

The Social Meeting

Many Adventist are aware that John Wesley had a list of questions for meetings of the Methodist Church. I have listed these questions below. Russell Burrill stated these questions were not used by Seventh-day Adventist in the Social Meeting. I have added Russell Burrill's information as he has studied the Early Adventist Social Meeting. His two posts give some historic detail. Wesley's questions are very probing. I believe they would still be good for a person to consider in growing spiritually. But I also understand what would happen if used in a meeting with a gossipier.....

Kenneth Brummel
Site Director
Washington NH SDA Church

Comment 1:

Ken, Thanks for messaging me about what you put on the site for the social meeting. However, I am afraid that is not true. There is no evidence to my knowledge that early Adventists used the John Wesley questions. In fact by the time Ellen White becomes a Methodist even the Methodists had stopped using them. Those questions ended when John Wesley died. The class meeting of Methodists began degenerating thereafter and ultimately became prayer meeting.

Adventists borrowed the basic concept. The Adventist social meeting contained a lot of testimony, prayer and at times, but not always accountability. There is no evidence that they ever used such direct questions. Hope this helps.

Russell Burrill

I asked Russell about a time line of Wesley and early Adventism. Even if questions are not directly used, if close in time, they can sometime still shape and influence conversations that follow. Here is his reply.

Comment 2:

John Wesley declared these questions could never be changed. However he died in 1791, 40 years before Miller began to preach. As soon as he died the Methodist changed the questions, while keeping the class meeting. They made the questions less penetrating, until by the time of Ellen White, the class meeting had become a Bible study followed by testimonies. Ellen White and other early Adventists then took the old Methodist class meeting as it was in their day and then made their own adaptations and called it the social meeting. The origin of the social meeting is tied to the Wesley class meeting and springs from it, but it is abundantly clear that they never used John Wesley's questions. In fact in my study I found that they never really even asked questions. It was primarily testimonies of what God had done in their life that week. And at times, if a brother had erred they would publicly correct him in the social meeting. But they never asked questions that everyone had to answer. In this sense they departed from the old Wesley class meeting. However, it is important to remember that most of the early Adventists had never even heard Wesley's 5 questions since they had been in non use for nearly 50 years before Ellen White and the early Adventists.

Russell Burrill

John Wesley's Small Group Questions:

1. Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I am? In other words, am I a hypocrite?
2. Am I honest in all my acts and words, or do I exaggerate?
3. Do I confidentially pass onto another what was told me in confidence?
4. Am I a slave to dress, friends, work, or habits?
5. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying?
6. Did the Bible live in me today?
7. Do I give it time to speak to me every day?
8. Am I enjoying prayer?
9. When did I last speak to someone about my faith?
10. Do I pray about the money I spend?
11. Do I get to bed on time and get up on time?
12. Do I disobey God in anything?
13. Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?
14. Am I defeated in any part of my life?
15. Am I jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy or distrustful?
16. How do I spend my spare time?
17. Am I proud?
18. Do I thank God that I am not as other people, especially as the Pharisee who despised the publican?
19. Is there anyone whom I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold resentment toward or disregard? If so, what am I going to do about it?
20. Do I grumble and complain constantly?
21. Is Christ real to me?

Wesley's Band Meeting Questions:

1. What known sins have you committed since our last meeting?
2. What temptations have you met with?
3. How were you delivered?
4. What have you thought, said, or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not?
5. Have you nothing you desire to keep secret?

Reference: *John Wesley's Class Meetings: a Model for Making Disciples*, by D. Michael Henderson, Evangel Publishing House, 1997, pp. 118-9

From: http://www.christunitedjxn.org/assets/1156/john_wesleys_accoutability_questions.pdf