

SERMON SERIES: IT'S HIP TO BE SQUARE

"Experience And The United Methodist Future"

The Wesleyan Quadrilateral



- ★ Wesley believed that the truths of Scripture are confirmed in experience. Consequently we must respond to that which God has revealed historically through Scripture and at present through the work of the Holy Spirit.
- ★ The test for whether a witness is true or false should not be feelings alone. The appropriate way to “test the spirits” (1st John 4:1) should include criteria taken from Scripture, tradition, and reason as well as from experience.
- ★ *Empirical* knowledge is that founded on experience, observation, facts, sensation, practice, concrete situations, and real events. It is knowledge derived from sense experience and is generally capable of public assessment. *Experimental* knowledge relies on understanding, insights, or information that derive from personal or

interpersonal sense experiences (such as introspection, self-analysis, private conscious states, and other means).

- ★ Although the confirmatory role of experience pertains especially to the assurance of salvation, it also pertains to other truths of Scripture and to doctrines of orthodox Christianity.
- ★ Wesley believed that true religious experiences would not contradict but only confirm and illumine Scripture.
- ★ Wesley saw a relation between spiritual and physical experiences, and he was interested in examining both. But when it came to Christianity, he was primarily concerned with the inner, spiritual knowledge that comes through a personal relationship with God.

¶ In searching for resolution to issues related to [LGBTQ] persons, we do not seek a balance of views drawn from Scripture, tradition, reason and experience. Balance mistakenly communicates the idea of equilateral authority. This was not Wesley’s understanding, who affirmed the primacy of scriptural authority. Instead we should integrate the relevant data in an appropriate manner, allowing Scripture to lead us. ... A Wesleyan approach to homosexuality not only lends itself to a comprehensive and integrative approach...it understands and treats people realistically and compassionately... Jesus called people to repentance, but he also astounded others by the compassion he demonstrated toward those caught in temptation and sin. Can it be said of us that we surprise others by the sympathy and compassion we extend toward [LGBTQ persons]? ¶

—Dr. Don Thorson

“John Wesley, Revelation, and Homosexual Experience”
April 28, 2016, *Good News* magazine