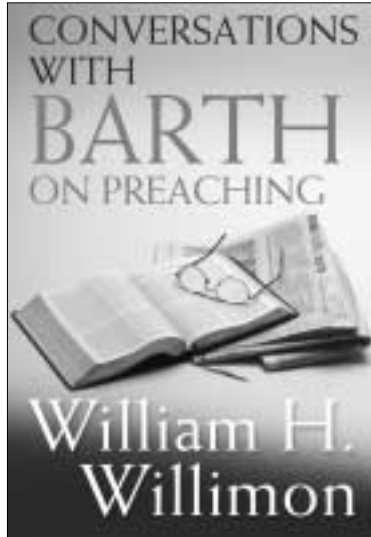


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# OPEN FORUM

I was disappointed that you could not find a competent liturgist to review Mark Stamm's book (*Let Every Soul Be Jesus' Guest*) defending the aberrant practice of giving communion to the unbaptized. It is a practice without precedent in the history and theology of the church and within Methodism itself.

If one wants to know how early American Methodists approached admission to the Eucharist and the love feast, one could do no better than to consult Professor Lester Ruth's recent study of the quarterly conference in early American Methodism (*A Little Heaven Below*.)

The conclusion of the review, which seems to take glee in quoting people as to how they would take revenge on clergy who defend the church's traditional practice, was particularly appalling.

**Charles Hohenstein**  
 South Bend, Indiana

This issue (May/June) appears to honor women in ministry. However, on page 12 in the article about Bishop Kelly we read "her son John and his wife are United Methodist pastors." If son John is mentioned, why is his wife not named? Please honor "his wife" by printing a correction and naming Rev. Staci Current in a future issue!

**Donna Morrow DeCamp**  
 Walnut Creek, CA

*Editor's Note: The Reverend Staci Current is pastor of Shattuck Avenue United Methodist Church in Oakland, California. CR regrets the oversight.*

I loved the most recent issue of *Circuit Rider* highlighting the UM Women in Ministry. I am the Dean of the Chapel at Ferrum College (a UM college) in Virginia . . . congratulations on a GREAT issue!

**Wes Astin**  
 Ferrum College, Virginia

A careful reading of the Open Forum in the May/June issue discloses a strident indictment of "the bureaucratic complexities," of the church in the ministerial candidacy program, which is frustrating young candidates. The increasing number of hoops is pushing people into higher paying non-ordained positions, which are less subject to "the system."

Meanwhile we continue the uninterrupted decades of loss of members. It seems this problem generates continuous evasive discussions, many "this will cure it" programs and no sanctions for leadership or pastoral failures to bring people to the Lord

Several retired clergy I know tell me they would not recommend anyone going into the UM ministry, and it is clear from the May/June issue that young males are not in a position of parity.

**E.D. Robertson**  
 Leawood, KS

Read *Circuit Rider*  
 online at  
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## THIS HOLY MYSTERY

The 2004 General Conference accepted the study of Holy Communion called "This Holy Mystery." The text of the study can be accessed free of charge at [www.gbod.org/worship/thisholymystery/contents.html](http://www.gbod.org/worship/thisholymystery/contents.html). A very helpful book, This Holy Mystery by Gayle Felton, which includes the full text of the study as well as teaching and study guidance for class and small group use, is also available. See page 19 to order.