

BELONGING



PARTICIPANT 2022

MEMBERSHIP GUIDE FOR THE WESLEYAN CHURCH



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WE'RE BUILT TO BELONG

Why Bother to Belong?

1. Humans are made with a need to _____ and Christians are part of a community of believers. Membership is a response to these realities.
2. Becoming a member is a form of _____ to your values and priorities.
3. Public commitment is also a type of _____. Everyone needs to be held accountable for the important things in life. Membership attempts to help.
4. Membership gives expanded opportunities for your _____ and service for Christ.
5. We all tend to need mutual _____.
6. Membership involves _____.
7. It is an affirmation of your personal commitment to _____ to be a serious part of His church on earth.
8. Your committed involvement becomes one added blessing to the congregation; your _____ and abilities contribute to the strength of the total effort. Everybody wins!

My Membership Group

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT MEMBERSHIP?

Acts 2:42–47

1 Corinthians 12:12–27

Romans 12:3–8

Ephesians 6: See if you can locate the verses where the writer (Paul) mentions the strong “membership” types of relationships, including:

Family: _____

Employee: _____

Army: _____

Country: _____

People of the common bond: _____

Life Application

What kinds of things can our church do to show that we care for those who come?

What helped you sense that this church wanted you here?

How do we help people sense that they belong?

What can each of us do to contribute to a caring congregation?



THE PERFECT CHURCH

Why I Believe!

1. The Church is the only organization committed to addressing _____ issues (i.e.: time and eternity).
(Matt. 28:18–20; John 17:20–21; Acts 1:7–8; Phil. 2:14–16)
2. Christ, the gospel, and the Church give dignity and _____ to those who believe and belong. (Eph. 5:25–33)
3. The Church of Jesus Christ is a moral and spiritual _____ in a world of moral chaos. (Matt. 5:13–16)
4. The Church is a community of love and healing for _____ people, regardless of age, education, color, or class, available to help from birth to death. (1 Cor. 13; Eph. 4:29–5:2; 1 John 3:16–18)
5. In the Church of Jesus Christ, everybody is _____ special! (1 Cor. 12:12–26; Eph. 4:16)
6. When everything else has fallen, the Church will still be _____!
(Matt. 16:17–18)



***Give some of your reasons for the importance
of Christ's Church in our world:***

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____
- F. _____

THE PERFECT CHURCH?

Qualities We Want

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 12. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 16. _____ |

What Factors Led You to Choose This Church?



BIBLICAL MODELS OF HEALTHY CHURCHES

Read these Scriptures and write the activities of the early Christians.

1. Acts 2:42–47
2. Ephesians 4:1–16
3. Hebrews 10:19–25

FIVE HABITS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH

(A Study of Heb. 10:19–25)

1. Their priority is drawing near to _____ . (v. 22)
2. They cling firmly to their _____ . (v. 23)
3. They keep finding ways to _____ each other. (v. 24)
4. They will never give up _____ together. (v. 25)
5. They specialize in _____ one another. (v. 25)



Biblical Names for and Descriptions of the Church

1. A Chosen People (*1 Pet. 2:9*)
2. A Royal Priesthood (*1 Pet. 2:9*)
3. A Holy Nation (*1 Pet. 2:9*)
4. A People Belonging to God (*1 Pet. 2:9*)
5. Christians (*Acts 11:26*)
6. The Body of Christ (*1 Cor. 12:27*)

Application

Which of the above names or titles for the Church do you like best and why?

Share which one or two of the “Five Habits of Healthy Churches” is:

1. A great need for congregations:
2. An area of personal improvement:



WHAT IN THE WORLD IS A WESLEYAN CHURCH?

Interesting Facts

1. Our name comes from the eighteenth-century preacher and scholar, _____.
2. The Wesleyan Church is historically connected to the _____ Church.
3. The Wesleyan Church is a _____ merger of the Wesleyan Methodist Church and the Pilgrim Holiness Church.
4. Other church groups that are similar to us in doctrine are Free Methodists, Nazarenes, Churches of Christ In Christian Union, Church of God (Anderson), and The _____ Army.
5. We have about _____ churches in North America and about _____ congregations around the world.
6. On a given weekend, there will be about _____ Wesleyans in worship around the world.
7. Our earliest beginnings were in the year _____.
8. We may be the only denomination founded primarily on response to the _____ issues of the time.
9. Those key social issues were slavery, women's rights, and _____ labor atrocities.
10. We were one of the first denominations in America to ordain a _____.
11. Our home office is in _____, Indiana.
12. We have churches in _____ countries around the world.



***HOW DO WESLEYANS COMPARE AND CONTRAST
WITH OTHER GROUPS?***

CHRISTIAN

ORTHODOX

PROTESTANT

EVANGELICAL

WESLEYAN

1. CHRISTIAN:

2. ORTHODOX:



THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth:

And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hades; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible:

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made;

Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;

He suffered and was buried, and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father;

And He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead;

Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one catholic and apostolic church; I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.



3. PROTESTANT

On What Do Protestants and Catholics Agree?

1. Both view the _____ as our written authority.
2. Both ascribe to the _____.
3. Both believe that _____ is the Son of God and Savior.
4. Both aggressively _____ the world by winning converts to Christ.
5. Both believe in _____.



WHAT ARE SOME OF THE DIFFERENCES?

- Source of _____: Protestants believe that the Bible is our sufficient source of common authority. Catholics view the authority of tradition and the (Catholic) church on virtually equal footing with Scripture.
- The _____: For Protestants, communion and baptism are sacred rituals that are means of grace when received through faith. For Catholics, the sacraments (especially baptism) are instruments that bring us salvation.
- _____: In the Roman Catholic system, the authority of the Pope has long been considered infallible. Protestants believe that no human leader carries that kind of divine authority.

4. EVANGELICAL

THREE ISSUES

1. The inspiration, reliability, and authority of the Bible. Some biblical scholars and some mainline Protestant denominations began teaching that the Bible is not always to be taken “literally,” and that biblical truth may not be sufficient truth for our Christian lives.
2. Focus on specific and personal faith in Christ for one’s salvation. Our hope for heaven is not found in merely “doing good works,” rather it is by personal faith in Christ.
3. The belief that all Christians need to be engaged in active witness to their faith in Christ, through word and deeds, in hopes of drawing others to trust in Christ.



APPLICATION

- What are my evaluations of a person who talks the Christian life and faith, but walks (lives) in unchristian fashion?
- Briefly describe how putting your faith and biblical values into practice makes a difference:
 1. In your attitude about yourself.
 2. In your marriage (if married) and/or your family relationships.
 3. In dealing with temptations.
 4. In your philosophy of life and/or your personal mission statement.
 5. How you talk to or about others.

James 1:22

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”

James 2:14

“What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?”

James 2:20–26

“You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,’ and he was called God’s friend. You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone. In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.”



WHAT ABOUT OUR CHURCH—ITS STORY AND DREAMS

Our Church's Family Album

Our Church's Birthday

Our Founding Pastor

Why Our Church Was Started

Our Mission Statement

..... Our Vision for Ministry



THE MISSION OF THE WESLEYAN CHURCH

The Wesleyan Church is a Spirit-led, praying movement called to evangelize and make disciples of all people by:

- Equipping believers
- Developing leaders
- Multiplying churches
- Transforming communities

THE VISION OF THE WESLEYAN CHURCH

Transforming lives, churches, and communities through the hope and holiness of Jesus Christ.

And the particular way we envision doing this is by:

1.

2.

3.

4.



WHERE ARE YOU?

1. Describe the major influences in your spiritual/religious life so far. Identify both the positive and negative ones.

Positive Influences

Negative Influences



2. When and how did God first become real to you?
3. Has your faith in Christ become a “personal thing” for you? If so, please describe. If not, describe the barriers.
4. How have your expectations about the Christian life been changed or confirmed?
5. What things seem to be “testing points” for your faith and living a Christian life?



YOUR MOST IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIPS

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

The greatest investment of faith you will ever make is to recognize and confess your need of Jesus Christ as your bridge to God, your guide and example in life, and your hope into eternity. Have you ever made that confession and commitment? Now may be your time!



GREATEST INFLUENCES ON MY VALUES AND VIEWPOINTS

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

THE WESLEYAN QUADRILATERAL

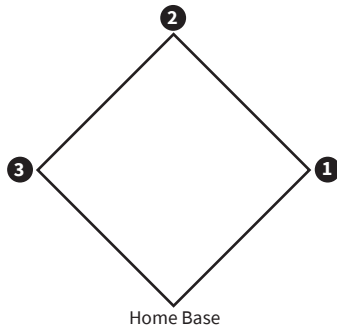
Sources of our Values and Beliefs

Home Base—Scripture

1—Tradition

2—Reason

3—Experience



RELIGIOUS BELIEFS ARE LIKE ONIONS

A. Biblical _____.

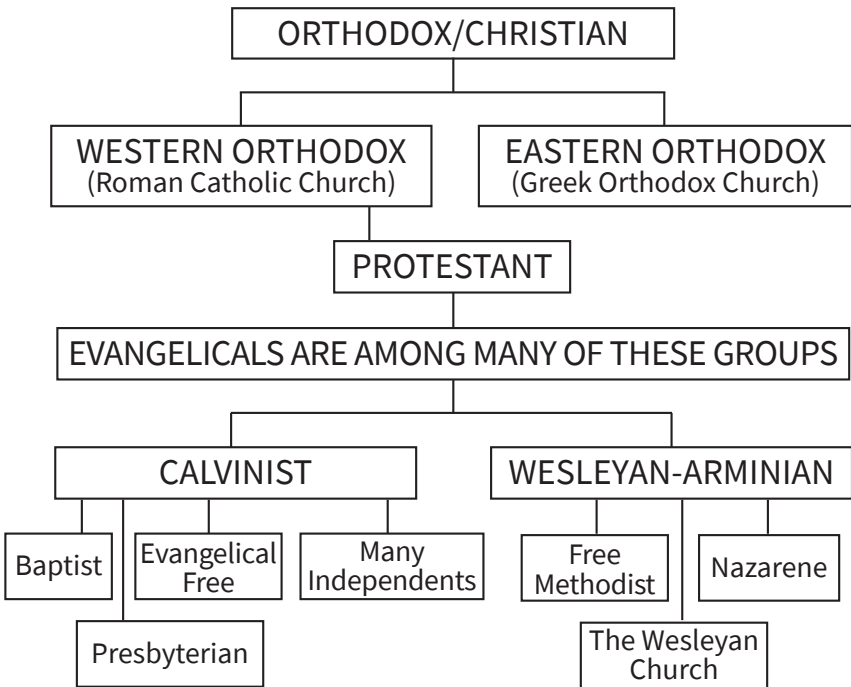
B. _____.

C. _____ Conscience.



REMEMBER?

Christians
Orthodox
Protestant
Evangelical





WHAT (ELSE) WESLEYANS BELIEVE

Guides and Helps to Holy Living

260. To be identified with an organized church is the blessed privilege and sacred duty of all who are saved from their sins and are seeking completeness in Christ Jesus. From the Church's beginnings in the New Testament age, it has been understood that such identification involves putting off the old patterns of conduct and putting on the mind of Christ. In maintaining this Christian concept of a transformed life, The Wesleyan Church intends to relate timeless biblical principles to the conditions of contemporary society in such a way as to respect the integrity of the individual believer, yet maintain the purity of the Church and the effectiveness of its witness. This is done in the conviction that there is validity in the concept of the collective Christian conscience as illuminated and guided by the Holy Spirit. The following items (265) represent historic, ethical and practical standards of The Wesleyan Church. While it is hoped that our people will earnestly seek the aid of the Spirit in cultivating a sensitivity to evil which transcends the mere letter of the law, those entering into membership are encouraged to follow carefully and conscientiously these guides and helps to holy living. Disregard of the principles embraced in these guides and helps to holy living subjects all credentialed ministers and any member serving in an elected leadership capacity to Church discipline (268; see also 550–610).

265. Those admitted to membership in our churches commit themselves to demonstrate their life in Christ in such ways as to:

Toward God

(1) Reverence the name of God and to honor the Lord's Day by divine worship and spiritual edification, participating in those activities which contribute to the moral and spiritual purposes of this day.

Gen. 2:3; Ex. 20:3, 7–11; Deut. 5:11–15; Isa. 58:13–14; Mark 2:27; Acts 20:7; Heb. 4:9

(2) Seek only the leading of the Holy Spirit and to abstain from all forms of spiritism, such as the occult, witchcraft, astrology, and other similar practices.



Lev. 19:31; 20:6; Deut. 18:10–14; Acts 19:18–19; Gal. 5:19–20

Toward Self

(3) Exercise faithful stewardship through the wise use of their time and material resources, practicing careful self-discipline in order to further the mission of Christ's church (remembering the principle of tithing which is basic to the New Testament standard of stewardship) and to demonstrate compassion to those in need.

**Prov. 3:9; Mal. 3:10; Matt. 23:23–24; Acts 20:35; 1 Cor. 16:2;
2 Cor. 9:7; Eph. 5:16; Col. 3:17; James 2:15–16; 1 John 3:17**

(4) Follow the teachings of the Scriptures regarding gender identity and sexual conduct.

Gen. 1:27; 1 Cor. 6:12–20; 7:17–24

(5) Demonstrate a positive social witness by abstaining from all forms of gambling and by abstaining from using or trafficking (production, sale or purchase) in any substances destructive to their physical, mental and spiritual health, such as alcoholic beverages, tobacco and drugs (other than proper medical purposes of drugs); and by refraining from membership in secret societies and lodges which are oath bound, believing that the quasi-religious nature of such organizations divides the Christian's loyalty, their secret nature contravenes the Christian's open witness and the secret nature of their oaths is repugnant to the Christian conscience.

Ex. 20:17; Rom. 14:21; 1 Cor. 6:12. Gambling violates the principle of Christian stewardship and the tenth commandment, is harmful to the individual in that it is emotionally addictive, is a poor example to others, and pollutes the moral climate of society.

**Prov. 20:1; Rom. 6:12; 14:21; 1 Cor. 6:12–20; 10:23; 2 Cor. 7:1;
Eph. 5:18; 1 Thess. 5:22.** Christians are to regard their bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit. While no "thing" of itself is sinful, the Christian



should avoid the use of anything which would not help build the fellowship of the church, would not help the believers to realize their full potential in Christ, or which would enslave them. In the light of the scientific knowledge of our day concerning the actual and potential harm of these substances, total abstinence is more in keeping with these biblical principles than is moderation.

Ex. 20:3; Matt. 5:34–36; John 18:20; Acts 4:12; James 5:12.

These prohibitions do not restrict membership in labor, civic or other organizations which do not contradict loyalty to Christ and the Church. When in these relationships Christian principles are violated, members shall be dealt with because of such violations and not because of the membership itself.

Toward Family

(6) Follow the teachings of the Scriptures regarding marriage and divorce. We affirm that sexual relationships outside of marriage and sexual relationships between persons of the same sex are immoral and sinful. We further affirm that marriage between one man and one woman is God's design, and we regard sexual sin of the spouse, such as adultery, homosexual behavior, bestiality or incest, as clear biblical grounds for considering divorce, and then only when appropriate counseling has failed to restore the relationship.

Ex. 20:14, 17; 22:19; Lev. 20:10–16; Matt. 5:32; 19:19; Mark 10:11–12; Luke 16:18

(7) Preserve the sanctity of the home by honoring Christ in every phase of family life and by demonstrating Christlike love (always avoiding violence, including physical, psychological, emotional, or sexual abuse toward one's spouse or family members, as well as sexual infidelity or desertion, any of which warrant church discipline for the offender and may justify separation or divorce if true repentance and appropriate counseling cannot bring about reconciliation), and by living peacefully with one another, thereby building up one's spouse and family members through word and deed, and encouraging



the nurture and education of the children in the Christian faith so as to bring them early to the saving knowledge of Christ.

**Prov. 22:6; Malachi 2:13–16; Mark 10:9; 1 Cor. 7:10–16;
Eph. 5:28; 6:4**

Toward the Church

(8) Work together for the advancement of God’s kingdom and for the mutual edification of fellow believers in holiness, knowledge, and love; walk together in Christian fellowship by giving and receiving counsel with gentleness and affection; by praying for each other; by helping each other in sickness and distress; and by demonstrating love, purity, and courtesy to all.

Rom. 15:1–2; Eph. 4; 1 Thess. 5

(9) Grow in the knowledge, love, and grace of God by participating in public worship, the ministry of the Word of God, the Lord’s Supper, family and personal devotions, and fasting.

**Mark 2:18–20; Acts 13:2–3; 14:23; Rom. 12:12; 1 Cor. 11:23–28;
Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6; 1 Tim. 2:1–2; 2 Tim. 3:16–17; Heb. 10:25;
1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18**

(10) Preserve the fellowship and witness of the Church with reference to the use of languages. The Wesleyan Church believes in the miraculous use of languages and the interpretation of languages in its biblical and historical setting. But it is contrary to the Word of God to teach that speaking in an unknown tongue or the gift of tongues is the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit or of that entire sanctification which the baptism accomplishes; therefore, only a language readily understood by the congregation is to be used in public worship. The Wesleyan Church believes that the use of an ecstatic prayer language has no clear scriptural sanction, or any pattern of established historical usage in the Church; therefore, the use of such a prayer language shall not be promoted among us.



Acts 8:14–17; 1 Cor. 12:1—14:40; Gal. 5:22–24

Toward Others

(11) Do good as much as is possible to all people as God gives opportunity, especially to those in the body of Christ, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the destitute, by visiting or helping those who are sick or in prison; by instructing, correcting or encouraging them in love.

Matt. 25:31–46; Eph. 5:11; 1 Thess. 5:14; Heb. 3:13; 10:23–25

(12) Respect the inherent individual rights of all persons, regardless of race, color or sex.

1 Cor. 8:13; 12:13; Gal. 3:28; 1 Tim. 5:21

(13) Live honestly, be just in all dealings and faithful in all commitments.

Eccl. 5:4–5; Rom. 12:17; Phil. 4:8–9; 1 Pet. 2:12

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YOUR REACTION

After reading the thirteen commitment statements in *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church* (called Membership Commitments), offer your responses to the following:

1. Which of the thirteen do you view as positive and fairly non-debatable?

2. Which do you believe to be unreasonable?

3. Which ones are confusing to you?

4. Assuming that you might disagree with one or more of the Wesleyan convictions, if you were to abide by them all, would you say that any one of them is unwise or unhealthy for you or would cause you to have a negative witness for Christ? Support your response.



YOUR MEMBERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Student Membership

564. Those children and youth who have testified to the experience of regeneration may be received as student members immediately after their conversion and baptism. The local board of administration, having provided for their examination concerning their relationship with Christ and their intention to develop toward spiritual maturity, may receive them by majority vote. Student members should be received formally in a public ceremony led by the pastor or staff pastor. The local church shall provide a program that will guide student members toward spiritual maturity and an understanding of the importance, privileges, and commitments of membership.

565. Student members shall have all the rights of adult-level members except to vote and hold office. They may become adult-level members at any time the local board of administration deems they are qualified, and should be received as given in 553. If student members are not qualified for adult-level membership by their sixteenth birthday, every effort shall be made by the pastor and local board of administration during the following year to prepare them for adult-level membership. When they are twenty-one years of age, they must either become adult-level members or be dropped from the student membership list (cf. 782:9). Student members who desire to become adult-level members shall be received as given in 553.

Membership

553. Persons to be admitted to membership in The Wesleyan Church shall be those who meet the conditions set forth in the Constitution (297:1–4).

(1) Candidates for membership shall be examined by the local board of administration (782:7; 835–837), to determine whether they meet the requirements of the Constitution concerning their experience of regeneration, Christian baptism, their willingness to be instructed in and acceptance of the Articles of Religion, Elementary Principles and the authority of The Discipline in matters of church government, and their willingness to enter into a membership and discipleship relationship with The Wesleyan Church through the local church.



(2) Candidates for membership who have satisfactorily passed the examination by the local board of administration, shall be voted upon by the local church conference unless the local church conference has delegated this responsibility to the local board of administration (297:5; 655:1). In either case, it shall require a majority vote of those present and voting to receive; and if objections are urged against the reception of a member, it shall require a two-thirds vote of those present and voting.

(3) Candidates for membership may be asked to affirm their commitment to their experience of regeneration, Christian baptism, their acceptance of the Articles of Religion, Elementary Principles and the authority of The Discipline in matters of church government, and their willingness to continue a membership and discipleship accountability relationship with The Wesleyan Church through the local church annually. The local board of administration shall carry out this reaffirmation process in a fair and responsible manner, taking care to preserve both the life and health of the church as well as the established rights of the member. If a member chooses not to participate in the reaffirmation process, that choice will be considered as a voluntary withdrawal from membership.

(4) Persons who have been duly accepted for membership as explained in 553:2, should be received into membership in a public service, in which they shall make their confession and vows public, (556:5), and be given the right hand of fellowship by the pastor or the representative of the pastor.

557. Guides and Helps to Holy Living. The Membership Commitments Guides and Helps to Holy Living (260–268) are the biblically-based convictions historically held by The Wesleyan Church, which all members are encouraged to prayerfully consider and embrace.

558. Leadership Qualifications. All those serving in elected or credentialed office in The Wesleyan Church shall be required to follow carefully and conscientiously the Guides and Helps to Holy Living found in paragraphs 260–268.

297. The conditions of membership are:

- (1) Confession of faith in Jesus Christ as evidenced by an inner witness of new birth through the Holy Spirit and a commitment to pursue holiness in all things.



- (2) Christian baptism.
- (3) Instruction in, acceptance of, and a commitment to abide by the Articles of Religion (210–250) which are summarized in 299, the Elementary Principles, and the authority of The Wesleyan Church in matters of church government.
- (4) A commitment to live out the mission and vision of The Wesleyan Church through a discipling relationship within the local church.

555. The rights of membership are set forth in the Constitution (302). The judicial process for dealing with any member charged with failure to uphold the Articles of Religion are located in the Judiciary section of *The Discipline* (5000–5004) and in the *General Board Policy on Church Discipline and Ministerial Restoration*.

302. The rights of membership are:

- (1) The fellowship of the saints and the encouragement, admonition and spiritual guidance of the ministry.
- (2) The access to the sacraments and ordinances of the Church.
- (3) The right to participate in any vote being taken by the local church conference.
- (4) The eligibility to hold leadership positions (552:2–3), providing the qualifications are met (260–268; 558) and if not under discipline.
- (5) The right to hearing and appeal if charged with failure to maintain the conditions of membership, with the specific provision that joining another religious body shall of itself sever membership in the Church.
- (6) A member in good standing in any Wesleyan church is entitled to membership privileges in any Wesleyan church to which a transfer of membership may be desired, subject to 567.

305. Church membership may be terminated only by one or more of the following (585):

- (1) Voluntary withdrawal.
- (2) Joining another religious body or a secret order.
- (3) Expulsion after proper hearing and conviction.
- (4) Persistent neglect of Church relationship as defined by *The Discipline*.
- (5) Death.

PARTICIPANT

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ARTICLES OF RELIGION

(from *The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church* 2016)

1. Faith in the Holy Trinity

210. We believe in the one living and true God, both holy and loving, eternal, unlimited in power, wisdom, goodness, the creator and preserver of all things. Within this unity there are three persons of one essential nature, power and eternity—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Gen. 1:1; 17:1; Ex. 3:13–15; 33:20; Deut. 6:4; Ps. 90:2; Isa. 40:28–29; Matt. 3:16–17; 28:19; John 1:1–2; 4:24; 16:13; 17:3; Acts 5:3–4; 17:24–25; 1 Cor. 8:4, 6; Eph. 2:18; Phil. 2:6; Col. 1:16–17; 1 Tim. 2:1–7; Heb. 1:8; 1 John 5:20

2. The Father

212. We believe the Father is the source of all that exists, whether of matter or spirit. With the Son and the Holy Spirit, He made man, male and female, in His image. By intention He relates to people as Father, thereby forever declaring His goodwill toward them. In love, He both seeks and receives penitent sinners.

Ps. 68:5; Isa. 64:8; Matt. 7:11; John 3:17; Rom. 8:15; 1 Pet. 1:17

3. The Son of God

214. We believe in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, truly God and truly man. He died on the cross and was buried, to be a sacrifice both for original sin and for all human transgressions, and to reconcile us to God. Christ rose bodily from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and there intercedes for us at the Father's right hand until He returns to judge all humanity at the last day.



Ps. 16:8–10; Matt. 1:21, 23; 11:27; 16:28; 27:62–66; 28:5–9, 16–17; Mark 10:45; 15; 16:6–7; Luke 1:27, 31, 35; 24:4–8, 23; John 1:1, 14, 18; 3:16–17; 20:26–29; 21; Acts 1:2–3; 2:24–31; 4:12; 10:40; Rom. 5:10, 18; 8:34; 14:9; 1 Cor. 15:3–8, 14; 2 Cor. 5:18–19; Gal. 1:4; 2:20; 4:4–5; Eph. 5:2; 1 Tim. 1:15; Heb 2:17; 7:27; 9:14, 28; 10:12; 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 John 2:2; 4:14

4. The Holy Spirit

216. We believe in the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and is of the same essential nature, majesty, and glory as the Father and the Son, truly and eternally God. He is the administrator of grace to all mankind, and is particularly the effective agent in conviction for sin, in regeneration, in sanctification, and in glorification. He is ever present, assuring, preserving, guiding, and enabling the believer.

Job 33:4; Matt. 28:19; John 4:24; 14:16–17; 15:26; 16:13–15; Acts 5:3–4; Rom. 8:9; 2 Cor. 3:17; Gal. 4:6

5. The Sufficiency and Full Authority of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation

218. We believe that the books of the Old and New Testaments constitute the Holy Scriptures. They are the inspired and infallibly written Word of God, fully inerrant in their original manuscripts and superior to all human authority, and have been transmitted to the present without corruption of any essential doctrine. We believe that they contain all things necessary to salvation; so that whatever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man or woman that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. Both in the Old and New Testaments life is offered ultimately through Christ, who is the only mediator between God and humanity. The New Testament teaches Christians how to fulfill the moral principles of the Old Testament, calling for loving obedience to God made possible by the indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit.



The canonical books of the Old Testament are:

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

The canonical books of the New Testament are:

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, and Revelation.

Ps. 19:7; Matt. 5:17–19; 22:37–40; Luke 24:27, 44; John 1:45; 5:46; 17:17; Acts 17:2, 11; Rom. 1:2; 15:4, 8; 16:26; 2 Cor. 1:20; Gal. 1:8; Eph. 2:15–16; 1 Tim. 2:5; 2 Tim. 3:15–17; Heb. 4:12; 10:1; 11:39; James 1:21; 1 Pet. 1:23; 2 Pet. 1:19–21; 1 John 2:3–7; Rev. 22:18–19

6. God's Purpose for Humanity

220. We believe that the two great commandments which require us to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, and our neighbors as ourselves, summarize the divine law as it is revealed in the Scriptures. They are the perfect measure and norm of human duty, both for the ordering and directing of families and nations, and all other social bodies, and for individual acts, by which we are required to acknowledge God as our only supreme ruler, and all persons as created by Him, equal in all natural rights. Therefore all persons should so order all their individual, social and political acts as to give to God entire and absolute obedience, and to assure to all the enjoyment of every natural right, as well as to promote the fulfillment of each in the possession and exercise of such rights.

Lev. 19:18, 34; Deut. 1:16–17; Job 31:13–14; Jer. 21:12; 22:3; Mic. 6:8; Matt. 5:44–48; 7:12; Mark 12:28–31; Luke 6:27–29, 35; John 13:34–35; Acts 10:34–35; 17:26; Rom. 12:9; 13:1, 7–8, 10; Gal. 5:14; 6:10; Titus 3:1; James 2:8; 1 Pet. 2:17; 1 John 2:5; 4:12–13; 2 John 6



7. Marriage and the Family

222. We believe that every person is created in the image of God, that human sexuality reflects that image in terms of intimate love, communication, fellowship, subordination of the self to the larger whole, and fulfillment. God's Word makes use of the marriage relationship as the supreme metaphor for His relationship with His covenant people and for revealing the truth that that relationship is of one God with one people. Therefore God's plan for human sexuality is that it is to be expressed only in a monogamous lifelong relationship between one man and one woman within the framework of marriage. This is the only relationship which is divinely designed for the birth and rearing of children and is a covenant union made in the sight of God, taking priority over every other human relationship. We adhere to the teachings of Scripture regarding the sacredness of gender identity, sexual conduct, and marriage, and believe that sexual relationships outside of marriage and sexual relationships between persons of the same sex are immoral and sinful.

Gen. 1:27–28; 2:18, 20, 23–24; Isa. 54:4–8; 62:5; Jer. 3:14; Ezek. 16:3ff.; Hos. 2; Mal. 2:14; Matt. 19:4–6; Mark 10:9; John 2:1–2, 11; 1 Cor. 9:5; Eph. 5:23–32; 1 Tim. 5:14; Heb. 13:4; Rev. 19:7–8

8. Personal Choice

224. We believe that humanity's creation in the image of God included ability to choose between right and wrong. Thus individuals were made morally responsible for their choices. But since the fall of Adam, people are unable in their own strength to do what is right. This is due to original sin, which is not simply the following of Adam's example, but rather the corruption of the nature of each mortal, and is reproduced naturally in Adam's descendants. Because of it, humans are very far gone from original righteousness, and by nature are continually inclined to evil. They cannot of themselves even call upon God or exercise faith for salvation. But through Jesus Christ the preventive grace of God makes possible what humans in self effort cannot do. It is bestowed freely upon all, enabling all who will to turn and be saved.



Gen. 6:5; 8:21; Deut. 30:19; Josh. 24:15; 1 Kings 20:40; Ps. 51:5; Isa. 64:6; Jer. 17:9; Mark 7:21–23; Luke 16:15; John 7:17; Rom. 3:10–12; 5:12–21; 1 Cor. 15:22; Eph. 2:1–3; 1 Tim. 2:5; Titus 3:5; Heb. 11:6; Rev. 22:17

9. Sin: Original, Willful, and Involuntary

225. We believe that through the disobedience of Adam and Eve sin entered the world and all creation suffered its consequences. The effects of sin include disruption of the relationship between God and humanity, deterioration of the natural order of creation, and exploitation of persons by evil or misguided social systems. The whole of creation groans for redemption. Each person is born with a proclivity toward sin, manifested in an inordinate orientation toward self and independence from God, leading to deliberate acts of unrighteousness. The residual effects of Adam and Eve's disobedience include a marred human nature from which arise involuntary shortcomings, faults, infirmities, and imperfect judgments, which should not be accounted the same as willful sin. However, as manifestations of the fallen nature of humanity, these shortcomings of God's holiness still necessitate the merits of the atonement, the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, and the self-control of the believer. Willful sin results when a morally accountable person chooses to violate a known law of God, using freedom of choice to please self rather than obey God. The consequences of willful sin include a loss of fellowship with God, a self-absorption with one's own interests rather than love and concern for others, a bondage to things which distort the divine image, a persistent inability to live righteously, and ultimately everlasting misery and separation from God. The atoning work of Christ is the only remedy for sin, whether original, willful or involuntary.

10. The Atonement

226. We believe that Christ's offering of himself, once and for all, through His sufferings and meritorious death on the cross, provides the perfect redemption and atonement for the sins of the whole world, both original and actual. There is no other ground of salvation from sin but that alone.



This atonement is sufficient for every individual of Adam's race. It is unconditionally effective in the salvation of those mentally incompetent from birth, of those converted persons who have become mentally incompetent, and of children under the age of accountability. But it is effective for the salvation of those who reach the age of accountability only when they repent and exercise faith in Christ.

Isa. 52:13–53:12; Luke 24:46–47; John 3:16; Acts 3:18; 4:12; Rom. 3:20, 24–26; 5:8–11, 13, 18–20; 7:7; 8:34; 1 Cor. 6:11; 15:22; Gal. 2:16; 3:2–3; Eph. 1:7; 2:13, 16; 1 Tim. 2:5–6; Heb. 7:23–27; 9:11–15, 24–28; 10:14; 1 John 2:2; 4:10

11. Repentance and Faith

228. We believe that for men and women to appropriate what God's prevenient grace has made possible, they must voluntarily respond in repentance and faith. The ability comes from God, but the act is the individual's.

Repentance is prompted by the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit. It involves a willful change of mind that renounces sin and longs for righteousness, a godly sorrow for and a confession of past sins, proper restitution for wrongdoings, and a resolution to reform the life. Repentance is the precondition for saving faith, and without it saving faith is impossible. Faith, in turn, is the only condition of salvation. It begins in the agreement of the mind and the consent of the will to the truth of the gospel, but issues in a complete reliance by the whole person in the saving ability of Jesus Christ and a complete trusting of oneself to Him as Savior and Lord. Saving faith is expressed in a public acknowledgment of His lordship and an identification with His church.

Mark 1:15; Luke 5:32; 13:3; 24:47; John 3:16; 17:20; 20:31; Acts 5:31; 10:43; 11:18; 16:31; 20:21; 26:20; Rom. 1:16; 2:4; 10:8–10, 17; Gal. 3:26; Eph. 2:8; 4:4–6; Phil. 3:9; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:25; Heb. 11:6; 12:2; 1 Pet. 1:9; 2 Pet. 3:9



12. Justification, Regeneration and Adoption

230. We believe that when one repents of personal sin and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, that at the same moment that person is justified, regenerated, adopted into the family of God, and assured of personal salvation through the witness of the Holy Spirit.

We believe that justification is the judicial act of God whereby a person is accounted righteous, granted full pardon of all sin, delivered from guilt, completely released from the penalty of sins committed, by the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, by faith alone, not on the basis of works.

We believe that regeneration, or the new birth, is that work of the Holy Spirit whereby, when one truly repents and believes, one's moral nature is given a distinctively spiritual life with the capacity for love and obedience. This new life is received by faith in Jesus Christ, it enables the pardoned sinner to serve God with the will and affections of the heart, and by it the regenerate are delivered from the power of sin which reigns over all the unregenerate.

We believe that adoption is the act of God by which the justified and regenerated believer becomes a partaker of all the rights, privileges and responsibilities of a child of God.

Justification: Hab. 2:4; Acts 13:38–39; 15:11; 16:31; Rom. 1:17; 3:28; 4:2–5; 5:1–2; Gal. 3:6–14; Eph. 2:8–9; Phil. 3:9; Heb. 10:38

Regeneration: John 1:12–13; 3:3, 5–8; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:26; Eph. 2:5, 10, 19; 4:24; Col. 3:10; Titus 3:5;

James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:3–4; 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 John 3:1

Adoption: Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5, 7; Eph. 1:5

Witness of the Spirit: Rom. 8:16–17; Gal. 4:6; 1 John 2:3; 3:14, 18–19

13. Good Works

232. We believe that although good works cannot save us from our sins or from God's judgment, they are the fruit of faith and follow after regeneration. Therefore they are pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and by them a living faith may be as evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit.



Matt. 5:16; 7:16–20; John 15:8; Rom. 3:20; 4:2, 4, 6; Gal. 2:16; 5:6; Eph. 2:10; Phil. 1:11; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 1:3; Titus 2:14; 3:5; James 2:18, 22; 1 Pet. 2:9, 12

14. Sin After Regeneration

234. We believe that after we have experienced regeneration, it is possible to fall into sin, for in this life there is no such height or strength of holiness from which it is impossible to fall. But by the grace of God one who has fallen into sin may by true repentance and faith find forgiveness and restoration.

Mal. 3:7; Matt. 18:21–22; John 15:4–6; 1 Tim. 4:1, 16; Heb. 10:35–39; 1 John 1:9; 2:1, 24–25

15. Sanctification: Initial, Progressive, Entire

236. We believe that sanctification is that work of the Holy Spirit by which the child of God is separated from sin unto God and is enabled to love God with all the heart and to walk in all His holy commandments blameless. Sanctification is initiated at the moment of justification and regeneration. From that moment there is a gradual or progressive sanctification as the believer walks with God and daily grows in grace and in a more perfect obedience to God. This prepares for the crisis of entire sanctification which is wrought instantaneously when believers present themselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, through faith in Jesus Christ, being effected by the baptism with the Holy Spirit who cleanses the heart from all inbred sin. The crisis of entire sanctification perfects the believer in love and empowers that person for effective service. It is followed by lifelong growth in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The life of holiness continues through faith in the sanctifying blood of Christ and evidences itself by loving obedience to God's revealed will.

Gen. 17:1; Deut. 30:6; Ps. 130:8; Isa. 6:1–6; Ezek. 36:25–29; Matt. 5:8, 48; Luke 1:74–75; 3:16–17; 24:49; John 17:1–26; Acts 1:4–5, 8; 2:1–4; 15:8–9; 26:18; Rom. 8:3–4; 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 4:13, 24;



5:25–27; 1 Thess. 3:10, 12–13; 4:3, 7–8; 5:23–24; 2 Thess. 2:13; Titus 2:11–14; Heb. 10:14; 12:14; 13:12; James 3:17–18; 4:8; 1 Pet. 1:2; 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 John 1:7, 9; 3:8–9; 4:17–18; Jude 24

16. The Gifts of the Spirit

238. We believe that the gift of the Spirit is the Holy Spirit Himself, and He is to be desired more than the gifts of the Spirit which He in His wise counsel bestows upon individual members of the church to enable them properly to fulfill their function as members of the body of Christ. The gifts of the Spirit, although not always identifiable with natural abilities, function through them for the edification of the whole church. These gifts are to be exercised in love under the administration of the Lord of the church, not through human volition. The relative value of the gifts of the Spirit is to be tested by their usefulness in the church and not by the ecstasy produced in the ones receiving them.

Luke 11:13; 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:38–39; 8:19–20; 10:45; 11:17; Rom. 12:4–8; 1 Cor. 12:1–14:40; Eph. 4:7–8, 11–16; Heb. 2:4; 13:20–21; 1 Pet. 4:8–11

17. The Church

240. We believe that the Christian church is the entire body of believers in Jesus Christ, who is the founder and only head of the church. The church includes both those believers who have gone to be with the Lord and those who remain on the earth, having renounced the world, the flesh and the devil, and having dedicated themselves to the work which Christ committed unto His church until He comes. The church on earth is to preach the pure Word of God, properly administer the sacraments according to Christ's instructions, and live in obedience to all that Christ commands. A local church is a body of believers formally organized on gospel principles, meeting regularly for the purposes of evangelism, nurture, fellowship and worship. The Wesleyan Church is a denomination consisting of those members within district conferences and local churches who, as members of the body



of Christ, hold the faith set forth in these Articles of Religion and acknowledge the ecclesiastical authority of its governing bodies.

Matt. 16:18; 18:17; Acts 2:41–47; 9:31; 11:22; 12:5; 14:23; 15:22; 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:28; 16:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:2; Eph. 1:22–23; 2:19–22; 3:9–10, 21; 5:22–33; Col. 1:18, 24; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 12:23; James 5:14

18. The Sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper

242. We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the sacraments of the church commanded by Christ and ordained as a means of grace when received through faith. They are tokens of our profession of Christian faith and signs of God's gracious ministry toward us. By them, He works within us to quicken, strengthen and confirm our faith.

We believe that water baptism is a sacrament of the church, commanded by our Lord and administered to believers. It is a symbol of the new covenant of grace and signifies acceptance of the benefits of the atonement of Jesus Christ. By means of this sacrament, believers declare their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.

Matt. 3:13–17; 28:19; Mark 1:9–11; John 3:5, 22, 26; 4:1–2; Acts 2:38–39, 41; 8:12–17, 36–38; 9:18; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16; Rom. 2:28–29; 4:11; 6:3–4; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27–29; Col. 2:11–12; Titus 3:5

We believe that the Lord's Supper is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death and of our hope in His victorious return, as well as a sign of the love that Christians have for each other. To such as receive it humbly, with a proper spirit and by faith, the Lord's Supper is made a means through which God communicates grace to the heart.

Matt. 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; John 6:48–58; 1 Cor. 5:7–8; 10:3–4, 16–17; 11:23–29



19. The Second Coming of Christ

244. We believe that the certainty of the personal and imminent return of Christ inspires holy living and zeal for the evangelization of the world. At His return He will fulfill all prophecies made concerning His final and complete triumph over evil.

Job 19:25–27; Isa. 11:1–12; Zech. 14:1–11; Matt. 24:1–51; 25; 26:64; Mark 13:1–37; Luke 17:22–37; 21:5–36; John 14:1–3; Acts 1:6–11; 1 Cor. 1:7–8; 1 Thess. 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13–18; 5:1–11, 23; 2 Thess. 1:6–10; 2:1–12; Titus 2:11–14; Heb. 9:27–28; James 5:7–8; 2 Pet. 3:1–14; 1 John 3:2–3; Rev. 1:7; 19:11–16; 22:6–7, 12, 20

20. The Resurrection of the Dead

246. We believe in the bodily resurrection from the dead of all people—of the just unto the resurrection of life, and of the unjust unto the resurrection of damnation. The resurrection of Christ is the guarantee of the resurrection that will occur at Christ's Second Coming. The raised body will be a spiritual body, but the person will be whole and identifiable.

Job 19:25–27; Dan. 12:2; Matt. 22:30–32; 28:1–20; Mark 16:1–8; Luke 14:14; 24:1–53; John 5:28–29; 11:21–27; 20:1–21:25; Acts 1:3; Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 6:14; 15:1–58; 2 Cor. 4:14; 5:1–11; 1 Thess. 4:13–17; Rev. 20:4–6, 11–13

21. The Judgment of All Persons

248. We believe that the Scriptures reveal God as the Judge of all and the acts of His judgment are based on His omniscience and eternal justice. His administration of judgment will culminate in the final meeting of all persons before His throne of great majesty and power, where records will be examined and final rewards and punishments will be administered.



Eccl. 12:14; Matt. 10:15; 25:31–46; Luke 11:31–32; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom. 2:16; 14:10–12; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 9:27; 2 Pet. 3:7; Rev. 20:11–13

22. Destiny

250. We believe that the Scriptures clearly teach that there is a conscious personal existence after death. The final destiny of each person is determined by God's grace and that person's response, evidenced inevitably by a moral character which results from that individual's personal and volitional choices and not from any arbitrary decree of God. Heaven with its eternal glory and the blessedness of Christ's presence is the final abode of those who choose the salvation which God provides through Jesus Christ, but hell with its everlasting misery and separation from God is the final abode of those who neglect this great salvation.

Dan. 12:2; Matt. 25:34–46; Mark 9:43–48; Luke 13:3; John 8:21–23; 14:2–3; 2 Cor. 5:6, 8, 10; Heb. 2:1–3; 9:27–28; 10:26–31; Rev. 20:14–15; 21:1–22:5, 14–15



ARTICLES OF FAITH

(paraphrased from the Articles of Religion)

1. *The Holy Trinity*

God's most basic revelations of Himself are in terms of relationships—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These are terms that relate to our lives, yet show us three basic dimensions of the Almighty. As Father, He is the sovereign Creator of all that exists. As Son (Jesus Christ), God enters creation, becomes a part of it, and identifies with humankind. As Spirit, His nature is a clue to our own, and we experience intimacy and immediacy with God. The Trinity is less a doctrine taught in Scripture and more caught from Scripture, about God's nature as He relates to us.

**Gen. 1:26–27; Ps. 51:1–12; Matt. 3:16–17; John 14, 16 and 17;
Rom. 15:14–20; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 2:14–22; Col. 1:3–8; 1 Thess. 1:1–7;
2 Thess. 2:13–17; 1 Pet. 1:1–2**

2. *God the Father*

Source and sovereign are two descriptions of God, our heavenly Father. This relational term reminds us that God is creator and caregiver, yet maintaining a sometimes mysterious distance from the normal human senses of detection. God chose to get close, involved, and identifiable to us at a strategic time in history through Jesus Christ, and any time through His Spirit. God the Father is all-knowing, everywhere present, and peerless in majesty and power.

**Gen. 1:2; Ps. 13:1–14; 23; 95:1–7; Isa. 6:1–8; Matt. 6:9–13, 25–24;
7:7–12; 1 Tim. 6:11–16; Heb. 1:1–3; 12:28–29**

3. *Jesus Christ, Son of God*

Jesus is unique from all religious leaders, authorities, or gurus who have ever lived. He is in a category of one! The Bible presents Jesus as the truly human-divine being of and from God: God in flesh. Not only is Jesus the God-come-to-earth, Jesus has become our savior, or bridge to God. Even His crucifixion was a major plank in the “bridge” as He was bearing the



consequences for the sins and waywardness of mankind. He was truly our sacrificial lamb. He is our best help and hope, and literally our salvation!

Matt. 1:18–21; 3:13–17; Mark 10:45; 15:38–39; John 1:1–18; 3:16–17; 5:17–19; 8:19–20; 10:25–30; Phil. 2:5–11; 1 Cor. 15:1–8; 2 Cor. 2:6–10; 4:6; Col. 1:15–20; 2:6–10; Heb. 1:1–4; 4:14–16; 2 John 5:1–12

4. *The Holy Spirit*

This title refers to the intimate and living essence of God. We have been created with a capacity for God. When humankind was created, God breathed into us His breath of life. Our *human* spirit, or soul, is our God-given connection with His own Spirit. Our human spirit connects with His *Holy* Spirit. His Spirit is our helper, counselor, strengthener, protector, and our true God-connection, not bound by time and space. The Holy Spirit is God *in* us, *with* us, and *for* us. He is the life-changing resurrection power of God at work within us!

Matt. 1:18–19; John 4:24; 14:16–17; 15:26; 16:13–15; Rom. 1:1–5; 8:1–17; 26–28; Gal. 5:16–26; Eph. 1:1–10; 1:15–23; 2:14–22; Phil. 3:17–15

5. *The Bible, God's Word*

We believe that the Bible is the inerrant God-inspired account of creation history and His relationship with humankind. His wisdom and truth were also given to us through divine inspiration, using human writers to frame His word in words. Jesus Christ is also called the Word, in flesh, and His Spirit also “communicates” to us. Yet, the Bible is the totally reliable, inerrant, God-inspired revelation that is designed to help us understand who God is and what God is like, who we are, what our needs are, and how we get together with God and find His salvation, life, and love to be ours for time and eternity. The Bible is our God-given compass for all matters of faith and relationship with God and each other.

Matt. 22:37–40; 28:19–20; John 10:10; 2 Tim. 3:15–17; Heb. 4:12–13; 2 Pet. 1:19–21



6. God's Purpose for Us

We are made for relationship and stewardship. God made us with an internal desire for companionship and love in relationship with Himself and with one another. We are also created to be managers of the creation and the opportunities we are given. In a sense, He calls us to be “partners in creation” with Him, not as equals, but in a relationship of love, commitment, and service to one another. He has given us the right to enjoy, explore, and expand; we have been given responsibilities for which we are accountable.

Gen. 1:26–28; 2:15–19; Ps. 8; Luke 10:25–37; Eph. 2:8–10

7. Marriage and the Family

God's title as Father implies family. We were created to be the “human family.” Adam and Eve were created for partnership and family development. Marriage and family are outcomes of the nature God gave us, with desires for love, companionship, and creative capacities. The family is an analogy used in Scripture to describe for us the nature of our relationship with Him. We further believe that God's desire and design intended that marriage be a monogamous relationship between one man and one woman, committed to one another for a lifetime. Children are an appropriate and divine-like outcome of that relationship. God is unhappy over that which violates this intention for marriage and family. We believe that same gender marriage is not God's intention and that it violates His basic plan for marriage.

Gen. 1:27–28; Mal. 2:14; Matt. 19:4–6; John 2:1–2; 1 Cor. 7; Eph. 4:25–32; 5:20–33

8. Freedom to Choose

Two amazing capacities God gave us are *discernment* and *choice*. We are called to cultivate a sense of moral righteousness and be responsible to make choices that respect the guidance God *has* given and *continues* to give us.

From creation, humankind has demonstrated the ability and the tendency to use our freedom of choice unwisely. We have proven repeatedly that we are all flawed deeply in a way that inclines us to fall short of the way of life



that God intended for us. This is sometimes called our sin nature. Our nature is also subject to being misled (temptation) and treating others with unkindness that breeds from our natural problems with selfishness, greed, hatred, contempt, pride, and other related maladies. We need help! Without it, we are in huge trouble with each other and God. Help arrived in Jesus Christ. But, once again, we must exercise that choosing capacity to reach out for what God has made available.

Gen. 4:6–7; Deut. 30:19; Josh. 24:15; Prov. 8:10; 16:16; Eph. 4:22–24; 5:20–33

9. Sin

Adam and Eve's disobedience to God has resulted in sin's entering the world and has affected all creation. It not only affects our relationship with God, but it has affected the natural order of creation and has resulted in the sinful exploitation of many. Every person is born with a tendency toward sin and independence from God. In addition, human beings are prone to shortcomings, faults, and imperfections of various kinds, which are not the same as willful sin. Nevertheless they point to the need for atonement, God's sanctifying work, and self-discipline on the part of the individual. Whether original, willful, or involuntary, sin is only forgiven and cleansed through the atoning work of Christ.

10. Salvation

In a real sense, our waywardness presented God with a dilemma. How could His love and justice be accomplished as humanity violated His moral standards? Self-sacrifice was and is God's solution for our sake. Entering this world of flesh through Jesus Christ, God lived, loved, taught, suffered, died, and was raised in celebration and victory over death, sin, and Satan (the living force of evil in our universe). In essence, Christ became the bridge that makes possible our return to God. His life and death were a colossal "price" or punishment paid for our sin. This is sometimes called the "atonement," which means payment for an offense and provision for reconciliation. That's what God has done for us through Jesus Christ! It is the divinely offered opportunity for our literal salvation, for time and eternity. Christ makes new life (being born again) a reality. Now, comes our response.



**Matt. 1:18–21; John 1:1–14; 3:16–17; 14:5–7; Col. 1:13–17; 4:14–16;
1 Tim. 2:1–6; Heb. 5:1–10**

11. Repentance and Faith

Two of the most beautiful and powerful words in human language! To repent means to recognize that something (in or with us) is not the way it *should* be. We must change. We regret things, as they are. We decide to turn away from the way it has been, turn toward God and the way it should be, make decisions, and take actions to follow through with our repentant spirit. In the case of our relationship to God and to sin, we turn away from sin and to Christ. We place our trust and hope in Jesus Christ for our forgiveness, and trust Him as our bridge to God, our Savior. Those steps of repentance and faith are prompted by God's Spirit as we are enabled to develop a relationship of faith in God and practice the healthy habit of repentance as often as needed to keep life on course as God's Word and Spirit help us.

**Mark 1:15; Luke 5:32; 13:3; 24:47; John 3:16; 17:20; 20:31; Acts 5:31;
10:43; 11:18; 16:31; 20:21; 26:20; Rom. 1:16; 2:4; 10:8–10, 17; Gal.
3:26; Eph. 2:8; 4:4–6; Phil. 3:9; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:25; Heb. 11:6;
12:2; 1 Pet. 1:9; 2 Pet. 3:9**

12. Justification, Regeneration, and Adoption

We believe that the Bible teaches that salvation is both an event and a relationship. The event is sometimes referred to as conversion, being born again, receiving Christ into our lives, or any one of several other terms or phrases. Personal and decisive faith in Christ assures us of God's forgiveness. We are justified (made right before God) and regenerated (given new life), but we must also give attention to walking in faith and obedience to Christ. St. Paul uses the term "in Christ." When you take a plane to some destination, you board it and remain on board for the duration of the journey. Just as you would not jump off after takeoff, your faith journey continues after justification and regeneration.

When one is in Christ, that person is a child of God, adopted, as it were, and now an heir of the vast kingdom of the Father.



Matt. 5:9; John 1:12; Rom. 8:14–19; 10:13; 2 Cor. 6:17–18; 4; Gal. 3:26, 29; 4:5–7; Eph. 1:5; 2:19; Phil. 1:6; 1 Tim. 2:1–6; 2 Tim. 4:6–8; Heb. 12:1–3; 1 Pet. 1:3–9; 1 John 3:1–2

13. Good Works

Living the Christian life is an issue of faith *and* works, not faith *or* works. The two go together like each half of a pair of scissors. The following Bible references clarify the necessity of each in a healthy relationship to God and one another.

Eph. 2:8–10; 1 Thess. 1:3; book of James

14. Satan and Sin

The author of sin is Satan, the living embodiment of spiritual rebellion and ungodliness. Satan is limited in power but active in the world to tempt, lure, and otherwise con us into doubting God and distrusting His values, priorities, and commitments. Sin has various definitions, but in its clearest form is disobedience to a known expectation of God or conscience. It may also be *not doing* what *should* be done. The most common biblical meaning of sin is “missing the mark.” The Bible reveals that God’s greatest concern is for those sins of intention and malice. However, as God helps mature our consciences and spiritual capacity, sin is that which is not love toward ourselves or others. Sin is unhealthy in its mildest consequences, and deadly for time and eternity in its worst consequences. We are accountable for our sins. That is why repentance, forgiveness, and reform are so important. We believe that God who offers forgiveness for our sins also gives us wisdom, desire, and power to live increasingly without conscious and intentional sinning. Forgiveness from sins committed is just the beginning. Deliverance from the inner push toward sin, sometimes called the “sin nature,” requires divinely assisted participation and ongoing discipline.

Job 1–2; Zech. 3:1–2; Matt. 4:11; 12:24; John 8:44; 12:31; Rom. 3:23; 6:1–23; 2 Cor. 6:15; Eph. 5:25–28; 6:10–18; 4:4; 1 Thess. 3:5; 1 Pet. 4:1–6; 5:8; 1 John 1:1–10; 2:1–2; 3:4–10



15. Sanctification and Holy Living

When we initially come to Christ in faith, it is pretty much a self-serving experience. It is about *our* sins, *our* lostness, *our* need of God. Me, me, me, and my needs and the benefits and blessing I can receive. Now, think about it for a minute.

What is described above is wonderful, but it is strictly a *consumer mentality*. We learn from life experience and Scripture the following:

First, we can't measure up to basic Christianity without help. Second, Christianity is not just about "taking," but also about giving and serving. Third, there will continue to be three major enemies that we face; the world, the flesh, and the devil (Satan). We need help.

A much deeper and more comprehensive commitment and clean up is needed, and one that is not as self-serving in nature. That's where Romans 12:1–3 hits the nail on the head.

Sanctification *begins* when we first come to Christ. We have been separated from our sins and given new life and are in right relationship with God. That's a wonderful beginning, but there is more! Essentially, sanctification and holy living are about becoming a fully committed and cleaned up "tool" to be used for serving God. The "holy" part of it can be best summarized as living a life of love, like Christ has lived for us. Christlikeness is holiness.

**Matt. 5–7; Rom. 8:1–4; 12:1–21; Eph. 4:22–24, 25–32; 5:1–2, 15–20;
Col. 2:6–12; 3:1–17; 1 Thess. 4:1–8; 5:23; 1 Pet. 1:13–23; 2:1–25; 3:15–18**

16. The Gifts, Fruit, and Guidance of the Holy Spirit

To tackle the sanctification and holy living issues, we need big help. Our spirit needs the ongoing help of God's Holy Spirit. The human spirit is the most intimate and immediate aspect of who we are. The Holy Spirit is the intimate and immediate presence and personality of God in touch with and helping us in areas of discernment, character, and service. Terms that the Bible uses in this regard are fruit, gifts, and guidance of the Spirit. The following Scriptures help us understand in what ways the Spirit helps us.

**John 14:15–21; 15; 16:5–11; Rom. 12:4–8; 1 Cor. 12:1–14; Eph. 4:7–8;
Gal. 5:16–26; Heb. 2:4**



17. The Church of Jesus Christ

Amazing as it sounds, the Church is the tangible and collective presence or representation of Christ on earth! Christianity is not just about “me” but about “we.” We are individually created and accountable before God, but we are called together and sent out to be God’s representatives on earth. The Christian movement was initially sparked and fueled by the resurrection of Christ, then given an official “launch” when God’s Holy Spirit came powerfully on the disciples of Jesus in Jerusalem, shortly after the ascension (departure into the heavens) of Christ. It has since been built and strengthened by The Spirit of God to be salt and light in our world, and to make the gospel of Christ attractive to those who are not yet His followers. We are called to worship, witness, and win others to Him. None of us is, individually, the “perfect” Christian. All of us together make the “perfect” Christian body.

Matt. 16:18; 28:19–20; John 17; Acts 2:1–12; Eph. 1:22–23; 2:19–22; 4; 1 Cor. 12

18. The Sacraments: Baptism and The Lord’s Supper

Sacraments are those specific religious acts that Christ intended for us to continue until He returns. Catholics identify seven sacraments. The exact number that God would endorse is a mystery. Sacraments are means of confirming our faith and giving public witness to the sacred nature of what we believe. They remind us of the gracious Christ of history and His death for us, the Christ of the ever present, who abides with us to help day by day, and a powerful reminder that He will fulfill His promise to return some day for His followers! We recognize and practice two sacraments: the Lord’s supper and baptism.

Matt. 3:13–17; 26:26–28; 28:19; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; John 6:48–58; Acts 2:38–41; Rom. 6:1–2; 1 Cor. 5:7–8; 10:3–4; 11:23–29

19. The Return of Christ

Often called the second coming of Christ, it is the biblical teaching about the amazing return of Jesus Christ to earth. It is a dramatic statement of



need for the world to get serious about their faith in Him. Christ will someday come to take believers out of this world. There is lively debate about when the second coming will occur in light of world events and the role of Christians in the world.

Matt. 24:36–51; Luke 12:39–40; John 21:15–25; Acts 1:1–11; 1 Thess. 1:8–10; 2:17–20; 3:13; 4:13–18; 5:1–11; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:15

20. Resurrection of the Dead

The Bible teaches that when Christ returns He will raise the “dead in Christ,” who will live forever with Him! It is a belief offering amazing hope and optimism in light of the waves of massive meaninglessness of life for some, the difficulty of earthly life for others, and even the suffering and martyrdom of millions on earth who hold out hope that God has something infinitely better for us on the “other side” of this world and life. It is indeed a living hope that is worth living toward!

John 11:25–26; 14:1–4; 1 Cor. 15:12–58; 1 Thess. 4:13–18; Rev. 20:11–13

21. Final Accountability

We believe that the Bible teaches final accountability of all persons to God. That accountability will happen, we believe, in the form of a judgment time in which there will be assignments of human beings to heaven or hell. Stark and contrasting as they are, they are intended to remind us of the reality of consequences beyond time, into eternity, on the basis of our lives lived and faith in our great hope through Jesus Christ. “Where are you intending to spend eternity?” is the question. And, on what basis are you firming up your plans? Faith in Christ and following Christ are the only sure options for each and all of us! *Are you exercising those options?*

22. Made for Eternity

We are made for eternity. We are all finally accountable to God. Beyond death there exists eternity, with incredibly different characteristics. The ultimate best is heaven. The ultimate worst is hell. Our destiny is according to God’s judgment, grace, and final determination rather than some arbitrary



decree of God, disconnected from our relationship with and response to His love and redemption extended to us in Christ.

Ps. 73:12–20; Matt. 10:28; 13:30–50; 25:34–46; Mark 9:42–49; Luke 13:3; John 3:16–17; 8:21–30; 14:1–4; 2 Cor. 5:1; Heb. 2:1–3; 9:27–28; 10:26–31; 1 Pet. 1:3–9; 2 Pet. 1:3–11; Rev. 20:14–15; 21–22

23. Christian Assurance

We strongly believe that persons need not be in doubt about their salvation or relationship to God. We believe in spiritual security for now and into eternity based on four clear biblical essentials:

Faith: John 20:31; Rom. 10:9, 13–14; Heb. 11:6; 1 John 3:23; 5:1, 4–5, 13

Love: Gal. 5:6; Heb. 6:10; 1 John 3:23–24; 5:2–3

Obedience: Heb. 5:9; 12:7–9; 13:17; 1 John 1:7; 2:3–6, 17; 3:23–24

The Witnesses:

a. Witness of the Holy Spirit: John 16:12–15; Rom. 8:14–16; 1 John 3:24; 4:13; 5:6–8

b. Witness of the Human Spirit: 1 John 3:18–21; 5:10

c. Witness of the Word: John 20:31; 2 Tim. 3:16; 1 John 5:11–13

d. Witness of the Works: Gal. 5:22–23; 2 Tim. 4:6–8; Heb. 6:7–9; 1 John 5:1–5

e. Witness of the World: 1 John 5:9

We do *not* believe that the above four considerations are invalidated by a fairly common view of eternal security that is based on the doctrine of double predestination, which teaches that God has predetermined or predestined certain persons for heaven and other others for hell. Our true security rests in what Christ has done for us and our ongoing faith relationship in Christ.



THE HISTORY OF THE WESLEYAN CHURCH:

Its Story and Scriptural Base

The Wesleyan Story

The Wesleyan Church finds its roots in the church of the New Testament, sharing with the primitive church its saving faith in Jesus Christ. The great expressions of doctrinal truth worked out by the worldwide church in the centuries following the New Testament era are found in the Articles of Religion of The Wesleyan Church, testifying to its oneness with the historic fellowship of the church universal.

Occasionally throughout church history, however, one or more of the biblical doctrines has become neglected by the mainstream of the church, and God has had to raise up a man who with his followers has sought to renew a balanced presentation of the whole gospel. So it was with the doctrines of God's gift of grace to all men, of personal assurance in salvation, and of Christian perfection. The renewal of these doctrines began with a man who was born in England over 300 years ago: John Wesley.

John Wesley's Experience

John Wesley was born June 17, 1703, in the little town of Epworth, England, where his father was pastor of the Anglican Church. Shortly before John's sixth birthday, the parsonage burned at night and John was snatched from an upstairs window by a neighbor standing on another's shoulders, just before the roof fell in. He always afterward thought of himself as a "brand plucked from the burning."

It was while John was completing his education at Oxford University that the reading of some religious books kindled within him a desire for a holy life. He and some of his friends became so zealous in their attempts to please God that they were nicknamed "the Holy Club" and "Methodists."

Although John Wesley had earned two degrees at Oxford and had been ordained to the ministry, his desire to know that he was personally saved was not yet satisfied. He served for three years as a missionary to the Native Americans and colonists in America, yet returned to England as frustrated as ever. But Peter Boehler, a faithful Christian friend from Germany, pointed the way. On May 24, 1738, at a home Bible study, Wesley felt his heart



“strangely warmed” and knew that Christ had taken his sins and saved him from the law of sin and death.

From this time on, John Wesley devoted his life to sharing with others his “warmhearted” relationship to God. He spent over 50 years traveling up and down through the British Isles, preaching several times a day to great throngs of people. He organized his followers into “societies” and “classes.” He was aided in his work by his younger brother, Charles, who not only preached, but also wrote some 6,000 hymns.

John Wesley had Christian holiness as his goal all along, and he soon saw that both the Bible and Christian experience taught that there was a possibility of entire sanctification in this present life. He recognized in the Bible—and saw confirmed in the testimonies of those reached through his preaching—that after conversion there is another necessary experience. In this, the Christian completely consecrates himself to God, is cleansed of his tendency to sin, and is filled with the Holy Spirit. So he preached, wrote, and exhorted others to seek all that God had for them. He declared that God had raised up the Methodists to spread scriptural holiness through “these lands.”

Methodism Comes to America

After John Wesley died on March 2, 1791, his societies withdrew from the Church of England and formed the Methodist churches. Even before Wesley’s death, members of his societies had found their way to the American colonies. The first known Methodist service in the colonies was held by Philip Embury in New York City in 1766. Quickly the word spread to Philadelphia, and from a separate beginning in Maryland, it spread to Delaware and northern Virginia.

After the colonies gained their independence, Wesley had ordained preachers for the American churches and two superintendents, Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke. On Christmas Eve, 1784, the preachers convened in Baltimore, Maryland, and organized the Methodist Episcopal Church.

At the time of the American Revolution, the Methodists were only a tiny sect, but by 1850, they had become the largest of all denominations. In between was written an exciting story of evangelism and revival. On the American frontier, the Methodist message of salvation available for all people and the Methodist system of circuit-riding were just what was needed; hundreds of thousands were brought to Christ.



From the beginning, the American Methodists gave strong emphasis to Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection or holiness. However, in 1812, the General Conference voted to separate Wesley's *Plain Account of Christian Perfection* and the other doctrinal tracts from the *Discipline*. Unfortunately, 20 years passed before the *Plain Account* was again available. Most Methodist preachers were dependent upon what they could carry in their saddlebags for a library; when they could not read about holiness, it was soon neglected in their preaching.

Wesleyan Methodism Begins

Another emphasis of early Methodism which was later neglected was that of opposition to slavery. John Wesley had strongly denounced human slavery. Francis Asbury and other early American Methodist preachers had followed suit. But with the growth of Methodism in the southern states and the increasing economic advantage of slavery due to invention of the cotton gin, church leaders became increasingly reluctant to offend the preachers and members in the slaveholding states.

Orange Scott, a district superintendent in New England, became a strong proponent of abolitionism, an emerging movement calling for the immediate end of slavery. Many other Methodists joined his call for the Church to return to its earlier standards. When they encountered bitter opposition, they were removed from office or denied pulpits for refusing to be silent on the issue. Seeing no hope of change, they decided that it was time to form a new denomination. Accordingly, from May 31–June 7, 1843, a convention was held in Utica, New York, to organize the Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America.

The new church was organized free of bishops, having only presidents to moderate its conferences. It not only opposed slavery, but it championed many forms of social and political reform. It opposed war, the use of alcoholic beverages and tobacco, membership in secret societies and lodges, and supported women's rights and the emerging labor movement.

At the first General Conference of the new denomination, held in 1844, there was adopted the first article on sanctification ever incorporated by any denomination in its doctrinal statement. It was subsequently ratified by the annual conferences and printed in *The Discipline* of 1848.



The Holiness Revival

The neglect among Methodists of holiness preaching in the years following 1812 soon called forth protests and appeals for revival. In 1835, there began in New York City a remarkable women's prayer meeting called the Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness. It was led by two sisters, Sarah Lankford and Phoebe Palmer. Eventually, it was opened to men; for more than 60 years ministers and laymen, district superintendents and bishops, and college and seminary professors came to those meetings to seek the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Not only within Methodism, but also among Congregationalists and Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Baptists, a holiness revival broke out that grew in scope and power.

During the Civil War, the holiness revival became somewhat dormant, although Phoebe Palmer and her physician husband carried it to Great Britain. But following the Civil War, the revival was vigorously renewed. In 1867, the first camp meeting for the promotion of holiness was held at Vineland, New Jersey. As a result, a national organization was formed that eventually became known as the Christian Holiness Partnership. Soon there were regional, state, and local associations. Then came holiness conventions, a multiplication of holiness periodicals and publishing houses, and hundreds of evangelists specializing in the preaching of entire sanctification.

The Wesleyan Methodist Connection had successfully concluded its crusade against slavery. Now it was caught up in the holiness revival, the early stages of which had been reflected in its doctrinal statement of 1844–1848. It further refined its statements, insisted that its pulpits would be open only to preachers who proclaimed perfect love, and turned its energies from changing a person's external condition to changing his internal motives and attitudes.

Eventually, the larger, older denominations became concerned about those who were specializing in holiness preaching, and they began to put pressure on them to confine themselves to accepted forms of worship and evangelism. At the same time, there was a growing multitude of people who had been saved through the ministry of holiness evangelists who had never had ties to the older churches. And there were many from the lowest levels of society who had been saved through holiness rescue missions who did not feel at home in the older churches. So, many small holiness



denominations began to emerge from the various associations and prayer bands.

Among these tiny denominations were several which eventually became a part of The Wesleyan Church. In 1880, there began in Southern California what was later to be known as The Holiness Church. In 1882, in Pennsylvania and later spreading to Indiana, there emerged what was to be known as the Holiness Christian Church. In 1885, a group appeared in the Midwest that at a later time took the name Missionary Bands of the World. In 1888, in eastern Canada, some Baptist ministers who were entirely sanctified encountered opposition from their brethren and formed the Alliance of the Reformed Baptists of Canada. In 1893, a group known as the Hephzibah Faith Missionary Society formed in Iowa. In 1896, the Pentecostal Rescue Mission was established in Binghamton, New York. In 1897, in Cincinnati, Ohio, a prayer band was started which later became the International Apostolic Holiness Church. In 1899, in Colorado, there began what was to be the People's Mission Church. Sometime during these years, there emerged in Ohio a small group known as the Pentecostal Brethren in Christ. And in 1917, the Pilgrim Holiness Church organized in Pasadena, California.

The Pilgrim Holiness Church

In 1897, in Cincinnati, Ohio, two holiness evangelists, Martin Wells Knapp, a Methodist, and Seth Cook Rees, a Quaker, organized the international Holiness Union and Prayer League. It was designed to promote worldwide holiness evangelism, not as a denomination but as an interdenominational fellowship.

In the years that followed, under General Superintendent George B. Kulp, the Union became the International Apostolic Holiness Church. Then, from 1919 to 1925, there followed a series of mergers, involving in turn the Holiness Christian Church, the Pentecostal Rescue Mission, the Pilgrim Church, the Pentecostal Brethren in Christ, the People's Mission Church, and some overseas missions. The new national denomination, with mission fields around the world, came to be known as the Pilgrim Holiness Church.

In 1930, the Church found itself in need of a drastic reorganization. The coming together of tiny groups had left it with overlapping boards and officers and no means of correlating the whole. The General Assembly of that



year revised the *Manual* (the book of church law) and established one general superintendent, one general board, one unified budget, and one centralized headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana.

In the years that followed, Paul Westphal Thomas, former leader of the People's Mission Church, was the man who patiently made the new plan work. He served in many different departments of the Church, climaxing his service with four years as general superintendent. The Church grew through evangelism, through world missions, and through better organization and administration. In its later years, the Pilgrim Holiness Church was again involved in mergers and in reorganization. In 1946, it received into its ranks the Holiness Church of California. In 1958, it changed from one general superintendent to three. And in 1962, the Africa Evangelistic Mission merged with the Pilgrims.

The Wesleyan Methodist Church

Once caught up in the holiness revival, the Wesleyan Methodists soon realized that in their reaction against autocratic church government, they had structured their own too loosely. So they started a process of restructuring that was to go on across nearly one hundred years. Some of their annual conferences led the way by making their presidents actual superintendents. Eventually, the name of the denomination was changed to The Wesleyan Methodist Church of America, dropping the old idea of "Connection." Denominational leadership evolved slowly, first with departmental heads and then, in 1947, a full-time general conference president correlating the whole. In 1959, he gave way to three general superintendents.

The holiness revival also brought renewed zeal among Wesleyans for communicating the gospel to others. Overseas missions began in Africa in 1889, and, one by one, other fields around the world were added. At home, growth accelerated slowly. But after World War II, the Church launched many new extension projects in the mushrooming suburbs, and church growth reached levels never before experienced.

The key persons in the revitalizing and restructuring of the Church were Eber Teter and Roy S. Nicholson. Rev. Teter served for 14 years as the first "superintendent-type" annual conference president and followed that with 18 years of service heading up both home and foreign missions. Dr. Nicholson



became the only full-time general conference president, besides serving in many other general offices and leading the Church to greater efforts in outreach.

During the later years, the Wesleyan Methodists enjoyed the addition of some of the smaller groups which had formed out of the holiness revival. In 1947, a significant portion of the Hephzibah Faith Missionary Association joined the Wesleyan Methodists. In 1958, the Missionary Bands were added. And in 1966, the Alliance of the Reformed Baptists of Canada also merged.

The Merging of the Streams

The Pilgrim Holiness Church and the Wesleyan Methodist Church had often discussed the possibility of combining their forces—in the 1920s, in the 1940s, and in the late 1950s. But in 1962 and 1963, the respective general conferences authorized renewal of negotiations. And in 1966, the two general conferences were held simultaneously to hear reports from the Joint Commission on Merger. As a result, merger was approved.

The union as The Wesleyan Church was consummated in Anderson, Indiana, beginning June 26, 1968. A *Discipline* was adopted and officers and a general board were elected. In the following months, the headquarters for the new denomination was located in Marion, Indiana. Districts and colleges underwent mergers and realignment.

The merged body began to grow more rapidly than either former group had done. The 1972 General Conference at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, authorized the development of new general conferences overseas, providing for the full maturing of the mission fields. The Caribbean Provisional General Conference was organized on April 3, 1974, and the Provisional General Conference of the Philippines on April 22–23, 1975. Two denominational conferences on evangelism were held which helped speed growth on the home front. On October 5, 1975, *The Wesleyan Hour* began its radio broadcast, soon extending its ministry to over 100 stations. By the 1976 General Conference at Wichita, Kansas, the Church heard reports of a 20 percent gain in membership since merger.



THE BIBLICAL BASE

One of the distinguishing marks of The Wesleyan Church, from the life of John Wesley through the histories of the various denominational bodies, has been that of deep respect for the authority of the Bible and an insistence that doctrine and practice must be based upon it.

John Wesley said that from 1730 on, he began to be a man of one Book. Later in life he declared, “My ground is the Bible. Yea, I am a Bible-bigot. I follow it in all things, both great and small.” And he said, “in all cases, the Church is to be judged by the Scripture, not the Scripture by the Church.” When the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1784, it took as its doctrinal statement on the Scriptures the article of the Church of England:

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture, we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the church.

This statement was adopted later by the Wesleyan Methodists, the Pilgrim Holiness Church, and most of the tributary groups that merged into them. A couple of the groups did reflect rather early the growing conflict between liberal theologians and those committed to a solid belief in the Bible. The International Apostolic Holiness Union in 1902 adopted the following:

Rationalism is making awful havoc in the religious world, under the specious names of “The Higher Criticism” and “The New Theology.” We therefore emphatically affirm our unwavering faith in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as Divinely and supernaturally given, and our only Divinely authorized outward rule of faith and practice.



But by 1910, this group had also settled for the older Methodist statement.

In 1951, the Wesleyan Methodists decided that a stronger statement was needed to counteract the tendencies of many modern Christians to look upon the Bible as simply another human book. So they added to the old statement one sentence. With only slight changes in wording, it was retained as a part of the official statement of The Wesleyan Church as follows:

These Scriptures we hold to be the inspired and infallibly written Word of God, fully inerrant in their original manuscripts and superior to all human authority.

So The Wesleyan Church has not only maintained its position on the divine origin and authority of the Scriptures, but has made its doctrinal statement even more explicit. It is first and foremost a church of the Bible, seeking to set forth nothing but what the Bible teaches, and seeking to require only what the Bible requires.

THE  **wesleyan** CHURCH

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