

TOURING/SMALL CAST PERUSAL SCRIPT

THE WORLD IS MY PARISH

by R. Rex Stephenson & Mike Trochim



Newport, Maine

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THE WORLD IS MY PARISH (Tour Version)

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Cast of Characters

ACTOR ONE plays:

JOHN WESLEY—Leading evangelist and organizer of the Methodist movement in eighteenth-century England

ACTOR TWO plays:

JAMES ROGERS—Methodist lay preacher, assigned by the Conference to care for Reverend Wesley toward the end of his life

JAMES OGLETHORPE—Prominent military man, politician, and philanthropist who founded the British colony in Georgia

GEORGE WHITEFIELD—An evangelist second only to Wesley in the eighteenth-century religious revivals in England and America

BISHOP OF BRISTOL—Based loosely on Rt Rev Joseph Butler, early critic of Methodism

CHARLES WESLEY—John's younger brother and coadjutor in the Methodist movement; composer of thousands of Methodist hymns

MR. HARDING—A typical Methodist, who has risen in life through the practice of sobriety and thrift

OR you could have seven actors playing these roles, or any number up to seven.

The Setting

The World Is My Parish can be performed in a church sanctuary, a theater, or on a platform stage. In any of these facilities, the scenery is the same: at *right center* is a dressing table with five wigs set on stands and an antique mirror, and a stool. Above the table is a coat rack on which is hung the apparel of the various characters; just *above and to the right of center* is a pulpit; in the *far left center* area is a table and two chairs, with a large Bible set on the table. At the entrance to the church or theater should be set a sign reading "Rev John Wesley To Speak Here Tonight."

THE WORLD IS MY PARISH by R. Rex Stephenson & Mike Trochim *Perfect for Community, College/University, Church and Professional groups. TOUR VERSION: 2 Males, or up to 7 roles. About 90 Minutes.* John Wesley was an Anglican minister and theologian who, with his brother Charles and fellow cleric George Whitefield, is credited with the foundation of the evangelical movement known as Methodism. This play highlights his life and struggles. **Tour Version Order #3160.**

THE WORLD IS MY PARISH

SCENE ONE -- As the lights come up on an empty stage, **JAMES ROGERS** enters from back of auditorium. He begins speaking to audience members, as he moves toward the front, as if they were attending an eighteenth-century Methodist meeting.

JAMES ROGERS: I'm glad to see so many have joined us for the service at City Road Chapel this afternoon.

[picking out audience member]

I'm glad you're here Mrs. Johnson.

[picking out another audience member]

Mr. Dunlop, how good of you to come all the way here to London from Bristol to see Mr. Wesley. And you

[picking out another audience member]

Mr. Hodgson -- you've known Mr. Wesley longer than I have, I guess. Oh, Mrs. Smith,

[to another audience member]

we haven't seen you at society meetings lately. Beware! Mr. Wesley will pull your ticket! Look at Sam over there,

[pointing to another audience member]

nodding his head, he had his ticket pulled once by Mr. Wesley.

[**ROGERS** has moved to front of auditorium; he gives invocation from pulpit.]

Praise God for bringing this congregation together this afternoon. May He open hearts and minds to receive the grace which bringeth salvation and holiness.

[To audience]

I'm James Rogers, helper to Mr. Wesley. To those of you unfamiliar with our Connection, a lay preacher. Don't be alarmed, Mr. Wesley will preach this afternoon. But he has not arrived yet. He is not as strong as he once was. The man is almost eighty-eight years old, you know. He has lived through almost this entire eighteenth century.

[Looking around]

A lot of you I know, but there are also many here whom I have not seen before. I don't know if you've come tonight to find grace or just to satisfy your curiosity about one of the most remarkable men of our times. It doesn't matter -- all are welcome. But while we wait on Mr. Wesley, allow me to tell you some things about him. He has preached more than 40,000 times. He said to me that a preacher who doesn't preach at least three times a day is not serving the Lord. As best we can figure it, he's travelled about 250,000 miles, mostly on horseback, to meet the needs of this sinful nation, from Scotland and Wales, to Ireland, and even the American colonies. Why he has preached in places the King wouldn't go without an army to protect him. And whom he hasn't reached with his voice and presence, he has reached with his publications. More than 400 books and pamphlets. He has written on almost every subject. I'll hazard a guess that you didn't know that when he started Kingswood School he wrote all the textbooks for the students. And Mr. Wesley had his own ideas about education. If you remember how we were schooled in the languages, we were taught the most difficult conjugations first under the assumption that if we weren't able to learn those, there was no sense teaching us the rest. But Mr. Wesley discovered that if students learned the simplest principles first,

the more difficult would follow ... That just proves how well Mr. Wesley understands human nature. Well, enough. I have here some notes I've made for a biography I'm writing about Mr. Wesley. These notes were dictated to me by Mr. Wesley personally. Now sometimes he says I get the information wrong and tries to correct me, but I really do get it right. And whenever Mr. Wesley began to reminisce about events of sixty years ago, he would appear to me as a young man again.

[JOHN WESLEY, as a young man, enters.]

John Wesley was born at Epworth Rectory eighty-eight years ago, in 1703. His father's name was Samuel, rector of St. Andrew's. His mother's name ...

[As ROGERS checks his notes, WESLEY interjects.]

JOHN WESLEY: My mother's name was Susanna. She brought into this world a total of nineteen children. I was the fifteenth. She taught all of us at home. We could all read by the time we were five years old ...

JAMES ROGERS: What's more remarkable than that was when they learned the Lord's Prayer...

JOHN WESLEY: ...As soon as we could talk Mother taught us the Lord's prayer. And not only did she teach Samuel, Charles, and myself; she also taught the girls to read. Mother firmly believed that until a girl could read she shouldn't be taught to sew.

JAMES ROGERS: I think it was Susanna's influence that gave Mr. Wesley his unique appreciation for the role of women. The people who have objected to our female preachers ...

JOHN WESLEY: ... My mother had a profound influence on me, and much of my self-discipline and spiritual insight I owe to her. She also encouraged me to continue my education at Oxford, where I earned my degree and was ordained an Anglican priest. But, James, my foolish heart was darkened by fear. I was afraid I'd miss the way to heaven. I could see the heavenly gates only in the distance and I meticulously planned out the route I would take to reach them and the equipment I would need for the journey. And to ensure my passage through those gates, I threw myself into good works. I visited prisons, gave money to the poor, and regulated each moment of my daily life.

JAMES ROGERS: He even developed a checklist for holiness. It was a sort of test he gave himself to make sure that he was living righteously before God.

[ROGERS crosses to the table, left, and picks up a piece of paper, which he hands WESLEY.]

JOHN WESLEY: *[Reading checklist]* Let's see. Have I prayed with fervor today? ... yes. Have I given thanks immediately for any pleasure? ... Alright, yes. Have I thought of or spoken to anyone unkindly? Well, let me think about that one ... no, I don't think so. Have I been temperate and moderate in eating and drinking? ... yes ...

JAMES ROGERS: What about that extra piece of cheese this morning?

[WESLEY frowns and hands ROGERS the paper.]

Not only did he go through this once a day, but after a while began to check himself every hour! That's devotion, right?

[*interjects*]

When I was nineteen I looked around and said to myself, "I'm sinning less than most people and that should be good enough to get me into heaven." ...

[*ROGERS picks up the story again.*]

Anyway, it was about this time that Mr. Wesley started his Bible study group at Oxford.

JOHN WESLEY: My brother Charles started the Holy Club at Oxford. We studied the Scriptures, prayed, confessed to each other, engaged in charitable works, and, since my brother Charles was involved, there was lots of hymn-singing.

JAMES ROGERS: And I bet he could always end on a positive *note*!

JOHN WESLEY: And we were *serious* in our studies; so methodical in fact that the other Oxford students began to call us "methodists."

JAMES ROGERS: It was a derogatory term then. The other theology students looked down on the Holy Club because its method took religion too seriously. Seriously enough that John and Charles determined to go to the new colony of Georgia to convert the heathen Indians.

JOHN WESLEY: Perhaps our stated purpose was to go as missionaries to the American Indians, but ...

JAMES ROGERS: What other purpose could you have had?

JOHN WESLEY: Well, as for myself, my chief motive above all else was to save my soul by my own efforts and religious works.

[*WESLEY crosses left, sits at the table, and freezes.*]

SCENE TWO

JAMES ROGERS: Probably most of you know, but for those of you who don't, let me explain: the Georgia experiment was an idea of James Oglethorpe to establish a colony in the new world for German dissenters and English debtors.

[*ROGERS begins a transformation into OGLETHORPE; he starts by removing his jacket and trading it for a military style one. Then he sits on the stool, picks up the Oglethorpe wig, and places it on his head. This is all done while he's speaking.*]

Charles Wesley went as Mr. Oglethorpe's secretary and John went as missionary to the Creek and Choctaw Indians. While Mr. Oglethorpe was a man of great compassion he also believed that he knew exactly the

manner in which the colony should be governed;

[*ROGERS has now completed his change into James Oglethorpe.*]

a man of some wit,

[*OGLETHORPE puts on glasses.*]

and a pronounced farsightedness ...

[*OGLETHORPE rises , picks up a walking stick, and crosses to the table; he now speaks as Oglethorpe.*]

Mr. Wesley ...

[*Because of Oglethorpe's farsightedness, he comes close to hitting Wesley with his walking stick.*]

JOHN WESLEY: Gen Oglethorpe. I believe, sir, that the time has come for me to return to England.

OGLETHORPE: I would encourage you not to make this decision in haste. You have been a real help to me in my administration of this colony, although your work as a pastor has left something to be desired. As you well know, I think you have been too strict with our settlers.

JOHN WESLEY: But I have only followed the exact ecclesiastical regulations of the Church of England. How else can people find the way to heaven but by following them? And, besides, I didn't come to be a pastor to the colonists in Savannah, but to minister to the Indians -- a ministry which you have not allowed me to develop.

[*WESLEY sits.*]

OGLETHORPE: Yes ... Well, you didn't seem to be having much success among the Creeks and I wasn't about to let you go off into the wilderness to preach to the Choctaws. You might have been killed. Or worse, you have might instigated a frontier war ... the way you almost started a civil among the settlers here.

JOHN WESLEY: I know that I have been accused of being a sly hypocrite, a seducer, an egregious liar, a murderer of poor infants by plunging them into cold water during baptism, a spiritual tyrant, a sower of sedition, and even a keeper of a bawdy house. Now I ask you Mr. Oglethorpe, how could one man accomplish all of that in a mere year and nine months?

OGLETHORPE: I'm aware, Mr. Wesley, that the charges against you are absurd. But you have fueled them by your own rigidity.

[*He sits.*]

Why must you be like the proverbial oak that would rather break than bend? Georgia is not England, and England, my friend, is not Oxford. What is it my young friend that has driven you so?

JOHN WESLEY: I have tried to justify my own existence before God by living in the most righteous manner as prescribed by the Church,

[*He rises and crosses away.*]

and I have tried to lead others in the same path. Oh, who will rise up with me against the wicked? Who will

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take God's part against the evildoers? And I know of no place under heaven where there are more sinners than in this place.

OGLETHORPE: Mr. Wesley,

[He searches the Bible.]

where in the Scriptures does it say that, "every man that strives for mastery is *temperate* in all things"?

JOHN WESLEY: I Corinthians 9:25.

OGLETHORPE: Why are you such a zealot?

JOHN WESLEY: I know only that if I am to find salvation I must live steadfastly by the law of God. And if others are to find salvation they must follow my example.

OGLETHORPE: *[rises.]* Ponder this Rev Wesley, has this method produced the intended results?

JOHN WESLEY: I fear I have preached not as I ought but as I am able. And I have a dread of being cast into hell because of my shortcomings.

[WESLEY exits, stage right.]

SCENE THREE -- ROGERS, while he is speaking, crosses to the coat rack and removes Oglethorpe's jacket and wig; when this is finished, he moves right center.

JAMES ROGERS: Mr. Wesley did leave Georgia. Actually there was a bit of a scandal: he was indicted by a grand jury, and, after posting bail, promptly set sail for England. It was on that voyage back to England that Mr. Wesley's ship encountered a violent storm; so severe in fact that all aboard believed themselves doomed to drown.

JOHN WESLEY: *[enters and crosses right center]* I realized then for the first time that I was not ready to meet God. My tests, my good works, my staunch self-righteousness ... all seemed so shabby and inadequate. I felt so alone ... I felt that the God whose grace I had so ardently pursued, would not, could not, accept me.

JAMES ROGERS: It's easy to see that Mr. Wesley was really struggling for his faith. I hate to say this, but it makes me feel better because I still struggle for mine. Next, I suppose I ought to tell you about "Aldersgate." When Mr. Wesley explained it to me -- that life-changing experience...

JOHN WESLEY: James, my life was like the Apostle Paul's: "To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good which I would, I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do [Ro.7:14-23]." In this state of bondage to sin, I was indeed fighting but not conquering.

JAMES ROGERS: It was then, on April 22, 1738, that he came under the influence of the Moravian Peter Boehler. And he said to Mr. Wesley,
[*ROGERS adopts a slight German accent.*]
"You don't have dominion over sin and constant peace because you lack sense of forgiveness; a forgiveness that can come only through confidence in the merits of Christ."

JOHN WESLEY: [*He moves forward and addresses the audience.*] I was quite amazed. It was clear I did not have that kind of faith. I did not have an assurance that I was translated out of darkness and into Christ's marvelous light such as Scripture promised to those who believe. I could only cry out, "Lord, help thou my unbelief."
[*He turns to address BOEHLER.*]
But how could I preach a faith I did not myself have?

BOEHLER: Preach faith until you have it; then, because you have it, you will preach faith all the more.

JOHN WESLEY: [*Addressing audience again*] And on my way back to Oxford I did speak with some along the road. While there were those who acted as if I preached some strange doctrine, others willingly received it.

JAMES ROGERS: [*He resumes his normal voice and moves forward to address the audience.*] Mr. Wesley was then called back to London, where, on Sunday, May 7, he preached at St. Catherine Cree's; and several people have testified to me that he spoke strong words of salvation by faith in the blood of Christ. But what was surprising to me was that ...

JOHN WESLEY: I was informed that I was not to preach anymore at that church.

JAMES ROGERS: On Tuesday the 9th of May, he preached at Great St. Helen's. Truly, the church was overflowing. Mr. Wesley declared the love of God to all that were oppressed by the devil. Many found God and were converted. But the rector said ...

JOHN WESLEY: "Sir, you must preach here no more."

JAMES ROGERS: It was then that he received a letter from Peter Boehler which warned against the sin of unbelief. He wrote,
[*ROGERS crosses back to the table to pick up a letter, which he hands to WESLEY; speaking with a slight German accent.*]
"If you have not conquered it yet, see that you conquer it this very day, through the blood of Jesus Christ. Do not delay. Believe in Jesus so that he may be able to do for you what he has done for so many others."

JOHN WESLEY: On Friday, the 19th, I preached at two more churches, but after being warned off again I had

continual sorrow and heaviness in my heart. Yet, I heard a voice (who could doubt that it was the voice of God?) saying, "Believe and thou shalt be saved."

JAMES ROGERS: [*resuming his normal voice*] Then, on the evening of the 24th of May, though he was tired and sick, he went to a prayer meeting in Aldersgate Street ...

JOHN WESLEY: ... when about a quarter to nine, while one of the men was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my own heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

[*WESLEY crosses to sit at the table.*]

JAMES ROGERS: When he went home that night, he faced doubts, which returned again and again. And Mr. Wesley discovered the difference between his old self and his new self.

JOHN WESLEY: I was, before, striving, yea, fighting with all my might. But then I was sometimes, if not always conquered; now I am more than a conqueror through Christ who loved me.

[*WESLEY freezes.*]

SCENE FOUR -- ROGERS crosses to coat rack and begins his transformation into **GEORGE**

WHITEFIELD; he puts on a jacket, then sits on the stool to put on the Whitefield wig (also, if there is time, he should put on a clerical collar.

JAMES ROGERS: It's probably hard for all of us gathered here today to believe that church doors would be closed to a messenger of God's love such as Mr. Wesley. And he wasn't the only one being excluded. Even the great George Whitefield was denied the pulpit. I know many of you have heard of him, a former student of Wesley's at Oxford and member of the old Holy Club. He helped stir the Great Awakening in the American colonies, and even worked with Benjamin Franklin to found the University of Pennsylvania. How many of you have heard Mr. Whitefield preach? Oh, that's too bad. He had a voice! And power! They say he once spoke to 17,000 people. Why the great English actor David Garrick said he would give a thousand pounds just to be able to say "Oh" like Mr. Whitefield.

[*The change into WHITEFIELD should be completed.*]

Anyway, Mr. Wesley and Whitefield were great friends, and Mr. Wesley told me about a time when he was profoundly influenced to change his approach to preaching because of Whitefield.

[*WHITEFIELD starts to cross to WESLEY, stops, and remembers he's forgotten his hat; he returns to the coat rack and puts on a tricorned hat.*]

They met on the street.

[*As WHITEFIELD, he addresses WESLEY.*]

John,

[They meet and shake hands.]

JOHN WESLEY: George! Won't you come in for a while.

WHITEFIELD: No, John, I have an appointment.

JOHN WESLEY: Oh, just for a moment, George. I'm interested to know how things are going with you.

[They cross to the table; both sit.]

WHITEFIELD: I'm having much the same experience as you are insofar as the Church of England is concerned. The more I preach salvation by faith in Christ alone, the more people are converted, the more detested I become among the comfortable, complacent clergy.

JOHN WESLEY: I understand your frustration on that score, George. Whenever I seem to be making an impact on people, I'm asked not to return.

WHITEFIELD: Soon, John,

[He rises and crosses away.]

there will not be a church in England in which we will be allowed to preach. You must come to the same conclusion that I have reached: that field preaching, in the open air, is the only way we can bring God's message to the neglected masses.

JOHN WESLEY: God's Word should be preached in God's house!

WHITEFIELD: God is being shut out of his own house by a clergy who care only to collect their tithes and dine with the local squires. Who in the Church cares about the wretched coal miners who turn to gin for comfort because the church will not offer them the comfort of Christ?

JOHN WESLEY: I'm aware of that, George. And what's more, the Church of England seems totally incapable of civilizing, let alone bringing a healthy morality to, the mining communities.

WHITEFIELD: Yes,

[He crosses back to table and sits.]

but it's a common problem throughout the country ...

JOHN WESLEY: ... Fathers deserting their families, children forced into workhouses, mothers thrown onto poor relief. And where are the ministers of the Church of England?

WHITEFIELD: They're gone to meet with the bishop, hoping for a better appointment! John, you started Methodism to reform the Church of England. We never imagined back at Oxford that the Church would not want to be reformed. To preach in the fields and streets and village squares is the only way to reach the

people who so desperately need Christ.

JOHN WESLEY: George, I know that you've had some great success with field preaching. But I can't imagine myself preaching from the back of a wagon. It seems to have a bit of the devil in it.

WHITEFIELD: I'd best be going, John.

[He rises.]

The devil and I have an appointment to stand on the back of a wagon this afternoon. Pray about it, John.

JOHN WESLEY: I will, George, but first I have a message to prepare on Christ's Sermon on the Mount. God go with you.

[WHITEFIELD exits; WESLEY begins writing.]

JOHN WESLEY: *[He speaks as if thinking out loud.]* Luke 6:17, "And he came down and stood in the plain and a great multitude of people came to hear him." Hmm, "plain"? ...field? ..."And he came down and stood in the "field" and a great multitude of people came to hear him." ... "And they that were vexed with unclean spirits were healed." That's what the vexed people of England need -- to be healed. Jesus had to preach outside because of the great multitudes. On the other hand, the synagogues were closed to him, just as the churches in England are closed to me. Should I not follow Christ's example? Naturally the devil hates open-air preaching! For there the Spirit of the Lord can work.

SCENE FIVE -- ROGERS enters, now wearing a clergyman's robe. He sits at the stool and puts on the Bishop's wig. The wig is wildly unkempt and it should be worn slightly askew.

JAMES ROGERS: As most of you know, Mr. Wesley was a very successful field preacher. Thousands who had never darkened the door of a church would come to hear him. And I'll tell you something else ... on several occasions when I've been with Mr. Wesley, and it would be raining, and a thousand people would gather. When Mr. Wesley started the first hymn ... the rain would cease! And when he finished the last word, the rain would begin again. The Lord works in miraculous ways. With field preaching becoming so popular, it wasn't long until the Church became interested in it.

[He should be finished changing into the BISHOP OF BRISTOL.]

Mr. Wesley was called before the Bishop of Bristol in 1739. The Bishop was a well-meaning man, but one who was generally in a hurry, which led to a rather disheveled appearance.

BISHOP: Mr. Wesley,

[WESLEY rises and takes several steps toward the BISHOP.]

I will deal plainly with you, for I have only a few minutes to spare. I once thought Mr. Whitefield and you well-meaning men. But I can't think so now.

JOHN WESLEY: It grieves me, sir, that my ministry so troubles you.

BISHOP: I hear, too, that many people fall into fits under your preaching and that you pray over them.

JOHN WESLEY: I do so, my lord, When any show by strong cries and tears that their soul is in deep anguish, I frequently pray to God to deliver them from it.

BISHOP: Very extraordinary indeed! John, ... may I call you John?
[*BISHOP puts his arm around WESLEY's shoulder.*]

JOHN WESLEY: Yes, certainly, my lord.

BISHOP: There's a troubling in my heart. These Methodist societies ... they ... It's hard to say precisely what it is ... on the other hand ...
[*He waits for WESLEY to answer.*]
Well?

JOHN WESLEY: Let me begin by explaining
[*WESLEY crosses away.*]
that the societies arose out of the need to continually reinforce a vital Christianity among those who have come to Christ through our preaching. ...

BISHOP: Yes ... now about this preaching ... As you know, we in the church of England hold services every Sunday morning. Our well-educated ministers have written carefully considered sermons to read by the local clergy. Prayers have been written by our foremost experts to help the common people relate [*gesturing toward heaven*] to the Almighty. You, I understand, speak, and pray, extemporaneously.

JOHN WESLEY: I find that your sermons and prayers do not meet the needs of those to whom I preach. They need a religion of the heart as well as of the head, a practical and vital religion.

BISHOP: But our sacraments, given in most churches once a month, and in every parish in England at least twice a year, that, my young Methodist friend, is a practical and vital religion!

JOHN WESLEY: [*in a pleading tone*] Surely, the sacraments are important, but our people need a more personal discipline.

BISHOP: Personal discipline? What ever do you mean by that?

JOHN WESLEY: Why, they must be held accountable to the Lord and to each other. Each one must be encouraged to examine their life to guard against sin. For a Methodist, religion is a daily endeavor. I believe that one of the great problems with the Church of England is that it has relegated the practice of worship to

Sunday only.

BISHOP: [*in a patronizing tone*] But our clergymen, John, already have so many responsibilities: serving in Parliament, for example, that they simply don't have time to ...

JOHN WESLEY: We Methodists have devised a system whereby ...

BISHOP: [*with a flash of anger*] Don't interrupt me, Mr. Wesley!
[*trying to control himself*]
Now, what were you going to say?

JOHN WESLEY: I rely on helpers and class leaders to visit the home of every family in our connection at least once a week, to learn about their needs and problems, both spiritual and material. It is in reality, a time when we can share with each other our joys and concerns.

BISHOP: But John, doesn't that disrupt the proper and orderly forms of the Church?

JOHN WESLEY: No,
[*speaking more firmly*]
rather it makes for greater cohesiveness in the Church. Expecting merely that people attend service once or twice a year and refrain from murder and robbery is expecting them to do only the minimum. The Methodist societies expect people to do the maximum for the glory of God and the love of man.

BISHOP: But you are trying to make religion all-encompassing.
[*He crosses away.*]
People don't have time for all that. They have their jobs, their families, responsibilities. ... If I could just lay out for you what I have to do in one week, you'd wonder that I have time to say my prayers before bed! What we are expecting of people is the most that they can accomplish in the hustle and bustle of this modern age.

JOHN WESLEY: [*He is becoming frustrated and impatient.*] With all due respect, your lordship, if we only expect this minimum from our flock it is like she who fancies herself a virtuous woman only because she is not a prostitute, or he who believes he is an honest man only because he does not steal. May God preserve me from such a poor, starved religion as that.

BISHOP: My religion?
[*flash of anger*]
Starved?

JOHN WESLEY: Yes, starved. You see, a Methodist ...

BISHOP: [*interrupting and raising his voice*] Then what marks a Methodist as a Christian? Who is this special person, according to your definition?

JOHN WESLEY: [*regaining control and crossing to the BISHOP*] One who loves the Lord his God with all his heart. God is the joy of his heart. One whose life is like one brief candle that shines so brightly that it lights the entire house. This, my dear bishop, is a Methodist.

BISHOP: [*crossing to the table to lecture WESLEY*] Sir, you have not asked for my advice, nevertheless I will give it to you freely. You and your Methodist societies have no business here. You are not commissioned to preach or hold meetings in this diocese. Therefore, go ye hence!

[*He sits and begins reading the Bible; WESLEY starts to leave, then stops and crosses back to the BISHOP.*]

JOHN WESLEY: [*with fiery determination*] My business is to do what good I can wherever I can. Wherever I see one or a thousand men running into hell, be it in Bristol or Ireland, or China, I will stop them if I can ... Were I to let any soul drop into the pit of everlasting fire, I don't believe that God would accept as my excuse, "Lord, he was not in my parish!"

BISHOP: [*rising and shouting*] But Bristol, sir, is not your parish.

JOHN WESLEY: The world is my parish!

BISHOP: There are laws, sir,
[*thumping the Bible*]
man's laws which govern preaching.

JOHN WESLEY: I have not broken any of the laws of the Church, though I do believe that you are capable of creating new laws which make our manner of preaching illegal. If that happens, it would then be time for me to ask myself, should I obey God or man.

[*WESLEY exits.*]

10 more pages to the end of the script