

FINALLY UNITED

Throughout my entire life, I've been involved in the Methodist Church. In April of 1968, we became the *United* Methodist Church. But just a decade earlier, churches like the one I grew up in were segregated and did not welcome the black community. It took the Civil Rights Movement to eventually unite us.



Then as United Methodist, we claimed to be “a welcoming church”, but our Book of Discipleship stated that homosexuality was incompatible with Christian teaching. We would not ordain or marry gay people. We have been divided on this issue since the 1970's.

At our General Conference in May 2024, we revised the Social Principles in the Book of Discipline, removing the previous language that was harmful. What a celebration it was! Now, we can be called The **United** Methodist Church and be proud of it.



It's a freeing experience to follow God's plan to be the Church. We are finally *united* and can now move forward, growing and fully becoming God's instrument of love for all.

*Agapê,
Kimball, SE*

Donna Reed and Me

I was a young minister's wife. Kimball was appointed to be the new pastor of two small rural Methodist churches on the borders of Tennessee and Kentucky. In the summer of 1967 we moved into the parsonage that was next door to one of the churches.

As we settled in that first night, we tucked our children into their beds with a lullaby and prayers. I went to the living room to rest and watch my favorite TV show, *The Donna Reed Show*, while Kimball worked on his sermon. I dreamed of being like Donna Reed ~ a different dress each day with a string of pearls to match. Her picture-perfect house was always ready for company. However, Donna's two children were teenagers while I had four youngsters ~ two active boys and two little girls still in diapers! I thought to myself, "I've got to figure out how to be me, not Donna Reed!"



Early the following Sunday, before making breakfast for my family and getting myself and the children dressed for Church, I needed to wash a load of diapers and hang them on the backyard clothesline to dry.

The first Sunday at our new church was wonderful! I felt a sense of pride as folks warmly welcomed our family to the community. It was a welcome I'll never forget. When we got home, I was filled with warmth and exhaustion. But before I could rest, I needed to bring in the diapers still hanging on the line. Just then, there was a knock at our front door. It was a lady who was quite sure I needed to know "We don't hang diapers on Sundays!" Having delivered her message, she excused herself. That certainly put a damper on my mood.

As my joy was turning to embarrassment, there was another knock. This time it was one of our church's most loved members. She said, "I understand you had a visitor a few minutes ago."

"Yes ma'am, we did."

She hugged me and said, "Tomorrow, I want you to go over to the corner store and choose a clothes dryer you like. It'll be our congregation's welcome gift to you."

I also remember when folks from the congregation surprised us with a country tradition called, *Pounding the Preacher*. We were taken to a Sunday School room filled with many pounds of gifts.

Practical gifts like laundry detergent, flour and Crisco, fresh fruits and vegetables from their farms and gardens, and so much more. We were even given homemade toys for our children.

I would continue watching *The Donna Reed Show*, but I no longer felt like I had to be like her. I had all I needed to be me! And while I enjoyed growing up in the city, I'll always be thankful for my years in rural America with the folks sharing their wonderful and warm country ways.

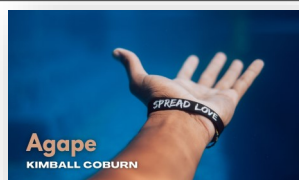


Memories from Pam

With the help of our Media Team, Kimball is creating a series of videos that can be used for personal inspirations, program starters, or worship resources. View and download all 16 videos at KimballCoburn.com

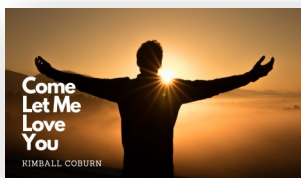


Our Call is a video series shared by the Kimball Boyd Coburn Ministry. Kimball shares stories and songs of God's love and our opportunities to make a better world.

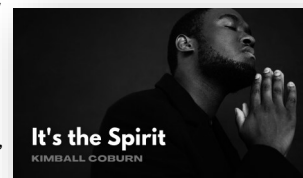


Agape is the highest form of love. This love brings us to action, serving, caring, sharing, giving, and forgiving. Living the Christian life comes through being a person of Agape.

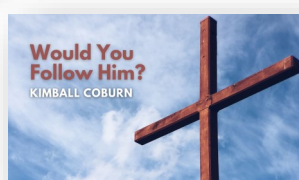
Being a child of God is a special relationship. Feeling God as Father or Mother is feeling love in a very special way. God provides a home in our lives where we can receive unconditional love.



One Sunday morning after worship, a young boy stared up at me in my long black robe and red stole. He asked, "Mister are you God?" I answered, "No Son, I'm not God, but I can tell you where God is." The Spirit of God lives in us, giving us the power to be loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled.



Evangelism is being a messenger for God. God's message is love. God's love moves us to a personal relationship with our Lord and to others through acts of peace and justice.



Living out your faith is the most freeing experience in all of life. It frees you to be what God created you to be. It gives you the courage to take risks. Being a Christ follower includes giving Him your all and serving others unselfishly. So the question is, *Would you follow Him?*

The disciples asked Jesus who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus put his arm around a child and said, "I promise you this, if you don't accept God's kingdom in the simplicity of a child, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven."



I fondly remember when Mama said I was old enough to sit with her for the morning worship service. Let's use every opportunity to present our children with wonderful experiences that help develop their faith to be strong and enduring.



As a young pastor serving my first church in the late 60s, I wrote this song to encourage the young people of that tumultuous time. The message for the Boomer Generation holds true for today's Gen Z. You're not only the Church of the future, you are the Church today.

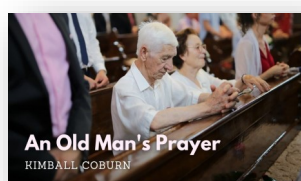
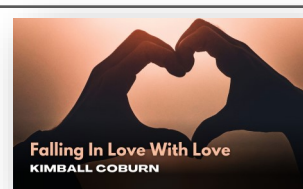


The kingdom God wants for us is that of peace and love. Yet this seems so far from reality. God sent his Son, Jesus, to teach us how to be peacemakers. In Christ, we will commit to building a community of peace and love.

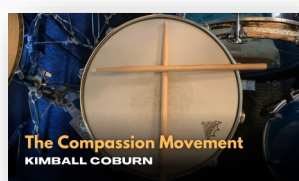
Being the Church is the highest calling in life. To fulfill this Calling today, we need a modern reformation. Our rootedness in Jesus is the source of reformation – the source of faith, hope, and love – the blessed assurance that the Holy Spirit lives inside of us.



God's love is a gift of grace. It's freely given and only asks that we receive and share it with others. When we share this gift in our personal relationships, community relationships, and world relationships, the circle of grace is completed.

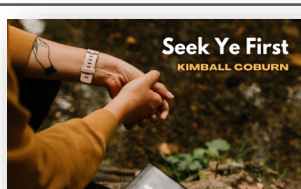


As we grow old, we may have less stamina, but we have more wisdom and faith to share with younger generations. We, seniors, must hear God's Call loud and clear because our youth and young families need to hear and see loving examples of the teachings of Jesus.

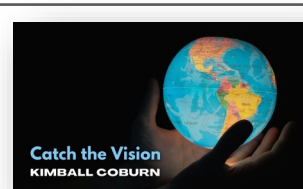


The Gospel is like a two-edged sword, it is personal and social. It opens the door to our relationship with God and transforms society. More than ever, we need to be at work sharing this message of love through acts of compassion.

Jesus didn't come to create a new religion, but to tear down religious barriers that keep us apart. We are called to seek the Kingdom of God that makes us one. A kingdom where we live by faith, and work for peace and justice. The Kingdom of God is unity and love for one another.



Jesus came preaching the Kingdom of God. His vision is based on love — love of God and love of neighbor. But God also gave us a choice whether to catch this vision and live it out in our lives or not. Vision is not seeing something, vision is *being* something.





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Service Return Requested



"Love is patient, love is kind, It does not envy, it does not boast, is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered. It keeps no secrets of wrong. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails." (I Corinthians 13: 4-8a NIV)

The election season in America has been known to bring out the worst in us. Even in the Church we divide over issues and candidates, putting politics before people. But now is the season that calls us to walk in each other's shoes — to be sensitive to those with differing views and backgrounds, regardless of education or economic status. We're always to be kind and considerate towards one another. Love doesn't mean we have to agree on everything. It means we care for one another. So much so that we're willing to listen and try to understand how the other feels.

Richard Niebuhr writes, *"Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore we must be saved by love."* It's Christ-like love that brings healing and hope. This is the love we need to practice as a nation. God's love never fails!

Agape
Kimball Coburn, SE