**UNIT IV**

**METHODIST MOVEMENT**

**Methodism**, 18th-century movement founded by [John Wesley](https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Wesley) that sought to reform the [Church of England](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Church-of-England) from within. The movement, however, became separate from its parent body and developed into an [autonomous](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/autonomous) church. The [World Methodist Council](https://www.britannica.com/topic/World-Methodist-Council) (WMC), an association of churches in the Methodist tradition, [comprises](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/comprises) more than 40.5 million Methodists in 138 countries.

**Origins**

John Wesley was born in 1703, educated in [London](https://www.britannica.com/place/London) and Oxford, and ordained a [deacon](https://www.britannica.com/topic/deacon) in the Church of England in 1725. In 1726 he was elected a fellow of Lincoln College at Oxford, and in the following year he left Oxford temporarily to act as [curate](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/curate) to his father, the rector of Epworth. Wesley was ordained a priest in the Church of England in 1728 and returned to Oxford in 1729. Back in Oxford, he joined his brother [Charles](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-Wesley) and a group of earnest students who were dedicated to frequent attendance at [Holy Communion](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Eucharist), serious study of the [Bible](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Bible), and regular visitations to the filthy Oxford prisons. The members of this group, which Wesley came to lead, were known as Methodists because of their “methodical” devotion and study.

In 1735, at the invitation of the founder of the colony of Georgia, [James Edward Oglethorpe](https://www.britannica.com/biography/James-Edward-Oglethorpe), both John and [Charles Wesley](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-Wesley) set out for the colony to be pastors to the colonists and missionaries (it was hoped) to the Native Americans. Unsuccessful in their pastoral work and having done no missionary work, the brothers returned to England conscious of their lack of genuine Christian faith. They looked for help to Peter Böhler and other members of the [Church of the Brethren](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Brethren), who were staying in England before joining [Moravian](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Moravian-church) settlements in the [American colonies](https://www.britannica.com/topic/American-colonies). John Wesley noted in his *Journal* that at a Moravian service on May 24, 1738, he “felt” his “heart strangely warmed”; he continued, “I felt I did trust in [Christ](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jesus), Christ alone, for salvation; and an [assurance](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/assurance) was given me that He had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.” Charles Wesley had reported a similar experience a few days previously.

Some months later, [George Whitefield](https://www.britannica.com/biography/George-Whitefield), also an Anglican clergyman who had undergone a [“conversion experience,”](https://www.britannica.com/topic/conversion-religion) invited his friend John Wesley to come to the city of Bristol to preach to the colliers of Kingswood Chase, who lived and worked in the most debased conditions. Wesley accepted the invitation and found himself, much against his will, preaching in the open air. This enterprise was the beginning of the Methodist Revival. Whitefield and Wesley at first worked together but later separated over Whitefield’s belief in double [predestination](https://www.britannica.com/topic/predestination) (the belief that God has determined from eternity whom he will save and whom he will damn). Wesley regarded this as an [erroneous](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/erroneous) doctrine and insisted that the love of God was universal.

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Under the leadership of Whitefield and then of Wesley, the movement grew rapidly among those who felt neglected by the Church of England. Wesley differed from contemporary Anglicans not in doctrine but in emphasis: he claimed to have reinstated the biblical doctrines that human beings may be assured of their [salvation](https://www.britannica.com/topic/salvation-religion) and that the power of the [Holy Spirit](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Holy-Spirit) enables them to attain perfect love for God and their fellows in this life. Wesley’s helpers included only a few ordained clergymen and his brother Charles, who wrote more than 6,000 [hymns](https://www.britannica.com/topic/hymn) to express the message of the revival. In spite of Wesley’s wish that the Methodist Society would never leave the Church of England, relations with Anglicans were often strained.

In 1784, when there was a shortage of ordained ministers in America after the [Revolution](https://www.britannica.com/event/American-Revolution), the Bishop of London refused to ordain a Methodist for the United States. Feeling himself forced to act and believing that biblical principles allowed a [presbyter](https://www.britannica.com/topic/presbyter) to ordain, Wesley ordained [Thomas Coke](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Thomas-Coke) as superintendent and two others as presbyters. In the same year, by a Deed of Declaration, he appointed a Conference of 100 men to govern the Society of Methodists after his death.

Wesley’s ordinations set an important precedent for the Methodist church, but the definite break with the Church of England came in 1795, four years after his death. After the schism, [English Methodism](https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Methodist-Church), with vigorous outposts in [Ireland](https://www.britannica.com/place/Ireland), Scotland, and Wales, rapidly developed as a church, even though it was reluctant to perpetuate the split from the Church of England. Its system centred in the Annual Conference (at first of ministers only, later thrown open to laypeople), which controlled all its affairs. The country was divided into [districts](https://www.britannica.com/topic/district-church-government) and the districts into circuits, or groups of congregations. Ministers were appointed to the circuits, and each circuit was led by a superintendent, though much power remained in the hands of the local trustees.

The Wesleyan Methodist Church grew rapidly, numbering 450,000 members by the end of the 19th century. Its growth was largest in the expanding industrial areas, where the Methodist faith helped workers—both men and women—to endure economic hardship while they [alleviated](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/alleviated) their poverty. Because their faith encouraged them to live simply, their economic status tended to rise. Consequently, Wesleyan Methodism became a middle-class church that was not immune to the excessive stress on the individual in material and spiritual matters that marked the Victorian age.

At the same time, the autocratic habits of some ministers in authority, notably Jabez Bunting, an outstanding but sometimes ruthless leader, alienated many of the more [ardent](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ardent) and democratic spirits, resulting in schisms. The Methodist New Connexion broke off in 1797, the Primitive Methodists in 1811, the Bible Christians in 1815, and the United Methodist Free Churches in 1857. A movement to reunite the Methodist groups began about the turn of the century and succeeded in two stages. In 1907 the Methodist New Connexion, the Bible Christians, and the United Methodist Free Churches joined to form the [United Methodist Church](https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-Methodist-Church); and in 1932 the Wesleyan Methodist Church, the [Primitive Methodist Church](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Primitive-Methodist-Church), and the United Methodist Church came together to form the Methodist Church.

The Methodist Church has shared in the numerical decline that has plagued English churches since about 1910. This decline, together with broader social and cultural changes, inspired a desire to express Wesley’s original ideals in a contemporary form. The church planned new evangelical missions, developed the Kingswood School (Wesley’s foundation) and other boarding schools, and trained Christian teachers at Westminster and Southlands colleges, activities that continued through the rest of the 20th century. Its strong interest in social issues has expanded to include a wide range of national and international problems, especially those connected with race, poverty, and peace.

The Methodist Church immediately became involved in the [ecumenical movement](https://www.britannica.com/topic/ecumenism) and later was a founding member of the [British Council of Churches](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Churches-Together-in-Britain-and-Ireland) (1942) and the [World Council of Churches](https://www.britannica.com/topic/World-Council-of-Churches) (1948). Throughout the 20th century it participated in interdenominational [dialogues](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dialogues) and sought to create unions across denominational boundaries. Relations with the Church of England improved so much by the 1960s that a plan for the reunion of the two churches (in two stages) was approved in principle by both in 1965. The final form of the plan was approved by the Methodist Church with a very large majority in 1969, but the Church of England did not muster a large enough majority to bring the plan into effect. The same happened in 1972, and in 1982 the Anglican church failed to ratify a proposal for a “Covenant for Visible Unity” that was favoured by the United Reformed Church and the Moravian Church as well as by the Methodists. The church also engaged in official discussion with [Roman Catholics](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Roman-Catholicism) on national and world levels and found a surprising degree of agreement while it promoted tolerance and understanding on previously [contentious](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/contentious) issues.

The first [woman](https://www.britannica.com/topic/women) was [ordained](https://www.britannica.com/topic/ordination) to “The Ministry of Word and Sacraments” in 1974. This was the climax of many years of discussion and controversy. It indicated a growing appreciation of the place of women in the life of the church. The theological objections had been carefully considered and rejected before the final step was taken.

**Humanitarianism** is an active belief in the value of human life, whereby [humans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human) practice benevolent treatment and provide assistance to other humans, in order to improve the conditions of humanity for [moral](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morality), [altruistic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Altruism) and [logical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logic) reasons. Humanitarianism is today primarily understood as voluntary emergency aid in a transnational context, but it overlaps with human rights advocacy, actions taken by governments, development assistance, and domestic philanthropy. Other critical issues include the correlation with religious beliefs; the motivation of aid between the poles of altruism and social control; market affinity; imperialism and neo-colonialism; gender and class relations; and the types of humanitarian agencies and endeavours that characterise different epochs.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humanitarianism#cite_note-1) A practitioner is known as a **humanitarian**.

**Historical examples and periodization**

Historically, humanitarianism was publicly seen in the social reforms of the late 1800s and early 1900s, following the economic turmoil of the [Industrial Revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Industrial_Revolution) in England. Many of the women in [Great Britain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Britain) who were involved with [feminism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminism) during the 1900s also pushed humanitarianism. The atrocious hours and working conditions of children and unskilled laborers were made illegal by pressure on Parliament by humanitarians. The [Factory Act of 1833](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Factory_Act_of_1833) and the [Factory Act of 1844](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Factory_Act_of_1844) were some of the most significant humanitarian bills passed in [Parliament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliament_of_the_United_Kingdom) following the Industrial Revolution.

In the middle of the 19th century, humanitarianism was central to the work of [Florence Nightingale](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florence_Nightingale) and [Henry Dunant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Dunant) in emergency response and in the latter case led to the founding of the [Red Cross](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Cross).

The [Humanitarian League](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humanitarian_League) (1891–1919), was an English advocacy group, formed by [Henry S. Salt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_S._Salt), which sought to advance the humanitarian cause.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humanitarianism#cite_note-:1-4)

Various suggestions of distinct periods of humanitarianism exist, drawing either on geopolitical or socioeconomic factors that determine humanitarian action. The first approach is exemplified by Michael Barnett's proposition to distinguish ages of "imperial humanitarianism" (up to 1945), "neo-humanitarianism" (1945–1989), and "liberal humanitarianism".[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humanitarianism#cite_note-5) Norbert Götz, Georgina Brewis, and Steffen Werther are advocates of the socioeconomic and cultural approach, arguing that there have been ages of "ad hoc humanitarianism" (up to c. 1900), "organized humanitarianism" (c. 1900–1970), and "expressive humanitarianism" (since 1970). They suggest we might currently be entering "a novel kind of defensive humanitarianism with roots in the expressive age, with automated interfaces, and with thick 'firewalls' between donors and recipients."[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humanitarianism#cite_note-6)

**Reform Bills**

The **Reform Bills** were a series of proposals to reform voting in the British parliament. These include the [Reform Acts of 1832](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reform_Act_1832), [1867](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reform_Act_1867), and [1884](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Representation_of_the_People_Act_1884). The bills reformed voting by increasing the electorate for the [House of Commons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House_of_Commons_of_the_United_Kingdom) and removing certain inequalities in representation. The bill of 1832 disfranchised many boroughs which enjoyed undue representation and increased that of the large towns, at the same time extending the franchise, and was put through by the [Whigs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whigs_(British_political_party)). The bill of 1867 was passed by the [Conservatives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservative_Party_(United_Kingdom)) under the urging of the [Liberals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberal_Party_(UK)), while that of 1882 was introduced by the Liberals and passed in 1884. These latter two bills provided for a more democratic representation.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reform_Bills#cite_note-1)

**BACKGROUND**

In the [19th century](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/19th_century), three acts extended voting rights to previously [disenfranchised citizens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disenfranchised_citizens). Before 1832, one adult male in ten had the vote. Moreover, the franchise varied a great deal. A few boroughs gave the vote to all male householders, but many parliamentary seats were under the control of a small group or sometimes a single rich aristocrat. Reforms had been proposed in the 18th century, both by radicals such as [John Wilkes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Wilkes) and by more conservative politicians such as [William Pitt the Younger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Pitt_the_Younger). However, there was strong opposition to reform, especially after the outbreak of the [French Revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Revolution). The cause was continued after 1792 by the [London Corresponding Society](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Corresponding_Society)

**1832 Reform Act**

Main article: [Reform Act 1832](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reform_Act_1832)

The 1832 Reform Act was the most controversial of the electoral reform acts passed by the Parliament. The Act reapportioned [Parliament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliament_of_the_United_Kingdom) in a way fairer to the cities of the old industrial north, which had experienced tremendous growth. The Act also did away with most of the ["rotten" and "pocket" boroughs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rotten_borough) such as [*Old Sarum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Sarum), which with only seven voters (all controlled by the local squire) was still sending two members to Parliament. This act not only re-apportioned representation in Parliament, thus making that body more accurately represent the citizens of the country, but also gave the power of voting to those lower in the social and economic scale, for the act extended the right to vote to any man owning a household worth £10, adding 217,000 voters to an electorate of 435,000. As many as one man in five (though by some estimates still only one in seven) now had the right to vote.

For many [conservatives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservatism), this effect of the bill, which allowed the middle classes to share power with the upper classes, was revolutionary. Some historians argue that this transfer of power achieved in England what the French Revolution achieved eventually in France. The agitation preceding and following the first Reform Act (which Dickens observed at first hand as a shorthand Parliamentary reporter) made many people consider fundamental issues of society and politics.

The novel [*Middlemarch*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middlemarch), by Mary Ann Evans ([*George Eliot*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Eliot)) is set in the 1830s and mentions the struggle over the Reform Bills, though not as a major topic. Eliot's [*Felix Holt, the Radical*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felix_Holt,_the_Radical), set in 1832, is a novel explicitly about the Great Reform Act.

**1867 Reform Act**

Main article: [Reform Act 1867](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reform_Act_1867)

This extended the right to vote still further down the class ladder, adding just short of a million voters—including many workingmen—and doubling the electorate, to almost two million in [England](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England) and [Wales](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wales). It, too, created major shock waves in contemporary British culture, some of which appear in works such as [Matthew Arnold](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_Arnold)'s [*Culture and Anarchy*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_and_Anarchy) and [John Ruskin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Ruskin)'s [*The Crown of Wild Olive*](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Crown_of_Wild_Olive&action=edit&redlink=1), as authors debated whether this shift of power would create democracy that would, in turn, destroy high culture.

The opposite case had been argued by the '[*Chartists*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chartism)*'* , who campaigned from 1838 for a wider reform. The movement petered out in the 1850s, but achieved most of its demands in the longer run.

**1884 Representation of the People Act**

Main article: [Representation of the People Act 1884](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Representation_of_the_People_Act_1884)

Along with the 1885 Redistribution Act, this tripled the [electorate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constituency) again, giving the vote to most agricultural laborers. Only after 1884 did a majority of adult males have the vote.

By this time, voting was becoming a right rather than the property of the privileged. However, women were not granted voting rights until the [Act of 1918](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Representation_of_the_People_Act_1918), which enfranchised all men over 21 and women over thirty. This last piece of gender discrimination was eliminated 10 years later (in 1928) by the [Equal Franchise Act](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Representation_of_the_People_Act_1928) and the voting age was lowered to 18 in [1969](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Representation_of_the_People_Act_1969).

The three Reform Acts, of 1832, 1867, and 1884, all extended voting rights to previously disfranchised citizens. The first act, which was the most controversial,

reapportioned representation in Parliament in a way fairer to the cities of the industrial north, which had experienced tremendous growth, and did away with "rotten" and "pocket" boroughs like Old Sarum, which with only seven voters (all controlled by the local squire) was still sending two members to Parliament. This act not only re-apportioned representation in Parliament, thus making that body more accurately represent the citizens of the country, but also gave the power of voting to those lower in the social and economic scale, for the act extended the right to vote to any man owning a household worth £10, adding 217,000 voters to an electorate of 435,000. Approximately one man in five now had the right to vote.

For many conservatives, this effect of the bill, which allowed the middle classes to share power with the upper classes, was revolutionary in its import. Some historians argue that this transference of power achieved in England what the [French Revolution](http://www.victorianweb.org/history/hist7.html) achieved eventually in France. Therefore, the agitation preceding (and following) the first Reform Act, which [Dickens](http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/dickens/index.html) observed at first hand as a shorthand Parliamentary reporter,  made many people consider fundamental issues of society and politics.

**The 1867 Reform Act** extended the right to vote still further down the class ladder, adding just short of a million voters — including many workingmen — and doubling the electorate, to almost two million in England and Wales.

The 1867 act created major shock waves in contemporary British culture, some of which appear in works such as Arnold's Culture and Anarchy and [Ruskin](http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/ruskin/index.html)'s Crown of Wild Olive, as authors debated whether this shift of power would create democracy that would, in turn, destroy high culture.

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