

## WIDE ROAD THEOLOGY 101

- **Do United Methodists believe that faith in Jesus Christ is necessary to go to heaven?**
- Yes, United Methodists do believe that faith in Jesus Christ is the only way the Bible gives as clearly God's gift and way of salvation and heaven. God can save anyone that God chooses to save and we cannot decide whom God will save. We simply trust the plain teaching of scripture. See John 3:16, Acts 4:12 and many other texts.
- Our belief in this unique path of salvation can never be used to put down other religions and the gifts that they have to give to the world, even to Christians. That we have a gospel to proclaim is not grounds for hurting others. We can and must be friends with Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, and others. In dialogue with them we learn and they learn. In a time when religion is so much in the news and on our minds, we need to be vigilant against our own hostility and follow Jesus in the way of love.
- The 2008 Book of Resolutions stated, "While we as Christians respond faithfully to the call to proclaim the gospel in all places, we can never presume to know the full extent of God's work in the world, and we recognize the reality of God's activity outside the Christian church. It is central to our faith that salvation is accomplished not by human beings, but by God. We know that judgment as to the ultimate salvation of persons from any faith community, including Christianity and

Judaism, belongs to God alone."

- *Rev. Dan Benedict, Center for Worship Resourcing, General Board of Discipleship. (Building New Bridges in Hope, The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church - 2008. Copyright © 2008 by The United Methodist Publishing House. Used by permission.) / <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/do-united-methodists-believe-that-faith-in-jesus-christ-is-necessary>*

Please read the words, not only what they say but what also they do not say.

They say that they believe that "Yes, United Methodists do believe that faith in Jesus Christ is the only way the Bible gives as clearly God's gift and way of salvation and heaven."

But they believe that there are other paths to God. They do not believe that the Bible is the only source of salvation knowledge. Thus, we can even learn from the pagan, false religions of this world. And we can "never presume to know the full extent of God's work in the world, and we recognize the reality of God's activity outside the Christian church." All of this is consistent with their liberal view of Scripture.

This approach very clearly reflects the theology of the wide road of destruction.

- (Matthew 7:13 ESV) Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.

SO LET'S THINK ABOUT THIS ... THE SPIRIT OF THE SON  
PROCLAIMS OUR SONSHIP ... WE ARE "ON GOD'S RADAR."



- (Galatians 4:6 ESV) And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

So who makes the declaration of sonship? The Son. Who enters the heart of the believer and proclaims to the universe—"Abba! Father!" signifying the fully completed adoption process in the courts of heaven? The Spirit of his Son.

So let's see if we have this straight. The Son of God enters my heart and proclaims by adoption as a son of God to God the Father. Yip! That's what it says.

- (Galatians 4:9a ESV) But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God ...

It is not just that we know God but that God knows us. Confirming and affirming this is the Spirit-to-spirit witness of which Paul wrote to the Romans.

- (Romans 8:16 ESV) The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.



SPIRIT CAM  
MONITORING  
TERRESTRIAL SONSHIP