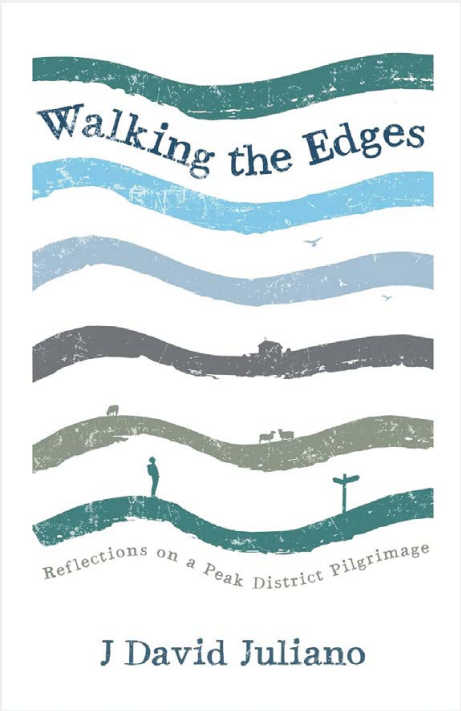
Walking the Edges

REV. J DAVID JULIANO

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After more than thirty-five years of pastoral ministry in England and in Florida, I hit a wall. Not a dramatic collapse – just the slow, grinding emptiness that many in ministry know and few admit to. I was, as we say in the American South, lower than a snake's belly.

So I did something that made no sense on paper. I flew four thousand miles, laced up my boots, and set out with my friend and mentor Jorge to walk the Peak Wesley Way: 47 miles through the Derbyshire Peak District, from Matlock Bath to Edale, linking the chapels and meeting places where Wesley and the early Methodists once preached.

Six days. Blisters. Sheep. Weather that changed its mind every twenty minutes. Chapels that smelled of furniture polish and faithfulness, and in Bakewell, Baslow, Hathersage and Castleton, ordinary Methodists quietly keeping the doors open, the kettle on, and the gospel alive in places where the numbers tell a discouraging story.

I went looking for answers and didn't find many. What I found instead was that God meets tired people on footpaths as surely as he met Wesley on the road – and that renewal often comes not from praying harder, but from putting one aching foot in front of the other and letting him walk alongside.

Walking the Edges: Reflections on a Peak District Pilgrimage is the story of that week: part travelogue, part confession, part love letter to British Methodism and the stubborn, beautiful people who make it up. It's funny in places and honest throughout.

If you've ever felt stuck – in ministry, in faith, in life – I hope it encourages you. If you're within reach of the Peak Wesley Way, I hope it gets you walking. Revival, I've come to believe, may well begin at ground level.

Rev. J David Juliano is Lead Pastor of First Sebring Methodist Church, Florida.





(Rev. J David Juliano is pictured centre in LH pic and right on RH pic)