

Reimagining Connection: A Glimpse of Our Connectional DNA

Jervis Djokoto

To *unleash holy freedom* across our nation is not something any one church can accomplish alone. This past Sunday, April 5th, I had the privilege of witnessing a beautiful expression of this connectional vision in action. Four of our Free Methodist churches in Durham region Ontario—Trulls Road (Courtice), The Corner Church (Oshawa), Whitby FM, and Uxbridge FM (Uxbridge, distributed church model)—gathered for a joint service (at General W. Sikorski Polish Veterans Association Club, North Oshawa). All four Lead Pastors, Jon Grant (Trulls Rd), Tyler Lane (The Corner church), Evan Garst (interim/transition Pastor at Whitby FM), and Blake Found (Uxbridge FM) were present, along with many other leaders and members from each congregation.

From the moment people arrived, there was a tangible sense of joy and anticipation. Warm greetings, shared smiles, and intentional connection filled the lobby. Each attendee received a simple guide brochure outlining four themes for the service: **Transformation** (2 Corinthians 5:17), **Unity** (Ephesians 4:3), **Holiness** (Ephesians 4:24), and **Freedom** (John 8:36). On the reverse side were specific prayer points for each church—an invitation not just to gather, but to intercede for one another. Before the service began, a few of us joined in a time of prayer, asking God to move powerfully softening hearts, deepening unity, and breaking spiritual strongholds. There was a deep sincerity in some of these prayers; at moments, emotion filled the room as people cried out to God to move.

The service itself was a nice blend of worship, prayer and brief teaching from Jon and Evan. It was especially encouraging to see a worship team that included many young people, leading with passion and excellence. Pastors from each church contributed—offering reflections, leading in prayer, and guiding the congregation through a shared experience of worship. I was also pleased to hear that throughout the service, our shared mission—*unleashing holy freedom*—was echoed a few brief times in both prayer and proclamation.

In many ways, the gathering felt like a family reunion. There was a sense of rediscovering one another—friends, co-labourers, brothers and sisters in Christ—from across our local churches. It was a reminder that while we often minister in our individual contexts, we are part of something much larger. Moments like this stir both gratitude and hope. They remind us that connection is not just a structure—it is a lived reality. I am increasingly seeing this across our movement and praying for more: coaches, Network leaders, Mentors and staff working more collaboratively, churches supporting one another, and a growing desire to pursue renewal together.

My encouragement to all our Free Methodist churches is simple: lean into opportunities for partnership, shared gatherings, and collaboration. Let us continue to reimagine what connection can look like in our time and place. And to leaders of these churches, I say good job! May the prayer of Jesus in John 17—that we would be one—become an ever-deepening reality among

us. Father, water these seeds sown during this important Easter season across our nation and grow them beyond what we could imagine.