

Regional Gathering 2025

JESUS *is* LORD

a community of oneness

Reclaiming Our **Confessing, Countercultural
& Contagious** Identity



WELCOME TO REGIONAL GATHERING

Bishop Linda Adams

BISHOP OF THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH IN CANADA

REV. DUSTIN SCHELLENBERG

Welcome & Call to Worship

CRESTVIEW PARK FREE METHODIST CHURCH
WORSHIP TEAM

Praise & Worship

Offering Ourselves to God

REGIONAL GATHERING 2025

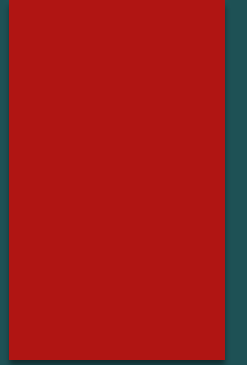
JESUS *is* LORD

SESSION ONE:
THE SOURCE OF OUR ONENESS

OLD COVENANT CONFESSION

Deut. 6:4-9

Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.



- One God in an Ancient Near Eastern context of many gods
- Recovering oneness with God lost in the Garden
- God's claim to exclusivity (e.g. the first commandment)
- Covenant Maker, Covenant Keeper
- Jealous "Husband"

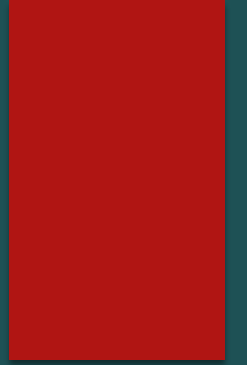
THE NEW COVENANT CLAIM

Acts 2:36

“Therefore, let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

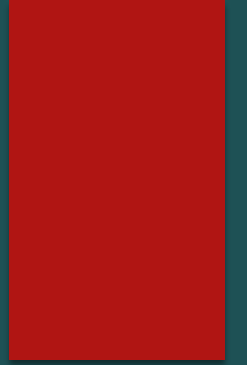


- **Cross-Cultural** (15 languages – unity in diversity)
- **Committed** (devoted to the Apostles' teaching)
- **Compassionate** (signs and wonders like Jesus; sharing of goods and property like family)
- **Confessional** (Jesus is Lord)
- **Countercultural** (both Lord and Messiah)
- **Contagious** (daily – rapid expansion, multiplication)

THE JESUS MOVEMENT, "BOTH MESSIAH AND LORD"

- Jesus is Lord, in the context of many gods (Roman pantheon)
- Roman Empire brought all "gods" under one Emperor.
- "Caesar is not Lord."
- Persecution; scattering; mission on the move (Acts 1:8)
- *Liminality; communitas* were formed.

THE ROOTS OF THE CHURCH



- A Confessing/Confessional Community: "Jesus is Lord."
- A Countercultural Community: a discipleship culture (Acts 5:41 "rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.")
- A Contagious Community: apostolic momentum outward

THE HONEYMOON PHASE?

Are we naïve to examine it when we live more than 2000 years later? How can looking back to this earliest description of “church” be relevant to us?

In 18th C England, Wesley aimed to learn from and emulate the “Primitive Church.”

In 19th C America, Roberts echoed Wesley.

They were RADICAL = “back to the ROOTS.”



What Happened?

Christendom.

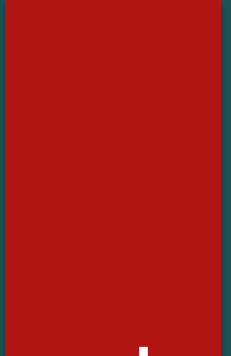
- Official religion of city/state/empire
- Movement of the church from margins to center of society
- Creation of "Christian culture" or civilization
- All citizens (except Jews) are "Christian" by birth
- No freedom of religion; political power divinely authenticated
- Infant baptism as symbol of obligatory incorporation
- Sunday as official day of rest, with penalties for violation
- "Orthodoxy" defined by church leaders supported by the state
- Imposition of Christian (or O. T.) moral standards on society

- Hierarchical ecclesiastical system analogous to state structure
- Massive, ornate church buildings
- Clergy/laity distinction with laity assigned a passive role
- Obligatory tithes to an increasingly wealthy Church
- Legal defense of Christianity to restrain heresy and schism
- Division of the globe into "Christendom" and "heathendom"
- Waging war in the name of Christ and the Church
- Use of political and military force to impose the Christian faith
- Use of O. T. rather than New, to justify many of these changes

--Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*


Huddle Discussion Question:

**Was Christendom mostly a positive
or a negative development for the Church?
Which parts were positive? Negative?**




“Far too long, historians have accepted the claim that the conversion of the Emperor Constantine (ca. 285–337 AD) caused the triumph of Christianity. To the contrary, he destroyed its most attractive and dynamic aspects, turning a high-intensity, grassroots movement into an arrogant institution controlled by an elite who often managed to be both brutal and lax.”

--Rodney Stark, *For the Glory of God*



“Constantine’s calling himself a Christian and pouring that flood of wealth and honour on the Christian Church, the Clergy in particular, was productive of more evil to the Church than all the ten persecutions put together.”

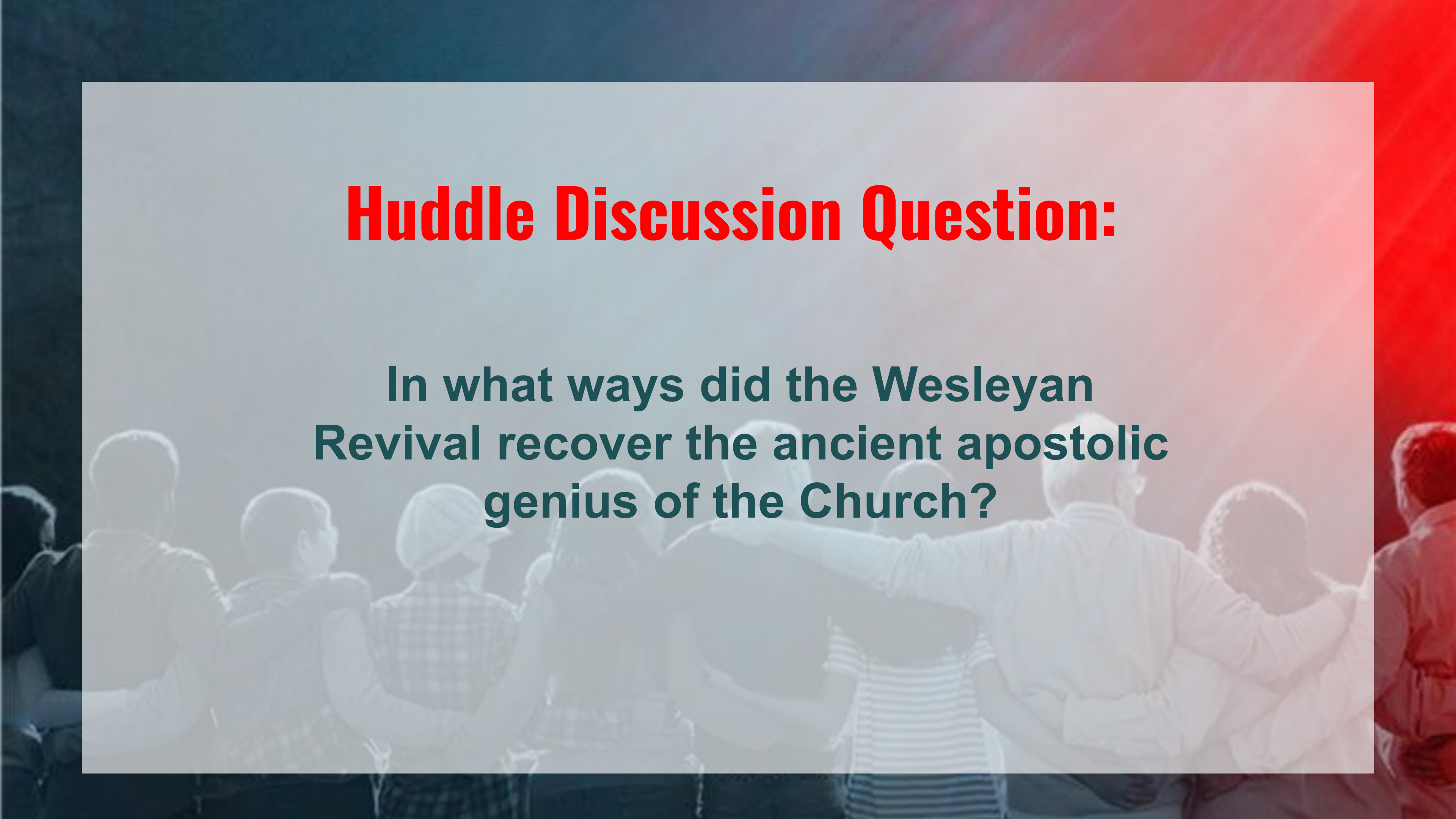
--John Wesley, *Of Former Times* sermon



We live in a Post-Christendom context.
In Canada, many outside the church see the
Christendom era as oppressive.
Yet in the church, we sometimes yearn for
or fight for a return to “the good old days.”

Huddle Discussion Question:

In what ways did the Wesleyan Revival recover the ancient apostolic genius of the Church?



Our challenge is nothing less than shifting the tracks of history from its current trajectory of systematic theological, numerical, and spiritual decline. Ironically, I believe that the only way forward requires first and foremost that we reach back into our deepest narratives to find the resources to negotiate the twenty-first century faithfully. We must somehow recover the forgotten ways: the radical self-understanding as a Jesus movement, the spiritual dynamism of a disciple-making culture, and apostolic drive that seemed to infuse the original church.

--Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*

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“I believe God may have raised up John Wesley as much for the 21st Century as for the 18th Century. I believe the best days for our tribe and for the whole Wesleyan movement lie in the future. I believe Jesus can turn the water of dull, ceremonial religion into the sparkling wine of vibrant, vibrating faith. I believe that even though what we now call Methodism is in too many ways what Wesley came to get rid of, it need not come to this. Sometimes our solutions lie as much in the past as in the present or the future. I believe what historians call the “Methodist Revolution” is an unfinished revolution.”

-Leonard Sweet, *The Greatest Story Never Told*


“We have no desire to get up simply a large church; but we do hope that our societies will be composed, *exclusively*, of those who are *in earnest to gain heaven*, and who *are determined, by the grace of God*, to live up to the requirements of the Bible...

It is of the greatest importance that those who come into the new organization be of **one heart and mind.**”


--B. T. Roberts in Introduction to the
1862 Free Methodist Book of Discipline

1 Corinthians 8: 6

For us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.



He is Lord, He is Lord.
He has risen from the dead
And He is Lord.
Every knee shall bow,
Every tongue confess
That Jesus Christ is Lord.



You're my Lord, You're my Lord.
You have risen from the dead
And You're my Lord.
On my knees I'll bow,
With my tongue confess
That Jesus Christ is Lord.



Coffee is on us!

Canadian Bible Society

Our Daily Bread

Deeks Insurance

Robertson Hall Insurance

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SESSION TWO:
EMBRACING CONNECTION

Better Together Video



The Global Free
Methodist Church

FWM



Free Methodist World Missions
makes disciples
by mobilizing the global church
and empowering international leaders
to establish transformational churches.



**The Free Methodist Church has
ministry in over 100 countries
in six world areas:**

Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America,
Middle East and North America.



Total worldwide
Free Methodist membership
is over **1.6 million**.



Africa

Membership: 1,095,462

Countries: 30





Asia

Membership: 357,369

Countries: 25



Europe

Membership: 5,305

Countries: 15



Latin America

Membership: 93,357

Countries: 23





Middle East
Membership: 30,820 +
more than 5,000 house
churches
Countries: 7



Canada & U.S.A.

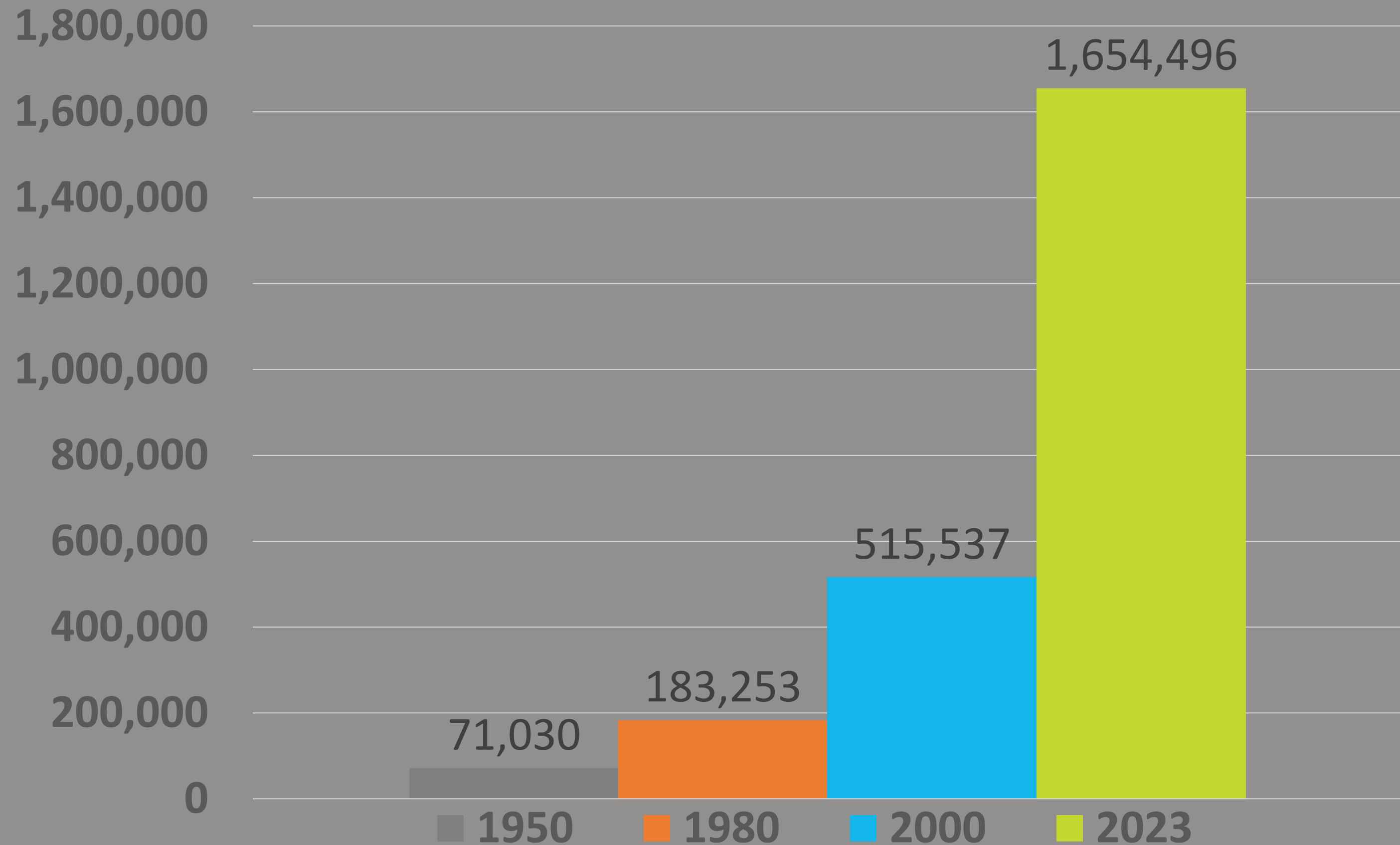
Membership: 72,183

Countries: 2

4.36% of
worldwide total



Worldwide Free Methodist Church Membership



- <https://vimeo.com/65841471?&login=true> - =

Video: 150 years of Free Methodist History, filmed in 2011

FMCIIC MANUAL ¶374.1:

Methodists are connectional. They do not believe that any one local church has the range of gifts and training to establish doctrine, ordination standards, and other constitutional matters. Instead, Methodists do these things collectively, freeing local churches for the work of ministry. They are accountable to their conference for character and conduct and work side-by-side with local church leaders. Independent churches and pastors are not truly Methodist.

Connectionalism

- Free Methodists share a common theology, membership covenant, and leadership system.
- Free Methodists co-operate with other parts of the Christian church in redemptive endeavours and political response.
- Free Methodists build healthy inter-congregational cooperation, celebration and support.
- Free Methodists affirm diverse approaches to accomplish our common vision and mission.

Dr. James Pedlar, Chair of Wesley Studies, Tyndale Seminary

“Connectionalism is a theological concept in Methodist ecclesiology that denotes the dynamic, organic interdependence of the church in all of its facets. Methodists have historically spoken of themselves as a body as a “connection,” and therefore connectionalism speaks to Methodist convictions about the nature of the church, and it also gives shape to the way Methodists structure their life together.

“As regards the nature of the church, connectionalism implies that no part of the church is the church, but that local congregations, small groups, clergy, laity, and regional, national, and international bodies are all interdependent parts of the church, which are intended to flourish in covenantal relationship with one another.

As regards the mission of the church, connectionalism implies that engaging the world with the gospel requires coordination and sharing of human and financial resources, rather than congregational autonomy and independence.


“As regards church polity, connectionalism implies that local churches are part of a larger connectional family, which implies relationships of mutual accountability and support.

If this rich and multi-layered conception of the church as a connection is kept in mind, we can avoid reducing our national leadership to a bureaucracy seeking to impose itself on local autonomous churches, and rather see our denominational structures (of which our local churches are a part) as an expression of our understanding of the very nature of the church itself.”

Huddle Discussion Questions:

What evidence do you see in the current ethos and culture of the FMCIC that we value connection?

What evidence could you name that implies that we do not value or embrace connection?

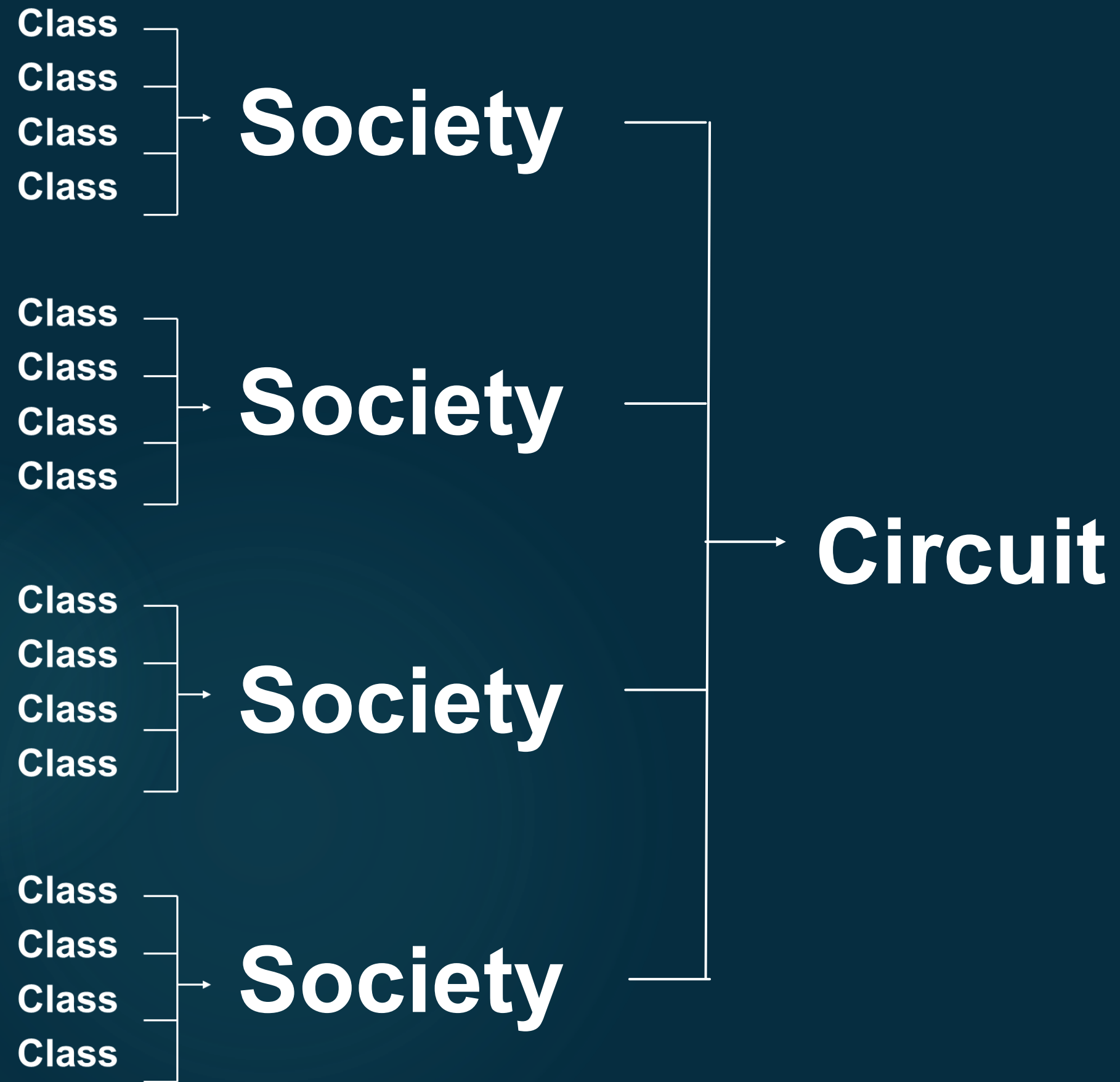


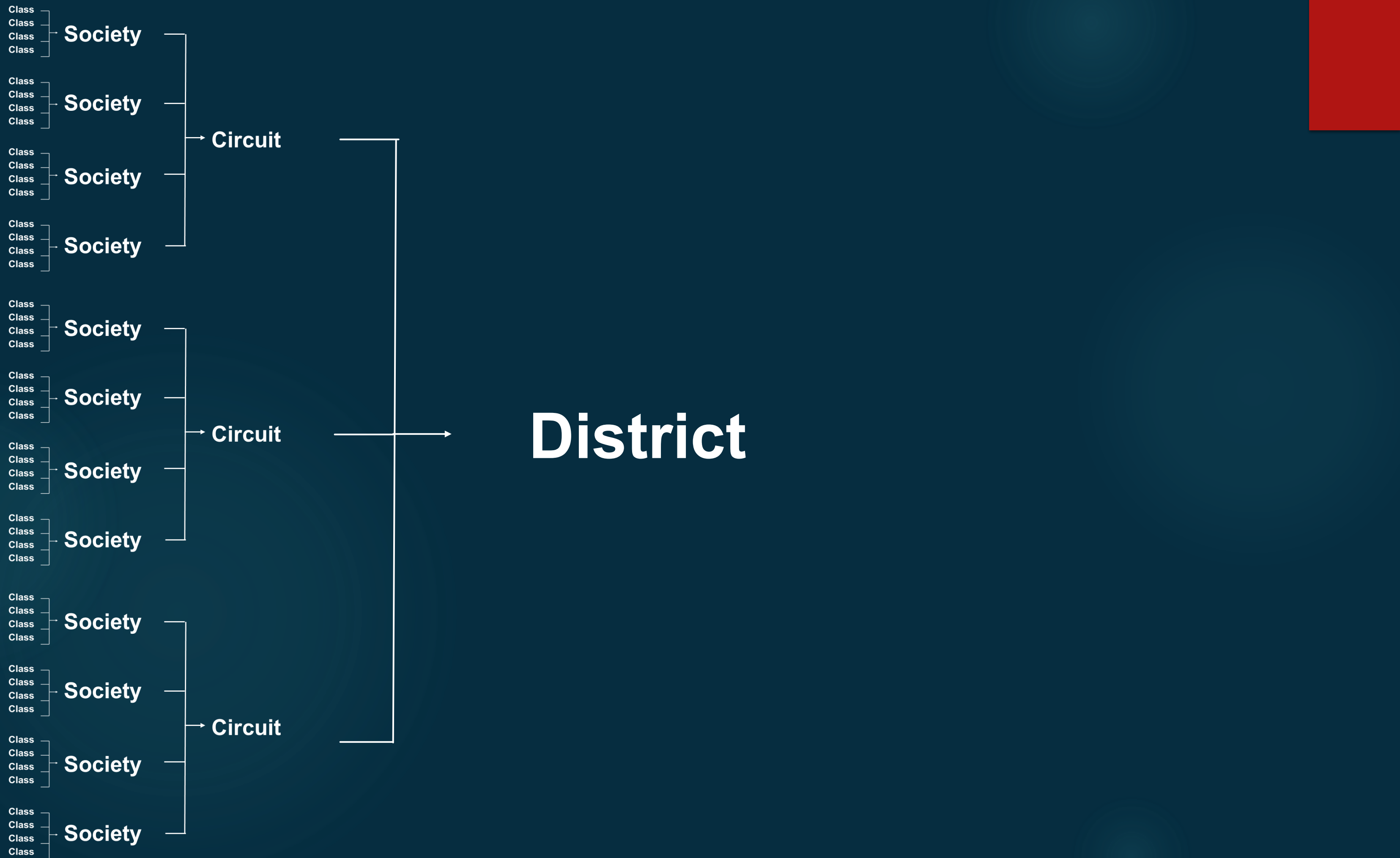
“I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out.”

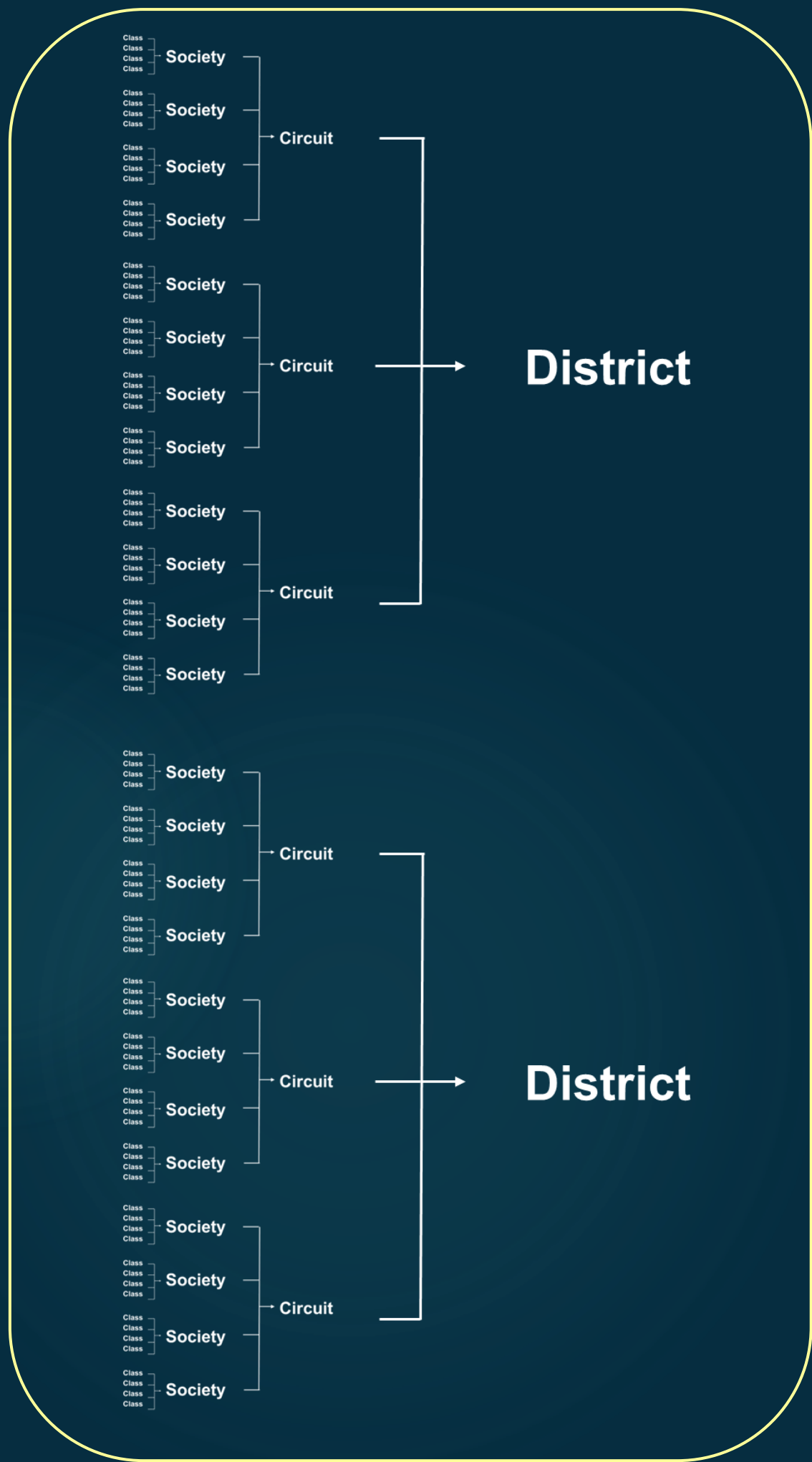
--John Wesley, late 1700's

Rev. Greg Pullam,
The Heart of Canadian Free Methodism Course









METHODIST CONNEXION

overseen by the
Annual Conference

Organizational/Administrative Structure

FMC generally

---	WORLDWIDE	World Conference
Connexion	NATIONAL	General Conference
Annual Conference	REGIONAL	Annual Conference
District	AREA	District/Zone
Circuit	AREA	Circuit
Society	LOCAL	Society/Local Church

Organizational/Administrative Structure

FMCIC

WORLDWIDE	World Conference
NATIONAL	General Conference
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Organizational/Administrative Structure

FMCIC

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Organizational/Administrative Structure

FMCIC

WORLDWIDE	World Conference
NATIONAL	General Conference
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AREA	District/Zone
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LOCAL	Society/Local Church



Huddle Discussion Questions:

**What things (roles, structures, events, etc.)
have we created to close the gap
between the local church and
the General Conference?**



Lunch is on us!



Canadian
Bible Society

PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE FOR LUNCH YET

GROUP PHOTO TIME

REV. JERVIS DJOKOTO

Forming a Culture of Church Health:

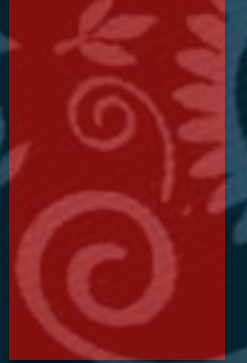
Music, Stories, & Revitalization Pathway

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SESSION THREE:

ONE BODY, ONE MISSION



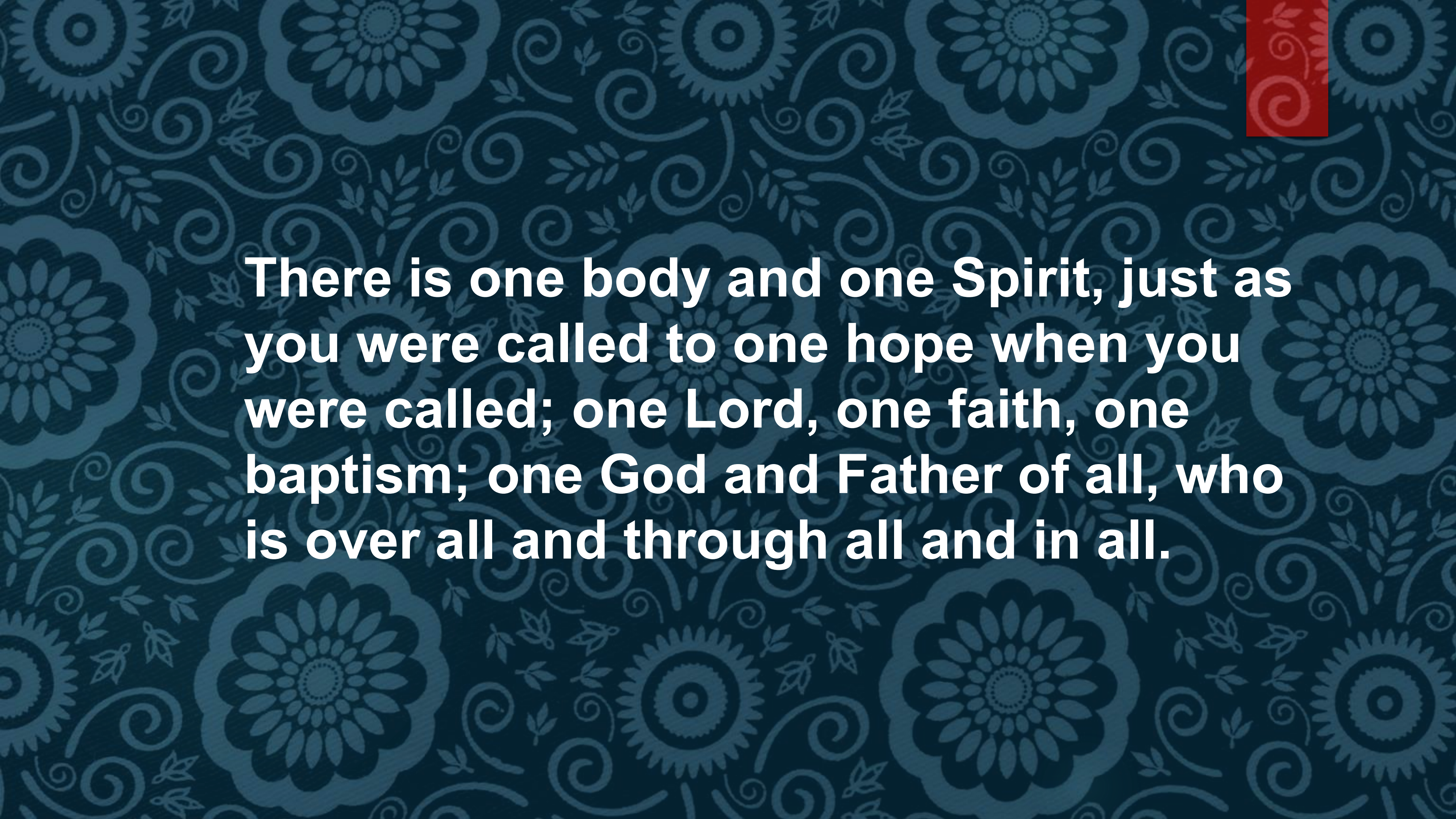
Beautifully designed

THE ONE BODY OF CHRIST

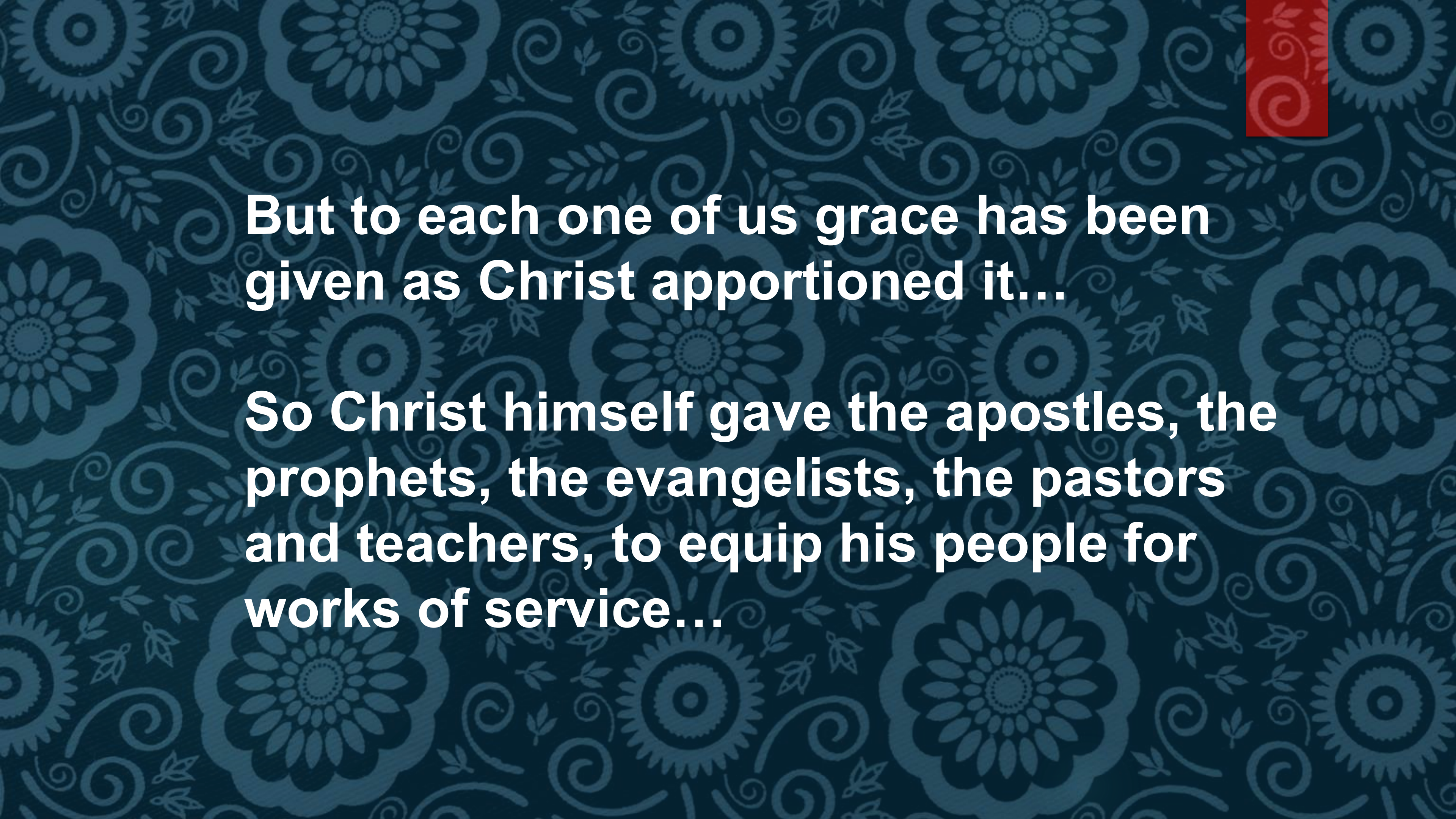


Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-16

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.



**There is one body and one Spirit, just as
you were called to one hope when you
were called; one Lord, one faith, one
baptism; one God and Father of all, who
is over all and through all and in all.**



**But to each one of us grace has been
given as Christ apportioned it...**

**So Christ himself gave the apostles, the
prophets, the evangelists, the pastors
and teachers, to equip his people for
works of service...**

Apostles: “Sent Ones”

- ❖ extend the gospel
- ❖ ensure that the faith is transmitted from one context to another and from one generation to the next
- ❖ Always thinking about the future, bridging barriers, establishing the church in new contexts, developing leaders, networking trans-locally.

Prophets: Covenant Keepers

- ❖ Know God's will.
- ❖ Particularly attuned to God and his truth for today.
- ❖ Challenge and correct dominant assumptions.
- ❖ Insist that the community obey what God has commanded.
- ❖ Constantly “mind the gap” between God’s perfect will and desire for the church to be holy as he is holy and our performance.

Evangelists: Recruiters

- ❖ Infectious communicators of the gospel message.
- ❖ Call for a personal response to God's redemption in Christ.
- ❖ Draw believers to engage the wider mission, growing the church.
- ❖ Focus on reaching those outside the church.

Shepherds: Pastors

- ❖ Nurture and protect.
- ❖ Caregivers of the community.
- ❖ Focus on the protection and spiritual maturity of God's flock.
- ❖ Cultivate a loving and spiritually mature network of relationships, making and developing disciples.

Teachers: Wise Communicators

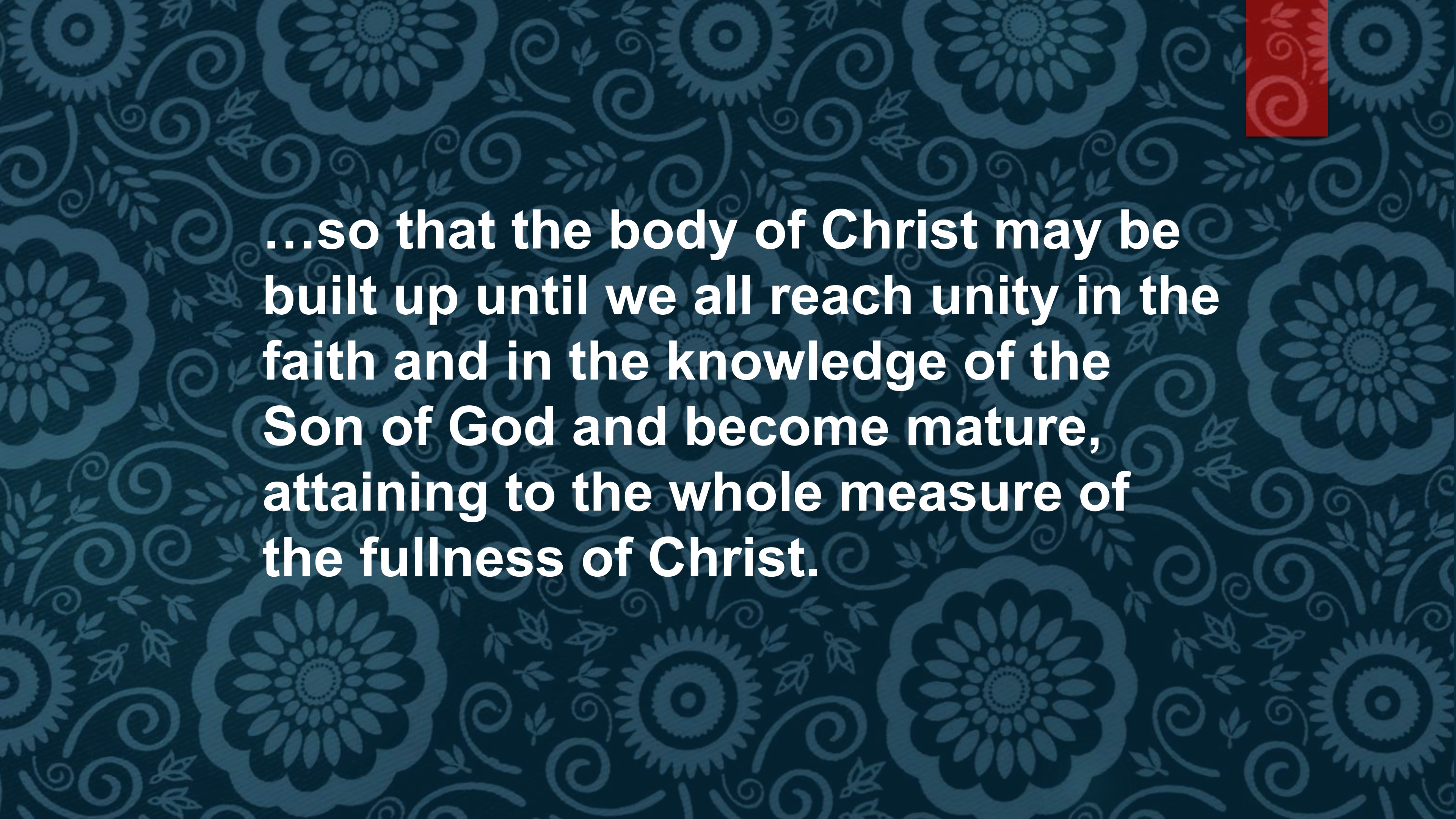
- ❖ Understand and explain.
- ❖ Communicate God's truth and wisdom.
- ❖ Help others remain biblically grounded to better discern God's will.
- ❖ Guide others toward wisdom.
- ❖ Help the community remain faithful to Christ's Word



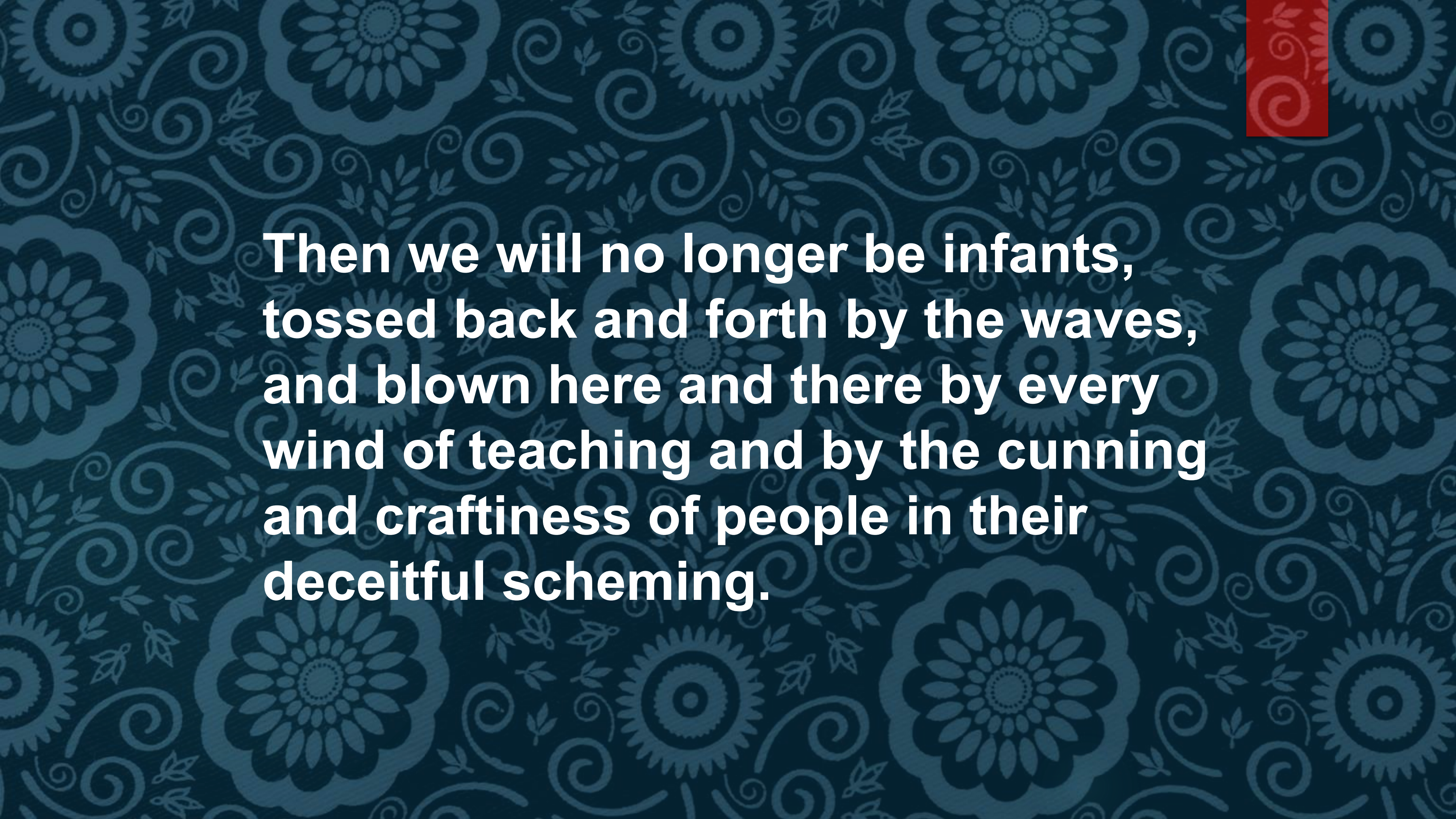
We need the APE's!

Larry Walkemeyer, *The River Church*

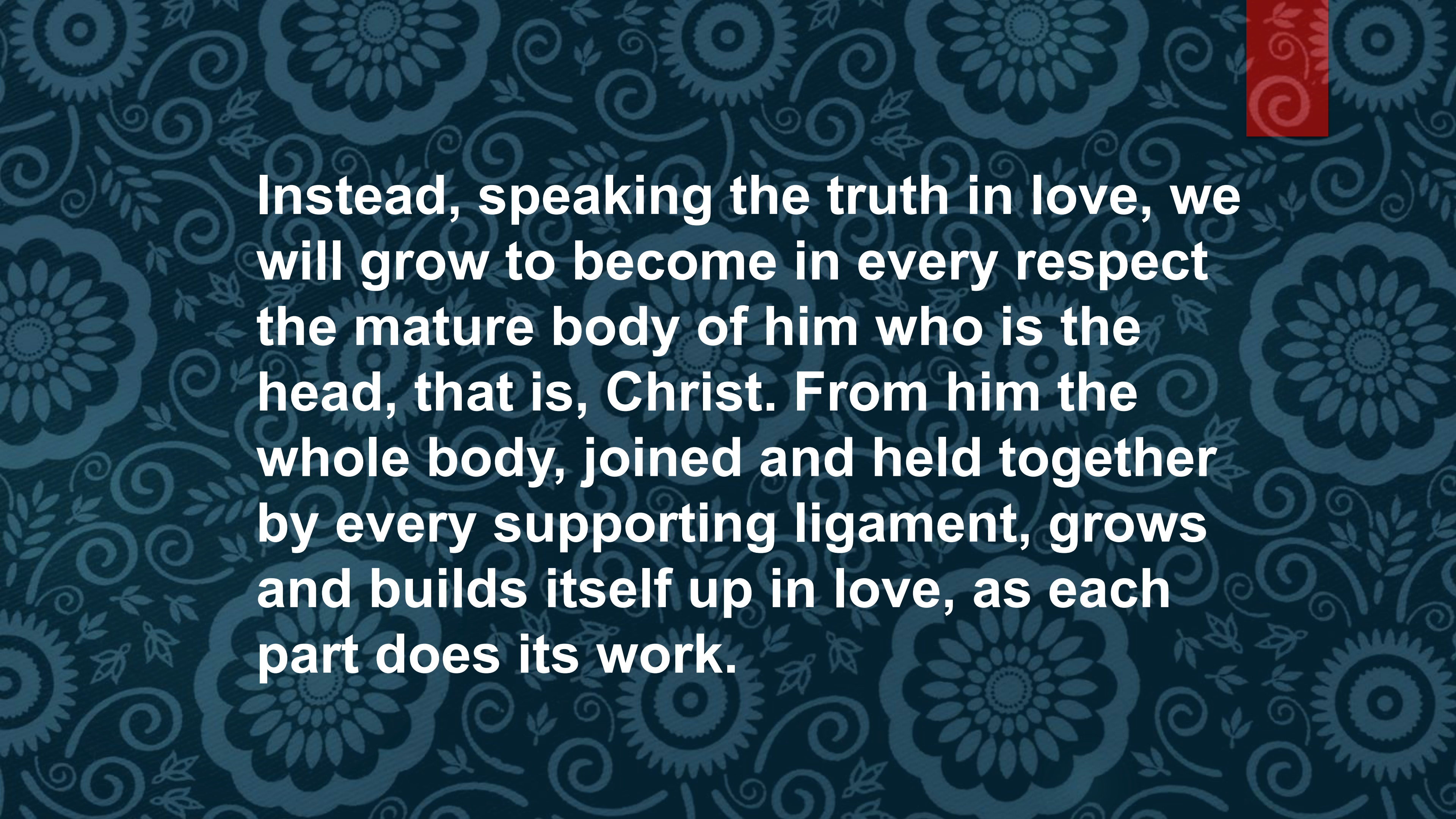
“The challenge with mavericks is they can easily become rebels. The difference between a maverick and a rebel is their teachability and accountability. Rebels are independent, self-assured, disrespectful of spiritual authority, and spread criticism about the status quo more than momentum for the mission. Mavericks are focused on the mission at all costs, yet, are not out to destroy the institution. This was John Wesley’s approach.”



...so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.



**Then we will no longer be infants,
tossed back and forth by the waves,
and blown here and there by every
wind of teaching and by the cunning
and craftiness of people in their
deceitful scheming.**



Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Love.

Unity.

Peace.

Oneness.

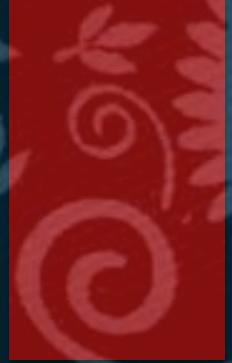
Grace.

Maturity.

Wisdom.

Growth.

Love.



Questions for Ordained Ministers

Manual §872


Do you believe in the Triune God, and confess
Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord?

R: *“I do so believe and confess.”*




Do you wholeheartedly love the Lord your God
and your neighbor as yourself ?

R: ***“I do.”***




Will you be careful to nourish your soul through
the disciplined use of the means of grace and,
with the help of the Holy Spirit, continually
rekindle the gift of God that is in you?

R: ***“I will.”***




Do you confidently believe that the Lord has called
you to serve His church as an ordained minister?

R: ***“I so believe.”***



Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures
contain all doctrine necessary for salvation
through faith in Jesus Christ, and are the unique
and authoritative standard for the church's faith
and life?


R: ***"I am."***



Will you then, as you exercise your ministry of Word and sacrament and leadership, faithfully study, teach and apply the truth of these Scriptures publicly and privately?


Will you teach nothing as necessary to salvation except what can be proved by the Scriptures and, when necessary, graciously correct error?

R: *“I will do so by the help of the Lord.”*




Will you commit to living a holy life according to the teachings and behaviour of Christ so as to be a wholesome example of godliness?
(And will you do your best to influence your husband /wife/ family to join you in this commitment?)

R: *I will do so by the help of the Lord.*"



Will you, in the exercise of your ministry, lead people to faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and as Lord, disciple them to grow in grace as you lead them to participate together in God's mission to bring wholeness to the church, neighborhood, community and world?

R: *I will do so by the help of the Lord.*"



Will you be loyal to the Free Methodist Church,
committing yourself, along with those serving with
you, to be accountable to the authority of the Holy
Scriptures, to *The Manual of The Free Methodist
Church in Canada* and to those appointed to
oversee your ministry?

R: *I will do so by the help of the Lord.*"

Psalm 133

How good and pleasant it is
when God's people live together in unity!
It is like precious oil poured on the head,
running down on the beard,
running down on Aaron's beard,
down on the collar of his robe.
It is as if the dew of Hermon
were falling on Mount Zion.
For there the Lord bestows his blessing,
even life forevermore.

A Season of Prayer



Coffee is on us!

Canadian Bible Society

Our Daily Bread

Deeks Insurance

Robertson Hall Insurance

FMCIC AFFINITY PROGRAM

Why consider this?

Receiving a group rate by working together brings significant benefits, both financially and in terms of shared resources. By pooling our numbers, we leverage our collective buying power to access reduced rates that might not be available individually. This cooperative approach not only makes services more affordable for everyone but also strengthens our sense of community, as we're able to support each other in achieving shared goals.

Additionally, group rates often come with added perks, such as enhanced services or support, ensuring that everyone involved enjoys an even greater value. Working together amplifies our impact, allowing us to achieve more collectively than we could alone.

We continue to work on your behalf to help our churches with affinity programs and more. Check the Affinity page on the FMCIC website monthly, as new partners are added often.



fmcic.ca/affinity

FMCIC Affinity Program

Free access to discounts on services,
hotels, car rentals, and programs.

We are better together.



Intercultural Camp 2025

July 28 – August 3

YOUTH FROM – Quebec – Manitoba – Saskatchewan – ON MISSION

Hosted by Roblin Free Methodist Church and the Prairie Pastors Network, in collaboration with Quebec coaches and leaders, 15 youth from QC and 15 youth from MB/SK will come together for a week of intercultural mission, discipleship and adventure!

Please keep this camp in your prayers, and if you or your church would like to be a sponsor, please speak with Pastor Adam Kline, Director of Intercultural Missions.



BISHOP LINDA ADAMS

What have we heard today?

Testimony, Discussion & Commitment

BISHOP LINDA ADAMS

Closing