

# HOLINESS EMBODIED IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC CONTEXT

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## INTRODUCTION

Growing up in the United States, I mistakenly believed that rice, when cooked, should be fine and fluffy. TV commercials tried to sell rice that was guaranteed not to stick together but, rather, would fall apart. Each rice grain would not stick to other rice grains. That is what I was taught rice should be like.

Upon coming to Asia and the Pacific, I have changed my mind. Rice is eaten with chopsticks. Rice should clump together. Each grain should cohere or stick together with other rice grains. How tedious it would be to eat rice one grain at a time!

Post-modernism, Asia-Pacific ways of thought, and a renewed reading of Scripture prompt us to see that the Western over-emphasis upon individuality was a mistake. Revivalism arose in a culture that separated individuals. Our hymns and our preaching reflect this centeredness upon self. Consequently, our church's emphasis has been upon the entire sanctification of individuals alone without, sometimes, balancing that with an equal call to responsible participation within community. Both our context and the Bible call upon us to seek ways by which our call to holiness may be received and embodied collectively. Our personal holiness cannot be conceived apart from what and who we are as one part of a body of believers seeking to find out what it means, in this time and in this place, to be a holiness church.<sup>1</sup>

## SPIRIT AND STRUCTURE

Spirit and structure cannot be separated. While we have existed for 100 years as a holiness denomination, it still must be asked: Have we allowed holiness to seep into every communion and every communication, every statement and every strategy? Or have we simply tacked on to a generically evangelical *ordo salutis* "entire sanctification"? How can we overcome any disunion that might have occurred in our structural development that disconnected perfect love from everything that we do and say?

Part of our Methodist legacy is our strong concern for structure. Within eighteenth century British Methodism, the class and society form of organization suited both the Spirit of renewal and the emerging industrial context. Similarly, Methodism grew tremendously in America in the nineteenth century by having a form of organization that equally fitted frontier expansion, small towns and settled urban communities.

However suitable to the times, church structures are meant to serve the Spirit, and the Spirit must never be forced to serve structures. Nazarene church historian Mendell Taylor believed that whenever a movement began to inhibit the free-flowing river of God's grace, the Spirit opened another channel through which to flood the dry ground. His point was that the Church of the Nazarene was raised up to be such a channel of God's grace, and his implicit question was: Will it ever be? How can we make sure that our structure never inhibits the Spirit?<sup>2</sup>

The Church of the Nazarene remains the institutional organization of a movement. A movement is "a group of people who are organized for, ideologically motivated by and committed to a purpose which implements some form of personal or social change; who are actively engaged in the recruitment of others; and whose influence is spreading in opposition to the established order within which it originated."<sup>3</sup> For holiness people the purpose was the free, unhindered proclamation of entire sanctification, which they saw as effecting both personal and social renewal. The "established order," largely, was Methodism. The

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<sup>1</sup> See *Embodied Holiness: Toward a Corporate Theology of Spiritual Growth*, eds. Samuel M. Powell and Michael E. Lodahl (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999); J. Ayodeji Adewuya, *Holiness and Community in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1: Paul's View of Communal Holiness in the Corinthian Correspondence* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> Mendell Taylor, *Exploring Evangelism* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1964), 7. See also Howard A. Snyder, *The Problem of Wineskins: Church Structure in a Technological Age* (Downer's Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975).

<sup>3</sup> Luther Gerlach and Virginia Hine, *People, Power, Change: Movements of Social Transformation* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970), xvi.

hope of our founders was that by organizing as a church, the holiness movement would gain strength and its distinctive message would be not only retained but propagated more effectively.

Interdenominational groups including the National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness (founded in 1867), commissioned evangelists, published papers, conducted conventions, spawned regional associations, and sponsored local holiness camp meetings. Non-Methodists came into the experience of entire sanctification and enjoyed blessed fellowship at holiness camp meetings. Holiness evangelists and leaders felt that they needed to conserve their converts.<sup>4</sup>

In the 1880s independent holiness congregations arose. Those who joined desired to return to New Testament Christianity. They resented bullying church leaders, and claimed that Christ only is the Head of the church. They championed local congregational autonomy. These "come-outers" had no creeds or written disciplines (except the Bible), and no church membership rolls. They stressed both holiness and unity (insofar as Christians were to come apart from denominations and be joined together in the true church of God). They baptized only adults, and only by immersion. Some practiced foot washing as a sacrament.<sup>5</sup>

In response, the conservative National Camp Meeting Association insisted on denominational loyalty and also banned from active participation any who would emphasize healing or pre-millennialism. Nevertheless, opposition to holiness grew within Methodism among leaders troubled most by the disorder to denominational structure created by the holiness movement. Southern bishops banned unregulated itinerant evangelism in 1894. Methodist theologians, consciously departing from John Wesley, argued against the second-ness of entire sanctification. Bishops ordained ministers who did not testify to entire sanctification, pastors abandoned class meetings, suppressed testimonies to the second crisis experience, and argued that growth into holiness was sufficient and all that could be expected. Laypersons preferred wealth and social prestige. Gradually there was a failure of clear teaching on holiness at the Methodist schools.<sup>6</sup>

The paradox is that out of a doctrine and experience that emphasized perfect love came church schism. But it was understandable that holiness people wanted to be part of a church of born-again believers and Spirit-filled pastors where they might freely testify to being cleansed from all sin. They felt harassed by bishops. They felt that loyalty to the church and its programs was being emphasized more than loyalty to Christ. The perfect love that flowed from them sent them to the poor (both urban and rural), who they felt were being neglected by the older churches. They wanted a church that reflected simple living for plain people. To formality and liturgy, they preferred lively gospel styles of worship and singing. They quickly established schools where their children would be nurtured in the faith.<sup>7</sup>

Holiness people sought to erect an ecclesiastical structure that reflected their aspirations for a "glorious church," and their hopes for a corporate expression of their Spirit-filled lives. Such a church was to project a social witness consumed with optimism in God's grace and power to conquer evil. It was also to be a church unlike the churches they left, where, they felt, the structure of the church itself thwarted the Spirit.<sup>8</sup>

An early conflict between foreign missions secretary Hiram Reynolds and missionary to India M.D. Wood in 1906 clarified the structure of the church's government and the control of missions and churches abroad. Reynolds's position won: we would not seek to be a denomination made up of self-governing and

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<sup>4</sup> *Echoes of the General Holiness Assembly, Chicago May 3-13, 1901*, ed. S. B. Shaw (Reprint, New York: Garland, 1984), 274-275. See Melvin Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, second ed. (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 1996), especially chapters 6-7.

<sup>5</sup> Timothy L. Smith, *Called Unto Holiness: The Story of the Nazarenes: The Formative Years* (Kansas City: NPH, 1962), chapter 2.

<sup>6</sup> Melvin Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, second ed. (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 1996), 250-255; Timothy L. Smith, *Nazarenes and the Wesleyan Mission: Can We Learn from Our History?* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1979).

<sup>7</sup> Dieter, *The Holiness Revival*, 201-205.

<sup>8</sup> For example, see E. M. Isaac in *Herald of Holiness*, April 17, 1912, 5; Phineas Bresee, "Organized Holiness," *Herald of Holiness*, April 17, 1912, 5; [B.F. Haynes], Editorial, *Herald of Holiness*, May 1, 1912, 1, and various articles in the same issue.

autonomous national churches, but, rather, a denomination subject to centralized leadership. Reynolds believed that there was one way to preach holiness and one way by which holiness would be manifest, irrespective of cultures. The expected signs, however, emerged directly from Western, especially American, individualism. As structure dominated over spirit, the church lost the freedom to make the message of holiness culturally meaningful.<sup>9</sup>

Both Phineas Bresee and Reynolds, our first two general superintendents, were committed to evangelism, and both saw the necessity of schools and hospitals on mission fields—though from different perspectives. Bresee and Reynolds represented the subtle tensions within the holiness movement between sectarian and churchly tendencies. Reynolds represented more attention to structure and power, Bresee, more freedom in the Spirit and purity.

When the church emphasized empowerment with the Holy Spirit, the passion to win souls by whatever means possible was intense. Reynolds highly valued efficiency and accountability. Means of advancing the gospel were not only revivals, but compassionate deeds. Ours was the same gospel story as presented by other evangelicals. Nazarenes simply added entire sanctification to the order of salvation. There was room, in this paradigm, for cooperation with other denominations.

When the church emphasized purity, the mission focused on establishing places where perfect love was manifest among the marginalized. Bresee wanted “centers of holy fire” established in cities. The Spirit welcomed spontaneity and compassionate works. Other churches needed this purity, leaders such as Bresee felt, and the Church of the Nazarene was raised up in some way to motivate other Christians to pursue holiness, or, in other words, to “Christianize Christianity.”

The Church of the Nazarene was not so much the result of a movement of individuals as a movement of congregations and associations. We were founded upon the principles of collectivity, cooperation and community. We were not content with the notion that the “Church,” properly conceived, could remain local or regional. To be the Church we must transcend the barriers that separate human beings from each other. At the time of Pilot Point, the Church of the Nazarene was international, including congregations with like-minded aspirations in India, Cape Verde, Mexico and Japan.

Since it was Reynolds rather than Bresee who oversaw missions, Reynolds’s personality and ideas shaped the larger church. Reynolds expected respect for the authority of the church and its leaders. He fretted whenever missionaries became too independent. Even reported revivals in India and China worried Reynolds, who wanted guarantees that the movement of the Spirit fit Nazarene patterns. In Japan he preferred safe and loyally conservative William Eckel to the fiery church-planting evangelist Minnie Staples. Reynolds’s emphasis upon conformity to structure was passed on to local churches.

In theory, Nazarene missionaries imbibed the “three-selves” missions mantra of self-propagation, self-support and self-government. When mission fields reached the three-selves goals, at least in principle, the mission would desist and the local districts would stand on their own. Not only were these established missiological principles, and ones evident in early as well as later Nazarene missions policies, but they were ones in accord with Anglo-American virtues of independency, hard-work and self-determination as well as the mission theories of Rufus Anderson, Henry Venn and J. Hudson Taylor. Asking when these goals had been reached, the answer seemed always to be “not yet.”

Self-support was measurable, but with expanding districts, schools, literature development, and other concerns, elusive. The missionaries’ goals were not self-perpetuation, either by policy or by conscious inclination. But the longer a mission remained in a country the more institutionalized it became, and the less likely that missionaries would leave and local leaders take over.

Beneath the surface of the “not yet” answer were missionaries who considered themselves at home in foreign cultures and strangers in their own lands. Furthermore, missionaries demanded in some cases a spiritual and emotional maturity greater than what they themselves exhibited to each other, or what was true in their own countries. As long as missionaries remained they were perceived to be in positions of authority.

In regard to self-government, due to the centralized nature of Nazarene polity, the commitment of the

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<sup>9</sup> Floyd Cunningham, *Holiness Abroad: Nazarene Missions in Asia* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2003), chs. 1-2.

church toward developing fully self-governing bodies, in the sense that Venn, Anderson and Taylor meant it, was partial. Unlike Baptists and other congregationally oriented denominations and faith missions, Nazarenes retained a structure that kept churches around the world tied together. Nazarene polity kept the quadrennial General Assembly at the pinnacle of its democratic processes. Assembly delegates, elected by districts, in principle represented all of the geographic areas of the church. Local groups of believers either at home or abroad were not fully independent, but, rather, bound to the General Assembly, the districts, the General Superintendents, and the *Manual*. Although Methodists and Anglicans were similarly governed, unlike them Nazarene missionaries did *not* go with the goal of establishing national and autonomous bodies. More like the Roman Catholics, Nazarenes aimed to remain one organic whole, governed from a central headquarters. The Nazarene church composed itself of districts spread around the world, rather than national churches. Various Nazarenes chafed under this, because it seemed only to perpetuate North American domination.<sup>10</sup>

To make a comparison, Nazarene polity more closely resembled French than British imperial philosophies. The French saw their colonial holdings as overseas departments or extensions of France itself. The National Assembly included representation from the colonies. The British system, by contrast, was more flexible, allowing adaptations of its codes and precedents based on local situations. The goal was home rule. British colonies could become autonomous members of the Commonwealth.

Like the French, Nazarenes were “assimilationists” rather than contextualists about the extension of their holiness language and code of behavior. Like them, Nazarenes envisioned a centralized, representative world government. The Church of the Nazarene maintained one constitution and set of rules for all. They were not aiming for “home rule” for any segment of the church. Theoretically, all Nazarenes were equal. They were equally capable of the same spiritual and moral attainments. But, as it was for the French, for Nazarenes, the globalization of leadership was slow to actually take place.<sup>11</sup>

Both French and Nazarene colonialism replaced indigenous customs with ones thought to be nobler. The customs of Nazarenes were incorporated in the holiness code contained in its *Manual*, and passed on through missionaries, leaders and pastors to local members. If colonialism introduced people to a new language, for the Church of the Nazarene it was the language of second blessing holiness. Its terms, phrases, and ways of interpreting the Bible are transmitted in other tongues, but the theology or worldview of the church was supposed to be the same everywhere. Along with church structure and behavioral boundaries, missionaries translated holiness books into local languages, with no attempt at contextualization. There was no doubt among Nazarenes at home and abroad that “we,” defined by a common theology as well as experience and morality, could be universalized. Leaders assumed this to be self-evident. Nazarenes were a people of one code that leaders believed was suitable for all cultures.<sup>12</sup>

Great idealism under girds this mission. Is a global holiness church too much to aspire toward? If we can talk about systemic evil, may we begin to be so radical as to talk about systemic holiness? Reinhold Niebuhr had little faith in either individuals or society to be wholly saved. If persons were sinners, Niebuhr argued, societies only compounded sinfulness. But perfectionists never agreed with this neo-orthodox

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<sup>10</sup> See Jerald Johnson, *The International Experience* (Kansas City: NPH, 1982); Paul Orjala, “Communicating to Ourselves as Nazarenes about the Nature, Need and Future of Internationalization,” (outline) presented to Internationalization Commission, February 13-14, 1987. The Nazarene structure is noted by Ralph D. Winter, “Protestant Mission Societies and the ‘Other Protestant Schism’,” in *American Denominational Organization: A Sociological View*, ed. Ross P. Scherer (Pasadena: William Carey, 1980), 211. For the context of this issue in missions theory see Charles Forman, “A History of Foreign Mission Theory in America,” in *American Missions in Bicentennial Perspective*, ed. R. Pierce Beaver (Pasadena, CA: William Carey, 1977), 69-140; William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1987), 77-90, 112-118; and Charles E. Van Engen, “A Broadening Vision: Forty Years of Evangelical Theology of Mission, 1946-1986,” in *Earthen Vessels: American Evangelicals and Foreign Missions, 1880-1980*, eds. Joel Carpenter and Wilbert R. Shenk (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 203-232.

<sup>11</sup> See Winfried Baumgart, *Imperialism: The Idea and Reality of British and French Colonial Expansion, 1880-1914*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 1982), 1-3, 14-17, 51-57, 180-181; Raymond F. Betts, *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory, 1890-1914* (New York: Columbia U. Press, 1961), 8-9, chs. 2, 6 and 9; Jo W. Saxe, “Dilemmas of Empire: The British and French Experience,” in *The Idea of Colonialism*, eds. Robert Strausz-Hupe and Harry W. Hazard (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958), 50-57, 65-67.

<sup>12</sup> The preceding paragraphs are from Cunningham, *Holiness Abroad*, 275-277.

description of the human predicament. We Wesleyans are optimists not about ourselves but about our God and his power to save us to the uttermost and sanctify us through and through. If the church be the church, we may expect it to reflect the image of God in its body, in its corporate structure and in its organic life.<sup>13</sup>

## THE MYTH OF PERSONAL/SPIRITUAL HOLINESS

Holiness was not intended to be solitary. A solitary walk with Jesus, a "Jesus and me" faith, is antithetical to holiness. Anyone who feels he or she has "arrived" once entirely sanctified, and no longer has responsibility toward others has yet to be filled with perfect love. A person who is only concerned about himself or herself getting to heaven is still self-centered and ego-centric. It is smugness that leads us to be satisfied with personal rather than social or communal salvation. I should not and were I an Asian or Pacific Islander, could not think of my salvation and myself apart from my family, my clan, my tribe, my people. Long-term Nazarene missionary Neville Bartle observes: "Because of the intense individualism of Western society, holiness has often been thought of as internal, personal, and to a large extent, private. The concept of separation from the world has also encouraged isolated personal holiness." This model does not fit the Bible any more than it does Asia-Pacific cultures. Bartle comments: "Instead of thinking about the implications of being a 'child of God,' we need to think more about the social implications of being the 'people of God' in a more collective sense."<sup>14</sup>

The Bible sustains a careful connection that we often do not between our calling as individual Christians and our life together. When God redeems us he does it within community and through community, and sets us in community – never alone. He redeems us as the Triune God, in himself being essential relatedness and personhood.<sup>15</sup>

The Bible does not make the clear distinction that we sometimes make between body, soul and spirit. Inspired writers were indebted to Hebrew psychology in which these were inseparable parts of one whole being. One of our problems is in addressing one part of human life without paying attention to the whole. The synthesis of social compassion and personal evangelism of the nineteenth century broke down among evangelicals, including Nazarenes, during the Modernist-Fundamentalist debates of the 1920s. Methodists tended to emphasize asocial concerns, we, personal perfection.<sup>16</sup>

During the 1970s, the Roman Catholics in Latin America became intensely political, and emphasized liberation from economic and social oppression. Meanwhile, by the tens of thousands, Roman Catholics left the church to join evangelicals and Pentecostals, who did not forget their spiritual needs while also showing immense concern for political and social realities.<sup>17</sup>

As holiness people, often we have attended to physical or bodily needs as well as spiritual ones. The hospital we had in Daming, and the one we maintain in Kudjip testify to this. We aim, in Papua New Guinea, for community-based health care. Because we want to prevent disease in individuals, we must deal with corporate or communal behavior. To say that holiness must be embodied is to say not only that it must compassionately reach out toward others' physical needs, but also that the church as a body must live out in deeds of compassion and righteousness the fruit of the Spirit. Emanating from holiness communi-

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. Donald Meyer, *The Protestant Search for Political Realism, 1919-1941* (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1960), ch. 9.

<sup>14</sup> Neville Bartle, "Culture and the Beauty of Holiness: Reflections from the South Pacific," in *The Challenge of Culture: Articulating and Proclaiming the Wesleyan-Holiness Message in the Asia Pacific Region: Papers Presented at the Asia-Pacific Region 2001 Theology Conference*, ed. David Ackerman (Taytay, Rizal, Philippines: Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, 2002), 106.

<sup>15</sup> See David McEwan, "Being Holy is Being Christlike: To What Extent is this a Definable and Useful Model in an Australian Context?" in *The Challenge of Culture*, 65-82, especially 77-79.

<sup>16</sup> David O. Moberg, *The Great Reversal: Evangelism and Social Concern* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1972); Jean Miller Schmidt, "Reexamining the Public/Private Split: Reforming the Continent and Spreading Scriptural Holiness," in *Rethinking Methodist History: A Bicentennial Historical Consultation*, eds. Russell E. Richey and Kenneth Rowe (Nashville: Kingswood, 1985), 75-80.

<sup>17</sup> David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), especially chapter 12.

ties, we expect to see the Spirit of Christ, with all of his mercy, love, peace, joy and forgiveness. Our holiness must be a community-embodied holiness.

We must preach an embodied holiness because of our understanding of creation, the incarnation and salvation. We teach that God himself through his Word created the world, and did not entrust this task to any lesser being. If Jesus were fully incarnated as we proclaim, he was fully embodied—no phantom, but made up of the same flesh and blood as you and I. In all points, he was tempted like we are, yet, and this is our hope, he remained without sin. We preach a full salvation: that we may be sanctified through and through, and that our whole spirit, soul *and* body may be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We see among the Hebrew people, and among the early church a deep sense of corporate embodiedness. One great text from which to preach holiness in the Asia-Pacific context is Ezekiel 36. This is because it deals with shame, as Asia-Pacific cultures do, as the motivating factor bringing us to heart purity. In order not to shame the name that we corporately bear, each one of us personally as individual members of one body, and we as the body itself, must not live like those around us. We must, by how we live our lives, bring glory and honor, rather than shame to God. The only way we can bring glory to the name we collectively bear, is to be purified by his Spirit – to have hearts of stone replaced by hearts of flesh, and to have the law written within. As parts of his body, it is incumbent upon all of us to seek this cleansing. We may hope and pray that as the high priest sprinkled the people to cleanse them from outward sin, the Spirit might be outpoured upon us all together.<sup>18</sup>

The church at Corinth evidenced God's saving grace to all, irregardless of ethnic or religious background. Embodied holiness became an issue in relation to meat offered to idols. There was a faction in the church that was theologically right, and morally wrong. The converts from paganism were hurt by their brothers: meat consecrated to idols was too much a reminder of their old ways of living and worshipping at the temples—they had given up such ways of life. Some Christian converts had no such prejudices and advocated unrestricted consumption of meat offered to idols. All things are created good, they rightly argued. Food does not change our relation to God one way or the other. Let us find the correct theology of meat offered to idols and act on it, was their way of thinking. They began with intellect and determined conduct and ethics by it—a false starting place, Paul says, based on pride and arrogance (4:19). Those who ate the meat were correct in their theological and religious understanding of meat; right in head, yet so absolutely wrong in their practice.

Eating meat is an *amoral* circumstance theologically. It is not a great Christological issue like Paul had to address in other churches. Meat eating (or not) is not one of the "essentials": there are some things worth fighting for, but this is not one. But the roughshod use of legitimate liberty became a stumbling block.

Meat eating became *immoral* because it broke personal relationships. True knowledge does not boast. True knowledge realizes its own inadequacies. Holiness is living for others. If my eating meat disrupts my relationship with fellow Christians or causes anyone to fall, I will never eat meat again! (8:13). What I do must be based on my love for and need for the Christian community that spiritually nourishes me. I need the community of those baptized with Christ to give me my moral bearings. By myself I cannot determine the way God requires. I am too prone to rationalizing. For the sake of the community, I must subordinate my individual "rights." Freedom, writes one commentator upon this passage, "is not a liberation from the restraints of interpersonal relationships."<sup>19</sup>

Our aim is building up with love. Paul grounds holiness ethics not upon knowledge, but upon *love*, which the Corinthians neglected.

The point of this episode in the Corinthian church is not about eating meat, it is about living together as the people of God. It is about being humble and gentle, patient, bearing with one another. Holiness is about making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. Holiness is about

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<sup>18</sup> Compare Jason Hallig, "Communicating Holiness to the Filipinos: Challenges and Needs: The Path to a Filipino Theology of Holiness," in *The Challenge of Culture*, 84-86.

<sup>19</sup> Wendell Lee Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth: The Pauline Argument in I Corinthians 8 and 10* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 115. See also Adewuya, *Holiness and Community*, the basis of which is a doctoral dissertation completed under the direction of Kent Brower at Manchester University, 183-186.

being one body in one Spirit. Holiness is about allowing the one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, the one God and Father of us all, who is over all and through all and in all, to bind us together inseparably as one. The world is too needy of Christ for it to be any otherwise among us.

Just so, Paul implores the Roman brothers and sisters to present their bodies as living sacrifices, which is their spiritual worship. Romans 12: 1-2 speaks of transformity in contrast to conformity. We are not to be conformed to the idols of the world surrounding us. Not to be conformed in Paul's day meant not to worship the emperor and the gods. In those days, to not conform might very well mean death.

Conformity brings comfort to many. The goal is to find out what other people are doing, or saying, what they are buying, what they are wearing—and do the same. To be a man in barrio contexts, is to drink with the other men, to gamble on cards and cockfights, and to cheat on one's wife. To do differently, to stand out, brings accusations of being under the *saya* or attached to the wife's apron strings. In this case, to be responsible for one's family is out of conformity to the norm. It requires transformation, a renewing of one's mind, to stand up against peer pressure, and to say NO to the world. It takes a decisive, courageous act of consecration to God, regardless of the opinions of the world.

In some ways, Westerners are good at non-conformity. They can be rugged cowboy individualists. The problem with the Westerners' view of holiness, many times, is that they do not read past Romans 12:2 to the remaining part of the chapter. When Paul says, "present your bodies" he is pleading for the corporate obedience of the church. "Bodies" is plural. The community, not an individual, is to be the "living sacrifice" (singular) to be transformed. We are transformed as we participate in this collective, counter-cultural corporate "body" that Paul continues to describe in the remaining verses of this chapter.<sup>20</sup>

It seems as though E. Stanley Jones read the whole of Romans 12. As a youth growing up in a Methodist church that still had class meetings, he had seen the helpfulness to spiritual nurture of small groups and mutual caring. The class meetings inspired him to set up a Christian ashram in India.<sup>21</sup>

The point is, we cannot really be holy apart from being in right relationship with our brothers and sisters in Christian community. "Embodied" holiness means worship that is holistic rather than divided between mind and body. We present our bodies collectively, which is to say, our whole, undivided selves as a spiritual worship, so that God through Christ may sanctify us corporately through and through: spirit, soul and body. We can mark this in how we worship. The Koreans' way of swaying when they pray is very similar to the Jewish and Eastern Orthodox way of praying with the whole self. Worship that includes collective praying and reading the Scripture, kneeling, standing, clapping, walking forward to receive communion, and singing helps the worshipper to incorporate the whole self, body as well as mind, in the process of worship.

Spiritual gifts, as described in Romans 12, are for the community, and are to edify it. They are not intended to bring us as individuals closer to God. That is not their purpose. If gifts exalt self or tear persons away from the community they are not gifts of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, Nazarenes reject tongues as practiced by many Pentecostals because tongues practiced "vertically" only accentuates the self in relation to God rather than the self within the context of the community of God. Languages, on the other hand, reach out horizontally, strengthen the community inwardly, manifest the Kingdom, and extend the Kingdom outwardly.

Romans 12: 9 explains precisely the nature of our transformed selves: our "love must be sincere." William Greathouse comments on Romans 12: 9: "Sanctification is not getting on one's horse and riding off like the Lone Ranger in one's endeavor to be holy! No, sanctification is living out the love of the Spirit *within community*."<sup>22</sup> The word for love here in this verse, as you would expect, is *agape*. The manifestation of it is to hate what is evil, and cling to what is good, to be devoted—not to ourselves, not to our own agenda, not to seeing that "my" will and "my" way is done—but to be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Love makes a difference in how we communicate. *Agape* love honors others above ourselves, pushing up that big chair for little nobody others to sit in, or choosing the chair with its back to

<sup>20</sup> Adewuya, *Holiness and Community*, 169, drawing upon Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996), 196-197.

<sup>21</sup> E. Stanley Jones, *A Song of Ascents: A Spiritual Autobiography* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), 42.

<sup>22</sup> Greathouse, *Wholeness in Christ: Toward a Biblical Theology of Holiness* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1998), 125.

the door, and never claiming esteemed positions for ourselves, no matter who we are or what kind of place or power we have. Love is not proud. It is willing to associate with people of low position. In this world, the way to get ahead is to make friends with people who are in a higher position or who have a higher status than themselves. We use people to accomplish our own goals. Love is the opposite. Love casts out conceit. Love seeks out the oppressed, the scorned, the marginalized, and the forgotten. Love defeats the twin enemies of egocentricity and ethnocentricity. Love is the bond among us that enables us to live in harmony.

This should characterize us as Christians in the world and, in a real sense, this is the mission of the Church of the Nazarene and other holiness churches in the world: to go to the neglected people and remote quarters of the world and irregardless of race and ethnicity establish centers of holy fire among the poor. We are called to go to the despised of this world – victims of AIDS, street children, the physically disadvantaged – ones that no one else will sit beside, and embrace them with the love of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul writes in Romans 12:18, “as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.” It means, the only attitudes and emotions we can control, and should seek to control, are our own. Yet we find, marvelously, that when we are changed, when our attitudes are transformed. It changes others.

Through sanctifying grace we *can* take the high road. We can bear suffering, if need be, without inflicting it on others. We do not have to win. We serve Christ. If we treat *well* those who treat us badly, we shame them. “Treat your enemy kindly, for this may make him ashamed and lead to his repentance.”

This amazing love that flows out of our transformed lives allows us to return good for evil, and to bless those who persecute us. Love allows us to push our self-centered feelings and emotions aside, to not feel envious, jealous or threatened by others. Love enables us to achieve self-efficacy. It enables us to rejoice with those who rejoice because we are genuinely, deep down, really glad for them. Love enables us to feel others’ pain. If evil is the lack of empathy, holiness, the opposite, enables us to mourn with those who mourn. Love makes a difference.

Early in the history of the Christian church, fanatic monks such as Anthony left the cities for the desert and lived solitary lives—praying and fighting demons. Later, after Emperor Constantine granted the church toleration, some Christians interested in pursuing holiness erected monasteries. Unlike the earlier Egyptian monks, leaders such as Basil (330-379), after living as a hermit, concluded that communal life was a better way. Basil founded a monastic community at Caesarea that became a model for other monasteries. During this time he developed a “Rule” to organize monastic life. To Basil, monasticism was a means of service to God, and was achieved in community under obedience. The Rule stipulated hours of prayer, manual labor, and disciplines. It imposed poverty and chastity. Monks cared for the poor. The monks, Basil believed, living together, formed a spiritual family. Monastic communities were based on the social nature of human beings. Whereas the solitary life of a hermit benefited one individual, communal life reflected love and charity for others. In community we perfect ourselves in the fruits of the spirit and the qualities of Christlikeness. As we live and work with others, our rough edges, the difficult, prickly and obnoxious points in our lives, become more obvious than if we lived alone. Solitary monastic life offered no opportunity to reflect Christian virtues. “If you live alone,” Basil asked, “whose feet will you wash?”<sup>23</sup>

Medievalist Collin Morris traces the “discovery of individuality” in Western culture to the rise of humanism in the years between 1050 and 1200. Western culture, Morris argues, “developed this sense of individuality to an extent exceptional among the civilizations of the world.”<sup>24</sup> The ancient world lacked a word for “person,” or what it implies, “a clear distinction between my being, and that of other people.”<sup>25</sup> With this in mind, Morris notes that the New Testament never stressed individuals without also showing the corporate boundaries in which they lived.<sup>26</sup>

Among Protestants, the Anabaptists were personal in their belief, but at the same time intensely corporate in their witness. Note Mennonites today. Not only are they a tightly knit community, but they are

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<sup>23</sup> Quoted in C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism: Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages*, second ed. (London: Longman, 1989), 10.

<sup>24</sup> Collin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual 1050-1200* (Reprint, Toronto: U. of Toronto Press, 1987), 1.

<sup>25</sup> Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual*, 3.

<sup>26</sup> Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual*, 10-13.



known as a people with a particular calling or mission in the world, to live peaceable lives and demonstrate charity.

Timothy Smith convinced a generation of Nazarenes that “the nineteenth-century quest for holiness was turned into avenues of service, instead of the byways of mystic contemplation.”<sup>27</sup> Later Smith commented: “Evidence has multiplied that holiness preaching was from Francis Asbury and time onward an important catalyst to Methodist participation in American movement for social justice.”<sup>28</sup> Holiness impelled our forefathers and foremothers to active involvement in their societies, as they took leadership in anti-slavery campaigns and in movements to grant preaching rights to women, and prohibit the buying and selling of alcohol. In the late nineteenth century they built orphanages and homes for unwed mothers, and conducted storefront rescue missions for the homeless and poor. Holiness compelled embodied involvement in the course of human affairs.

Perhaps each denomination has its own essential reason to be, some aspect of the whole gospel that God intends for it to accentuate. The Church of the Nazarene, I believe, has to a remarkable extent, across four generations, sustained its sense of mission to spread the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification and to nearly every country in the world. Yet we expressed that mission differently in each generation, and from place to place.

The first generation of Nazarenes (to 1915) still had the elements of a movement about it. At the time of the birth of the Church of the Nazarene, wrote Timothy Smith, “Graying divines cherished still the dream of an interdenominational crusade for a national Pentecost.”<sup>29</sup> We desired to maintain the best elements of the undenominational character of the holiness groups that merged together. There was a sense of the freedom of the Spirit to boldly try new things and enter new places. The desire was to seek the glory of God among his people in worship. At the same time, our forefathers and foremothers expressed their corporate holiness through their unwillingness to bow toward the evils prevailing in their cultures. The Association of Pentecostal Churches of America in the East protested the behavior of American army soldiers stationed in the Philippines during the turn of the century war between the United States and the Philippines.<sup>30</sup>

In 1907, at the height of the Jim Crow laws in the American South that segregated and subjugated African Americans, the Holiness Association of Texas passed a resolution on “The Race Problem.” The members resolved: “With humiliation we confess that we and our fathers, of the white race, of this country, have not done near as much as we might have done toward the well-being and advancement of the colored race and are willing to take our part of the blame for the unneighborly and unbrotherly feeling which has sprung up and seems to be growing every day.” The white race, the “stronger” race, ought, said the Association members, to take the initiative in “correcting the wrong, and effecting a reconciliation, and if we have the spirit of Christ, to accomplish this, we will be willing even to yield up some of our rights and preferences, to suffer wrong rather than do wrong.” White employers, said the Association, should take opportunities, “when practical,” to worship with African Americans at their “family altars.” Evangelists should seek opportunities to preach to them, and attend the worship services of Negroes, and “manifest otherwise their interest in their souls’ welfare.” The Association’s white preachers should speak out publicly and privately against the crime that is often committed by “colored” men against womanhood and advocate a speedy trial—and at the same time should denounce mob action as “both criminal and inefficient.” The Association pledged its support to any who might feel a special call to labor among the “colored” people.<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile, Phineas Bresee’s work was unconcerned about maintaining or catering to one strata of society. “Christian life,” said Bresee, “is ethical, personal, social, financial and political.”<sup>32</sup> His congregation,

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<sup>27</sup> Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War* (Reprint, New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 175-176.

<sup>28</sup> Smith, “Introduction,” to Charles Finney, *The Promise of the Spirit*, ed. Timothy L. Smith (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1980), 13.

<sup>29</sup> Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 12.

<sup>30</sup> *Association of Pentecostal Churches of America Minutes of the Sixth Annual Meeting* (Providence, RI: Pentecostal Printing Company, 1901), 45-46.

<sup>31</sup> *Holiness Association Year Book 1906-1907* (N.p., [1907]), 67-69.

<sup>32</sup> *Sermons of Isaiah* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1926), 162.

as Carl Bangs depicts it, was diverse, including the very poor and the very rich. Yet, said Bresee, "I would rather have the thousands of the poor coming around the cross than to have all of the gold of the rich."<sup>33</sup> Quickly, the church established missions among the Spanish-speaking people and Chinese of Los Angeles. From the beginning, it allowed women full rights of ministry.<sup>34</sup>

In this first generation we grew by accessioning associations of holiness impassioned people.

The lasting image in the minds of the first generation was Pilot Point, a great melting point of East and West, North and South. The "dividing lines," the "barriers" were destroyed in our effort to preach the sanctifying grace of Christ. We could do this better in communion with a connected body of like believers rather than in local congregations. We committed ourselves to the prohibition movement, to the cities, to the poor, to marginalized people such as unwed mothers, and to women in general.

The second generation (1915-1945) was less empathetic and less bold, in a sense, suspecting that the Spirit needed taming through denominational structures. Sectarianism, evidenced by the number of songs by Haldor Lillenas that we sang, that were peculiar to us, grew alongside legalism. To keep the Spirit in the church, it seemed necessary to keep up the tempo, as Timothy Smith remarked.<sup>35</sup> We leaned toward Pelagianism, emphasizing free will more than free grace. We added rules. At the same time, as we could, we began moving out of the inner cities into the suburbs, and concentrated our efforts on building colleges that could affordably educate our children in an atmosphere of disciplined and character-building holiness. Our conception of holiness became more individualistic. As we added to the list of "do nots," the implication was that holiness was related more to laws than to love. If one could testify to a second crisis, and if one lived by the letter of the *Manual*, one was "holy." In this sense one could be holy alone apart from right relationships with neighbors. The second generation conceived of Christ and society as being directly antithetical and erected walls separating Christ from culture. We possessed little sense, for instance, that holiness should impel us toward even empathy for the plight of American Negroes. Our record of race relations in the United States was dismal during these years and we have not yet recovered from it.

While attempting to preach holiness abroad, missionaries themselves sometimes fell far short of the ideal. Usually it was in subtle ways – in struggles for domination and control and in the breakdown of interpersonal relations among themselves. There was an obvious credibility gap if one professed holiness and lived in estrangement from fellow Christians. In Japan failure of William Eckel and Minnie Staples to work together split the church for decades, long after both of these leaders retired. The emphasis on personal or individual conscience allowed reverence toward the shrines when militarism arose in the country. "The church," Manabu Ishida comments, "taught that Christian faith was to do only with individual and spiritual matters. It made possible for the Japanese Christian to consider themselves faithful Christians while supporting the military government and its colonialism."<sup>36</sup>

In China, General Superintendent Chapman separated two squabbling missionaries from the central mission station in Damingfu to opposite ends of the field.<sup>37</sup> In India, immediately following the Second World War, raw, green missionaries with little sensitivity toward history, politics or culture took over key leadership positions from Indians who had ably led the church during the war.<sup>38</sup> To peoples that highly respect humility and smooth interpersonal relations, what did this communicate about the nature of holiness? Could they "tell it well" without also living it well? The marvel is that God was and is able to build strong churches on the basis of human frailty and weakness.

Among the morals of the story, I suppose, is the importance of harmonious, positive and right relationships. The holiness message was weakened most, it seems, by the failure to get along well with others,

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<sup>33</sup> *Sermons from Matthew's Gospel* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, n.d.), 96.

<sup>34</sup> Carl Bangs, *Phineas F. Bresee: His Life in Methodism, the Holiness Movement, and the Church of the Nazarene* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1995), 187-188, 200, 218, 227.

<sup>35</sup> Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 296.

<sup>36</sup> Manabu Ishida, "The Scriptures as the Book of Sacred Drama of God's Holy People: Interpreting the Scriptures in Japanese Context," paper presented at the Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theology Conference, 2003. See J. G. Morrison to C. W. Jones, April 20, 1939 (Nazarene Archives, file 540-25).

<sup>37</sup> Cunningham, *Holiness Abroad*, 164.

<sup>38</sup> Cunningham, *Holiness Abroad*, 79.

and the hesitancy of missionaries to back away from positions of dominance. Both of those problems are holiness-of-heart problems. More than we probably realize, our communicating and modeling of encouragement and enablement affects our holiness identity and character at all levels.

One way of putting the problem, as Professor Chun Kwang Don does in a recent paper, is that we possessed an “apathetic” God, removed from and unmoved by human suffering. If God himself was unable to be touched by our infirmities, we could hardly expect ourselves to care for others’ suffering. Or, at most, we might sympathize from a distance. A more adequate understanding of God as one who empathizes with us, Chun says, leads us toward a clearer understanding of what it means to be “holy” as our heavenly Father is holy: it is to be loving, merciful and empathetic. Westerners, I fear, have transmitted an apathetic conception of God and holiness that separates spiritual life from relationships to others.<sup>39</sup>

Another way of putting the problem is to say that we placed the “circumstance” of holiness above the “content” of holiness. A person’s testimony to a second blessing, to the time and place when and where he or she had been entirely sanctified, mattered more than love. For those who could so testify, what could we say if they were racists or acted unkindly toward their spouses or children, or brothers and sisters in Christ? In some cases, we became known as a judgmental, scolding, nagging people who concentrated our attention on external righteousness, rather than on the charity and grace that allowed us to distinguish between essentials and non-essentials. Sometimes we failed to show care, respect, compassion, forgiveness, and redemptive love. Perfect love, comments Samoan Peniperite Fakaua, “is a universal language, it is a family language, and it is a term of relationship.”<sup>40</sup>

### THE PROMISE OF COMMUNAL/EMBODIED HOLINESS

Holiness should never have been separated from community. The Bible does not—in either the Old Testament or New Testament, nor does John Wesley.

The mobilization of the church as a force for social change flowed out of Wesley’s theology of embodied or social holiness. When challenged on what he meant by Christian perfection, Wesley recalled the words of Jesus. It is loving “the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27). Holiness was not for Wesley passive, but active, full of the “work” of faith, the patience of hope, the labor of love. Christian perfection was doing the will of God on earth as it was in heaven, and human beings accomplished this by grace-enabled love.<sup>41</sup>

“Deeds of mercy” did not, for Wesley, flow out of duty. “Deeds of mercy” were gracious means through which persons became the Christlike individuals they longed to be. Spiritual growth came by engagement with the poor. There was no “pure spirituality” apart from relatedness to the downtrodden. For Wesley, social action through the faithful community grounded spiritual formation where it needed to be grounded, in the world as well as in the Word.<sup>42</sup>

Wesley believed that the Sermon on the Mount provided an ethic for this time and this place—a worldly ethic. For Wesley grace was able to cleanse, empower, and bring victory in this life over sin. The scope

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<sup>39</sup> “Doing Empatheology as a Praxis of Holiness Theology: Theological Reading Luke 10: 30-37,” paper presented at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theology Conference, Seoul, Korea, October 7, 2003, and Larnie Sam Tabuena, “Response: The *Telos* and *Pathos* of Christlike *Kenosis*,” at the same conference.

<sup>40</sup> Fakaua, “Teaching and Preaching Biblical Holiness in the South Pacific Island Context,” in *The Challenge of Culture*, 28. See Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1972), 47-52.

<sup>41</sup> “The Principles of a Methodist,” *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 9: *The Methodist Societies: History, Nature and Design*, ed. Rupert E. Davies (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989), 55; “A Plain Account of Christian Perfection,” *Works*, third ed., 11: 371, 387.

<sup>42</sup> See Randy Maddox, “‘Visit the Poor’: John Wesley, the Poor, and the Sanctification of Believers,” in *The Poor and the People Called Methodists*, ed. Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 59-81. Similarly, see Rebekah Miles, “Works of Mercy as Spiritual Formation: Why Wesley Feared for the Souls of the Rich,” in *The Wesleyan Tradition: A Paradigm for Renewal*, ed. Paul W. Chilcote (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 98-110.

of redemption was all creation.<sup>43</sup> The Kingdom came through the actions of Christians motivated by Kingdom ideals. Love was the means of achieving the Kingdom as well as its end. No one could truly love his or her neighbor unless there was first a transforming encounter with God. There could be no love toward God, Wesley continued in one sermon on the Sermon on the Mount, in a kind of Trinitarian formula, unless there was faith in Christ and in his redemption; and there can be no faith in Christ apart from the Spirit bearing witness with men and women that they are children of God. If there was such love toward God, human beings' values and ways of life would be changed. Wesley said: "Let justice, mercy and truth govern all our minds and actions. Let our superfluities give way to our neighbor's conveniences. . . our conveniences to our neighbor's necessities; our necessities to his extremities."<sup>44</sup>

Wesley could not accept a religion that did not issue in works. These works were not means by which individuals achieved salvation. Wesley was very clear that without grace nothing was possible. Left to themselves human beings were "utterly impotent."<sup>45</sup> He was under no delusions about human nature. A human being, Wesley once said, is "a mere lump of ungodliness, and who commits sin in every breath he draws; whose actual transgressions, in word and deed, are more in number than the hairs on his head."<sup>46</sup> Any good works come not out of human effort or striving, but from the Spirit. They were the fruit, the witness and the guarantee of salvation. Faith itself for Wesley was not simply intellectual or "spiritual," but a matter of being wholly dependent upon God. Faith produced holiness and love, an actively sacrificial and creatively redemptive love.<sup>47</sup>

How did Wesley know that the Gospel he preached did much good had any effect? He did not have altar calls; he did not count converts. But he observed the Spirit's presence.<sup>48</sup>

Wesleyans want the word, creeds, doctrines, forms, and structures but crave the Spirit who constantly breaks through the forms unexpectedly to creatively impel us toward new levels and modes of embodied love. For generations, Wesleyans have rejected worldliness. During the Depression, holiness people laid their jewelry on the altars. Rightly conceived, the logic behind this is not for the redemption of one's own soul so much as for the good of others. Evangelists sent the jewelry laid on the altars to Kansas City so that missionaries might remain on mission fields.<sup>49</sup> It was unexpected that the Church of the Nazarene, of all churches, should be in 1984 among the first denominations to hold a major conference on AIDS. But we did not just talk about response; in Thailand and other places we are embodying holiness in our AIDS ministry.<sup>50</sup>

Embodied holiness compels collective witness. Missiologists as well as historians have prodded evangelicals into thinking about corporate movements toward Christ. We could cook rice one grain at a time; or we could cook rice all together in one great, large, steaming pot. Or, to change the metaphor: we could fish with one fishing pole, or we could fish with a net. Early in Christian history, whole kingdoms became Christian at the will of a ruler. During the Reformation whole countries became Protestant. Catechism and revival followed. More recently, in places such as India, whole villages, led by chiefs and elders, decided to become Christian. Discipleship followed.<sup>51</sup> We must not dismiss such movements as shallow. In Naza-

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<sup>43</sup>Theodore Jennings, "Wesley and the Poor: An Agenda for Wesleyans," in *The Portion of the Poor: Good News to the Poor in the Wesleyan Tradition*, ed. M. Douglas Meeks (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 33, 37.

<sup>44</sup>"Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount: Tenth Discourse," *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 1: *Sermons*, 662; "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," *Works*, 3rd ed., 11: 441.

<sup>45</sup>"A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," *Works*, 11: 440.

<sup>46</sup>"The Righteousness of Faith," *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 1: *Sermons*, ed. Outler, 212. See also "Original Sin," *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 2: *Sermons*, ed. Albert Outler (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985), 172-185.

<sup>47</sup>"Salvation by Faith," *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 1: *Sermons*, ed. Outler, 125; "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," *Works*, third ed., 11: 367-368. The preceding paragraphs are from Cunningham, "Reflections on Wesley's Understanding of Social Holiness," [*Taiwan Wesleyan Theological Journal*] 1 (1997): 87-101.

<sup>48</sup>A. Skivington Wood, *The Burning Heart; John Wesley: Evangelist* (Reprint, Minneapolis: Bethany, 1978), 160-166.

<sup>49</sup>A. J. Smith to J. G. Morrison, January 29, 1931 (file 447-59, Nazarene Archives). See also Mary A. Tenney, *Blueprint for a Christian World: An Analysis of the Wesleyan Way* (Winona Lake, IN: Light and Life, 1953); Ronald J. Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: A Biblical Study*, second ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1984).

<sup>50</sup>*Herald of Holiness*, July 1, 1984, 4, 20.

<sup>51</sup>J. W. Pickett, A. L. Warnhuis, G. H. Singh, and D. A. McGavran, *Church Growth and Group Conversion* (South Pasadena, CA.: William Carey Library, 1973), especially the chapter by Warnhuis, "Group Conversion," 8-21.

rene history its corporate local leaders of holiness groups in Italy, Canada, Nigeria and elsewhere saw wisdom and good in bringing their followers into close relationship with like-minded believers.

Asia-Pacific people, like the Corinthians, Romans and the other first century Mediterranean people to whom the gospel was addressed, are community or group oriented. In Taiwan, among some groups, a believer could not be baptized unless some other members of his or her family also were or became Christian. In the Philippines visiting American evangelists are pleasantly surprised to see whole congregations come forward to the "altar" after they preach. The congregation is exhorted to respond to the message, and responds as a corporate whole, submitting in spiritual worship to the Word of God. This seems wise, to invite families and groups "forward" toward collective repentance, to collectively seek God's forgiveness, since each person is part of a group and responds within it.

What Makoto Sakamoto writes of Japanese culture is probably true in general of people in this part of the world. "Every Japanese needs to belong to some group because the Japanese are afraid of isolation from the group members. Many college students and office workers must participate in drinking parties after school or office work. This is because the fellowship creates oneness inside the group. A group atmosphere decides what way one needs to behave inside the group. So one can say this relationship is not dictator-slave type; it is deeply connected with loyalty, faithfulness, and thankfulness to the boss, and obligation." Sakamoto continues: "Consequently disobeying the group decisions is considered to be sin against the boss or the other group members."<sup>52</sup> Collectivity, thus, could be used for either good or bad, depending on whether the group and its leaders are motivated by kingdom ideals or motivated by selfish desires. A truly "holiness" church will be inspired and anointed by God's Spirit and led by men and women filled with God's sanctifying Presence.

We teach our children to sing "Jesus loves me this I know." That is the simple gospel expressed in an individualistic way, and we must balance it, always, with "Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world." At the recent worship service in Taiwan, where people from several ethnicities gathered, missionary Jim Williams had each one say "Jesus loves me" in his or her own language. The Korean woman would or could not. Instead, she said: "Jesus loves the Korean people." If I were to exegete this little event I would say she perfectly expressed the gospel in an Asian-Pacific way. Jesus loves the Korean people, of whom I am one, she seemed to say.

If we can begin to conceive of conversions taking place en masse, what about entire sanctification? If we look at many passages in the New Testament that call us to holiness, it is "us" or "we" who are called corporately or plurally to become holy. At Pentecost, in the upper room, the believers were "all together in one place" when the Spirit descended upon them and "all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit." The effect of the baptism with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was not only a power to witness, and purity of heart (Acts 15: 9), but corporate responsibility toward every member of the community (Acts 2: 44). At Caesarea (Cornelius's house) and other places the Holy Spirit came corporately to his people.

Look at Ephesians 3: 14-19 in this light: that Christ may dwell in our collective hearts by faith; that we together, corporately, may be rooted and established in love, that we together may have power—together with all the saints—to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to be together as his people, as his church, as his children, filled to the measure of all of the fullness of God.

Even during the generations that we Nazarenes emphasized personal holiness, the Holy Spirit was often outpoured upon us, often, collectively. When a great revival came to our field in China in 1927, students from the Bible school spread it to villages throughout our entire field. Many, including missionaries themselves, became convinced that missionaries were unneeded.<sup>53</sup>

In other places, across our history, during Sunday evening evangelistic services, revivals and camp meetings, chapels and great gatherings such as General Assemblies the Holy Spirit fell upon us collectively. Probably many who can identify a "second" crisis associate it with a collective outpouring. They felt the Spirit warming their hearts, melting them together, and preparing them for service. Contrary to Reynolds's expectations, how these outpourings of God's sanctifying Spirit are manifest will not only vary from culture to culture but change overtime. We cannot presume that the manner in which God pours out

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<sup>52</sup> "The Challenge of Articulating the Doctrine of Holiness in Japanese Culture: Japanese Conception of Sin and the Doctrine of Sanctification," in *The Challenge of Culture*, 19.

<sup>53</sup> Cunningham, *Holiness Abroad*, 159.

his Spirit will be the same. But we can be sure that God wills to bless his people mightily, to purify and to empower them. My hope is that we never cease to experience at every level great outpourings of his Spirit but that we more fully embody such blessings in greater service, and empathetic compassion to others.

The fourth generation (nearing its last years) has returned the church to its theological roots in John Wesley and reemphasized its ministries to the poor and to the cities. At the same time, the church has expanded around the world, and wrestled with how to be an international church. Not very optimistic that society could be transformed, Nazarenes possessed a growing awareness that Christ and culture coexisted in a paradoxical way. Compassionate ministry, a corporate response to crises, augmented localized charity. Evangelism re-wed compassion. Like an earlier generation, the fourth emphasized the working out of holiness in relational and compassionate ways.<sup>54</sup>

The embodied, collective and relational emphasis put to holiness resonates in Asia-Pacific contexts. Following other denominations in Japan that had already done similarly, on March 15, 1993, the Church of the Nazarene in Japan issued a "Confession" in which it stated its "regret" that it "did not resist the aggression, but rather cooperated with it." At the 1995 Regional Conference regional conference in Manila, before a vast crowd, the Japan District Superintendent made an official apology to the people of the Asia-Pacific Region who had suffered under the Japanese prior to and during World War II.<sup>55</sup>

We the Church of the Nazarene in Japan, as a faith community called and gathered by our only Lord Jesus Christ, confess the following with aspiration to peace.

We recognize that our country caused great sorrow and pain among Asian and other countries and people living in those countries and regions including our own during the War of aggression.

The churches who belong to the Church of the Nazarene regret and repent the fact that we did not resist the aggression, but rather cooperated with it.

In addition, we of the Church of the Nazarene are sorry for the fact that we did not express our repentance officially for 48 years after the War, and we ask forgiveness for this also.

We promise that we will always remember the fact that our country invaded our neighboring countries, and that we will do our best not to repeat the same sins.

We seek for reconciliation with people in Asian and other countries, and with resident foreigners in Japan, in whatever circumstance, on the basis of this repentance.

Fifteenth of March 1993  
Higuchi Shigeru, District Superintendent  
Church of the Nazarene in Japan

Such a spirit evidences embodied holiness. A few years ago leaders at Korea Nazarene University found that few schools in Korea were caring for the physically disadvantaged and mentally challenged. Its eight undergraduate divisions majors includes Rehabilitation, Social Welfare/Child Studies, and Special Education. Its graduate schools include a Master's degree in Rehabilitation.

## A HOLINESS CHURCH

We are a denomination trying to find out in each generation and in each culture what it means to be a holiness church. Each generation must rediscover, re-contextualize and re-embody holiness. Among the many lessons that Western Nazarenes can learn from Asia-Pacific Nazarenes is their sense of solidarity and community, and the value they place upon in the personal relationships. These are essential ele-

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<sup>54</sup> See, for instance, R. Franklin Cook and Steve Weber, *The Greening: The Story of Nazarene Compassionate Ministries* (Kansas City: NPH, 1986); Howard Culbertson, *The Kingdom Strikes Back: Signs of the Messiah at Work in Haiti* (Kansas City: NPH, 1990).

<sup>55</sup> See *Asia Pacific Ambassador* (October 1995), 5; and John P. Bowen, "Japanese Church Seeks Reconciliation with Nazarenes in Korea," *World Mission* (February 1996), 2.

ments of biblical Wesleyan holiness. A sense of embodiedness rescues us from an individualistic and apathetic conceptualization of holiness.

We intend for holiness to be more than “doctrine,” we intend it to be life. We are discovering that we cannot be a holiness church without being an international church, and that we cannot be an international church without being a holiness church. What I mean is that the experience of holiness leads us to such a radical optimism in the grace of God, that we cannot accept ethno-centrism or hyper-nationalism any more easily than we accept ego-centrism. We are not content with the barriers that separate human beings from one another. National boundaries, anyway, are arbitrary barriers.<sup>56</sup> Not only do such barriers separate South Koreans from North Koreans, they separate Christian brothers and sisters from each other. The goal of the Church of the Nazarene, still, is to be one body with many parts, not many bodies, because being one body allows us to more completely reflect the one Body of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we give up on being an international church, we give up on the power of perfect love to hold together people of many nations and economic backgrounds whose deepest motivation is perfect love and whose highest goal is to love God and to love their neighbors as themselves. At the same time, if holiness works, it has to work at structural levels. The Spirit of God will animate the true Body of Christ. If holiness works, it will work through a top to bottom, bottom to top self-emptying of the desire for power and control that perfect love compels us toward and enables in us both personally and collectively. A carnal church cannot hope to be an international church; but a church that preaches the embodied Christ and his power to sanctify can and must and will be an international church. The way to sustain this cannot be force or coercion, but perfect love.

## A PRAYER

O Gracious Father, we humbly beseech thee for thy church;  
that thou wouldst be pleased to fill it with all truth, in all peace.  
Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it.  
Where it is right, establish it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided reunite it;  
for the sake of Him who died and rose again, and ever liveth to make intercession for us,  
Jesus Christ thy Son, our Lord. Amen.  
--*Book of Common Prayer*

**Floyd T. Cunningham**  
**Church of the Nazarene Asia–Pacific Regional Conference**  
**Bangkok, Thailand, October 25, 2003**

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<sup>56</sup> A point made persuasively by Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991).