



Chapter One: The Church' must be transformed into a missionary church (nn. 19-49)

‘No one should think that the invitation is not meant for him or her’(n.3).



Rembrandt

‘How good it feels to come back to him whenever we are lost! Let me say this once more: God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy’^(n.3).

‘If we have received the love which restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others?’^(n.8).

‘Let us recover and deepen our enthusiasm, that “delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing, even when it is in tears that we must sow ... And may the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the good news not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervour, who have first received the joy of Christ”(Paul VI). (quoted n.10)

Mission is directed to three groups (n.15)

a) ‘the faithful who regularly take part in community worship’.

The Pope includes ‘those members of the faithful who preserve a deep and sincere faith, expressing it in different ways, but seldom taking part in worship.’

b) baptised unbelievers

c) Those who do not know or respect God, or who reject God. They still experience a yearning.

‘Along these lines the Latin American bishops stated that we “cannot passively and calmly wait in our church buildings”; we need to move “from a pastoral ministry of mere conservation to a decidedly missionary pastoral ministry”.



Caravaggio 'The Call of Matthew'

Eyes to see



‘True love is always contemplative, and permits us to serve the other not out of necessity or vanity, but rather because he or she is beautiful above and beyond mere appearances’(n. 199).

- Michelangelo



Jesus is THE **Sacrament** of God

‘The **Word** became flesh
and lived among us,
and we have seen his glory,
the glory as of a father’s only son,
full of grace and truth ...

From his fullness
we have all received,
grace upon grace’ (John 1:14,16).

‘He whom God has sent speaks
the words of God, for he gives the
Spirit without measure.’ (John 3:34)

The Church is THE **Sacrament** of
Jesus

his 'body' in the world,
living the life given to us by his Spirit –
the Spirit he shares with the Father.



Tintoretto 1592

Bernard Lonergan SJ Philosophy of God and Theology 1973

The person does not come first.

What comes first is the community.

It is within community

through the way persons relate

that the individual person emerges.

Since persons are the products of community,

and since the strongest and best of communities

is based on love, religious experience

and the emergence of personality go hand in hand.

‘The immense importance of a culture marked by faith cannot be overlooked; before the onslaught of contemporary secularism an evangelized culture, for all its limits, has many more resources than the mere sum total of believers. An evangelized popular culture contains values of faith and solidarity capable of encouraging the development of a more just and believing society, and possesses a particular wisdom which ought to be gratefully acknowledged. It is imperative to evangelize cultures in order to inculturate the Gospel’(nn. 68-69).

‘To believe in a Father who loves all men and women with an infinite love means realizing that “he thereby confers upon them an infinite dignity” (JP II Message to the Handicapped 16.11.1980). To believe that the Son of God assumed our human flesh means that each human person has been taken up into the very heart of God. To believe that Jesus shed his blood for us removes any doubt about the boundless love which ennobles each human being.

Our redemption has a social dimension because “God in Christ, redeems not only the human person, but also the social relations existing between people” (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. Compendium n. 52). To believe that the Holy Spirit is at work in everyone means realizing that he seeks to penetrate every human situation and all social bonds.

‘Evangelization is meant to cooperate with this liberating work of the Spirit. The very mystery of the Trinity reminds us that we have been created in the image of that divine communion, and so we cannot achieve fulfilment or salvation purely by our own efforts.

From the heart of the Gospel we see the profound connection between evangelization and human advancement, which must necessarily find expression and develop in every work of evangelization. Accepting the first proclamation, which invites us to receive God’s love and to love him in return with the very love which is his gift, brings forth in our lives and actions a primary and fundamental response: to desire, seek and protect the good of others.’

‘The joys and the hopes,
the griefs and the anxieties
of the men and women of this age,
especially those who are in any way afflicted,
these are the joys and hopes,
the griefs and anxieties
of the followers of Christ.

Indeed nothing genuinely human
fails to raise an echo in their hearts,
for theirs is a community composed of men and women.

United in Christ,
they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey
to the kingdom of their Father
and they have welcomed **the news of salvation
which is meant for everyone**’(n. 1).

The 'Catholic' Church: All-embracing

Paul VI announcing the Secretariat for Non-Christians, Pentecost 1966

'To take away from the Church its qualification of "catholic" would mean to change its face, the face Christ wants and loves; it would mean to go against the ineffable intention of God who wanted to make the Church the expression of his unbounded love for mankind.

Pope Paul VI speaks of how small the human heart can be, and goes on:

‘But when the name “catholic” becomes an interior reality,
all egoism is overcome,
all class struggle develops into full social solidarity,
all nationalism is reconciled with the good of the world community,
all racism is condemned,
and all totalitarianism is unmasked in its inhumanity.
The small heart has been broken open or, better,
acquires a completely new capacity to expand.
As Saint Augustine says: ‘Let the space for love be widened’.

Pope Paul VI continued

‘A catholic heart means a heart with universal dimensions: a heart that has overcome its basic narrowness that prevents us listening to our calling towards supreme love.

It means a magnanimous heart, an ecumenical heart, a heart capable of embracing the whole world.

This does not make it a heart that is indifferent to the truth of things or to sincerity of words. It does not mistake goodness for weakness, nor does it confuse peace with cowardice or apathy.

It lives the marvellous synthesis of St. Paul: ‘Doing the truth in love’(Ephesians 4:15).’

‘Catholic’ is not a brand name

We are to reverence and respect the unique mystery of each person’s experience and the many ways in which people’s experience is expressed culturally.

Unity not Uniformity

Communion not Conformity

‘Make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace’(Ephesians 4:3).

The Church's mission is to share (with everyone who wants to listen) the Good News of what Jesus revealed about God

about the meaning of life

about how we can best live to the full.

‘I have come that you may live and live to the full’(John 10:10).

A truly 'Catholic' community

- open to embrace every person in his or her uniqueness
- open to welcome each person's gifts and insights
- open to respect each person's freedom

Karl Rahner TI 1.4]

‘While preserving unity in essentials,
let everyone in the Church,
according to the office entrusted to them,
preserve a proper freedom
in the various forms of spiritual life and discipline,
in the variety of liturgical rites,
and even in the theological elaborations of revealed truth.
In all things let charity prevail.
If they are true to this course of action,
they will be giving ever richer expression
to the authentic catholicity and apostolicity of the Church.’

Unity not Uniformity

Communion not Conformity

“In Catholic doctrine there exists an order or a ‘hierarchy’ of truths, since they vary in their relation to the foundation of the Christian faith”(UR II)³⁸This holds true as much for the dogmas of faith as for the whole corpus of the Church’s teaching, including her moral teaching’(n. 36).

‘What counts above all else is “faith working through love” (*Gal* 5:6) (n. 37).

‘It is the task of exegetes and theologians to help “the judgment of the Church to mature”(DV, 12) (n.40).

We are to create communities that live the love that filled Jesus' heart and to invite people to share this experience.

The Church is not given a mission to control or force.

The Church is only to present and attract,

leaving people free to accept or reject,

for that is the nature of love.

That is the nature of God as revealed by Jesus.

Respect for people's experience and freedom

- Central to the mission of the Church is respect and reverence for each and every person

for the ways in which God is acting in their lives

and the ways in which, whether they realise it or not, they are responding to grace.

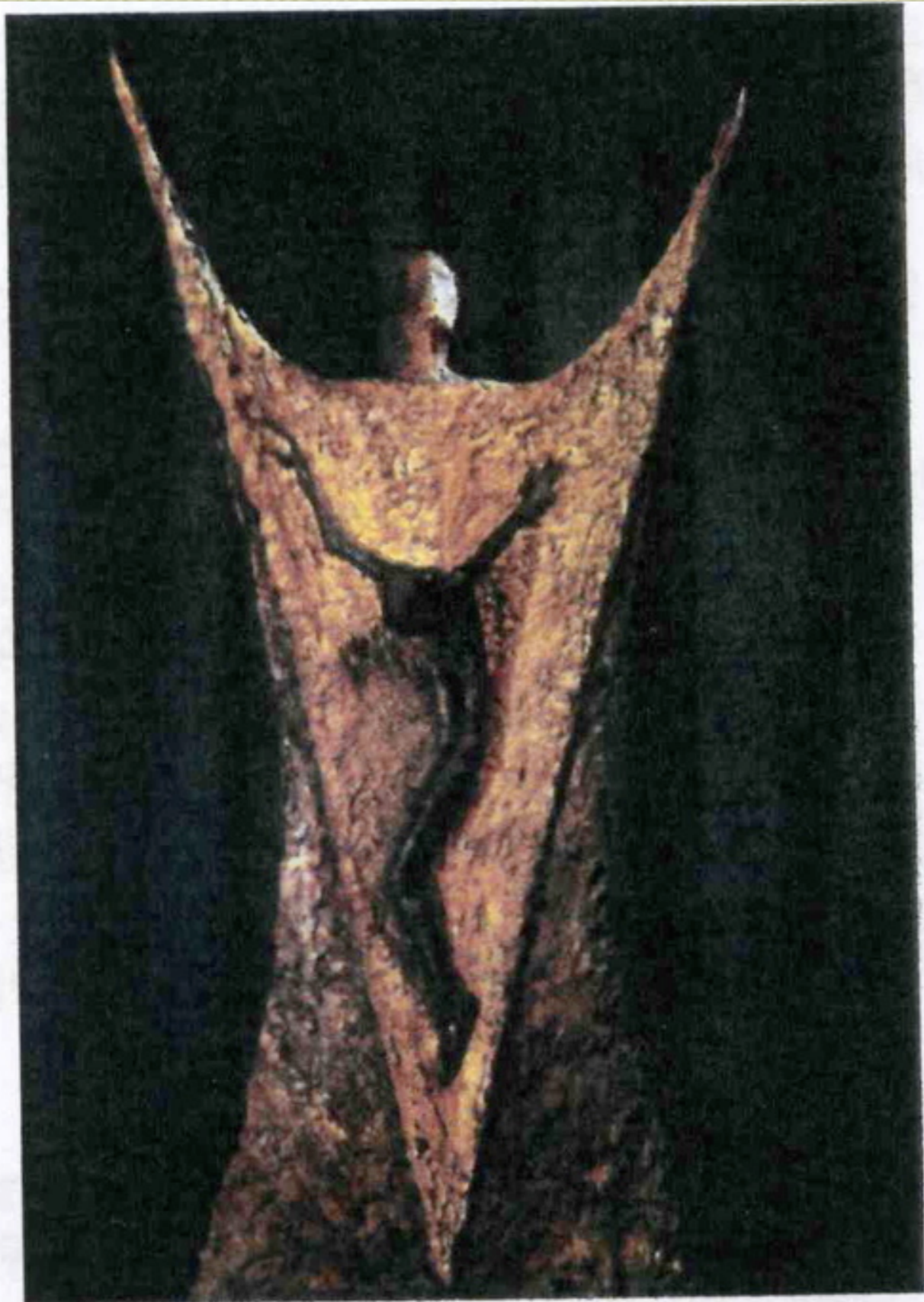
This means respecting people's freedom as to how they choose to respond to the Good News that we never cease to offer them.

‘Saint Thomas Aquinas pointed out that the precepts which Christ and the apostles gave to the people of God “are very few”.⁴⁷ Citing Saint Augustine, he noted that the precepts subsequently enjoined by the Church should be insisted upon with moderation “so as not to burden the lives of the faithful” and make our religion a form of servitude, whereas “God’s mercy has willed that we should be free.”(S. Th. I-II, q. 107, a. 4) (n.43).

Galatians 1:3-5

‘Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to set us free from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.’

‘If the Son makes you free you are free indeed’(John 8:36)



‘I have come that you may live, and live to the full’(John 10:10)

Mature persons are **generative**. That is, they are able to spend their life in creative communion which is life-giving both to themselves and to those with whom they relate.

To be generative, a person must have experienced **intimacy**: the kind of loving and being loved which is experienced as being the fruit of being deeply known and accepted by another whom we intimately know and accept.

To be truly intimate one must have a sense of one’s personal **identity**: a sense of self that is experienced as being affirmed by another who is significant to us.

Finding our identity within the church

Treasured Possession : segullâ

‘If you obey my voice and keep my covenant,
you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples’(Exodus 19:5).

‘YHWH has chosen Jacob for himself,
Israel as his treasured possession’(Psalm 135:4).

‘They shall be mine, says YHWH of hosts,
my treasured possession’(Malachi 3:17).

‘You are a people holy to YHWH your God;
YHWH your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on earth
to be his people, his treasured possession’(Deuteronomy 7:6; 14:2).

‘Today YHWH has obtained your agreement: to be his treasured people,
as he promised you, and to keep his commandments’(Deuteronomy 26:18).

‘The contribution of the Church in today’s world is enormous. The pain and the shame we feel at the sins of some members of the Church, and at our own, must never make us forget how many Christians are giving their lives in love. They help so many people to be healed or to die in peace in makeshift hospitals. They are present to those enslaved by different addictions in the poorest places on earth. They devote themselves to the education of children and young people. They take care of the elderly who have been forgotten by everyone else. They look for ways to communicate values in hostile environments. They are dedicated in many other ways to showing an immense love for humanity inspired by the God who became man. I am grateful for the beautiful example given to me by so many Christians who joyfully sacrifice their lives and their time. This witness comforts and sustains me in my own effort to overcome selfishness and to give more fully of myself’(n. 76).

‘The mission is first and foremost the Lord’s work, surpassing anything which we can see and understand. Jesus is “the first and greatest evangelizer”. In every activity of evangelization, the primacy always belongs to God, who has called us to cooperate with him and who leads us on by the power of his Spirit. The real newness is the newness which God himself mysteriously brings about and inspires, provokes, guides and accompanies in a thousand ways. The life of the Church should always reveal clearly that God takes the initiative, that “he has loved us first” (1 John 4:19) and that he alone “gives the growth” (1 Corinthians 3:7). This conviction enables us to maintain a spirit of joy in the midst of a task so demanding and challenging that it engages our entire life. God asks everything of us, yet at the same time he offers everything to us’(n.12).

‘Christ Jesus has made me his own’ (*Philippians 3:12-13*) (n. 121).



Tintoretto 1592



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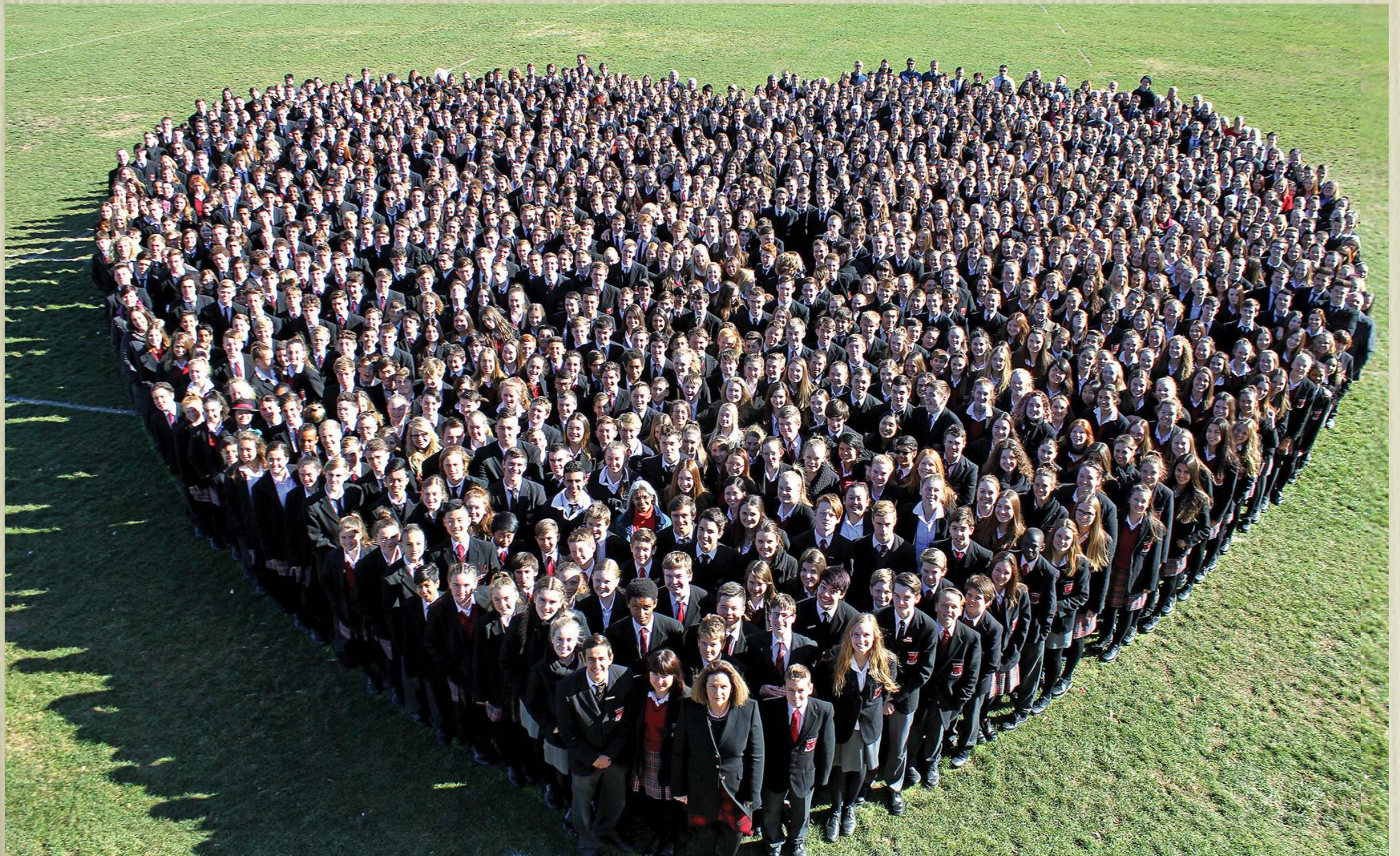


Live the Gospel

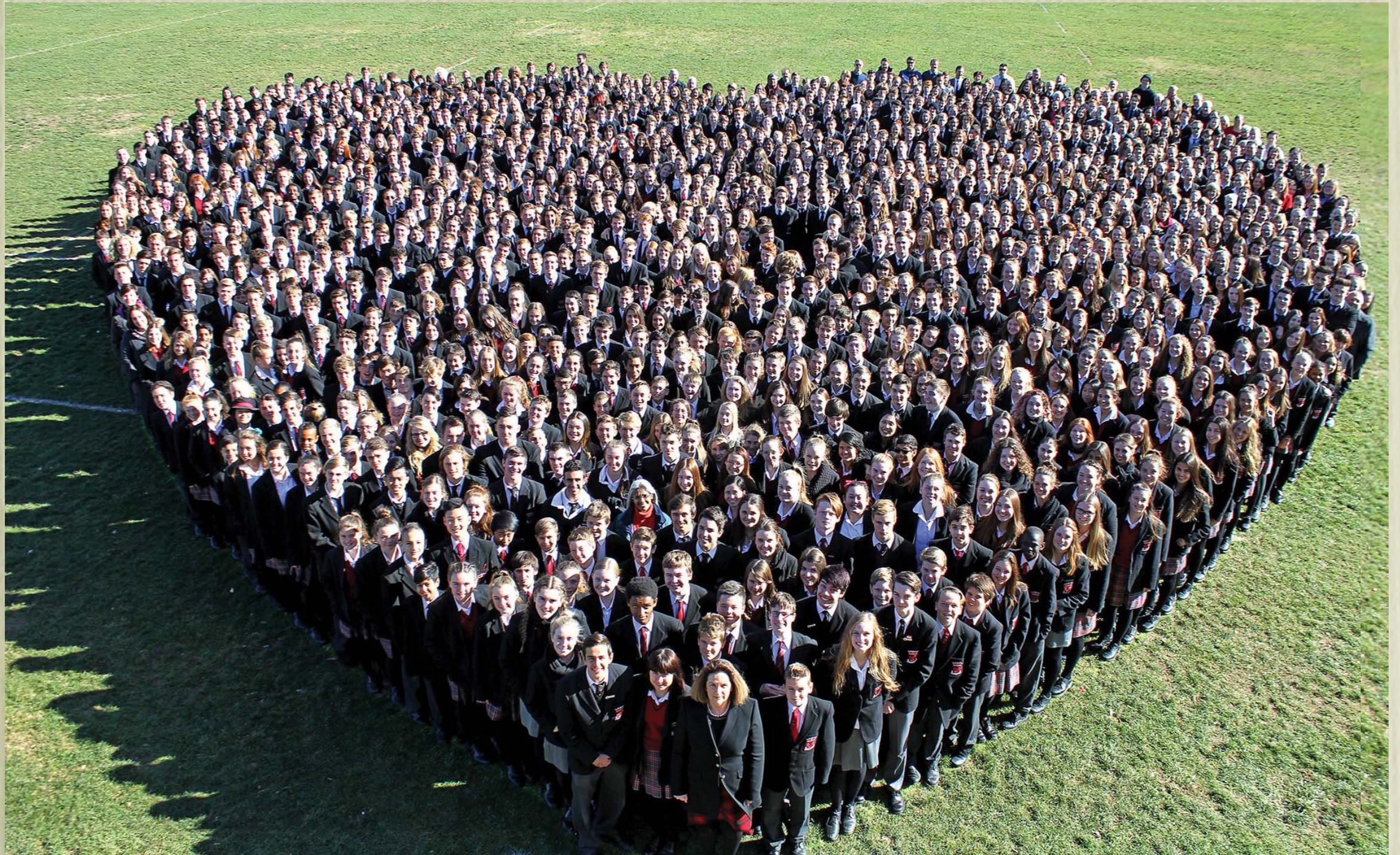
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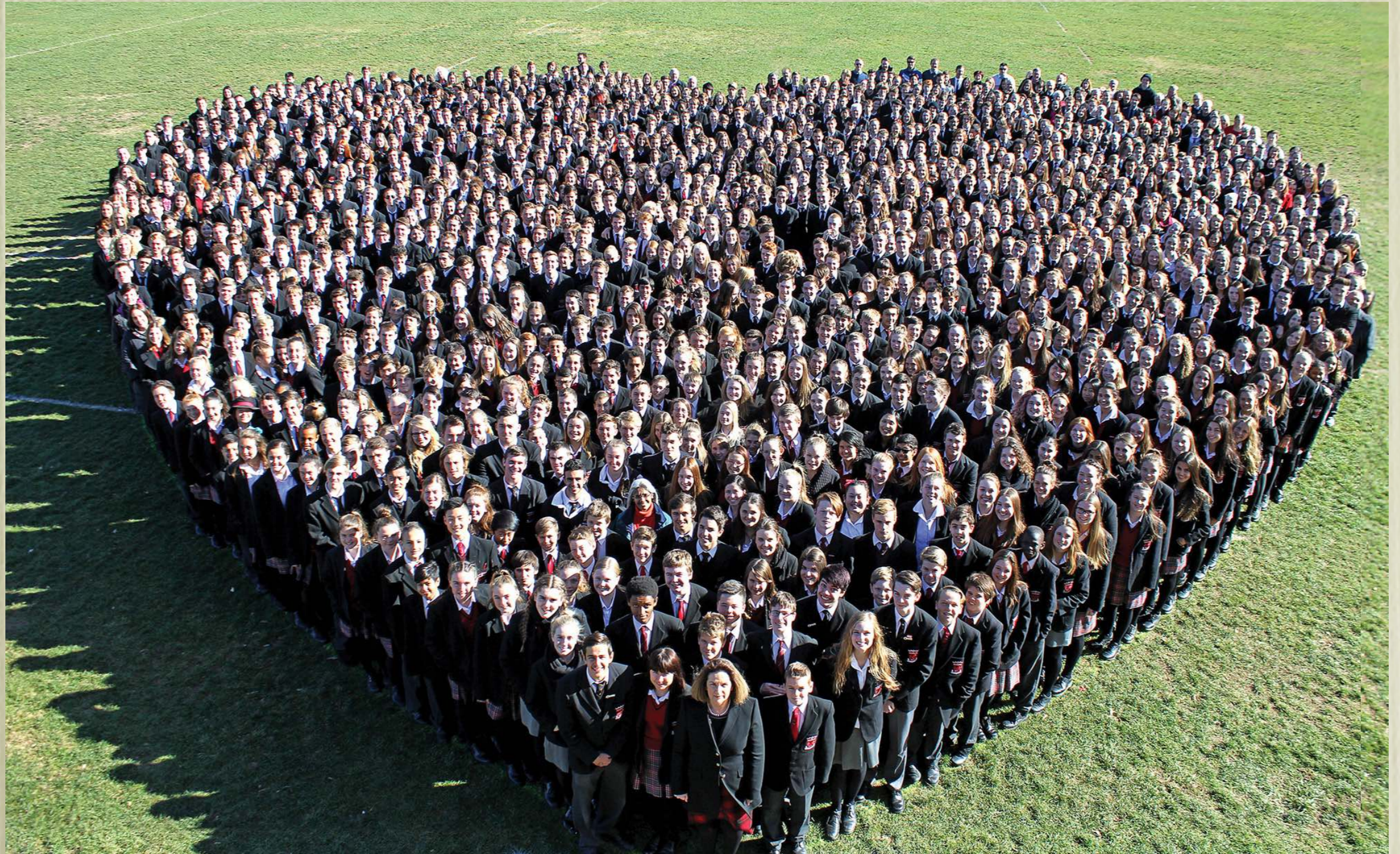
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Living in faith we gather in your name,
Living in hope we learn about our world.
Living in love we reach out to one another.
With our ears and eyes and hands and lips
and minds and hearts, we live the gospel. (2).



Open our ears to hear your voice. Open our eyes to see.
Open our hands to help and to be all that we can be.
Open our lips to speak kind words. open our minds to learn.
Open our hearts to feel your love,
and to love you in return.



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