

WPA WCA Accountable Discipleship Task Force

Hello, I am Pastor Randy Bain and the chair of the Western PA WCA Task Force for Accountable Discipleship.

The Accountable Discipleship Task Force for Western PA WCA has been directed to “identify, develop, and deploy effective models for disciple making as an integral part of the ministry of the local church, and communicating the necessity of every Christ follower embracing the call to be disciples and to be makers of disciples.”

The Task Force has met several times via Zoom since October 2021. With the directive from WPA WCA, we seek to inspire/challenge, inform, and equip churches, clergy, and laity seeking to join the future GMC.

We would refer churches and individuals to the WCA Global Accountable Discipleship Task Force’s Report and recommendations. Links to this report may be found on this WPA WCA website or at the Global Wesleyan Association website. Under the “media tab” <https://wesleyancovenant.org/task-force-reports/>.

The summary found on pages 10-12 of the report are of special interest. It states: “As accountable discipleship once provided the engine for the early Methodist movement, the Task Force believes that a renewed emphasis and expectation of discipleship growth will be the engine that drives the Global Methodist Church and sets the direction for a denomination that will be focused on the Wesleyan emphasis of sanctification and holiness of heart and life in its members and in its local churches.”

Recommendations #2, 5, and 6 are especially challenging to our participation in the future GMC and for making accountable disciples.

2. We recommend that the Commission on Discipleship and Just Ministry develop **an official catechism and catechetical resources to be used by new member classes in local churches, confirmation classes, and in other settings ... We recommend that churches entering into the Global Methodist Church also use these catechetical resources in classes and groups with existing members so that all new and existing members of the denomination begin with a common theological grounding.**
5. We recommend that the Global Methodist Church adopt participation in an **accountable discipleship small group as a basic expectation for membership in the local church and that local churches deploy a phased implementation process as the means of integrating church membership and accountable discipleship, ultimately requiring participation in an accountable discipleship group for new members and as a prerequisite to serving as a leader in the local church.**
6. We recommend that seminaries approved by the Global Methodist Church ... provide ... coursework, training, and experience in participating in, leading, and developing accountable discipleship groups ... **We also recommend that clergy entering into the Global Methodist Church from the United Methodist Church and other**

denominations be trained and participate in accountable discipleship groups within the first year of clergy membership in the new denomination.

We have identified some key resources and recommend them to you:

- Kevin Watson's, The Class Meeting,
- Key UM Beliefs by Abraham and Watson,
- Accountable Discipleship, by Steven Manskar,
- Absolute Basics of the Wesleyan Way, by Justus Hamilton and Phil Tallon
- Seedbed.com resources.
- Discipleship Band app by Seedbed.
- Absolute Basics of the Wesleyan Way by Justus Hamilton Hunter and Phil Tallon. It comes in 4 formats (Softcover, DVD, PDF, or Video Streaming).
- Discipleship Bands: a practical field guide” by Mark Benjamin and J.D. Walt. On the last page (48), information is given about a **band meeting app** for connecting virtually.

For most of us on the task force, pastors, and churches, the next challenge might be to identify best practices in our connection and in Western PA.

If you have suggestions of those who are doing Accountable Discipleship well and a model for contemporary Class Meeting groups, please let us know.

If you would like to be part of our WPA Accountable Discipleship task force, please contact me or Laura Saffell. My email address is: rwbain55@gmail.com.