

THE WORLD
Parish

IS OUR

A Four-Lesson Teaching Series from
the Assembly of Bishops

*Discover the heritage of the Global Methodist Church
and your place within it*



GLOBAL
METHODIST CHURCH



John Wesley famously said, “The world is my parish.” While Wesley was originally speaking about preaching outside of church buildings in various “parishes” of the Church of England, that phrase came to mean so much more than a preaching strategy.

Join us for *The World is Our Parish*, a special teaching series with our Assembly of Bishops. Through this four-lesson series, you will learn about the roots of Methodism and the Global Methodist Church’s role in this lineage of faithfulness and pursuit of Christ. This series was filmed in the United Kingdom and features significant Wesleyan sites that connect us to our Methodist heritage.

As you watch the series, use this study guide to follow along with each video lesson and dive deeper into each topic.



Scan to view the videos

You can view the videos in English, French, Korean, Spanish and Portuguese at tinyurl.com/TWIOP.



Lesson 1
Methodism's Global Spread

WATCH

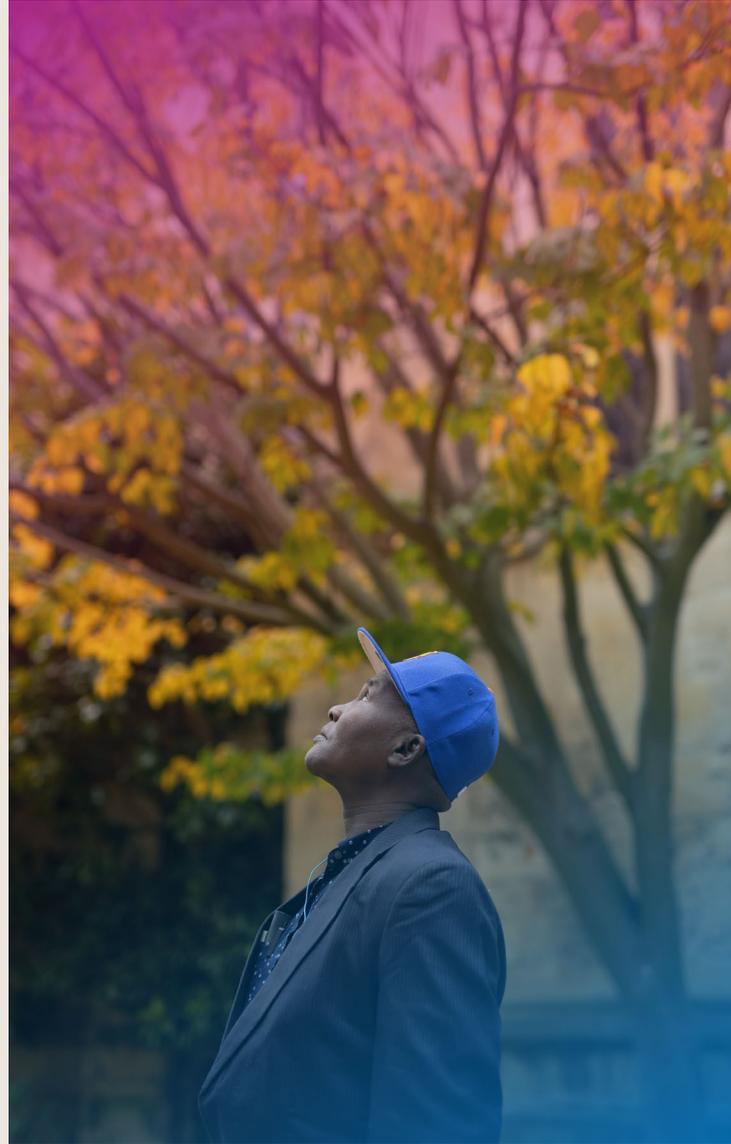
LESSON 1

Methodism's Global Spread with Bishop Auta

READ

ACTS 1:6-9

“Then they gathered around him and asked him, ‘Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?’ He said to them: ‘It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’ After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.”





When Jesus told the disciples they would be witnesses in “Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth,” He wasn’t just naming a list of random places. To witness in Jerusalem meant starting right where the disciples already were. Reaching Judea meant going one step further, to other Jews beyond their city, yet still within their culture. Samaria, however, would have been a much more difficult challenge. For centuries, most Jews and Samaritans saw each other as enemies. Witnessing in Samaria would require laying down resentments and being willing to love people who still might only hate them in response. Finally, the phrase “the ends of the earth” was another way of saying “everyone, everywhere, and don’t stop until you’ve reached all of them.” In other words... the world is your parish!

Unless you were born and raised in Jerusalem, Judea, or Samaria, then when Jesus said, “to the ends of the earth,” He was talking about

reaching YOU! If we could trace the lineage of our spiritual family tree, we would see just how much we owe our faith to men and women who left behind what is safe, comfortable, and familiar for the sake of the Kingdom. For the sake of our souls.

The global reach of Christianity is stunning. No other faith has made such a worldwide impact. This feat is truly a miracle only God could accomplish, which is why Jesus tells His disciples that God the Spirit Himself will empower them for it. The Holy Spirit has already empowered generations of Methodists for this mission before us. Yet often, we are tempted to settle for what is possible in our own power, rather than depending on the Spirit who makes all things possible — including advancing His Kingdom to the very ends of the earth. For Global Methodists to participate in God’s movement today, it means allowing the Spirit to move in us, through us, and toward even those who are far from us.

PRAY

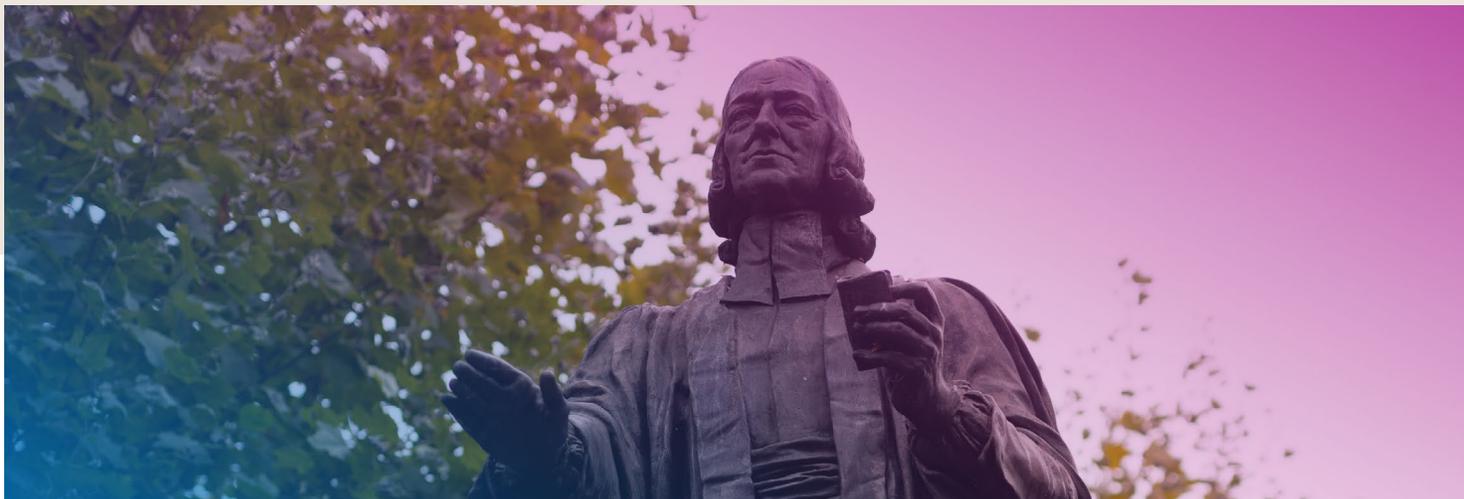
Lord,

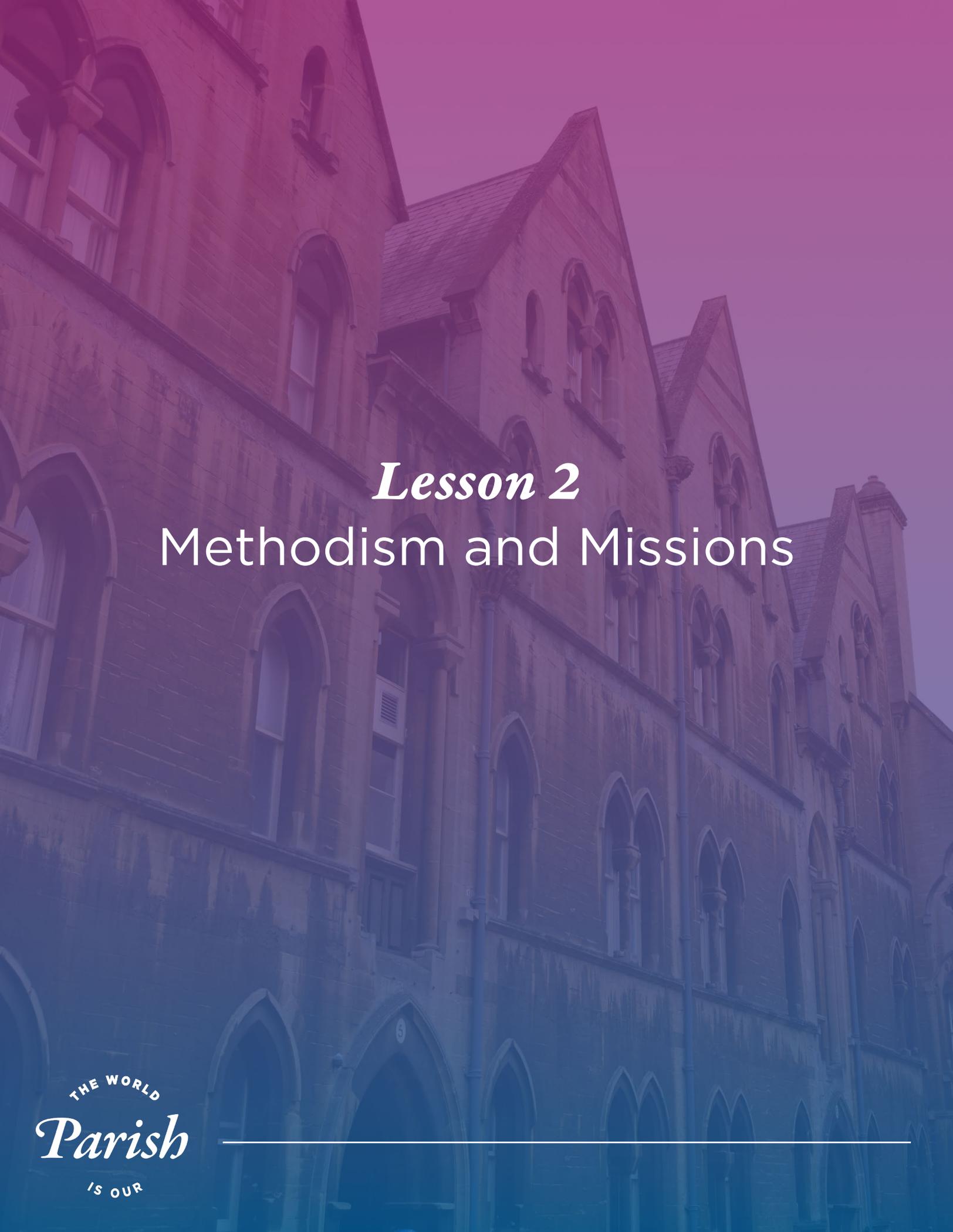
You are the King of Kings. We thank you that your Kingdom has come near to us and yet stretches far beyond what we can see. We are sorry for when we have neglected the ends of the earth or underestimated your power. Holy Spirit, we depend on you. Would you come upon us and fill us with yourself, even right now... Lord, help us receive your Spirit and empower us to be your witnesses by spreading scriptural holiness across the globe. May your Kingdom come and your will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven.

Amen.

REFLECT

1. What does it mean to be a witness of Jesus? Who first witnessed to you?
2. How does thinking about your spiritual family tree affect how you think about spreading the Gospel yourself?
3. What might it look like to witness by the power of the Holy Spirit, rather than your own?
4. What is one next step you could take to participate in God's Kingdom movement to the ends of the earth? If you don't know yet, what could help as you discern?
5. During the rest of this *The World is Our Parish* series, how will you pray for those around the globe who have yet to be reached?





Lesson 2
Methodism and Missions

WATCH

LESSON 2

Methodism and Missions with Bishop Greenway

READ

GENESIS 12:1-4

“The Lord had said to Abram, ‘Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.’ So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran.”





Have you ever heard the phrase, “we are blessed to be a blessing”? We can see this pattern of blessing and sending throughout the Bible, but especially here in Genesis 12. At this point, Abram was seventy-five years old, married, and probably pretty settled down. In Abram’s culture, people didn’t usually move far away from home. Men like Abram usually lived with their whole family their entire lives and had important responsibilities to help take care of them. We aren’t told exactly how Abram heard God, but the command God gave would have been shocking. God was asking Abram to “go,” far away from his home and family, leaving everyone and everything he knew behind. To go from comfort to discomfort, stability to surrender, the plans he’d made to the plans only God could fully see. It’s the kind of sacrifice that makes zero sense unless God is actually real and good.

However, God also promises to give Abram a new home and family, one that will grow into a “great nation” and be used to bless the whole world. This promise is foundational for the rest of the Bible. It sets the agenda for both Abram’s future,

and God’s plan for the rest of humanity. Abram’s family soon grows into the people of God called “Israel,” whose laws and lives are meant to make them a blessing to others. The ultimate blessing, however, will come through Abram’s descendant, Jesus — the eternal God the Son, sent by God to save the world. Abram left his home, became a nomad, and sacrificed all he knew because he had faith in the character of God. The Son of God left Heaven, became a servant, and sacrificed His very life, proving the character of God Himself. God sends because He loves the world. Through the life, death, resurrection, and reign of Christ, we see the fulfillment of all God’s promises.

From the beginning, God’s people have been on “mission.” This term comes from a Latin word meaning “sent.” The people of God have always been sent to bless others, and to point to the ultimate blessing of salvation through Jesus Christ. The generations of Methodists who have lived on mission remind us that the blessings of God are not to keep for ourselves alone but are meant to be used to bless others — and ultimately the whole world.

PRAY

Gracious and loving God,

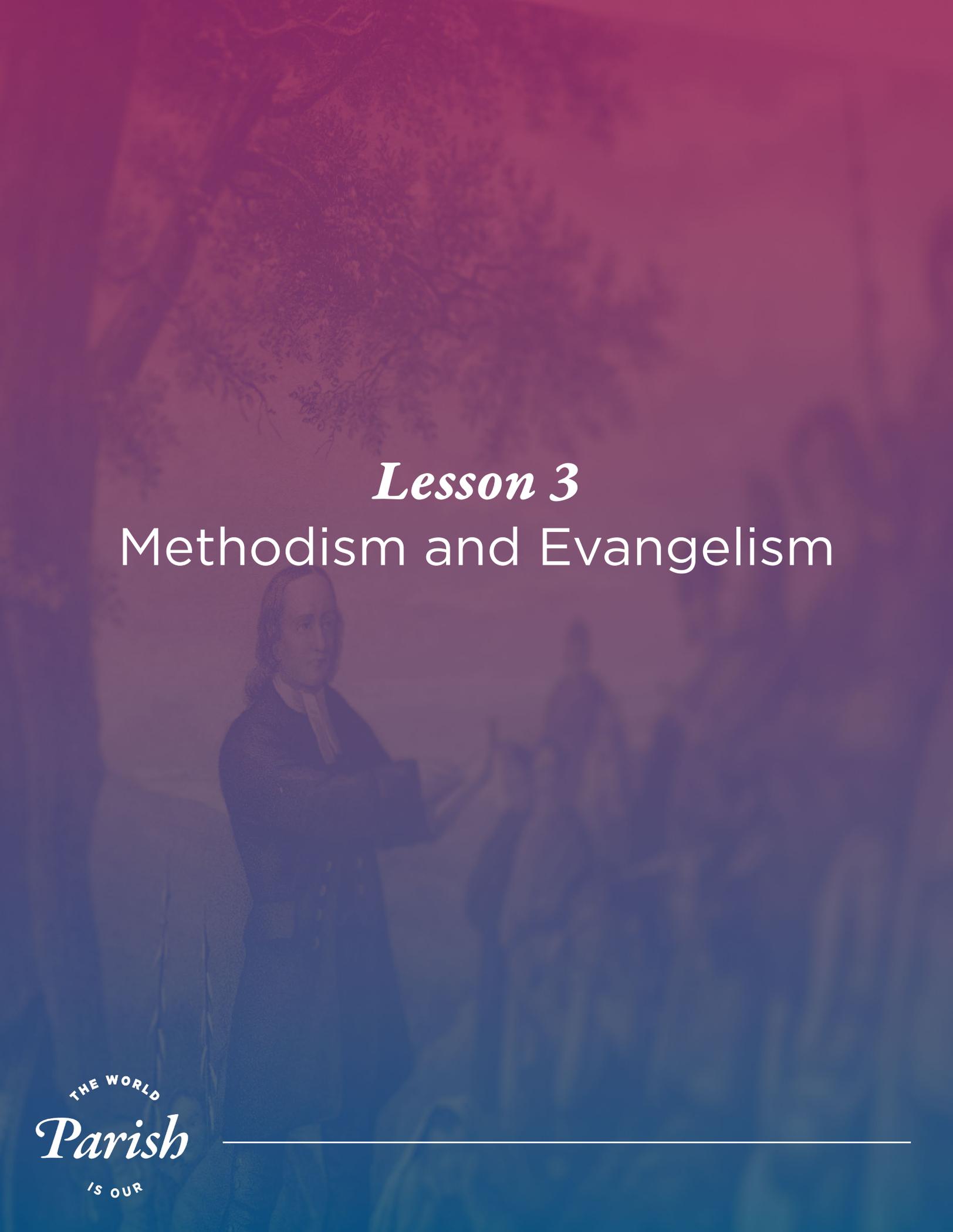
We thank you for sending your one and only Son to save the world. We confess that we have not always loved you with everything we have or loved our neighbors as ourselves. Lord, would you give us your heart for the least, the last, the lost, and the lonely? By your Holy Spirit, please empower us to bless others as you have blessed us. Help us to hear your voice and respond to your call in faith, hope, and love. May we live each day as an act of worship, to the glory of your name.

Amen.

REFLECT

1. What does it mean to “live one’s life on mission”? Do you know anyone who does this well?
2. In this lesson so far today, what stands out most about the character of God?
3. What kind of sacrifice in your life would make zero sense unless God is actually real and good?
4. How might you discern if God is calling you to sacrifice something to bless others?
5. Think about your local community. What could it look like for you to help your church bless others? If you already know a few ways your church lives on mission together, do you sense God calling you to serve or sacrifice in any new ways?



The background of the slide features a faded, historical-style illustration of a man in 18th-century clothing standing in a field. A large, leafy tree is on the left, and a group of people is visible in the distance on the right. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue-to-purple gradient.

Lesson 3

Methodism and Evangelism

WATCH

LESSON 3

Methodism and Evangelism with Bishop Levingston

READ

MATTHEW 28:16-20

“Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘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.’”





Disciples of Jesus make disciples of Jesus. How? The “Great Commission” found at the end of Matthew gives us both the mission and methods for followers of Christ. Jesus outlines these three steps: Go, baptize, and teach.

For many of us, we already feel stuck at the first step, “Go.” Sometimes, this is because we’ve kept to ourselves and our church so much that we haven’t intentionally built relationships with anyone outside of it. Because we’ve made all our friends at church, we’re not sure we even know anyone who isn’t a Christian. Maybe we’ve hoped that somehow just being nice might cause our coworker or cashier to ask us about Jesus, but we’re not sure how to start the conversation ourselves. Jesus’ imperative to “go” is a call not to wait for the lost to find us, but to prayerfully step out of our own comfort zones and seek those souls whom Christ longs to save.

The second and third steps — baptize and teach — together tell us something key about making disciples: evangelism and discipleship go hand in hand. Perhaps you, or your church, have struggled to bridge this gap and know how

to do both well. Ultimately, both evangelism and discipleship are about helping people know Jesus. We’re called to walk alongside people in their faith journey, whether that’s helping them take their first step or next. This begins by being disciples ourselves. It’s hard for us to make disciples if we haven’t gone deep in our own discipleship. It’s also hard to evangelize — to announce the good news — if we’re not even sure what the good news is. I may be able to memorize a definition of the “gospel,” but I still may not know how Jesus is good news for me. If all my attempts at evangelism are motivated by guilt instead of gratitude, I will struggle to share a compelling case for Christ. The end goal is not just baptism, but transformation — for us and for all people.

Finally, Jesus tells His disciples: “I am with you always.” Again, we see this foundational truth for spreading the faith: Jesus, who is called “God with us,” sends the Spirit of God to live in us. Only by the power and presence of God can we proclaim the gospel of God to “all nations” and spread scriptural holiness around the globe.

PRAY

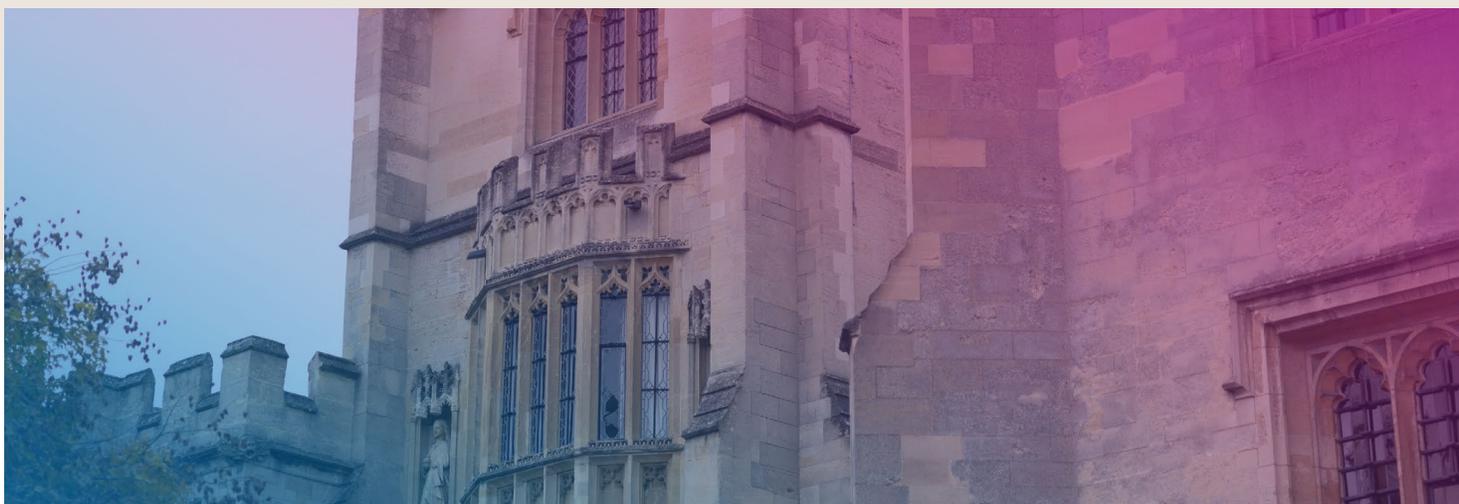
Almighty God,

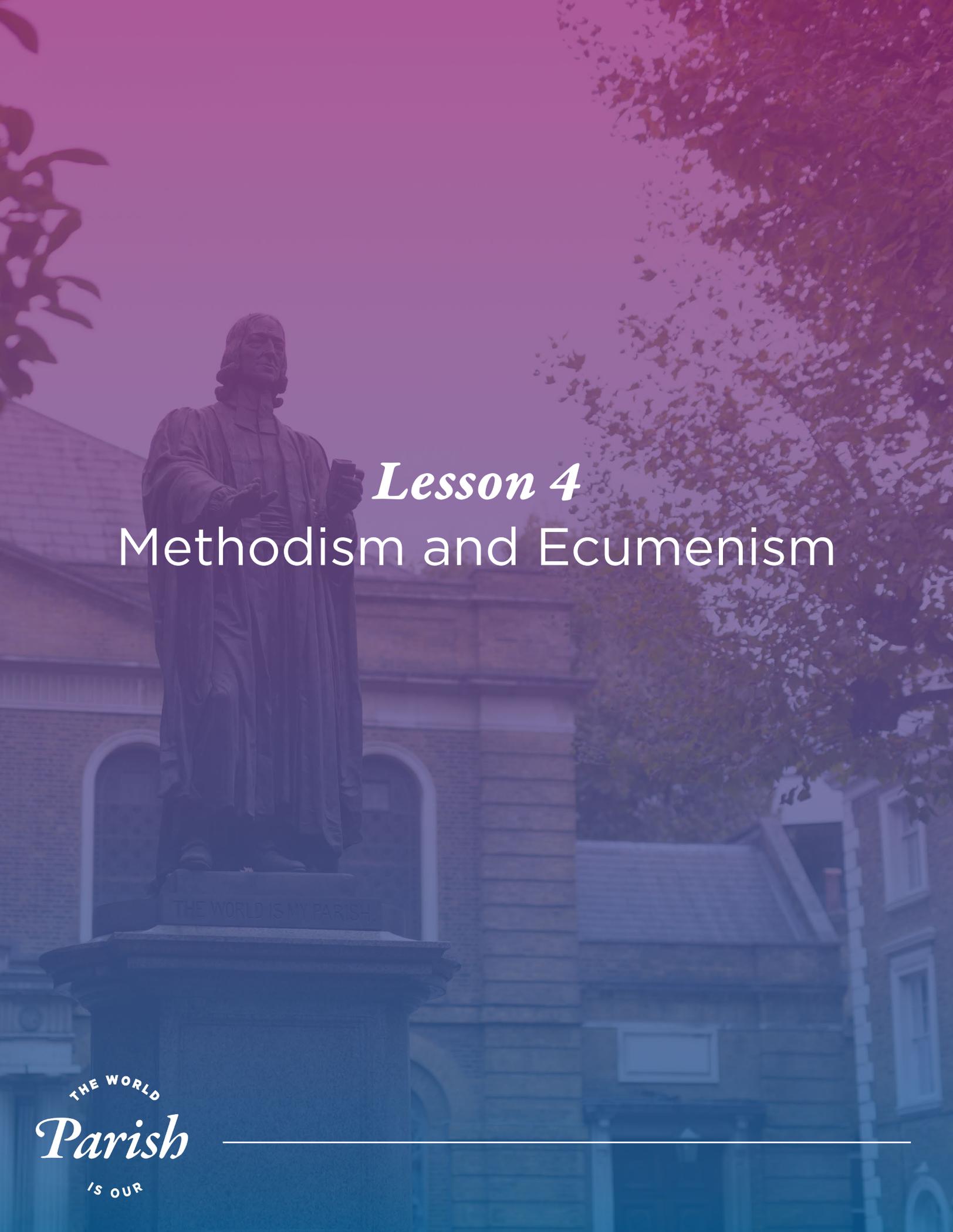
We thank you that you are not a God who waits for us to find you, but that you have come to seek and save the lost. We are sorry for when we have let fear or complacency keep us from proclaiming the good news of Christ and His Kingdom. Please light a fire in us again, give us a burning passion for evangelism, and help us join you in your work to save souls and spread scriptural holiness.

Amen.

REFLECT

1. How is the gospel — the life, death, resurrection, and reign of Jesus — “good news” for you? What about Jesus has made you want to follow Him?
2. Many people find evangelism challenging. What about it is the hardest for you? What has been helpful?
3. Take a moment to write down the names of at least five people in your life who may not know Jesus. If you can’t think of five people, write down how you can seek relationships with those in your community who may not have a relationship with Jesus yet.
4. Can you commit to praying for these people or for new relationships? How often will you pray? When? Is there someone in your church you could meet with to pray for these people together?
5. In your own life this week, what might it look like to be an “everyday evangelist” more intentionally?



A statue of a man in clerical robes stands on a pedestal. The pedestal has the inscription "THE WORLD IS MY PARISH". The background shows a brick building with arched windows and trees. The entire image has a blue and purple color overlay.

Lesson 4 Methodism and Ecumenism

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WATCH

LESSON 4

Methodism and Ecumenism with Bishop
Carolyn Moore

READ

REVELATION 7:9-10

“After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’”





We believe in the holy catholic church. Most of us have repeated that line most every Sunday since we were children. It is likely the most questioned line of the Apostles' Creed. Why catholic? What does that mean for we who are Protestant? When every word of our creed was hammered out through tense debate and conviction, why did our fathers in the faith settle on that word — "catholic?"

At the end of the fourth century, this idea of catholicity became very important. There were early believers who came from a Jewish background and believers who came from a Gentile (non-Jewish) background. Suffice it to say, they disagreed on some things. Calling on the Holy Spirit to help them, they examined the scriptures and decided to work it out according to the whole. That is the definition of the word, "catholic" — "according to the whole" — as in, the church all over the world, wherever it exists.

We might even argue that it refers to what John saw in his vision — "a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language." While John's vision is of the time to come when we will all stand in the unhindered presence of God, the great multitude he sees are the same people presently doing the work of the Church on earth. The Body of Christ is "every

nation, tribe, people and language." It is all of us, from every kind of church that proclaims Jesus as Lord. That means Christianity is not local. It is global and it transcends time.

What does the Church as a whole believe? On what should we all agree? As Global Methodists, we cannot care only about what people in our own culture believe. We must think and act "according to the whole." We must ask how our beliefs line up with Christians in Africa and South America and Europe and China and India. Our beliefs must reflect a global gospel. Unless he is Christ for the whole world he is not Christ for any of it. Likewise, we must examine and carefully weigh our core beliefs so we can be unified in as many ways as possible with those in other denominations who hold our core values.

To say we believe in "one holy catholic church" is to say that we who believe that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life are bound to each other. It is to believe that one day we will all stand before the throne together, crying out in a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God!" In John Wesley's sermon on the catholic spirit, he concludes with this wisdom. "Keep an even pace, rooted in the faith once delivered to the saints, and grounded in love, and in true catholic love, till you are swallowed up in love forever and ever." Amen!

PRAY

Lord,

I confess that it is more comfortable to think only about my part of the world and my place in the Body of Christ, rather than thinking about the whole of your people across the world and across time. Teach me, Jesus, to embrace a global gospel and a catholic spirit.

Amen.

REFLECT

1. How does this definition of the term “catholic” — according to the whole — change your understanding of what the Apostles’ Creed states?
2. What is the difference between “thinking alike” and “loving alike,” as Wesley wrote, when it comes to caring for the Body of Christ?
3. Have you read John Wesley’s sermon, “On a Catholic Spirit”? If not, we highly recommend it!

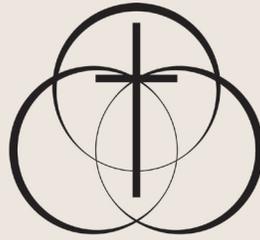


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Thank you for journeying with us through *The World Is Our Parish*, reflecting on the roots of Methodism and the global calling that has shaped our movement from the beginning.

Methodism's global story did not end in the past—it continues through faithful witness, connection, and love today. Wherever God has placed you, you are part of His work in the world.

As this series comes to a close, we remember that the world is still our parish. Wherever God has placed us—near or far—we are sent as witnesses, called to love boldly, serve faithfully, and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.



GLOBAL

METHODIST CHURCH

T*he World Is Our Parish* video lessons were produced by the Global Methodist Church in collaboration with Bishops John Pena Auta, Jeff Greenway, Kenneth Levingston and Carolyn Moore.

Study guide curriculum was written by Katherine Reiley and Carolyn Moore.

Photos featured in this study guide document the Assembly of Bishops' pilgrimage to historic Wesleyan and Methodist sites in the United Kingdom. Key locations include Wesley's New Room, the Wesley's home in Bristol, Wesley's home in London and Christ Church at Oxford University.

For more information and to view other teaching series, visit globalmethodist.org.