

**Mark R. Quanstrom**  
**A CENTURY OF HOLINESS THEOLOGY**

**Chapter 1: Perpetuating the American Ideal**

A. ‘Determined to Conquer this Land’

Finney, Palmer: ‘a century of spiritual progress’; ‘rechristianizing the continent’

B. An Optimistic Age

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America the land of promise. John R. Mott: evangelizing the world in this generation, Rauschenbusch. Martin Marty: progress a demonstrable fact: the war to end all wars: the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City.

C. Still Confident

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One mile east of where the memorial would stand, the fifth general assembly of 1919 met on the corner of Troost and 24<sup>th</sup> St. Optimism evaporating: a defensive posture: but persons could be perfected even if society could not. Timothy L. Smith: ‘the relevance of Wesleyan perfectionism to a generation awed by its rediscovery of the deep sinfulness of man’ (*Called unto Holiness*, 351).

By the end of the century, ‘instantaneous change’ has given way to ‘an unremarkable event in a process of growth, Pentecost no longer understood by many as *the* occasion of personal entire sanctification, and the high expectations of the positive consequences of entire sanctification have diminished drastically. Wars and depression, etc. have given a deeper understanding of the nature of sin, so that optimism of the beginning of the century looks quaintly naïve. ‘Theological realism’: ‘the deep sinfulness of man’.

The chapters (15f.).

## Chapter 2: The Possibilities of Grace

### A. The Cardinal Doctrine of the Church of the Nazarene 17

1908 Manual: the brief doctrinal statement, and the articles on original sin and entire sanctification

### B. Entire Sanctification as the Instantaneous Eradication of the Sinful Nature 21

J.A. Wood, *Purity and Maturity*, 1876. (Also *Perfect Love*, 1861) His primary thesis that these are not synonymous. Entire sanctification was not the fullness of grace, but simply the absence of sin. Because purity (holiness) was not the culmination of a long process of Christian maturity, it should be expected early in the Christian life. He did not deny the need for growth in grace or maturation, but believed that one could not mature into purity. Growth came after purity.

### C. Pentecost as the Occasion for Entire Sanctification 25

Daniel Steele's The Gospel of the Comforter became required reading for fourth year students on the course of study in 1908. He did not argue so much as assume that Pentecost, or the baptism with the Spirit, was the occasion of entire sanctification. The baptism of the Holy Spirit destroyed the carnal nature, and this was instantaneous. Pentecost was the biblical evidence that sanctification was a second work of grace wrought instantaneously in the heart of the regenerated believer. 'Entire sanctification' and 'the baptism of the Holy Ghost' were synonymous to holiness people. Pentecost was the paradigm for the experience.

### D. Faith and Consecration as the Primary Conditions for Entire Sanctification 29

A.M. Hills, Holiness and Power was added to the reading course in 1911, and stayed there till 1964. He was a Congregational pastor who had studied at Oberlin under Finney and Mahan. Along with Steele, Wood and others, he believed that the baptism with the Holy Ghost would become the great unifying force for Christianity. He insisted on the instantaneous aspect and the eradication of the carnal nature. Where Phoebe Palmer had listed two conditions for obtaining the blessing (consecration and faith), Hills listed eight: discovering the need of entire sanctification, repenting for not receiving the sanctifying Saviour, recognition of its importance, believing in its possibility, 'hungering and thirsting', obedience, consecration, and faith.

Biblical images used for consecration included 'being crucified with Christ', laying all on the altar (Palmer's image). 'Faith' was the last essential condition: 'believe and receive'. The victory of faith was the assurance of entire sanctification.

Sin was destroyed and holiness imparted - 'entire devotement to God, and the holy obedience of love made perfect.' Asbury Lowrey, *Possibilities of Grace*, 1884, was added to the reading in 1911. He taught 'holiness or hell', and although this was never officially endorsed, much early Nazarene teaching reflected it. Steele had warned of the dangers of remaining in the strictly justified state, and Wood had referred to the 'merely justified'. Lowrey wrote more extravagantly than Wood, Steele or Hills of holiness as the eradication of all sin in the life of the believer. His positive descriptions of the entirely sanctified state used language which other traditions reserved for glorification. He hinted that not only was original sin gone, but even the residual effects. He stated: 'It is a sinless condition.' In entire sanctification, believers became as holy as God was holy, an 'incarnation' of God the Father's holiness. He believed (in some contradiction to Wood) that the grace of entire sanctification imparted nothing less than a fully mature Christian character. With inbred sin removed, there would be a 'repugnance' to sin and therefore almost an inability to sin. Temptation would find no access. He came close to saying that sin would be an impossibility. One who was filled with the Holy Ghost would not be subject to the vicissitudes of life, almost inured against them, and in suffering would sing a paean of praise. His extravagant language of heaven on earth finds a parallel in John Fletcher. Lowrey, one of the most optimistic of holiness writers, remained on the book list till 1956.

A.M. Hills was almost as equally promising. Every doubt would be removed and there would be a constant assurance of God's salvation. Sanctification did not just take care of a short temper, it cured irritability. The Holy Ghost gave such self-control that sickness, disease or pain could not compromise it.

'Glorious freedom' (Haldor Lillenas)

### Chapter 3: The Responsibility of Grace

#### A. The Need for an 'Official' Nazarene Theology

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According to Martin Marty, the interwar years (1919-1941) were years of conflict in America and saw a tightening of denominational lines and a 'growth in rigidity in various camps...' This hardening of denominational identity characterized the Church of the Nazarene. The defensive need to preserve the inherited faith replaced the previous desire to propagate it aggressively. Some 'sharpening of the lines of separation' was seen in the dropping of the word 'Pentecostal' by the 1919 general assembly. (Seymour put out by Bresee!). Articles by Chapman and Wiley on the 'tongues' movement.

Influence of Fundamentalism: inerrancy of scripture one of the defining issues. the General Superintendents addresses adopted some of the fundamentalist terminology; 'united on the fundamental'(1923)... 'we are all fundamentalists'... 'the whole Bible, the inspired, infallible, revealed Word of God' (1928). Changes to the article on the Holy Scriptures proposed in 1923 and confirmed in 1928:

We believe in the *plenary* inspiration of the Holy Scriptures by which we understand the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament, given by divine inspiration, *inerrantly* revealing the will of God concerning us in all things necessary to salvation: so that whatever is not contained therein is not to be enjoined as an article of faith.

Miley's Theology was the standard textbook in the Course of Study until 1932. It devoted only thirty pages out of one thousand and fifty seven to the doctrine of entire sanctification, and those were largely a polemic against the holiness movement's specific emphases. It was not necessary to insist on the instantaneous aspect, nor to interpret it as the eradication of the carnal nature. He seemed to indicate his preference for the Keswick 'repression' theory.

#### B. Native Ability

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Miley had a strong emphasis on the moral responsibility of man which was consistent with the Nazarene position. He devoted successive chapters to free agency and man's ability to choose. He rejected the classical doctrine of 'moral inability' and modified greatly the effects of the fall. The power to choose freely good over evil resided in the native attribute of reason. He did acknowledge that we could be aided by the Holy Spirit, but while he gave lip service to enabling grace, the accent was on man's freedom.

#### C. The True Theory of Moral Freedom

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A.M. Hills' two chapters on moral freedom were restatements of the views of Miley and Finney. Although not asked to write the official theology (partly because of this postmillennial views), he went ahead and published his *Fundamental Christian Theology* independently. J.B. Chapman helped him to find a publisher and Hills invited him to

contribute a chapter putting the pre-millennial view balancing his own chapter giving the post-millennial view. In 1932 and 1936 he had three of his books, *Holiness and Power*, *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology* and *Fundamental Christian Theology* included in the ministerial course of study. He devoted two chapters to the doctrine of moral freedom, basically re-statements of Miley's and Finney's views. Hills had studied at Oberlin under Finney, and considered Finney's arguments on this 'unanswerable'.

#### D. From Depravity to Free Agency

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The articles on 'Original Sin' and 'Inherited Depravity' were distinct in the 1908 *Manual*. The latter contained the sentence: 'It is not possible that any should turn and prepare themselves by their own natural ability.' In 1911 they were combined, but the assembly of 1923 voted to divide them again, but the second of the two was not entitled 'Inherited Depravity' (as in 1908) but 'Of Free Agency'. (This was the title in the Thirty-Nine Articles and in Wesley's Articles of Religion). In 1928, the article on 'Free Will' was re-worked to include the statement that 'man's creation in godlikeness included the ability to choose between right and wrong.' Although it said that since the fall man could not now turn by his own natural strength, this did place the accent on free will. [?]

This combination of moral ability and the incredible promise of sanctification was profoundly optimistic and perhaps intimidating, for all the promise was waiting for was an obedient will. There was no excuse. The responsibility for this amazing grace was on the freely believing and obeying agent.

'Is your all on the altar of sacrifice laid?' (Elisha A. Hoffman)

## **Chapter 4: Christian Theology of the Church of the Nazarene**

### A. The Task of H.Orton Wiley 78

'Dynamical' Inspiration.

Prevenient Grace, not free will.

### B. Faithful to the Doctrine of the Church 84

Entire sanctification an instantaneous act, a second distinct work of grace. He did not base this on Acts 2, but on the aorist tense of 'sanctify'. While rejecting fundamentalism, he retained a 'fundamentalist' hermeneutic (86).

Progressive sanctification was to be strictly understood as the gradual approach toward the instantaneous sanctifying experience. 'Continuous' meant 'preserving' Complete purification from all sin, the destruction of the carnal mind and a divine empowering of holy love. Holiness was the union of those two aspects. As a result the very nature of man was changed (90). This was effected by consecration and faith.

### D. Some Clarifying Definitions 92

What entire sanctification did not accomplish. Three important distinctions: (1) between purity and maturity (2) between infirmities and sins (3) between the temptation of the sanctified and the temptations of others who have a natural corruption of the heart. Christian perfection was not the perfection of God himself, nor Adamic nor angelic perfection. There are similar statements in C.W. Ruth, Daniel Steele and A.M. Hills, but as a very minor theme. The early Nazarenes church was not too interested in defining their glorious doctrine in limiting terms. With Wiley that had begun to change.

## Chapter 5: Right Conceptions

### A. Keeping to Course

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Reinhold Niebuhr ‘theological realism’: the inevitability of sin. His 1939 Gifford Lectures given in Edinburgh and published as *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, emphasized in sharp contrast to Wiley that there was no promise that man could escape his sinful condition while a captive of the fallen world. While sin wasn’t necessary, it was inevitable. The most influential [American!] theologian of the first half of the twentieth century was propagating a theology that was antithetical to the cardinal doctrine of the Church of the Nazarene.

In the forty years since the Pilot Point merger, national and world events had proven all optimism concerning the nature and destiny of man naïve. The Bolshevik revolution, the stock market crash and severe depression, the repeal of prohibition in 1933, the Second World War and the atom bombs, and the cold war had effectively killed any last vestige of hope that the holiness doctrine would be the agent for transforming American culture and then the world at large. H.V. Miller’s 1948 address referred to the ‘rich, though small, inheritance’ passed to Nazarenes, preserving the trust the Methodists had forsaken. Four years earlier, J.B. Chapman had reminded the delegates that the only reason the Nazarene denomination existed at all was for the sake of holiness doctrine.

The leadership called the church to faithfulness and continued indoctrination, and to further that, founded a denominational graduate seminary. The primary purpose of NTS was ‘to conserve, maintain, advocate and promulgate the great Bible doctrine of ‘Entire Sanctification’ as a second distinct work of divine grace’ (104).

They now had an authoritative systematic theology and provided orthodox graduate school education.

### B. The Meaning of Holiness

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Yet subsequent explications of the doctrine reveal the subtle influence of ‘theological realism’. The books added to the reading list did not have the triumphalist titles or flavour of earlier books.

They included Henry E. Brockett’s *Scriptural Freedom from Sin*, Richard S. Taylor’s *A Right Conception of Sin*, J.B. Chapman, *The Terminology of Holiness*, D. Shelby Corlett’s *The Meaning of Holiness*, and W.T. Purkiser’s *Conflicting Concepts of Holiness*.

J.D. Drysdale’s foreword to Brockett acknowledged the mistake of holiness authors: “I am forced to admit that amongst us there has [sic] often been sad and extravagant expressions [of the doctrine of entire sanctification]...’ Brockett wrote: ‘We must beware of *exaggerating* the truth of deliverance from sin and thus falling into the error of thinking that it means either Adamic perfection or a fixed state of sinless perfection, that is, a state from which we can never fall or in which we can never be tempted.’ He

quoted J.G. Morrison and emphasized that he (Brockett) was not free from faults and failures. He made the crucial distinction between being 'blameless' and being 'faultless'.

Richard S. Taylor's *A Right Conception of Sin* (109), a polemic against the Calvinist definition of sin, was added to the reading list in 1940. He carefully distinguished between the sinful nature and the human nature, between willful transgressions of known laws and infirmities. The doctrine of sin was the central doctrine around which entire systems of theology were built. Calvinism inevitably led to antinomianism, but Nazarenes believed in the complete transformation of human nature. He rejected the error of a 'sinning saint': righteousness was not simply imputed but imparted in the grace of entire sanctification. But this promise of entire sanctification required a right conception of sin. Two conditions had to be fulfilled: there had to be the knowledge of sin accompanied by an intention to sin. If either was lacking, there was no sin. Christians would never intentionally transgress the known law of God. Infirmity, a permanent human condition due to the fall had to be distinguished from inbred sin, which was not a permanent condition of the fall. The difference was sometimes difficult to discern, but it had to be made. Since mistakes, deficiencies, lapses, abnormalities and peculiarities were inevitable, there could be no culpability. Consequently Taylor had to qualify carefully what could be expected from entirely sanctified individuals. Thus for Nazarenes, a right understanding of entire sanctification demanded not only a right conception of sin, but a right conception of infirmity. Entire sanctification eradicated the sinful nature resulting in believers being able to live free from sin. Entire sanctification did not however restore the fallen condition.

D. Shelby Corlett (the fourth editor of the *Herald of Holiness*, 1936-1948, and second president of NTS, 1952-1966) was one of several writers who emphasized the continued work of God *subsequent* to entire sanctification. His book, *The Meaning of Holiness* was published in 1944 and included in the reading list from 1944 to 1956. His emphasis was not so much on the experience of entire sanctification itself as on the fulfillment of that experience. Too many entirely sanctified individuals were living far below the holiness standard. Entire sanctification dealt only with inbred sin: it did not restore (in Richard Taylor's language) the mistakes, deficiencies, lapses, abnormalities and peculiarities of the fallen condition. Corlett quoted Brockett to justify the idea that entirely sanctified believers needed to confess infirmities, lack of judgment and other faults. Asbury Lowery had written that entirely sanctified believers could pray the Lord's Prayer as a corporate prayer, and as remembering sin already forgiven, though not confessing actual recent sin of their own. He even acknowledged as Corlett did that they could appropriately confess infirmities. Corlett did not hesitate to write either about the value of discipline for entirely sanctified believers. They needed to control their dispositions even though these dispositions were not sinful but just infirm.

There was nothing in Brockett, Taylor or Corlett which was not in earlier writers, but these second and third generation holiness writers were not making extravagant claims concerning what entire sanctification accomplished and they were much more explicit concerning the infirmities with which entirely sanctified Christians would still be plagued.

Consequently the promise was tempered. The expectations concerning the grace were becoming more modest.

### C. Cardinal Elements

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Steven [sic] S. White, *Cardinal Elements in Sanctification*, gave five essential truths: (1) a second work of grace: defended secondness by distinguishing between acts of sin and the state of sin, (2) instantaneous, (3) freed from inbred sin – ‘eradication’ (4) attainability in this life (5) identified with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He also wrote *Eradication: Defined, Explained, Authenticated*, an even more forceful defense included in the study course from 1956 to 1968. In *Cardinal Elements*, he warned against two errors, too much emphasis on the crisis nature of entire sanctification – the entirely sanctified must continue to consecrate – and failing to make the distinction between infirmities and sins. Entire sanctification would not make anyone godlike or erase the effects of the fall on the human body and mind. In *Eradication* he listed all the euphemisms [? synonyms, surely!] for original sin to make clear what was eradicated in entire sanctification (125). This third ‘cardinal element’ was the most important for White.

Thus there were two movements in the Church of the Nazarene in the fourth and fifth decades, both a consequence of changing historical circumstances. The reality of sinfulness resulted in clinical qualifications which defined man’s fallen-ness as infirmity instead of sin. But at the same time the threat of this ‘theological realism’ compelled the denomination to give greater attention to ‘conserving, maintaining, advocating and promulgating’ the precious doctrine with which it had been entrusted. Entire sanctification eradicated sin, but sin was understood quite particularly.

## Chapter 6: A Plain Account

### A.. Called unto Holiness

Timothy L. Smith, in his denominational history, *Called unto Holiness* (1957), called the church to a re-assessment of holiness theology which would provide a more theologically realistic account. Thoughtful persons (he wrote) may ponder ‘the relevance of Wesleyan perfectionism to a generation awed by its rediscovery of the deep sinfulness of man.’

This awareness was more evident in the quadrennial addresses of the general superintendents in the 1960s and 1970s – V.H. Lewis in 1968, George Coulter in 1972, and Eugene Stowe in 1976. Nazarenes were still called to holiness, but it was a more modified holiness that in the early days.

### B. Problems of the Spirit-filled Life

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It probably would have been inconceivable to the leaders of the American holiness movement at the beginning of the century that one of the books eventually recommended for study would be entitled *Problems of the Spirit-Filled Life*. In it William S. Deal addressed the problem of distinguishing between carnality and humanity. He argued for the uniqueness of each person’s experience of entire sanctification. Because different people have different personalities and different temperaments and because people come to the experience with different levels of spiritual maturity, no one expression of entire sanctification is normative. No two could be alike, and so it was impossible to judge whether another had truly received the grace. The benefit of the doubt should always be given to those who professed. The rest of the book tried to distinguish sin from a mere expression of humanity. He tried to give examples, distinguishing between thoughts of evil and evil thoughts, occasional overeating and gluttony. He warned against depending too much on emotions for evidence of entire sanctification. The joy and peace which come with it did not lie in the realm of human emotions, but within the spiritual nature. He distinguished between sinful expressions of fear and anger and their merely human expressions.

Richard Taylor devoted several chapters to distinguishing between sin and infirmity in *Life in the Spirit* (1966). There was no shortage of attempts to make this distinction, and a growing casuistry characterized Nazarene discussion of human weakness. W.T. Purkiser edited *Exploring Our Christian Faith* (1960) and wrote a chapter on the effects of entire sanctification. It purged away evil concupiscence – pride, self-will, carnal temper, envy, malice, etc., but purely psychological drives remained to be disciplined – (1) a natural gravitation toward ‘ease, idleness, luxury, comfort, self-liberty...’ (2) a tendency to be warm and enthusiastic towards certain virtues and graces, but indifferent to others (3) instinctive self-love (4) levity and foolishness (5) fluctuation of moods...

It is easy to see where this could lead. Those who believed that sanctification was essential to their salvation and who had experienced this second crisis would attribute an ‘failure’ to their humanity since all sin had been eradicated by the second work of grace.

What was prideful in the unsanctified was merely the psychological drive of instinctive self-love in the sanctified! They attributed to the entirely sanctified problems which according to Asbury Lowery were only problems for the merely regenerate.

### C. John Wesley's Concept of Perfection

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In *The Spirit of Holiness* (1963), Everett Lewis Cattell, President of Malone College, wrote that valid truth about crisis experience had been so emphasized as to neglect the development of the holy life. He had found this balance by 'going back to Wesley himself'. Zondervan had re-published *The Works of Wesley* in 1958, and in 1965, the Wesleyan Theological Society was formed by Leo Cox. John Wesley's *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* had been published by NPH and added to the study course for the first time in 1952. In 1964, Leo Cox's *John Wesley's Concept of Perfection* was added to the course, and four years later George Allen Turner's dissertation from Harvard, *The Vision Which Transforms*. This biblical apologetic for a Wesleyan understanding of holiness had previously appeared on the reading list as *The More Excellent Way*.

This was all potentially problematic for Nazarenes, for John Wesley's writings were not entirely consistent with the holiness writings which had previously been recommended as authoritative. The denomination had understood the grace of sanctification as an instantaneous event and largely equated 'sanctification' and 'entire sanctification', but Wesley used the term 'sanctification' to refer to the entire salvific process from justification to glorification. Cox suggested a corrective from Wesley for the holiness movement – the gradual work of sanctification, beginning from regeneration. Then the holiness people believed that entire sanctification was granted when the two conditions, faith and consecration, were met. Wesley's understanding was that the generality of believers were not entirely sanctified till near death. Whereas for them, the shorter way of faith and consecration brought the grace, for Wesley the occasion of entire sanctification was conditioned by God's sovereign will, not the desire of the seeker. What Nazarenes were considering mere infirmities, Wesley considered sin. According to Wesley, the pervasiveness of sin was such that even entirely sanctified believers were still absolutely dependent upon Christ's mediation.

The appeal of Wesley to many in the holiness movement 'awed by the rediscovery of the deep sinfulness of man' was his recognition of the pervasive tenaciousness of sin, the demanding conditions required for cleansing from it, and the extraordinary nature of life lived free from it.

### D. The Article of Faith

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From 1928 to 1976, the article on entire sanctification had remained unchanged, but in 1976 it was modified by adding two qualifying paragraphs. One, distinguishing between a pure heart and a mature character had been part of the article from 1911 to 1923. The other emphasized the need for continued growth in grace. Both the study of Wesley and these new paragraphs indicated that the denomination wanted to give more attention to growth in grace. The distinctive doctrine was no longer so plain.

## Chapter 7: The Credibility Gap

### A. Motion to Remove 'Eradicate'

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At the 1985 general assembly, a commission chaired by Ponder Gilliland, pastor of Bethany First Church of the Nazarene, proposed a new article of faith on original sin which made more explicit the dual nature of sin in its first two paragraphs. The third paragraph distinguished sins from infirmities. But there was a crucial omission: there was no mention of the remedy from original sin as in the old article, 'until eradicated by the baptism with the Holy Spirit.' Dr Eugene Stowe immediately made a motion to delete the proposed amendment and keep the original statement. Ponder Gilliland replied that the commission's concern with the existing article was that it diminished the significance of the first work of grace. V.H. Lewis spoke against any change. Lyle Pointer, pastor of First Church, San Jose (California) spoke against Stowe's motion arguing that the articles of faith should use biblical terminology and not theological terms like 'eradication'. This was defeated and after lengthy debate and a recess, Pointer moved an amendment to the existing article on original sin. That was defeated. After further intense debate, the general assembly finally retained the original article and added the three new paragraphs as additions.

This effort to remove 'eradicate' and 'baptism with the Holy Spirit' was evidence of a dynamic discussion that had been going on the denomination for fifteen years. There was a well defined movement within the church to understand the doctrine in a new way.

### B. An Experience Beyond Conversion

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The event which initiated this movement was the publication by a sixty-seven year old theology professor from Trevecca Nazarene College of *A Theology of Love* in 1973. It was perceived as the first truly creative holiness theology in decades, and called into question the 'traditional' understanding of the doctrine of entire sanctification. It was the discrepancy between the doctrine of the eradication of the sinful nature and the experience of those who claimed to have received the grace which had prompted the narrower definition of sin and the more expansive definition of infirmity. Wynkoop called this 'the Credibility Gap'. She highlighted some of the practical questions which were causing confusion: Why *two* special moments? Why not one or three or 100? How does one distinguish one from the other? If one 'blessing' is lost, what happens to the other? Does God withhold a measure of grace at the first in order to give it at the second? Why a crisis? Process? What is the relation between the two?

Wynkoop's solution to the credibility gap was something more radical than any had suggested to date. She proposed nothing less than the restructuring of the conceptual framework, a 'relational hermeneutic' which she claimed was more adequate for what she called John Wesley's 'theology of love'. She believed that the Wesleyan holiness movement had significantly departed from classical Wesleyan theology and had uncritically adopted fundamentally wrong ontology which could not be faithful to Wesley.

Three conceptual adjustments had to be made. The first concerned the nature of persons. She called for the rejection of a 'Greek' concept of person, a divine soul trapped in a material and thus evil body (leading to an unbiblical denigration of human nature and an artificial distinction between sin and infirmity), and for a return to a 'Hebrew' definition of person as a unity.

Secondly, perhaps the most important adjustment was to the understanding of the nature of sin. She called for the rejection of what she called a *substantial* concept of sin and the adoption of a *relational* view. Much of the confusion in the holiness movement was a consequence of this unbiblical concept.

The third conceptual adjustment was to the definition of salvation, which had to be understood in 'moral' not 'magical' terms. Salvation was a matter of ethical relationship: sin was the description of the estranged relationship between God and man. Holiness was the description of a completely restored relationship. Estrangement from God (the essence of sin) and communion with God (the essence of holiness) were contingent upon a person's obedience. Salvation was therefore contingent on the choice of a freely acting agent. At one point she equated holiness with moral integrity.

She balanced this emphasis on the power of the human will by reminding her readers of the doctrine of prevenient grace, and felt compelled to write at several points, 'This position is not Pelagianism', but the emphasis throughout *A Theology of Love* was not so much on the grace of God as on the moral responsibility of persons for their salvation.

This 'relational' theology led to the correction of flawed traditional descriptions. She rejected 'eradication' and 'sinful nature', for sin was not a thing that could be eradicated by a second work of grace. A person whose entire heart was centred on Christ could be said to be entirely sanctified. This had challenging implications. If there was no such thing as inbred sin that needed to be eradicated, then there was no *essential* need for two works of grace. But for the most part they were needed because of the need for moral development subsequent to the first work of grace. This definition of salvation as a relationship to God contingent upon the existential decision of an absolutely free and responsible person which usually manifested itself in two crisis experiences, led Wynkoop to deny any essential distinction between the first crisis of justification and the second crisis of entire sanctification. They were both sanctifying and the difference was just in degrees of commitment. She appealed here to Wesley that sanctification began at regeneration. This was new. While Nazarenes had long recognized that the first work of grace was considered 'initial sanctification' [where is the documentation for this?], the emphasis had been on the second work. Justification was popularly understood as a relatively minor preface to entire sanctification. Wesley had warned against this depreciation of justification, and Wynkoop was heeding his warning. The second pivotal crisis then was simply a consequence of the nature of spiritual maturation.

Perhaps the most challenging implication of her reconceptualization of the doctrine concerned the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. According to Wynkoop, entire sanctification was not effected by the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The occasion of the

believer's reception of the Holy Spirit was the *first* work of grace. She appealed to Daniel Steele to confirm that Wesley had never equated the two, and declared that it could not be supported by Scripture.

This according to Wynkoop, entire sanctification did not eradicate the sinful nature, was not essentially different from initial sanctification, was a probably but not a necessary crisis in the salvation process, and was not the occasion of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. For most Nazarenes this was revolutionary in 1973. While her intent was to provide a more adequate conceptual framework for the doctrine and therefore 'justify' it for a contemporary audience, her definitions tended to undermine the doctrine's distinctiveness. The depreciation was evident in her recommending the expression 'an experience beyond conversion'.

### C. The Debate on the Baptism with the Holy Spirit

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Wynkoop and the rediscovery of Wesley both challenged Nazarene 'orthodoxy', but the issue which led to considerable conflict and debate was the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The *WTJ* became the forum with articles by Alex R.G. Deasley, J. Kenneth Grider, Mildred Bangs Wynkoop and George Allen Turner of Asbury defending either the classical 'Wesleyan' interpretation or the 'Nazarene' position. Hoping to clarify the issues, Dr Rob Staples drew up paper for a breakfast meeting at NTS. It was now common knowledge that Wesley did not equate the baptism of the Spirit with entire sanctification, and that that equation was an American addition to Wesley's doctrine coming primarily from outside the Wesleyan tradition, from Charles G. Finney and New School Presbyterianism. After twenty-three pages of historical review, he tackled the implications of the debate for the Church of the Nazarene. He argued that there was no evidence that the holiness movement intended to diverge from Wesley, and Nazarene scholars were aware that exegesis supported the 'more biblical Wesleyan position'. But as Staples well knew, this was inconsistent with the Articles of Faith, and fidelity to biblical truth must take priority over a denomination's 'creed'. Staples proposed two solutions: one was to amend the Articles of Faith, but any attempt to do so at that point, he believed, would be divisive and counter-productive. Instead he issued a call for a tolerant attitude. The third part of his paper called for a 'holistic approach'. John Fletcher had spoken of many baptisms of the Spirit. Staples' paper lay unnoticed for some years.

Meanwhile H. Ray Dunning of Trevecca was asked by the Board of General Superintendent in 1979 to write a contemporary one-volume systematic theology to replace Wiley. William Greathouse warned M.A. (Bud) Lunn in a letter in February, 1980 that Dunning would be forced to address this contentious and potentially divisive issue. He hoped (as Dr Staples had) that an inclusive interpretation of the Articles of Faith would be able to accommodate a view which diverged from the historic position. Others were not so sure that the Articles of Faith had enough breadth to do this.

The doctrinal issue came to a head before Dunning's book was published. A district superintendent had three men up for licence who did not agree that entire sanctification was 'wrought by the baptism of the Holy Spirit' and they had learned this view in Dr Staples' classes. But Dr Staples was being considered for tenure, and the Trustees felt they could only grant this if Dr Staples' position was accommodated by the Articles. The question was therefore referred to the Board of General Superintendents for a ruling. In 1983 therefore Dr Staples sent his breakfast club paper to the Board of General Superintendents with an extra sixteen pages. In these he drew their attention to an article by Dr Alex Deasley in the *WTJ*, 14 (1979) pointing out the H. Orton Wiley devoted only one page to the baptism of the Holy Spirit and that 'the structure of his argument is not affected by in it the least degree'. He also informed the Board that prior to 1923, the *Manual* Article on Entire Sanctification did not contain Spirit-baptism language. He referred to the Deasley article to support a holistic interpretation: 'Deasley makes Spirit-baptism the all-embracing category, with regeneration and entire sanctification being different aspects or phases of Spirit-baptism.' He declared that both Deasley's and Fletcher's views were in harmony with the Nazarene Articles of Faith that entire sanctification is 'wrought by' the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 1984, Dr Greathouse, as secretary of the Board of General Superintendents, wrote to Dr Paul Cunningham, chairman of the Board of Trustees of NTS, that the consensus of the Board of General Superintendents was 'that Dr Staples' view in in accord with our interpretation of Article X.' They ruled that Article X was an 'adequate articulation' of the biblical doctrine of entire sanctification as understood by historic Methodism and the holiness movement, recognizing the 'various terms' representing 'various phases'. They also reaffirmed the 'historic position of the Church of the Nazarene' that the apostles were entirely sanctified by the baptism with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.'

Dr Staples was granted tenure, but not everyone was pleased with the ruling which was more elastic than had ever been given before. Dr Paul Cunningham wrote to Dr Staples that he admitted to some confusion over their decision, but since 'the Board of General Superintendents concludes that your position is acceptable, and then have stated the position of the church, we must assume this is your position as will at this time, and that you will teach this as the position of the church along with other theories of interpretation that would be necessary for a comprehensive view of the development of holiness thought.' He wrote that it was difficult to see how our pastors and constituency could 'accept our distinctive doctrine of entire sanctification when it is preached on a multiple choice basis.'

In any event the denomination now had a theological 'ruling' that permitted a broad understanding of the doctrine. In the official interpretation, it was *the* occasion of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and thus a distinct work of grace. But it was also *an* occasion of *a* baptism with the Holy Spirit and this not *that* distinct. But both were acceptable interpretations of the Articles of Faith.

H. Ray Dunning's systematic theology proved controversial, some regarding it as 'subversive'. There was a question for a time whether NPH would publish it at all. Dr Richard Taylor pointed out in a letter to Dr John Knight, his fellow editorial board member, that an official systematic theology to replace Wiley must not depart at any significant point from the Articles of Faith. He recommended that it be published as a private monograph, as Wynkoop's book had been, rather than as an official Nazarene textbook. In the end it was published (following W.T. Purkiser's compromise recommendation) as a 'representative' theology of the Church of the Nazarene, not an 'official' theology.

Dunning's systematic theology was different, a sophisticated theology with highly nuanced definitions and subtle articulations. He adopted like Wynkoop 'a relational model of ontology in contrast to substantial modes of thought.' A person's essence was constituted by the relation to God, and failure to recognize persons as intrinsically related beings led to all kinds of confusion, particularly in the doctrine of entire sanctification. 'Substantial modes of describing man's state of being in sin makes entire sanctification difficult if not impossible to fit logically into a theological conceptuality.' He called for the rejection of much traditional language. Traditional formulations of holiness doctrine had created what Wynkoop had called the 'credibility gap'. A 'relational mode of ontology' would make a doctrine of sanctification viable again and make a doctrine of freedom from sin credible.

Sin as an act was whatever violated the relationship with God and sin as 'original' was the loss of the pre-Fall relation between God and man. Sin was not the result of creaturehood, but the consequence of the exercise of the God-given gift of freedom. He did acknowledge a positive perversion of human 'nature' that resulted from the Fall, but this sinful state of being must be comprehended relationally, defined essentially as lost relationship to God.

Since sin was not an inevitable condition of a person's creatureliness and did not have ontic status, that there was the possibility for a person to be 'cleansed' from sin. Like Wynkoop, he defined holiness as single-minded devotion to Christ: 'Mildred Bangs Wynkoop is correct in defining sin as 'love locked into a false center, the self', and holiness as 'love locked into the True Center, Jesus Christ our Lord.'

The definition of holiness as right relationship resulted in some different emphases expressed in five unequivocal pronouncements which, while 'Wesleyan', did not represent the American-holiness movement's formulation. The five pronouncements arose out of a differentiation between 'ceremonial' sanctification by which someone or something is rendered sacred by its relation to God, and 'ethical' sanctification, in which a person is made *actually* righteous. Considering sanctification in the ethical sense led to the five 'exegetically derived propositions'. (1) Sanctification is logically subsequent to justification. (2) All believers are sanctified. (3) Justification and sanctification, while logically distinct, were chronologically simultaneous – that is to say, at the moment of

justification, sanctification begins. Like Wynkoop therefore, Dunning placed more emphasis on the radical change of the first work of grace. (4) All believers, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit, are recipients of the Spirit. This was consistent with Wynkoop and had almost cost Staples his tenure, but its statement in a commissioned 'Nazarene' systematic theology was even more undermining of the denomination's historical understanding. (5) Sanctification in the New Testament is oriented towards Jesus Christ. The goal was Christlikeness.

Dunning elaborated his fourth proposition in a chapter entitled 'The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit'. He cautioned against using Acts as a paradigm for later believers. The baptism with the Holy Spirit was not to be exclusively identified with entire sanctification. There can be many 'baptisms' with the Holy Spirit, and whether such a baptism resulted in an experience of entire sanctification depended upon the faith and understanding of the believer. Dunning therefore emphasized the continuity of the salvation process more than the crises. Like Wynkoop his focus was on the process of sanctification which began with regeneration. Like Wynkoop he did not distinguish any qualitative difference between the two works of grace. His stress on the continuity of the sanctifying process came close to suggesting that the second crisis was inconspicuous. His definition of entire sanctification in terms of intention or motive precluded the kinds of specific descriptions of the life of the entirely sanctified. There were no glorious portrayals of the life of the entirely sanctified in contrast to that of the 'merely' saved. As Wesley said, it was the loving God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength and our neighbour as ourselves. This was not perfectionism. There were four fundamental freedoms: freedom for God, freedom for other persons, freedom from the earth and freedom from self-domination. This resulted in renewal in the image of God, not completed by a second work of grace, but a life-long process.

Some perceived this as a radical departure from the traditional Nazarene explication of the doctrine, divergent from the articles of faith and subversive to the historic understanding of the doctrine. What was remarkable was not the General Superintendents' comment that not every affirmation would solicit full agreement from all readers, but that the book could be considered true to the doctrinal standards of the church.

#### E. The Theological Formulation

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Two of the three volumes of *Exploring Christian Holiness* appeared in the 1980s – Vol. 1, *The Biblical Foundations* by W.T. Purkiser [in 1983], and Vol. 2, *The Historical Development* by Paul M. Bassett and William M. Greathouse and Vol. 3, *The Theological Formulation* by Richard S. Taylor [in 1985]. Vols 1 & 3 were added to the Course of Study. Taylor's volume was written while he was on the editorial board for Dunning's *Grace, Faith and Holiness*, and represented a more traditional formulation of the doctrine. In it he directly challenged the positions held by Wynkoop and Dunning. He refuted the relational understanding of sin and salvation, calling it heretical: 'It is heretical because a denial of an inherited sinful bent, not the product of one's own choices but the product of the Fall, is Pelagianism ... And furthermore, it is certainly not Wesleyan.'

Taylor believed that there was a qualitative difference between initial sanctification and entire sanctification. Failure to discriminate led to the ‘growth theory’ of sanctification. ‘Sanctification is an act of cleansing and unless inbred sin be removed, there can be no fullness of life, no perfection of love.’ He also insisted that entire sanctification was *the* baptism with the Holy Spirit. He went so far as to suggest that an emphasis on sanctification as a gradual process instead of as an instantaneous second crisis experience was due to sin. It was a mark of the carnal mind to prefer gradual process to crises, but gradualness was not compatible with (a) the unitary nature of indwelling sin (b) the will and power of God to make us holy now (c) the nature of faith (d) the hunger and thirst after righteousness by a convicted believer yearning for deliverance (e) the challenge and expectation of immediacy that permeates the NT. Taylor intentionally distinguished his doctrine from Wynkoop’s and Dunning’s.

Thus in 1986, Nazarene Publishing House was publishing and in 1990, the Ministerial Course of Study was recommending divergent interpretations of the distinctive doctrine of entire sanctification. Beginning with the publication of *A Theology of Love* in 1973, there were competing explanations of the distinctive doctrine of entire sanctification in a denomination which had historically understood its primary reason for being to consist in the preservation and propagation of that distinctive doctrine. In the light of the two divergent and apparently irreconcilable explications of the doctrine of entire sanctification within the denomination itself, as evidenced by the heated debate at the 1985 General Assembly, the question in the last decades of the twentieth century was whether or not the Church of the Nazarene had a coherent and cogent doctrine of holiness at all.

## Chapter 8: We Are a Holiness People

### A. Why the Holiness Movement Died

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In March, 1999, *God's Revivalist* published an article by Richard Taylor, 'Why the Holiness Movement died.' The title, he admitted, was a rhetorical flourish, but he did believe that the holiness message was in serious decline and imminent danger of dying. The first reason was the fallen creatures did not want to hear it. But he acknowledged that the extravagant claims made for the second blessing were often unrealistic and so undermined the doctrine. The second reason was the hypocrisy of those who claimed to be entirely sanctified. Thirdly he suggested that the influences of pastoral counseling and the church growth movement had distracted pastors from their first obligation to preach the message of heart holiness. Taylor also blamed a group of teachers with earned doctrines from 'liberal' schools who had come back to teach in holiness academic institutions and, without malice necessarily, had contributed to the demise of the doctrine. His final volley was at one single book: Mildred Bangs Wynkoop's *A Theology of Love* bore much of the blame. Her relational understanding of holiness tended to undermine the Nazarene distinctives concerning the second work of grace. He called for a return to the traditional proclamation of entire sanctification.

J. Kenneth Grider's *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology* was published in 1994, six years after Dunning and represented a more traditional formulation. Another voice critical of the 'relational' formulation was Donald S. Metz. He had published *Studies in Biblical Holiness* in 1971, and this was placed on the Course of Study in 1976. In 1994, he published independently *Some Crucial Issues in the Church of the Nazarene* which called for a return to the traditional formulation of the doctrine to save the church 'embalming itself for burial.' Of course, Wynkoop and Dunning did not see their work as 'subversive'. They believed they were saving the doctrine from certain extinction by providing a more truly Wesleyan formulation and in the process a more relevant and more comprehensible explanation.

### B. A Mission Statement for the Church of the Nazarene

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In the Spring of 1999, the General Superintendents printed a mission statement. It used language cautiously representative of traditional formulations: 'Then in the act of entire sanctification, also called the baptism with the Holy Spirit, He cleanses us from original sin and indwells us with His holy presence.' But they also included the emphases of later formulations: that while the divine image was restored in entire sanctification, 'we have not yet arrived spiritually; our life-long goal is Christlikeness.' There was to be 'continued yieldedness, obedience and faith so that we are 'being transformed in his likeness with ever-increasing glory.' But it is difficult to imagine that the mere assertion of a formulation would bring resolution to the lack of theological definition of entire sanctification. The General Superintendents were hopeful: 'We believe that human nature, and ultimately society, can be radically and permanently changed by the grace of God.' But that was precisely the issue. That ebullient confidence of the opening of the century was gone. 'Radical optimism' had faded. In response to the growing awareness

of the 'deep sinfulness of man', mid-century holiness theologians had enlarged their understanding of infirmity and restricted their definition of sin (Brockett, Purkiser, Taylor). A later school (Wynkoop, Dunning) had responded by also changing definitions. Sanctification was to be understood more as a life-long process instead of an instantaneous work. The problem with these definitions was that they effectively emasculated the promise of entire sanctification at least as it had been understood at the beginning of the century. The Church of the Nazarene at the beginning of the twenty-first century is thus confronted with a theological identity crisis with no clear resolution. It seems hard to imagine that the denomination could authentically return to the early twentieth century understanding even though this is what is articulated in the Articles of Faith. Yet the later 'relational' formulations have resulted in a doctrine of entire sanctification without much distinction as a specific second work. How can the church understand the promise of freedom from sin while at the same time recognizing the reality of the deep sinfulness of man. Can there be a 'theologically realistic' formulation of the doctrine that preserves the promise of grace consistent with the problems of man? If not, the Church of the Nazarene must reconcile itself to being a denomination without clear theological definition concerning its cardinal doctrine.