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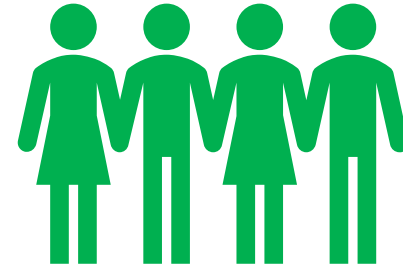
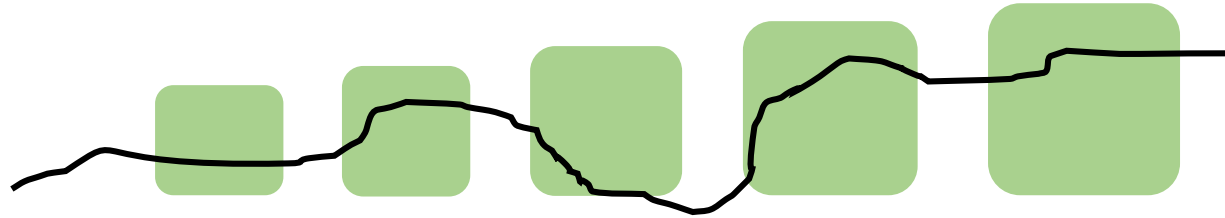
Sheffield, Dan. "A Wesleyan Ecology of Christian Formation." Paper presented at the Annual Wesley Studies Symposium, Tyndale University College & Seminary, Toronto, Ontario, April 25, 2018. (MPEG-3, 35:48 min.)

A historical painting depicting a large group of people in 18th-century attire. In the center, a man with long white hair, wearing a dark robe and a white cravat, stands and addresses a crowd. The crowd consists of men, women, and children, many wearing hats and period clothing. The scene is set outdoors, possibly in a public square or a church courtyard, with classical architectural elements visible in the background.

# A Wesleyan Ecology of Christian Formation

Dan Sheffield

# Educating toward outcomes



# Moses

<sup>4</sup> Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one. <sup>5</sup> Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. <sup>6</sup> These commandments that I give you today are to be *on your hearts*. <sup>7</sup> **Impress them** on your children. **Talk about them** *when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up*. <sup>8</sup> **Tie them as symbols** on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. <sup>9</sup> **Write them** on the door-frames of your houses and on your gates.

Deut. 6:4-9

# Jesus

<sup>19</sup> Therefore go and **make disciples** of all nations, **baptising them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and **teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you**. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Matt 28:19-20

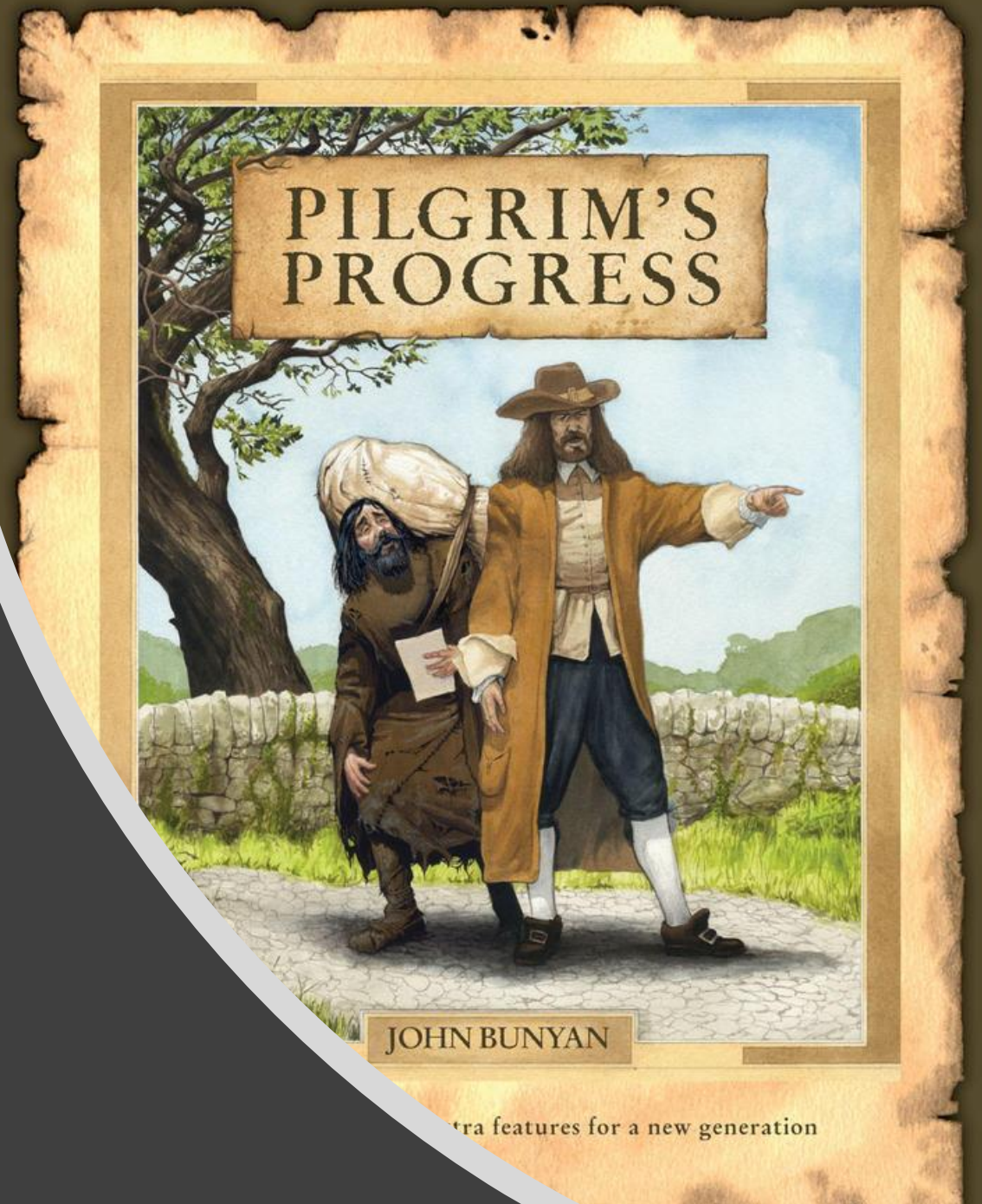
# Paul

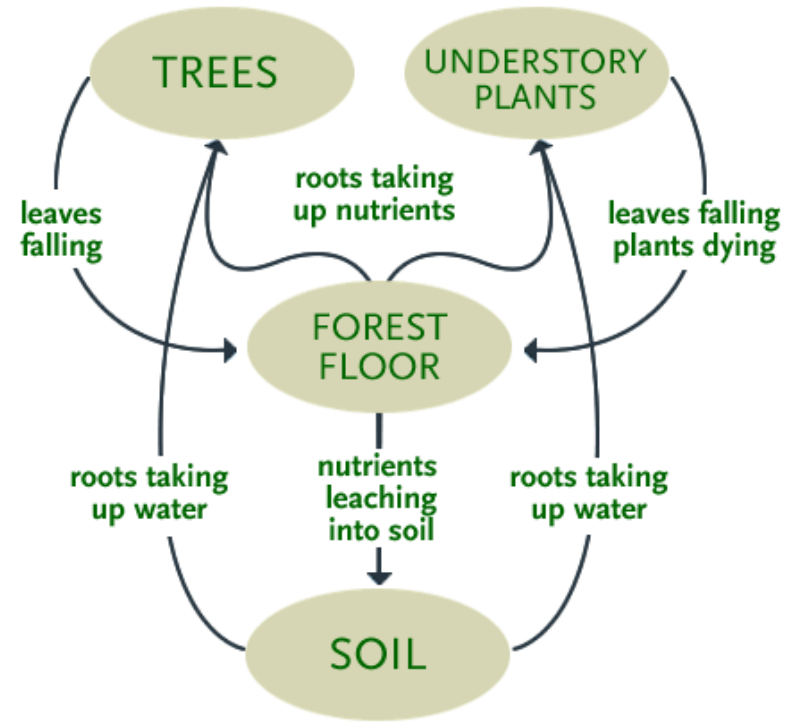
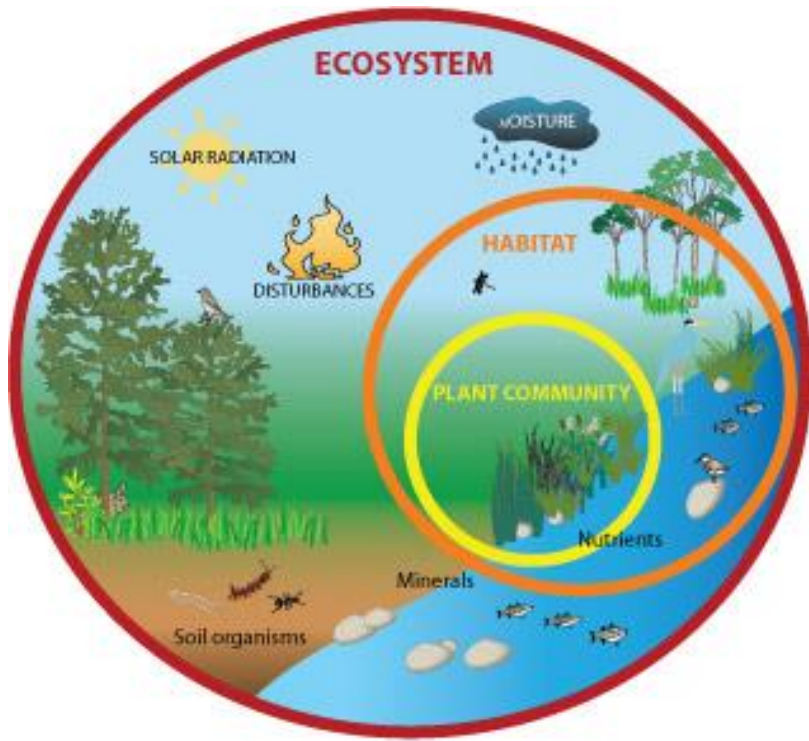
<sup>20</sup> That, however, is not the way of life you **learned** <sup>21</sup> **when you heard** about Christ and **were taught** in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. <sup>22</sup> You **were taught**, with regard to your former way of life, **to put off** your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; <sup>23</sup> *to be made new in the attitude of your minds*; <sup>24</sup> and **to put on** the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Eph 4:20-24

# Christian tradition

- Augustine's *Confessions*
- Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*
- Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*
- Wesley's *via Salutis*; "The Scripture Way of Salvation"
- Robert Mulholland's *Invitation to a Journey*





*Oikonomia* – an ecology



# Overview of Wesleyan framework

“Some time since, you desired an account of *the whole economy* of the people commonly called Methodists... I sent you this account, that you may know not only their **practice** on every head, but likewise the **reasons** whereon it is grounded, the occasion of **every step** they have taken, and the **advantages** reaped thereby.”

John Wesley, from *A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists* (1749)



# Methodist “methodology”

Theoretical  
rationale

“reasons”

Methods of  
formation

“practices”

Process of  
development

“steps taken”

Evaluative  
measurables

“advantages  
reaped”



# Methodist Conference (1744)

What to teach?  
How to teach?  
Who shall teach?

# Overview of Wesleyan framework

“the **aim** of a Wesleyan ecology of faith formation is **to make disciples** – *to shape Christian identity and Christian vocation...*

And following on that, **to develop the church’s role** *in nurturing and supporting human response* to the prompting of the Holy Spirit...”

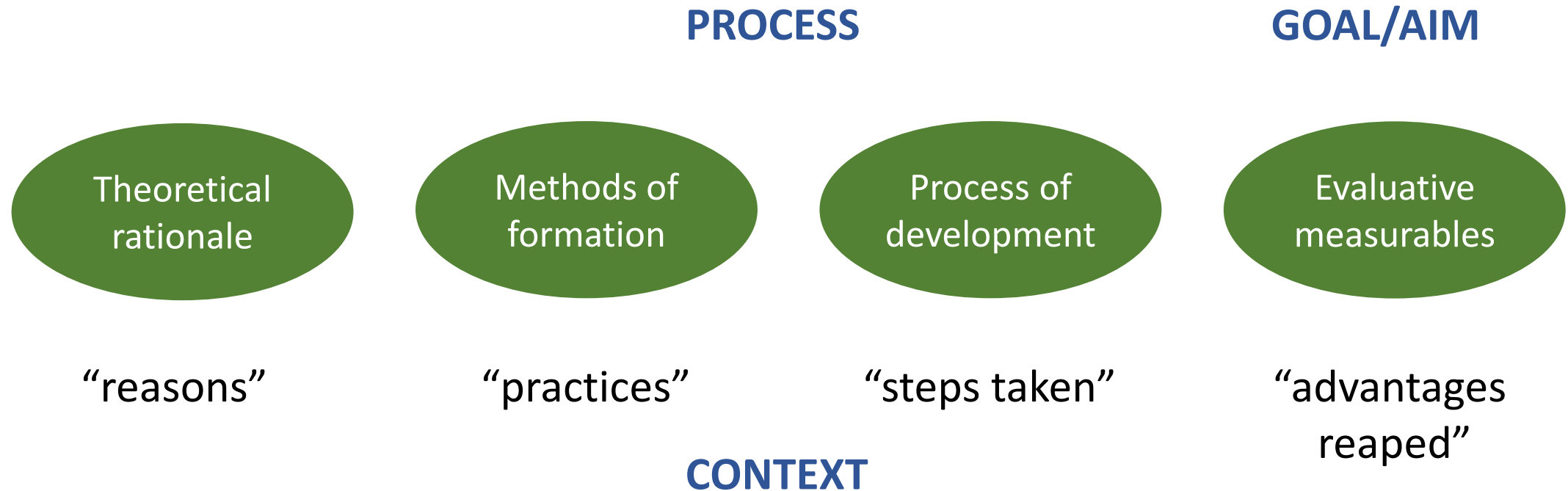
Sondra Higgins Matthaei, *Making Disciples: Faith Formation in the Wesleyan Tradition* (2000), Nashville: Abingdon Press, 170-171.

# Overview of Wesleyan framework

“the **context** for a Wesleyan ecology of faith formation is **the community of the church** that is called to pattern its life after the community of the Trinity...”

Matthaei, 171

# Overview of Wesleyan framework



J Hinrichsen

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“it is necessary to have the intended **learner’s transformation as a focus of design** and not merely as a statement of output. Such a learning orientation needs to be made explicit in the curriculum design process at the earliest stage...”

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Juliet Hinrichsen, “Develop, Use, Extend: Promoting Deep Learning through Pedagogical Progression,” in *Improving Students’ Learning Outcomes*, edited by C Nygaard, C Holtham, N Courtney. Copenhagen Business School, 2009, p79-80.

# Bloom and Fink

<b><i>Anderson and Krathwohl's update of (Bloom's Taxonomy), 2001, 1956</i></b>		<b><i>Fink's Taxonomy 2003 (domains)</i></b>	
Creating (Evaluation)	Putting elements together to form a coherent or functional whole; reorganizing elements into a new pattern or structure through generating, planning or producing	Learning How to Learn (skill acquisition)	Provides the ability for long-term learning by teaching students to become self-directed learners
Evaluating (Synthesis)	Making judgements based on criteria and standards through checking and critiquing	Caring (affective)	Provides motivation and energy for learning by developing new interests, feelings, and values associated with the course material
Analyzing (Analysis)	Breaking materials into parts and then determining how the parts interrelate to each other or to an overall structure or purpose	Human Dimension (affective)	helps assess if students learn more about themselves and others; stresses the human factor and gives human significance to learning
Applying (Application)	Carrying out a procedure through executing or implementing	Integration (cognitive)	connecting different ideas that might appear in different disciplines or across the lifespan
Understanding (Comprehension)	Constructing meaning from different types of functions, be they written or graphic messages, or activities	Application (cognitive)	encompasses critical, creative, and practical thinking, as well as additional skill sets that may be beneficial to students
Remembering (Knowledge)	When memory is used to produce definitions, facts, or lists, or to recite or retrieve information	Foundational Knowledge (cognitive)	Includes all the content, ideas, and information that you want your students to know at the end of the course





# J Mezirow

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“to foster learners who are able to act on their own purposes, values and beliefs rather than uncritically acting on those of others.”

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L. Hanson, “Global Citizenship, Global Health, and the Internationalization of Curriculum: a study of transformative potential,” *Journal of Studies in International Education*, vol 14:1, 2010, p76.

# J Mezirow

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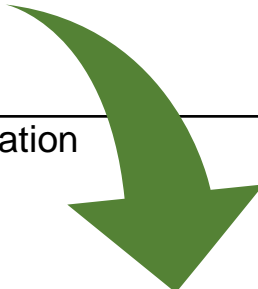
“the **process** by which we **transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference** (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mindsets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective, so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action”

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Jack Mezirow and associates, *Learning as Transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress*, New York: John Wiley, 2000, p7-8.

# Mezirow's transformative learning

Mezirow's TLT movements	Specific phases	Requirements	
Disorienting dilemma	New experience, new content Unsettled sensation	Context	
	Self-examination (shame, fear, guilt, anger)	Critical self-reflection	
	Critical assessment of assumptions		Critical discourse
Reformulation	Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared		
	Exploration of options for new roles, relationships and actions		
	Planning a course of action		
Acting upon new meaning system	Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans		
	Provisional trying of new roles		
	Building self-confidence and competence in new roles, relationships		
	Reintegrating into one's life		



# J Mezirow

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The learner has to make “**a decision** to negate an old perspective in favor of a new one or to make a synthesis of old and new.”

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J. Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, New York: John Wiley, 1991, p161.



# Methodist Conference (1744)

What to teach?  
How to teach?  
Who should teach?

# Wesley: What to teach?

a cognitive process of didactic learning

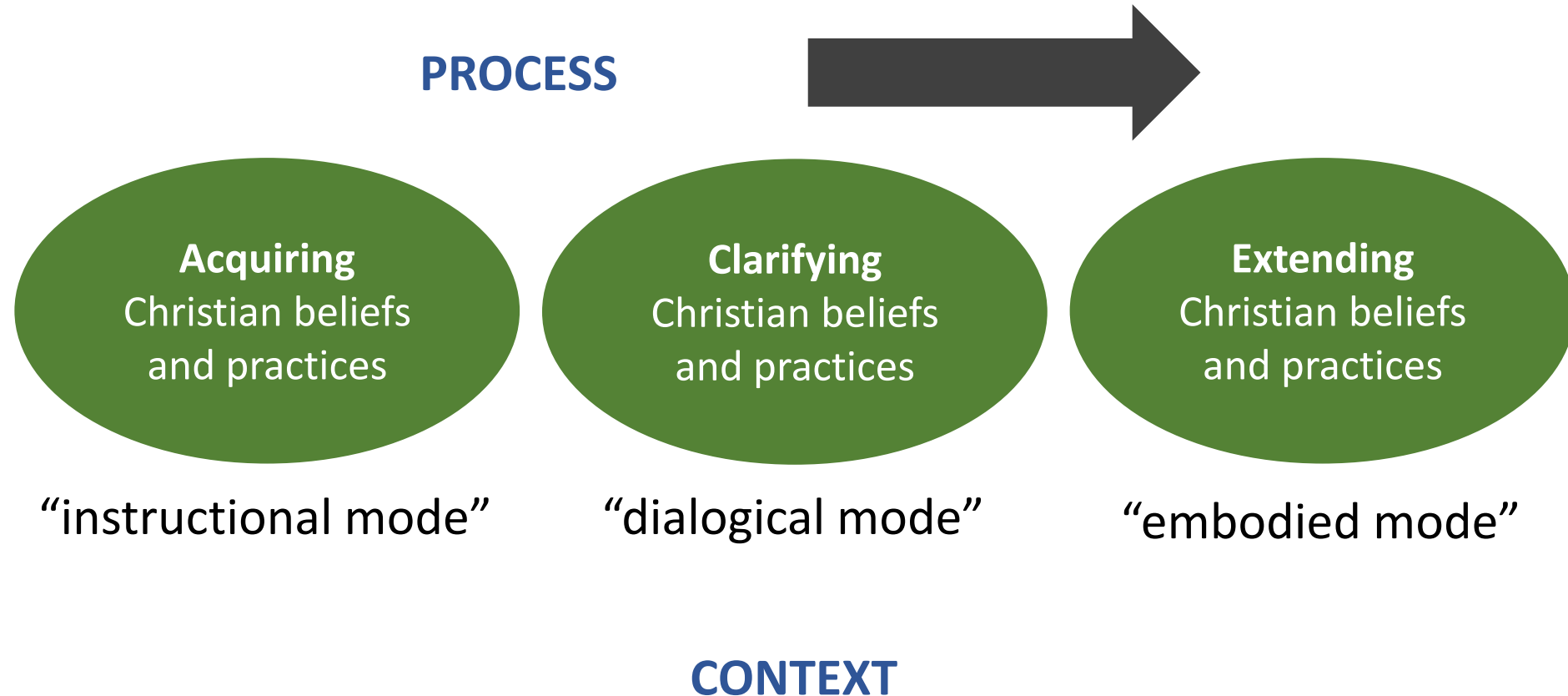
**Means of Grace**

**Acts of Piety/Acts of Mercy**

a formative process of spiritual nurturing



# Wesley: What to teach?



# Wesley: How to teach?

Critical learning

**Means of Grace**

**Acts of Piety/Acts of Mercy**

Practical divinity



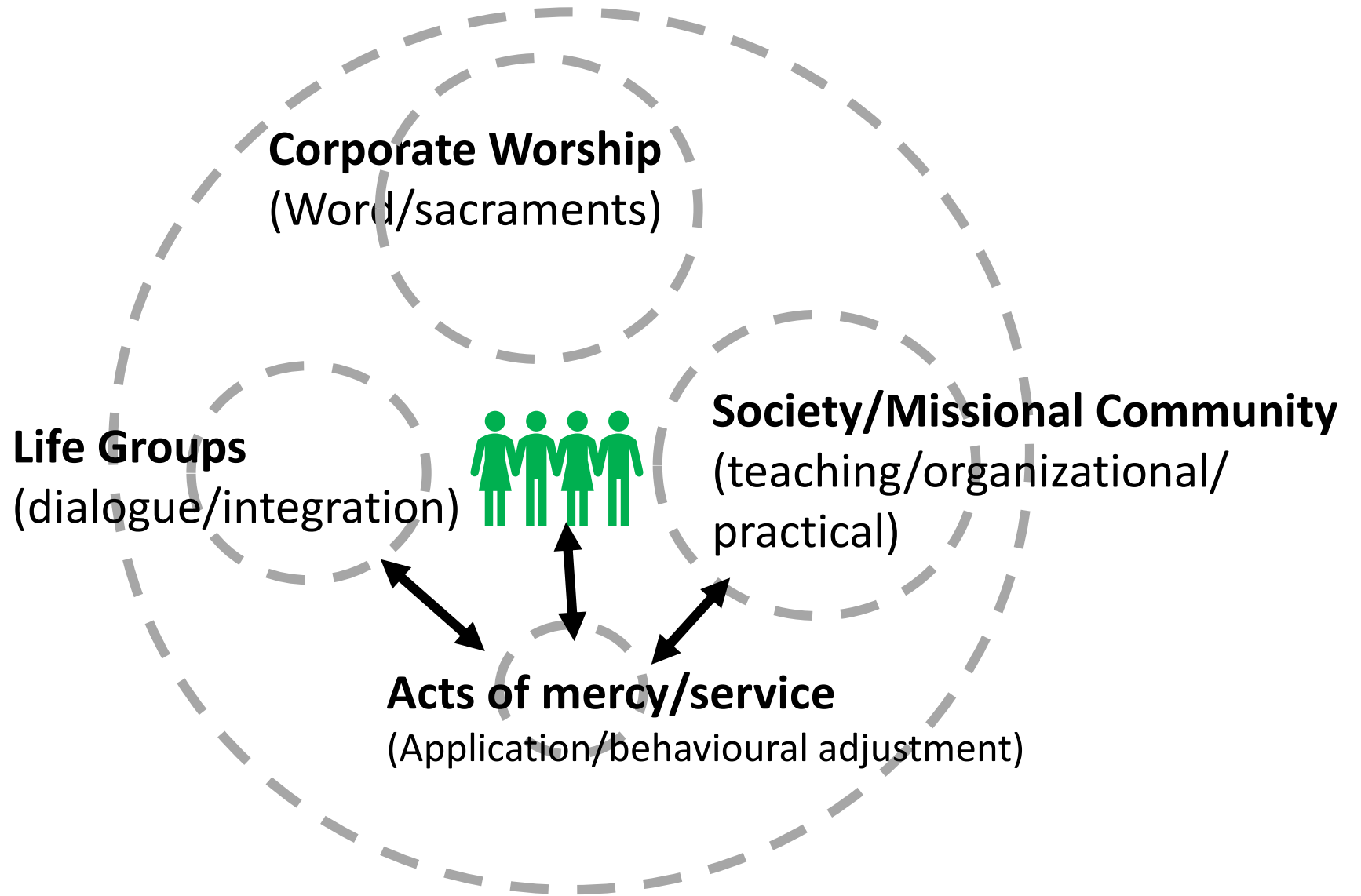


“That part of our *economy* [method/system], the **private weekly meeting** for prayer, examination and particular exhortation, has been the **greatest means** of deepening and confirming every blessing that was received by the word preached, and of diffusing it to others, who could not attend the public ministry; whereas without this religious connection and intercourse [*conversation*], the most ardent attempts by mere preaching have proved of no lasting value.”

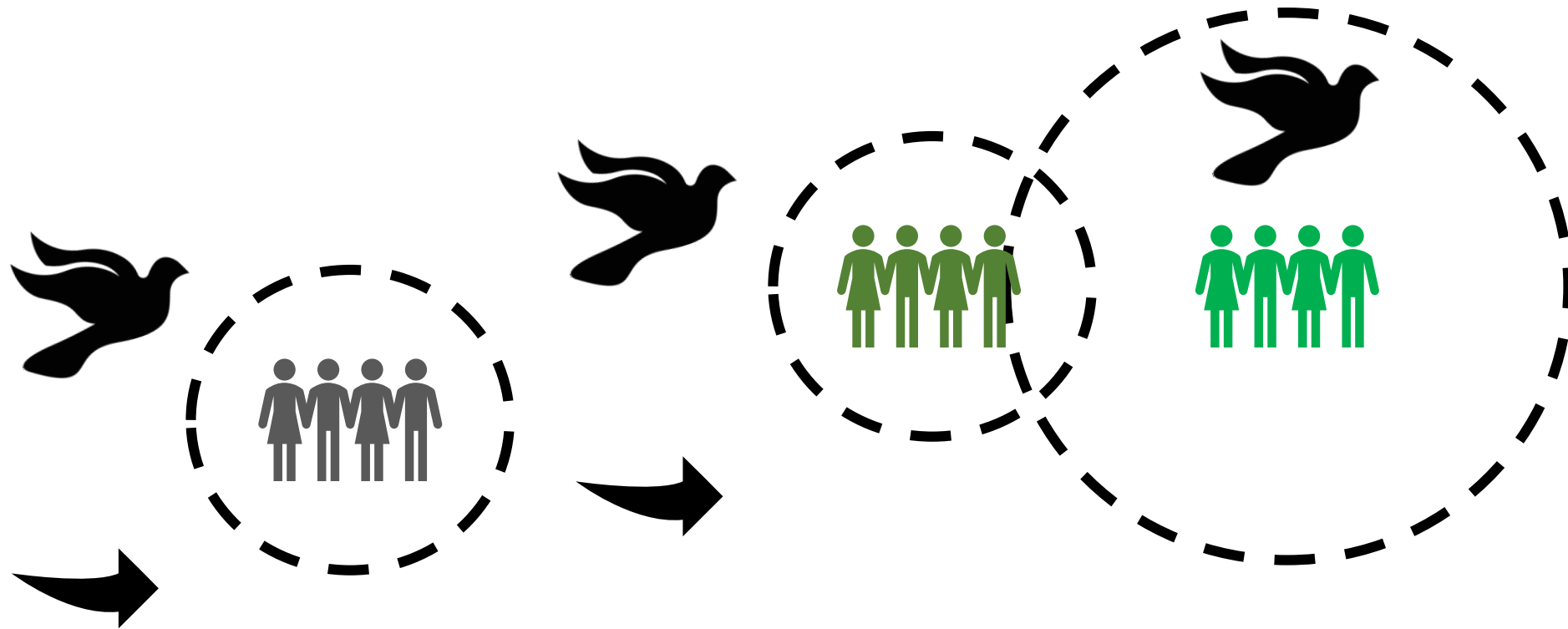
John Wesley, *Works*, VIII: 252



# A Wesleyan Ecology of Christian Formation



# An alternative formation as kingdom people



“conformed to the pattern of this world”

Assumptions

Knowledge perceptions

Habits/Practices

“be transformed by...”

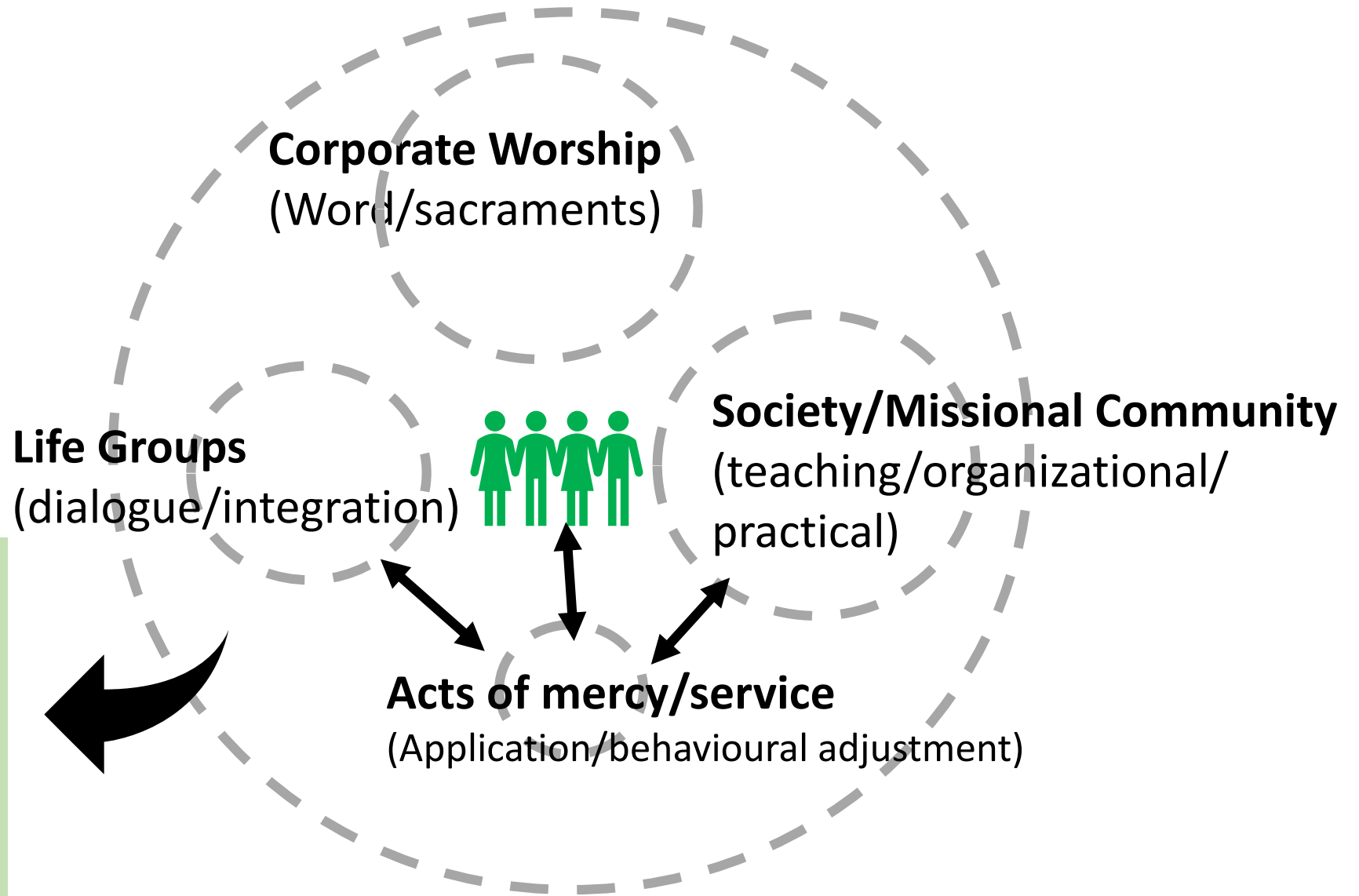
Assumptions

Knowledge perceptions

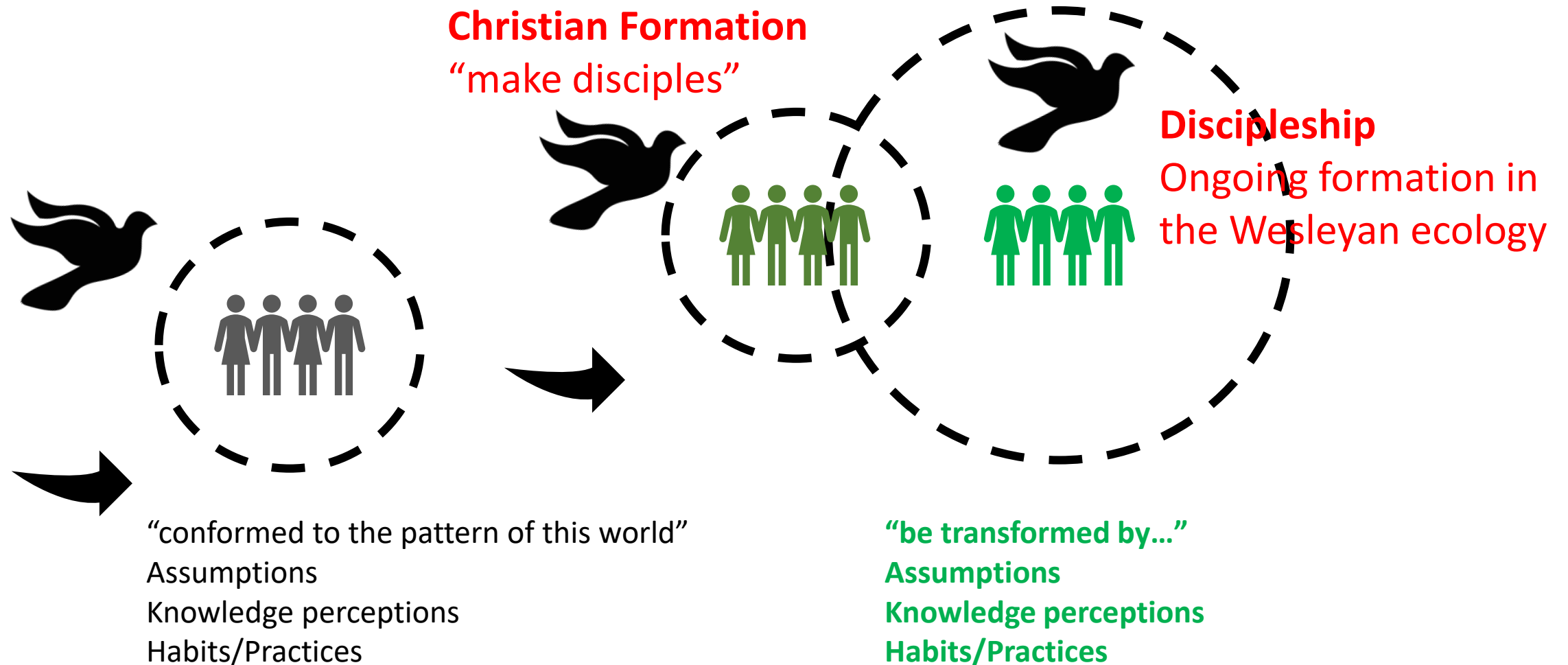
Habits/Practices

# A Wesleyan Ecology of Christian Formation

**A Methodist Christian**  
An outcome of the Wesleyan methodology

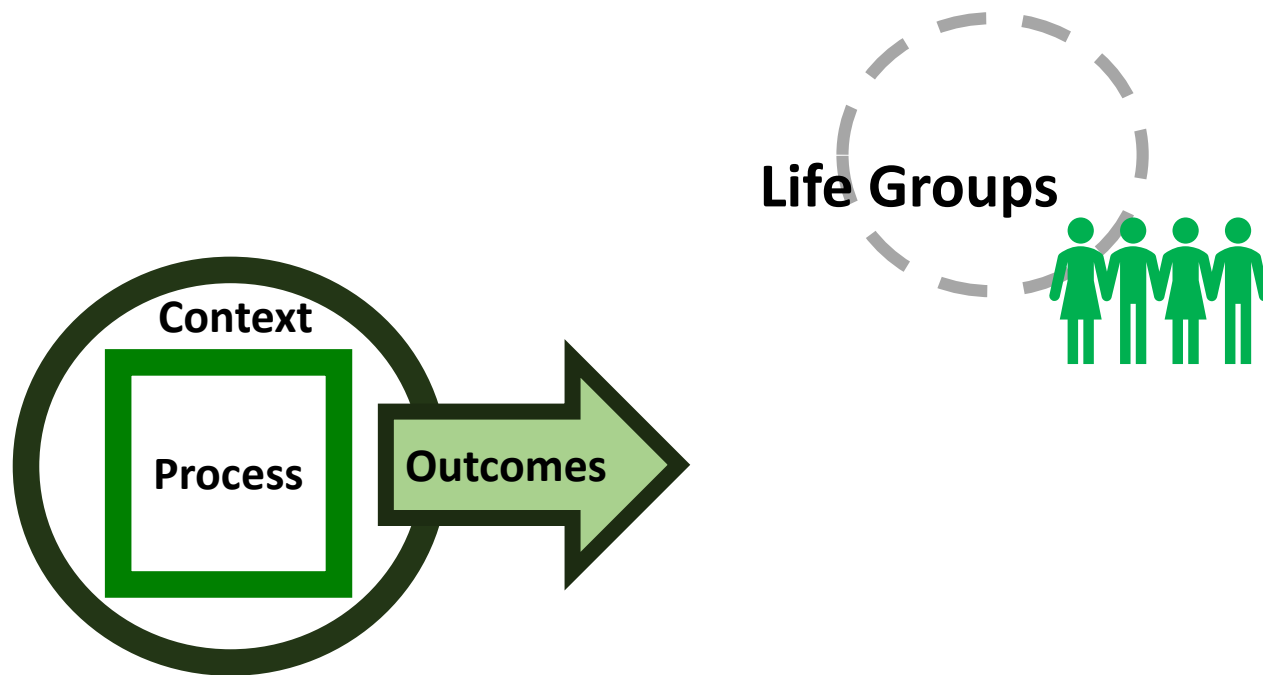


# An alternative formation as kingdom people



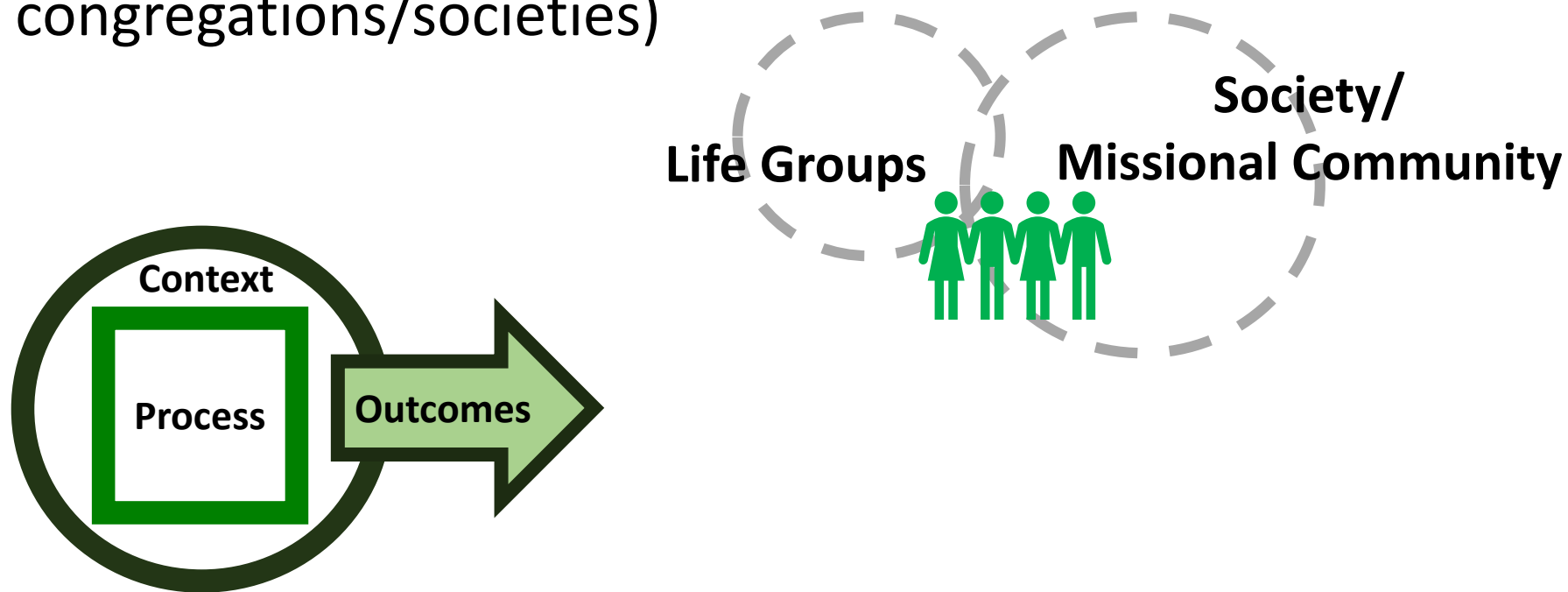
# A Wesleyan Ecology of Christian Formation

Do we know how to **shape Christian identity and vocation** (belief and practice) in the context of **small group** community? (make disciples)



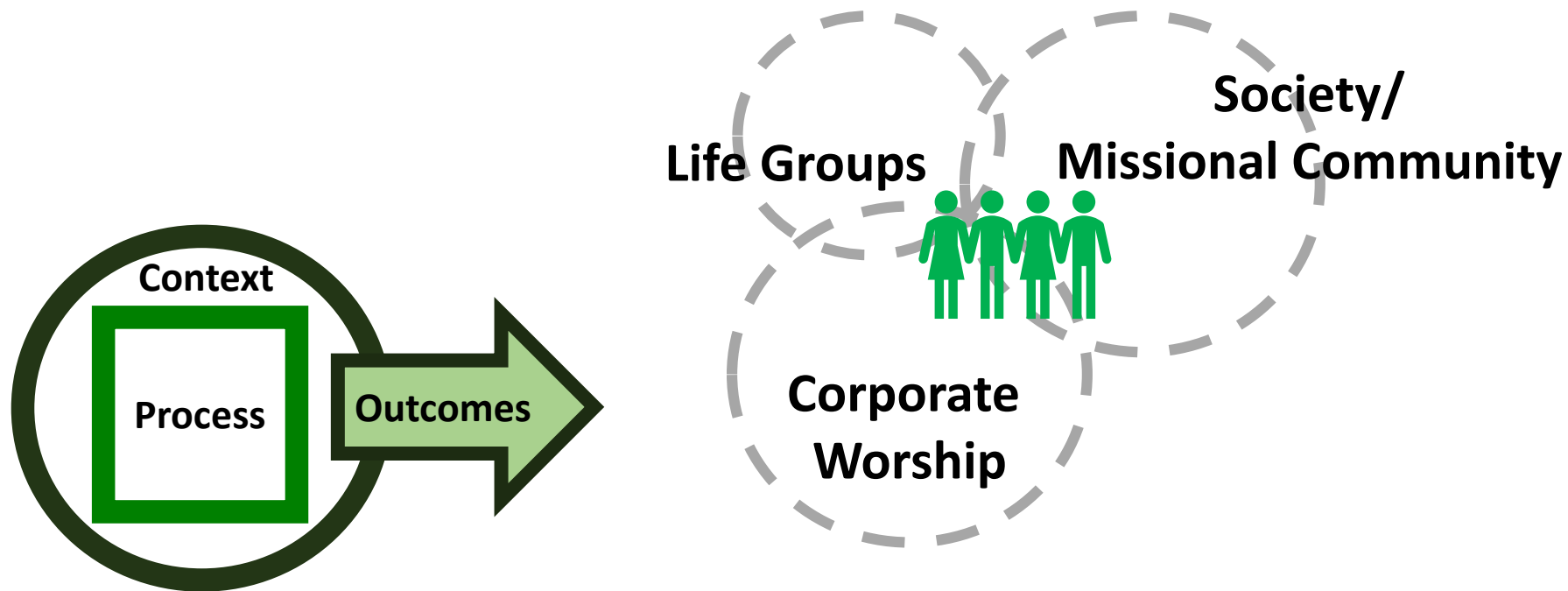
# A Wesleyan Ecology of Christian Formation

Do we know how to **shape** small disciple-making groups into larger **faith communities** of **mutual support and resourcing**? (form congregations/societies)



# A Wesleyan Ecology of Christian Formation

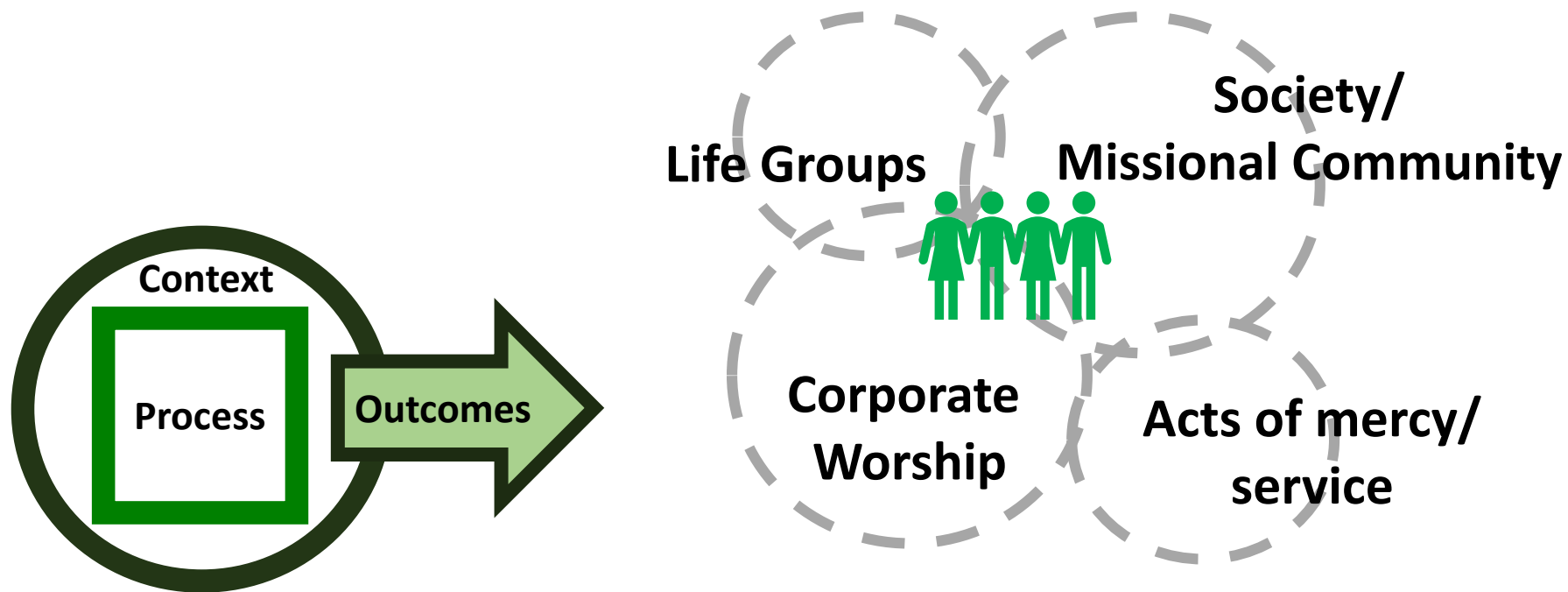
Do we know how to shape our **corporate worship** so that **Christian identity and vocation are formed and energized**?





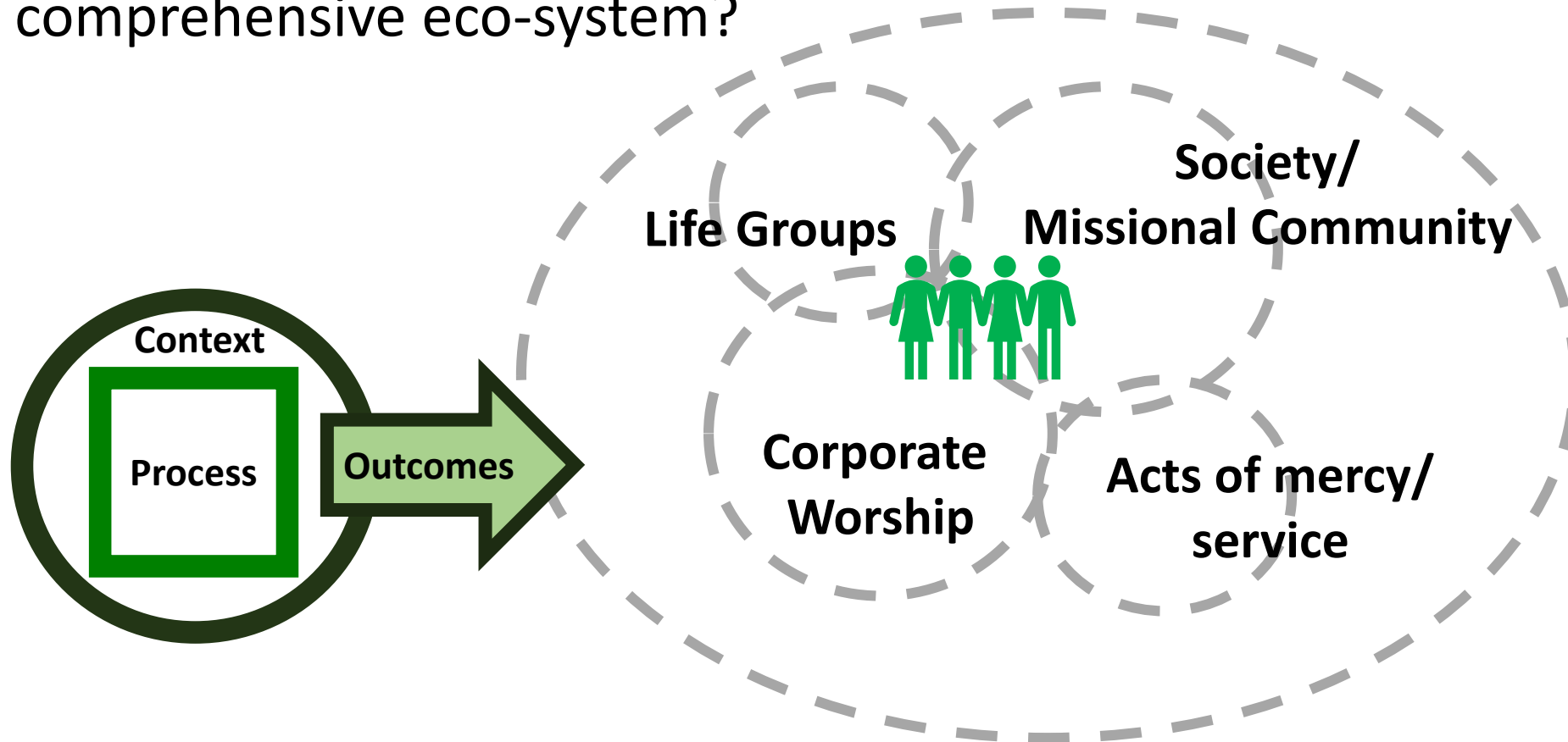
# A Wesleyan Ecology of Christian Formation

Do we know how to **integrate acts of mercy, or service as formative practice**, not just as “random acts of kindness” or “social justice?”



# A Wesleyan Ecology of Christian Formation

Do we have the **resources/methods to support** this kind of comprehensive eco-system?



# John Wesley

Lastly, so that his followers may the more **effectually provoke one another** to love, holy tempers (*fruit of the Spirit*), and good works, our blessed Lord has united them together in one — the church, dispersed all over the earth; a little emblem of which, of the church universal, we have in every particular Christian congregation.”

Sermon 92 “On Zeal”



Our **primary formation** has been toward the culture of consumerism and self-interest. The call to conversion is a call to a rival, alternative worldview. This new worldview likewise requires formation – **a rival formation**. There is every reason to believe that the process will require an intensive and sustained process of **detoxification**... Bryan Stone

We initiate churches, and shape the life of those Christian congregations, as **a context** within which **to form** Jesus-followers toward the obedient life – loving God and loving our neighbour – and **this life together** glorifies God, bearing faithful witness. Dan Sheffield

