

Inside the Cover:

Foreword:

The story of how this material came to be written is true. It came about in reaction to a brother clergyman of another denomination. My letter to him is the actual document. What I didn't know was that I would accept the challenge of actually producing this workbook as a way to clearly define my theology using my invented metaphor of "Gut Trip Analysis."

As I recall, it was during 2001 when I was asked by the pastor of the (Salina, KS) Trinity United Methodist Church to move a Wednesday evening prayer group from the Parlor into one of the Fellowship Halls with the purpose of expanding it from a few dear souls to more seekers. This was the initial motive to create the "Spiritual Swim Team," a group that met every Wednesday evening from 6 to 6:45 p.m. It was a time for prayer, honest collegiality, and spiritual reflection; John Wesley would be proud.

After a year the "Spiritual Swim Team" grew to a group of about 25 to 30 people. One day, I received a call from Bishop James K. Matthews, a prominent retired United Methodist Church Bishop whom I had met in Italy on a trip from Rome to Pompeii. The call went something like this in Bishop Jim's 90 year-old high squeaky voice: "Bill Salmon, this is Bishop Jim. I want to know about your Spiritual Swim Team. Are you a church with a swimming pool?" "No," I responded, "we are just a group of Christians who meet learning to be Life Savers and trying to keep our heads above Spiritual Waters."

How he found out about this activity I never found out. He lived on the East Coast, and I lived in the middle of Kansas. Anyway, my description is adequate enough to give you some idea of its purpose.

Soon after we started, I began writing these study guides as a method to stimulate conversation. Each week one topic would be drafted for our conversation. The group began to anticipate them from week-to-week. After each session I revised the draft to reflect what we had learned together and new directions for the future of such conversations.

Recently, in preparation for this publication these notes were slightly updated. I want you will enjoy the enlightenment they may offer to you.

About the Author:

William E. Salmon:

Dr. William E. Salmon is a retired United Methodist Minister and trained at the Ecumenical Institute, Chicago, now known as EI/ICA Chicago. He is also the author of *"The Making of a Teacher"* published by Resurgence Publishing Corp.

In his career he served eighteen years in Kansas United Methodist Churches, eleven years as a Kansas Wesleyan University Administrator, and eleven years in international work with the Institute of Cultural Affairs (EI/ICA). For over fifty years he is married to Beverly Trapp, his college sweetheart. They live in Salina, Kansas – in the Nation's Heartland.

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