

THE COLUMBIA WESLEY FOUNDATION

While it is true that college students are the future of the church, it is equally true that they are also its present. As such, they have their own set of gifts and unique perspectives and experiences to give shape to the mission and ministry of the church in this day and culture. They are students and yet also our teachers when it comes to building the church and welcoming the reign of God. The Wesley Foundation at USC (also known as the Methodist Student Network) is a place and a community where young adults take their faith and discipleship seriously, affirm the great traditions of Christianity and challenge the *status quo* of business as usual. The Methodist Student Network is a diverse and international community representing the global church. Students of various cultures, religious backgrounds, races and nationalities make for a vibrant and rich faith community. Much is to be celebrated in reflecting on its mission and ministry and its growth since it became a stand-alone ministry four years ago. Some highlights of this year are noted.

- Eight times a week students go into the community to serve at a soup kitchen, an after school mentoring program, Habitat –for-Humanity, and an EOSL program for Latino women in the West Columbia area which MSN students founded.
- Methodist Student Network has been to New Orleans and Dulac, La. on two occasions to be in service to and solidarity with its battered residents. MSN has been there 11 times since Katrina. We also served in mission for a week in Harlem, NYC.
- We took a team of 25 to Guatemala to be in ministry with people and Methodist Church in Santa Cruz del Quiche. There we ran a VBS for local children, helped to build classrooms for a church/school, held meetings and worship with the youth and provided a health clinic for the town and several outlying villages seeing over 400 patients.
- On campus we provided many opportunities for study and worship and support. Through various small groups (Covenant Discipleship, Freshman, Women, Men, Bible Study Plus, Grads), a program evening tackling tough issues of faith and life (such as sexuality, war, homosexuality, relationships and economic justice) and Quiet-time, students can be spiritually grounded and transformed.
- Sunday evening worship is a reconciling and unifying adventure as students of various nationalities, cultures, races and faith traditions discover a oneness in Christ that is real. Traditions and songs of the global church are incorporated.
- The faith community and Center provide hospitality and a place where life long friendships are formed and life/faith issues can be explored.
- Three recent graduates are in seminary. Three present students are preparing to enter.

Thanks to all the students who live out their faith and lead in ministry at MSN. Thanks to faithful friends and supporters who believe in the mission of the Wesley Foundation. Thanks to all those churches, UMWs, Circles and Sunday School classes who have given money and food to sustain students on their faith journey. What a blessing it is to accompany these students.

Tom Wall, Director – Campus Minister