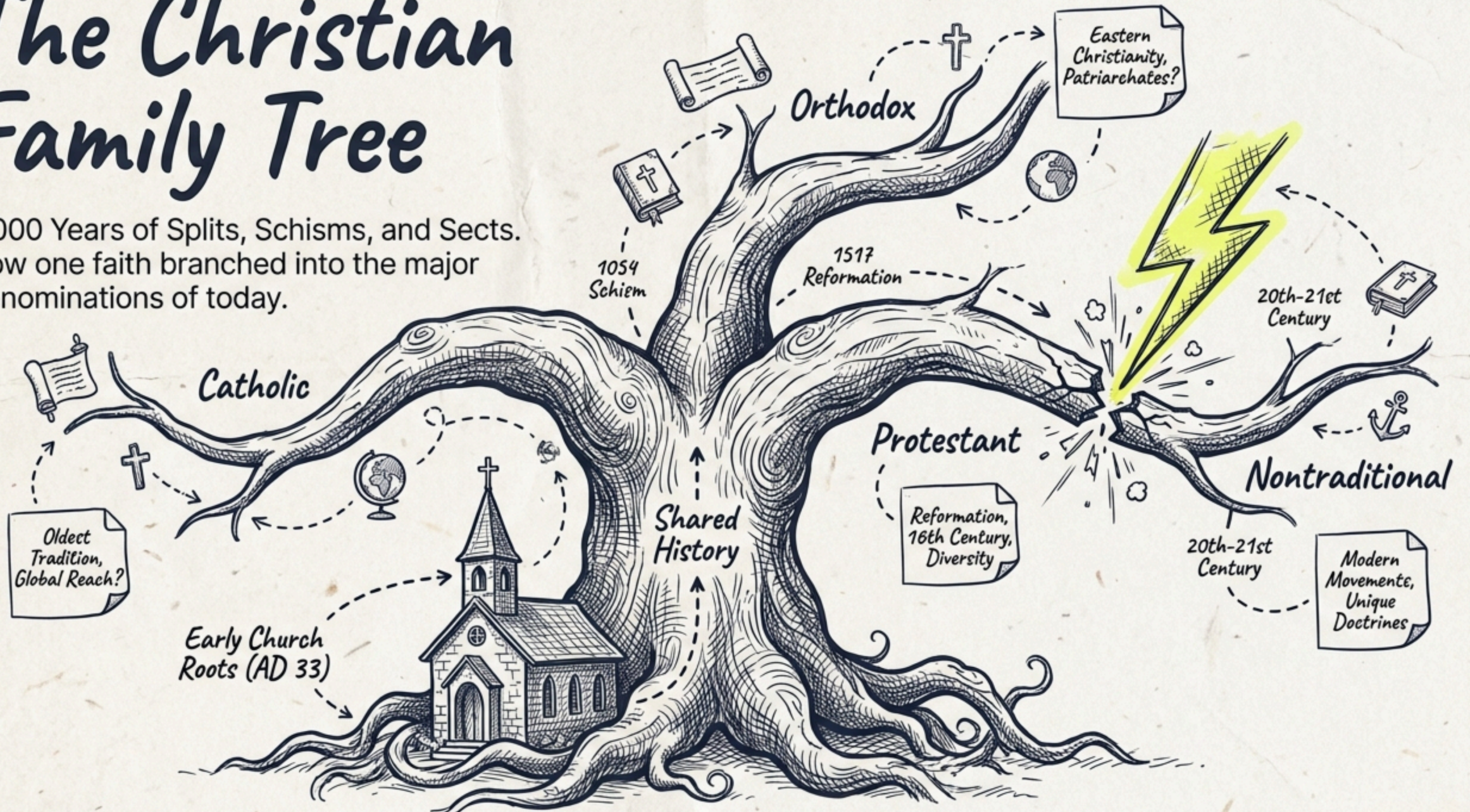


The Christian Family Tree

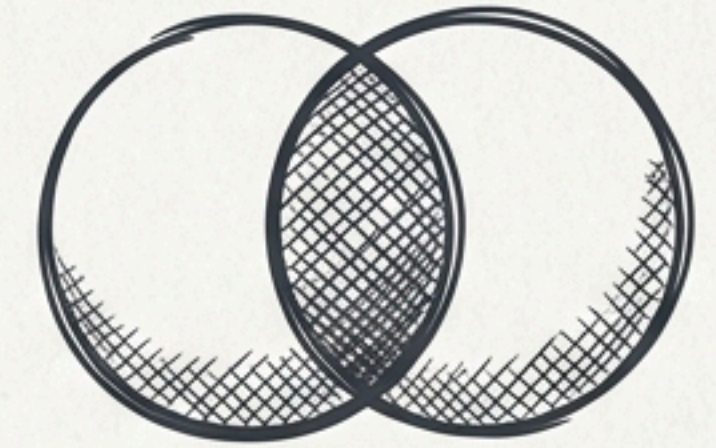
2,000 Years of Splits, Schisms, and Sects.
How one faith branched into the major denominations of today.



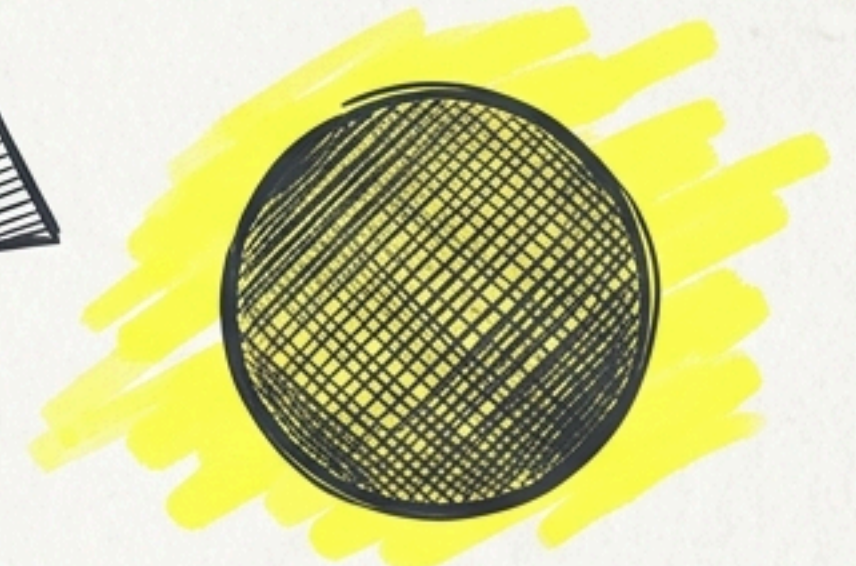
The First Fracture: Oriental Orthodox

Long before the Protestant Reformation, Christianity experienced its first massive break at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD. The debate centered entirely on Christ's nature.

Human + Divine = ?



Catholic/Orthodox View
(Two Natures)



One Nature

Scale: 60-80 Million adherents.

The Split

Most church leaders agreed Christ had two natures (human and divine). A group branded as heretics insisted on "One Nature"—perfectly united.

The Result

Isolated from Western debates, the Coptic, Ethiopian, Eritrean, Syrian, Armenian, and Indian churches became "living fossils," guarding unchanged traditions for 1,500 years.

451 AD

The Great Schism: East meets West

Tensions had brewed for centuries between the Greek-speaking East and Latin-speaking West. The breaking point came down to a single word added to a creed.



The Western church added the word *filioque* (the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father *and the Son*). The East saw this as absolute heresy.



The Eastern Orthodox Church Today

- 220–260 Million adherents.
- Led by independent patriarchs (no Pope).
- Worship is mystical: chanting, incense, icons.
- Priests can marry.

The Divorce: In 1054, a papal envoy excommunicated the Eastern patriarch inside the Hagia Sophia. The patriarch excommunicated the Pope in return.



1054 AD

The Roman Catholic Giant

In 312 AD, Emperor Constantine saw a cross in the sky with the words "In this sign conquer." Christianity went from a persecuted secret in the catacombs to the official religion of Rome.

Scale:
~1.3 Billion adherents.



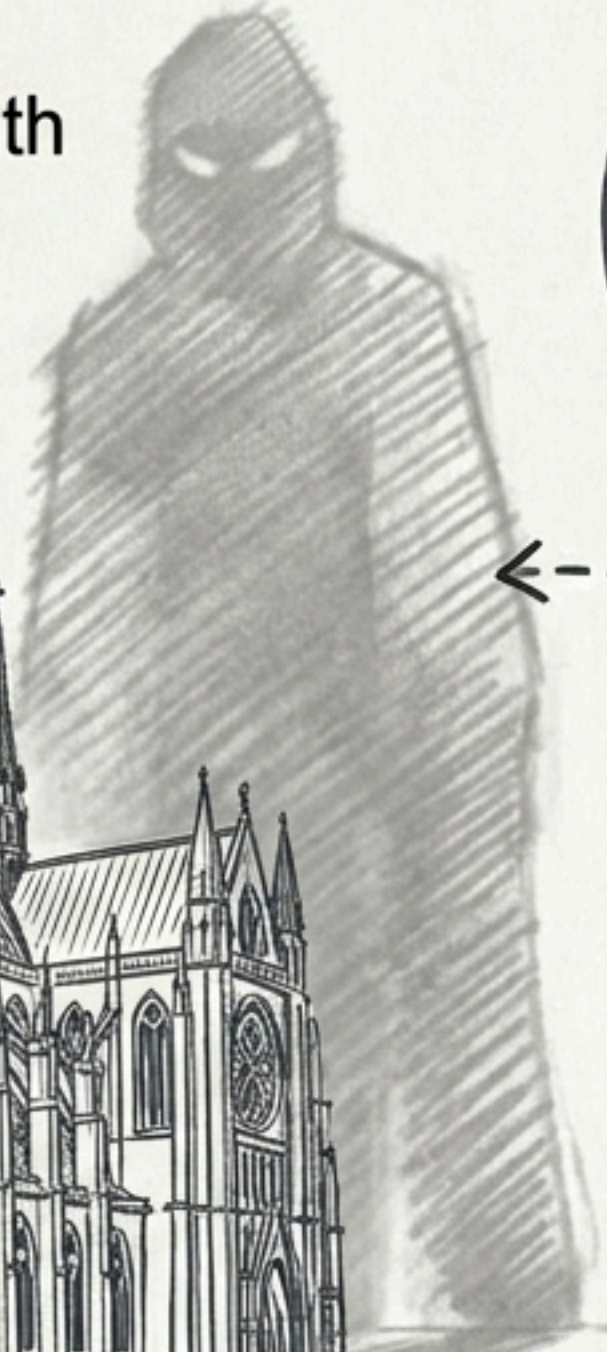
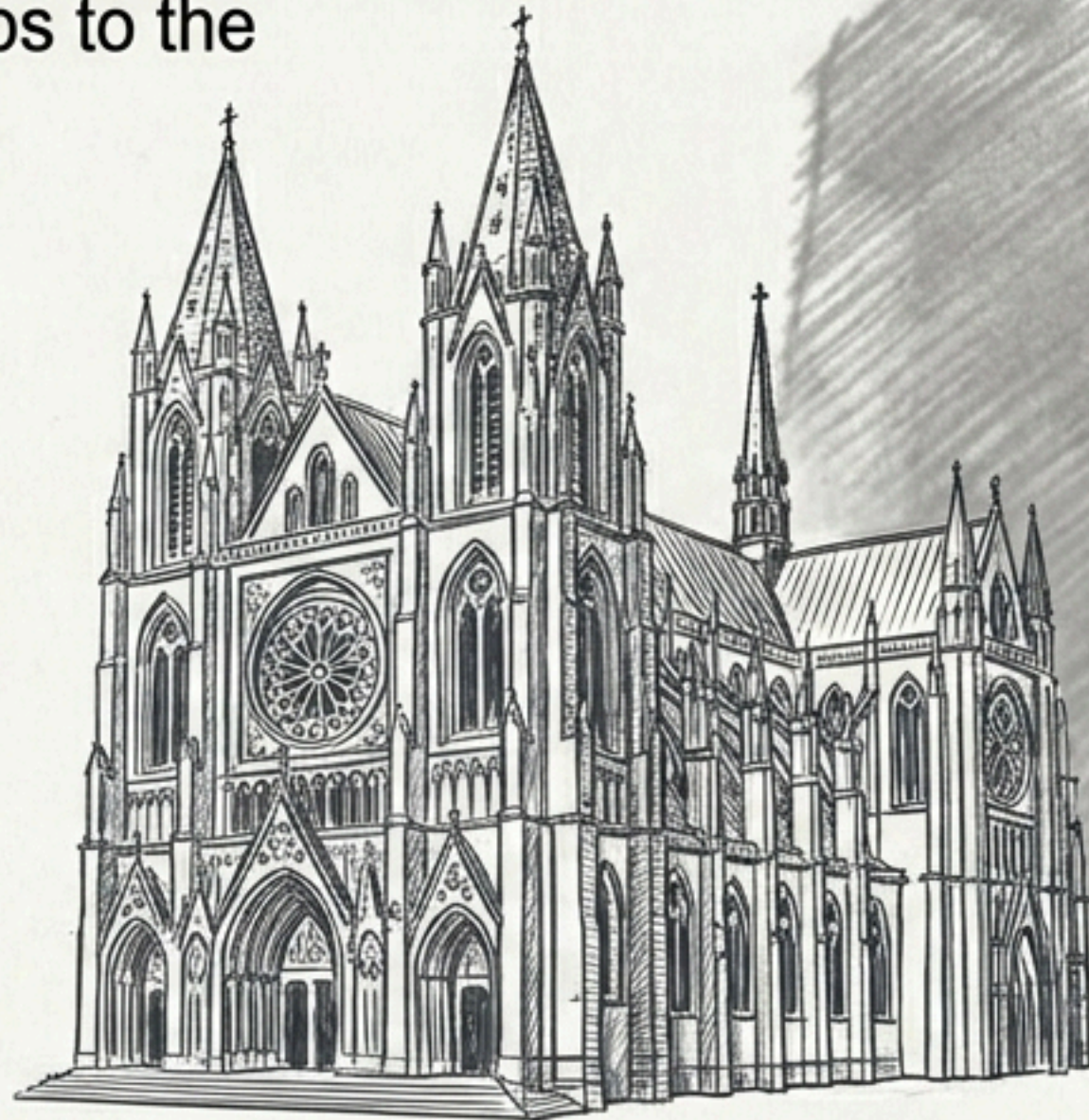
The Pope
(Christ's representative)



Honoring
of Saints



7 Sacraments
(God's grace)



The Shadow.
Massive medieval
power led to
deep controversies,
from the Crusades and
the Inquisition to
modern-day abuse
scandals.

312 AD

Middle Ages

The Spark of the Reformation

Outraged by the sale of “indulgences” (paying for forgiveness), a fiery German monk named Martin Luther nailed 95 complaints to a church door in Wittenberg.

Luther's Core Cry:

- **Sola Scriptura:** Scripture alone guides faith, not tradition.
- **Sola Gratia:** Grace alone saves, not good deeds.



The Protest



The Viral Effect: Translated German Bibles spread instantly. Christianity shattered.



The Theology: Grace as a free gift, not a bought indulgence.

Lutheran Churches Today

- 75–90 Million adherents.
- Retained liturgy but scrapped man-made rules.
- Legacy holds deep stain of later anti-Semitic writings.



Oct 31, 1517

The Architect of Order: Presbyterian

While Luther was passion and fire, John Calvin was cool, logical, and systematic. He built a theological fortress centered on the total sovereignty of God.

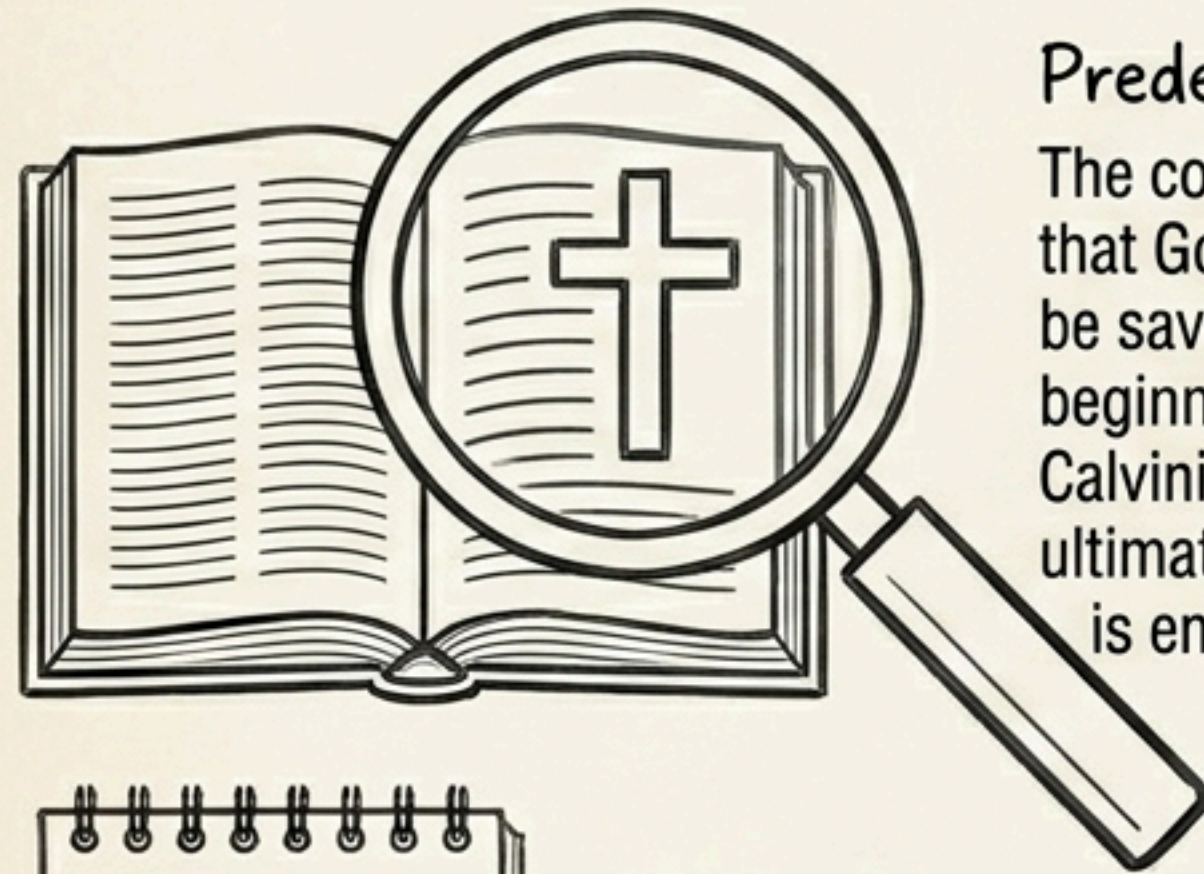
Predestination

The controversial belief that God chose who would be saved from the beginning of time. Calvinists argue this is the ultimate humility—salvation is entirely God's work.

Elders (Presbyters)



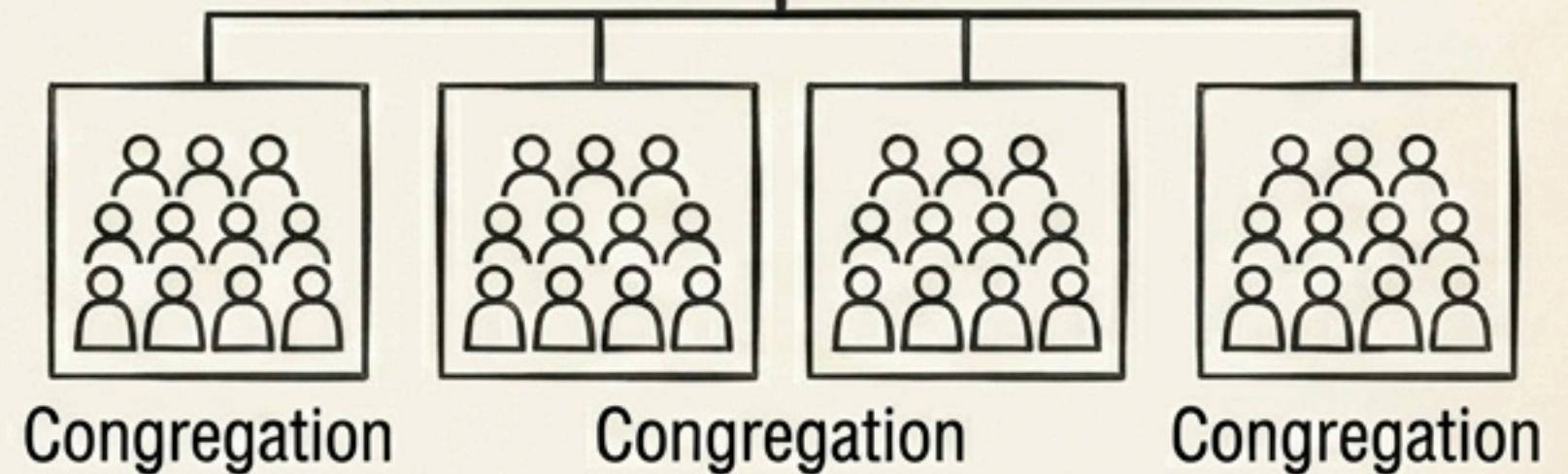
Faith by Committee
Calvin designed a church run by elected elders, bypassing Popes and bishops entirely.



The Legacy

Fueled Scotiand's independence and inspired America's Puritans (who were so serious they banned Christmas).

Mid-1500s

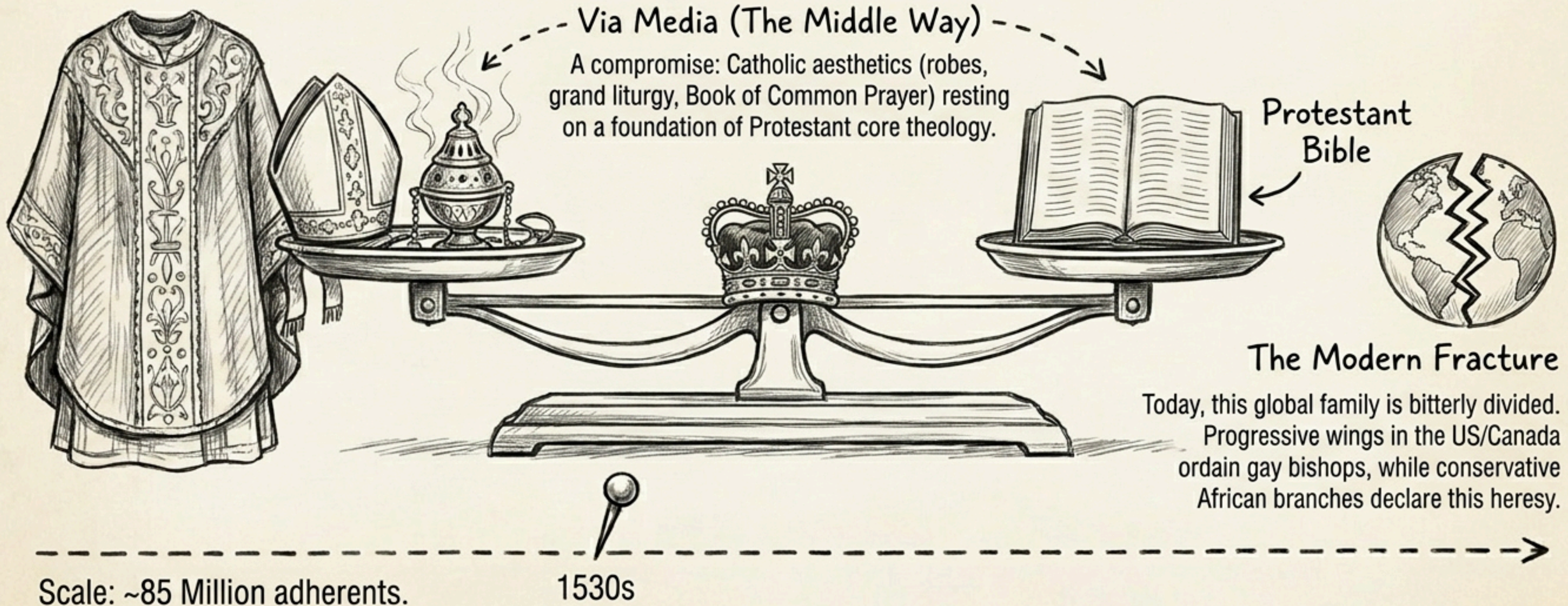


Scale: ~75 Million adherent

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The King's Middle Way: Anglicanism

Henry VIII wanted a divorce. The Pope said no. So, Henry broke with Rome, looted the monasteries, and declared himself the supreme head of the Church of England.



The Rebels of Choice: Baptist Churches

Scale: ~100 Million adherents.

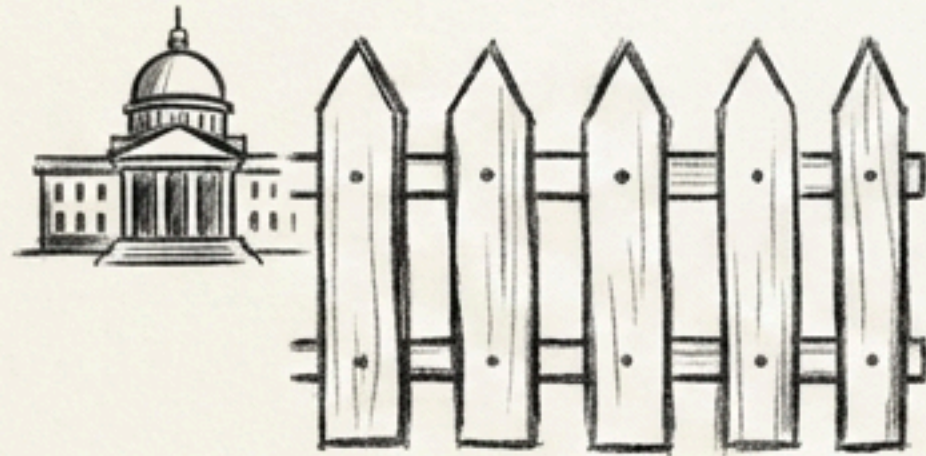
In 1600s England, a small group rebelled against state-mandated religion. They believed faith must be a conscious choice, not an accident of birth.



Rejection of Infant Baptism

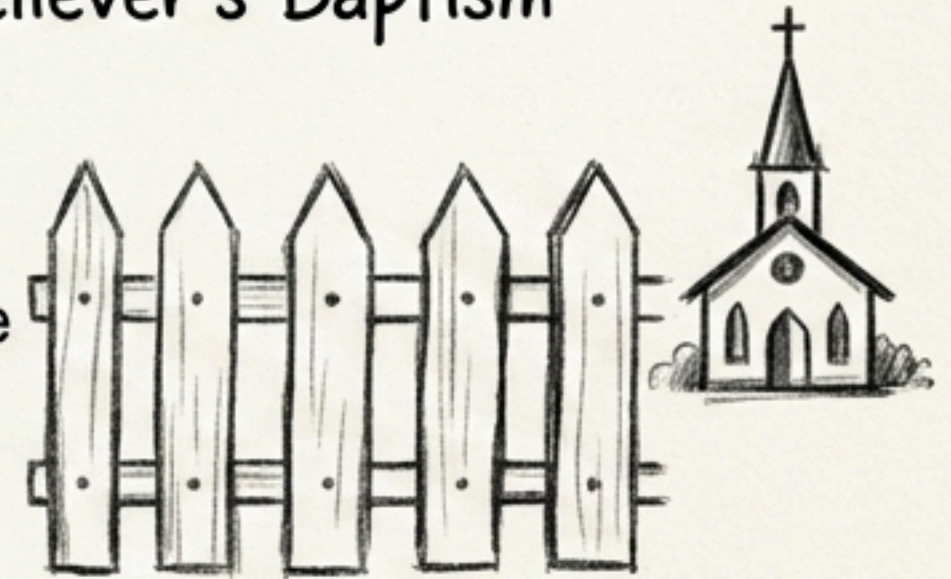


Adult Choice & Believer's Baptism



The Separation of Church and State

Jailed and whipped, they fled to America. Led by figures like Roger Williams, they became early pioneers of democracy and complete local independence. No bishops. No Popes.



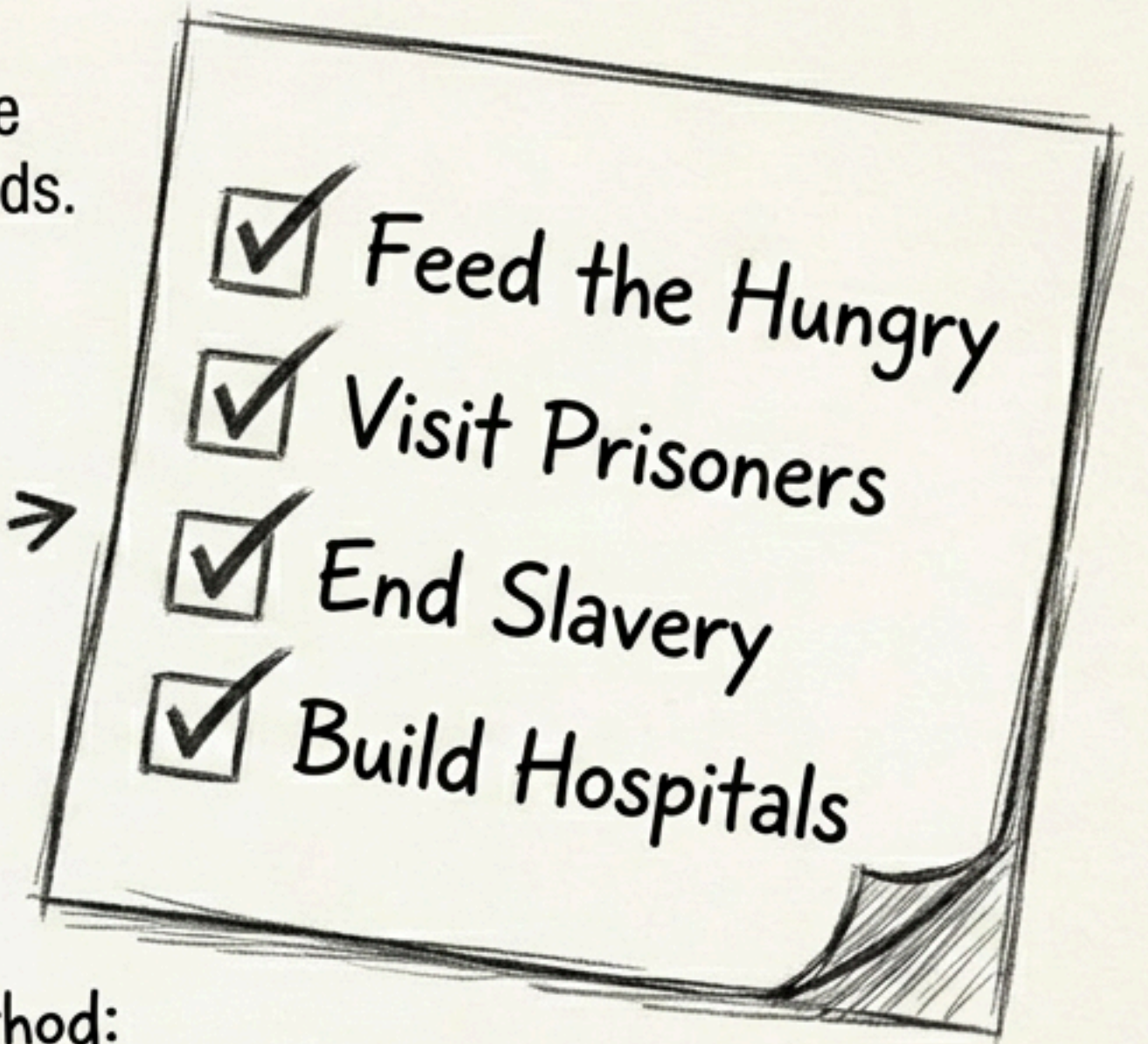
1600s

Method in the Madness: Methodists

Amidst the despair of England's Industrial Revolution, John Wesley rode over 250,000 miles on horseback to preach to the forgotten in open fields.



Faith is Action →



The Method:

- Wesley insisted faith is about what you **DO**.
- Organized **highly structured, methodical** small accountability groups.
- Founded hospitals, the YMCA, and stood at the forefront of the Civil Rights movement.

Scale: 70–80 Million adherents.

1700s

The Electric Revival: Pentecostalism

Inside a tiny Los Angeles church in 1906, a one-eyed Black preacher named William Seymour led a raucous prayer meeting that birthed the fastest-growing Christian movement in history.

1 The Encounter:

Promised a direct, electric encounter with God. No dry sermons—just raw, emotional worship.



2 The Evidence:

Belief in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, marked by speaking in tongues, faith healing, and miracles (mirroring the biblical Book of Acts).

3 The Explosion:

Reached poor sharecroppers, miners, and celebrities alike. Today, the fastest-growing branch globally.

Scale: 280–350 Million adherents.

1906

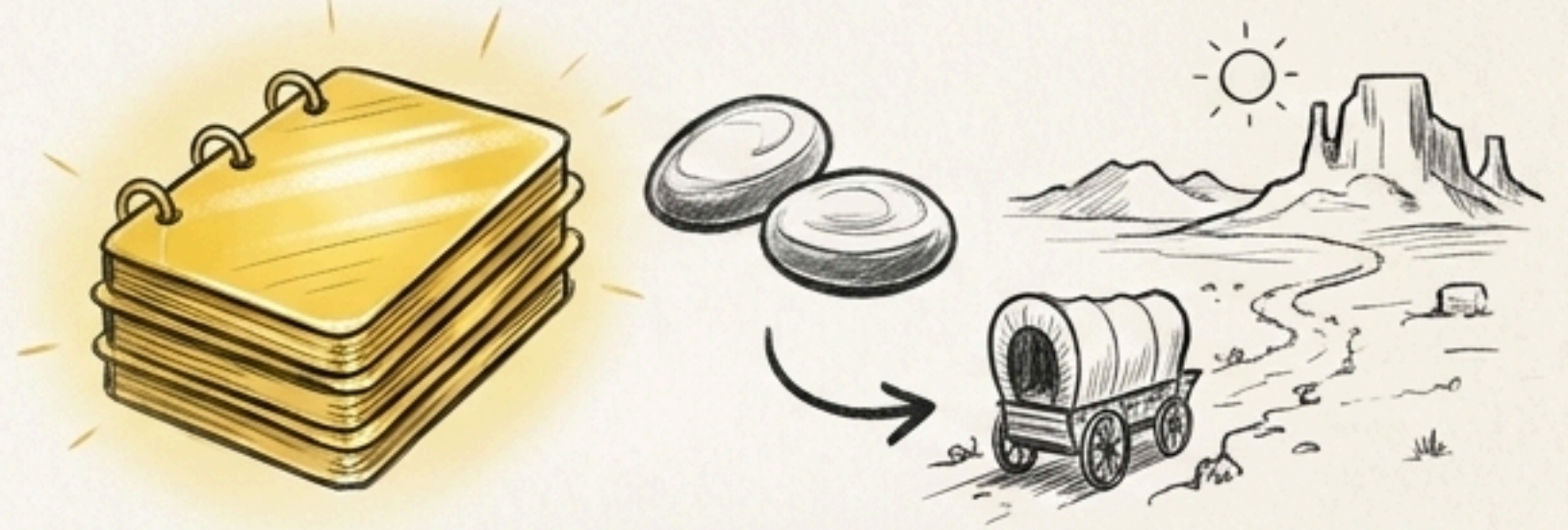
19th Century American Visions

Seventh-Day Adventists (22.5M)



- Born from the 'Great Disappointment' of 1844 when William Miller's end-of-world prediction failed.
- Visionary Ellen G. White guided the movement.
- Core Beliefs: Worshipping on the original Saturday Sabbath.
- Pioneered holistic health, vegetarian diets, and global hospital networks (ADRA).

Latter-day Saints / Mormons (17M)



- 1820s New York. Joseph Smith claimed visions from God and was led by an angel to unearth golden plates.
- Translated into the Book of Mormon (Israelites in the Americas).
- After violent persecution, Brigham Young led a brutal exodus to Utah.
- Known today for clean-cut missionaries and massive genealogical focus.

1820s–1840s

The Prophecy Reinterpreted: Jehovah's Witnesses

In the 1870s, Charles T. Russell formed a Bible study, predicting the end of the world in 1914. When the world didn't end, followers concluded Jesus began ruling invisibly from heaven.

Theology

- Reject the Trinity (Jesus is a creation, not equal to God).
- Reject Hell (the wicked simply cease to exist).
- True name of God is Jehovah.

Strict Separation

Total separation from "the world"—
no voting, no military service, no holidays,
no birthdays, no blood transfusions.



The Mission:
Legendary,
non-negotiable
door-to-door ministry
awaiting Armageddon.






1870s / 1914

Scale: 8.5 Million adherent

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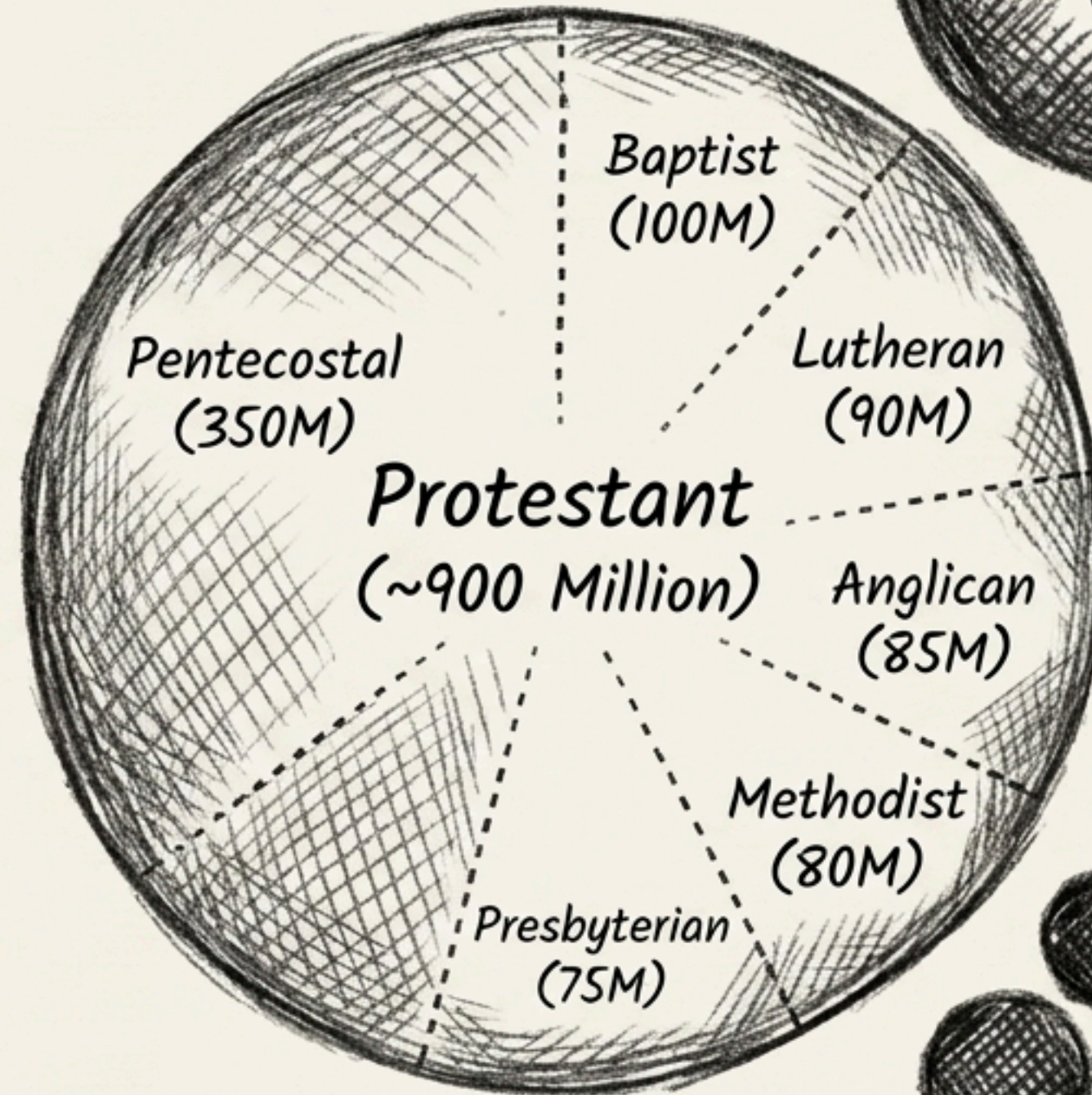
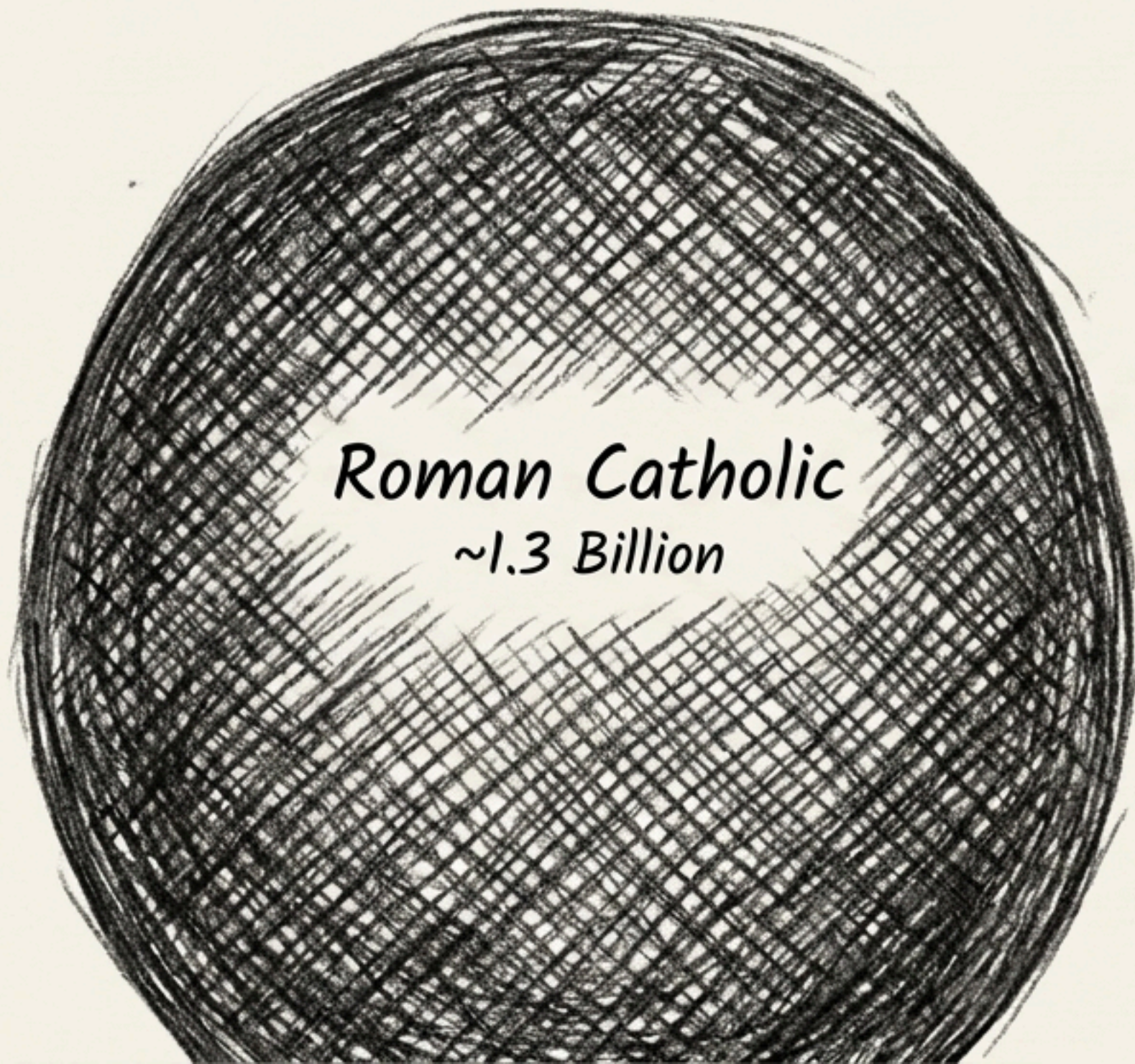
The Diagnostic Matrix

A snapshot of how the major branches answer the fundamental questions of faith.

	Catholic / Orthodox	Mainline Protestant	Evangelical (Baptist/Pent.)	Nontraditional
Ultimate Authority	 Pope + Tradition	 Scripture Alone	 Scripture + Spirit	Scripture + New Prophets/Texts
Salvation	Grace + Sacraments	Grace Alone	Personal Choice/Faith	Varies deeply
The Clergy	Celibate Priests	Educated Pastors	Local Preachers / All believers	Varies deeply
Key Rituals	 7 Sacraments	 Baptism & Communion	Adult Baptism, Spirit Baptism	Varies deeply

The Global Scale

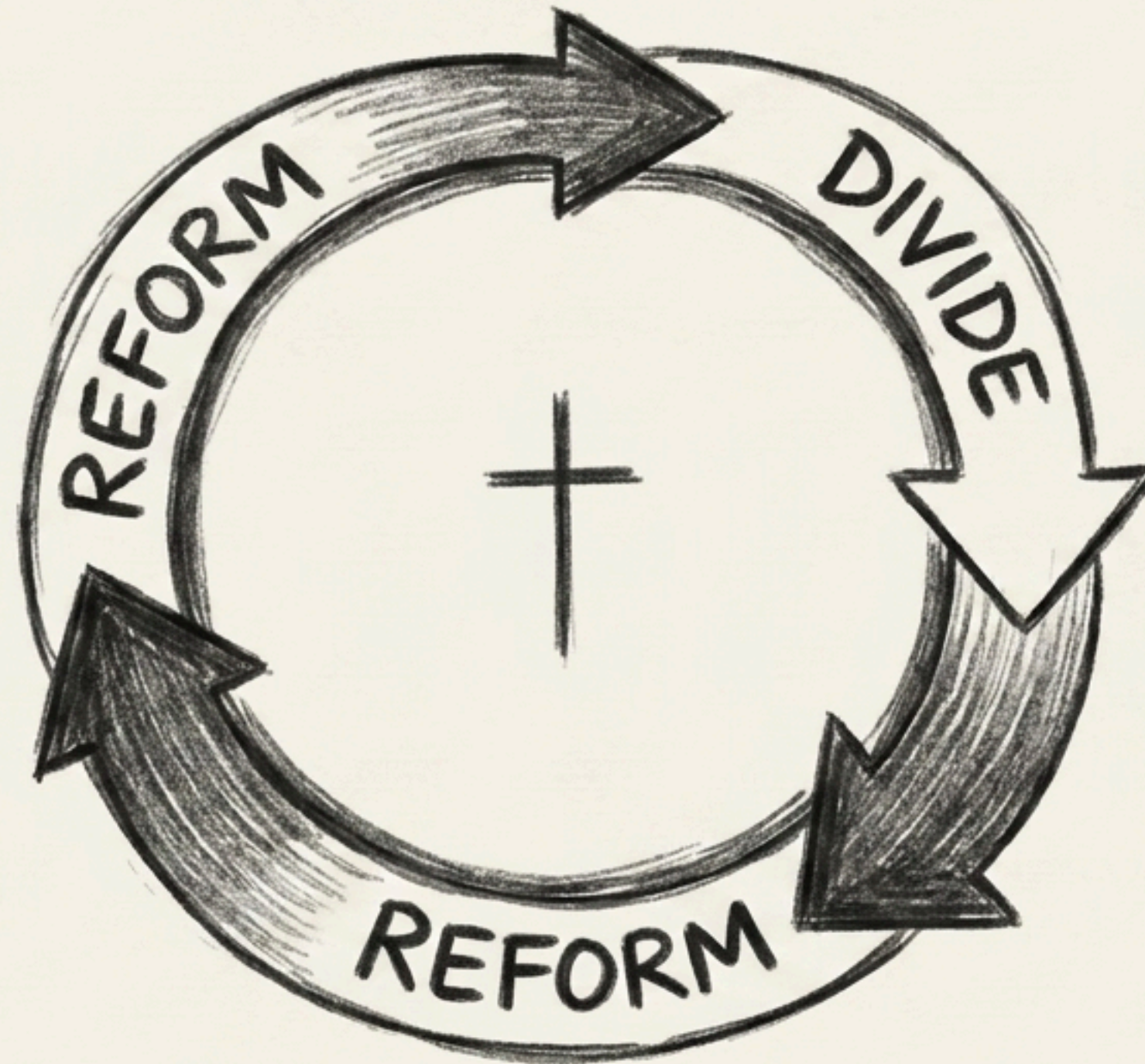
When you map the major branches by estimated adherents, the massive scale of the historical roots becomes visible.



SDA (22M)
LDS (17M)
JW (8.5M)

The Cycle of Faith

For 2,000 years, the story of Christianity has followed a relentless cycle. A desire for reform leads to a bitter division, which births a new tradition, which eventually requires its own reform.



Despite thousands of distinct branches, deep historical wounds, and vastly different ways of viewing the world, all claim a connection to the exact same origin. The journey of faith is always striving to live up to its calling.

Which branch's history fascinates you most?
Drop a comment!