

WALK BY FAITH *not by sight*



Growth Group Study Guide



Walk by Faith, Not by Sight (Our Articles of Faith)

Since its inception, God's Spirit has enlivened the Methodist movement. In the 1720s John and Charles Wesley and friends at Oxford University met together to deepen their Christian faith through daily, practical spiritual disciplines. Derided by others as a "new sect of Methodists" for their "methodical" ways of practicing the faith and holding one another accountable to it, the small group embraced the insult and persevered in their fellowship. They and the millions who followed after them have ever since been known as "the people called Methodists."

These "Methodists", including us, have tenets of faith universal to all Christians and some specific to the Methodist movement. The twenty-four "*Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church*" (see Appendix) state these succinctly. Founded on the Old and New Testament, adopted in 1784, the "*Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church*" are our standard for belief and practice.

The series "**Walk by Faith, Not by Sight (Our Articles of Faith)**" will engage several of the "articles" for deeper understanding and faith development.

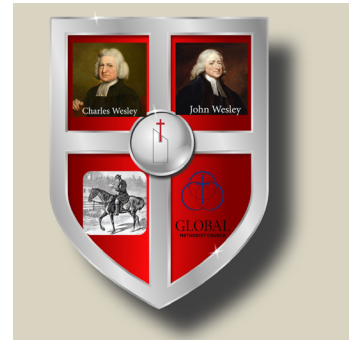
Note: A complete copy of the "*Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church*" can be found in the Appendix at the back of the study guide.

July 2, 2023

Session 1 | We believe in the Holy Trinity

Before you begin this Growth Group session, read the summary found inside the cover of your Growth Group materials.

All the Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church can be found in the Appendix of this Bible Study

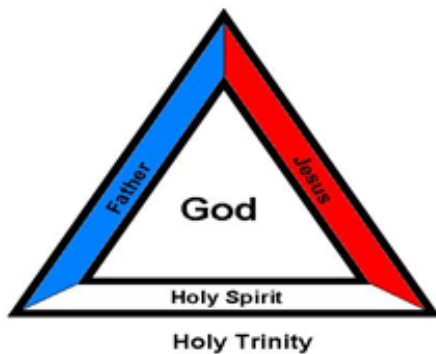


Article I - Of Faith in the Holy Trinity

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and good, the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there are three persons of one substance, power, and eternity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Background:

This will help set the context of the session if someone from your group reads this aloud.



As we begin our transition into becoming a part of the Global Methodist church, we should look into what they believe. Today we will be looking at Article 1 of the “*Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church*” which is referenced in “*The Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline of the Global Methodist Church*”. (See above.) God always was, is, and always will be. He was here before earthly time began. In Genesis 1:26 God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” The word “our” would indicate that the Trinity was there from the beginning. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit make up the Holy Trinity. The three persons of the Holy Trinity are woven throughout Old and New Testament scriptures.

God the Father – We learn about God as our Heavenly Father from Isaiah 63:16, 64: 8, Jeremiah 3:19 and Malachi 2:10.

God the Son - The first person to call Jesus the Son of God was Nathanael (John 1:49).

“Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”” (Mark 1: 10-11).

God the Holy Spirit – “Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.” (Gen. 1:2)

“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” (John 14:26)

As part of our Independence - Article XXIII

Of the Rulers of the United States of America- The President, the Congress, the general assemblies, the governors, and the councils of state, as the delegates of the people, are the rulers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made to them by the Constitution of the United States and by the constitutions of their respective states. And the said states are a sovereign and independent nation and ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

Scripture: Luke 3:21-22, Acts 2:29-33, Galatians 4:4-6

Before engaging in the questions, have someone in your group read the Scripture passages aloud.

Sermon Reflection:

1. What was something you want to make sure you remember that came from the sermon this week?
2. What challenged you about this sermon?
3. What do you think Jesus is trying to teach you through this sermon? How will this affect your daily life?

Questions from the Bible:

1. How is it possible for three separate living things to all be one?
2. Are God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit equal?
3. Read Ephesians 3:14-17. How is each member of the Trinity described in these verses?
4. What does the Holy Spirit do? Refer to scriptures in Job 34:14-15, Psalms 139:7-8, Romans 8:4, and Romans 8:11.
5. In John 16:13, Jesus says of the Holy Spirit: "When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own: he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come." Jesus tells us the Spirit will speak only what he hears. From whom does the Spirit hear?

6. If the word triune or trinity never appears in the Bible, why is the Trinity such an important part of our belief in God?

7. In the account of the baptism of Jesus (Luke 3:21-22), which of the three persons of the Holy Trinity are present? Explain.

8. Read Genesis 1:1-5. Where in this passage do you see a reference to a second person of the Holy Trinity?

Questions for Application:

1. Is there a person of the Trinity that you have felt more connected to? Who do you pray to most often? Can you describe a time when you have experienced any of their presence?

2. How does understanding the Trinity affect your relationship with God? Why is it important that we know God in all His fullness?

3. What is the hardest part of the Trinity for you to grasp?

4. When Jesus was on earth why did he pray to His Father? If they are both one why would Jesus pray to himself?

5. In John 16:7b-8 Jesus says about the Spirit, “Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness, or judgement”. Recall a time when you felt the conviction of the Holy Spirit in regard to sin, righteousness, or judgement.

6. The concept of the Holy Trinity is hard to describe. How have you resolved this aspect of our faith in your mind? How would you describe the Trinity to a non-believer?

Resources: Consider starting one of these Bible reading plans to go deeper on this topic

God in Three Persons: Embracing the Trinity- 6-day plan- <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/28180-god-in-three-persons-embracing-the-trinity>



Knowing & Loving the Trinity-4-day plan- <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/25901-knowing-loving-the-trinity>



Questions for Discussion:

1. What are you reading in the Word this week?
2. How is your reading growing you in the Marks of Discipleship – prayers, presence, gifts, witness, service?

Growth Challenge:

Be mindful of what it means to you to have God as your Father, Jesus, God's Son as your Savior, and the Holy Spirit as an advocate for you.

Video Summary:

Scan this QRcode (preferably not during the church service) to listen to a brief video summary of this week's lesson on the Holy Trinity.



NOTES

July 9, 2023

Session 2 | We Believe in Sin and Free Will

Before you begin this Growth Group session, read the summary found inside the cover of your Growth Group materials.

All the Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church can be found in the Appendix of this Bible Study



Article VII - Of Original or Birth Sin

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.

Article VIII - Of Free Will

The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

Background:

This will help set the context of the session if someone from your group reads this aloud.

As our sermon series concerning some of the key tenets of the Methodist faith continues, it is important that we go back to the very beginning to understand what we as Methodists believe about sin: its origin and ensuing consequences for believers.

The term original sin refers to Adam's sin of disobedience in eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, in direct defiance of a clearly given instruction from God. (Genesis 2:16-17) While Adam was created in the image of God, that original, singular act of disobedience allowed sin to enter into the world, permeating the very nature of man. "When Adam sinned, his inner nature was transformed by his sin of rebellion, bringing to him spiritual death and depravity that would be passed on to all who came after him. We are sinners because we sin, and we sin because we are sinners. This passed-on depravity is known as inherited sin. Just as we inherit physical characteristics from our parents, we inherit our sinful natures from Adam." (gotquestions.org)

**Free will
requires that we
choose.**

When God created man in His image, He gave us *free will*—the power to choose. This freedom to choose is limited by the constraints of our nature. For example, we have the freedom to choose whether or not we will walk or drive to church; we are not free to choose to fly to church, because the ability to fly is not a part of man's nature. Similarly, we are free to choose whether or not we will accept Jesus' gift of salvation. We are not free to choose to make/earn/serve or will ourselves to salvation, because our sinful nature prevents us from making atonement for our sins.

In the history of the world, only one person has been born without a sinful nature: Jesus Christ. His virgin birth allowed Him to enter the world and bypass the curse passed down to mankind through Adam.

Because Christ chose to go to the cross to satisfy—once for all time—the sin debt of mankind, we have the freedom to choose to be born again into a new nature (2 Corinthians 5:17); one that is empowered by the Holy

Spirit for our lifelong battle with our sinful nature. Have you chosen to accept Christ's gift of salvation? The blessing of *free will* requires that we choose; not choosing is a choice—each has eternal consequences.

Scripture: Romans 3:10-18, Genesis 3:22

Before engaging in the questions, have someone in your group read the Scripture passages aloud.

Sermon Reflection:

1. What was something you want to make sure you remember that came from the sermon this week?
2. What challenged you about this sermon?
3. What do you think Jesus is trying to teach you through this sermon? How will this affect your daily life?

Questions from the Bible:

1. Read Romans 5:12-17. According to Paul, what is the solution to the sinful nature of mankind? How does this apply in your life?
2. Read Genesis 8:21. Where do we find our sinful nature addressed in this passage?
3. Paul tells us in Romans 6:14 that
“For sin shall no longer be your master, because
You are not under the law, but under grace.”
If sin is no longer our master, why does sin still exist in our lives?

4. Why did God give us free will? If God knew what the results would be—sin and evil—why did He give humanity free will?

5. How can one learn to hate one's own sin? Does hating sin have an impact on one's ability to overcome it?

6. In Proverbs 16:9 we read
“In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps.” What can we learn about free will from this verse?

7. Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14: “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life and only a few find it.” What, if anything, do you think free will has to do with what Jesus has said about the narrow road?

8. Of Jesus, Peter said in 1 Peter 2:24a: “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness”. How does the knowledge that Jesus went to the cross, not solely as atonement for our sins, but also that “we might die to sins and live for righteousness” influence your understanding of your responsibilities concerning free will?

Questions for Application:

1. What are your thoughts regarding original sin as described in Article VII?

2. What are some euphemisms people use today to describe sin? Why do you think people use them? Do you ever hear the word “sin” used outside of the church?

3. How have you seen the effects and/or consequences of sin in your own life or in your family history?

4. How would you describe sin and free will to a non-believer?

5. We all struggle with free will and our sinful nature. If you can, describe a time when you felt this struggle was more than you could bear. Have you developed methods to help you deal with the struggle?

6. Since God has created us in His image, why did He give us free will?

7. Have you experienced the leading or prompting of the Holy Spirit in an effort to guide you and your decision making? Did you heed His advice? What was the outcome?

8. About the concept of original sin, Peter Kreeft has said, “Original sin is the proclivity to say, ‘my will be done’ instead of ‘thy will be done.’” How does this idea manifest itself in Adam’s decision to eat from the forbidden fruit? How does this manifest itself in your life?

9. Try to describe a society where we have free will and we don’t experience bad things happening to good people (or where evil does not exist).

Resources: *Consider starting one of these Bible reading plans to go deeper on this topic*

[Free – A Six-Day Reading Plan on God’s Grace and Power Over Sin in Our Lives, Andy Stanley, <https://bible.com/reading-plans/22736/day/1?segment=0>](https://bible.com/reading-plans/22736/day/1?segment=0)



[How to Resist Sin, Three-Day Reading Plan, Richard Caldwell, <http://bible.com/r/7Es>](http://bible.com/r/7Es)



Questions for Discussion:

1. What are you reading in the Word this week?
2. How is your reading growing you in the Marks of Discipleship – prayers, presence, gifts, witness, service?

Growth Challenge:

As you go through your week, see if you can recognize your sinful nature trying to influence your behaviors and attitudes. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you find the strength to resist these temptations.

Video Summary:

Scan this QRcode (preferably not during the church service) to listen to a brief video summary of this week's lesson on sin and free will.



NOTES

July 16, 2023

Session 3 | The Church administers the Sacraments

Before you begin this Growth Group session, read the summary found inside the cover of your Growth Group materials.

All the Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church can be found in the Appendix of this Bible Study



Article XIII – Of the Church

The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

Background:

This will help set the context of the session if someone from your group reads this aloud.

According to the Merriam Webster dictionary, a sacrament is defined as an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace; or more particularly, a solemn religious ceremony enjoined by Christ, the head of the Christian church, to be observed by his followers, by which their special relation to Him is created, or their obligations to Him renewed and ratified. The sacraments recognized by the Methodist church are Holy Baptism and Holy Communion.

Holy Baptism is a public confession of faith in which we receive God's grace. It represents repentance (acknowledging we're wrong) and forgiveness of sins. With this act, we are initiated into the universal church, and a special relationship with God is formed. There is one baptism as outlined in Ephesians 4:5 (one Lord, one faith, one baptism).

Sacrament
A visible sign of
God's invisible
grace.

Holy Communion (i.e. the Lord's Supper) represents our redemption, and reminds us of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. God invites us to participate in the meal that Christ shared with His disciples, and our participation depends on our willingness to accept that invitation. The meal includes the eating of broken bread and drinking from the cup (i.e. grape juice). John Wesley believed that during Holy Communion our sins are forgiven and we are given the strength to live a Christian life.

Both of these sacraments are considered to be a visible sign of God's invisible grace.

Scripture: Ephesians 4:11-16 and Hebrews 10:13-25

Before engaging in the questions, have someone in your group read the Scripture passages aloud.

Sermon Reflection:

1. What was something you want to make sure you remember that came from the sermon this week?

2. What challenged you about this sermon?
3. What do you think Jesus is trying to teach you through this sermon? How will this affect your daily life?

Questions from the Bible:

1. How does God communicate to us through the sacraments?
2. Read Hebrews 10:19-22. Which sacrament is referenced in this passage? Explain.
3. How are baptism and communion similar/different?
4. What does baptism symbolize? Refer to 1 Corinthians 12:13.
5. Read Acts 19:4-6. What difference does Paul describe between the “baptism of John” and being baptized in the “name of the Lord Jesus”? Which baptism is administered in the Methodist church?
6. What should a Christian know and believe before receiving Jesus’ body and blood in the Lord’s Supper? Refer to 1 Corinthians 11:27-29.

7. In the Article of Religion XIII (refer to the beginning of this lesson) we are told the church is a place where the pure Word of God is preached. How do we know that what is being preached from the pulpit is the pure Word of God? What is the responsibility of church members concerning this? Refer to 1 Thessalonians 5:21.

8. In Ephesians 4:15 it says that church members “will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.” When you consider this goal, how do you think you are doing? Where might you benefit from more growth?

Questions for Application:

1. How would you explain Holy Baptism to a non-believer?

2. How would you explain Holy Communion to a non-believer?

3. The Article of Religion XVIII (refer to the appendix of this study guide) concludes with the following statement: “The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was not by Christ’s ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshiped.” Why do you think it was important to the early Methodists to include this statement? What aspects of this do you see during communion at Marion Methodist?

4. How do we apply the sacraments in our lives?

5. How do sacraments help us to grow into Christlikeness?

6. If you were raised in a different denomination, what differences, if any, were there in the administration of the sacraments?
7. In a world where many are falling away from the church, what does church membership and participation mean to you?

Resources: *Consider starting one of these Bible reading plans to go deeper on this topic.*

What is Baptism? <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/9127-what-is-baptism-a-3-day-plan-to-prepare-or-decide>



The Lord's Supper <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/10919-reconsidering-the-lords-supper>



Question for Discussion:

1. What are you reading in the Word this week?
2. How is your reading growing you in the Marks of Discipleship - prayers, presence, gifts, witness, and service?

Growth Challenge:

The next time that you take Holy Communion, after you have asked for your sins to be forgiven, focus on how that moment can strengthen your Christian life.

Video Summary:

Scan this QRcode (preferably not during the church service) to listen to a brief video summary of this week's lesson on the sacraments.



NOTES

July 23, 2023

Session 4 | We believe the Church is to be Creative

Before you begin this Growth Group session, read the summary found inside the cover of your Growth Group materials.

All the Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church can be found in the Appendix of this Bible Study



Article XXII - Of the Rites and Ceremonies of Churches

It is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same, or exactly alike; for they have been always different, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the rites and ceremonies of the church to which he belongs, which are not repugnant to the Word of God, and are ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, that others may fear to do the like, as one that offendeth against the common order of the church, and woundeth the consciences of weak brethren.

Background:

This will help set the context of the session if someone from your group reads this aloud.

While speaking to His people, the Jews of Israel, Jesus said "I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen." Jesus was telling them, and us, that He came to live among us, not just for the salvation of the people of Israel, or just for those who worship as we do, but for all who believe. (See Romans 3:22)

Some of us may have been fortunate enough to have experienced Methodist worship with a congregation in a different place and culture. You may have noticed that some familiar aspects of worship were very different from what we experience here at Marion Methodist. Perhaps you experienced Communion with the juice of a fruit other than grape, or perhaps you witnessed a full immersion baptism. For the Methodist church, this is one of our strengths. The flexibility to adapt our worship to the "diversity of countries, times and manners" of the worshiping congregation brings diversity and allows for creative worship. This flexibility is not without limit however, as Article XXII (see above) further states that the rites and ceremonies of the church are not to be "repugnant to the Word of God" and that they are to be "ordained and approved by common authority." This allows for a wonderful variety in the styles and modes of worship, while requiring that we remain true to the Word of God.

I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock and one shepherd.
John 10:16

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:12-14 and John 10:16

Before engaging in the questions, have someone in your group read the Scripture passage aloud.

Sermon Reflection:

1. What was something you want to make sure you remember that came from the sermon this week?

2. What challenged you about this sermon?
3. What do you think Jesus is trying to teach you through this sermon? How will this affect your daily life?

Questions from the Bible:

1. In John 10:16, when Jesus refers to “other sheep that are not of this sheep pen”, to whom is He referring? Why do you think Jesus made the point of different sheep becoming one flock?
2. In John 10, Jesus says, “I am the gate” and “I am the good shepherd”. What is Jesus telling us about His relationship with us?
3. Does the example of different parts of the body support the idea of sheep from different pens or are they separate ideas? Explain your thinking.
4. What does the New Testament say about ways to worship God? Refer to Matthew 4:10, John 4:23-24 and Romans 12:1.
5. The Old Testament law has a very prescribed, extensive set of rituals for Israel’s worship of God. In contrast, for Methodists, the only “rites” mandated in the New Testament are baptism and communion. There are no specifics concerning the practice of these two rituals in **The Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church**, other than they are not “repugnant to the Word of God”, and that they are “ordained and approved by common authority.” Why the big change from the Old Testament ritual-heavy observation to the New Testament mandates?

6. What are the spiritual benefits of creativity?

Questions for Application:

1. If you can, describe a time when you experienced a different method of administering the sacraments. What were you feeling during this experience?
2. Do you see the flexibility of the Methodist church as a strength or as a limitation? Explain.
3. Is creativity important to God? Explain your thinking.
4. What are some memorable aspects of worship that have had a meaningful impact on your life?
5. The six verses of the final Psalm, number 150, are an instruction to the people of God to praise the LORD. We are to praise His greatness with our voices, instruments, and dancing. The passage concludes with, "Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD." When was the last time you praised the Lord with abandon? Are you comfortable doing so? If not, why not?
6. According to gotquestions.org, "True Christianity, as derived from accurate interpretation of the Bible, is not rules-based. Rather it is relationship-based." Is relationship with Jesus the basis for your current faith practice? If not, what might you do to improve your personal relationship with Him?
7. How are you praising God with whole-life worship? Refer to Hebrews 13:15-16.

Resources: *Consider starting one of these Bible reading plans to go deeper on this topic*

Diversity: Flourishing As One Body (5 day): <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/4554-diversity-flourishing-as-one-body>



One Body, Different Parts: Devotions From Time of Grace (5 day): <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/11287-one-body-different-parts-devotions-from-time-grace>



Questions for Discussion:

1. What are you reading in the Word this week?

2. How is your reading growing you in the Marks of Discipleship - prayers, presence, gifts, witness, service?

Growth Challenge:

If you have not experienced various methods of administering the sacraments, consider seeking out opportunities to do so.

Video Summary:

Scan this QRcode (preferably not during the church service) to listen to a brief video summary of this week's lesson on the church is to be creative.



NOTES

July 30, 2023

No Growth Group Lesson this week.

Enjoy the worship service by guest Danen Kane.



<https://danenkane.com>

Appendix

The Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church

Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion were finalized in 1571 to define the doctrine of the Church of England. When Methodism emerged as a church, independent of the Church of England two centuries later, John Wesley abbreviated the formulation to 24 Articles. An additional article dealing with the duty of Christians to civil authority was added by the Methodist Episcopal Church when it was formed in 1784. The Articles were officially adopted by the General Conference of 1808, when the first Restrictive Rule was also implemented, and revised by the Uniting Conference of 1939 when three Methodist communions within America became one. The Twenty-Five Articles are as follows:

Article I - Of Faith in the Holy Trinity

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and good; the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Article II - Of the Word, or Son of God, Who Was Made Very Man

The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided; whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile us to His Father, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.

Article III - Of the Resurrection of Christ

Christ did truly rise again from the dead, and took again his body, with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the last day.

Article IV - Of the Holy Ghost

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

Article V - Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation

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

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, The First Book of Samuel, The Second Book of Samuel, The First Book of Kings, The Second Book of Kings, The First Book of Chronicles, The Second Book of Chronicles, The Book of Ezra, The Book of Nehemiah, The Book of Esther, The Book of Job, The Psalms, The Proverbs, Ecclesiastes or the Preacher, Cantica or Songs of Solomon, Four Prophets the Greater, Twelve

Prophets the Less.

All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account canonical.

Article VI - Of the Old Testament

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testaments everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and Man. Wherefore they are not to be heard who feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the law given from God by Moses as touching ceremonies and rites doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity be received in any commonwealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral.

Article VII - Of Original or Birth Sin

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.

Article VIII - Of Free Will

The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

Article IX - Of the Justification of Man

We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith, only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.

Article X - Of Good Works

Although good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and spring out of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit.

Article XI - Of Works of Supererogation

Voluntary works—besides, over and above God's commandments—which they call works of supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogance and impiety. For by them men do declare that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake than of bounden duty is required; whereas Christ saith plainly: When you have done all that is commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

Article XII - Of Sin After Justification

Not every sin willingly committed after justification is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore, the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after justification. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and, by the grace of God, rise again and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned who say they can no more sin as long as they live here; or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

Article XIII - Of the Church

The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

Article XIV - Of Purgatory

The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardon, worshiping, and adoration, as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but repugnant to the Word of God.

Article XV - Of Speaking in the Congregation in Such a Tongue as the People Understand

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the primitive church, to have public prayer in the church, or to minister the Sacraments, in a tongue not understood by the people.

Article XVI - Of the Sacraments

Sacraments ordained of Christ are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they are certain signs of grace, and God's good will toward us, by which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm, our faith in him.

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel; that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called sacraments, that is to say, confirmation, penance, orders, matrimony, and extreme unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel; being such as have partly grown out of the corrupt following of the apostles, and partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not the like nature of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, because they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about; but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation; but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves condemnation, as St. Paul saith.

Article XVII - Of Baptism

Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized; but it is also a sign of regeneration or the new birth. The Baptism of young children is to be retained in the Church.

Article XVIII - Of the Lord's Supper

The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death; insomuch that, to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Supper of our Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshiped.

Article XIX - Of Both Kinds

The cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay people; for both the parts of the Lord's Supper, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be administered to all Christians alike.

Article XX - Of the One Oblation of Christ, Finished upon the Cross

The offering of Christ, once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifice of masses, in the which it is commonly said that the priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, is a blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit.

Article XXI - Of the Marriage of Ministers

The ministers of Christ are not commanded by God's law either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage; therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christians, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve best to godliness.

Article XXII - Of the Rites and Ceremonies of Churches

It is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same, or exactly alike; for they have been always different, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the rites and ceremonies of the church to which he belongs, which are not repugnant to the Word of God, and are ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, that others may fear to do the like, as one that offendeth against the common order of the church, and woundeth the consciences of weak brethren.

Every particular church may ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies, so that all things may be done to edification.

Article XXIII - Of the Rulers of the United States of America

The President, the Congress, the general assemblies, the governors, and the councils of state, as the delegates of the people, are the rulers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made to them by the Constitution of the United States and by the constitutions of their respective states. And the said states are a sovereign and independent nation, and ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

Article XXIV - Of Christian Men's Goods

The riches and goods of Christians are not common as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as some do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

Article XXV - Of a Christian Man's Oath

As we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ and James his apostle, so we judge that the Christian religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the prophet's teaching, in justice, judgment, and truth.

[The following Article from the *Methodist Protestant Discipline* was placed here by the Uniting Conference (1939). It was not one of the Articles of Religion voted upon by the three churches.]

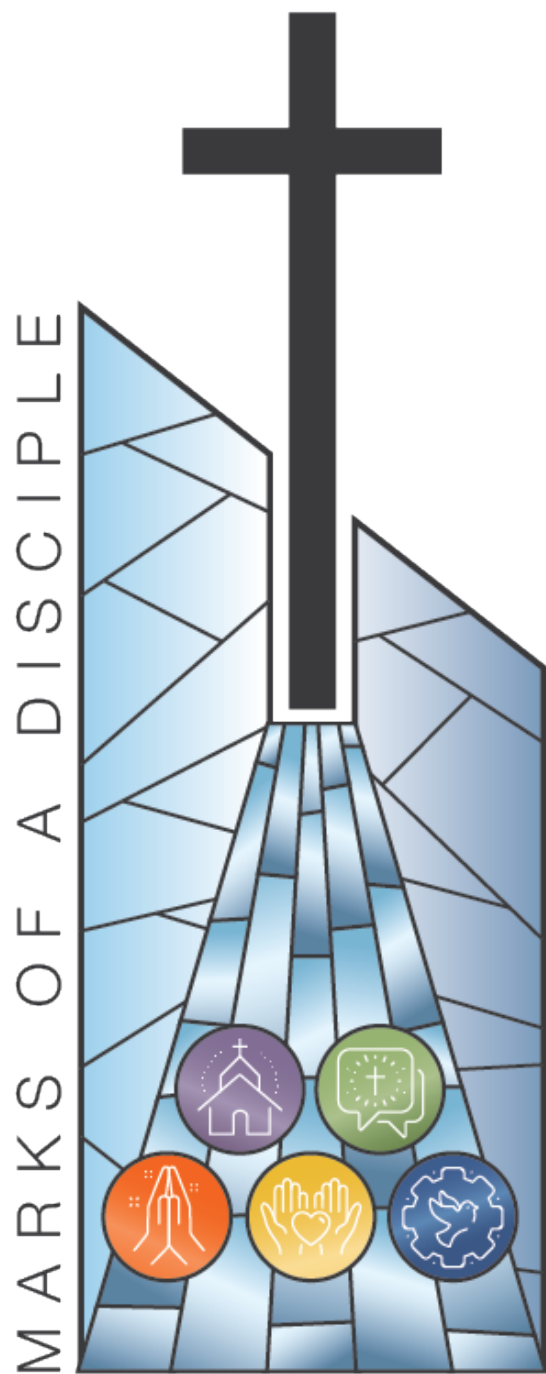
Of Sanctification (from the Methodist Protestant Discipline)

Sanctification is that renewal of our fallen nature by the Holy Ghost, received through faith in Jesus Christ, whose blood of atonement cleanseth all from sin; whereby we are not only delivered from the guilt of sin, but are washed from its pollution, saved from its power, and enabled, through grace, to love God with all our hearts and to walk in His holy commandments blameless.

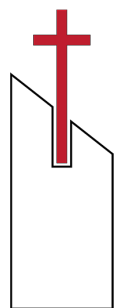
[The following provision was adopted by the Uniting Conference (1939).]

Of the Duty of Christians to the Civil Authority

It is the duty of all Christians, and especially of all Christian ministers, to observe and obey the laws and commands of the governing or supreme authority of the country of which are citizens or subjects or in which they reside, and to use all laudable means to encourage and enjoin obedience to the powers that be.



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