
RENEWAL



The Journal of the Evangelical Renewal Fellowship in New England

December/January/February 2005

Evangelical Renewal Fellowship is the New England Association of The Confessing Movement within the United Methodist Church

THE POWER OF NUTS **Rev. Dr. Thomas W. Bentum**

A year or two out of college, I had an opportunity to hear Dr. Ralph Winter speak at a nearby church. Dr. Winter was the director of the US Center for World Mission in California at the time. The US Center's primary purpose was to mobilize and train people to reach out to the un-reached people groups of the world. It was no surprise to me when he reminded everyone of the urgency and the necessity of the task. But what struck me was his call for some to stay. People who were excited about missions were all going overseas taking their enthusiasm with them. He said that we need a few good mission nuts to stay home and keep the enthusiasm for un-reached people's alive.

Dr. Winter's call for mission nuts changed my thinking about ministry, which is why I remember it so well. My goal in ministry up to that point was to help all the people I worked with live the balanced Christian life. We should all be reading our Bible, praying, worshiping, sharing our faith, giving generously, etc. That is not a bad goal, but I began to realize the importance of the unbalanced Christian life in some people. Some people are passionate about a specific area of the Christian life. They need to be allowed and even encouraged to go nuts about un-reached peoples or whatever else God has laid on their hearts. Now that I look back I can see how those nuts influenced my life, not only the mission nuts, but also the prayer nuts, the evangelism nuts, the social justice nuts, and so on. They are the people who pushed me in areas of my life where it would be easy to ignore or be complacent.

We need more nuts in the United Methodist Church. I do not mean the destructive kind of nuts. I am talking about the nuts that are passionate about a crucial area of the Christian life and push us all to better place in living out our faith in Christ. As I have said elsewhere, the greatest enemy for renewal in our church is not liberalism, it is institutionalism. Institutionalism doesn't like nuts (unless one is nuts about institutionalism and we seem to have an abundance of those!). Institutionalism breeds mediocrity and rewards it. We need to begin encouraging and rewarding the passionate among us and not squelching them or running in fear from them.

The reason nuts are so powerful and needed in the church is that Christianity is more caught than taught. Why else would Jesus spend three years with twelve men to reach the world? He wanted them to catch something and not just learn something. It is obvious they caught it because the church exploded after the Ascension as people not only heard the message but saw with their own eyes the passionate lives the Disciples were willing to live for the sake of Christ.

ERF is bringing Dr. Rose Sims to Manchester in March is because she is a nut—an evangelism nut—a we-need-to-win-lost-souls-for-Jesus nut. Dr. Sims has no new plan for us, no remarkable new insights or flashy program. What she has is her passion for Jesus and an unstoppable love for the lost. Our people simply need to come along side of her either through her book or especially in person and catch something of what she has got. This time with Dr. Sims could be the point where the fire is rekindled in the hearts of our people and even our conference. Perhaps with her help we can raise up a new generation of nuts in our conference pushing all of us to making reaching the lost the priority it should be.

In the last couple of years I've had a chance to meet some of the people in our conference who are passionate about a particular area of ministry. Some are nuts for worship, some for evangelism, some for missions, some for social justice, some for cultural transformation, some for discipleship and so on. They are out there. God has indeed raised them up for this time. The challenge is to bring our people along side of them in some way so that they can push the church out of the deadly mediocrity it has become so used to.

THE SALT OF THE EARTH AND LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Walter Ciesluk

Matthew 5:13-16 NIV-- ¹³"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. ¹⁴"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

God's answer to the question of human purpose and meaning centers around two great mandates He has given us in His Word. [Reference1]. This first mandate, the Cultural Mandate, was given at the dawn of creation. It is found at the very beginning of the Old Testament, in Genesis 1:26-28: Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

The second mandate, the Great Commission, was given at the dawn of the new creation, at the very beginning of the Christian era, soon after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We find the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

As the lay leader for evangelism in my church, I am very familiar with the Great Commission and have been trying to help our church live up to that calling. Only recently, however, have I become aware of the importance of the Cultural Mandate, giving us the responsibility to bring the truth and will of God to bear on every sphere of our world and our society. We are to exercise godly dominion and influence over our neighborhoods, our schools, our government, our literature and arts, our sports arenas, our entertainment media, our news media, our scientific endeavors - in short, over every aspect and intrusion of human society. The solution to the desperate problems of our world is for us to become involved in our culture and to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Time is Right!

With all the things happening in our society today, abortion, private and public immorality, awful public behavior and a secular media, it is easy for Christians to become disillusioned. There is a tendency for Christians to turn inward and just worry about building churches, and not worry about the culture. But, this attitude is not biblical. The Scripture calls believers to fulfill their call to subdue the earth, to take every thought captive in obedience to Christ, and to care passionately about the culture around us. The time is right for this. Gallup polls are showing that people are yearning for the restoration of moral traditions in American society. People are beginning to realize that all of the things on which we have banked our hopes in the twentieth century, have fallen. People have unprecedented personal autonomy, but they can't live with the chaos their choices have created.

At the same time, Christians have been and are impacting the culture. Teenage pregnancies and abortions are down, crime is down. All kinds of people have become more aware of the issue of life. Both non-Christian and Christians are resonating to the ideas and values of the gospel. More than ever, it is time for Christians to truly live out their faith and build their communities as the Bible prescribes, and if we spread out from our communities and begin to touch every area of life, we cannot help but transform the culture. We cannot do it from our sanctuaries or living rooms. We do it, with God's help, by getting out there and living our faith day by day, and advocating what we know to be true.

What should the church do?

So, what should the church be doing about this situation? Or as Chuck Colson puts it, "How Now Shall We Live?" in the new millennium [References 2 & 3]. The first task is to see our Christian faith as a life system, a worldview. We are to seek for the truth in all areas of life. God created the world and our challenge as believers is to order our lives accordingly. We've got to know the moral rules that God has created in order to live a rational, responsible, sensible life. If we don't conform to the way God has created the world, we're going to be constantly out of line with the universe.

As a first step, we need to understand the competing worldviews which are prevalent in contemporary society, and be prepared to defend our faith with good apologetics. Today if we walk into a secular group and say, "Jesus is the answer," we will get puzzled looks, stares of disbelief or outright hostility. Take the great questions that people have asked since the beginning of time: "Where do I come from? Why am I here? And where am I going?". Our culture doesn't want to ask them anymore, because they're not prepared for the answers. So in order to reach the world, we've got to have an informed view about what the world thinks and about how the world is structured. We cannot simply come and preach the gospel without understanding — and we cannot defend what we believe without understanding — that there are two wholly alien visions of reality or worldviews competing for the hearts and minds of civilized society today. One, the secular view, says that there is no truth, all values are equal, and you can believe anything you want. The other, the Christian view, believes in absolute truth and a fixed moral and physical order. The secular view says there's a natural or mechanical explanation for everything. The Christian worldview says there is a spiritual realm beyond what you can see with your eyes." The secular worldview says history is merely the biased reflection of the people who wrote it; the Christian worldview believes in history. As Christians, we are "people of the Book," people of history, people who serve a God who is and who still speaks. He has intervened in history and has given us His Son. These are all historical events. The Resurrection is an historical event, and we have staked our lives on this truth. The argument for the Christian worldview is rational, based on history and facts, and centuries of point-counterpoint debate. But we Christians cannot defend the truth we believe if we don't understand the two worldviews that are in conflict today. Christians have to make an apologetic defense. With love and gentleness, we are to show the world why their purely secular presuppositions do not work. But, it takes a lot of work to be prepared for this undertaking. As a good start toward this objective, I recommend that we all become familiar with the material of Charles Colson's and Nancy Pearcey's book, *How Now Shall We Live?* (Reference 3), as well as Josh MacDowell's, new book, "The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict" (Reference 4)

Next, we need to continue to engage in the political arena. Christians who shun politics are essentially saying let's leave law making and the government to the secular humanists and atheists. The reality is that because Christians have been moved to participate in the political process they have been effective in the past in addressing the great moral issues of the day. Two noted examples from our own country have been the "abolition of slavery" and "limited government and democracy". We wouldn't have democracy today if our forefathers kept their Christianity out of politics! But, we can't leave the political advocacy only to the experts and politicians. Every single Christian must strive to be able to dialog with their neighbors and make the case for why Christianity is the only rational way to live responsibly. It offers the only reliable way to look at the world because all other views of reality prove ultimately to be irrational. And that's the case we have to make in our own spheres of influence.

And finally, all Christians, Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant, need to stand together as Jesus commanded. We are to be "the people of God." We have simply got to learn how to stand together as mere Christians and defend our biblical worldview?" Mostly all Christians agree on the essential centrality of Jesus Christ as man's only hope of salvation, and on that basis we should be able to work together. We should also be able to profess the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, the Cross as an atoning sacrifice, the Scriptures as the Word of God, and the Ten Commandments as a divinely imposed rule of life. But the time has come that we must take seriously what our Lord prayed in His prayer the night before He was crucified. He prayed "that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:21). The best-formulated worldviews, the best evangelistic campaigns, the best things we can do as Christians will be for naught if the world cannot see that the people of God are standing together. There is nothing more disconcerting than for the different denominations in Christian community to present positions to the world on the moral and ethical issues of our day which totally

contradict to each other. The scandal is that we lose our credibility and the secular world doesn't take us seriously. The scandal ought to be, not the scandal of division, but the scandal of the cross — that the Son of God went and died and shed His blood for each one of us.

Some Last Thoughts

Despite what is happening in the world today, we have reason for hope. If Christians will present to the world the image of the living Christ and His love, within the context of loving communities of faith, and if we'll stand together and lock arms, on common ground, then this is an hour in which Christianity can once again be seen as the only rational way to live life. God's revelation-- the revelation of God in Christ, and the good news of the gospel, which brings salvation and hope to every human being -- is the only hope for a reasonable existence. Everything else has failed. This is the Christian moment. It is no time to turn away. It is no time to say it's not our Christian duty to live out the gospel. In the springtime of hope that the new millennium brings, this will be a time when people will turn away from the broken, false, and fallen idols of the past one hundred years, looking for the Source of their one true hope.

In the words of Adam Hamilton [Reference 5], "our faith, as we will see, can have an important role in shaping the values and morals that we pass on to our society. Our opinions matter, and our thinking on the hard questions, questions of our time, will have an impact on the shape of our future. If we have considered the complexities of these issues in the community of faith, prayerfully seeking the guidance of the Bible, our tradition, and the leaders and experts who can inform us, we are more likely to be ready both to meet a personal challenge that requires us to make a difficult decision and to offer a meaningful contribution to the deliberation of our nation."

The bottom line is that the purpose of the church is to be salt (preserving enduring values) and light (illuminate the truth that is hidden) and participate in the public arena as it shapes our future.

References:

1. The Cultural Mandate, D.J Kennedy, <http://www.reclaimamerica.org/PAGES/PastorsPageMEDIA/culturalmandate.html>
2. The Christian Mind in the New Millennium, Chuck Colson, <http://www.pfm.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=BreakPoint1&template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=4681>
3. How Now Shall We Live? Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, Tyndale House Publishers, Copyright 1999
4. The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict, Josh McDowell, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Copyright 1999
5. Confronting the Controversies, A Christian Looks at the Tough Issues, Adam Hamilton, Abington Press, Copyright 2001

It's not just a matter of being saved. The transformation that God sent His Son to accomplish does not stop with John 3:16. Rather, our most compelling task is to see the world and all of life with God's eyes. It is to see our Christian faith as a life system, a worldview.—Dr Abraham Kuyper.

"As the third millennium nears, God is preparing a great springtime for Christianity." – Pope John Paul II

IN THE BEGINNING

Deborah Botham

Winter is not yet officially here and already there are deep red buds on the branches of the maple tree. They wait, tightly folded and shielded against the coming snow and ice, until the first warm rays of spring sunshine plump and ply them into unfurling. The frogs have disappeared into muddy pond bottoms, flies have retreated, and, thankfully, the mosquitoes are gone.

Some folks find the winter depressing and disheartening, focusing on the drab and seemingly lifeless landscape. Others delight in the crisp lines of the leafless trees and the brilliant blue of the wintry sky. We know that in just a matter of months the world will awaken in bright spring colors. Could this entire cycle of life, death and rebirth be some accident of nature? Some fortuitous, grand cosmic mistake?

Several months ago, the local PBS station broadcast an exquisitely photographed series called "Origin". The so-called experts regaled us with their theories of the origins of life on this great planet. It turns out that we are related to fish. This was complete news to me. It appears that the search for the missing link is over. We all came out of the primordial sea.

As Christians, how do we respond to this type of scholarly research? The answer seems to depend on our view of the Bible, and how we fit science into faith. Most Bible-believing Christians cannot accept the theory of evolution. This naturalistic explanation does not allow for the existence of a personal, divine Creator. And, contrary to how this theory is presented in academic instructions, there is no concrete evidence to support it. To quote the note in my Bible, "Evolution is a hypothesis without scientific "evidence"; to accept it one must have faith in a human theory.

Folks like me, and perhaps you, have a difficult time participating in the creation vs. evolution argument. I simply believe that the Word of God is absolute truth. I've never doubted it, never questioned it. There are many things I don't understand, but I trust that these exquisite layers of truth will be peeled back as I grab on to one tenet and knead it into my heart and mind.

For others, only a scholarly, intellectual study will do. We are fortunate to have Lee Strobel's newest work, **The Case for a Creator**, to recommend as a resource. The same impeccable research that brought **A Case for Faith** and **A Case for Christ** to fruition, has yielded a comprehensive study that debunks evolution myths. Dr. William Dembski's **Intelligent Design: The Bridge between Science and Theology** is also an important contribution to the ongoing discussion, albeit a little more technical than most readers are willing to endure.

The ultimate question remains one of faith. Creationists accept the Scriptural statement, "Before the mountains were born or you brought for the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God." (Psalm 90:2). He existed before creating the universe, and "through Him all things were made." (John 1:3)

Until recently, those who espoused the theory of evolution left no place for God. With the advent of the Big Bang theory, however, that has changed. Current scientific thought has it that some 15 or 20 million years ago, there was an instant of creation, a moment in time when some great explosion sent searing celestial bodies soaring through space outward from some inexplicable center of energy.

Even a Time magazine reporter wrote in 1979, "the Big Bang theory sounds very much like the story that the Old Testament has been telling all along." Still, this new revelation from the scientific community sheds no light on the causative source of that explosion. Neither does it explain the exquisite complexity and order of creation.

"In the beginning, God" That is the final answer.

REFLECTION: THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

Rev. Dr. Mark D. Roberts

So what is the true meaning of Christmas?

Among those who try to get beyond the "spending and feeding-frenzy" of secular Christmas celebrations, you hear various answers to this question. "Christmas is about giving." "Christmas is really about love." "Christmas means 'Peace on earth.'" Etc. etc. All of these answers are moving in the right direction, but they miss the true Christian understanding of Christmas.

Christmas is, above all, the celebration of the birth of Jesus. Why do we Christians celebrate? Because we believe that the baby in the manger was, by a grand miracle of God, the very Word of God in the flesh. In the words of the beloved carol, "O Come, All Ye Faithful," Jesus was the "Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing."

But then one might ask, "Why is this such a big deal? Why should it matter to me that God has come in the flesh? After all, Jesus is no longer with us. I can't exactly go over to Bethlehem and find him. So what difference does it make?" Let me mention three aspects of this difference, though there are dozens more.

First, the incarnation of the Word means that God understands what it's like to be human in an astounding and intimate way. With due apologies to the pop song, God is not watching us "from a distance." Much truer lyrics are found in the old hymn, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus": "Can we find a friend so faithful, who will all our sorrows share? Jesus knows our every weakness. Take it to the Lord in prayer." Jesus, who is truly God, knows our every weakness precisely because he is also truly human. So Christmas means that God understands, that he has stood in our shoes, so to speak. This is a great encouragement, but it is also just the beginning.

Second, the incarnation of the Word means that we can know God more fully. Jesus came to reveal the very nature of God, so that we might know God both truly and intimately. As Jesus himself said in the Gospel of John, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father!" (14:9, NLT). So when we read the gospels and see Jesus' compassion for the sick, his care for the poor, his love for the lost, his power to make things right, and his ultimate sacrifice for us, we see what God is really like.

Third, and most importantly, the incarnation of the Word at Christmas means that salvation is on its way. Jesus was born, not only to live as a human being, not only to proclaim and enact the kingdom of God, but ultimately to die so that we might enter that kingdom. Jesus came so that, in the end, he might bear the sin of the world on the cross, including your sin and my sin. Though we are not saved merely because of the incarnation, that is a prerequisite for the salvation that comes through the death and resurrection of Jesus. He can die in our place precisely because he is human. And he can defeat the power of death precisely because he is God. (I've discussed all of this in much greater depth in my book, *Jesus Revealed*.)

Therefore, even as we celebrate Christmas, we do so with one eye on the future. We know what lies ahead for this baby, who is indeed the Savior. And we rejoice because we know what lies ahead for us because of his birth, his life, his death, and his resurrection.

May you have a truly merry Christmas, knowing what it's really all about!

The peace of Christ be with you!

This reflection is from the website of Rev. Dr. Mark D. Roberts, www.markdroberts.com. Rev. Roberts notes that this resource can be downloaded for personal use or for use in a Christian ministry, as long as its source is acknowledged and it is not in a publication for sale. Rev. Roberts is a pastor, author, and speaker, and, since 1991, has been the Senior Pastor of Irvine Presbyterian Church in Irvine, California.

RECENT BOOKS ON TRENDS IN CHRISTIANITY

The Ice Cube is Melting, What Is Really at Risk in United Methodism?, Lyle E. Schaller, Abingdon Press, May 2004

Comparing current membership figures in The United Methodist Church with those from forty years ago, Lyle Schaller concludes that the United Methodist "ice cube" is melting. Any number of factors might account for this trend, but almost every observer would agree that what Lyle Schaller calls the "contagious disease of intra-denominational quarreling" has played a large role. Schaller says that the day has arrived to focus on the cure to this disease. Recognizing that the most difficult step in this process will be to gain agreement on what are the non-negotiable issues that divide United Methodists, Schaller has recruited a number of individuals from around the denomination to comment on what is really "at risk" in The United Methodist Church. Only by undertaking the hard work of gaining agreement on what the real issues are that divide United Methodists, he says, will it be possible to hope for a way forward.

Evangelical & Methodist, A Popular History, Riley B. Case, Abingdon Press, April 2004

In addition to the official Methodism that established itself as an institution at the center of American culture, there is an unofficial Methodism, one that was not mediated through annual conferences and an educated clergy, one more concerned with gospel fervor than with social respectability. It was from this "grassroots" Methodism that the various movements calling for evangelical renewal in the denomination arose during the twentieth century. Riley Case tells the story of the populist wing of the Methodist movement in America, culminating in the work of those who have sought in recent years to return Methodism to its authentic Wesleyan roots. The spread of Methodism in nineteenth-century America was accompanied, says Riley Case, by a slow, yet certain, division of the tradition into at least two branches. One strand might be called establishment Methodism. This is the Methodism usually described in denominational histories. It was the Methodism of tall steeples, rented pews, robed choirs, and denominational journals, colleges, and seminaries. It was Methodism becoming institutionalized, with authority focusing more and more in bishops, presiding elders, conferences, and (later) committees and agencies. Case contends that this focused authority, later identified simply as the hierarchy, offered a mediated faith, one best filtered and controlled by those with education and experience. The other strand of Methodism might be called populist Methodism. It, for the most part, was unofficial Methodism. It was the Methodism of log cabins, moral crusades, circuit preachers, revivals, camp meetings, prayer bands, and indigenous Methodist gospel music, including African American spirituals. It was an unmediated Christianity, one that did not need to be filtered through educated clergy or annual conferences. Its authority was derived from the anointing of the Spirit and appealed to the power of primitive Methodism, or old-time religion. It was Methodism not as an institution but as a movement. This book intends to tell the story of this second branch of the Methodist tradition by recounting the history of Methodism's evangelical wing.

The Evangelistic Love of God & Neighbor, A Theology of Witness & Discipleship, Scott J. Jones, Abingdon Press, October 2003

There are, it seems as many definitions of the term evangelism as there are people doing the defining. For some, it means proclaiming the gospel to those who have not heard it. To others, it means making disciples of Jesus Christ. To others it means working for the transformation of the world into the kingdom of God. For still others, it has principally to do with building vibrant, healthy congregations. Underlying this confusion is a fundamental inability to locate the practice of evangelism within one's overall theological convictions. This book provides a guide through this confusion by addressing a more important question: What does evangelism have to do with who God is? What is it we know about God that makes evangelism a central part of what it means to be Christian? In this comprehensive theology of evangelism, Scott J. Jones proposes to ground the practice of evangelism in an understanding of God's love for the world, specifically as seen in the incarnation of God in Christ. Because in Jesus, God took on all of what it means to be human, evangelism must be a ministry to the whole person. The typical distinctions between soul-winning, social action, and church growth evaporate; individual conversion and acts of mercy are part of the same ministry of bringing persons more fully into the reign of a loving God.

FLORIDA CONFERENCE EVANGELIST, FEATURED SPEAKER AT RENEWAL, 2005

We are pleased to announce, that a noted Florida Conference evangelist, Dr. Rose Sims, will be the featured speaker at the next ERF-New England gathering scheduled for March 11 & 12, 2005. "Dr. Rose" Grindheim Sims, Ed.D., is a wife, mother and grandmother, Church Growth leader, ordained deacon, author, college professor, and Conference Evangelist. Her vision is that the vital, alive church can turn America back to God. Dr. Sims has won the Circuit Rider Award from the United Methodists, their highest national award for church growth.

In seven years her last church in Trilby, Florida, went from 7 in attendance to 350 members, founded one of the larger missions in Florida, built a sanctuary seating 250, a life center, mission, education building, a youth center and missionary parsonage, all debt free, and packed the church with youth, children, singles, and families who were won to Jesus Christ.

As a result of her book, *"New Life For Dying Churches"*, which won the worldwide award as best non-fiction by Christian Writers Fellowship International, she has been invited to speak and conduct church growth, youth, singles, and women's seminars in Australia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Cayman Island, England and in many national, state, district and local church conferences across America in many denominations. The book has been filmed by Ken Anderson Films, gone into six printing including Spanish and been made into an 8-hour Church Growth Video Seminar which has changed many churches from declining to dynamic. She has conducted many "Vision 2000" conferences, the International Church of God Conference, and clergy and youth conferences. She has appeared on 700 Club and TV and radio stations.

Her popular new book, *"Papa Was a Promise Keeper"*, shares the incredible saga of her Danish immigrant father who made a promise to his little girl to find Christ. Dr. Sims shares her father's depression-era struggle to keep that promise, the country preachers who were faithful, and her romance with a Norwegian immigrant visionary husband who planted the dream for the preservation of the church in America. Her popular children's book, *"The Little Church That Could"*, is a powerful gift of rich heritage and a must for every child and every church library. Following the death of her little grandson, Dr. Sims has written *"Angel Wings & Heavenly Things"* for all those who need to remember again how wonderful heaven must be and how near to all of us is the rush of Angel's Wings!

Dr. Sims is a dynamic speaker and her visit should be a great event and generate wide interest in all the United Methodist Churches in New England.

***My United Methodist congregation just can't seem to grow.
Where can I learn from someone who has made it happen in
his or her church and not just hear a bunch of empty theory?***

You can!

***Come, learn and be inspired by Dr. Rose Sims who has lead her
small and dying churches to fruitful growth.***

RENEWAL 2005, NEW LIFE FOR DYING CHURCHES
A Conference On Church Growth With Dr. Rose Sims
The Executive Court Inn, Manchester, New Hampshire
March 11 & 12, 2005
Sponsored by the Evangelical Renewal Fellowship

Saturday Seminar

Saturday begins with breakfast and an opportunity to talk with Bishop Peter Weaver about our topic of growing churches or other issues that may be of interest. Our seminar leader will be Dr. Rose Sims. She is the author of the book *New Life for Dying Churches*, which we recommend that you read before the seminar. Dr. Sims has had many personal experiences of helping United Methodist churches that were dying find new life and have a flourishing ministry. Therefore she teaches from a depth of experience and not just theory. Dr. Sims received the Circuit Rider Award, the highest national award for United Methodists for church growth. Dr. Sims has a passion for bringing new life back into dying United Methodist churches that is contagious.

Saturday Program: 8am to 3pm

Registration opens (7:30 a.m.), Breakfast and conversation with Bishop Peter Weaver (8 a.m.), Opening Worship (9:15 a.m.), Plenary session with Dr. Rose Sims (10 a.m.), Fellowship lunch (12 noon), Plenary session continued with Dr. Rose Sims (1 p.m.), Closing worship (3 p.m.), Depart (3:30 p.m.).

Friday Evening Program: 7 to 9pm

Friday evening is the board meeting for ERF. All members of ERF are members of the board. Anyone may attend the board meeting, but only members may vote. The board meeting will consist of worship and prayer, hearing reports of ERF leaders, consideration of possible Annual Conference legislation and goal setting for the future.

Accommodations

The conference will take place at the Best Western Executive Court Inn and Conference Center in Manchester, New Hampshire. They are located at 13500 South Willow Street which is three miles west on Route 28 off exit 5 on Interstate 93. If you would like to stay there overnight on Friday, they are offering a special rate of \$89 per room if you tell them you are a part of the renewal conference. They may be reached at 1-877-627-2525.

Purpose

The Purpose of the Evangelical Renewal Conference is to promote renewal in the New England Annual Conference through confessing the apostolic faith in Jesus Christ. We can be found on the web at: www.erf-ne.org

For more information contact Tom Bentum at 603-788-2734 or Tbentum@clergy.net

Cut Out and Mail:	FAMILY REGISTRATION FORM
Friday Evening	Number of People ___ times \$5 = \$ _____
Saturday	People ___ times \$25 = \$ _____
Breakfast with the Bishop	People ___ times \$10 = \$ _____
Fellowship Lunch	People ___ times \$15 = \$ _____
Dr Sims book, New Life for Dying Churches	Books ___ times \$10 = \$ _____
Extra Gift to ERF	= \$ _____
	Subtotal \$ _____
Early Registration Deduction (deduct \$10/person if postmarked by Jan15 and \$5/person if postmarked by Feb 15)	\$(_____)
	Total Enclosed \$ _____
All but \$5 of the total is completely refundable up until March 4. Dr. Rose Sims book will be sent within a week of registering. Make checks payable to <u>Evangelical Renewal Fellowship</u> and send to Rev. Lloyd Leeman, PO Box 411, Farmington, ME 04938.	
Name(s): _____	
Address: _____	
Phone: _____	
Email: _____	
Congregation: _____	

Evangelical Renewal Fellowship

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Purpose Statement

Confessing Jesus Christ as Son, Savior, and Lord, the Confessing Movement exists to enable the United Methodist Church to retrieve its classical doctrinal identity, and to live it out as disciples of Jesus Christ

ERF Executive Team

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