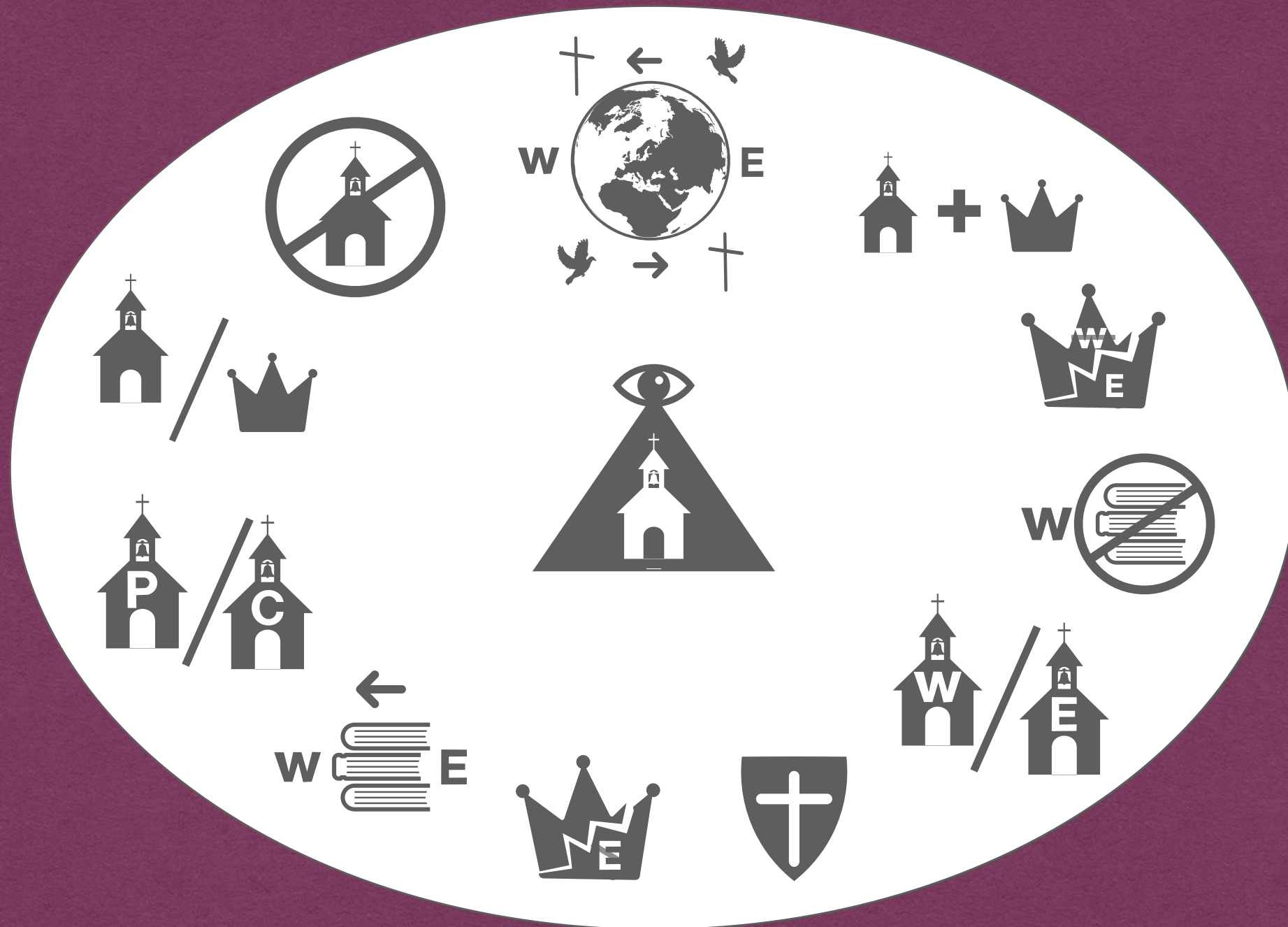


Bird's Eye View of Church History



Christian Worldview



4G Mentoring: Growing, Guiding, and Guarding the Global Bride of Christ

Copyright 2019 © by 4G Mentoring
www.4GMentoring.com
4GMentoring@gmail.com

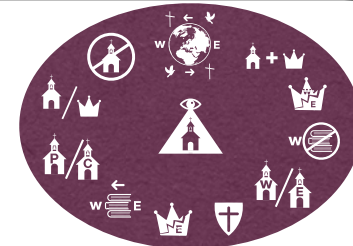
Foreword

This document has been designed for use with small discipleship groups using cell-phones, tablets, computers, TV connections, or projectors. This document is not designed as a printed book (though it can be printed) or large group presentation but rather as an electronic discussion guide for small or medium sized multi-language groups. The graphics on each page are designed to ease cross-cultural communication issues when using a translator or with group members using a second language. We hope that this document helps facilitate basic discipleship group discussions in both formal and informal groups in homes, churches, and coffee shops around the world. The copyright on this document allows you to freely distribute and even modify the content to meet your needs.

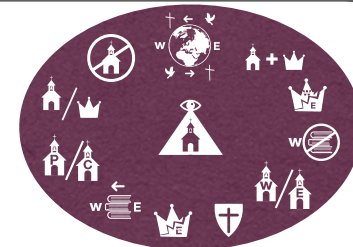
Table of Contents (Quick Access Menu)



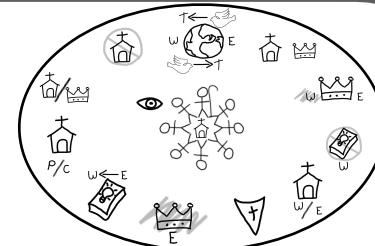
**Lesson: Bird's Eye View
Of Church History**



**Bird's Eye View of Church
History (Pictures Only)**



**Learning Tool:
Draw the Symbols**

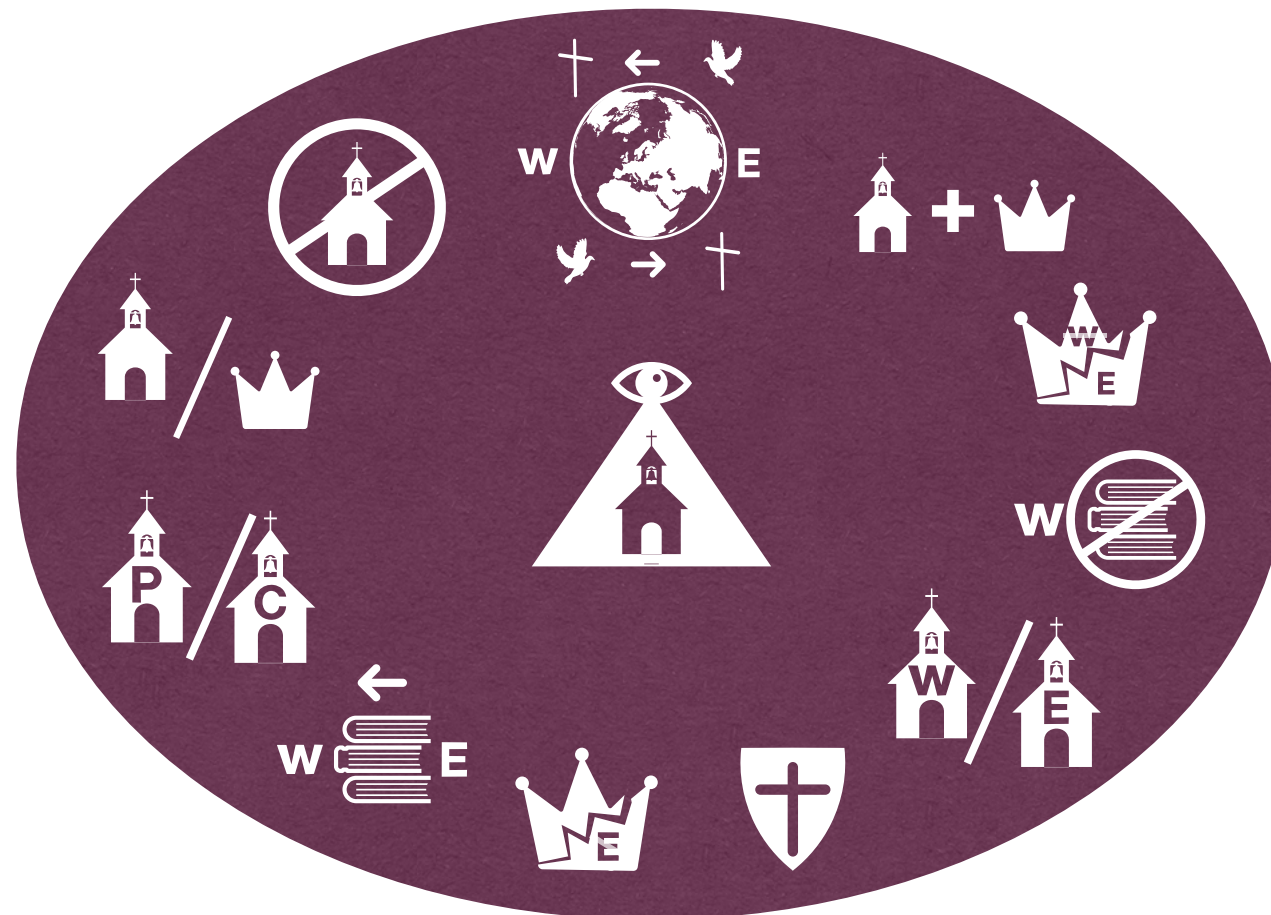




Lesson:

Bird's Eye View of Church History

- Church Begins in East and Moves West
- Church and State Merge
- Fall of the Western Roman Empire
- Loss of Knowledge in the West
- Eastern and Western Church Split
- The Crusades
- Fall of the Eastern Roman Empire
- Knowledge Moves Back West
- Catholic and Protestant Churches Split
- Separation of Church and State
- Secularism and Anti-Christian Sentiment
- Church Grows in East Again



Key Idea: The Church has gone through many changes over the centuries but God is still seeking to reach the nations with the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the Church.

Intro



Church History is the story of Jesus and his Bride. Although church history and traditions are not authoritative for us as Christians in faith and practice, a good understanding of church history can give us insight into how the church developed from the time of Jesus until now.

A basic understanding of church history helps us to understand how various church traditions and theological views arose and how we can imitate the successes and avoid the mistakes of Christians in the past. This Bird's Eye View of Church History is meant to give a very basic and simplistic overview of church history that can serve as a framework for further study.

Church Begins in East and Moves West

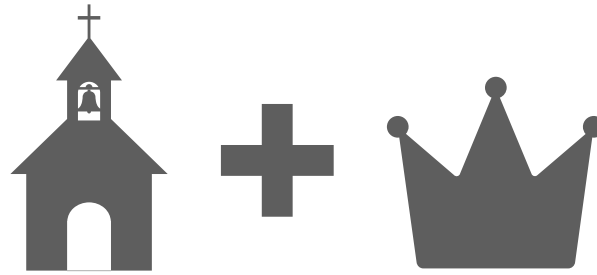
Acts 2-28
c. 30-313 AD



The “Church” began when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost. The Jewish church in Jerusalem began to take the Gospel to the entire Gentile (non-Jewish) world. Over the next 300 years the Gospel moved with power from the East to the West and became a predominantly Gentile religion. But as Christianity grew so did persecution. Christianity was an illegal religion in the Roman Empire and Christians were often fearful for their lives. Churches usually met in homes or sometimes in public places and there were almost no official church buildings. The leaders or pastors of these churches were typically not paid or highly educated and were usually chosen from among the congregation based on spiritual maturity.

Church and State Merge

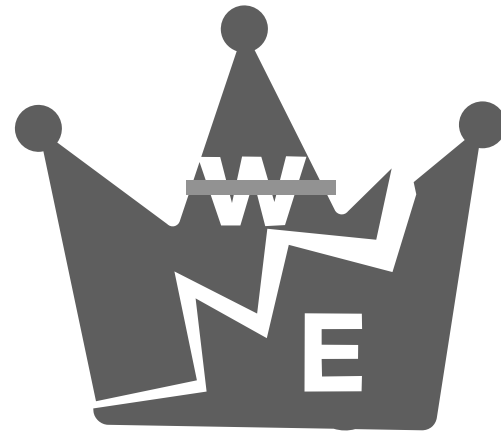
c. 313-1700 AD



In 313 AD Christianity became a legal religion in the Roman Empire under the Emperor Constantine and within a few years became the official religion of the Empire. For the first time Christian leaders were able to gather together in Church Councils to discuss major issues facing the Christian community. During this time the church also began to acquire large amounts of wealth and power and to build large buildings and complex organizational structures. The government quickly claimed the right to appoint church leaders. As church and state merged many people came into the church because of the power and wealth of the church rather than spiritual concerns. The focus on reaching the nations through the Great Commission began to decline during this period. Corruption within the church became rampant and some devout Christians even moved to the desert to become Hermits or Monks to flee the corruption of the Church.

Fall of the Western Roman Empire

410-470 AD



In 410 AD the western part of the Roman Empire began to fall to invaders from the north. By 476 AD the city of Rome had fallen and the western half of the Roman Empire ceased to function as a part of the empire. The eastern half of the empire became known as the Byzantine Empire and lasted for another 1000 years while the west descended into a time of chaos and war.

Loss of Knowledge in the West

c. 410-1300 AD



This time of chaos and war is known in the West as the Dark Ages or the Medieval Age. During the Dark Ages most people spent their time just trying to survive and did not have time to learn to read and write. Many books in the West were either destroyed in the wars or disintegrated with age. Books were hand-copied and expensive and so most churches only had one Bible. Many of the priests could not read well and did not have a good understanding of the scriptures. Little by little many superstitions began to creep into the belief and practice of the western church.

Eastern And Western Church Split

1054 AD



Over the years the eastern and western churches became more and more divided because of language and cultural differences. In 1054 AD the eastern and western churches formally split over a dispute between the leader of the church in the west (called the Pope) and the leader of the church in the east (called the Patriarch). The western church became known as the Roman Catholic Church and the eastern church became known as the Eastern Orthodox Church.

The Crusades

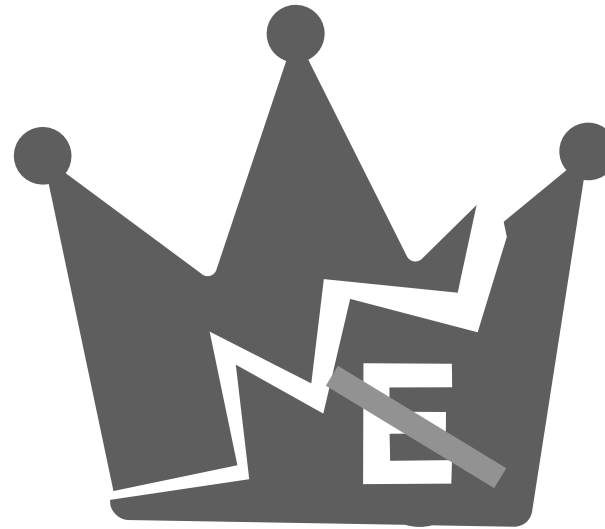
1095-1291 AD



During the Dark Ages Christians in the west developed many superstitions such as the belief that a person had to visit the Holy Land to get forgiveness of sins and that objects from the Holy Land, such as a piece of the cross or a bone from a saint, had powers to heal the sick. When Muslims conquered the Middle East and endangered the pilgrimage routes to the Holy Land many Christians believed that this endangered their souls. In 1095 AD the Pope called for a Crusade or Holy War to free the Holy Land. Many people joined this war out of religious fervor but many also joined because they were offered land, forgiven all debts, or released from prison. These Crusaders often cruelly and senselessly slaughtered Jews, Orthodox Christians, and Muslim villages along the way. Ultimately the Crusades failed to conquer the Holy Land and caused great hatred between people in the east and west.

Fall of the Eastern (Byzantine) Roman Empire

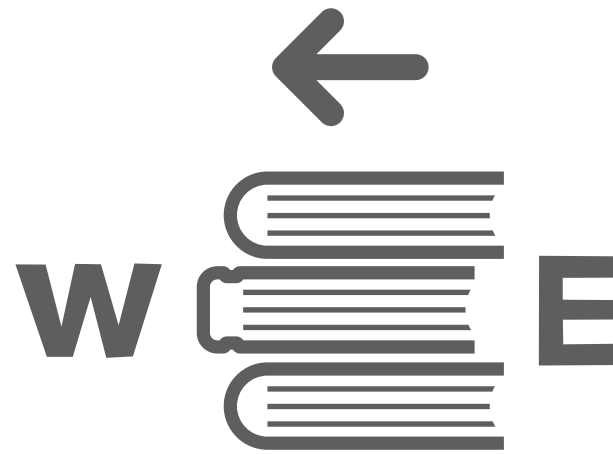
1300-1453 AD



In 1453 the Eastern part of the Roman Empire, called the Byzantine Empire, finally fell to Muslim invaders.

Knowledge Moves Back West

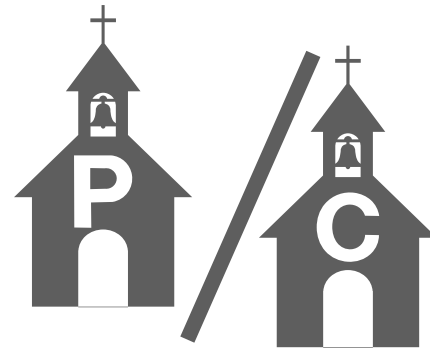
c. 1300-1600 AD



As the eastern part of the Roman Empire fell many of the eastern scholars moved west. They brought with them books and knowledge that the west had not seen for over 1000 years. As this knowledge of the ancient and classical world began to move back to the west people began to think in new ways. This time period is called the Renaissance or the re-birth of knowledge. During the Renaissance people began painting in new ways, writing new books, and inventing new things.

Catholic and Protestant Churches Split

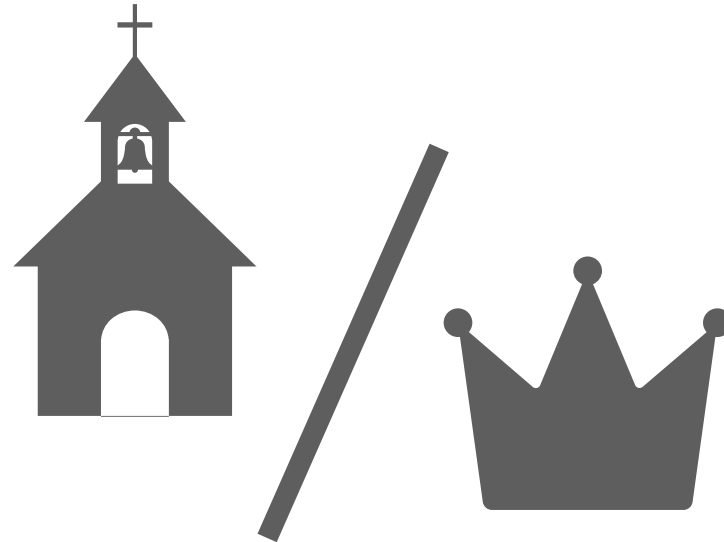
1517 AD



This new thirst for knowledge led to the invention of the printing press in order to print books faster and cheaper. As books became more common and less expensive normal people began to read the Bible for themselves for the first time. As they read the Bible they began to realize that the Roman Catholic Church was teaching many superstitions that did not come from the Bible. In 1517 AD a monk named Martin Luther publicly posted a list of 95 questions that he wanted to debate with church leaders concerning false teachings. The Pope saw Martin Luther and his followers as a threat to the church and excommunicated them (threw them out of the church). Martin Luther and others like him started the Protestant Movement in protest against the false teachings that had crept into Christianity.

Separation of Church and State

1791 AD - present



As the Catholic and Protestant churches split wars broke out as governments tried to regain control over the church. This led to calls for religious freedom and a separation of church and state. Many people argued that the government should not decide what a person should and should not believe about religious matters. Governments also should not appoint religious leaders or favor one religion over another.

Secularism and Anti-Christian Sentiment



As knowledge and new ways of thinking continued to grow Christians developed the Scientific Method as a way to understand the orderly world that God had created. But as the Scientific Revolution began to gain momentum some scientists began to claim that there is no God or that God cannot be known. As Evolution became the prominent theory of the origins of mankind among scientists some western political activists have moved from the political idea of religious freedom to the idea of freedom from religion in public spaces. Over time this has developed into the idea that religion must be confined to home and church and that religion cannot play any role in public life. This philosophy has contributed to a major decline of Christianity in the West.

Church Grows in East Again

1792 AD - present

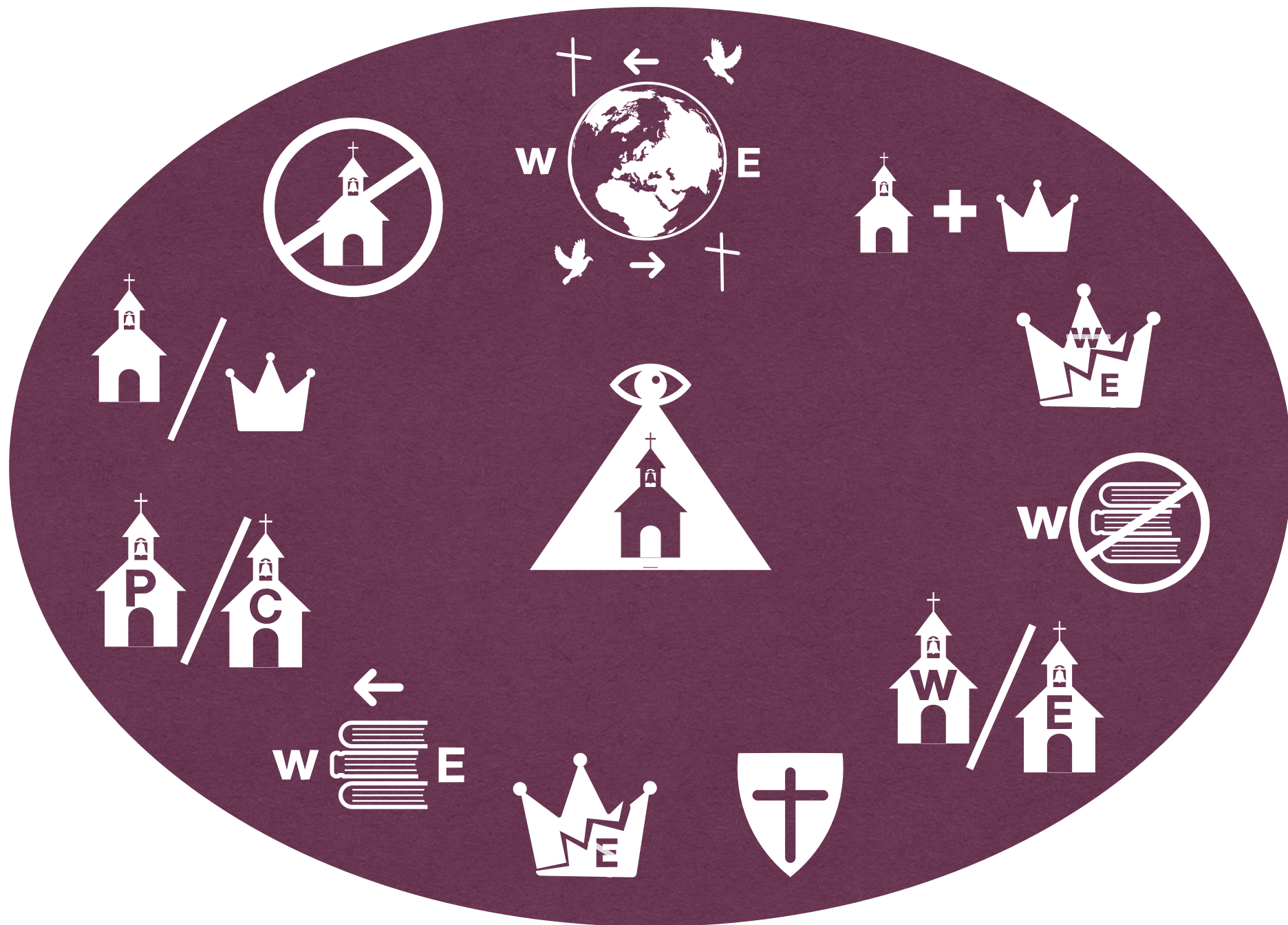


*There were missionary efforts by Catholics and Moravians to the East before this date but the Modern Missionary Movement began in 1792.

In 1792 an English shoe maker named William Carey began reading about India and realized that people in India had never heard the Good News about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He knew from reading the Bible that Jesus had commanded his disciples to take the Gospel to all peoples but that the church was no longer reaching out to lost people around the world. Carey left his home and business and went to India where he spent the rest of his life sharing the Gospel with the people of India. This was the beginning of the Modern Missionary Movement. This movement has resulted in huge growth for the church in the East but has also been accompanied by large amounts of worldwide persecution as the Church reaches out to people groups that have never before heard the Gospel. Meanwhile the Church awaits the return of Jesus Christ as the Bridegroom and the New Heaven and New Earth.

Bird's Eye View of Church History

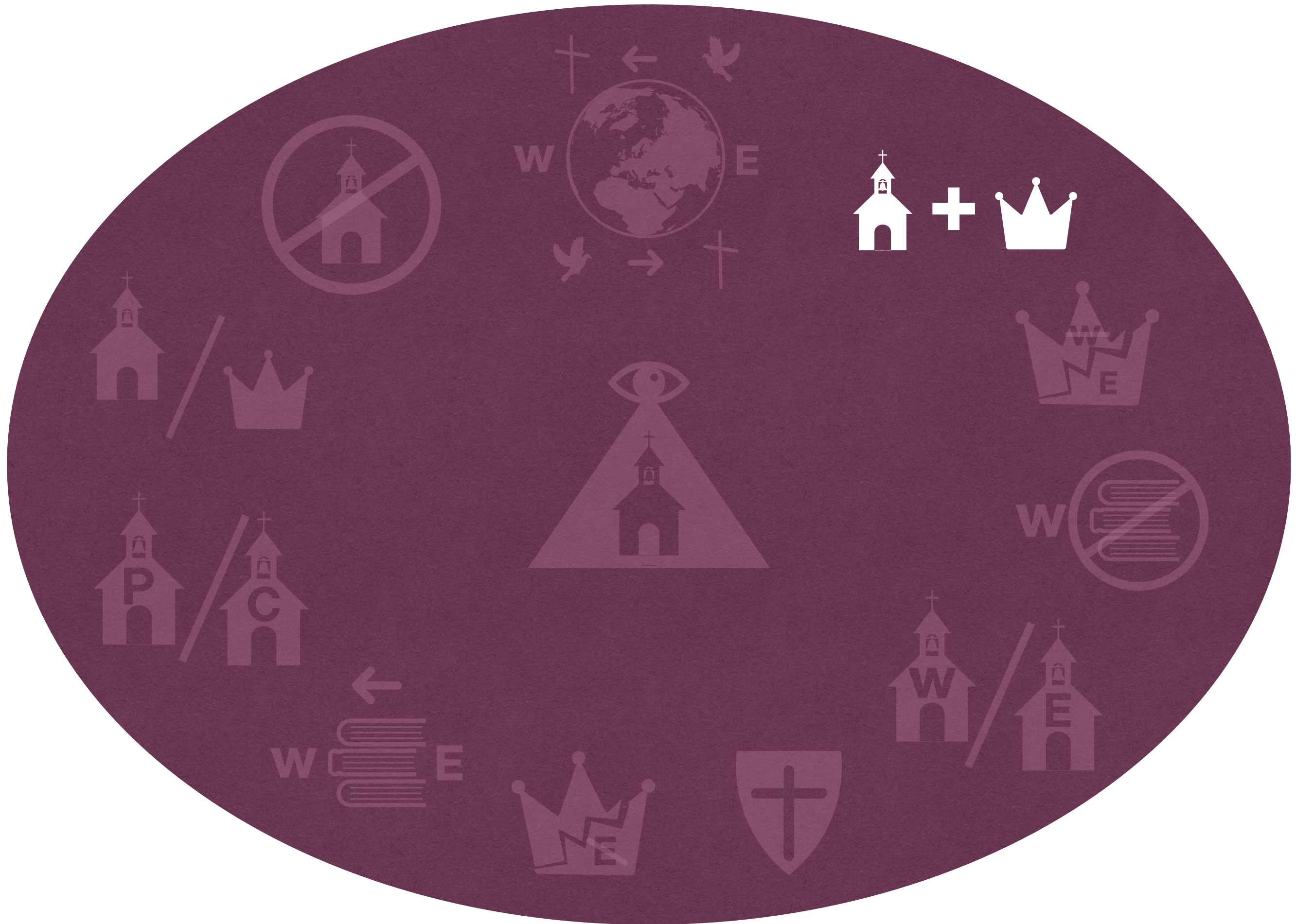
(Pictures Only)

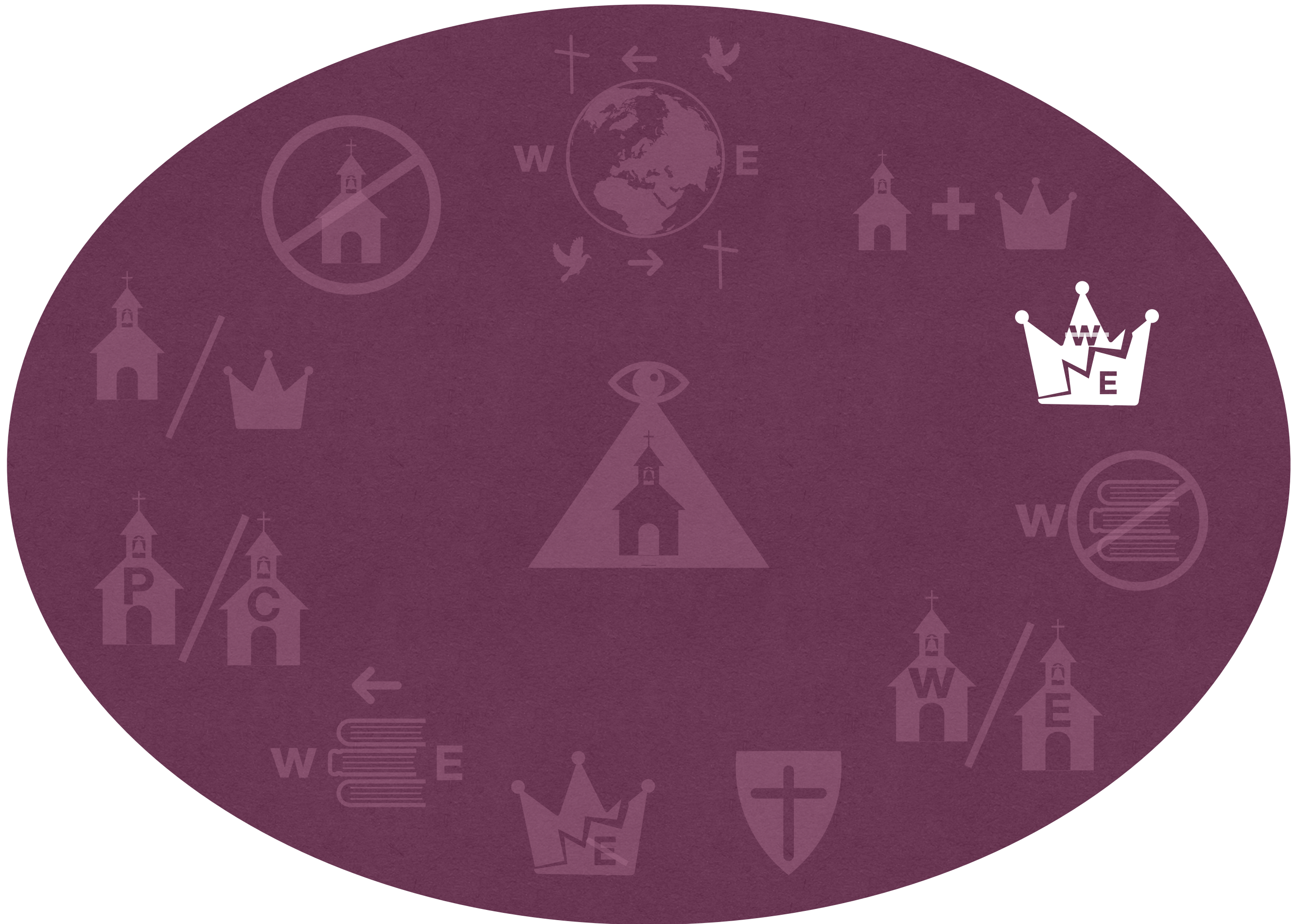


Retell the story in your own words.

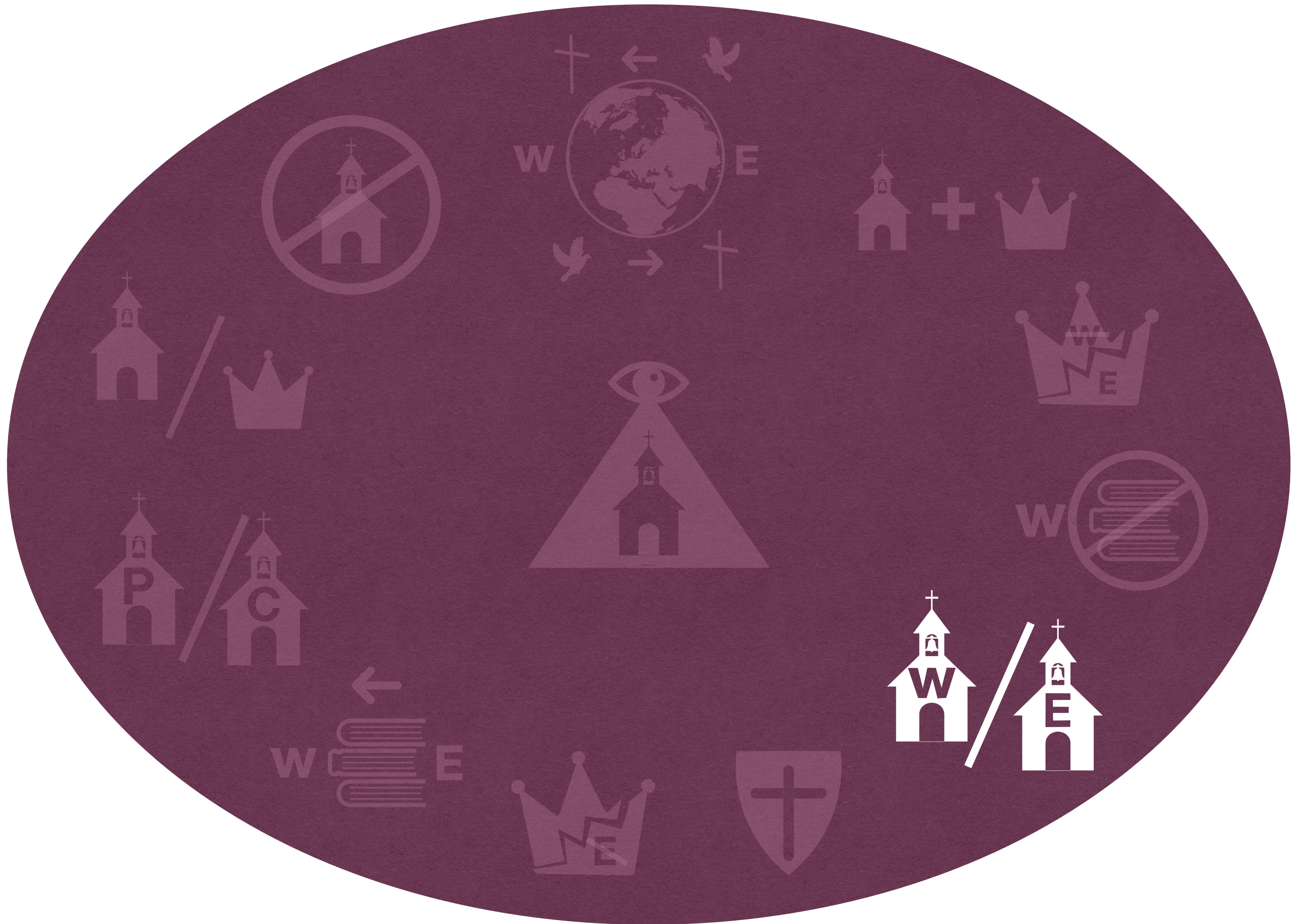


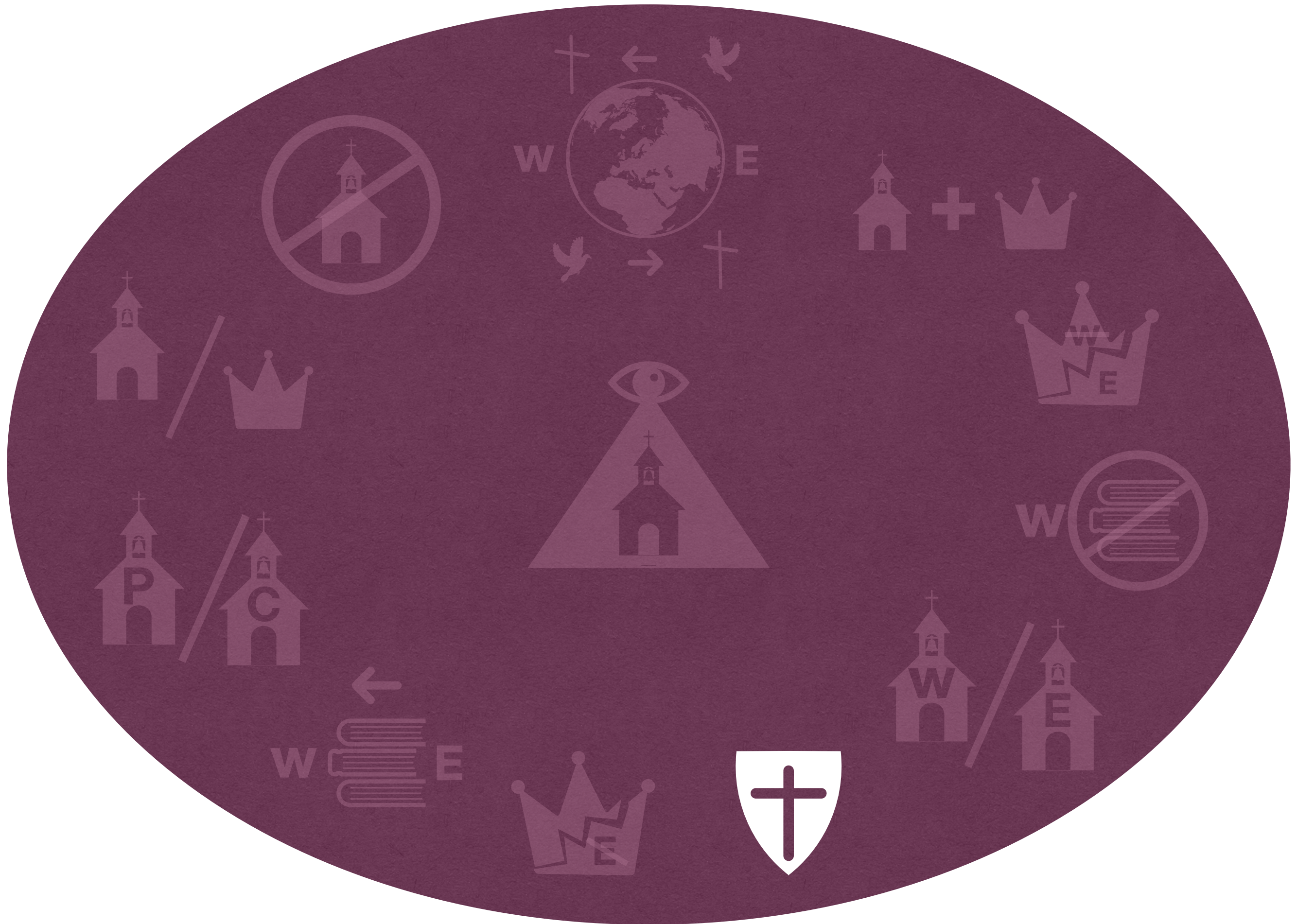




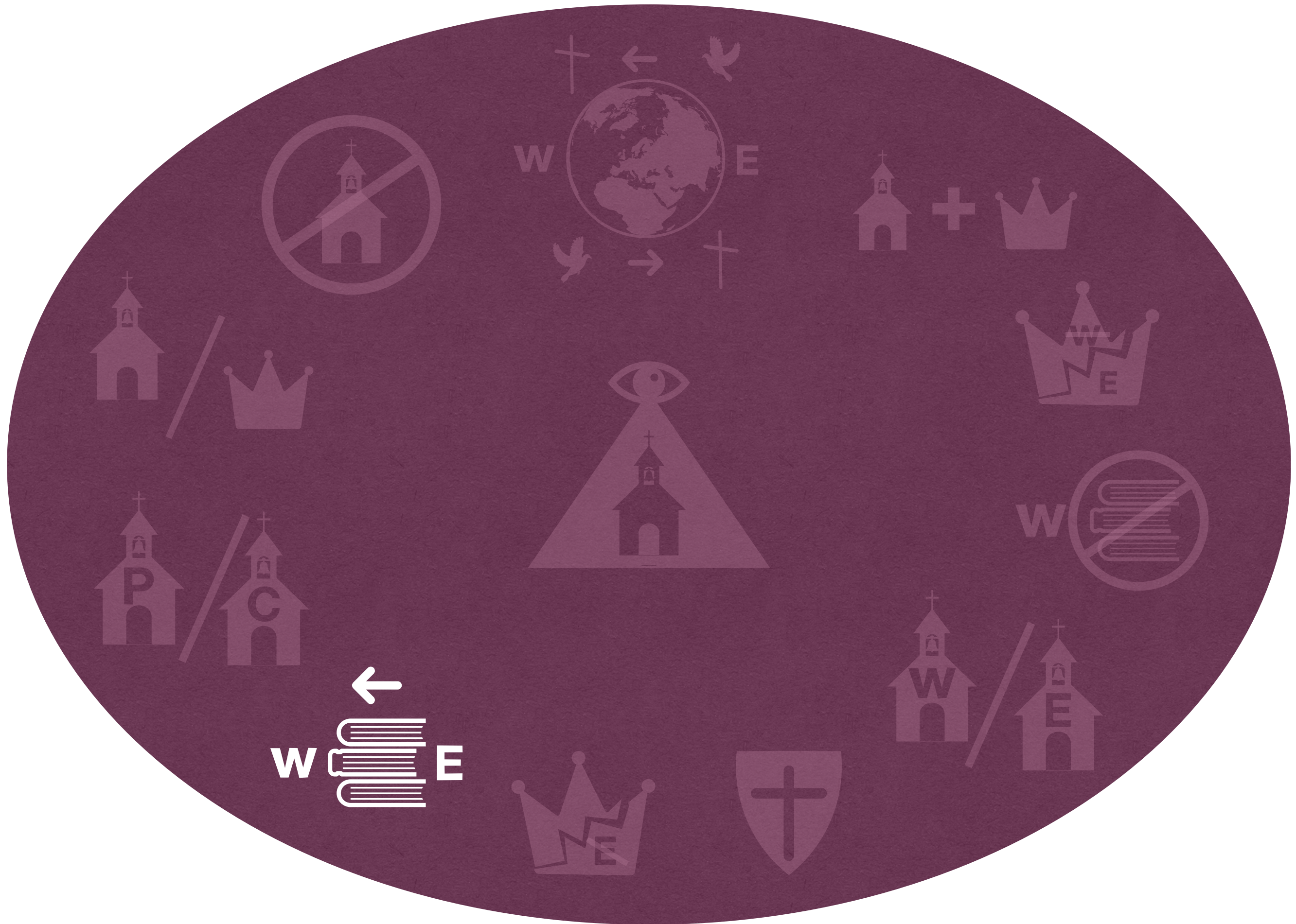


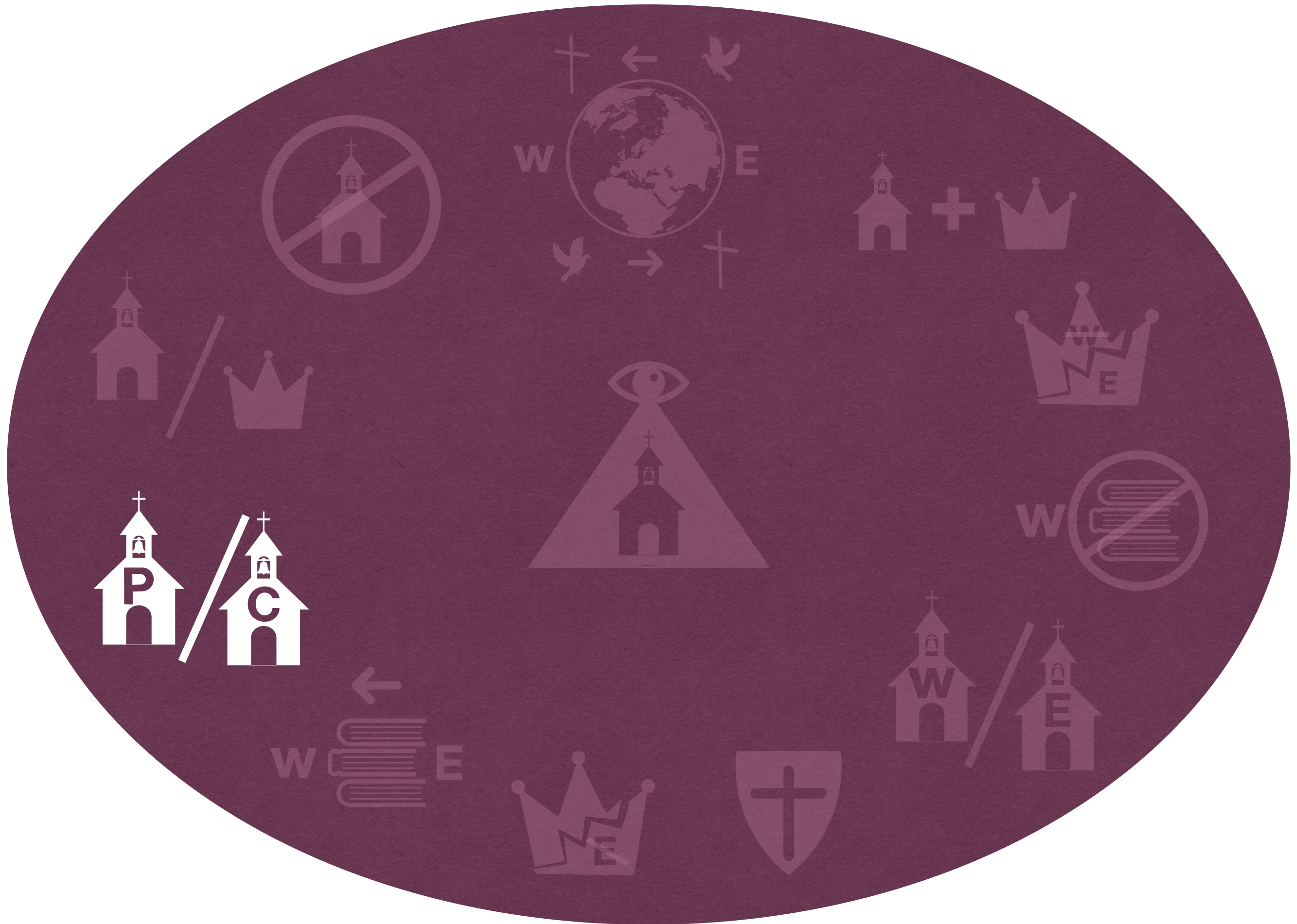


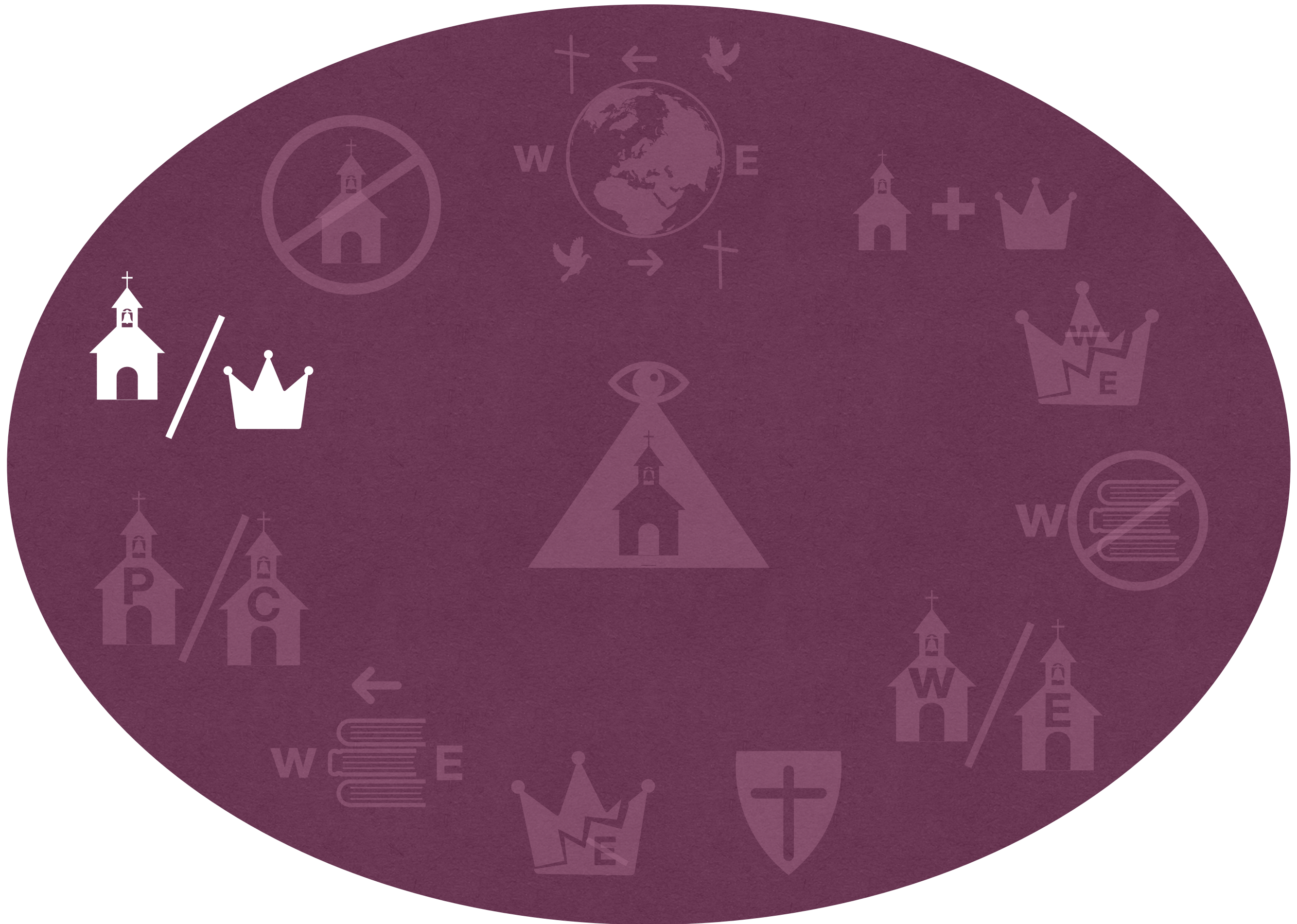




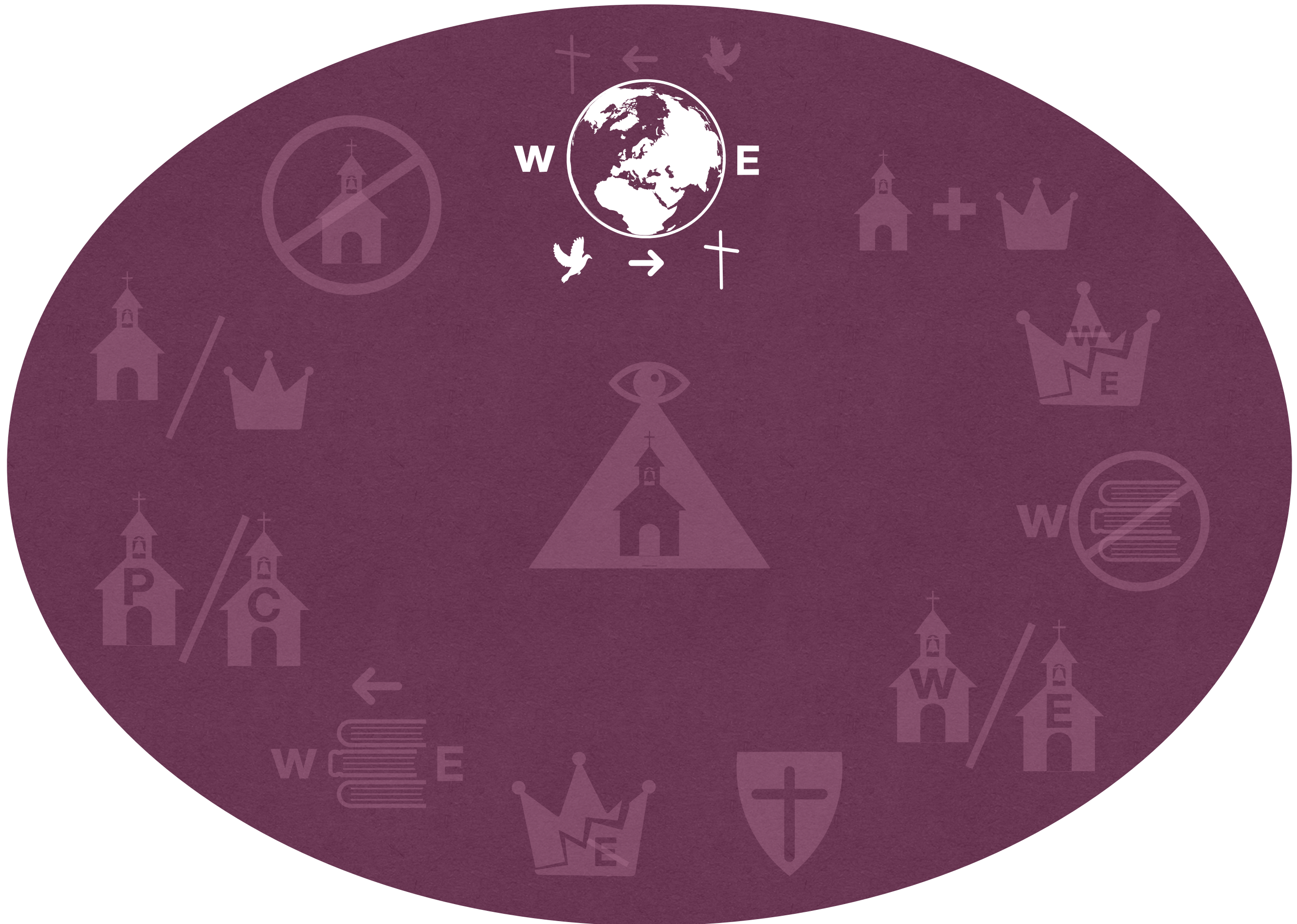


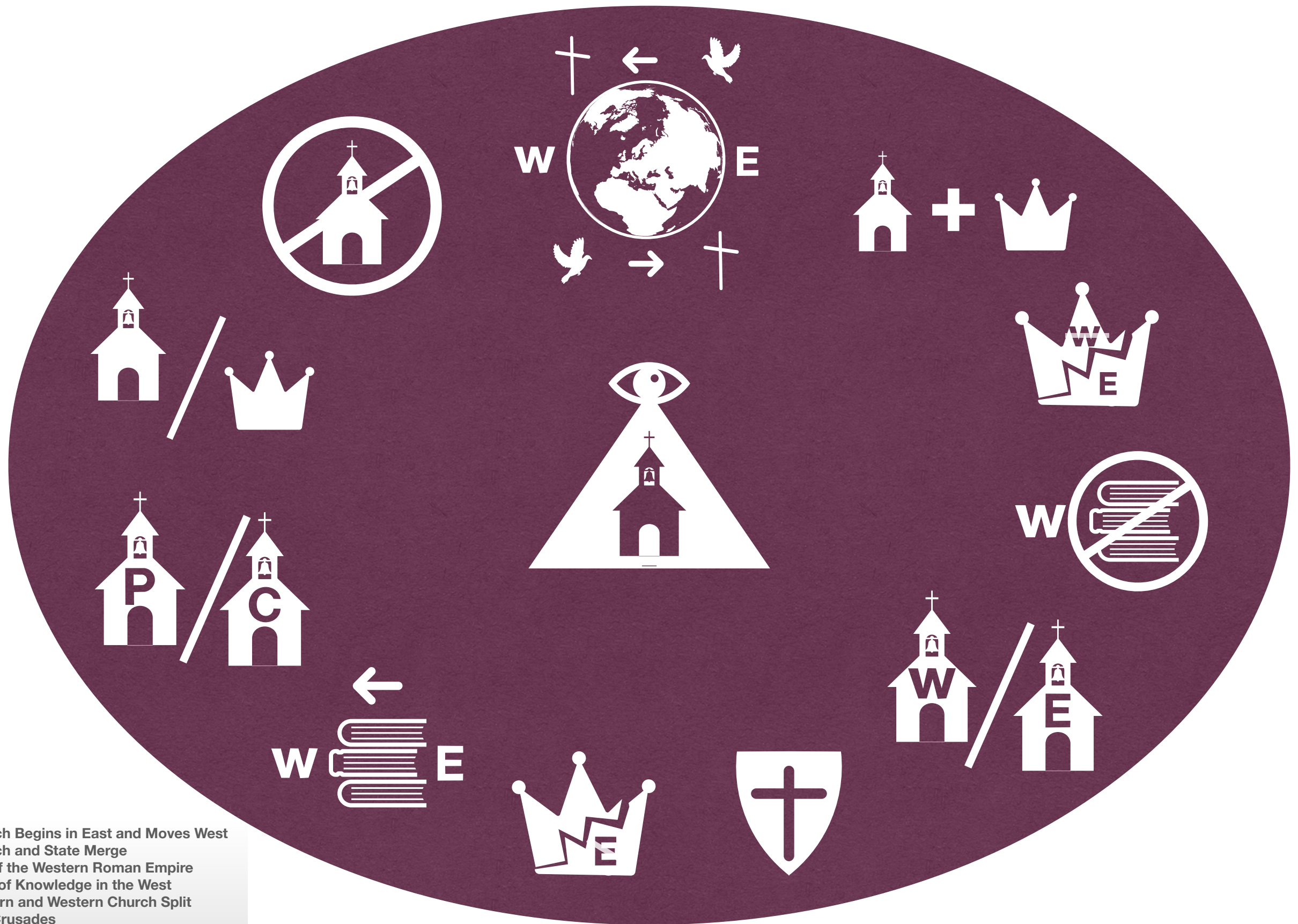








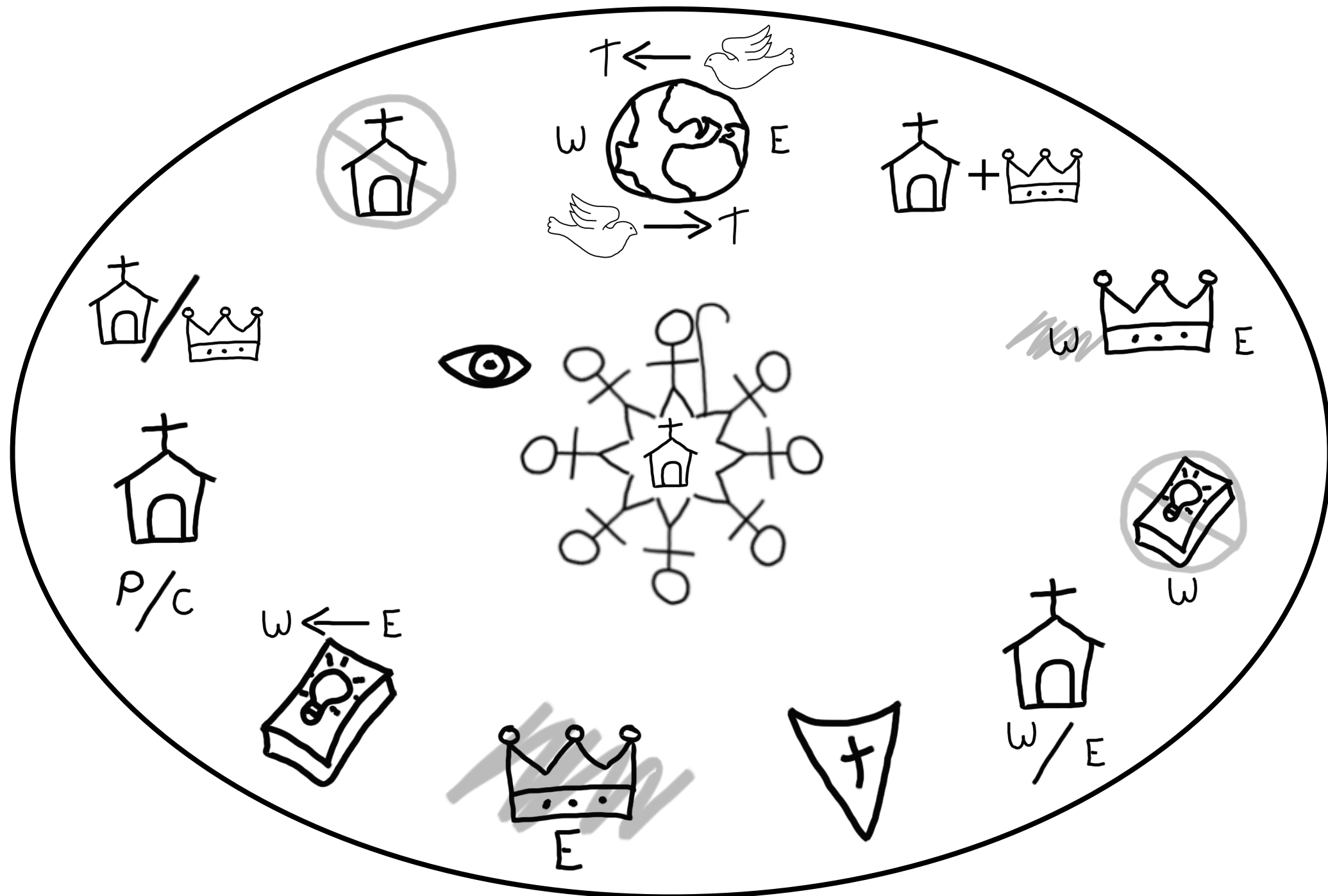




- Church Begins in East and Moves West
- Church and State Merge
- Fall of the Western Roman Empire
- Loss of Knowledge in the West
- Eastern and Western Church Split
- The Crusades
- Fall of the Eastern Roman Empire
- Knowledge Moves Back West
- Catholic and Protestant Churches Split
- Separation of Church and State
- Secularism and Anti-Christian Sentiment
- Church Grows in East Again

⊗ Learning Tool: Draw the Symbols

Draw the symbols and retell the story in your own words with a partner.



Suggested Lesson Order

Seeker's Class (7 lessons total)

01 - Creation to Christ (C2C) (1 lesson)

02 - The Six Sacrifice Stories (6 lessons)

Believer's Group (25 lessons total)

03 - Initial Discipleship - Milk (5 lessons)

04 - Basic Discipleship - Meat (20 lessons)

Christian Worldview (2 lessons)

05 - Bird's Eye View of the Bible (1 lesson)

06 - Bird's Eye View of Church History (1 lesson)

Book Studies (4-5 years) - no material but uses 3/3rds format

- James (character development)
- Titus (group development)
- Luke (or one of the other four Gospels (understanding the Gospel))
- Acts (understanding the early church and group multiplication)
- Genesis (theological foundations)
- Exodus (theological foundations)
- Joshua (theological foundations)
- Judges (theological foundations)

