



Brewerton United Methodist Church Weekly Update - January 30, 2011

Greetings!

In this month's Newsletter (ably produced by our editor, Kathy Peckham) I wrote about the place that the "methods" of Methodism played in both invigorating the spiritual growth of those who utilized them and revitalizing the spiritual depth of the Anglican Church and the social systems of 18th century England.

The committed, purposeful and regular gathering of John and Charles Wesley and their friends at Oxford University radically energized their spiritual lives and revolutionized (without an actual revolution) the church in England as well as the social structures that had been savaged by the changes wrought by the Industrial revolution.

These "methods" - among them bible study, prayer and fasting - were not the only transformative experience that made a difference in their lives, however. Equally important to the methods were the small groups that met regularly. In fact, it could be said that the covenant groups that Wesley organized were even more important to the growth of the movement and of the spiritual depth and maturity of those in it.

It simply is not practical to attempt to develop a closeness with every brother and sister in Christ, even in our small churches. There are not enough hours in the day for us to pour ourselves into each other's lives, to minister to each other's needs in regular and tangible ways when we only meet once a week for an hour on Sunday. God calls each of us to be ministers, starting with each other, then to the community around us and then to the world at large. Ministering to one another cannot possibly happen unless we get to know each other well, spend regular time with each other so that we know what is going on in each others lives, and live out our lives with one another so that we can truly share our hopes, dreams, burdens, sorrows and needs with one another.

It is this level of caring, sharing, ministering to and investing in the lives of one another that existed in the early church as it exploded throughout the Roman Empire. It was this level of loving and caring for one another that propelled a small group of Oxford teachers and students to turn the stagnant church and society they lived in on its ear and allowed them to reach tens of thousands of people who did not know Jesus. And it was this level of connection, dedication, and accountability that allowed this movement to help the new United States to form spiritually as it formed economically and politically into the greatest and most blest nation on earth to date.

Christianity was not meant to be lived out in large groups once a week. It was meant to be lived out in small clusters of people who made a difference in each others lives and helped each other learn more about Jesus, while they helped each other become the men and women of God that they were created to be. Not in a care or life group yet? Stay tuned for this incredible experience coming soon to a living room near you!

See you at Church, and around the Kingdom!

Pastor Roger, Lead Servant, Method-ist, and Care Group beneficiary