

European Explorations in Christian Holiness

Issue One

April 1999

Consisting of the Proceedings of the First European Nazarene Theology Conference, 16-19 April 1998, in Büsingen, Germany

“Towards a European Understanding of Holiness”

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The Editor...

The idea of a theology conference for Europe was a long time in coming to pass. As early as 1992, early in my tenure as Dean of ENBC, John Haines and I discovered that we both were thinking about the need for a conference to bring together the growing number of young women and men, educated largely in Nazarene colleges, who were coming into leadership across the Region.

A first foray into bringing this idea to reality took the form of a 'Theology Project' at ENBC, in January of 1994. Members were invited from each continental district to present papers from their own countries with a view to developing a 'Wesleyan Theology for Europe'. Two pastors who contributed to that conference contribute to this issue, now as lecturers at ENBC.

Out of this short conference came a two-fold commitment: firstly, to the church we serve; secondly, to the need for a presentation of Wesleyan and Holiness teaching which is both appropriate to the European context, and which looks forward as well as to the past.

Planning for a full-scale theology conference began immediately. Gordon Thomas, of NTC, took on the responsibility of organiser, bringing it successfully to fulfilment in April, 1998. The articles in this journal consist of the proceedings of that conference. The purpose of this journal is to be a vehicle for European voices, and, hopefully, responses from beyond Europe, East as well as West.

This issue does not tell the whole story of the conference. Space constraints do not allow all the papers to be included. Among those not published at this time are two 'personal views' of holiness, one from British Isles North District Superintendent Colin Wood, the other from Don Mentch, veteran pastor in England. James Paton, pastor in Büsingen and Schaffhausen, addressed the 'Crisis-Process Dialectic in Wesleyan Spirituality'. Frank Carver, recently retired from Point Loma and teaching at ENBC (on St John of the Cross); ENBC Academic Dean Larry Kromer (on Ignatius); and NTC Lecturer in Social Theology Chris Cope (on the Church in Social Transformation) also deserve to be read. On the whole, the conference revealed that European theological thinking is 'coming of age'.

A conference such as this would not have come about without the invaluable support of Dr R Franklin Cook, Eurasia Regional Director, and Dr Jerry Lambert of the International Board of Education – who provided funding both for the conference and for the publication of this inaugural issue of 'European Explorations in Christian Theology'.

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