

REGIONALIZATION: A THEOLOGICAL GROUNDING

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The Connectional Table
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01

Where are we
now?

02

Where is God
calling us to go?

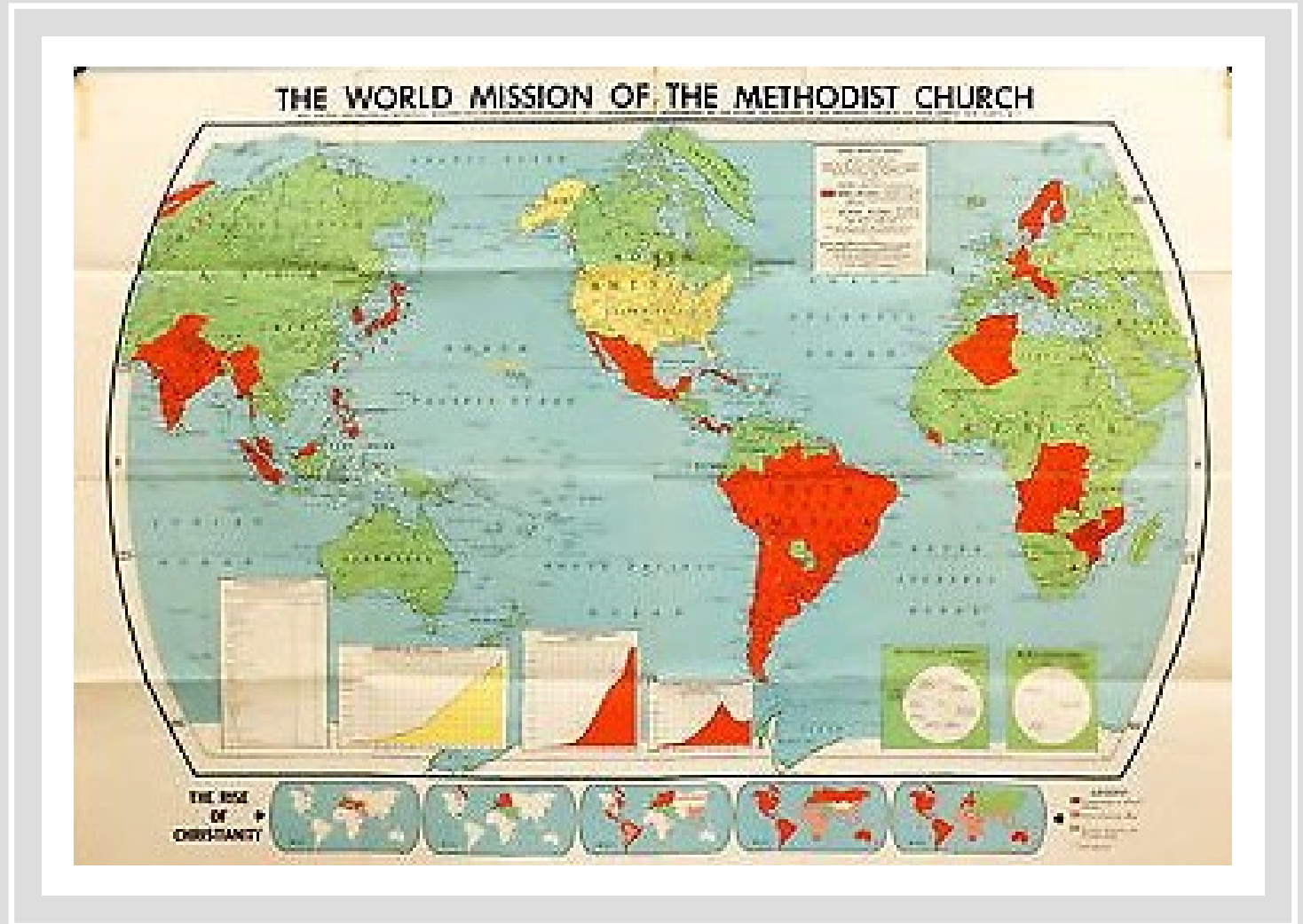
03

How will we get
there?

THREE STEPS

US-CENTRISM

- Attitudes
- Agendas
- Focus
- Finances
- Rules
- Representation



PROBLEMS WITH US-CENTRISM

Fairness and
equity

Christian
fellowship

Effectiveness
and
functionality

Witness



**GOD WILL
PROVIDE
SOLUTIONS**

**HOLD ON TO THE
CONNECTION**



4 MEANINGS OF CONNECTIONALISM

Structure

Relationship

Spirituality

Ecclesiology



A THEOLOGY OF CONNECTIONALISM

Connectionalism
should be:

Missional

Mutual

Decolonial

Contextual

Intercultural

Open

REGIONALIZATION AS SOLUTION

US-CENTRISM

Solutions: Regionalization

A BETTER
CONNECTION-
ALISM

REGIONALIZATION AS THEOLOGICAL CONCEPT

- **Regionalization:** the primary venue for making collective decisions for the church should be a regional level.
- **Contextualization:** the practices of the church should be determined within a shared context.

DIFFERENT LEVELS



WORLDWIDE
REGIONALIZATION
LEGISLATION

Existing central conferences become regional conferences.

A new U.S. regional conference is created.

Each regional conference can adapt portions of the BOD.

All regional conferences share portions of the BOD.

The Council of Bishops, Judicial Council, general agencies & General Conference are maintained.

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a small, colorful globe of the world. The globe is held in the center, with the person's fingers visible at the bottom and sides. The globe shows various countries in different colors, including green, yellow, orange, and purple. A semi-transparent black rectangular box with a thin white border is overlaid horizontally across the middle of the globe. Inside this box, the text "REGIONALIZATION IS BIBLICAL" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a person's face and colorful clothing.

REGIONALIZATION IS BIBLICAL

A photograph capturing a religious ceremony. In the center, a priest in white vestments with gold embroidery is blessing a woman's head with his right hand. The woman has her eyes closed and a serene expression. To the left, another woman in a grey top looks on. In the background, a man in a dark suit and glasses is visible. The scene is set against a dark, blurred background, possibly a church interior.

REGIONALIZATION IS MISSIONAL



REGIONALIZATION IS EQUITABLE

A close-up photograph of two hands clasped together in a firm grip. The hand on the left is darker-skinned and wears a blue denim jacket cuff. The hand on the right is lighter-skinned and wears a tan jacket cuff. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white. A dark grey rectangular box with a white border is centered over the hands, containing the text.

REGIONALIZATION IS
CONNECTIONAL

KAIROS

- God's appointed time
- Possibilities exist for successful collective action

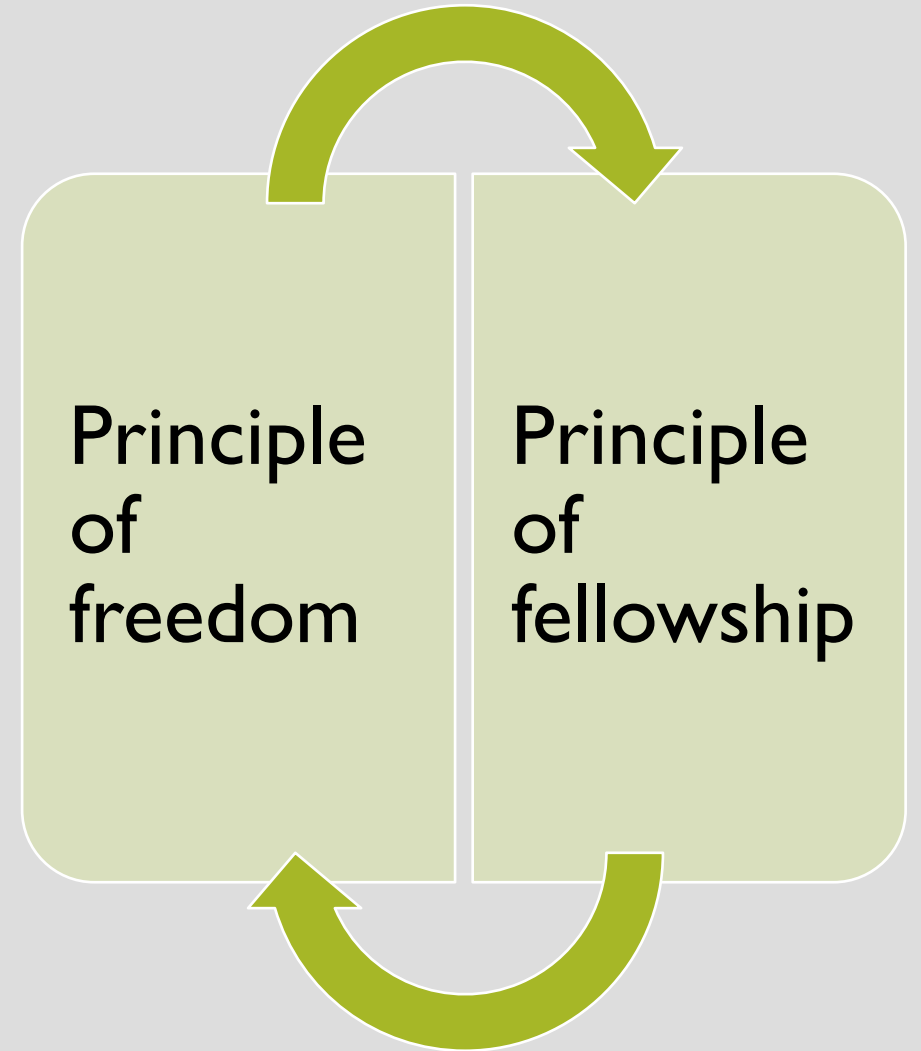


PREVIOUS KAIROS MOMENTS

- 1790s-1810s – General Conference & regional annual conferences established
- 1830s & 40s – First international missions
- 1870s – First central conferences
- 1920s – First discussion of autonomy; Central conferences extended
- 1960s and 1970s – COSMOS; Wave of autonomy

COSMOS

Commission on the
Structure of Methodism
Overseas
(1964-1972)



COSMOS

Commission on the
Structure of Methodism
Overseas
(1964-1972)

5 PRINCIPLES

- Responsible, indigenous churches
- Shaped by the centrality of mission
- Interdependence in mission and fellowship
- Be provisional and flexible
- Equality of relationship

COSMOS

Commission on the
Structure of Methodism
Overseas
(1964-1972)

4 OPTIONS

Continue
central
conferences

Autonomy
for churches
outside US

International
church w/
regional
conferences

World
Methodist
Conference
of Churches

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- 2000s – Worldwide Nature of the UMC
- 2020s – Worldwide Regionalization

LEAVE WITH...

Assurance

Gratitude

Determination