

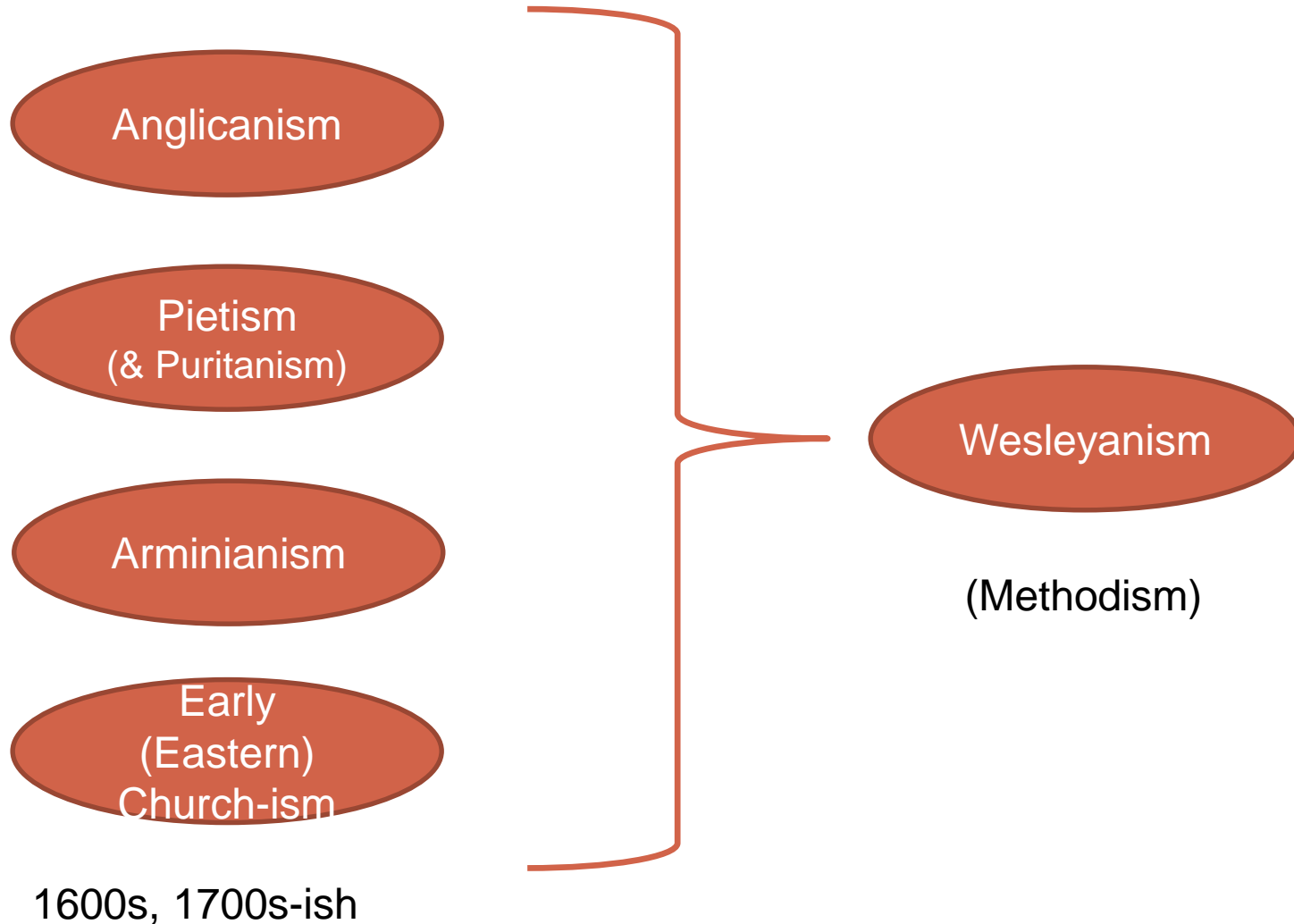
# CONTEMPLATING WESLEYAN IDENTITY

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For Songwriting

Note: This PowerPoint as well as the Wesley song examples can be found at <https://sites.duke.edu/lruth/public-presentations/>.

# Where did Wesleyanism come from?



# Wesleyan Distinctives of Doctrine & Piety

- The scope of Christ's work: unlimited atonement ("Whosoever will....")
- Full salvation: justification and sanctification ("God can do more with sin than just forgive it.")
- An experiential and experienced Bible religion ("Let us feel the truth.")
- Centrality of grace, unmerited and unconditional, between persons/Persons ("Thy nature and thy name is Love.")

# Contrasting with Popular Calvinism

## Wesleyanism

- Unlimited atonement
- Full salvation
- Experiential
- Centrality of grace

## Popular Calvinism (TULIP)

- Total depravity
- Unconditional election
- Limited atonement
- Irresistible grace
- Perseverance of the saints
  
- + a controlling image of God as the absolute, complete, holy Sovereign

# A Standard Recipe in Many Songs

- A dash of popular Calvinism (absolute, complete sovereignty and holiness of God)
- A tad of popular Pentecostalism (God acts in overwhelming [helpful] power)

# Resulting Common Portrayal

- A high, holy, absolutely sovereign God (of love) who
  - is incomparable as contrasted with us or with the world/creation
  - overwhelms with power
  - has acted on our behalf in the past in Christ and especially in his atoning death
  - grants us to have the resulting (legal) status of that activity (forgiveness and removal of shame)

## What Words Are Typically Used in This Portrayal?

- Words that emphasize God's difference to us/the world with respect to size, space, power, and/or character
- Adjectives and nouns of magnitude
  - E.g., awesome, great, mighty, holy, worthy (what else?)
  - E.g., adjectives ending in –er or -est

*These are the typical triggers for awe.*

# Considering Charles Wesley's Triggers for Awe

## Generally as Stated Above

- Unlimited atonement
- Full salvation
- Experiential
- Centrality of grace

## As Often Seen in Charles Wesley

- Paradox #1: juxtaposing the expansive nature of Christ's work against my personal share in it
- Paradox #2: Christ's most fully human moments are also his most fully divine ones



# Considering Charles Wesley's Triggers for Awe

## Generally as Stated Above

- Unlimited atonement
- Full salvation
- Experiential
- Centrality of grace

## As Often Seen in Charles Wesley

- Experiential #1: collapse time and space between us and biblical events
- Experiential #2: put us into the Biblical story to use scriptural language for the language of our Christian experience

# Considering Charles Wesley's Triggers for Awe

## Generally as Stated Above

- Unlimited atonement
- Full salvation
- Experiential
- Centrality of grace

## As Often Seen in Charles Wesley

- The Triune God has gang-tackled the problem of evil and human sin: A full Godhead saves a full human to the fullest.