



## Enlarging Our Vision for Kingdom Growth

Vic Reasoner

“Cast your bread upon the waters” is a philosophy for ministry contained in Ecclesiastes 11:1–6. During Solomon’s reign he loaded ships with grain and sent them across the Mediterranean Sea. According to 1 Kings 10:22, these ships returned every three years loaded with gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.

But there was risk involved. Not every ship returned. Some ships were wrecked or lost at sea. Yet men will assume such financial risks hoping to make a profit. The old adage is “nothing ventured; nothing gained.”

This same principle applies in kingdom work. Our “bread” is Jesus, the Bread of Life. Solomon would challenge us to be extravagant as we share the bread of life with a hungry world. Seven was the number of completion. The instruction to “give portions to seven, yes to eight” means we should go the extra mile in our generosity.

Richard Watson was not only a great theologian but also he had a zeal for world missions. He said the natural tendency is to start out pledging a seven but upon mature deliberation reduce it to a six. Yet our concern should not be whether we are doing too much. Our only questions should be, are we doing all we can?

This text also implies that not everything we do will succeed. According to verse 6 we do not know whether this endeavor or

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## Homecoming Issue

**Leadership and partnership: the global vision of the Francis Asbury Society**

that project will be the one which produces. Perhaps both will prosper, but one thing is certain—if we attempt nothing, we will always succeed at nothing.

Jesus taught this same principle in his parable of the sower. The livelihood of the farmer is dependent upon a bountiful harvest. The first step toward a bumper crop is to sow the seed generously. The church is God’s vehicle for broadcasting the gospel. He has no other plan. But we are generally much too

cautious, too careful, and too conservative. We have done too much “narrowcasting.” But Paul said, “I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some” (1 Cor 9:22).

The measure with which we sow will be the measure with which we reap (Mark 4:24–25; Luke 6:38). If we give our pocket change, God will bless us with pocket change. If we give by the thousands, God will give to us by the thousands. Let’s face it; some churches are large because they have maintained a large vision, not necessarily because they have compromised. Other congregations are small, not because they are more holy but because they are stingy.

When we consider that the seed fell on four types of soil, from a statistical standpoint 75% of the seed was wasted. Only one soil type brought forth fruit, and even then, the productivity varied from 30% to 60% to 100%. Years of disappointment have often resulted in us pulling back from the challenge. But Peter Marshall reminded us, it is

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## Vital Ministry in the Age of Globalization

Ronald E. Smith

Ron has been the chief executive officer of the Francis Asbury Society three times now (1995–1998, 2012–2014, and 2020–present), though he was also one of the first FAS evangelists. While God asked him to serve in leadership at a theological seminary as well as in pastoral ministry, Ron has maintained his deep covenant relationship with FAS, desiring to be “wholly devoted to God.” This article was originally published in *The High Calling*, July 2011 issue.

There are two symbols—icons as I see it—that stand in Wilmore, Kentucky, as a perpetual witness to what God desires to do to in his Church and world. The first is the cross that stands atop the city water tower. The second is the statue of Francis Asbury on his horse headed out of town. Ministry in our Asbury tradition is best captured by the realities that lay under these symbols. The first is that the Christian message regarding the work of Christ is captured in the cross. For those being saved the preaching of the cross is God’s power for salvation. And whosoever will may come, which is why we must go into all the world with the gospel. None may be excluded.

These two symbols portray an eternal reality about the gospel. The message of God’s saving work must be global and, for that to happen, we must be mobile. In a hallway in the FAS ministry center is the bicentennial print for Methodism. It is a portrait painted by Wyatt of the early Methodist missionaries commissioned by Wesley embarking for America by boat. The portrait is named “Offer them Christ.” Within seventy years of the first Christmas Conference for American Methodists in 1784, one out of every three people who professed Christ in America were Methodist. That first boat trip was significant! The point is, a lot has happened in America and around the world because of itinerants, people who were global and mobile.

At the Francis Asbury Society we are doing our best to perpetuate renewal and the saving work of God through itinerants who visit local churches, camps, schools, conference meetings, and mission fields the world over with the message of the full salvation Christ’s work on the cross enables us to proclaim. I took an unofficial count of the places our colleagues have been in ministry and it added up to at least seventy countries on six continents and included every state in the union. There are at least seven ways we at FAS are being global and mobile with our renewal efforts. Titus Women are doing spiritual conferences in many places in the U.S. and abroad. Our evangelists, preachers, and teachers are going out to teach, preach, and win souls. We are sending out short-term missionaries. We are publishing godly materials, both academic and at the lay level, and they go around the world in many languages. We host spiritual campaigns and training events. We train others to go, and equip them for the work through encouragement and covenant living. And, we sponsor academic work in order to teach and preach to those who teach and preach. Most recently we dedicated our new facility in Wilmore as a ministry center for renewal and equipping and for making disciples.

I have concluded that the symbols in Wilmore capture it well. The highest place in town is for the highest purpose in life—the message of the cross. And if that is the highest purpose, it’s time to get on your horse! Why not join us through your gifts, partnership, and covenant to live his highest ideals in our daily walk? Continue to pray for the Francis Asbury Society in its global, mobile mission of the cross. 🐎



## A Charge to Keep We Have: The Future of FAS

Paul Blair

Paul served as executive director and then president of the Francis Asbury Society from 1998 until 2012, though he also served as one of the first FAS evangelists. This article was originally published in our special dedication issue of *The High Calling* entitled, "Sacred Purpose, Sacred Place" (May/June 2011 issue). It celebrated the completion of the FAS ministry center and reminded us of our purpose.

To speak of spirituality is to speak of that meeting of eternity with time, of heaven with earth; it is to recover a sense of the holiness of matter, the sacredness of this world of space and time when it is known as the place of God's epiphany. Above all it is to know that man's life, man's body, is to be the place of God.<sup>1</sup>

When God came to Moses at the burning bush, the very dirt on which he stood became holy. Now, this was not some kind of special dirt; in fact, there was nothing particularly holy about either the ground or Moses himself. It was the immanent presence of a holy God that made the ground holy—holy enough for God to tell Moses to remove his shoes! But it was not just for Moses' sake that God chose to come in such a powerful way. It was also to commission Moses to free his people Israel from bondage in Egypt. When he comes to us, it is never about just us. It is all about the interpersonal relationships that he desires to touch through us.

Although there is one mediator between God and man—Christ Jesus—we are mediators of him to one another by his Spirit. When others meet us, they also have the privilege of meeting him who

is in us, as we are in him. We are the carriers of his presence as he carries us.

If we live in such a way as to receive more of his grace, his love, and his holiness, we become more like him. Because of this, we not only teach the love of Christ and the holiness of God. We *become* what we teach and preach: love overflowing. We become love to one another as he fills us with himself by his grace.

Throughout Christendom, millions have prayed, "Thy will be done on earth as in Heaven." Another similar prayer, found in the Book of Common Prayer, is prayed every Sunday by Christians all over the world:

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, *that we may perfectly love thee*, and worthily magnify thy Holy Name through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Do we truly believe that God answers this prayer? If so, what does the answer look like in the context of our relationships? Behind the calling of FAS is that God does in fact answer this prayer, and this is the "charge to keep" with which we are entrusted (2 Tim 1:14).

In deep gratitude for the gifts and prayers of many, FAS has set apart grounds and a building for his use. We give ourselves to becoming like him through faith, loving him with our whole heart and loving our neighbors as ourselves. Being "wholly devoted to him" is always

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1 A. M. Allchin, *The World Is a Wedding: Explorations in Christian Spirituality*, 20.



## Where in the World Is FAS?

Stan Key

This article was originally published in *The High Calling*, March/April 2014 issue, as Stan was introduced as the next president of the Francis Asbury Society; he served as president until 2020. In this article, Stan reminds us of why the Society exists: “to proclaim and promote the message of free salvation for all men, full salvation from all sin.”

Perhaps you heard the story of the man in the hot-air balloon who became hopelessly lost. Pushed this way and that by contrary currents of air, he finally floated close enough to the ground to be heard by people below. Spotting a farmer in his field, the man shouted as loudly as he could. “Where am I?” Looking to his left and then to his right, the farmer finally looked up into the sky. Pausing for only a moment, the farmer shouted back, “You can’t fool me, I know where you are. You’re hiding up there in that little basket!”

This silly story seems to define much of what I am feeling these days as I assume more leadership responsibilities here in the Francis Asbury Society. As the different currents of recent years push our little organization this way and that, I sometimes want to cry out, “Where are we?”

When you pause to think about it, there are only a few truly important questions in life: Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? These questions apply to organizations and ministries as well as individuals. When a ministry forgets her identity and purpose, the results are always tragic. Policies and procedures take precedence over mission and vision. The purpose of ministry becomes perpetuating the ministry. Paying the staff, maintaining the structures, and continuing the programs become

the focus. But when a ship at sea becomes more concerned over the décor in the lounge than the destination and purpose of the voyage, we have a problem of major proportions!

God raised up the Francis Asbury Society to exalt the Name above every name (Acts 4:12). This is why we exist. This is why we serve and pray and give sacrificially. Whenever we are tempted to think that our purpose is to promote a favorite person or preach a pet doctrine, we apostatize the faith and become marginalized in self-absorbed sectarianism.

And yet we recognize that we are called to live out this gospel purpose in a specific context that demands a particular identity and a distinctive mission. Though we love and affirm the grand current of what C. S. Lewis called “mere Christianity,” which includes all the branches of the historic orthodox faith, we understand that our place in the body demands a localized and particularized expression. C. S. Lewis spoke beautifully of this reality:

I hope no reader will suppose that “mere” Christianity is here put forward as an alternative to the creeds of the existing communions—as if a man could adopt it in preference to Congregationalism or Greek Orthodoxy or anything else. It is more like a hall out of which doors open into several rooms. If I can bring anyone into that hall, I shall have done what I attempted. But it is in the rooms, not in the hall, that there are fires and chairs and meals. The hall is a place to wait in, a place from which to try the various doors, not a place to

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## Wholly for God

Mark Nysewander

Mark was the first executive officer of the Francis Asbury Society after Dr. Kinlaw, serving from 1990 until 1995. In this article, written for this issue of *The High Calling*, Mark tells us how his time on staff at FAS blessed his life and ministry as well as where he's been and what he's been doing since then.

*"I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart..." Psalm 138:1a*

Some time ago I read *Taking Heaven by Storm*. It's written by John Wigger, professor of History at the University of Missouri. It's one of the finest academic works on early Methodism under Francis Asbury. In his book, John Wigger reveals one defining dynamic running all through the early Methodist movement. It manifested in everything from class meetings and camp meetings to district and annual conferences. This dynamic appeared in circuit-riding preachers, the Methodist people, and Francis Asbury.

What is this powerful characteristic surging through the early Methodist movement? Wigger terms it "militant supernaturalism."

Now, you may be thinking that "militant supernaturalism" sounds weird and somewhat shocking. You're right! It wouldn't be a welcoming tagline under the name of a church or ministry. Here's what I've concluded: John Wigger is creating an academic term for an academic audience explaining a spiritual reality.

Read the examples he gives illustrating militant supernaturalism and you'll witness a fiery movement of people living wholly for God. Wigger sees the dynamic of living wholly for God, describing it academically as militant supernaturalism.

Here's why the Francis Asbury Society carries the name of the first bishop of the Methodist Church in America. It's so named because the core value of FAS is the same as Asbury's fiery movement. FAS exists to see people today living wholly for God. This life comes, as it did with the early Methodists, through your definite surrender of all you are and all that you have to Jesus. Then intentionally ask him to fill you with his sanctifying Spirit. Empowerment to live wholly for God comes through fullness in the Holy Spirit. It's a baptism of love resulting in passionate devotion to God through Jesus and love for others.

In 1990 Dr. Kinlaw and the board invited me to become executive director of the Francis Asbury Society. I gladly accepted because of the core value of FAS. During my time with FAS, I was blessed to see the Lord moving through our ministry in so many wonderful ways.

The first blessing was for me. It was the opportunity of being with people like Dr. Kinlaw and Harold Burgess. These leaders modeled the very purpose of FAS: a whole-hearted life for God. They showed great kindness and grace toward me and my family. On long trips with Dr. Kinlaw, I saw up-close a man whose heart, mind, will, and energy was given over completely to Jesus. The founder of this Society reflected the core value of the ministry. His whole-hearted life is still a transforming witness to me.

Early on, Dr. Kinlaw would tell me that we need a "stable of evangelists" fanning out to camp meetings and churches. These messengers were to preach, minister, and teach the full gospel. Over

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## The Taproot of Wesleyan Ministry

Harold Burgess (1933–2011)

This article is excerpted from “A Wesleyan Theology of Ministry,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 18:1 (Spring 1983), 30–43. Dr. Kinlaw and Dr. Burgess first met in the early 1980s, and almost immediately, Harold began printing books that Dr. Kinlaw valued. By the time this journal article was published, the Francis Asbury Society had been birthed. Used with permission.

The taproot for a Wesleyan theology of ministry is surely to be identified with the thought and practice of John Wesley. Traveling some six thousand miles a year mostly on horseback, holding conference, founding schools, forming societies, preaching where and when he could an average of three times each day, helping the poor, undergirding the Sunday school, writing letters, journals, books, tracts, and hymns, Wesley was able to state in 1786, “I go on in an even line.” Wesley had a track to run on, a track that kept him on course through an age that ignored the human wreckage that was so much a part of the scene. He saw the human hurts, to which he consistently applied the gospel as established in God’s love. The result was, and Wesley regularly drew attention to the results, “that people had turned from their evil ways and taken up a new and good life; indeed, that people who had been pronounced neurotic and melancholic and had been given up as hopeless, became healthy, hard-working, and happy.”<sup>1</sup>

His understanding of the nature of ministry constantly kept in tension his awareness of God’s truth and his awareness of man’s need. Thus the doctrines which became the hallmark of the eighteenth-century revival were precisely those which touched upon the God-man relationship. In varied contexts Wesley enumerates these hallmark

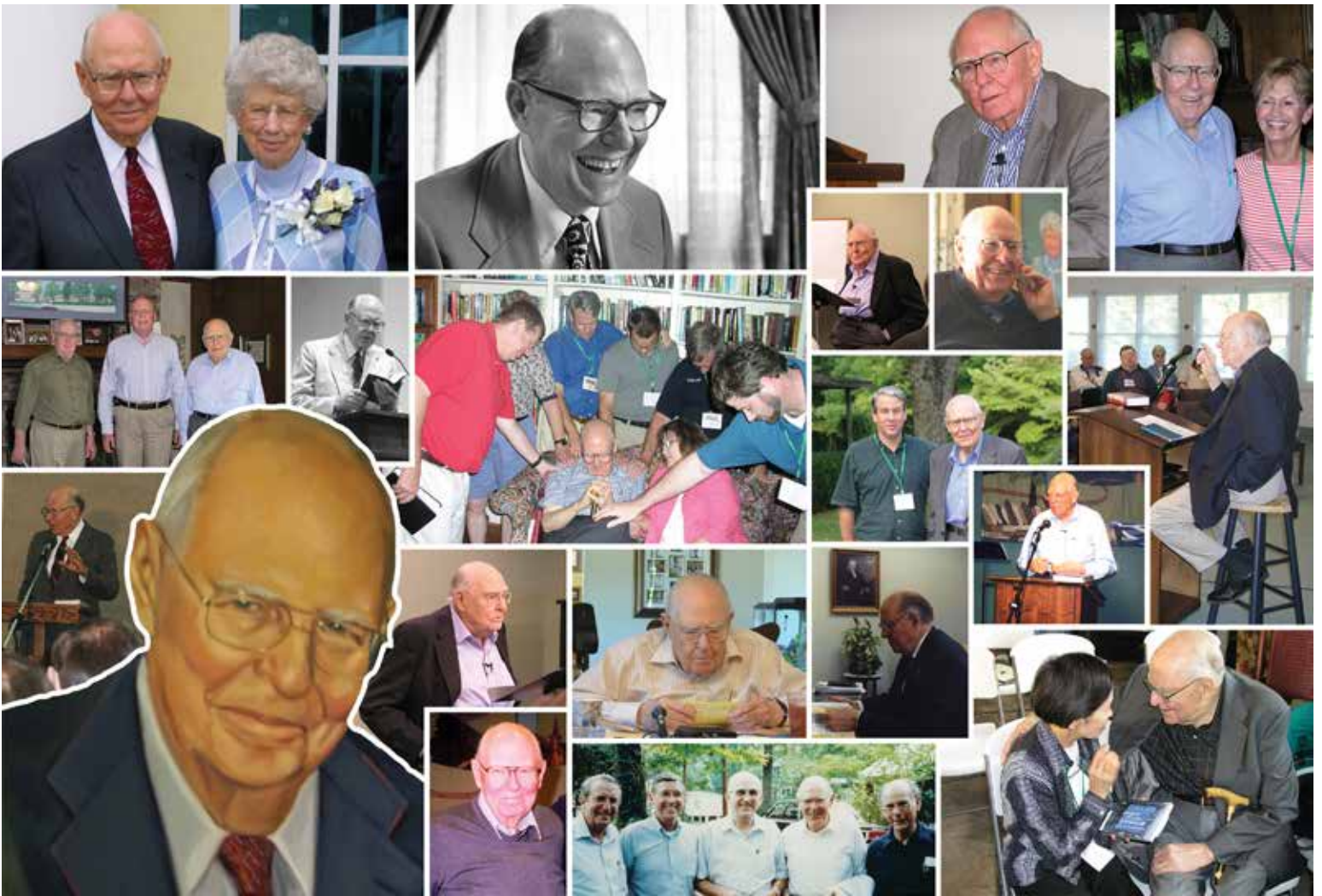
doctrines: he speaks of “three grand, scriptural doctrines”—Original Sin, Justification by Faith, and Holiness”; of “our main doctrines” as being repentance, faith, and holiness; and of “the grand fundamental doctrines . . . the New Birth and Justification by Faith.” Even if one has in mind the longer list of Wesley’s essential doctrines as compiled by Colin Williams, namely: “original sin, the deity of Christ, the atonement, justification by faith alone, the work of the Holy Spirit (including new birth and holiness), and the Trinity,”<sup>2</sup> the stress is upon the potential for healing man’s broken relationship with God.

In some contrast to the sixteenth-century Reformers, then, Wesley understood God in terms of a loving father who sustained a relationship with his children after the analogy of a family. The Reformers, on the other hand, laying stress upon the character and holiness of God, perceived the “truth-about-God-in-relation-to-man” to be more on the order of God, as creator and righteous judge, establishing a legal, though saving, relationship with man through justification by faith. Thus, in addition to justification by faith, Wesley championed the doctrine of the new birth (regeneration) as an entry point not only to a right relationship with God (the righteous judge) but also into the warm fellowship of the family of God. It should not be surprising that the atmosphere of the Wesley societies was much warmer than the atmosphere of Luther’s or Calvin’s churches. There was a recognition of, and rejoicing in, a sense of God’s unconditional love that simply was not the case under the more legal system of reformed doctrine. The theory of ministry was different; the results

2 Collin Williams, *John Wesley’s Theology Today*, 16–17.

1 Martin Schmidt, *John Wesley: A Theological Biography*, 2.2:123.

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## It's All About a Message

Dennis F. Kinlaw (1922–2017)

The Francis Asbury Society was incorporated on May 24, 1983, 245 years from the date of John Wesley's experience at Aldersgate. Our co-founders initially combined two efforts to create the Francis Asbury Society: publishing and evangelism. This article, which reminds us of the message we promote, was originally published in the special dedication issue of *The High Calling* (May/June 2011).

First of all, I want to say the Francis Asbury Society has no official affiliation with Asbury University or Asbury Theological Seminary. Though I served as president of the College for a number of years and also taught at the Seminary, those are institutions, and FAS was founded not to build an institution but to promote a message. There is a great deal of difference between a program to build an institution and a program to promote a message. In fact, sometimes it's harder to tell people what you're about when your goal is to promote a message.

Now what is that message? It is a very simple biblical one but an incredibly important one: we want to let the world know that the blood of Christ can cleanse a human heart from self-interest, from one's desire to "keep his thumb" on his life and have some control over it. The message is that the blood of Christ can cleanse the inner heart of a person enough that he can love God with all of his heart, mind, and soul, and love his neighbor as himself, as Christ himself has said we should do.

Scripture uses a number of expressions to describe this, one of which is "pure in heart." In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." If it is a pure heart, it is

a single heart; it is an undivided heart. There's been a division within us, but the Scripture speaks about the possibility that God can take a person's heart and unite it. Another expression is "an eye single to the glory of God." In other words, as you live, the one purpose in your life is the glory of God, and you let God take such total control of you that all you are and all you have is devoted to the glory of God.

I think this is what Jesus was getting at with the rich young ruler. The young man comes to Jesus and says, "What do I have to do to be saved? What do I have to do to have eternal life?" Jesus replies, "Keep the commandments." The young man looks back at Jesus and says, "Master, I've kept those." Jesus says, "OK. One thing you lack. Go sell all that you have, give it to the poor, and come take up your cross and follow me." Now, Jesus isn't after his wealth; what he wants is that young man, and when Jesus says, "One thing you lack," the young man turns and walks away. And Jesus' heart is broken because he has lost a young person whom he wanted—and wanted totally for himself.

I think we in America are masters of diminishing the requirements for being a disciple of Jesus and a follower of him. We talk about "believing on the Lord Jesus Christ" and "getting saved," and so we think that to give a certain mental response is what it takes to be saved. But if you will follow the teachings of Christ, you will find that Christ said there ought to be a cross in every person's life, just as there was a cross in his, where a person dies to his own interest. That's his terminology for "getting your thumb off your life," so that Christ controls it.

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# Why I Believe in the Asbury Mission

Ronald E. Smith



As president of FAS once again, Ron has asked us, “What if the wellbeing and happiness of the world depend on the wellbeing and happiness of Christ’s Body in the world, which depend on the wellbeing and happiness of the people in the local church, which depend on the wellbeing and happiness of my own soul?” Our recently launched initiative, Empower the Nations, has been created to equip a network of leaders around the world. This article, which discusses how Francis Asbury equipped networks in his ministry, was originally published as “From the President’s Desk” in *The High Calling*, March/April 2014 issue, as Ron was moving to New Jersey for pastoral ministry.

The net worth of an organization never rises above the net-work of its constituencies. From the time I first began to hear Dennis Kinlaw speak of the great resourcefulness of the world God made possible through the likes of Bishop Francis Asbury and his pursuit of raising a group of people “wholly devoted to God,” I have loved to dream the dream that a Society living under that mantra would be capable of carrying the strongest currents for the purposes of God in Christ Jesus. Of course, I will be the first to say, I never felt like I belonged there with that group. But since the time I gave my heart to Jesus, there has always been a yearning to be numbered there. So my life has been a pursuit of the dream to be numbered among a group of people with the ideals of men like Asbury, Wesley, Kinlaw, *et. al.* The road has been both steep and difficult. I have been a grave disappointment over the years to colleagues on that journey. Moreover, I have been gravely disappointed by others who have claimed to be on that road. I think I have grown to more fully understand Isaiah’s despondence when he confessed, “I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.” I find myself hoping that God would be merciful to me, like Isaiah found him to be when he supernaturally touched Isaiah’s unclean lips with the hot coals of his love and redemption as he proclaimed, “Your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for” (Isaiah 6:7).

When he was ordained, Francis Asbury was asked two great questions that I believe set his heroic future course. The first was, “Are you moving on to perfection?” The second was, “Do you expect to be made perfect in this life?” If you in the Francis Asbury Society family will allow me the liberty of using the RSV (the Ron Smith Version) for these questions, they are, “Do you believe that Jesus Christ can perfect that which concerns you?” And, “Do you believe he wants to—and can do it—now?” I have decided that the hinge of the Francis Asbury Society hangs on the same premises. The only gospel emphasis that can provide hope and transformation for people like me is that Christ has lived, died, and is

coming again in self-giving, holy love to transform his own by making his strength perfect in our weakness. This we believe and proclaim, and we find it to be a place of stewardship and emphasis for our Society. Although I am saying a geographic good-bye to the new team that has come together in the Francis Asbury Society, the United Methodist congregation I am serving in southern New Jersey very much will be part of the work of the Society. Why? Simply because I will forever be in covenant with those people who believe Christ can and will perfect his own if we entrust him with our whole lives for his glory.

Henry Clay Morrison was the founder of Asbury Theological Seminary. He was convinced that pastors who believed the gospel is big enough to transform the world and perfect it to present to God a Church as a Bride without blemish was the greatest hope for the well-being of our nation. I, too, believe that. So I, too, will forever remain a committed part of the FAS mission. I thought I would leave you with Dr. Morrison’s optimism for a Society of believers who trusted that Christ could perfect that which concerns us, and do it now. I sub-title this Morrison quote, “Why I believe in the Asbury mission:”

Give a nation a faithful ministry in its pulpits, [people] who feel the call and awe of God upon them; [people] who will be true to his word, declare his truth regardless of consequences, who will faithfully instruct [people] in righteousness and warn them against sin; [people] who will rebuke wickedness among the rich as well as the poor, who making the word of the Lord the sword of the Spirit, will strike mightily against the sins of the people and warn them of the judgment to come, meanwhile, with tender and loving heart, calling them to repentance and pointing them to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. Such a nation can but be blessed. There will be power in the churches; the fires of devotion will glow upon millions of family altars; there will be order and happiness in the home; the schools will be centers of spiritual and intellectual development; there will be honesty in commerce, justice in the courts, civic righteousness will prevail, moral standards will be high, social life will be pure, the fear of God will pervade the earth, the love of Christ will reign and rule in the hearts of [people], the Bible will become the revered and honored book, and the kingdom of heaven will be set up in the hearts of the people; and our crucified and risen Lord “shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.”

To this end, I go to ministry in the local church, but my covenant remains with the Society of people who bear the name of Francis Asbury and who desire above all things to “be wholly devoted to God.” May our network grow until the full worth of Christ be measured in all the earth! ✠



Adapted from JeffoftheJungle (Statue of Francis Asbury in HDR, July 22, 2012)



Now, you might say, "But doesn't everybody who is a Bible believer believe that?" Unfortunately they don't. There are countless Christians living defeated by sin, burdened by guilt, unhappiness, and frustration.

FAS takes its name from Francis Asbury, a Methodist bishop who came to the United States in 1771, at the age of 26. For 44 years, until his death in 1816, he did more to lay the spiritual foundation for America than any other single figure. Let me tell you what kind of a man he was. One day, while riding through Wilmington, North Carolina, he passed a slave. He said, "Good day, Sir," and the slave responded. As he went on his way the Spirit spoke to him and said, "You should have witnessed to that person." So he turned his horse around and went back. When he found the slave, he got off of his horse and said to him, "Sir, what is your name?" And the slave said, "I don't know. I've never known my name. I'm a slave. They all call me Punch, because I fight so much." Then Asbury opened the Scripture and told "Punch" about Christ, about the power of God to save. After praying with him, he went on his way. Twenty years later, Asbury was back in that community. As he was preaching in the church, at the end of the service, a black man came up to him, looked at him, and said, "Bishop, I'm Punch." Bishop Asbury said, "Tell me the story." He said, "Well, you know, you talked to me about Jesus and prayed with me." He said, "I went to my room, got down on my knees, confessed my sins, asked him to forgive me, and my room was filled with an incredible light. And, you know, I've never fought or cursed or played cards since. And I've got 300 people out here that call me their pastor." Now that's the kind of man Francis Asbury was, and I have become interested in that kind of gospel.

But what about the 20th century? I go back to 1970, during the revival at Asbury College, and think of Christians I have known who were in Christian service, in Christian work, but in their inner hearts, there was enough pollution and defilement of self-interest to keep them from knowing the power and freedom of God. I believe God can—and have witnessed that he does—transform "Christians" into real Christians, and that's what our business is: to preach that gospel of an undivided heart, a heart filled with love for God to the extent that a person's got his hands off, and Christ possesses him.

That's what the Francis Asbury Society is all about. It's a message. We try to find evangelists who will preach it, literature that will express it, and retreats that will give people an opportunity to enter into that kind of deeper life by the Holy Spirit. We are willing to support anything moving in this country or across the world that will bring the church to the place where Christ died to bring it, to be a people wholly devoted to God. ✝

were different. Indeed, to restate the Wesleyan understanding of the "truth-about-God-in-relation-to-man," Wynkoop argues that "love is more definitive of Wesley's theology than any methodology of the experience dimension presumed to be Wesley's."<sup>3</sup>

Nonetheless, it was the focusing of this "love" that gave form and substance to Wesleyanism's most distinctive doctrine, "holiness." It was the work of a lifetime for John and Charles Wesley to establish that "holiness," often designated "perfection in love," was the essence of salvation. Holiness was both a doctrine and a point of view for their ministry. Albert Outler notes that contemporary Christians are sometimes made uneasy by this Wesleyan doctrine of "holiness of heart and life:"

But I take comfort and courage in such a venture from the undeniable fact that John Wesley believed and taught an explicit doctrine of "holiness" as the goal and crown of the Christian life, and if this gives you trouble the burden of proof shifts over to your side (that is if you profess to be a Wesleyan at all) to explain why you are prepared to reject or ignore what he regarded as not only essential but climactic.<sup>4</sup>

It is my opinion that John Wesley was able to sustain a long life of vital ministry in large part because he was "on a track" that did not disconnect his practice from his theory. Rather his ministry was an outflow of his theology. It does seem that there may be a tendency for us Wesleyans to be loyal to our theology in a manner that indeed approximates a heavenly theory which is not fully rooted into our ministry. Wesleyan theology, however, works best when it is hot, permeating one's mind, one's heart, and one's action. What I am suggesting, then, is that one benchmark of a more adequate theology of ministry is one which features a healthy integration of the evidences for faith and the faith itself; of the truths to which we assent with the playing out of these truths in the work of ministry.

To "spread scriptural holiness" is indeed a Wesleyan task for ministry. But "spreading scriptural holiness" is much more than merely saying the "right" words—it is a matter of producing the right kind of fruit. ✝

3 Mildred Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love*, 27.

4 Albert Outler, *Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit*, 67.

**"I believe God can... transform 'Christians' into real Christians, and that's what our business is." —Dennis F. Kinlaw**

## Empower the Nations

### The Power of One

In the parable of the lost sheep, Jesus asks, "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it?" (Luke 15:4). Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. The principle here is the *power of one*. Christ is saying just pick one—*any* one. Invest so fully in the one that he or she may come to know Christ and to love him enough to go and do the same.

Last August, the Francis Asbury Society was holding its annual retreat at The Hemlock Inn in Bryson City, North Carolina. Jerry Coleman sang a short Christian chorus and then picked one other person to sing with him. Then the two did the same. By the seventh time, everyone at the retreat was standing together singing. Jerry went on to illustrate that if the process was repeated 34 times, every one in the world would be singing! That is the power of one.

The Empower the Nations initiative is all about the power of one. Our goal is that Christian leaders in every nation might have the opportunity to be educated, equipped, and encouraged in the theology and practice of holiness. Each leader is one who will disciple other ones so that the whole world may experience the transformative love of God. Ultimately, Empower the Nations aims to set up networks of Christian leaders in long-term mentoring relationships that cultivate, promote, and multiply covenant discipleship groups so that every person in the world will experience the transformative love of God.

But this initiative is not just for the FAS staff. Let's all think with the mind of Christ and ask this one significant question: Who will be my one? Invest your love in one today and ask him or her to do the same. The impact will be astounding! ✝

*A Charge to Keep...* continued from page 3

a demonstration in itself, not only of our affection for him but also as an indicator of how we are relating to others. Consider Christ's words: "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine you did to me" (Matt 25:40).

Our mission is to aid our brothers and sisters in Christ to become all that he died for them to be. We kneel in the same spiritual need ourselves, only able to help others as we humble ourselves and he gives himself daily to us. FAS is a communion within the body of Christ entrusted with the proclamation of "Joy to the world . . . He comes to make his blessing flow far as the curse is found"—not simply geographically "far," but also down into the "far" reaches of our own hearts. FAS is committed to live and proclaim the abundant life in Christ. We will continue as we have done in the past: to preach, teach, disciple, publish, and hold retreats and conferences. FAS relates to all groups in a non-sectarian tone regardless of religious affiliation, gender, race, or nationality.

A unique integrating factor of the Society is that we relate and minister to both the local church and the academy. First is our commitment to supply spiritual resources to both the leadership and the laity of the local church worldwide, especially to the men and women who sacrifice their living to support the Church and from whom our Lord draws and calls leadership for the next generation. Second to this is our commitment to provide graduate-level resources for the academy, aiding in the development of the scholar's responsibility to the church. From our inception we have provided evangelists and gifted spiritual speakers to support pastoral witness. We have also provided inspirational literature for the laity as well as textbooks and research assistance for accomplished and budding scholars alike. These are all provided in several languages.

Through the ages, one of the best kept secrets in Christendom is "the thread that runs so true," the unexpected witness from novelists, poets, artisans, and musicians who give ample testimony to the

spiritual witness to the perfect love of God that enables us to truly live in love with him and one another. We expect the great expositors, mystics, sages, and luminaries of the faith to touch on the Holy life in Christ, and they do. However, this other voice confirms the written word and the word proclaimed. It draws us in as a second witness to the truth resounding in our heart.

*I am so weak, dear Lord, I cannot stand  
One moment without Thee;  
But, Oh, the tenderness of Thy enfolding,  
And, Oh, the faithfulness of Thy upholding,  
And, Oh, the strength of Thy right hand—  
That Strength is enough for me.  
I am so needy, Lord, and yet I know  
All fullness dwells in Thee;  
And, hour by hour, that never-failing treasure  
Supplies and fills in overflowing measure  
My last and greatest need, and so  
Thy Grace is enough for me . . .*

*There were strange soul-depths, restless, vast, and broad,  
Unfathomed as the sea—  
And infinite craving for some infinite stilling;  
But now Thy perfect love is perfect filling;  
Lord Jesus Christ, my Lord, my God,  
Thou, Thou art enough for me.  
—George Macdonald*



To proclaim and live in the glorious mystery of God's perfect love, given to us, is the charge we have to keep. It is this sacred purpose, to love him and one another wholly, for which God sends his holy presence to make sacred the ground of our own hearts and the very grounds on which we stand. ✠

*Where in the World Is FAS?* continued from page 4

live in. For that purpose the worst of the rooms (whichever that may be) is, I think, preferable.<sup>1</sup>

For those who share our identity and want to be part of our mission, we humbly invite them to come in out of the hallway and pull up a chair around the fireplace. Here we find fellowship rich and deep. Here we prayerfully consider the role God wants us to play in his larger church and world.

John Wesley helps us to better understand how people in our "room" have historically defined themselves and understood their purpose. Lamenting the fact that many in the broader church perceived the Methodists as a marginal sect, Wesley feared that the Methodists themselves would begin to see themselves in such a light, locking the door and huddling by the fire in the hopes they wouldn't have to mess with those "other people" in the hallway and beyond. Wesley wanted his people to understand that far from being on the margins of what God was doing in history, they were in the very center of his work in the world!

The *distinguishing marks* of a Methodist are not his *opinions* of any sort. His assenting to this or that scheme of religion, his embracing any particular set of notions, his espousing the judgment of one man or of another, are all quite wide of the point. Whosoever, there, imagines that a Methodist is a man of such or such an *opinion*, is grossly ignorant of the whole affair; he mistakes the truth totally.<sup>2</sup>

Who then is a Methodist and what are the marks whereby he may be recognized? Wesley drives home the point when he boldly asserts

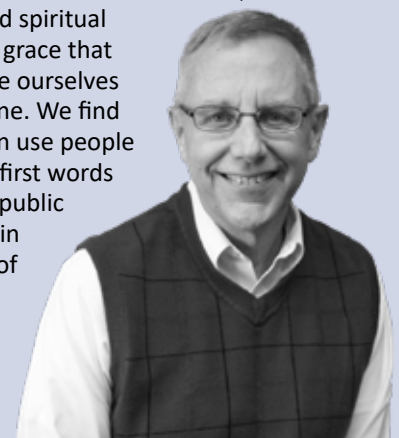
1 C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, Preface.  
2 John Wesley, *The Character of a Methodist*, 1 (1742).

that "a Methodist is one who has the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit given unto him (Rom 5:5); one who loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength (Mark 12:30)." To those who pointed out that these characteristics are only the foundational principles of real Christianity, Wesley simply said, "This is the very truth."

Who are we and why are we here? Where did we come from and where are we going? FAS exists to proclaim and promote the message of free salvation for all men, full salvation from all sin. We specifically labor to make resources available (sermons, books, people) that will remind the broader church that what God calls us to (whole-hearted devotion, Spirit-empowered service, and victory over sin), he is able to perform.

We do not fulfill our calling in a spirit of arrogance or superiority, and we certainly don't pretend to be the sole faithful remnant who alone preach the authentic gospel. God forbid! Rather, in humble recognition of our own profound spiritual poverty, we take comfort in the grace that saves even moral reprobates like ourselves so that all glory goes to him alone. We find courage to believe God can even use people like us when we remember the first words Jesus spoke when he began his public ministry: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:3).

The Francis Asbury Society has no higher aspiration than this! ✠



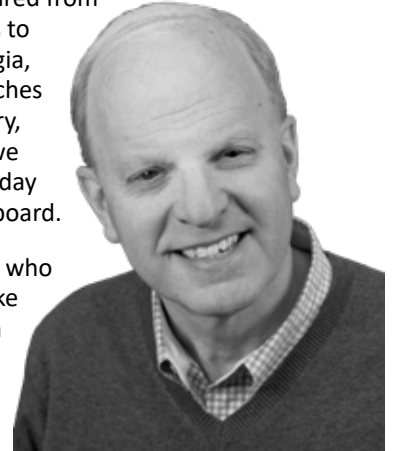
the years of my tenure, we were blessed to see God bringing to us a number of FAS evangelists and associate evangelists. Our “stable of evangelists” brought us blessings with their passion for Jesus Christ. In our ministry to churches and camp meetings as FAS evangelists, we witnessed the Lord coming with power transforming the very atmosphere with his presence. Many believers received the Spirit’s fullness to live wholly for God. In several places we saw renewal of an entire church.

Before one of my meetings, I checked out a dozen or so audio tapes from the Asbury College (now University) library. These were recordings of the entire 1970 Asbury revival. I listened as I drove all the way down to south Alabama and continued listening after the meeting as I returned to Wilmore. The tapes still carried the revival anointing! I shared about the tapes with the FAS board. We decided to produce a video using selected testimonies from those tapes. Chad Crouch gave his time and giftedness to put the video together. *When God Comes* was premiered in Hughes Auditorium on the 25th anniversary of the revival. It has become a blessing to many. This project blessed me with memories and thankfulness as one who was a student at Asbury College during the revival. If you haven’t seen *When God Comes*, go to youtube.com and search for “Asbury Revival 1970 (FULL).”

Another blessing God gave FAS was the Asbury Summer Assembly. This gathering, over several days in the summer, drew entire families staying in Wilmore or on the college campus. We saw God working in people’s lives giving them a greater heart for the Lord. Over a few years the Assembly grew to several hundred people attending.

Finally, it was during my days with FAS that we started *The High Calling*. It began as four pages with articles from our evangelists, a word from Dr. Kinlaw or myself, and news about our ministry. The itinerary of every FAS evangelist was also listed. I am grateful to see *The High Calling* grow today as a strong resource for encouragement and insight.

My days with FAS concluded in 1995. I then joined Rich Stevenson, who had been an FAS evangelist, to plant Great Commission Fellowship in Wilmore, Kentucky. Three years later Kathy and I were called to Bethany Missionary Church on the campus of Bethany Missionary College in Bloomington, Minnesota. After 5 years we were invited to Riverstone Church in Kennesaw, Georgia, where I was on staff for sixteen years. I retired from Riverstone but God again called us to Church on the Hill in Dalton, Georgia, as interim pastor. In all these churches and my continued itinerant ministry, I have carried the same message we carried at FAS. I’m grateful for the day Dr. Kinlaw invited me to come on board.



Charles Spurgeon proclaimed, “He who worships with his whole heart is like a man on fire.” As FAS continues in the value of the Spirit’s work for whole-hearted living, I pray it will be like a ministry on fire. ✠

### *Enlarging Our Vision...* continued from page 1

better to fail in a cause that will ultimately succeed than to succeed in a cause that will ultimately fail. The promise in Psalm 126:6 says, “He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will doubtless return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him.”

Here is the picture. A poor farmer has had a poor harvest. Through the winter he has drawn upon his reserves until very little remains. As spring draws near he wonders, *Will we face another drought this year? What is the use of risking the little remaining grain to use as seed?* But he has no choice. So one frosty spring morning he begins walking the same field. He takes the small number of precious seed he has left and begins sowing it. He weeps as he sows it because he knows if this seed does not produce, he is finished. It is all he has.

As he sows, he weeps over past failures. He cries because the ground seems so hard. He sheds tears because the weather is so miserable. He grieves because his resources are so meager. He weeps because the devil comes like a big black bird to snatch away the seed that he has sown. Adam Clarke said it is as though the seed is watered with his tears and God hears this brokenhearted prayer of desperation, rewarding it with a bountiful harvest.

Tears are not required as a condition for reaping. Instead, the psalmist is describing a contrast. There is a contrast of going and coming; sowing and reaping; weeping and shouting; planting little seeds and reaping large sheaves. There is the anxiety of sowing and the certainty of reaping. The truth is that even though we are often discouraged—even to the point of tears—we keep sowing, because that is what the church of Jesus Christ is called to do. The promise is not to those who simply weep but to those who keep on sowing. God has promised that if we take the precious little we have and sow it in faith, we undoubtedly will experience a time of growth and harvest.

But growth comes slowly. Except in times of revival, when God accelerates his work, the growth of the kingdom cannot be observed. We do not plant one day and reap the next. It is first the blade, then the ear, then the full ear of corn. This progression

requires time and patience because the seed we sow does not germinate overnight. Much of what happens initially is beneath the surface and cannot be quantified at all. Then we nurture tender plants; we keep our part of the garden weeded. Our ministries are not ninety-day wonders; they are a lifetime of dedication and sacrifice.

The word views our endeavor as “peanuts.” The mustard seed looks extremely small and yet it contains resurrection life. While the kingdom of God had an unlikely start, it will continue to grow until it fills the whole earth. Therefore, we must keep perspective. What we are doing is only one twig on one limb on one branch of a great tree. We cannot see the whole picture, but by faith we are to give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because we know that our labor in the Lord is not in vain (1 Cor 15:58). This promise is not based upon what we see, but upon the resurrection life of Jesus Christ. We are still on the little end of the biggest thing that has ever come to this world. And the secret of our generosity is this quiet confidence.

Yet God has not promised success for simply going through the motions. Eighty-five percent of all churches in America are not seeing any growth. That is because some are not sowing the right seed. Some are sowing a mixture of truth and error, getting mixed results. Still others claim they believe the true gospel but have quit sowing altogether. The answer is not to withdraw from society, quit going to church, or fire the pastor. The answer is to sow more seed and trust God for the increase. “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” (Gal 6:9).

In the last thirty-nine years the Francis Asbury Society has been devoted to kingdom growth. In this issue we honor that legacy. Every past president, whether living on earth or in heaven, shares this vision. And under the current leadership of Ron Smith, we are committed to empower the nations through this same message. Would you pray with us and partner with us, so that we can do more—not less? ✠



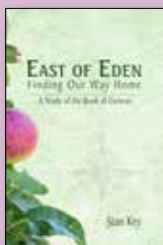
## The Significance of a Relationship

Charlie Fiskeaux, Special Assistant to the President for Financial Affairs

During our lives, we are involved in many different “things.” We get married, have and raise children, build a home, work at our job, invest for retirement, go to church, etc. All of these, perhaps, are worthwhile tasks that have meaning. The question is: what of it all will endure into eternity? The Scripture tells us that much of our earthly existence will not survive. John tells us, “The world and its desires are passing away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever” (1 John 2:17). Paul tells us that “fire will test the quality of each person’s work” (1 Cor 3:12).

With this future evaluation in mind, there is one “thing” that will last; that is, relationships. We all exist in a web of relationships, which is one aspect of God’s image stamped into our nature. Of course, the overarching relationship is embodied in the question, “What will you do with Jesus?”

So, then, there is significant, eternal value in bringing persons into salvific and discipling relationship with Jesus, which is a relationship that will endure into eternity. If you are looking for a place to invest that seeks to bring persons into such a deep relationship with Jesus, consider the Francis Asbury Society, a ministry that proclaims God’s grace sufficient to enable us to be “wholly devoted to God.” Details for various methods of giving to the ministries the Francis Asbury Society are available on our website: [www.francisasburysociety.com/support](http://www.francisasburysociety.com/support).



## East of Eden

By Stan Key

\$21.95 (paperback; 470 pages)

June release!

Who am I? If there is a God, what is he (she? it? they?) like? What’s the meaning of life? Why is there so much suffering? What does the future hold? The book of Genesis was written precisely for people who ask big questions. It does more than offer interesting history; it enables us to understand that the world is the way it is and, at the same time, offers a solution to many of the world’s problems. Study this God-inspired text and find divine help in answering the greatest mysteries of life.

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The High Calling is a bimonthly publication of The Francis Asbury Society to serve as a link between FAS and its constituents, building loyalty and awareness so that the teaching and experience of Christian holiness may continue to be lived and proclaimed throughout the world.

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