

## 11

### Holiness

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One of the exciting developments of our time and age within religion in our world is the great interest people show in the person and work of the Holy Spirit. No matter what they call the present time in this century, the “New Age”, or the “Atomic Age”, the Presence of God and the infilling of the Holy Spirit is so relevant for God’s creation today.

We are still reminded of this fact by the hymn writer Lelia N Morris (1862-1929) who wrote: “*Called unto Holiness*”. These wonderful words as a holiness message still ring out to a world that is so troubled with sin and bombarded with the twisted teachings of many today. Young people are searching for something definite and certain. Many are perplexed by the uncertainty and confusion of the present day and age with the low morals and thwarted modesty that is being laughed at. The songwriter stated: “Holiness unto the Lord is our watchword and song, Holiness unto the Lord as we as are marching along. We will sing it, shout it, preach it and live it. Holiness unto the Lord now and forever.”

The subject of holiness is old, but yet ever new. Many writers have written about the doctrine and the wonderful experience it brings to our situation. Our societies can and must be changed and can be as holy as previous generations. God’s provision of salvation and sanctification is still available and sufficient for a change of heart and life for the world today. Holiness is God’s ideal; His moral character is Holy and His requirement for all His creation is “Be holy; because I am holy”(1Peter 1:16). “You are to be holy to me, because I, the Lord, am holy” (Leviticus 20:26). This is how God wants to transform and impart Himself into the lives of men who once were sinful, but have made the commitment of turning back to serve the one who died and gave Himself as a ransom for many. Jesus prayed for mankind and the impartation of God’s Holy character and moral nature to be infused into man’s inner life, “Sanctify them by the truth” (John 17:17).

Holiness is the only message that is relevant for our time. In this 21<sup>st</sup> century, it will turn man back to God from their wicked way of life. Holiness is the fountain of truth, the origin of righteousness, the source of moral standards, and the criteria and standard for the thoughts and actions of man. Holiness is the ideal for God's nature and thus becomes His ideal for the quality of man's moral nature.

### **The Holiness Denomination in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

We live in an age of activism and of challenge where the doors of the future are wide open, beckoning men of vision. Any church is safe in the hands of people who possess a prophetic vision and a historian's wisdom. We must not only look into the future but also be reminded and have a strong appreciation of the foundations laid by our founders. In words of Dr P F Bresee: "The chief aim of the church was to preach holiness to the poor." This fact is evident from every page of the literature published. The very first literature published bore the scripture on the top of the page: "Inasmuch as you have done it to the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me." The founders were convinced that their mission was to go into the poorest areas and neglected places and by the power of the Holy Spirit create centres of fire.

The Holiness Movements in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century inherited from John Wesley, a great man of God, the idea that transforming a society and nurturing a convert is a timeless concept. In the fields of spiritual awakening for a society or spiritual discipline for the believer, Wesleyan history has few peers. Its vitality along the frontiers of a developing nation and its role in the Great Awakening of the 1850's cannot be discounted. Nor can we forget the role it played in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in the rise of the Pentecostal and Evangelical movements to great prominence. Now that we face the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century the Holiness movements and denominations can embrace the importance that we as God's army are marching forward with the strong message of holiness that will change the direction of the Christian faith to its proper course. The time has come for the holiness movement to embrace the tenets of personal and social holiness to make a definite change in our world today. I believe we need to recommit ourselves to the doctrine of holiness, which gives spiritual, aesthetic, and ethical meaning to our movement. What are the practices of commitment in our holiness movement that should be preserved and passed on to the

next generations? The church with the Wesleyan-Holiness Theology has a treasured memory of the past with the opportunity to be a major player in the spiritual history of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### **Africa for Christ**

Africa for Christ, regardless of all its diverse cultural settings, should be our main focus. I can say I am proud to be South African. God gave the Great Commission: “Therefore go and make disciples of **all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20). Take note: “all nations”, of all races, colour, or creed. We may learn a great lesson in our lives and ministry about God’s will for our Church and the message of holiness. Christ said: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). When God calls us to Him He wants all of us. One of the things God needs surrendered to the will and blood of Christ is our culture. Only when the heritage has been redeemed can God give it back to us. Our culture provides a unique way through which God’s Spirit can speak to and through us. We must communicate this fully to our people to make faith meaningful in their lives. We must have greater concentration upon religion itself, namely the resources for spiritual in depth holiness in heart and life. We must get involved in community concerns as this is where our people have to test their faith. We must get our young people into the churches or we will suffer the loss of another generation. We must take a giant leap forward as examples of holy living and sacrificial love in true and honest commitment. Africa can be won with the vision of our leaders impressed upon our minds and lives inspiring us to march forward reaching our generation for Christ in this 21st century.

### **Holiness Our Timeless Legacy for Africa**

The concept of holiness has remained intact through the years. Within the Wesleyan circles the definition of holiness is clear, the doctrine is declared and the demands for holy living are made plain. The world may not understand our terminology and they may deny our theology, but there is no disclaiming holy atmosphere in the church and holy conduct on the streets. It not only has to be preached but it has to be proven. Holiness proclaimed must be holiness in action. Africa needs to see it modelled in our lives and in our actions and we will then win Africa for Christ. We need to be cautioned that the children of this present generation are wise

enough to detect emptiness and hypocrisy, but if we really have what we profess, it will show. People today are not merely interested in words; they are interested in our walk. They want to see holiness in action, holiness translated in our daily living. They want to see the fruit on our trees, not only the leaves. The truly sanctified person shows it, for there is no substitute for holiness in the Church to reach Africa. Jesus told His disciples that they would receive power after that the Holy Spirit had come upon them and they would be His witnesses throughout the world. People wondered at the miraculous outpouring on Pentecost and heard the gospel in their own language, and it still continues today. I believe that no one that is filled with God's Spirit can ever be silent. This is what motivates Nazarenes across the Globe to "*Celebrate Christian Holiness*" and proclaim "*Holiness, our mission to this world*".

The theory is vital, the theology is necessary, and the holiness message in action is still relevant. This message is therefore of utmost necessity in our daily living to win Africa and our present generation.

1. Way, John M. *The High Way: God's Call To Holy Living*
2. Anderson M. *Our Holy Faith*
3. Purkiser, W T. *God's Spirit in Today's World*
5. McKenna, David L. *What A Time To Be Wesleyan*