We recommend that the study guide be used by Methodists and Baptists for reflection, conversation, and the increase of fellowship.
FAITH WORKING THROUGH LOVE

STUDY GUIDE
accompanying the Final Report of the International Dialogue between the Baptist World Alliance and the World Methodist Council

Edited by Valerie Duval-Poujol & Ulrike Schuler on behalf of the BWA/WMC dialogue team

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Front Cover: This church window was photographed by Ulrike Schuler in Christ Church Lambeth in London (today known as ‘The Hub’ Oasis Waterloo). The window was designed by the architect of the church, P.J. Darvall BA, ARIBA in 1960. It represents the diversity of human activities. The historical characters, with two exceptions, have been chosen at random. All are depicted, irrespective of date, race, social or theological differences and all share the one belief in the cross of Christ thus emphasising the essential unity of the Christian Church.
In the spirit of John 17:21 ("that all of them may be one... so that the world may believe that you have sent me"), two international delegations from the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) and the World Methodist Council (WMC) met between 2014 and 2018 and experienced the enrichment and the challenges of a theological dialogue. The result of this dialogue is a report called “Faith working through love”. It sets out the convergences and divergences between Baptists and Methodists on important issues (church, salvation, baptism, mission, etc.). It highlights how much more Methodists and Baptists have in common than what might separate them. In its conclusions the report gives some recommendations to both Methodists and Baptists for a closer connection and for working together in the mission of the church.

Considering the nature of the report (specialized topics with specialized theological vocabulary), the two delegations also decided to publish this study guide to enable non-specialists to enter into conversations with others and benefit from this dialogue. The study guide has been designed with groups in mind. It is intended to encourage people to explore the issues addressed in the report, by dialogue in groups composed of Methodists and Baptists who are eager to get to know each other better. It could be churches in the same town, national unions, theological students or teachers, friends or relatives especially in multidenominational contexts etc. The important thing is diversity within the group that includes both Methodists and Baptists.

The content of the study guide follows the pattern of the report:

1. The first session is about getting to know each other.

2. Accordingly, each main topic in the report will provide a topic for a session in your discussion: “History and Heritage of Baptists and Methodists” (chapter 1 of the report); “Church, Scripture and Authority” (chapter 2 of the report, first part); “Justification and Sanctification” (chapter 2 of the report, second part); “Baptism and Christian initiation” (chapter 3 of the report); “Worship and Witness” (chapter 4 of the report).

3. A final session for concluding reflections and prayers offers also stories of cooperation from all around the word. We invite you to end with a particular prayer, to be prayed by Baptists and Methodists together. It was drafted for this purpose by our two delegations, arising out of our dialogue.

4. Resources

For those who want to learn more on the different topics, we recommend reading the report itself and using the resources indicated at the end of this study guide.
These resources include:
- A Bible study: “The Lord’s call for unity: Peter and Cornelius” (Acts 10);
- An Appendix with a selection of important documents quoted in the study guide;
- Literature: books recommendations of both traditions with short introductions about the respective contents.

The study guide includes seven sessions, each following the same pattern:

1. To begin with, a KEY BIBLE VERSE connected to the topic of the session which reminds us that all our Christian knowledge and life is rooted in the Scriptures. The study group could start its meeting with a Bible devotion or Bible study inspired by this Bible verse.

2. Then INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC with a short summary of what the report says on this topic1: the study guide can be used without reading the report, although we also strongly recommend that you read it!

3. GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION: These are for sharing and further reflection. Everybody in the group should be given the chance to express his/her opinion and encouraged to listen to each other with an open mind.

4. "OFF THE BEATEN TRACK" offers a more light-hearted approach to the respective topic.

5. HYMN/SONG: If you do not know the hymn that we suggest, you may read the words as a prayer or time for reflection; or you may suggest another song so that the members of your group may get to know each other’s tradition.

6. PRAYER: We provide a prayer which we suggest is read aloud in the group, but a quiet personal prayer time or a community prayer could also be considered.

The length of each session is not predetermined; every group is free to choose and adapt the content of the meeting. Other songs, prayers, reflections, biblical texts, testimonies may be shared. We encourage you to find your way together.

The prayerful hope of the two delegations from the Baptist World Alliance and the World Methodist Council is that each group using this study guide may be filled with the joy we all have experienced:

1. Joy of a better understanding of our brothers and sisters in Christ,
2. Joy of sharing the same mission to this world, and
3. Joy of witnessing together Jesus Christ with “faith working through love”.

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1 In the section “Introduction to the topic” we generally use exactly the same wording as in the report.
BIBLE VERSE

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35)

INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

Jesus’s famous Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew chapter 5 enumerates several blessings ("Blessed are those..."), sometimes called the ‘Beatitudes’, that are poured out upon the Christian in certain circumstances.

Following on Jesus’s prayer for unity ("I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you", John 17: 20-21) we truly believe there is a special blessing, a real grace for Christians who try to live in unity. Inspired by the Beatitudes we declare: Blessed are those who try to get to know each other as brothers and sisters! Blessed are Methodists and Baptists who try to make a step forward in fellowship, their eyes fixed together upon Jesus!

For this first session, we suggest that each member of the group answers in 5-10 minutes the following questions:

1. How did I first encounter Jesus Christ?
2. How has this transformed/changed my life?

Some people are used to share their personal stories; others are not and could even feel ill at ease or reluctant to do so. The questions are flexible. This very first step is important to inspire the group to focus on the One we have in common: our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ.

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSIONS

1. If you are a Baptist believer, answer this question:
   If you think of a “Methodist Christian” or “Methodism” as a denomination, what are the words that first come to mind?
2. If you are a Methodist believer, answer this question:

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2 For Bible citations we use the New International Version (NIV).
3 These questions are used in different meetings of the Global Christian Forum, a unique gathering of global Christian churches and organizations bringing together all the major streams of the world Christianity (http://www.globalchristianforum.org).
4 It is also possible here to share about the way the tradition in which someone has been brought up led him/her to Jesus/to faith. If the study group is made up of ministers the second question could be worded: How has that led me to my present vocation and ministry?
If you think of a “Baptist Christian” or “Baptism” as denomination, what are the words that first come to mind?

3. Do you remember learning something new about yourself or your faith after speaking or collaborating with a person from another congregation parish or Church than yours?

To get to know other Christians often requires us to overcome past impressions (“I once met a Baptist who...”) or personal prejudices (“To me all Methodists are like...”), to give up generalization (“Every Baptist is a...”) or end up ignoring our neighbor (“Methodist? Never met one...”).

For this first session, the group may choose to read together the Bible study from the report, which you can find at the end of this study guide: “The Lord’s call to unity: the story of Cornelius and Peter” (Acts 10).

To enrich your discussion, read the following parable and share with the group what you understand:


It was six men of Indostan, to learning much inclined, who went to see the elephant (though all of them were blind), that each by observation, might satisfy his mind.
The first approached the elephant, and, happening to fall against his broad and sturdy side, at once began to bawl: 'God bless me! but the elephant, is nothing but a wall!'
The second feeling of the tusk, cried: 'Ho! what have we here, so very round and smooth and sharp? To me 'tis mighty clear, this wonder of an elephant, is very like a spear!'
The third approached the animal, and, happening to take the squirming trunk within his hands, 'I see,' quoth he, the elephant is very like a snake!'
The fourth reached out his eager hand, and felt about the knee: 'What most this wondrous beast is like, is mighty plain,' quoth he; 'Tis clear enough the elephant is very like a tree.'
The fifth, who chanced to touch the ear, said; 'E'en the blindest man can tell what this resembles most; Deny the fact who can, This marvel of an elephant, is very like a fan!'
The sixth no sooner had begun about the beast to grope, than, seizing on the swinging tail, that fell within his scope, 'I see,' quothe he, 'the elephant is very like a rope!' And so these men of Indostan, disputed loud and long, each in his own opinion, exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right, and all were in the wrong!
So, oft in theologic wars, the disputants, I ween,
tread on in utter ignorance, of what each other mean,
and prate about the elephant, not one of them has seen!

“OFF THE BEATEN TRACK”

Joke: How many Christians does it take to change a lightbulb?

1. Baptists: At least 15. One to change the light bulb, and three committees to
   approve the change and decide who brings the potato salad.

2. Methodists: Undetermined. Whether your light is bright, dull, or completely out,
   you are loved. You can be a light bulb, turnip bulb, or tulip bulb. Church wide
   lighting service is planned for Sunday. Bring bulb of your choice and a covered dish.

Jokes sometimes highlight and make us smile or laugh about what others observe as
characteristic or specific to a person or group. In your opinion and experience: Is
there any truth in these jokes?
HYMN/ SONG
Behold how good and how pleasant it is

Chorus: Behold how good and how pleasant it is,
For brethren to dwell together in unity!
Behold how good and how pleasant it is,
For brethren to dwell together in unity!

3. It is like the precious ointment upon the head,
That ran down upon the beard,
Even Aaron's beard:
That went down to the skirts of his garments.

Chorus

4. It is like the precious ointment upon the head,
That ran down upon the beard,
Even Aaron's beard:
That went down to the skirts of his garments.

Chorus

3. As the dew of Hermon, And as the dew that descended
Upon the mountains of Zion:
For there the Lord commanded the blessing,
Even life for evermore.

Chorus

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PRAYER
Eternal and merciful God,
You are a God of peace, love and unity.
We fervently pray through your Holy Spirit
that you will gather all that has been scattered,
and unite all that has been divided.
Convert us to unity in your Spirit
that we may seek your truth
and avoid all discord and disharmony.
Thus we may be of one heart, one will,
one understanding, one with the mind of Christ.
Grant also that, turning together towards Jesus
we may more faithfully worship you,
our Father, through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit,
to whom be all glory, now and forever.
Amen.

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6 Text by Glorraine Moone (1947-2016), inspired by the psalm 133:1.
SECOND SESSION
ROOTS & HERITAGE OF BAPTISTS AND METHODISTS

BIBLE VERSE
“For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.” (Psalm 100:5)

INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

Baptist and Methodist traditions are post-Reformation renewal movements, understanding themselves as a work of the Holy Spirit within the life of the wider church. Both have been nourished by the Puritan heritage of the 17th century, and have been shaped and widely influenced by the Pietistic streams of European religious history and of the evangelical revivals of the 18th and 19th centuries.

The Baptist movement as we know it today arose in pre-Revolutionary England in the context of persecution and dissent (beginning of 17th century). Modern historians recognize two distinguishable beginnings for the English Baptist movement, the one associated with Separatists John Smyth (1570-1612) and Thomas Helwys (1550-1616), out of which emerged the General Baptist tradition in 17th England (with the first Baptist congregation, in Spitalsfields, in London in 1611). The second issued in the Particular Baptists who emerged from offshoots of an independent congregation established by Henry Jacob (1563-1624) at London in 1616. In different contexts and in various ways, Baptists have developed a distinctive ethos of discipleship and church life characterized by the primacy of the local church; baptismal immersion for those who “profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to our Lord Jesus”; congregational church governance through which the “rule of Christ”—as Prophet, Priest, and King—guides the particular community of believers.

The Methodist movement: John and Charles Wesley were loyal priests and theologians of the Church of England who lived during the 18th century. They launched a movement of renewal which was actually part of a much larger Evangelical revival that gave rise to Moravian Pietism on the European continent, a Calvinistic form of Methodism in Britain and the First Great Awakening in America. John (1703-1791) expressed his understanding of the Christian faith primarily in sermons, theological treatises, and discussions of scripture. Charles, his younger brother (1707-1788), became one of the greatest hymn-writers of all time, blended belief and praise to create a unique lyrical theology of God’s love. Both were deeply concerned about a form of Christian discipleship that combined vital piety and social action, the recovery of a rich sacramental spirituality, and the need to translate saving faith into concrete acts of mission and service in the world.

Baptist life has been significantly shaped by the Wesleys. The early Baptist hymnals contained hymns by Charles Wesley, which made a lasting impact on Baptist worship.
Both movements are missionary people and spread quickly, developing a world mission. Methodists and Baptists both sought to focus their mission work through missionary societies under the auspices of missionaries sent by the respective churches and extended through those mentored and trained for mission work.

Nowadays, there are Baptists and Methodists all around the world (see maps below). They are organized in different settings: national autonomous congregations/churches or continental federations, or as part of United or Uniting churches. Globally they are organized in world councils – the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) and the World Methodist Council (WMC). The WMC is also a member of the World Council of churches whereas the BWA lets its member bodies be members on their own behalf.

From the very beginning, both movements were deeply engaged in education and health and broader social development as part of the missionary movement, in the building of schools and hospitals.

In their histories, both movements have tended to fragment, with a tendency towards division that has had ecclesiological, social and political foundations in different social contexts.

Methodists and Baptists both affirm the place of religious freedom in society but the prominent role of the struggle for religious freedom has been far greater in the Baptist movement (see for example The BWA Human Rights Award7; see also WMC Peace Award8).

Both movements have been challenged by issues surrounding gender and race. Both Baptists and Methodists, while recognizing and affirming the gifts of women, faced particular challenges in using these gifts in ministry and mission (though women were engaged in supporting and subsidiary roles). Both movements were also challenged by issues of race and slavery resulting in divisions and lasting animosity, the scars of which affect many of our churches. The growth of indigenous churches in reaction to the planting of colonial-dominated churches has added to the variety and vitality of churches in both denominations.

The following maps give an impression of the global spread of Baptism and Methodism according to the membership of the respective world councils9:

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9 The maps have been created for this study guide. We thank Dr. David Scott who made the WMC map and Mrs. Ashley Becker for the BWA's one. Although there is a difference between the official statistics because of the websites of the world bodies and the visualizing by these graphics (they cannot be more precise according to local distinctions), these maps give a very good actual overview.
STATISTICS BY REGION

North America:
- 95,592 churches
- 18,815,467 members

Central & South America:
- 43,350 churches
- 18,557,329 members

Caribbean:
- 7,442 churches
- 587,787 members

Europe/Middle East:
- 13,244 churches
- 718,677 members

Africa:
- 43,346 churches
- 18,897,895 members

Asia Pacific:
- 34,010 churches
- 5,972,656 members

World Methodist Council
Statistics by Region
GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What do you know about your own church’s tradition and history and about others (locally, national, global)? Share in the group what comes into your mind.

2. Do you know about the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) and the World Methodist Council (WMC)? Can you name a few tasks of these world organizations? You can explore the official websites together:

3. Looking at the tree of the confessions (see graphic next page): Is there anything that strikes you in particular?

4. Do you think, it is interesting or necessary to familiarize ourselves with our personal, national and churches history? How do you think this knowledge of the past explains or influences the present situation? (Have a look at OFF THE BEATEN TRACK)

5. What prominent persons from the Methodist or Baptist traditions do you know about? Please have a look at the list of people and match the names to Methodists and Baptists. What do you know about these people? (see answers on p.14-15)
   1. John Bunyan
   2. Mary Bosanquet-Fletcher
   3. William Carey
   4. Jimmy Carter
   5. Emilio Castro
   6. Aretha Franklin
   7. Billy Graham
   8. Thomas Helwys
   9. Martin Luther King
   10. Charlotte Digges "Lottie" Moon
   11. John Mott
   12. Philip Potter
   13. Queen Salote Tupou III.
   14. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
   15. John Smyth
   16. Charles Haddon Spurgeon
   17. Rick Warren
   18. John Wesley
   19. Charles Wesley
   20. Susanna Wesley
   21. Roger Williams
   22. George Whitefield
BAPTISTS


- Bunyan, John (1628 – 1688): English writer and Puritan preacher important for the Baptist tradition. The Pilgrim’s Progress (1678), a bestseller translated into 120 languages.


- Carter, Jimmy (*1924): 39th President of the United States (1977-1981), before senator and Governor of Georgia, received the Nobel Peace Prize for his work as co-founder of the non-profit organization named after him (Carter Center), member of the Southern Baptist Convention.

- Franklin, Aretha (*1942): American singer and song-writer, “the Queen of soul”, daughter of a Baptist minister. She started her career in a local Baptist church.

- Graham, Billy (1918-2018): Southern Baptist minister, most influential preacher and evangelist in the 20th century; reached in addition hundreds of millions through television, video, film, and webcasts.


- King, Jr., Martin Luther (1929 – 1968): American Baptist pastor, activist, humanitarian and leader in the African-American Civil Rights Movement; received Nobel Peace Prize for his tactics of nonviolence in the fight for racial justice, murdered.


- Spurgeon, Charles Haddon (1834 – 1892): English Particular Baptist preacher, remains highly influential among Christians of various denominations, among whom he is known as the ”Prince of Preachers”. He was a strong figure in the Reformed Baptist tradition, defending the Church in agreement with the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith understanding, and opposing the liberal and pragmatic theological tendencies in the Church of his day.

METHODOISTS

- Bosanquet-Fletcher, Mary (1739 - 1815): English preacher in the early Methodist movement, joint ministry with her husband, John Fletcher, of Huguenot roots, he came to England and was ordained in the Church of England, but worked closely with the Wesleys and the Methodist societies.

- Castro, Emilio (1927 - 2013): Methodist pastor and theologian from Uruguay, director of the World Council of Churches Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, General Secretary of the WCC (1985-1992), acknowledged for his eloquent preaching and progressive views on Christianity and the social order.


- Mott, John (1865 - 1955): American Methodist layperson, leader of the Young Men’s Christian Association YMCA) and World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), president of the World Missionary Conference in 1910 that initiated the broader ecumenical movement (developing into the World Council of Churches); Nobel Peace Prize in 1946 for his work in establishing and strengthening international Protestant Christian student organizations that worked to promote peace.


- Queen Salote Tupou III. (1900 - 1965): third monarch of Tonga 1918-1965. She established the Free Wesleyan Church on Tonga as the religion in the state (only Methodist state church in the world).

- Wesley, John (1703 – 1791): priest of the Church of England, evangelist and preacher, leader and organizer of the Methodist societies in Great Britain, and whose superintendents established the first Methodist Episcopal Church in the USA.

- Wesley, Charles (1707 – 1788): priest of the Church of England and poet; worked with his brother John in the awakening and renewal movement in Great Britain; writer of many of the hymns which expressed the theology and spirit of Methodism (called “lyrical theologian” of Methodism).

- Wesley, Susanna (1669 – 1742): “mother of Methodism”, mother of John and Charles Wesley, who applied the example, teachings and circumstances of their home life that deeply influenced the Methodist movement, gave advice in letters and commentaries, e.g. about the Apostles’ Creed.

- Whitefield, George (1714 – 1770): priest of the Church of England, one of the founders of a wing of Methodism (Calvinistic), itinerant preacher and evangelist in a series of revivals such as the Great Awakening in the British colonies of North America.
"OFF THE BEATEN TRACK"

“Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.”
(Søren Kierkegaard, Danish philosopher, theologian and poet)

HYMN/SONG

O God our help in ages past

Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.

1. Under the shadow of Thy throne
   Thy saints have dwelt secure;
   Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
   And our defense is sure.

2. Before the hills in order stood,
   Or earth received her frame,
   From everlasting Thou art God,
   To endless years the same.

3. Thy Word commands our flesh to dust,
   "Return, ye sons of men:"
   All nations rose from earth at first,
   And turn to earth again.

10 Used with permission of Dennis Fletcher (May 23, 2018).
11 Paraphrase of Psalm 90, written in 1719 by Isaac Watts (1674-1748), English Christian minister (Congregational), theologian, and a prolific hymn writer who is credited with some 750 hymns.
4. A thousand ages in Thy sight
   Are like an evening gone;
   Short as the watch that ends the night
   Before the rising sun.

5. The busy tribes of flesh and blood,
   With all their lives and cares,
   Are carried downwards by the flood,
   And lost in following years.

6. Time, like an ever rolling stream,
   Bears all its sons away;
   They fly, forgotten, as a dream
   Dies at the opening day.

7. Like flowery fields the nations stand
   Pleased with the morning light;
   The flowers beneath the mower’s hand
   Lie withering ere ‘tis night.

8. Our God, our help in ages past,
   Our hope for years to come,
   Be Thou our guard while troubles last,
   And our eternal home.

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**PRAYER**

**Reconciled with one another**

O God, holy and eternal Trinity, we pray for your Church throughout the world; heal her life, renew her worship, strengthen her witness, heal her divisions, let her unity become visible.

Lead us with all our sisters and brothers to community in faith, life and witness so that we, united in the one body, through the one Spirit, may together witness to the complete unity of your love.

Amen.

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12 Prayer taken from a liturgy responding to an ecumenical statement of the National Council of Churches in Germany, “Reconciled with one another: commemorating the Reformation ecumenically in Germany”, 2017.
KEY BIBLE VERSE

“Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.” (1. Corinthians 12:12f)

INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

Together as Baptists and Methodists, we rejoice in our agreement on the main points of the faith as contained in the Apostles’ Creed\(^\text{13}\), including the doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation of Christ.

We believe that the church is a gift of the triune God, founded by our Lord Jesus Christ and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Though our churches are apparently separated and divided, they are in reality united because together we share “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph 4:4-6). The willingness of many Methodists and Baptists around the world to share in the same Eucharistic celebration demonstrates the reality and seriousness of this conviction. Baptists and Methodists confess with other Christians that the church is one, holy, catholic (universal) and apostolic and that it becomes visible and manifest where the word of God is preached and sacraments/ordinances are celebrated.

Baptists and Methodists share a commitment to the importance of lived local Christian community, and to the joining of local churches in broader fellowships. We believe that Christ is present through the Spirit in every gathered congregation that assembles in his name and professes faith in him, especially in the celebration of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. We recognize that local congregation is wholly the church but not the whole church, for there is only one Church of God, whether it is expressed locally or universally.

We hold the notion of covenant to be significant in understanding the common life in Christ. Many Baptists read their congregational covenant regularly, often in the context of celebrating communion. Many Methodists celebrate a service of covenant renewal annually, generally including the Eucharist\(^\text{14}\).

Methodists and Baptists both affirm the priesthood of all believers: all believers (or all members of a local covenanted congregation) together are a priesthood, but this does not imply that each one is a priest apart from the rest of the church. On this basis, both of our traditions have also insisted on setting apart certain people for particular

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\(^{13}\) See Appendix RESOURCES, Sources III: Documents, A.

\(^{14}\) See PRAYER in Session 4.
ministries within our congregations. In our teaching and practice, we have both insisted that pastoral care and discipling work of the church is not to be reserved to ministers or other church officers. We both believe that the church’s life is marked by a mutual watching over one another in love, and this privilege and responsibility is shared by all in the covenanted community.

The One with all authority in heaven and on earth is the one Lord Jesus Christ, and he is both its source and its model; authority among his disciples can only ever be “cruciform” (that is centered on his example on the cross). Methodist and Baptist traditions are both suspicious of hierarchical understandings of authority within the church because they may not be well-suited to the exercise of cruciform authority.

Methodists and Baptists both have guiding and identifying foundational church documents. On the Baptist side these include: The First London Confession (1644/6), the Second London Confession (1677/89), the New Hampshire Confession (1833), the Baptist Faith and Message (1963), and the BWA Centennial Statement (2005)\(^\text{15}\).

On the Methodist side these include: The General Rules (1743), John Wesley's Explanatory Notes on the New Testament (1755) and Standard Sermons (1769), the Twenty-five Articles of Religion (1784), and the Evangelical United Brethren Church Confession of Faith (1962), as well as the statements of the WMC, Saved by Grace\(^\text{16}\) and Wesleyan Essentials of the Christian Faith\(^\text{17}\).

In the Appendix with RESOURCES, Sources III: Documents B and C you will find the summarizing documents of both world councils that are officially accepted by the respective member churches.

Methodists and Baptists have a different vision of how tradition relates to the universal church:

Baptists are “Congregationalists”, that is each gathered community under the rule of Christ is free to determine the shape and direction of life together, including baptismal practice and reception into membership. Even though Baptists regard each congregation as wholly the church, they do not see it as the whole church. Thus their congregational conviction is matched by an associational principle. A congregation enters into wider association voluntarily and the authority of the association is advisory, respecting the integrity of the local congregations where the decisions take place (see graphic). Baptists do not generally regard these wider denominational associations to be expressions of a “Baptist Church”.

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15 See Appendix with Resources, Sources III: Documents, B, 3.
Methodists use the language of “Connectionalism” (“connexionalism”) with regard to their organizational model of church, which means that members and congregations are related to and connected with each other as well as with the conference in which they are represented. The Annual Conference is the arena for decisions for the church in a particular area. In one sense, Methodism is a single church, but every voice is represented in its councils of oversight and governance.

Methodist denominations typically elect equal numbers of lay and clergy in terms of representation at regional and national meetings (conferences) at which the business of the church is conducted. Decisions for a conference region are made at the Annual Conference (see graphic as example).

The question of authority in the church raises the question of the role of the Bible. Both traditions call themselves “Bible Christians”. All we do is rooted in Scripture. John Wesley said he was homo *unius libri*, a man of one Book – the Bible. Similar slogans describing a wholehearted commitment to search out and follow the teachings of the Bible abound in Baptist life also. We both recognize as authoritative the same biblical canon of writings comprising the sixty-six books of the Old and New
Testaments. We both hold to “Scripture alone” (*Sola Scriptura*) which means that Scriptures have the primacy and supremacy, they are the final rule of faith and practice. Yet this does not mean *Nuda Scriptura*, Scripture only to the exclusion of all other sources of knowledge.

We recognize the limitations and dangers of “private interpretation” of Scripture which does not seek the wisdom of the wider interpretive community of the church. To take decisions, we both share a communal hermeneutic (methodology of interpretation), in the gathered local congregation for Baptists and in the conferences of Methodists.

We also observe that there are different ways to receive the teaching of the Bible. Some Methodists will put a particular emphasis on reading the Bible alongside and within the Christian churches’ tradition, using reason and experience as God’s gifts for measuring their interpretation of the Bible. This method for interpreting the Bible is known as “the Wesleyan Quadrilateral”. This means that our theological decisions are made by listening to Scripture, tradition, reason and experience together, in dialogue with each other. Keeping this dialogue running is the theological task.

**The “theological task”:**

![Diagram showing the Wesleyan Quadrilateral: Scripture, Reason, Tradition, Experience]

**GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. What are the consequences of your local congregation being “wholly the church but not the whole church”?
2. How do Methodists and Baptists understand the church: as a company of saints separated from “the world,” and/or a school for sinners saved by grace?
3. Do you identify yourself with a model of church structure which is congregationalist or connectionalist? Are there strengths or weaknesses in either model?
4. What does it mean for a Methodist or a Baptist when he/she reads the Bible to “seek the wisdom of the wider interpretive community of the church”? What benefits do you see in private reading of the Bible and in common reading of the Bible?
Walter Rauschenbusch confessed: "I am a Baptist, but I am more than a Baptist. All things are mine; whether Francis of Assisi, or Luther, or Knox, or Wesley; all are mine because I am Christ's. The old Adam is a strict denominationalist; the new Adam is just a Christian." What do you think of this statement?

"OFF THE BEATEN TRACK"

You can quit smiling now, dear, we are home.

Joke

One day a man who was a devout Christian dies. Saint Peter meets him at the Pearly Gates and begins to give him a tour of Heaven. As the tour goes on, Saint Peter points out all the different Christians. "There's the Catholics, there's the Lutherans, the Methodists, the Presbyterians, the Baptists", and so forth. As they come to this one group way off on their own, who live behind a very tall wall. Saint Peter motions for the man to come closer and whispers. "Now, for this next group, we need to be really quiet. They think they're the only ones in Heaven."

HYMN/SONG

The Church's one foundation

The Church’s one foundation
  Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His new creation
  By water and the Word:
From heav'n He came and sought her

19 Taken from Church is Stranger than Fiction by Mary Chambers. ©1990 Mary Chambers. Used by permission of InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove IL 60515-1426. www.ivpress.com.
To be His holy Bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.

Elect from every nation,
Yet one o’er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation,
One Lord, one faith, one birth;
One holy Name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses,
With every grace endued.

‘Mid toil and tribulation,
And tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation
Of peace for evermore;
Till, with the vision glorious,
Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious
Shall be the Church at rest.

Yet she on earth hath union
With God the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion
With those whose rest is won:
O happy ones and holy!
Lord, give us grace that we,
Like them, the meek and lowly,
In love may dwell with Thee.

**PRAYER**

May the Lord bless us, dear friends, as a Church,
may He make us one, and keep us so;
for it will be the dead stuff among us who will make the divisions.
It is the living children of God who make the unity!
It is the living ones who are bound together.
There will be no fear about that—
Christ’s prayer takes care of us, that we shall be one.
As for those of you who are joined with us in visible fellowship,
and are not one with Christ, may the Lord save you
with His great salvation, and His shall be the praise.
Amen and Amen!

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21 The end of a sermon from Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892), Unity in Christ (No. 668), a sermon delivered on Sunday morning, January 7, 1866 (see C H Spurgeon sermons entitled Unabridged Sermons in Modern Language. Green Forest: New Leaf Pub. Group, 2012).
INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

For Methodists and Baptists, the understanding of justification springs from the same broadly Reformed tradition. In accordance with the Scriptures, we believe that human beings are in need of salvation and God graciously offers redemption through Jesus Christ. The following statement from the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification expresses well our shared understanding:

In faith we together hold the conviction that justification is the work of the triune God. The Father sent his Son into the world to save sinners. The foundation and presupposition of justification is the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ. Justification thus means that Christ himself is our righteousness, in which we share through the Holy Spirit in accord with the will of the Father. Together we confess: By grace alone, in faith in Christ's saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works.

Justification and sanctification are two dynamic aspects of redemption, they are distinct realities that can never be separated. "Faith" and "Union with Christ" are in a sense two sides of the same reality.

Sanctification (being made holy) is the gracious work of God’s Holy Spirit and is always preceded by justification. On the one hand, this holiness is complete in the forgiveness of sins when God justifies and reconciles human beings through Christ. On the other, holiness is God’s continuous work in the Christian life through the power of the Holy Spirit. The final goal of this faith working through love is Christlikeness or holiness.

Baptists and Methodists have developed different nuances to describe those realities. Methodists will name the fullness of salvation as “perfect love” and “entire
sanctification,” phrases that are foreign to Baptist ears (although Methodists are also now somewhat nervous of the language of perfection unless it is carefully explained). Baptists see the fullness of salvation in solely eschatological terms (that is in connection with the end of times), looking to resurrection and glorification rather than any state achievable in this life. Baptists tend to place more emphasis on sin as law breaking and salvation as forgiveness. Methodists also use this language but tend to prefer therapeutic metaphors (e.g. need for healing) and place more emphasis on sin as disease or disability and salvation as restoration to wholeness.

Methodists use the term “Christian perfection” to describe the goal of the Christian life in this world, language which Baptists would not normally use. Baptists do, however, believe that the Christian grows in holiness throughout her or his life, and acknowledge that some believers come to live exemplary lives by loving God and neighbor. Given the qualifications and explanations that Methodists attach to their language of “perfection,” it is possible that Baptists may be able to affirm what Methodists mean by “Christian perfection” even if they do not use the term.

Methodists understand social holiness as both communal sanctification and social transformation. Baptists would certainly affirm the first, believing that covenanted believers grow in holiness together or not at all. There is also a strong, although not uncontroversial, witness to social transformation within the Baptist tradition — Martin Luther King is the obvious example.

We both find practices of mutual accountability and “watching over one another in love” to be central to the Christian life. “Watching over one another in love” integrates Christian discipleship and education, spiritual formation and pastoral care; this practice often take place in small group settings (e.g., the Methodist class system, Baptist Sunday School classes and fellowship, house and cell groups, etc.).

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What does it mean for you personally “to be justified by God”? What does it mean to be “liberated by God”? Can you distinguish/identify from what and for what you become “free”?

2. Is the “forgiveness of sins” a topic heard in sermons and/or discussed in your congregation?

3. Is "watching over each other" something that is attractive for modern individuals? What qualifications are necessary (in others and ourselves) in order for us to accept and adopt advice for our lifestyle?

4. What do you think can help brothers and sisters to "watch over each other in love" and to grow in their spiritual life? What role can rules and disciplines play in that?

5. Do you and your congregation understand the Christian mission as also including the responsibility of social transformation?

6. What are some shared stories of visible holiness which can inspire and shape our common journey as people of God called to holiness?
HYMN/SONG

Where shall my wondering soul begin?25
Where shall my wondering soul begin?
How shall I all to heaven aspire?
A slave redeemed from death and sin,
A brand plucked from eternal fire,
How shall I equal triumphs raise,
Or sing my great Deliverer’s praise?
O how shall I the goodness tell,
Father, which Thou to me hast showed?
That I, a child of wrath and hell,
I should be called a child of God,
Should know, should feel my sins forgiven,
Blessed with this antepast of Heaven!
And shall I slight my Father’s love?
Or basely fear His gifts to own?
Unmindful of His favors prove?
Shall I, the hallowed cross to shun,
Refuse His righteousness to impart,
By hiding it within my heart?
No! though the ancient dragon rage,
And call forth all his host to war,
Though earth’s self-righteous sons engage
Them and their god alike I dare;
Jesus, the sinner’s friend, proclaim;
Jesus, to sinners still the same.

Outcasts of men, to you I call,
Harlots, and publicans, and thieves!
He spreads His arms to embrace you all;
Sinners alone His grace receives;
No need of Him the righteous have;
He came the lost to seek and save.

Come, O my guilty brethren, come,
Groaning beneath your load of sin,
His bleeding heart shall make you room,
His open side shall take you in;
He calls you now, invites you home;
Come, O my guilty brethren, come!

For you the purple current flowed
In pardons from His wounded side,
Languished for you the eternal God,
For you the Prince of glory died:
Believe, and all your sin’s forgiven;
Only believe, and yours is Heaven!

PRAYER

Covenant Prayer26

“I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,
Exalted for thee or brought low for thee.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.
And now, O Glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
Thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
Let it be ratified in heaven.
Amen.

26 Covenant Prayer (United Methodist Hymnal, 607). In 1755, John Wesley began the practice of “covenant renewal” in the Methodist societies, using a service by Puritan pastor Richard Alleine. The “Covenant Prayer” reminds the community that we are not our own; rather, God claims us in Jesus through baptism and makes us his servants (for the full liturgy of the Wesleyan Covenant Service, see https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/covenant-renewal-service).
**KEY BIBLE VERSE**

“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” (Ephesians 4:4-6).

**INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC**

It is commonly said that “Baptists only baptize adults” and “Methodists only baptize infants.” Neither is true: Baptists baptize believers, and congregations may make a judgment that the faith expressed by a young person is authentic and that they are ready to undertake the responsibilities of baptized members. Methodists have always been ready to baptize appropriate candidates of any age and apply the same tests as Baptists in the case of those able to speak for themselves. Methodists have followed the practice of the Anglican tradition which nurtured the Wesleys and which tradition they held to be scriptural. Baptists in turn understand their observance to be a recovery of the primitive practice as taught in the New Testament. In an official ecumenical declaration that both Baptists and Methodist agreed to, it is stated: “While the possibility that infant baptism was also practiced in the apostolic age cannot be excluded, baptism upon personal profession of faith is the most clearly attested practice in the New Testament documents.”[^27]

Among the many convergences between Baptists and Methodists about baptism is the covenant. We both affirm that covenant in relation to the practice of baptism and discipleship shapes the nature and character of our communities. For Baptists the notion of covenant describes our concept of the church as a community of disciples gathered by Word and Spirit (Mt 18:20). Methodists similarly recognize the importance of the church as a covenant community. We both share an understanding of baptism as a sign of God’s covenant that binds us to God and God’s people through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The covenant-making and covenant-renewal elements of our two traditions emphasize the nature of the church as koinonia (communion, joint participation).

Though the practices of our churches may differ, Baptists and Methodists are committed to the historic Christian tradition of baptizing with water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and to the end of making disciples. God’s mission calls us to introduce people to Christ and work with them towards the goal of full Christian maturity.

We recognize that the typical baptismal practices of our churches are divergent and seemingly incompatible, but we also recognize that through one another’s practices true disciples are made.

As Methodists and Baptists, we both affirm that baptism bears witness to regeneration or new birth, but our emphases are different. Baptists see baptism as a witness to and seal of the divine work of regeneration, and so see it as properly following repentance and awakening of faith. As baptism is the rite of entry into the church, this protects the character of the church, which as Baptists understand it is comprised of believers. Methodists are also committed to celebrating the divine work of regeneration, and to regenerate church membership, but they do not see restricting baptism to believers only as the way to protect these gospel truths. Methodists understand baptism to be a sign of God’s grace at work in the life of the child born into the family of faith long before being capable of making a personal response. Baptists are also committed to celebrating God’s grace, but do not see extending baptism to infants as the right way to protect this truth.

Recent ecumenical dialogues including the one between the Baptist Word Alliance and the World Methodist Council have helped to understand each other better and have offered a way to think about these divergences differently. In this perspective and in order to recover the full meaning and significance of baptism it is necessary to see baptism as a process and more than a single event. As Baptists and Methodists, we both also consider that the process of baptism and Christian initiation involves repentance, faith and conversion/new birth followed by holy living. The “one baptism” (Eph 4:5) Christians are called to manifest is not merely a single act, but part of an extended process. Such an approach moves beyond comparison of the ways baptism is differently practiced as a single event and moves toward thinking about the varying ways of understanding the whole journey of Christian initiation. This journey includes baptism, but also Christian nurture, responsible faith, communion for the first time, and commissioning for service.

Baptists and Methodists might understand their divergent approaches as alternative patterns of the process of Christian initiation, a journey through which participants are made disciples. Methodists see much value in infant baptism, but can see these two patterns as equivalent routes to the same outcome of making disciples. Baptists can affirm without question that true disciples are made through pattern two, but regard pattern one to be more faithful to Scripture.
We both recognize that God works through our divergent practices so that true disciples of Jesus are made in both our traditions—and we rejoice in this.

As Methodists and Baptists, we confirm together that our churches oppose indiscriminate baptism, that is, baptism without Christian nurture and catechesis.

What are the conditions to become a member in a Baptist or Methodist church?

Methodists typically receive into church membership (after appropriate conversations and preparation) anyone baptized as an infant or as a believer by any mode, provided the baptism was with water and in the threefold name of the Trinity. While most Baptists around the world still restrict church membership to those who have been baptized by immersion upon the confession of faith, a growing number exhibit a willingness to move beyond a practice of “closed membership” to something more open, which they also consider to be biblically sound. In some contexts, the Baptist community has been led to reexamine the scriptural warrant for membership under the influence of the ecumenical movement and bilateral conversations. The practice of “open membership,” which allows for those baptized as infants to be received into membership when their testimony of their prior baptism is accompanied by the confession of faith, is practiced by a certain number of congregations in different parts of the world.

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Have you already attended a child’s dedication/an infant baptism?
2. What are the conditions for being a member of your church? Do other Baptist/Methodist churches that you know have the same conditions?
3. Do certain criteria apply if someone wants to receive the Lord’s Supper?
4. What do you think of the differences in the process of initiation in a Methodist and a Baptist context with the same elements but in a different order (Pattern 1 and 2)?
5. Below are two examples in Italy and Sweden where Baptists and Methodists have agreed to work closer together while acknowledging divergences on baptism. Read these examples and discuss the following questions:
6. Do you think it is possible for church members to work together (e.g. social projects) while having divergences on a theological issue like baptism? Is it possible to consider this issue as not church-dividing?
**IN ITALY**

Methodists, Baptists, and Waldensians in Italy established a covenant of federation on the basis of a shared broad Reformation theological foundation, and on the important judgment of the “fruits” of baptism, in which their “different baptismal practice does not prevent full ecclesial communion.” The report states that “Baptist churches (are invited to) accept Methodists and Waldensians as full and equal members, and Waldensian and Methodist churches to accept Baptists as full and equal members, each maintaining their own denominational distinctiveness.” Yet despite these broad agreements the Italian Baptists were still not prepared to accept the baptism of infants as genuine expression of the one baptism into Christ.

**IN SweDEN**

The Uniting Church in Sweden, which brings together the Baptist Union of Sweden, United Methodist Church in Sweden, and the Mission Covenant Church, simply affirms “local congregations perform different baptismal practices.” The Uniting Church in Sweden and the worldwide United Methodist Church signed an agreement of full communion in 2015. They agreed to “recognize each other’s baptism and administration of the sacrament of holy communion”.

**“OFF THE BEATEN TRACK”**

**Baptists:**

Believers Baptism = Church membership

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32 The Rev. Anne Lau Choy baptizes an infant at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Fremont, Calif. where she serves as pastor (Photo by Brian Teodoro).

33 The Rev. Joey Galinato of Good Samaritan United Methodist Church, the Rev. Michael McQueen of St. James United Methodist Church and the Rev. Ronny Branen of Prospect United Methodist Church join in baptizing 47 people in a river in Angat, Philippines (Photo by the Rev. Joey Galinato).

34 Confirmation Sunday at Saint Paul’s United Methodist Church, Tallahassee, Florida (Photo by Trey McNabb via Creative Commons).
HYMN/SONG

Here we meet to follow thee

Here we meet to follow thee;
Trusting in thy great salvation,
Which alone can make us free.
Nought have we to claim as merit;
All the duties we can do
Can no crown of life inherit:
All the praise to thee is due.
Yet we come in Christian duty,
Down beneath the wave to go;
the bliss! The heavenly beauty!
Christ the Lord was buried so.

35 Anne Steele (1716-1779), famous Baptist hymn-writer who as a woman in her time had to publish under the pseudonym "Theodosia".

PRAYER

Pour out your Holy Spirit, to bless this gift of water and those who receive it, to wash away their sin and clothe them in righteousness throughout their lives, that, dying and being raised with Christ, they may share in his final victory.
All praise to you, Eternal Father, through your Son Jesus Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns forever.
Amen. 36

KEY BIBLE VERSE

“God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.” (John 4: 24)

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

In this session we will deal with different aspects of the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ: worship, prayer, the Lord’s Supper, witness and mission to this world.

Worship

Baptists and Methodists agree that the assembled worshiping community is the central reality of the church. In Spirit-led worship, the community of faith hears and celebrates what God has done in creation and redemption and offers thanksgiving in response through communal praise and prayer.

In our respective traditions we both recognize the tension between formal and free worship as well as text-based (for example with books of worship) and extemporary forms of expression. Our worship ranges from liturgical and traditional forms to charismatic and revivalist expressions. We also share a common core of hymnody that can be traced to John and Charles Wesley (“O for a thousand tongues to sing”), Isaac Watts (“When I survey the wondrous cross”, “Joy to the World”, the Christmas Carol), John Newton (“Amazing Grace”), evangelical and Gospel songs (Fanny Crosby and Anne Dutton), and hymns from around the globe (Ruben Saillens and Shirley Erena Murray). We welcome the recovery of the reading and/or singing of the Psalms in worship. The emphasis on words sung, prayed, and preached however does not displace the role of silence in worship.

Preaching

Both traditions affirm preaching as a powerful sign of the gospel, which is grounded in God’s promise to take human words and transform them into God’s own Word (Rom 10:13-17). Methodists and Baptists both authorize and approve ordained and lay persons, both women and men, to preach in public worship. The true worship of God requires the proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the Sacraments or Ordinances, often accompanied by the singing of thanks and praise, and the offering
of prayers of confession and intercession, leading to the presentation of worshippers as a living sacrifice to God (Rom 12:1).

**PRAYER**

Methodists and Baptists both share a belief in prayer as one of the “means of grace,” whereby the Holy Spirit enables Christians to believe, love, and serve God. Jesus’s life of constant prayer serves as a model of Christian prayer.

**THE LORD’S SUPPER**

Regarding the Lord’s Supper, Baptists and Methodists both seek to obey the Lord’s command to break bread together, to “Do this for the remembrance of me.” This command is read by many Baptists as requiring simple obedience and, therefore, described as an “ordinance.” Most Methodists, in regularly describing the Supper as a “sacrament,” see it as a place where they experience communion with the risen Lord. Baptists and Methodists regard the rite as one of such solemnity and of promised grace that the difference between “ordinance” and “sacrament” need not be a matter of division.

With regard to the question of who may receive the communion practices vary widely within both the Baptist and Methodist traditions. John Wesley argued that only the repentant and faithful could receive and encouraged the weekly celebration of the sacrament among the Methodists of his time. Later Methodists tended to invite “all who love the Lord” to the table. The Baptist minister John Bunyan argued for the table to be open to all who sought to walk according to the light of God. A strict interpretation of what constitutes the church, however, has often led Baptist congregations to restrict communion to those who have been baptized as believers by immersion. Both Baptists and Methodists affirm that a more regular practice with regard to the Supper may be appropriate today.

**WITNESS AND MISSION TO THIS WORLD**

Baptists and Methodists understand that the goal of the Christian life is the love of God and love of neighbor. This twofold love is modelled by and mediated through Christ. Hence, they both aspire to live out a life of holiness with each other in the world that God seeks to redeem.

Baptists and Methodists believe that faithfulness to God’s mission involves seeking to disclose, challenge, and dismantle unjust structures in society. Both affirm that all persons are equally valuable in the sight of God.

Methodists and Baptists believe that they are bound, therefore, to work for a world in which every person has the necessities for life with dignity.

No area of our common faith bears more directly upon life in practical ways than God’s mission. Every aspect of this mission— the proclamation of the gospel through word, sacrament, and deed, the ongoing nurture of Jesus’ disciples, the service of all in need, the commitment of the community to peace with justice, and the stewardship of our fragile earthly home—is the responsibility of every Christian.
Baptists and Methodists empowered by God’s gift of unity, try to manifest the life of the gospel in the world and to serve as a prophetic sign of the reign of God. This is what we mean when we speak of faith working through love.

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How does my culture influence the way I practice my faith, or my worship or the preaching? Among my worship and cultural practices, which ones might need to be revisited or revised in the light of the gospel?

2. Can you think of any of your worship or cultural practices which the gospel calls into question? Consider for example the length of the preaching, the kind of music, the vestments or clothes that are worn, the place of women, the architecture, the diversity (or the lack of diversity) of social classes? Of level of education, of racial background?

3. In your opinion: What are the priorities in mission where your church (locally or nationally/internationally) should put more effort? On which challenges and towards which groups in society should the church put emphasis? Who is your neighbor to love as yourself today?

4. What role does prayer play in your life?

5. Which hymn is your favorite and why?

“OFF THE BEATEN TRACK”

37 Taken from Church is Stranger than Fiction by Mary Chambers. ©1990 Mary Chambers. Used by permission of InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove IL 60515-1426. www.ivpress.com.
What do you think? Should we pray or paddle?

**HYMN/SONG**

**Love Divine, All Loves Excelling**[^19]

Love divine, all loves Excelling,
Joy of heav’n, to earth come down,
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling;
All Thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesu, Thou art all compassion;
Pure, unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation;
Enter ev’ry trembling heart.

[^19]: Charles Wesley, versified 1747 (see note 19 for biographical notes on Charles Wesley).

[^19]: Taken from Way off the Church Wall ©1990 Rob Portlock. Used by permission of InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove IL 60515-1426. www.ivpress.com.
**THE LORD’S PRAYER (FROM JAMAICA, TUNE KUMBAYA)**

Father God in Heaven, Lord Most High.  
Hear your children's prayer, Lord Most High.  
Hallowed be Thy Name, Lord Most High.  
O Lord, hear our prayer.  
May your kingdom come, here on earth.  
May your will be done, here on earth.  
As it is in heaven, so on earth.  
O Lord, hear our prayer.  
Give us daily bread, day by day.  
And forgive us sins, day by day.  
As we too forgive, day by day.  
O, Lord, hear our prayer.  
Lead us in your way, make us strong.  
when temptation come, make us strong.  
Save us from our sins, keep us strong.  
O, Lord, hear our prayer.  
All things come from you, all are yours.  
Kingdom, glory, power, all are yours.  
Take our lives and gifts, all are yours.  
O Lord, hear our prayer.

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**PRAYER**

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy.

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40 From the prayer of a 19th century writer who was inspired by the writings of Francis of Assisi (1181/1182 – 1226), Italian Catholic friar, deacon and preacher. Francis of Assisi founded the men's Order of Friars Minor, the women's Order of Saint Clare.
SEVENTH AND FINAL SESSION

WHAT DID WE LEARN FROM/APPRECIATE ABOUT EACH OTHER

KEY BIBLE VERSE

“Only let us live up to what we have already attained.” (Philippians 3:16)

INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

HERE ARE THREE OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONCLUDING THE REPORT:

1. Around the world Baptists and Methodists share joint work through theological education, social ministry, youth programs, evangelistic meetings, joint communion services, and they often participate in each other’s churches when there is no congregation of their own denomination in the area. Because such widespread shared life already exists, we recommend that at every geographical level from the global to the local congregation, Baptists and Methodists always seek to follow the Lund principle that “to manifest the oneness of the people of God [they should] act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately.”

2. We recognize that baptism unites us, but that our understandings and practices of baptism also separate us. Together we share joy in God’s gracious gift of baptism and want all Christians to recognize and delight in this. Therefore, we recommend that Baptists and Methodists seek to find even more ways of encouraging their members to remember, reaffirm, and rejoice in their own baptism regularly. We believe that greater attention needs to be given to liturgies emphasizing active remembrance (anamnesis) of our own baptism and providing opportunities for the reaffirmation of baptismal vows.

3. While we have not been able to come to full agreement on all issues in our dialogue, we do not consider points of difference to be insurmountable barriers to unity in mission and witness. We recommend that Methodists and Baptists consider the extent to which they are able to affirm the conclusion of this dialogue that unity in mission and witness is not only desirable, but also possible, for Methodists and Baptists.

42 Recommendation No. 1 in the final report.
43 Recommendation No. 6 in the final report.
44 Recommendation No. 11 in the final report.
EXAMPLES OF COOPERATION BETWEEN METHODISTS AND BAPTISTS – STORIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

In the report, several inspiring stories of cooperation between Methodists and Baptists are already incorporated within each section. We have collected these stories from many nations. Here we only present an overview of all these kinds of cooperation. These may occur on a local level (two churches in the same town) or with other ecumenical partners on a larger level (a national council, for instance, or continental body like the Conference of European Churches). And you, what is YOUR story in your context?

WORSHIP AND PRAYER

Methodists and Baptists join together for common prayer meetings, joint services and missionary services, combined choir, and exchange of pulpits, especially during the great feasts of the church.

COMMON PROCLAMATION AND WITNESS

Methodists and Baptists take part together in initiatives of proclamation of the gospel, like evangelization campaigns, outreach initiatives like pulpit exchange, concerts, ...

MUTUAL SUPPORT IN CHURCH PLANTING AND MISSION FIELD

Methodists have offered hospitality and support to Baptist missionaries on the mission field and on the reverse Baptists have also offered hospitality and support to Methodists missionaries.

Methodist Missionaries’ and Baptist Missionary in Abeokuta, Nigeria (1850-1852)

The association between the Baptist Mission and the Wesleyan Methodist Mission dates back to the very beginning of Baptist work in Nigeria. This spirit of ecumenism was exhibited by the collaboration by some of the early Methodist and Baptist missionaries in Abeokuta in Nigeria. Rev. Thomas Jefferson Bowen, the pioneer Southern Baptist missionary to Nigeria arrived in Abeokuta South western Nigeria, on his way to commence Baptist work in the interior of Yorubaland. Before Bowen arrived in August 1850, the WMMS and the CMS missionaries had arrived in September 1842 and December 1842 respectively and they offered him corporate hospitality for months. Bowen had thought that he would just have a stopover in Abeokuta, but he was warned not to proceed into the hinterland because of the political unrest and the internecine war. Bowen was compelled to stay in Abeokuta for eighteen months between 1850 and 1851. During this time, he was generously hosted by the Wesleyan and the CMS missionaries. Even though Bowen was deeply committed to his responsibilities as a missionary, he could not open the Baptist mission for almost two years from his arrival. During this period, he became familiar with the region, learning Yoruba, the language of the people, as well as their culture and habits. This favorable condition gave Bowen the chance to do a pioneering study entitled Grammar and Vocabulary of the Yoruba Language, which was later published in 1858 by the Smithsonian Institute. This book was of immense help to many missionaries who came to the Yorubaland, and it was made possible by ecumenical hospitality and cooperation between missionaries.
Cooperation in Southeast Asia
Methodist missionaries launched their work in Singapore in 1885 under the leadership of James Thoburn, a seasoned missionary risk-taker. His vision was for this small island to become the springboard for mission to other Southeast Asian communities. In this evangelistic work Methodism actually owes a great debt to the Baptists of Rangoon. Arriving there, in mainland Southeast Asia, at the height of the monsoon season Baptists provided hospitality and support to the beleaguered Thoburn. “We were kindly received by Baptists friends,” he wrote, “and invited to use the small chapel, in which at that time the Baptist missionaries held their English service.” As a consequence of this initial support from Baptist friends, Thoburn planted Methodism deeply in Burmese soil through revivals in this chapel. It is not too much to say that Methodism spread far from this into the island world of Southeast Asia, from Singapore to the Philippines.

COMMON SOCIAL CARE
There has been co-operation in many social activities to meet people’s needs, especially in times of disaster. Baptists and Methodists usually collaborate, for example, in distributing food, clothing and in developing community self-help projects.

Shared Ministry among the Homeless
In 2008 Methodists and Baptists in Ashland, Ohio, USA, established a ministry alongside the homeless known as ACCESS. This shared mission, which grew to include other churches as well, provides short term shelter up to thirty days for women and children. Families and single women are accommodated in church buildings and cared for by an army of volunteers. Often members of various congregations assist other smaller churches in this mission. Meals, laundry facilities, clothing, crisis counseling, and support services to afford respite for families in duress and lead them to self-sufficiency. This is the first time that these churches have cooperated with each other in a shared mission in the community. The ministry has established deep friendships among those who now understand themselves to be brothers and sisters in Christ.

Common support in Nigeria
In Nigeria in November 2017, when some Islamists killed some Christians and destroyed church buildings (quite a number of them were Baptist Churches) in Ancha (Bassa Local Government) in Plateau State the Nigeria Baptist Convention and the Methodist Council of Nigeria offered much assistance together.

MUTUAL SUPPORT IN TIME OF CHURCH CRISIS
Uneasy Time: Period of Isolation for the Baptist converts in Lagos and Ogbomoso in Nigeria (1869-1875)
Between 1869 and 1875, there was no Southern "Baptist missionary on the field because it was difficult for the Foreign Mission Board to send missionaries to Nigeria. It is gratifying to note that from the early 1860s, Rev. J. M. Harden (an African American Baptist minister) and his wife stood in the gap to sustain the Baptist cause. When Rev. Harden died, Mrs. Harden carried on with the work single-handedly but there were many ministerial assignments which she could not perform. During these turbulent times for the Baptists, Rev. Rhodes of the Wesleyan Methodist Mission
Society took Baptists converts to the lagoon and baptised them, making them kneel in the water and dunking their heads three times.

**Solidarity in Jamaica**

In the Jamaica District Conference and in one of our West Rural Circuits, great fellowship and friendship has come out of a tragedy. The current Wesley Methodist Church located in Savanna-la-Mar makes its chapel available to the Savanna-La-Mar Baptist Church for funerals, weddings and other events since the destruction of their chapel by a freak storm in 2010. Out of this arrangement a Bi-annual Carol Service is held in the month of December. Both denominations have forged a closer relationship with each other as co-workers within God’s kingdom.

**Within Families**

It is not uncommon for families to have some members in a Baptist and in a Methodist congregation (e.g. husband Methodist, wife Baptist). It is often reported to be a source of deeper fellowship.

**Cooperation in Human Right Issues: especially Religious persecution**

**Sam Sharpe and the Abolition of Slavery**

The Methodist Mission in Jamaica began in 1789, when Thomas Coke arrived on one of his journeys to the West Indies. William Hammett arrived six months afterwards and was the first Methodist missionary. The work of the Baptists originated in 1783 with the arrival of George Liele, a Baptist freed slave from the USA. Methodist and Baptist preachers planted the seeds of revolution and laid a theological framework for emancipation, teaching slaves that “no one can serve two masters” (Matt. 6:24). Sam Sharpe, a creole slave and Baptist preacher, encouraged his followers to stand up for themselves. This led to a slave revolt, several hundred slaves were killed, and Baptist and Methodist chapels were destroyed. Sharpe was hanged on the gallows on May 23, 1832. Methodists and Baptists missionaries continued to work together until full abolition of slavery on August 1, 1834. “My chains fell off, my heart was free; I rose, went forth and followed Thee.”

**Collaboration between Theological Schools, common training programs for ministries**

**United Theological College of the West Indies**

In February 2017, the dialogue teams visited the UTCWI, which is located in Kingston, Jamaica and where members of the clergy are trained. UTCWI stands as a model of collaborative effort among denominations. The institution is an ecumenical project and was established out of the former Union Theological Seminary (Presbyterians and Disciples of Christ), Calabar College (Baptist), St. Peter's College (Anglican), and Caenwood Theological Seminary (Methodist) and made possible by a grant from the Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches. The UTCWI community comes together, not seeking uniformity, but as expressions of faith and traditions are maintained, the community comes into obedience to Jesus’ prayer (John 17:21) “that all may be one.” It is a melting pot of lecturers and students, who come from different

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45 Taken from a hymn of Charles Wesley: And can it be that I should gain (1738).
walks of life, share common meals, learning, and play football and cricket; who worship and break bread together and drink from the same cup.

**Organic Union: In several countries Baptists and Methodists are joined in common church union**

**North India**

The Church of North India, a union in 1970 of six churches, including Methodists (former British and Australasian missions) and Baptists (former British), affirms the sacrament of baptism and "recognizes both forms, infant dedication followed by baptism by immersion on profession of faith, and the baptism of infants, followed by confirmation, while insisting that baptism occur only once." When Baptists and Methodists differ over baptism, in this particular region of the world, it does not affect their fellowship and cooperation in matters of ministry, service, and mutual support.

**Guiding Questions for Discussion**

1. Which gifts has another church which would help your church fulfil its mission in a better way?

2. Which gifts can you identify you've received from another Church, or from a Christian from another Church?

3. Which gifts do you think your Church can offer other Christians?

4. What could be the next step to deeper fellowship with the Methodists/Baptists you have met in this group?

5. What would prevent you from taking that step? What would encourage you to take it?

**Final Personal Reflection**

We invite each participant to take 5 minutes to reflect upon the three following questions according to the seven sessions you have experienced:

1. What have I heard that I did not know?

2. What has confirmed something I already knew?

3. What questions are still in my mind?

Then every member of the group is invited to share his/her answers.

**"Off the Beaten Track"**

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47 Permission to use the graphic by UM Church for All People (www.4AllPeople.net).
HYMN/SONG

We are one in the Spirit

We are one in the Spirit,
We are one in the Lord,
We are one in the Spirit,
We are one in the Lord,
And we pray that all unity
may one day be restored:

Chorus:
And they'll know we are Christians
by our love, by our love.
Yes, they'll know we are Christians
by our love.
We will walk with each other,
We will walk hand in hand,
We will walk with each other,
We will walk hand in hand,
And together we'll spread the news
That God is in our land.

Chorus
We will work with each other,
We will work side by side,
We will work with each other,
We will work side by side,
And we'll guard each one's dignity
And save each one's pride:

Chorus
All praise to the Father,
from who all things come,
And all praise to Christ Jesus,
His only Son,
And all praise to the Spirit
Who makes us one:

Chorus

48 The text writer is not known. The song reflects John 17:21.26; Act 2:44-47.
PRAYER

A prayer for a «Faith working through love»
For Methodists and Baptists to Pray Together

TOGETHER
Living God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, before you we remember with gratitude the wonderful diversity of the Christian family.

BAPTISTS
Living God, thank you for the Methodists!
Thank you for their vision of spreading scriptural holiness around the world.
Thank you for their rich heritage of hymnody, which has been shared with all.
Thank you for their leadership in the movement for Christian unity in our own day.

METHODISTS
Living God, thank you for the Baptists!
Thank you for their passion for a biblical faith, and for their worldwide mission which has flowed from it.
Thank you for their faithfulness to baptism as an expression of the drama of Christian conversion.
Thank you for their steady commitment to religious freedom for all.

BAPTISTS
Merciful God, we confess our sins as churches.
Forgive us when we have preferred division over unity in mission.
Forgive us when we have acted as rivals to other Christians, (and especially to Methodists) or ignored their existence, or judged their faith, when none of us possesses the whole truth, nor are we the whole church.

TOGETHER
Forgive us, Lord of mercy, when we have not built on the unity you have already given us in Christ Jesus.

METHODISTS
Merciful God, we confess our sins as churches.
Forgive us when we have preferred division over unity in mission.
Forgive us when we have acted as rivals to other Christians, (and especially to Baptists) or ignored their existence, or judged their faith, when none of us possesses the whole truth, nor are we the whole church.

...

49 This final prayer shall be prayed by Methodists and Baptists together. It is drafted especially by our two delegations as a fruit of our dialogue.
TOGETHER

Forgive us, Lord of mercy, when we have not built on the unity you have already given us in Christ Jesus.

We pray for Christians around the world, with all their many names. We hold before you the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches, the Anglican, Lutheran, and Reformed Churches, the Evangelical and Pentecostal churches, the Indigenous churches and the churches in every place whose names we may not even know.

May your Holy Spirit help us to build on the unity you have already given us in Christ Jesus and help us to make it more visible.

Watch over the ways in which we witness, teach, and care, in our congregations, institutions, and families, that in all our work we may be faithful and true to the Gospel.

Help us to love one another, so that the world may believe.

In all things, may our faith be always active in love.

We ask this through Jesus Christ your Son, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns as one God forever.

Amen.
This picture was taken in March 2018 during the last session of the dialogue between delegates of the Baptist World Alliance and the World Methodist Council in Salisbury Cathedral in England, close to the baptismal font. The design of the font is very meaningful: The water flows to the four cardinal points of the compass; like God’s grace, the water is overflowing; it is offered to all who come seeking transformation in Christ; in the water, we see ourselves, and the canopy of the great church building over us like God’s universal love.

Shortly after this picture was taken, we all prayed together the prayer from the Study Guide: A prayer for a “Faith working through love”.
FROM THE BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE:
Rev. Dr. Curtis Freeman, Co-Chair, Durham, North Carolina (Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, USA); Rev. Dr. Fausto Vasconcelos, Co-Secretary (2014-2016), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (Baptist World Alliance); Rev. Dr. Deji Isaac Ayegboyin, Ibadan, Nigeria (Nigerian Baptist Convention); Dr. Valérie Duval-Poujol, Paris, France (Federation of Evangelical Baptist Churches in France); Rev. Dr. Timothy George, Birmingham, Alabama, USA (Southern Baptist Convention, USA); Rev. Dr. Stephen Holmes, St. Andrews, Scotland (Baptist Union of Scotland); Rev. Dr. R. L. Hnuni, Aizawl, Mizoram, India (Baptist Church of Mizoram); Rev. Dr Trisha Miller Manarin, (2016-2017); Falls Church, VA (Baptist World Alliance)

FROM THE WORLD METHODIST COUNCIL:
Rev. Dr. Tim Macquiban, Co-Chair, Rome, Italy (Methodist Church of Great Britain); Rev. Dr. Paul W. Chilcote, Co-Secretary, Florida, USA (United Methodist Church, USA); Rev. Christine Gooden-Benguche, Kingston, Jamaica (Methodist Church of the Caribbean and Americas); Rev. Prof. Emeritus Robert Gribben, Melbourne, Australia (Uniting Church in Australia); Rev. Lauren Claire Matthew, Durban, South Africa (Methodist Church of Southern Africa); Prof. Dr. Ulrike Schuler, Reutlingen, Germany (United Methodist Church, Germany Central Conference); Rev. Dr. Malcolm Tan, Singapore (Methodist Church in Singapore)
Sources II: Bible Study

**PETER AND CORNELIUS: THE LORD’S CALL TO UNITY (ACTS 10)**

We invite you to study the unique encounter of Peter and Cornelius in Acts 10. Our two delegations studied this text together during the final session of our Conversations. We found this biblical story and teaching very inspirational for our relationship as Baptists and Methodists together, and for those seeking deeper unity. Of course, this biblical text was not written to deal with modern relationships between our two denominations, but it certainly inspires this contemporary reading.

Acts 10 relates the story of Peter and Cornelius, an episode called by some “the Pentecost of the Gentile world”. We invite you to read the whole of chapter 10, although only a few crucial verses will be commented upon here.

This story is a crucial step in the birth and development of Christianity: the moment when the gospel is first offered to non-Jews.

Yet God is going to have a hard time convincing Peter to recognize Cornelius as a Christian brother:

Cornelius is a Roman officer, pagan, in the occupying army, he has not been circumcised, he has not known Jesus in the flesh, and yet God is going to ask Peter the Jew, who has known Jesus for three years, to recognize Cornelius as a brother in Jesus Christ, despite all their differences.

Let us ponder the long road Peter has to travel to come to this recognition:

First (v.9) there is the vision of “the large sheet”: it is about midday, Peter is hungry, he is praying, and he receives this vision of a large sheet full of all kinds of unclean animals. God (v.13-16) asks Peter three times to eat these unclean animals: God wants to teach him that the rules that he once learned to please God no longer apply.

Of course, the vision is first about the food, but Peter will very soon realize that it is also about ending discrimination: the gospel, the good news of Jesus is not only for the Jews but for all humanity. Perhaps he remembered all the times when Jesus abolished distinctions and demolished walls of division.

Anyway, Peter is still wondering what it all means. The message is not clear yet.

At this moment (v.19) God warns him that he will soon have a visitor. Did you notice? Peter needs the intervention of the Holy Spirit to convince him to go down and meet the emissaries of Cornelius.

V. 20: “So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.”

In Greek the word translated “Do not hesitate” means “without discriminating”, which implies that Peter was tempted to discriminate!

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50 This Bible study has been prepared by Dr Valerie Duval-Poujol and has been warmly received by the two delegations during the last session of the dialogue.
Peter then agrees to go and visit Cornelius: when he arrives, the text says that many people are there! Probably Peter would have preferred if there had been no audience! And he reminds the audience how tricky the situation is for him. Peter said to them:

(V. 28): “You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him.”

Another translation for “against our law” is “it is a crime”, “it is taboo”. The story goes on:

“But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean”.

Peter is beginning to understand God’s plan; he is about to discover that other Christians may not all be like him; he is about to discover the diversity of the Christian family. He is now open to preaching the gospel to people who are different from him, to non-Jews, but he still does not know exactly how it could work.

Then Peter listens to the testimony of Cornelius concerning what God has done in his life. This is the strategic point when Peter finally understands, and declares:

V. 34-36 "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts people from every nation who fear him and do what is right... the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all is for everyone”.

The very first fruit of this understanding, that comes even before Peter finishes his speech, is the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on Cornelius and all the people present - a New Pentecost, but this time for pagans, non-Jews.

As Peter will explain later: "If God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?" (Acts 11:17)

I think Peter has experienced then his “road to Damascus”, a paradigm change, a life-changing experience, like Paul: Peter now recognizes that God is at work, not only in his church, his country, but also among non-Jews. Peter has had to change enormously to answer God’s call to unity.

There is a specific hint in the Greek text of the inner change Peter is going through:

In v. 6 the angel had told Cornelius where he will find Peter, and the angel gives Peter’s address: Peter is “staying with Simon the tanner”: Peter is hosted by, is accommodated by a tanner. The Greek word for “is the host” or “is accommodated” is the passive form of the verb “to welcome the foreigner”, xenizo, (the English word xenophobia comes from the same root, but means the fear of the stranger). According to the Greek text, Peter was hosted, but after his encounter with Cornelius he is now the one who will host, who will welcome others.

Then in v. 23 Peter in his turn offers hospitality to the people sent by Cornelius: the Greek says that Peter “invites these foreigners”, “hosts these foreigners” using the same verb.

This verb sums up very well Peter’s transformation: he has been welcomed, he is now welcoming others, foreigners.
If you want to realize how revolutionary his change is, you just need to see the hostile reaction from the apostles and the brothers in Jerusalem. Listen to what they told him about what happened with Cornelius:

“You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them. (Acts 11:3)

But then, after Peter’s explanations, they also declare:

“When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, ‘So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life.’” (Acts 11:18)

The process Peter went through led him to abandon the spirit of discrimination that he had inherited from his religious education. We all should live out this same process, first when we become a Christian, and then during all our life, when we meet other Christians. The other Christians are brothers and sisters in Christ, but it sometimes takes time, as it did for Peter, to acknowledge this reality. We need, like he did, to let the Spirit help us to overcome our prejudices and preconceptions about other Christians.

Have you noticed in which town Peter received his vision? In which town he understood that he also need to go and preach to non-Jews, to people who are different from him? It was in the city of Joppa(or Japho), the very same town where Jonah the prophet had taken a boat to go to Tarsis to escape God’s instruction to go and preach to Nineveh. Jonah had also received a calling from God to go and preach to the non-Jews, but he chose to flee. The Scriptures put in parallel these two stories and invite us to make a choice: God is calling us to meet the others who are different: will we be like Jonah and run away, or will we be like Peter?

Yet the story goes even further. Once Peter has decided to go and associate with people who are different, he needs to strengthen this new belief. The belief that we do not hold all the truth, that another denomination, other Christians can also be receptacles of God’s grace, is like a plant that needs to grow: a plant that needs water and care.

In Galatians we read that in Antioch, Peter had stopped eating with non-circumcised Christians, he was eating separately! Paul writes:

“But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood self-condemned; for until certain people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But after they came, he drew back and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction.” (Galatians 2:11-12)

Paul specifies in that passage that Peter had started discriminating again when “people sent by James”, the Lord’s brother, head of the church in Jerusalem, came.

These people from Jerusalem are the image of the establishment. They are like people who tell us that their way of doing church is the only way of doing church. They represent the structures that can restrict us as we try to be generous. They might be the people we have grown up with, and that can stop us in opening ourselves to others.

We as Methodists and Baptists eager to seek deeper unity, must remain watchful, aware that a relapse into discrimination is always possible. If we ever see that happening, let us encourage each other as Paul encouraged Peter!
Sources III: Documents

A THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living 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.  

B BAPTIST FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS

1. The First London Confession (1644/6); The Second London Confession (1677/89); The New Hampshire Confession (1833); The Baptist Faith and Message (1963)


THE BWA CENTENNIAL STATEMENT, JULY 2005

To Baptist believers throughout the world with love and joy from those assembled together in Birmingham, UK, at the Centenary Congress of the BWA

Together those Assembled –

THE HOPE OF A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH

1. Renew our commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour, our guide and friend, in the power of the Holy Spirit and we affirm our life together as a community of faith looking forward in hope to Christ’s return and God’s New Heaven and a New Earth;

OUR TRIUNE GOD

2. Believe in the one eternal God who revealed Himself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit;

3. Rejoice that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, revealed in the Scriptures as fully God and fully human, and whose life shows us the way of true discipleship, was crucified for us and was raised from the dead on the third day to save us from our sins;

51 Copyright © 1988 English Language Liturgical Consultation. All rights reserved.
4. Declare that the divinely inspired Old and New Testament Scriptures have supreme authority as the written Word of God and are fully trustworthy for faith and conduct;

The Church and the Kingdom
5. Believe the Christian faith is best understood and experienced within the community of God’s people called to be priests to one another, as these Scriptures are read and studied together. We thank God for all those who study God’s word and seek to put its teachings into practice individually and collectively through congregational polity;

6. Understand that our worship, mission, baptism and celebrating of the Lord’s Supper, joyously witnesses to God’s great purposes in creation and redemption;

7. Believe our gathering churches, with other true Christian churches, are called to be witnesses to the Kingdom of God. To that end we pray, work and hope for God’s Kingdom as we proclaim its present and coming reality;

8. Declare that through the Holy Spirit we experience interdependence with those who share this dynamic discipleship of the church as the people of God. As such, we affirm Christian marriage and family life;

9. Repent for not having prayed and worked hard enough to fulfil the prayer of Christ for the church’s unity. We commit ourselves to pray and work to further the unity of Christian believers;

10. Affirm that Believers’ Baptism by immersion is the biblical way to publicly declare discipleship for those who have repented of sin and come to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour;

The Work of Christ: Atonement and Redemption
11. Affirm the dignity of all people, male and female, because they are created in God’s image and called to be holy. We acknowledge we are corrupted by sin, which incurs divine wrath and judgement;

12. Confess the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross, dying in our place, paying the price of sin and defeating evil, who by this love reconciles believers with our loving God;

Stewardship of God’s Creation
13. Proclaim our love of God’s created world and affirm our commitment to the stewardship of God’s creation.

Our Mission
14. Declare that God gives spiritual gifts to believers who are called to live a life of worship, service and mission. These gifts are discerned and confirmed by the believing community together;

15. Know that in the Great Commission, every believer, empowered by God, is called to be a missionary, learning and sharing more of Christ that the world might believe;
**RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND JUSTICE**

16. Confess that faith in Christ entails a passionate commitment to religious liberty, freedom, peace and justice;

17. Affirm that in Jesus Christ all people are equal. We oppose all forms of slavery, racism, apartheid and ethnic cleansing and so will do all in our power to address and confront these sins;

Now, at this centenary gathering these things we declare, affirm and covenant to the Lord Jesus Christ and to each other, believing the truth found in Him and revealed in the Scriptures. We, recognizing that this is a partial and incomplete confession of faith, boldly declare that we believe the truth is found in Jesus Christ as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. Because we have faith and trust in him so we resolve to proclaim and demonstrate that faith to all the world.

Amen and Amen. Maranatha, come, Lord Jesus, come

**C METHODIST FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS**

1. **WESLEYAN ESSENTIALS OF CHRISTIAN FAITH**

**THE PEOPLE CALLED Methodists**

The "people called Methodists" form a family of churches within the World Methodist Council...

- We claim and cherish our true place in the one holy, catholic and apostolic church.
- Our origins lie in the work of John and Charles Wesley in 18th century England which quickly spread to every corner of the world.
- The purpose of this work and ministry was, and is, to renew the Church and spread scriptural holiness which includes social righteousness throughout the whole earth, to the glory of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- We confess that often we have failed to live up to this high calling, and we repent of the times when our witness has distorted the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Trusting in the grace of God, we engage ourselves anew in God's service.

**OUR BELIEFS**

We affirm a vision of the Christian faith, truly evangelical, catholic and reformed, rooted in grace and active in the world.

- Methodists affirm the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the primary rule of faith and practice and the center of theological reflection.
- Methodists profess the ancient ecumenical creeds, the Apostles' and Nicene Creed.
- Methodists seek to confess, to interpret and to live the apostolic faith, the faith once delivered to the saints. Methodists acknowledge that scriptural reflection is
influenced by the processes of reason, tradition and experience, while aware that Scripture is the primary source and criteria of Christian doctrine.

- Methodists rejoice in the loving purpose of God in creation, redemption and consummation offered through grace to the whole world.
- Methodists believe in the centrality of grace; prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying.
- Methodists believe in the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the sufficiency of His atoning work for all humankind. Methodists believe that we "are the friends of all and the enemies of none."

OUR WORSHIP
We worship and give allegiance to the Triune God.

- In worship, we respond in gratitude and praise for God's mighty acts in creation, in history, in our communities, and in our personal lives.
- In worship, we confess our sin against God and one another and receive God's gracious forgiveness.
- In prayer, we wait in God's presence, offer the searchings and longings of our own hearts, for ourselves and in intercession for others, and open ourselves to God's Spirit to comfort, lead, and guide.
- In the celebration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, we participate in the mystery of God's presence, redemption and reconciliation.
- In reading, proclaiming and receiving the Gospel, we affirm God's creating and saving power.
- From worship we go into the world to love and serve others and to be instruments of justice and peace in the establishment of God's reign on earth.
- The language and form of worship emerge from the community through obedience to Jesus Christ and the creative power of the Holy Spirit.
- We inherit the treasury of the Wesley's hymns, with a hymnody now enriched from many other sources.

OUR WITNESS

- We proclaim Jesus Christ to the world through word, deed and sign.
- We seek the realization of God's will for the salvation of humankind.
- We are empowered by the Holy Spirit to be signs of Christ's presence in our communities and in the world through our preaching, teaching, and in deeds of justice, peace, mercy, and healing as the outworking of faith.
- We witness to God's reign among us now, as proclaimed by Jesus, and look forward to the full realization of the coming Kingdom when every form of evil will be destroyed.
• We seek to understand and respond to the contexts and situations in which we live, so that our witness will have integrity.

**OUR SERVICE**

We serve the world in the name of God, believing that our commitment comes to life in our actions, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

• As followers of Jesus of Nazareth, who came to serve rather than be served, we go into the world as people of God in Christ Jesus, to serve people, regardless of their economic and social status, race, gender, age, physical and mental ability, sexuality, religion or cultural origin.

• Being "filled with the energy of love," we anchor our service and our life and work in love for our neighbors, including those we perceive as our enemies.

• Since all forms of Christian service are influenced by a given context of community and culture, we seek to express our love in appropriate ways.

• The life of holiness holds together conversion and justice, works of piety and works of mercy.

• Empowered by God, authentic Christian service is based on Scripture, tested in community, affirms life and seeks the shalom of God's reign.

• Recalling the story of the Samaritan (Luke 10:25), we express and claim compassion for all people and accept the call in Christ to "suffer with" the least of these in humility and love.

**OUR COMMON LIFE**

We share a commitment to Jesus Christ that manifests itself in a common heart and life, binding believers together in a common fellowship and anticipating solidarity within the human family.

• Having experienced the Gospel of Jesus Christ as a liberating power from all oppression, we stand in solidarity with all people who seek freedom, peace and justice.

• Knowing that the love we share in Christ is stronger than our conflicts, broader than our opinions, and deeper than the wounds we inflict on one another, we commit ourselves to participation in our congregations, denominations and the whole Christian family for the purpose of nurture, outreach and witness.

• Remembering our Gospel commitment to "love our neighbors," we will, through dialogue and partnerships for service to the world, endeavor to establish relationships with believers of other religious traditions.

2. THE WORLD METHODIST COUNCIL SOCIAL AFFIRMATION

We believe in God, creator of the world and of all people;
and in Jesus Christ, incarnate among us, who died and rose again;
and in the Holy Spirit, present with us to guide, strengthen, and comfort.

We believe; God, help our unbelief.

We rejoice in every sign of God’s kingdom:
in the upholding of human dignity and community;
in every expression of love, justice, and reconciliation;
in each act of self-giving on behalf of others;
in the abundance of God’s gifts entrusted to us that all may have enough;
in all responsible use of the earth’s resources.

Glory be to God on high; and on earth, peace.

We confess our sin, individual and collective, by silence or action:
through the violation of human dignity based on race, class, age, sex, nation, or faith;
through the exploitation of people because of greed and indifference;
through the misuse of power in personal, communal, national, and international life;
through the search for security by those military and economic forces that threaten human existence;
through the abuse of technology which endangers the earth and all life upon it.

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

We commit ourselves individually and as a community to the way of Christ; to take up the cross;
to seek abundant life for all humanity;
to struggle for peace with justice and freedom;
to risk ourselves in faith, hope, and love,
praying that God’s kingdom may come.

Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.
Amen.

(Adopted by the World Methodist Council Nairobi, Kenya, 1986)
Sources IV: LITERATURE

METHODISM


This anthology of excerpts from the Wesleys, with probing facing-page commentary, provides insight not only into the renewal of dynamic and vital Christianity, but into the struggles and concerns of all who seek to be faithful participants in God’s vision of love in every age.


In this book, the authors address the issue of what holds all Methodists together and examine the strengths and diversity of an influential major form of Christian life and witness. They look at the ways in which Methodism has become established throughout the world, examining historical and theological developments, and patterns of worship and spirituality, in their various cultural contexts.


This survey of the Wesleyan movement in the eighteenth century is the story of many people whose lives and thoughts are woven together in the developing theology, organization, and mission of Methodism. It is the definitive history of earliest Methodism used throughout the world today.


In this primary work on the theology of John Wesley, Runyon sets Wesley’s own discussion of the "way of salvation" in the larger context of Christian doctrine, beginning with the Creation (and the Fall) and moving through the drama of salvation towards its eschatological fulfillment in the "new creation" of all things.


This encyclopedic volume on Methodism discusses the history, doctrine, practice, and polity of the Methodist movement from its founders, John & Charles Wesley, to its present state as a global family of churches in the Wesleyan tradition. Contributors from around the world describe Methodism from their own context and perspectives.

BAPTISM

We Baptists. One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism; Study and Research Division, Baptist World Alliance, Providence House Publishers, 1999

This book answers the basic questions about the Baptists: Who are they? What do they believe? How Baptists make moral decisions? Baptist in worship; Baptist church life and leadership; Human rights for all.

Bebbington’s book is the best and most accessible historical summary of the global Baptist story. It treats themes from religious liberty to women in ministry. It offers a historical portrait of a diverse, international people. Bebbington tells the Baptist story with great insight and clarity.


This volume provides comprehensive (though dated) collection of information on Baptists worldwide. It offers an interpretation of Baptists as a global Christian movement and includes brief historical accounts of Baptist developments in over 160 countries on six continents. It is divided into five regions (Africa, Asia and Oceania, Europe/Eurasia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Northern America), within which countries are treated alphabetically.


Holmes offers a clear and concise summary of Baptist theology as an activity that attends closely to the convictions and practices of congregations. Yet he shows that Baptists still share the theological consensus of the wider church on such basic doctrines as the Trinity, the person and work of Christ, and creation. But he also makes plain how this emphasis on the gathered community finds distinctive manifestation in congregational church government, respect for the liberty of conscience, and participation in God’s mission to the world.

Freeman, Curtis W. *Contesting Catholicity: Theology For Other Baptists*. Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2014.

In this book Freeman tells the story of the Baptists, not as a sectarian alternative to dominant forms of Catholic and Protestant Christianity, but rather as a community of contested convictions within the church catholic. This catholicity is both quantitative, because it participates with the consensus fidelium in mystical and historical continuity with the faith of the apostolic church, and qualitatively catholic, in that it joins voices with the apostolic witness to the Bible as the unfolding story of the triune God. Of particular interest to the Baptist-Methodist dialogue is the final chapter, which describes infant and believer baptism not as competing methods and theologies, but as two alternative patterns of within the process of Christian initiation and discipleship.

**Links (World Councils)**

- Baptist Word Alliance: [https://bwanet.org/](https://bwanet.org/)
- World Methodist Council: [http://worldmethodistcouncil.org](http://worldmethodistcouncil.org)