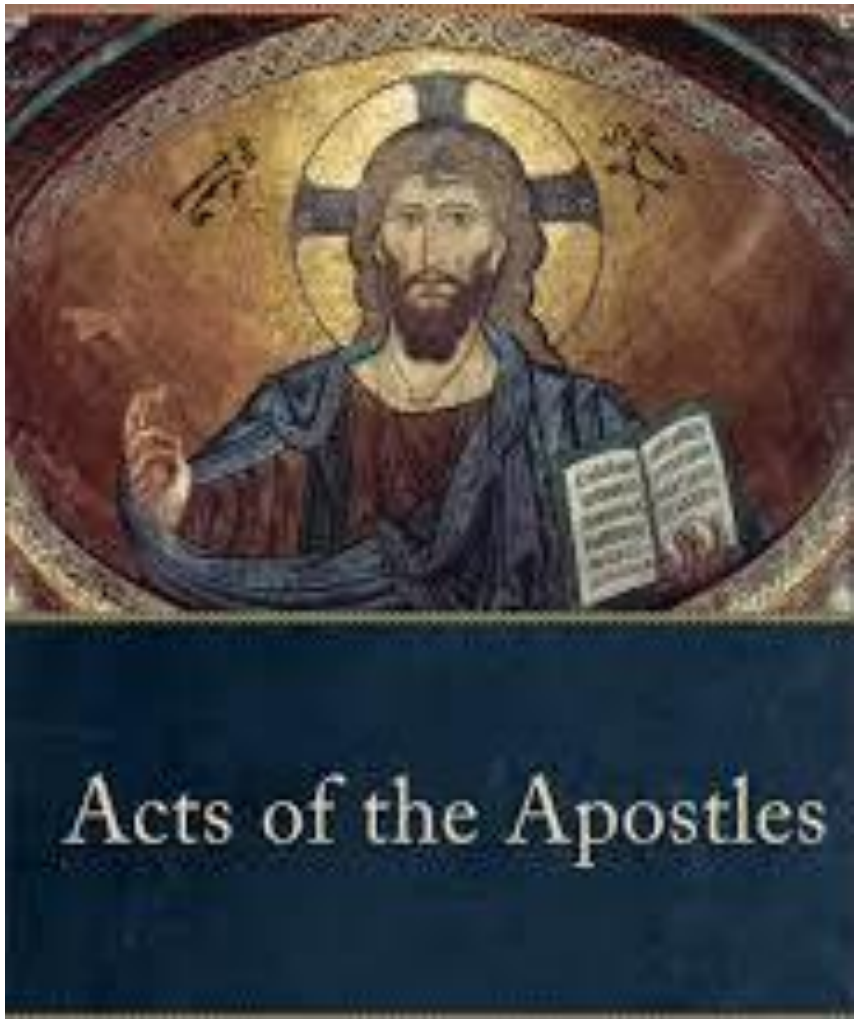
Acts 2:42-47
Common English Bible

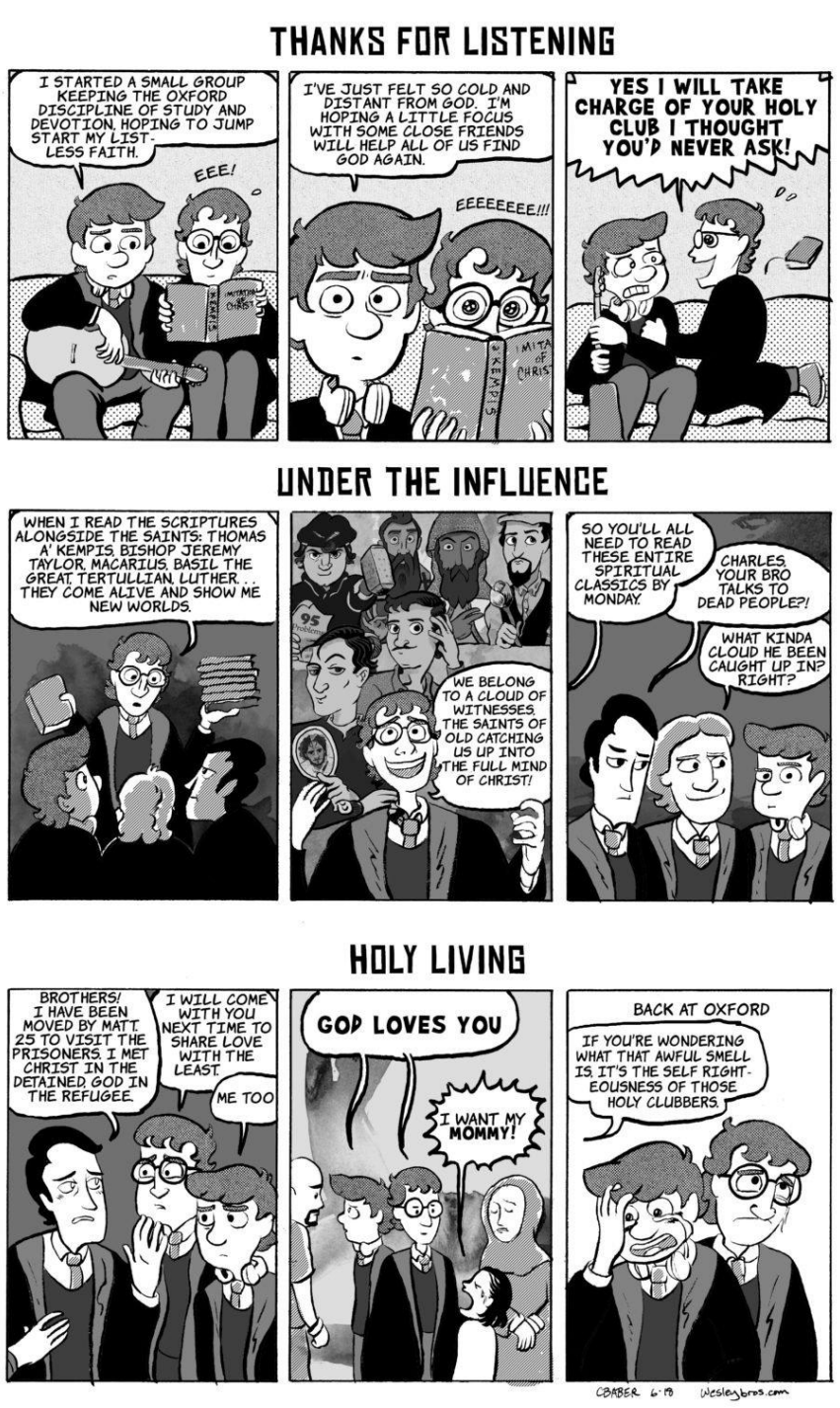
Community of believers

42 The believers devoted themselves to the apostles’
teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to
their prayers. 43 A sense of awe came over everyone. God
performed many wonders and signs through the
apostles. 44 All the believers were united and shared
everything. 45 They would sell pieces of property and
possessions and distribute the proceeds to everyone who
needed them. 46 Every day, they met together in the temple
and ate in their homes. They shared food with gladness and
simplicity. 47 They praised God and demonstrated God’s
goodness to everyone. The Lord added daily to the
community those who were being saved.



John Wesley & the Order of the Oxford Methodists

https://um-insight.net/perspectives/john-wesley-the-order-of-the-oxford-methodists/



Reverend Charlie Baber

Pastor of Youth Ministry
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Charlie Baber grew up in Cartersville, VA and was active in his rural United Methodist Church. After graduating from Gardner-Webb University, he pursued his calling to Youth Ministry at Central UMC, Shelby, and then Highland UMC, Raleigh, where he served for 8 years as youth minister and then 2 years as Associate Pastor. He came to University UMC to refocus his passion for youth ministry with the incredible students and volunteers in our Chapel Hill community. Charlie graduated from Duke Divinity School in 2010, and became an ordained Deacon in the VA Conference in 2013.

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The First Rise of Methodism

[*John Wesley and His Friends at Oxford*, Claxton, Marshall, 1813–1881, Photo credit: Salford Museum & Art Gallery]

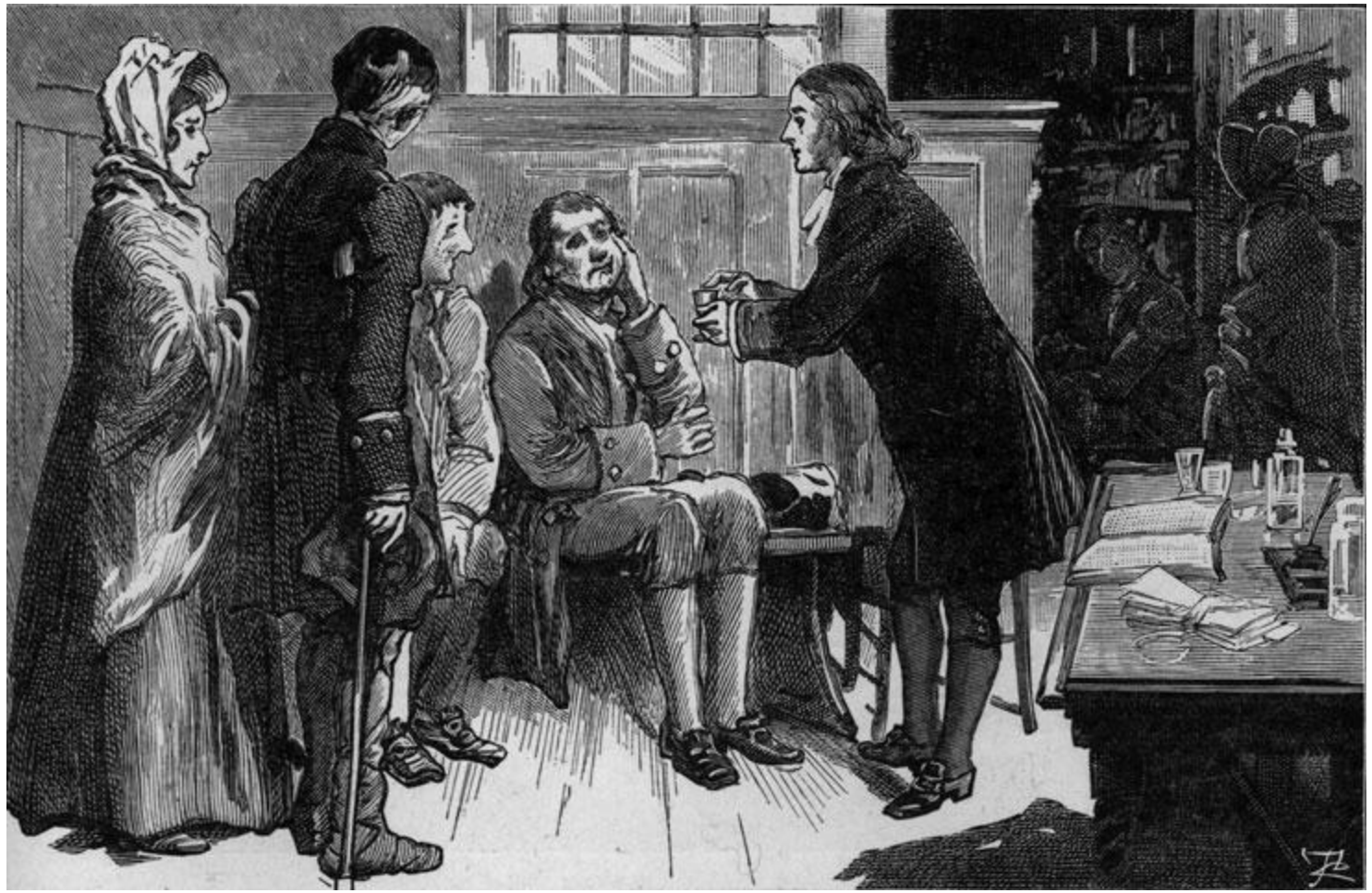
In May 1729 Charles Wesley became friends with William Morgan, a like-minded serious student and a serious Christian. In the summer of 1729, John returned to Oxford for his Masters Degree and joined Charles and William in encouraging one another in their faith. With other peers, these young scholars weren't content to merely study together. They attended Communion, prayed, and fasted together. Other undergraduates called them names:

- the Reforming Club,
- the Godly Club,
- the Holy Club,
- Sacramentarians,
- Bible Moths,
- Bible Bigots,
- *Supererogation Men, *the performance of more work than duty requires. Works of supererogation - (in the Roman Catholic Church) actions believed to form a reserve fund of merit that can be drawn on by prayer in favor of sinners.

- *Enthusiasts *term used to discredit religious dissenters. Also used to describe people who were seen as dangerous or blind fanatics.

- —and, because of their methodical approach to the spiritual life, the name that eventually stuck: Methodists.

At William Morgan's urging they soon turned their youthful zeal toward action—visiting the poor, the sick, and prisoners.



William Morgan, a serious student and a serious Christian, became friends with Charles Wesley in May 1729. In the summer of 1729, John returned to Oxford. In November, 1729, John joined with Charles, William, and Bob Kirkham to encourage one another in their faith.

These young scholars weren't content to merely study together. At William Morgan's urging they soon turned their youthful zeal toward action—visiting the poor, the sick, and prisoners. Richard Morgan, William's father, was displeased with his son's actions, writing to him from Ireland in 1732:

You can't conceive what a noise that ridiculous Society which you are engaged in has made here. Besides the particulars of the great follies of it at Oxford, which to my great concern I have often heard repeated, it gave me sensible trouble to hear that you were noted for your going into the villages about Holt, entering into poor people's houses, calling their children together, teaching them their prayers and catechism, and giving them a shilling at your departure.

I could not but advise with a wise, pious, and learned clergyman. He told me that he has known the worst of consequences follow from such blind zeal, and plainly satisfied me that it was a thorough mistake of true piety and religion.

Within months of receiving his father's letter, William Morgan died on August 26, 1732. Richard Morgan thought the Wesleys' rigorous religious routine, which involved fasting as well as visiting the poor and prisoners, played a role in William's death. Richard Morgan wrote to Charles, "The Wesleys he raved of most of all in his sickness."

John Wesley responded; later publishing his letter to Richard. It became the first public defense of Methodism, including the prison ministry instituted by William Morgan:

In November 1729, at which time I came to reside at Oxford, your son, my brother, myself, and one more, agreed to spend three or four evenings in a week together. Our design was to read over the classics, which we had before read in private, on common nights, and on Sunday some book in divinity.

In the summer following Mr. M[organ, i.e. William] told me he had called at the jail to see a man who was condemned for killing his wife, and that, from the talk he had with one of the debtors, he verily believed it would do much good if anyone would be at the pains of now and then speaking with them. This he so frequently repeated that on the 24th of August 1730, my brother and I walked with him to the Castle. [John continued to preach in the Castle prison at least once per month for the next four and a half years.]

We were so well satisfied with our conversation there that we agreed to go thither once or twice a week; which we had not done long before he desired me to go with him to see a poor woman in the town who was sick.

In this employment too, when we came to reflect upon it, we believed it would be worth while to spend an hour or two in a week, provided the minister of the parish in which any such person was were not against it.

These are 22 questions the members of John Wesley's Holy Club asked themselves every day in their private devotions over 200 years ago. https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/everyday-disciples-john-wesleys-22-questions

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