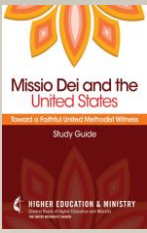


# Missio Dei and the United States Toward a Faithful United Methodist Witness

## Discussion Questions



# Session One

## Engage for a Vibrant Wesleyan Movement

1. Do you agree with Bishop Jones that ministry different today than it was 20 years ago? What is the same? What is different?
2. Do you agree that disciple-making happens best in the local church? Why or why not?
3. How hopeful are you about the future of the church? If your church closed its doors tomorrow, who would notice?

# Session One

4. State the central message of your church in one short sentence. Is it possible for The United Methodist Church as a denomination to have a single, clear message? What would it be?

5. What seemingly insurmountable obstacles and challenges are you experiencing in your church? Make a list. Then on this list, note how each obstacle might become an opportunity.

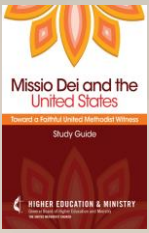
6. If you knew you could not fail and had all power of heaven on your side, how would you engage for a vibrant Wesleyan movement?



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## Session Two

# Engage for Such a Time as This

1. Describe how the Holy Spirit is moving in your church or ministry setting?
2. How would you describe God's mission for your church? How can you live more fully into it?
3. How do you understand Bishop Lowry means when he talks about an "orthodox" faith? What does he mean by the word "orthodox"?



# Session Two

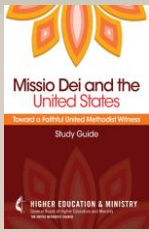
4. How does being a Christian affect your everyday living? What difference does it make to others that you are a Christian?
5. Read and discuss the Doctrinal Standards and Articles of Religion. You will find them in the 2016 Discipline, paragraphs 102–104 on pages 47–91. Do you see anything that surprises you? What is it?
6. If you knew you could not fail and had all power of heaven on your side, how would you engage for such a time as this?



# Session Three

## Engage for the Benefit of the World

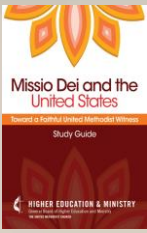
1. In what mission does your church engage?
2. Review what Bishop Hagiya says about missional and attractional models. What are some characteristics of a missional church? What are some characteristics of an attractional church? Is your local church more missional or more attractional?
3. Do you think that The UMC has spent too much time on its own internal problems at the expense of ministering to the world? Do you think issues surrounding LGBTQI inclusion are settled for younger generations?



# Session Three

4. Bishop Hagiya says that mission is the purpose of the church. Do you agree? Why or why not?
5. How much of your church budget is marked for mission and outreach? What percentage of your church budget is marked for institutional maintenance? What percentage of your church apportionments go for mission and outreach and how much goes for institutional maintenance?
6. If you had all the power of heaven and earth on your side and knowing that you would not fail, what would your church do differently?





# Session Four

## Engage with Soul Curiosity

1. Share how you became a Christian. Who shared their faith with you?
2. Reread Bishop Farr's opening illustration about the man he spoke with on an airplane. Has something similar happened to you? If you were in Bishop Farr's shoes, how would you build a bridge with that person and the spiritual life?
3. Discuss what Bishop Farr calls "soul curiosity." Give some examples of how a person engages with soul curiosity.



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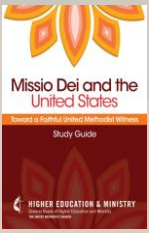
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# Session Four

4. What does it mean to make friend with others on God's behalf? Share a time when you or someone you know made a friend on behalf of God. How is that different from just making a friend? Or is it?
5. How can the church help people make their faith a priority?
6. If you knew that you would not fail and that heaven was on your side, what might you do? What might your church try?





# Session Five

## Engage with Strength and Generosity

1. Share a time when you or someone you know had to rely on God's strength?
2. Read 2 Corinthians 12: 8-10. What does it mean that God's grace is sufficient? How might that fact play out in your everyday life?
3. How do you respond to Bishop Hope Morgan Ward's examples of churches in mission?

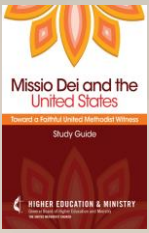
# Session Five

4. When people experience violence, what words of hope can Christians bring? How can we, as faithful followers of Jesus, help those who may have lost confidence in God and God's goodness?

5. Courageous conversations are usually hard. How can Christians mediate the presence of God when we discuss difficult topics and have conflicting viewpoints?

6. If you knew you could not fail and had all power of heaven on your side, how would you engage with strength and generosity? Make a list and begin.





# Session Six

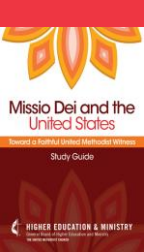
## Engage to Multiply Our Witness

1. Reread Bishop Schnase's section "At the Edges." Take a minute to map out your church. Who is at the center? Who are in the various circles? Who are at the edges?
2. Bishop Schnase says that a role of leadership is to direct the church's attention toward the margins. Is this true in your context? How might leaders do this effectively?
3. In what ways can churches multiply their witness.

# Session Six

4. Discuss this statement found in the Nicene Creed (#880 in the UM Hymnal): “We believe in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.” In the creed what do “one,” “holy,” “catholic,” and “apostolic” mean?
5. How do bishops give visible expression to the oneness of the church? How do churches give visible expression to the Methodist connection?
6. If you knew you could not fail and had all power of heaven on your side, how would you engage the edges and multiply your witness? Make a list and start engaging.





# Session Seven

## Engage for Generous Orthodoxy, United Methodism, and the *Missio Dei* in the United States

1. For Bishop Carter being generous involves offering charity, as described in I Corinthians 13. How can generosity heal the wounds of conflict in our family, church, denomination?
2. Share an experience of God's generosity. How does God's generosity differ from human generosity? How can we demonstrate God's generosity to others?
3. Look at the diagram of the three intersecting circles. In which circle do you feel most comfortable: covenant, justice, or unity. Bishop Carter calls the intersection the "extreme center." What words would you use to describe the intersection of covenant, justice, and unity?

# Session Seven

4. United Methodist believe in faith and works, personal and social, heart and head, Christ and culture, piety and mercy. What are the strengths and weaknesses of practicing a both/and faith?
5. If our church's mission is to be "spacious, adventurous, and unafraid," what steps should we take now?
6. If you were certain that all power of heaven and earth was on your side and that you could not fail, in what mission would you engage? Make a list and start making those dreams come true.

