



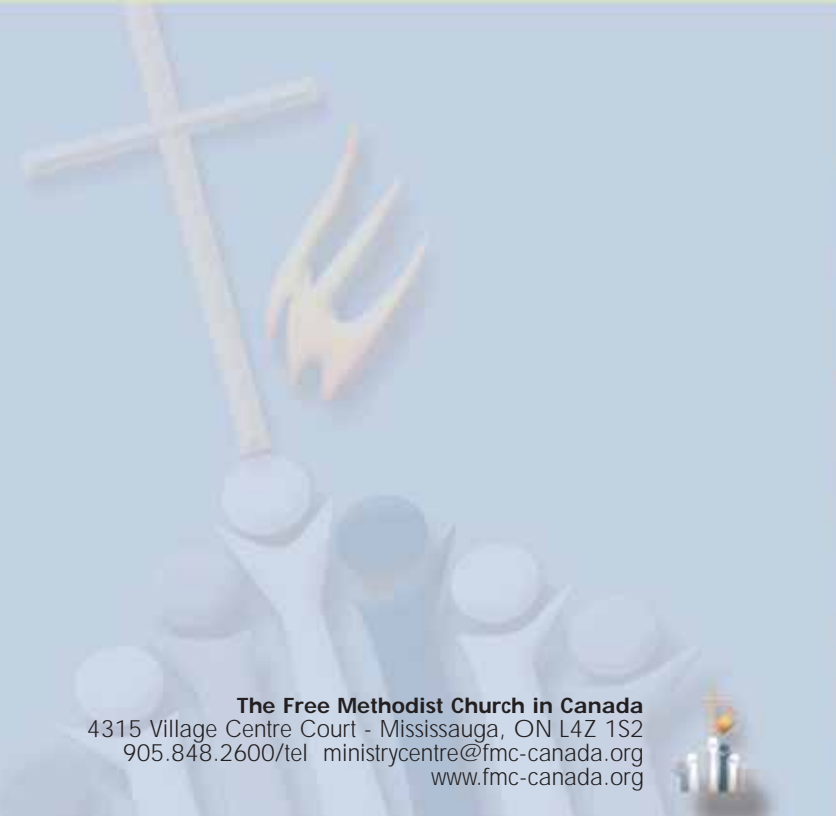
THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH IN CANADA

*Healthy Churches*

WITHIN THE REACH OF ALL

*people in Canada*

AND BEYOND ...



**The Free Methodist Church in Canada**  
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## WHAT'S OUR DNA?

### *Where do we come from?*

We are rooted in historic, orthodox Christianity, tracing our influences from the teachings of the early Church Fathers, the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the Anabaptist movement, the Methodist Church, the Holiness movement and the wider Evangelical movement. A constant theme in our heritage has been the desire for ongoing renewal and reformation in personal spirituality as well as congregational and community life.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was an Anglican priest in the 1700s. He had a desire to see the renewal of active spirituality among the common people of England. After meeting resistance for decades to its desire to remain as a renewal movement within the Anglican Church, eventually the Methodist Church was formed.

B.T. Roberts, the founder of the Free Methodist Church, was a Methodist Episcopal minister in New York State. He had a desire to see a renewal of earnest Christianity in the Methodist Episcopal Church and a commitment to meet the needs of the poor and disenfranchised.

When the Methodist Episcopal Church excommunicated Roberts, he and a number of other clergy and laymen formed the Free Methodist Church in 1860.

The Free Methodist Church in Canada was initiated when Roberts visited with a group of dissatisfied Methodists east of Toronto in 1873. The first church was formed in Galt, Ontario (now part of Cambridge) in 1876.

In 1959, the Holiness Movement Church merged with The Free Methodist Church in Canada. This indigenous Canadian church was likewise the result of a renewal movement among Methodist and Anglican churches in Eastern Ontario in the early 1900s.

In 1990, The Free Methodist Church in Canada became a self-governing General Conference with its own elected bishop. The Free Methodist Church in Canada belongs to the World Conference of the Free Methodist Church.

## WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO US?

### **Faith and action**

As Jesus-followers, we are being restored in relationship with our Creator through the work of Jesus on our behalf. We are also being called to bring about restoration and wholeness in our spheres of influence. Faith must produce social engagement as evidence of the authenticity and vitality of what we have found in Jesus. Our question: If our lives are being changed is that producing changes in the world we live in?

### **Love and reason**

We take seriously the question: *"If anyone has materials possessions and sees his brother in need but has not pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?"* Love awakens our conscience to unlimited responsibility for others. Our question: In what practical ways is God calling us to respond that will enable us to demonstrate His love through us?

### **Individual and community**

Each Jesus-follower is connected to God as an individual with responsibility for personal growth and development. We are also called into a community of believers to whom we are mutually accountable. The community of believers is a place where we become conscious of our identity in Christ and our own worth. It is also a starting point for transformational engagement in our neighbourhoods and wider society.



Members of West Springs Community Church in Calgary, AB build a home for Habitat for Humanity.



The Open Door in Pierrefonds, QC makes sandwiches every weekend to give to their neighbourhood friends.



Part of the community at The Way in Scarborough, ON



## WHAT IS A FREE METHODIST?

We are a movement of Jesus-followers committed to actively participate together in bringing holistic renewal to our nation and beyond. As we minister in cooperation with other churches and Christian leaders across the country, our focus is placed on seeing our friends, family and neighbours being actively restored in their relationships with God through encounter with Jesus Christ. As our personal lives continue to be shaped by biblical truth and renewed by the influence of the Holy Spirit, we become engaged participants in transforming our communities to reflect God's longstanding desire that all might be whole.



## WHAT'S OUR VISION?

*We want to see healthy churches within the reach of all people in Canada and beyond.*

We actively seek to develop healthy churches. The signs of a healthy church include empowering leadership, passionate spirituality, inspiring worship, functional structures, gift-oriented ministry, holistic small groups, loving relationships, and need-oriented evangelism.

We look for those places in our villages, towns and cities where people don't have access to a healthy church and seek to develop new congregations. We are doing this in rural communities, middle-class suburbs, metro inner-cities and among diverse ethnic groups across the country.

We also look for opportunities beyond our borders. As the Lord gives vision and capacity to our churches for ministry in unreached communities around the world, we seek to respond to the best of our ability.





## WHAT DO WE VALUE?

**Persons** – All persons are made in the image of God and possess intrinsic worth. All persons have a need to know Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. All persons can be saved and begin a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. All persons have unique gifts to contribute to the Kingdom.

**Church** – The Christian community is the foundation for the growth of the Kingdom of God on earth. The Christian community is the primary context for developing believers. The Christian community is to minister in Jesus' name to all people. The Christian community is to worship and serve God.

**Team** – Teamwork demonstrates the diversity of spiritual gifts and personal competencies within the church. Teamwork recognizes our dependence on God and each other. Teamwork maximizes the leadership resources of the church. Teamwork builds Christian community.

**Connection** – Free Methodists share a common theology, membership covenant, and leadership system. We cooperate with other parts of the Christian church in redemptive endeavours and political response. We build healthy inter-congregational cooperation, celebration and support. We affirm diverse approaches to accomplish our common vision and mission.

**Integrity** – Integrity is grounded in the character of God. Integrity establishes a framework for all relationships. Integrity guides all strategies, actions and programs. Integrity ensures the appropriate use of time, money and energy.

**Learning** – Learning leads to excellence and creativity. Learning leads to faithfulness to biblical essentials. Learning increases skill.

**Growth** – The Scriptures call for every church to grow. They call for the evangelization of the unreached. The Scriptures call for every Christian to grow in grace and knowledge of Christ. They call for every Christian to participate in the growth of the church.

## OUR MISSION OBJECTIVES

Find ■ Mature ■ Commission  
Interpret ■ Invest ■ Celebrate FMCIC

Here's how we approach making this dream a reality and making these values central to our practices. We're focusing on clear objectives: to **find** seeking people who need Jesus and help them to become **mature** believers. We're working with people who sense a call to ministry leadership. And we are preparing them and **commissioning** them to be godly and competent leaders in ministry. We want to carefully **interpret** trends in our world and fashion responses to them for our people through biblical teaching. We're serious about how we **invest** and direct our resources of time, energies and money, wisely in line with our values. And as we see our churches grow and our prayers answered we want to be a people who **celebrate** that God is at work among us as we partner together across this vast country.



## WHAT'S WITH THE "FREE?"

Early Free Methodists were concerned about a number of issues in their historical setting that still have relevance today.

Formed in the early days of the American Civil War, these supporters of the anti-slavery movement believed in equality for all, regardless of racial background. They wanted a church "free" for all to attend.

The Methodist Church had a practice of renting seats in their churches as a way of collecting financial support from their members. Since this practice was seen as disenfranchising the poor, who could not afford the seats, Free Methodists wanted "free seats" for all, regardless of socio-economic status.

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, taught that all Christians could be "free from the domination of sin" in their daily lives through the renewing activity of the Holy Spirit and faithful adherence to spiritual disciplines. Free Methodists wanted to recover this expectation in their movement.

A lively spiritual refreshing was sweeping the United States in the mid 1800s, and the Free Methodists wanted this "freedom of the Spirit" in their worship services as well.

Finally, many members of Methodist churches were also members of secret societies that often divided their loyalties toward their Christian commitments. Free Methodists wanted all their members to be "free" from such binding involvements outside the fellowship of Christian believers.

