

# The Third Path to Christian Unity

# Unity is Not Optional!

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, **3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.** 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. - Ephesians 4:1-6

# Unity is Not Optional!

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in me through their word; **That they all may be one**, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; That they also may be one in Us, **that the world may believe that You sent Me**. And the glory which you gave Me I have given them, **that they may be one** just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me...”

- John 17:20-23

# Unity is Not Optional!

“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but **that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment.**” 1

Corinthians 1:10

# The Three Paths to Christian Unity

- The Path of Subjugation

# The Path of Subjugation

- Religious Persecution
- In History
- Today

# The Path of Subjugation

## Pros:

- Effective, at least outwardly
- Treats truth as more important than human agreement

## Cons:

- Amounts to religious slavery
- Devalues the individual life and the individual conscience

## Cons:

- Assumes that the defended values are absolutely correct and unquestionable
- Truth is determined by whoever has the most power
- Fatally undermines the morality of the religion it seeks to preserve
- UNBIBLICAL  
– John 18:36

## John 18:36 ESV

Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world."

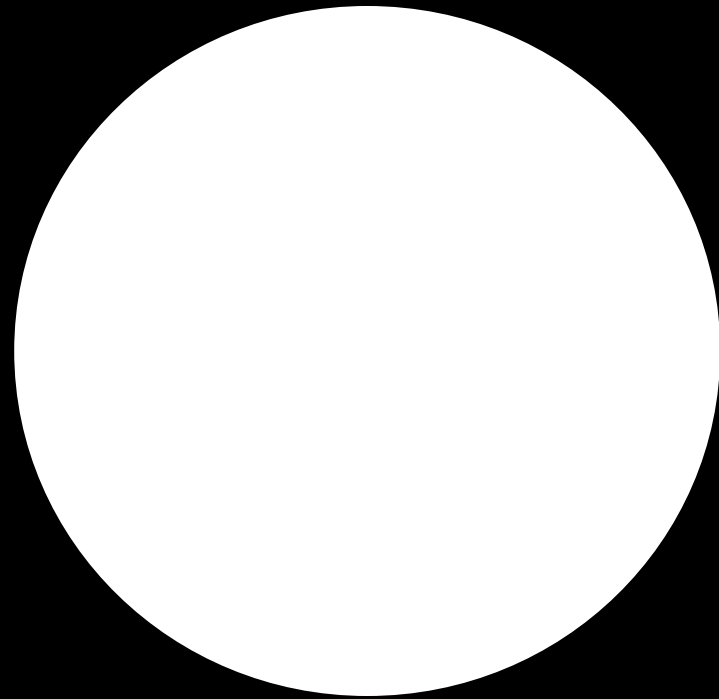


# The Three Paths to Christian Unity

- The Path of Subjugation
- The Path of Subtraction

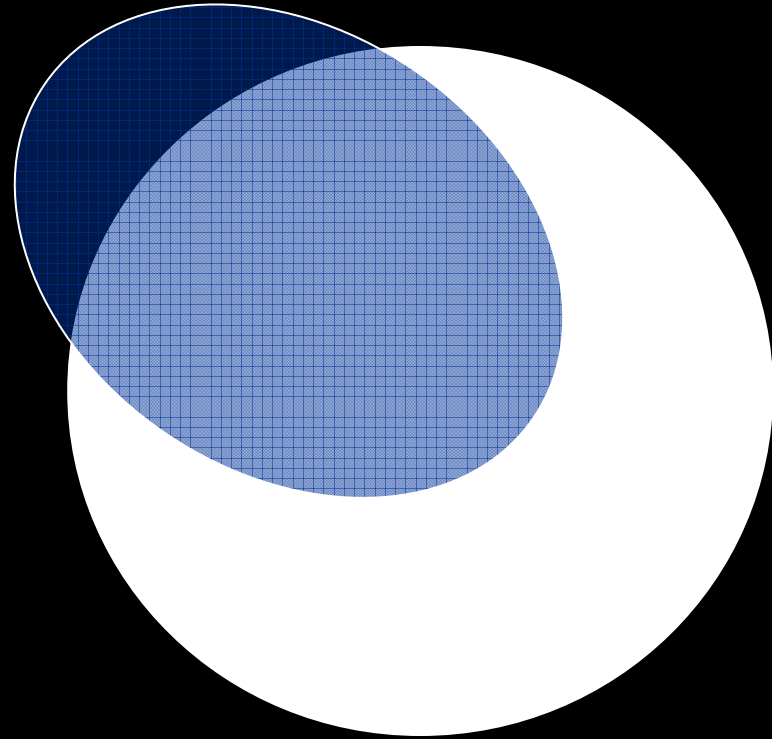
# The Path of Subtraction

- The Bible



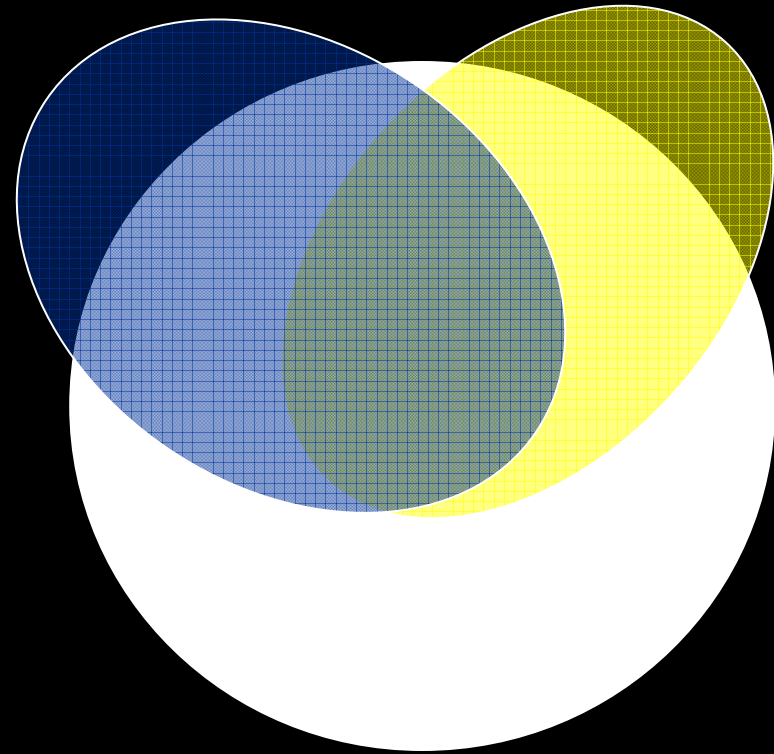
# The Path of Subtraction

- The Bible
- Me



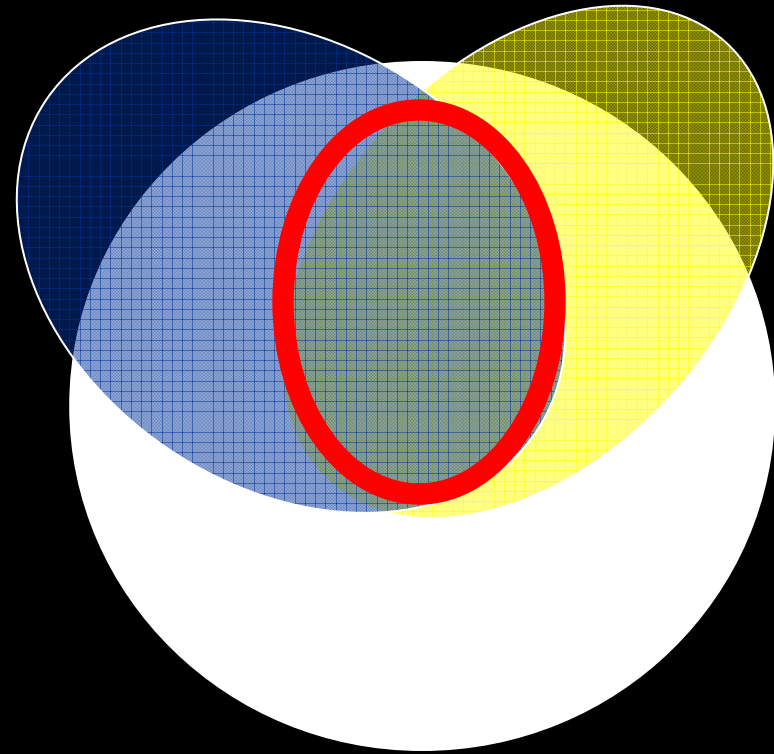
# The Path of Subtraction

- The Bible
- Me
- You



# The Path of Subtraction

- The Bible
- Me
- You
- “Essential”



# The Path of Subtraction

## Pros:

- Unity is relatively easy to achieve
- No killing or involuntary submission

## Cons:

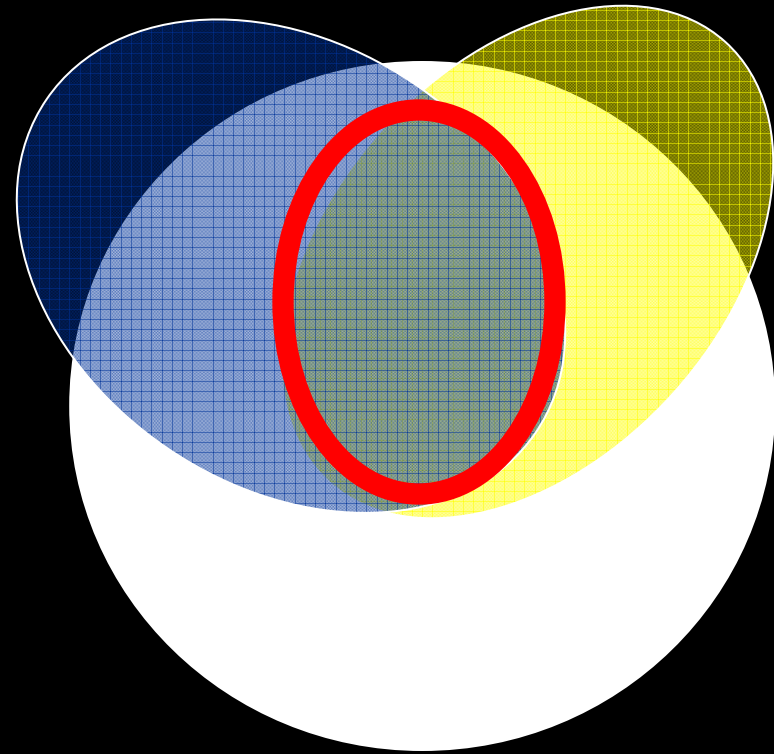
- Treats truth as less important than human agreement
- Parts of Scripture are set aside and forgotten

## Cons:

- The determination of what is “essential” is totally arbitrary
- Fatally undermines the morality of the unity it seeks to preserve
- “The faith” gets smaller and smaller the more unity is pursued

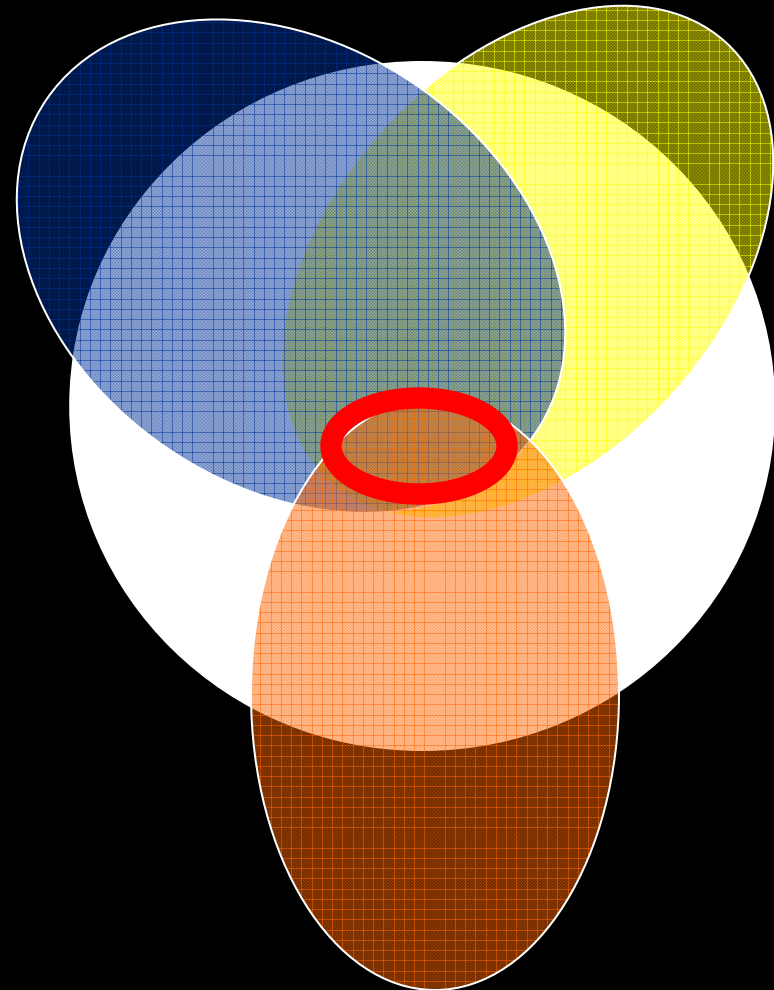
# The Path of Subtraction

- The Bible
- Me
- You
- “Essential”



# The Path of Subtraction

- The Bible
- Me
- You
- Someone Else
- “Essential”





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- UNBIBLICAL – 2 Jn 9-11

## 2 John 1:9-11 ESV

Everyone who goes on ahead and **does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God.** Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.  
10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, 11 for **whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.**

# Catchphrases of the Second Path to Christian Unity

- “My church teaches...”
- “That’s what you believe...”
- “Let’s agree to disagree...”
- “Attend the church of your choice...”
- “There are many paths to God...”
- “We are having an inter-denominational fellowship...”
- “We are all Christians...”

# The Three Paths to Christian Unity

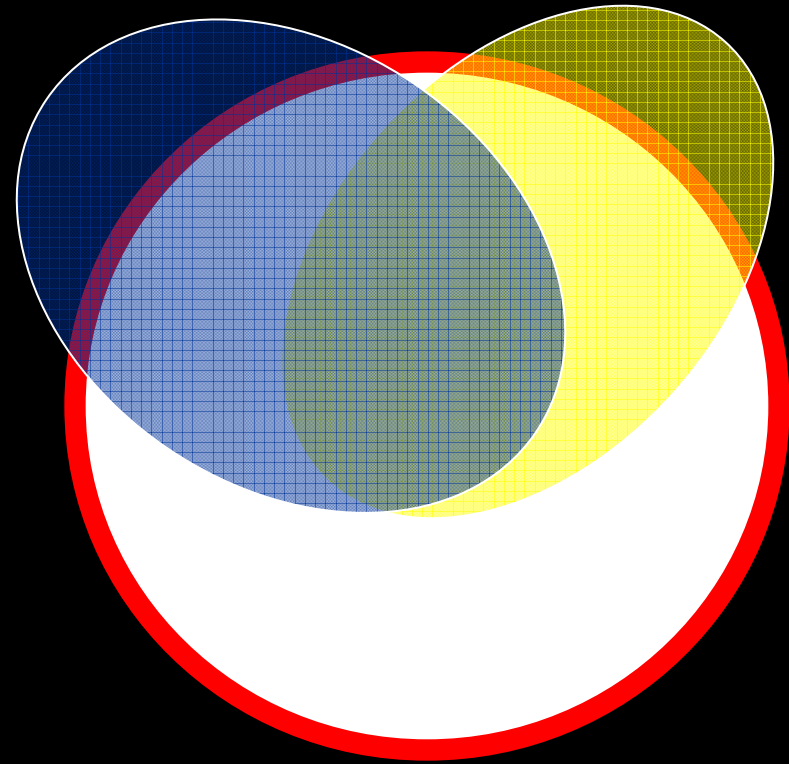
- The Path of Subjugation
- The Path of Subtraction
- The Path of Submission

# The Path of Submission

- Submitting to the will of God
  - 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil 2:1-2; 2 Th. 2:15,3:14

# The Path of Submission

- The Bible
- Me
- You
- “Essential”



# 1 Corinthians 1:10

**“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment.”**

# Philippians 2:1-2 ESV

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.



## 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:14-15 ESV

15 So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.

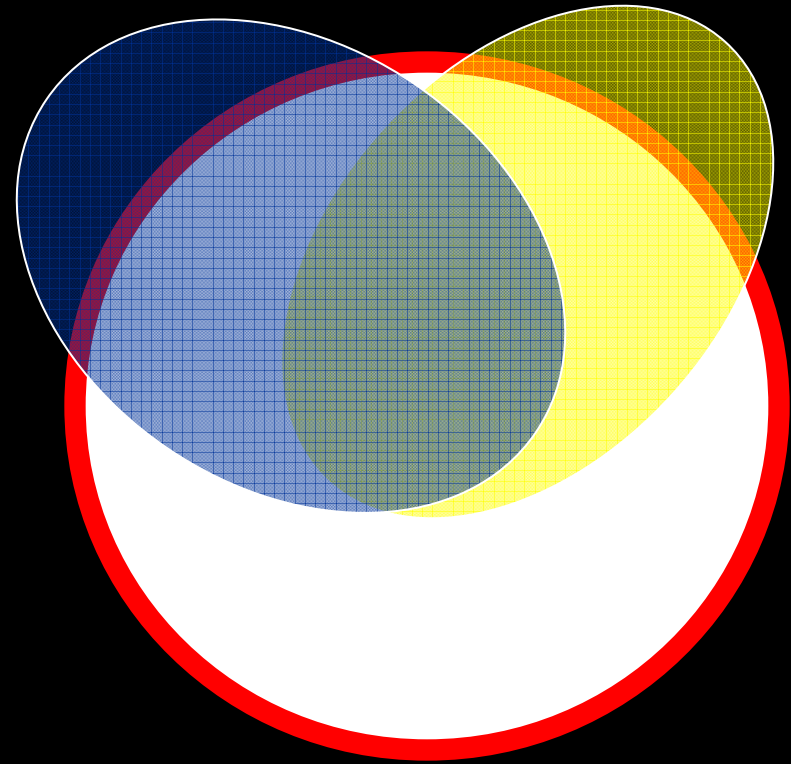
... 3:14 If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. 15 Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

# The Path of Submission

- Submitting to the will of God  
- 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil 2:1-2; 2 Th. 2:15,3:14
- Submitting to the correction of your brethren - Acts 18:24-26; Gal. 2:11-14

# The Path of Submission

- The Bible
- Me
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# Acts 18:24-26 ESV

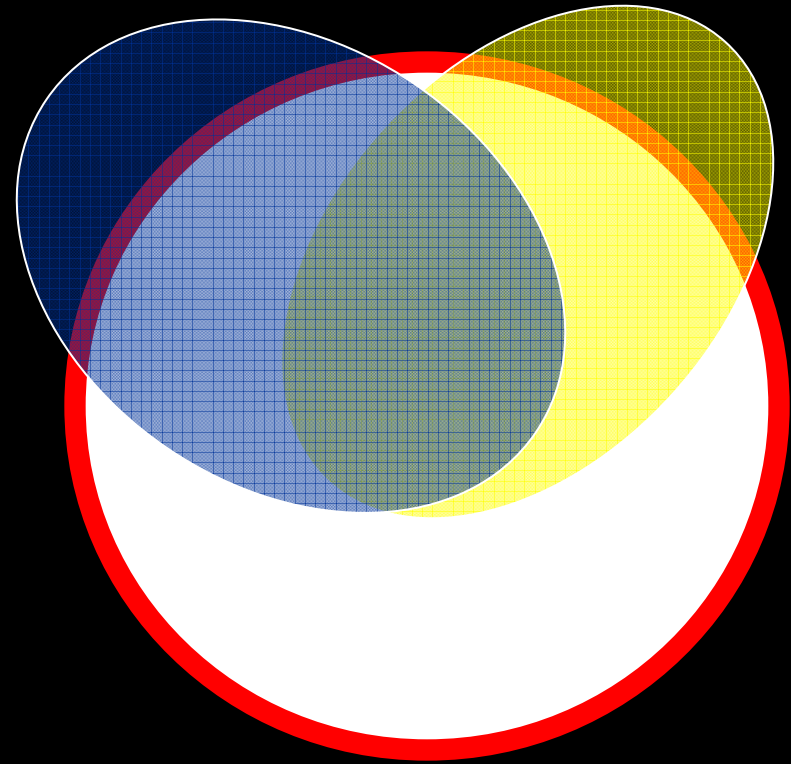
Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, **they took him and explained to him the way of God more accurately.**

# The Path of Submission

- Submitting to the will of God  
- 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil 2:1-2; 2 Th. 2:15,3:14
- Submitting to the correction of your brethren - Acts 18:24-26; Gal. 2:11-14
- Submitting to the conscience of your brethren - 1 Cor. 8:8-13

# The Path of Submission

- The Bible
- Me
- You
- “Essential”



# 1 Corinthians 8:8-13 ESV

8 Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. 9 But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. ... 13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

# The Path of Submission

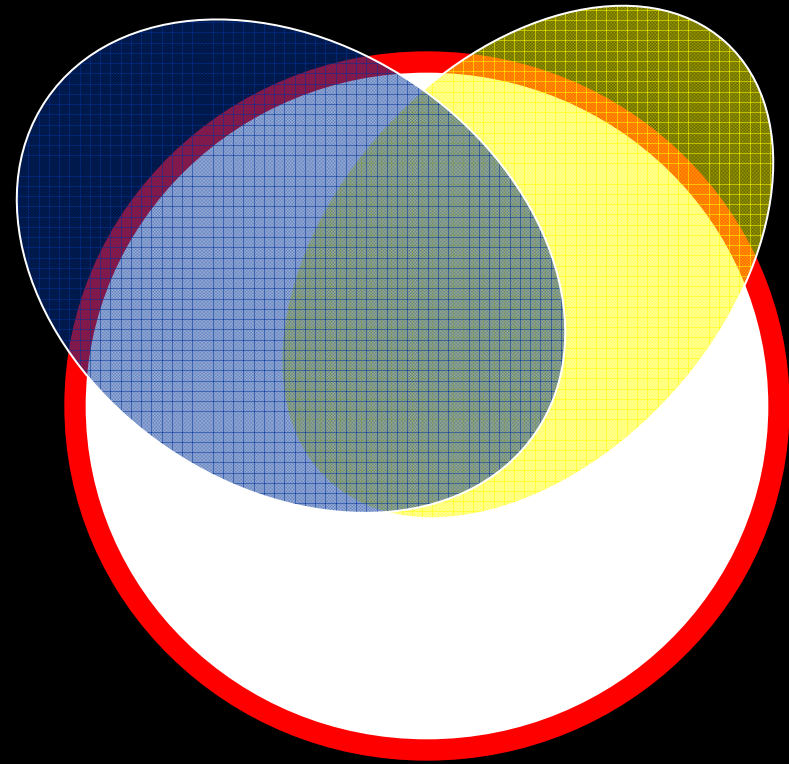
## Pros

- The truth is valued above human agreement
- No killing or coercion
- The more people we follow this path with the more we understand Gods' will



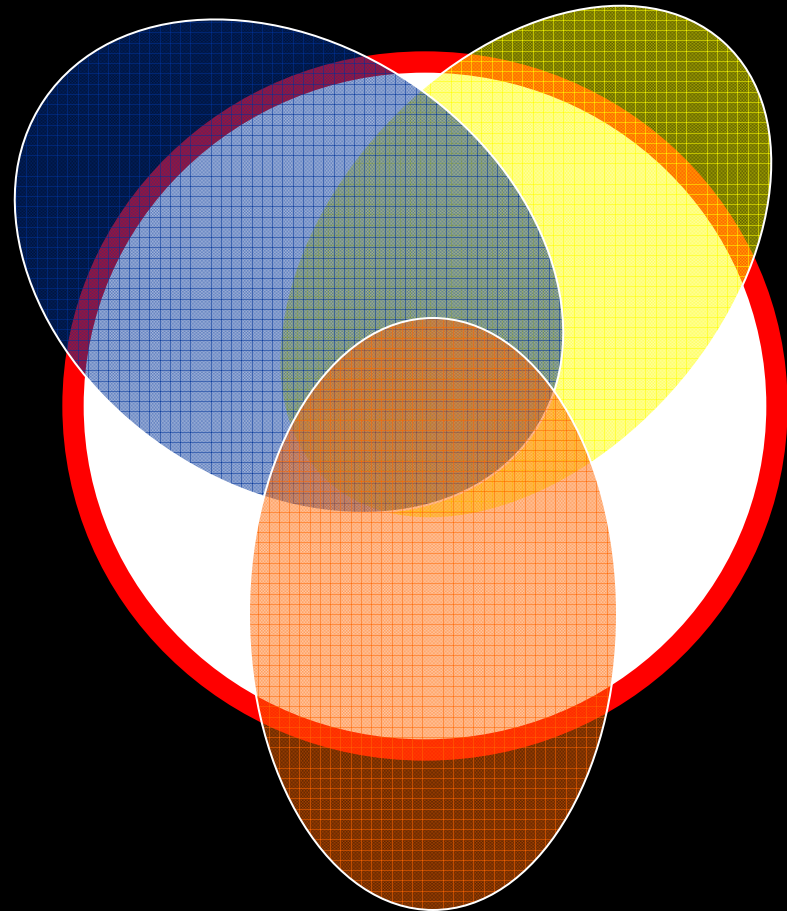
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- The Bible
- Me
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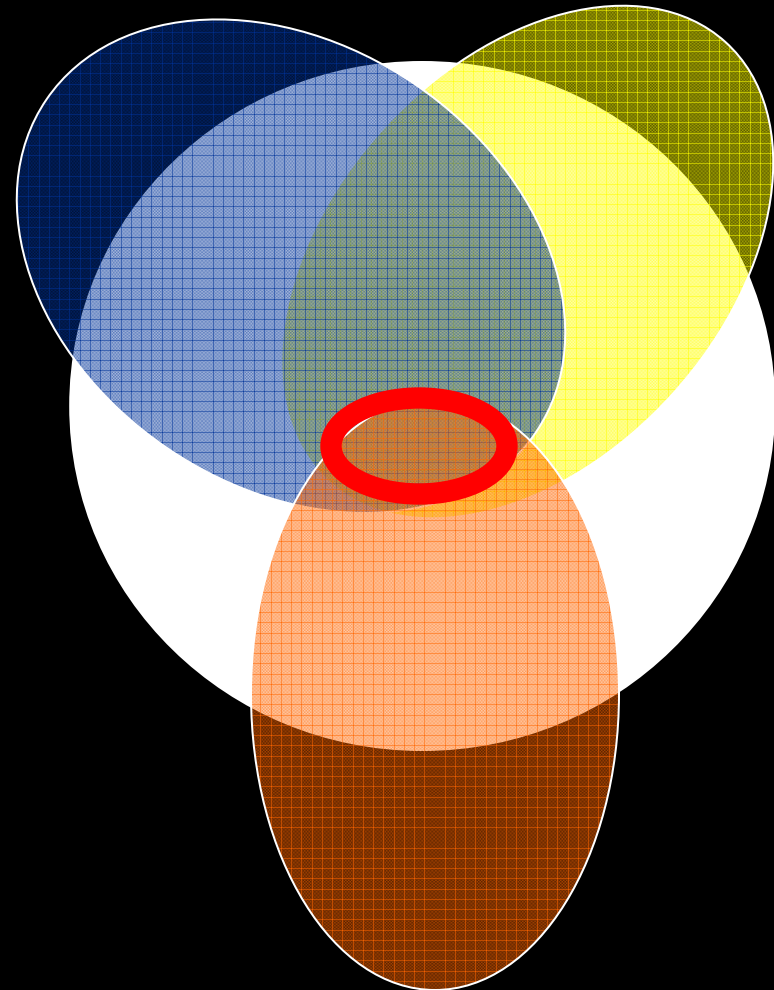
# The Path of Submission

- The Bible
- Me
- You
- Someone Else
- “Essential”



# The Path of Subtraction

- The Bible
- Me
- You
- Someone Else
- “Essential”



# The Path of Submission

## Pros

- The truth is valued above human agreement
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- **Is the Biblical path to Christian unity**

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## Pros

- The truth is valued above human agreement
- No killing or coercion
- The more people we follow this path with the more we understand Gods' will
- **Is the Biblical path to Christian unity**

## Cons

- Requires fervent love for God and His word
- Requires fervent desire for Christian unity
- Requires submission
- Requires time
- Requires hard work

# Catchphrases of the Second Path to Christian Unity

- “My church teaches...”
- “That’s what you believe...”
- “Let’s agree to disagree...”
- “Attend the church of your choice...”
- “There are many paths to God...”
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