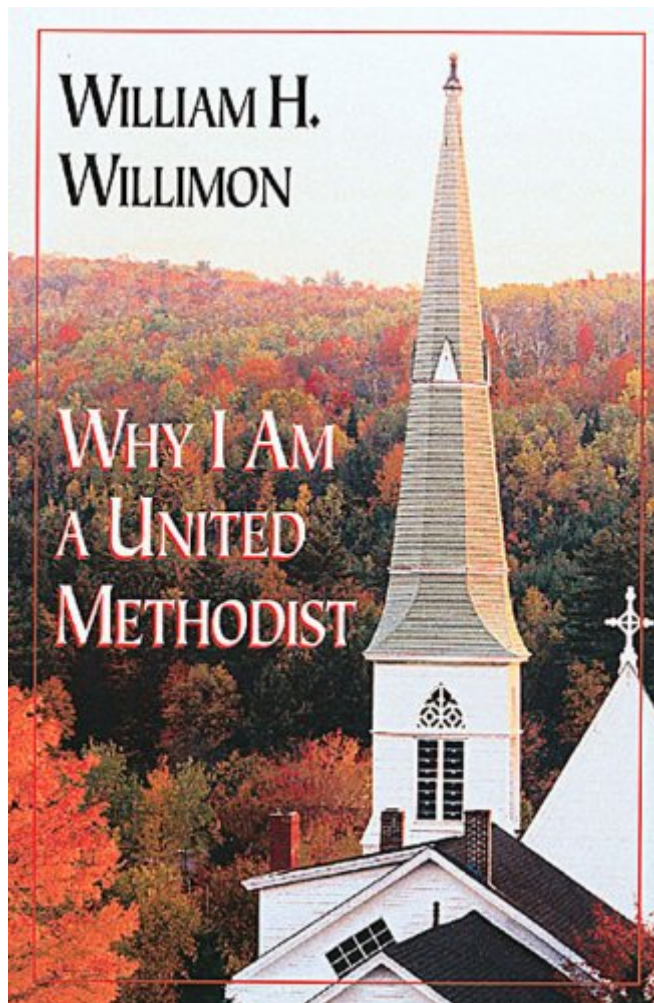


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# Why I Am A United Methodist



## Synopsis

In seven chapters, Willimon examines United Methodism and the ways it has made and continues to make a difference in his life. In an inspiring and enlightening way, he writes of his pride in being part of a church that has grown from one man's experience to a worldwide movement covering the globe with its message. A learning guide for groups and individuals is included. Chapter titles: Because Religion Is of the Heart Because the Bible Is Our Book Because Religion Is Practical Because Christians Are to Witness Because Christians Are to Grow Because Religion Is Not a Private Affair

## Book Information

File Size: 470 KB

Print Length: 132 pages

Publisher: Abingdon Press (June 1, 2009)

Publication Date: June 1, 2009

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B005EGSSIQ

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #529,724 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #65

in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Religion & Spirituality > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Denominations & Sects > Protestantism > Methodist #242 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Denominations & Sects > Protestantism > Methodist #169523 in Books > Religion & Spirituality

## Customer Reviews

This is an engaging and informative little book about the Methodist Church. It is written with warmth and humor, too.

Willimon presents the core teachings and practical emphasis of Methodism with clarity, flair, and

even some humor. Highly recommended as an introduction to the distinctive features of this denomination or as an illuminating refresher for longtime members.

This would be great for my Sunday School class as an interim lesson while teacher on sabbatical. A great review for all considering Methodism and superb for a refresher for "older" members.

If you want the scoop on what being a Methodist is about you'll like this book.

William Willimon has written a good little book that every Methodist could benefit by reading. I am a Methodist by birth, sure of why I am a Christian, but truthfully unsure of why I am a Methodist (excepting the influence of a wonderful mother who made sure we went to church). Willimon's book does great justice to the founding principals of Methodism and fills in the gaps for those of us (most, I would hazard) who are not sure how Methodists differ from the half-dozen other "Main-Line" Protestant denominations. Willimon focuses on the vision and passion of John Wesley, Methodism's founder. Wesley was a true thinker on religious issues, and his views on grace, the primacy of scripture, the role of good works in a Christian life and the route to salvation represented a real break with Anglicanism as practiced in his time -- (though he remained an Anglican and thought of himself as a reformer of that denomination). His guidance and thoughts dominated the early Methodist movement and are very helpful for contemporary Methodists to understand. The author does an outstanding job of bringing Wesley's theological and practice thoughts to life. Where I personally thought the book was a little weak, was in discussing organized Methodism's infatuation with social policy and legislation over the last several decades. Methodists have a long and honorable history of working to end slavery, feed the poor, nourish the souls of those imprisoned and generally alleviate human misery. Willimon gives just due to this enviable record. More recently, however, the Methodist church leadership has embraced an activist legislative agenda that reads more like that of a political party instead of a God mission (and it's not a conservative political party they sound like!). This controversy is touched on briefly by the author in his chapter on works. He fails to demonstrate how current Methodist leadership's determination to have positions on many side issues (did you know the church is "for" ratifying the 1973 "Law of the Sea" treaty?), springs from Wesley's tireless efforts to improve the basic physical and moral lot of his fellow beings. In fact, the author somewhat embarrassingly acknowledges the Church's difficulty with reconciling its activism with it's original mission. He quotes one practicing Methodist infuriated by some of the Church's foray's into public policy as saying "at least this church makes me think." This is a real

issue for United Methodists, one which has spawned several "back to basic" reform movements within the church and is responsible for making available some new members to the Baptist and independent churches that are in ascendancy in America today. I think the author brushed by these controversies in order to keep focused on the first principals of Methodism -- a vision that is truly inspiring and comfortable to those of us making our faith journey in this denomination. However, this digression and criticism does not underscore the value of the author's book. I suspect there are many, many Methodists wondering about what we stand for, what our founding principals are and how we differ from other protestant denominations. This book answers those three questions succinctly and well.

Does what is supposed to do very good material. convenient, flexible, sturdy Very pretty and not difficult to work with at all. I hope it could be as well as the product I used before, and it is, even better than the former one I used. Does exactly what it ways it does. Handy little device.

Willam H Willimon is a United Methodist because the ordinary people at McBee Chapel in Conestee, NC and Buncombe Street Methodist Church in Greenville, NC took the time and made the effort to tell him the story of the gospel. The author looks at the beliefs given to us (yes, I'm a United Methodist too) by John Wesley and describes what they mean to us today. This short book (128 pages), published by Abingdon Press in 1990 is suitable for individual reading or group study. The chapters are "Because religion is of the heart," "Because the Bible is our book," "Because religion is practical," "Because Christians are to worship," "Because Christians are to witness," "Because Christians are to grow," and "Because religion is not a private affair." Whether you are a United Methodist or not, I think you would enjoy and learn from reading this book as I did.

Reading this helped me learn more about my faith. I bought a copy for my sister as well.

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