

WHAT NOW? WHAT'S NEXT?

Will Willimon Offers
Hope & Help for Pastors
& Congregations

Don't Look Back

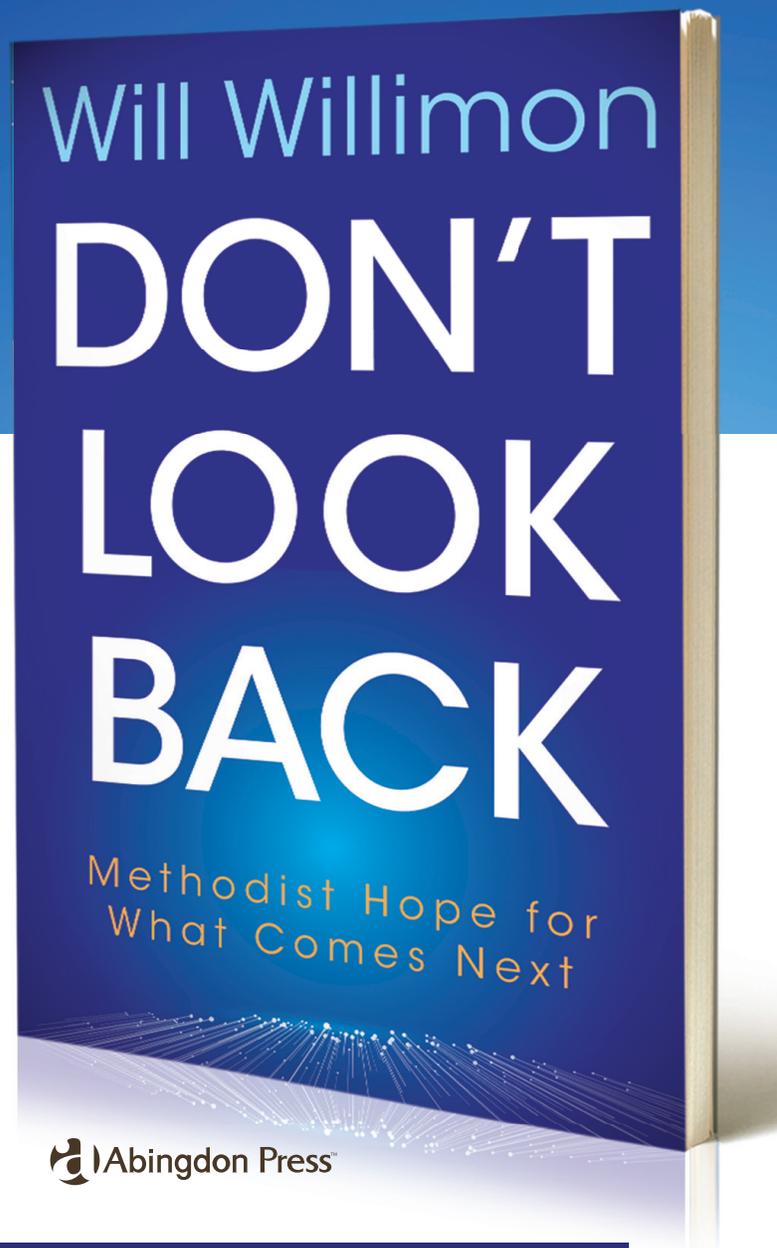
Methodist Hope for What Comes Next
By Bishop Will Willimon

With a sense of urgency, Will Willimon spent several months talking with pastors, organizational leaders, and parishioners across the Methodist spectrum, asking questions and listening carefully. What's next for us? What does it look like for a Methodist leader (or congregation) to respond to God's call now? What biblical texts, stories from our past, and core Wesleyan convictions can guide us from this point? And are we at Good Friday or at Easter?

Don't Look Back: Methodist Hope for What Comes Next draws from those conversations, Will's own experience, and his reflections on the state of the Church. It is frank, clear-eyed, and deeply theological. It offers practical, actionable guidance and firm handles for leaders and congregations to grasp as they move forward.

This book and related free resources will help facilitate honest, gracious, biblically rooted, and theologically informed decision-making in the months ahead. Published by Abingdon Press.
9781791027896. Reg. Price \$48.99; **\$13.99**

For information about discounts when buying multiple copies, please call 800-672-1789



PRaise FOR THE BOOK:

"*Don't Look Back* brings good news for weary, sad, and cynical Methodists: You are loved and chosen. There is a place and future for you in the relentless renewing work of God in our world. Drawing deeply from wells of ministry and faith, Will Willimon shares the wisdom we need for this season. His insights are tough and encouraging, practical, clear eyed, honest, relational, humble in service, Christ-centered, and so hopeful! This book invites us to dig deeper into our faith and ultimate mission beyond denominational mechanics and brokenness—bearing witness to what God is doing. This is a word not only for Methodists but for anyone who shares a radical Christian commitment and calling."

—Andy Langford, senior pastor, Central United Methodist Church, Concord, NC; scholar and expert on worship, evangelism, and preaching; editor of *The United Methodist Book of Worship*

"In equal parts funny, frank, and provocative, Willimon's impassioned plea for 'togetherness' is worth serious reflection for all tempted to separate from The United Methodist Church. Staring soberly at American Methodism's losses, *Don't Look Back* is filled with unyielding hope for a church willing to let go of the past, redefine its purpose and get on mission with the resurrected, living Christ."

—Roger Ross, former director of congregational excellence, Missouri Conference; coach with Spiritual Leadership, Inc; author of *Meet the Goodpeople: Wesley's 7 Ways to Share Faith*

"In *Don't Look Back* Will Willimon is an 'equal opportunity' truth teller. No one and nothing is off limits, including himself and especially not the institutional church. He encourages healthy grieving for what is no more but eschews syrupy nostalgia. He preaches, teaches, meddles, prods and probes all in the hope that we will fasten our attention on the resurrected Jesus and join him where he is at work."

—Gregory V. Palmer, resident bishop, Ohio West area, The United Methodist Church



To order copies of the book, visit Cokesbury.com or call 800.672.1789

HOW YOU CAN USE THIS BOOK & INCLUDED MATERIALS

Suggestions for Pastors

To get the most out of these materials, we suggest that you first read the book then watch the videos. Then:

1. With church council
 - Read and discuss book
 - Watch and discuss videos
2. With other key leaders
 - Read and discuss book
 - Watch and discuss videos
3. With the entire congregation
 - Preach sermon series
 - Use Sermon Series Outline
4. Lead smaller group studies
 - Use Study Guide for the Congregation and Groups and also the videos
 - UMW, Sunday school, Bible studies, young adults, etc.

List of Resources

All of the resources you need are listed below and are available free at abingdonpress.com.

- Video series featuring Will Willimon
- A One-Page Guide for District Superintendents and Conference Staff
- Sermon Series Outline
- Key Questions to Discuss with Leaders
- Study Guide for the Congregation and Groups

Print materials are downloadable and printable.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

The Reverend Dr. William H. Willimon is a bishop in The United Methodist Church who served as the dean of Duke Chapel and Professor of the Practice of Christian Ministry for 20 years. He is the author of roughly 100 books—over a million of which have been sold. His articles have appeared in many publications. In 1996, an international survey conducted by Baylor University named him one of the Twelve Most Effective Preachers in the English-speaking world.

FROM THE BOOK:

"Our divisions and separations are less menacing than the specter of our expiring." (*Chapter 1*)

"Jesus told a parable about an unproductive fig tree. Three years, no figs. In exasperation, the master ordered, 'Cut it down!' (Luke 13:6-9). Is that our story? Or is our moment best characterized by the sower who slings seed with abandon only to be surprised by a miraculously fruitful harvest? (Matt 13:1-9)." (*Chapter 2*)

"Asking and answering, 'Why are we here?' is up to you. Neither the UMC nor the GMC can do this purposeful work for your congregation." (*Chapter 5*)

"Some of your weariness and fear are the predictable costs of following a demanding Savior who thinks nothing of sending people like you on outrageous errands." (*Chapter 6*)

"Most people in your congregation have never heard of the Council of Bishops, can't name their bishop, and have never run across a real, live member of General Conference. In their unconcern for the church beyond their congregation, they have things in proper perspective." (*Chapter 8*)

"Sometimes those closest to Jesus, those working for him, are the least likely to see him when he shows up, unable to recognize him moving among them in the darkness just before dawn." (*Chapter 9*)