



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE
METHODIST?

WELLSPRING CHURCH | SPRING 2024

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION TO METHODISM

An overview of the **origins** and **key beliefs** of Methodism

INTRODUCTION TO METHODISM

Overview of origins

- Evangelical Movement led by **John and Charles Wesley** (Anglican clergy) in **18th Century England**.
- “Methodism” was a derogatory name given to the “Holy Club” by mockers because of **the methodical way they practiced spiritual disciplines**.
- Wesley was greatly influenced by his **parents** (especially his mother, Susannah), **reading** on radical discipleship, and the **Moravians**.

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Overview of origins

- Just a few of Wesley's influences:
 - *“The Rule of Exercises of Holy Living and Dying”* by Jeremy Taylor
 - *“A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life”* by William Law
 - *The Moravians (namely, Peter Boehler)*

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Overview of origins

- Wesley in Georgia
- Wesley's doubts
- Wesley's pursuit of true faith (not just nominal/cultural Christianity that marked Anglicanism)

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Overview of origins

- Wesley believed in the promises of Scripture for **a completely transformed (holy) life** (not just a change in status).
- Sanctification — guilt, power, and being.

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Overview of origins

- Wesley and Revival
- Wesley's Commitment to the Anglican Church
- American Methodism
- The Methodist Episcopal Church (1784)
- Merger with **Methodist Protestant Church** and **Methodist Episcopal Church, South** to form the **Methodist Church** (1939)
- **Methodist Church** Merged with **Evangelical United Brethren Church** to form the **United Methodist Church** (1968)

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Overview of origins

In 2022, UMC had 5,424,175
members and 29,746
churches in the US.

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Overview of origins

Approximately 24% of those churches (c. 7,000) disaffiliated in the past two years.

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Overview of origins

Worldwide, the UMC has just under 10 million members and 39,460 churches worldwide

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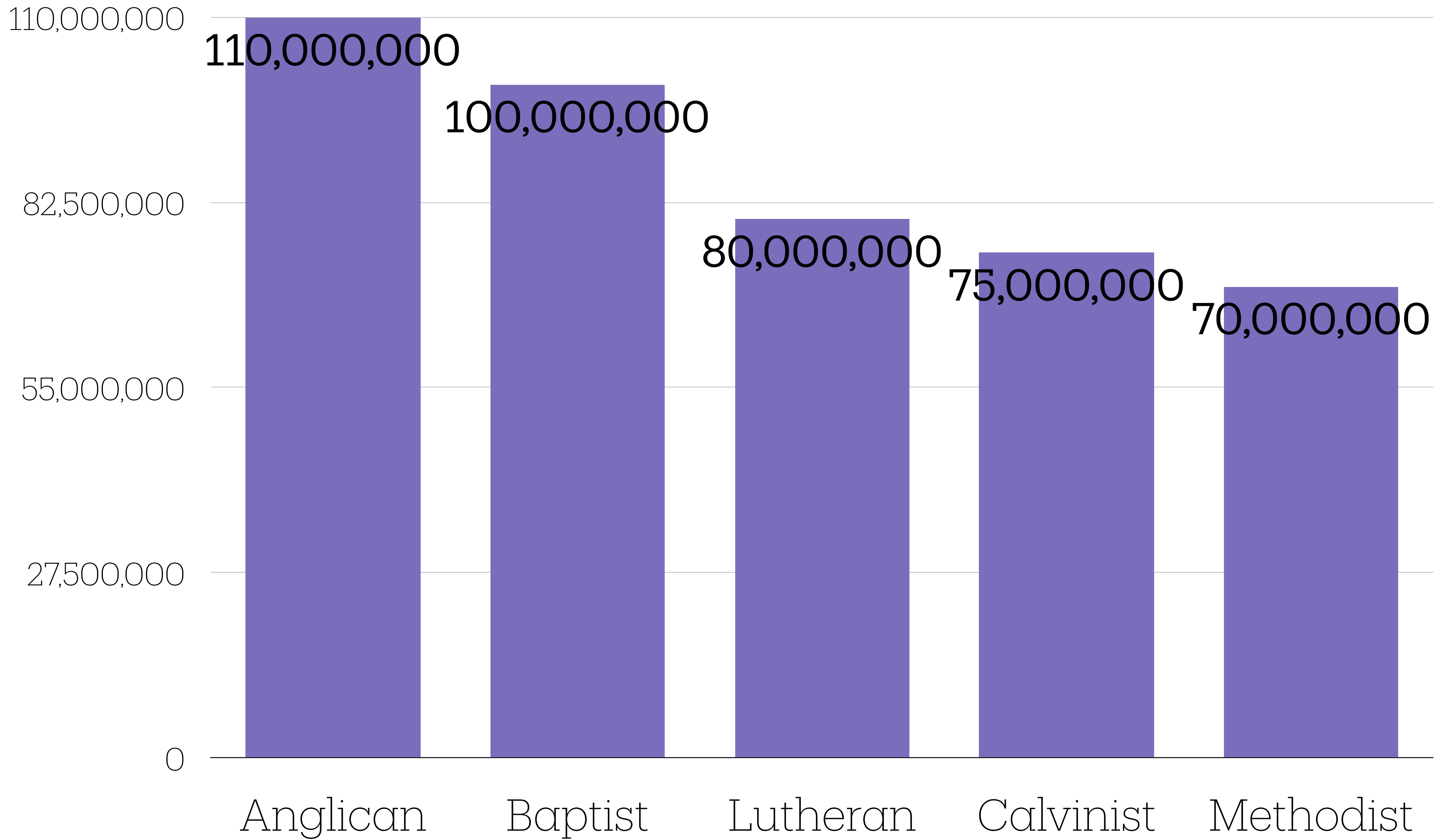
Overview of origins

75% of UMC churches
are in the US.

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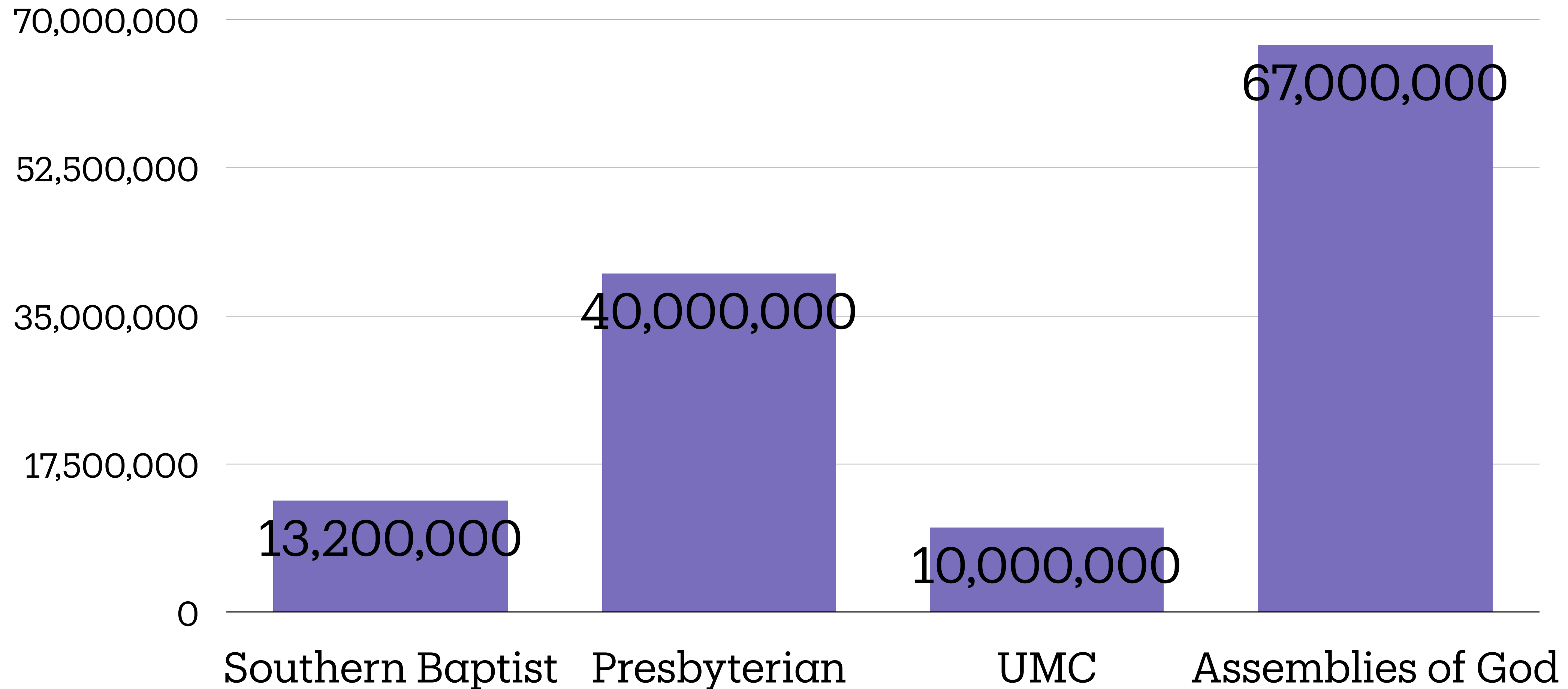
Overview of origins

Total membership of Wesleyan churches worldwide is around 70 million, with about 10 million churches.



INTRODUCTION TO METHODISM

Overview of origins



INTRODUCTION TO METHODISM

Overview of origins

CMC

Members: 14,738

Churches: 187

GMC

Members: ?

Churches: 4,495

Key Beliefs

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Key Beliefs

- The Great Tradition of Christianity
- Entire Sanctification
 - *The Grand Depositum of Methodism*
 - *Guilt, Power, Being*
 - *Freedom from and freedom to*
 - *Holy Love*

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Key Beliefs

- Assurance of Salvation
- Arminian Theology (grace-enabled free will)
- Salvation as a Journey (not merely a transaction)

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Key Beliefs

- Social Holiness (band meetings)
- Means of Grace
 - *Works of Piety*
 - *Works of Mercy*

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Foundational Documents for Doctrinal Standards

- The Holy Scriptures (66 books). The canonical books of the Old and New Testaments (as specified in the Articles of Religion) are the primary rule and authority for faith, morals, and service, against which all other authorities must be measured.
- Apostles Creed
- Nicene Creed
- Definition of Chalcedon

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Foundational Documents for Doctrinal Standards

- **The Methodist 25 Articles of Religion.** 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.

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Normative Wesleyan Standards

Representing the normative contributions and emphases of Methodism's articulation of the Christian faith, the Wesleyan Standards have, to one degree or another, been broadly shared between the spiritual descendants of the eighteenth-century evangelical renewal led by John and Charles Wesley. These standards teach us what it means to be Methodist and the teachings of our communities should be consistent with them.

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Foundational Documents for Doctrinal Standards

- Standard (53) Sermons of John Wesley
- Wesley's notes on the New Testament