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What Can the Wesleyan/Holiness Tradition Contribute to Christian Higher Education?

John E. and Susie C. Stanley

The Wesleyan/Holiness movement began as an attempt to reclaim traits of the eighteenth-century Wesleyan or Methodist revival which, Wesleyan/Holiness leaders contended, the broad mainstream of Methodism had forsaken. The largest denominations of the tradition are the Salvation Army, the Church of the Nazarene, and the Church of God (Anderson). Smaller denominations include the Free Methodist Church and the Wesleyan Church. These denominations, except for the Salvation Army, emerged from the nineteenth-century holiness movement in the United States.

Major Motifs in the Wesleyan/Holiness Tradition

Despite the separate distinctives of these specific denominations which began as reform movements, three general theological principles nourish the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition: (1) the Wesleyan quadrilateral as a theological method, (2) sanctification of the believer and the call to holy living, and (3) social holiness. Understanding these three essentials not only explains foundational theological impulses but also acquaints one with the spirit of the Wesleyan/Holiness heritage.

The Wesleyan Quadrilateral as Theological Method

The Wesleyan quadrilateral describes the four essential elements in the theological method of the Wesleyan/Holiness movement: Scripture, tradition, reason, and

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experience.¹ They were the key ingredients of the Anglican theological method inherited by John Wesley. The manner in which the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition implicitly appropriated these Anglican elements from the beginning, and then eventually explicitly adapted and endorsed them as the Wesleyan quadrilateral, illustrates the theological inclusiveness characteristic of the tradition.

The Bible is the primary means of God's revelation to humanity. Foundational as a source of doctrine, inspiration, moral guidance, and spiritual formation, the Bible serves not only as the record of God's revelation through Israel, Jesus, and the church, but also as the controlling boundary by which other theological claims are measured. Second Timothy 3:16 witnesses to Scripture's being "inspired by God" for guidance in doctrine and "training in righteousness," or living.

Tradition refers to the inherited witness, beliefs, and practices of religious bodies. Affirming tradition as a source of truth recognizes that one's religious heritage influences how one receives and perceives the Bible. While the quadrilateral rightly notes the role of tradition in shaping persons and communities, holiness churches which began as reform movements obviously have adapted varied stances toward the role of tradition, as will be illustrated later in this chapter.

Wesley affirmed human reason as a third avenue toward theological understanding. Reason is God's gift to humanity, reflecting the mind of God. Reason inspires human creativity, enables us to think about God and life, and guides moral inquiry. Although sin stained and distorted human reason after the fall, originally the gift of reason was part of what it meant to be created in the image of God. This positive regard for reason generated positive implications for Christian higher education in the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition.

Experience is the validating link which enables persons and groups to know the truth God discloses through Scripture, tradition, and reason. Experience had two dimensions for Wesley. On the one hand, experience was like Old Testament wisdom. It denoted the accumulated reservoir of practical knowledge gleaned from living a God-honoring life. On the other hand, experience connoted the validating presence of the Holy Spirit. Dennis Kinlaw, former president of Asbury College, observes that for Wesley experience was

a third gift from the Spirit, a personal and immediate authentication that moved Christian truth from information about God and faith in the Gospel to an existential personal apprehension of that truth for oneself.²

1. Albert C. Outler coined the term. See his "The Wesleyan Quadrilateral in John Wesley," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* [hereafter *WTJ*] 20 (Spring 1985): 7-18; also Donald A. D. Thorsen, *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990).

2. Dennis Kinlaw, "The Bible and Theology" in E. E. Carpenter and W. McCown, eds., *Asbury Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), p. 88.

Placing value on experience as the Spirit's confirming role in the inward, subjective life is consistent with Wesley's testimony that his heart was strangely warmed at Aldersgate. According to Wesley, "Revelation is complete, yet we cannot be saved unless Christ be revealed in our hearts, neither unless God cleanses the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit."³ Again, in his *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, Wesley wrote concerning the inspiration of Scripture, "The Spirit of God not only once inspired those who wrote it, but continually inspires, supernaturally, those that read it with earnest prayer."⁴ Albert F. Gray, a pastoral theologian and founding president of Pacific Bible College, now Warner Pacific College, wrote a theology in which he entitled the section on biblical inspiration, "It Is The Person That Is Inspired."⁵ The role of the Holy Spirit in authenticating experience for Christians means that the Spirit transforms the Bible into God's Word for believers. Truth is relational. The confirming presence of the Spirit enables the realities taught in Scripture, perceived by reason, and delivered via tradition to become the truth necessary for salvation, spiritual formation, and social witness. Because truth is relational and experiential, humility and tolerance should season the believer and the church. The Wesleyan quadrilateral highlights the work of the Holy Spirit and Christian experience. As the song writer D. Otis Teasley phrased it, "I know in my heart what it means."⁶

Sanctification

The second essential theological distinctive is sanctification, which is the defining doctrine and experience of the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition. John Wesley spoke of Christian perfection as a growing love in the believer's life as the Holy Spirit cleansed the human heart. In the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition sanctification came to be understood as a definite second work of grace following justification and salvation. Sanctification purifies the heart of inbred sin and is accomplished by the Spirit who empowers the believer for service. In spite of intramural debates regarding the meaning of sanctifica-

3. John Wesley, *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, ed. by John Telford (London: The Epworth Press, 1931), vol. 6, p. 28, as cited by Rob L. Staples, "John Wesley's Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," *WTJ* 21 (Spring/Fall 1986): 100.

4. John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* (London: Epworth, 1966), p. 794.

5. Albert F. Gray, *Christian Theology. Book 1* (Anderson: Warner Press, 1944), p. 80.

6. D. Otis Teasley, "I Know in My heart What It Means," in *Worship the Lord: Hymnal of the Church of God* (Anderson: Warner Press, 1989), #417. Outler notes, "But always, Biblical revelation must be received in the heart by faith: this is the requirement of 'experience'" ("The Wesleyan Quadrilateral," p. 11).

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tion, Wesleyan/Holiness scholars concur that the theology of sanctification is the heart of the heritage.

The Wesleyan/Holiness movement was a reform movement combating moral pollution in society and doctrinal dilution in church. Thus, it is easy to understand why early leaders maintained that purity of heart and power for service were two essential aspects of sanctification. Three biblical texts anchored holiness preaching — 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Romans 12:2, and Acts 1:8. First Thessalonians 5:23 and Romans 12:2 called for purity of heart and holy living. According to these passages, the Spirit produces a people whose lives demonstrate a positive change in daily behavior. Moral integrity becomes the intention of holiness Christians. But purity should not be bottled up. Holiness preachers also proclaimed Jesus' promise in Acts 1:8: "but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Because of its emphasis on the sanctified life, the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition stresses what the saved self can become rather than what the sinful self has been. The accent falls on what humans can become through the continuing work of the purifying and empowering Holy Spirit. A high estimate of the church prevails because the Spirit calls the church to be a fellowship demonstrating the divine possibilities of life together in the Spirit. Sanctification orients the church toward continual renewal and outreach. The gifts of the Spirit empower the church for service. The Wesleyan/Holiness tradition stands on the left wing of the Protestant Reformation because of its optimistic view of sanctified human potential, its stress upon love as an actualization rather than a mere intention of Christian experience, and its emphasis on spiritual experience. The Spirit's purifying and empowering ministry makes the renewal of persons, the church, and society possible here and now rather than postponing renewal to a future age or dispensation.

Social Holiness

Social holiness, the third characteristic of the tradition, indicates the compassionate ministries and social impulses which emerged within the Wesleyan/Holiness movement. Scholars and lay persons alike often categorize Protestants into two camps: those who are concerned with saving souls and those who focus on transforming the social order.⁷ For John Wesley, ministry was not an either/or proposition; he placed one foot firmly in each camp by refusing to separate the two. In addition to preaching to the poor on the streets, Wesley started an employment bureau, a loan fund, a medical dispensary, and

7. Jean Miller Schmidt outlined the two-party system in *Souls or the Social Order: The Two-Party System in American Protestantism* (Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, 1991), p. 173.

homes for the poor. Wesley's followers continued his emphasis on love. William Booth, cofounder of the Salvation Army, summarized all of religion in the word "love," declaring that love must be put into action.⁸ Booth's *In Darkest England and The Way Out* detailed the Salvation Army's social campaign to end poverty, minister to criminal offenders, and rehabilitate persons crippled by drink and prostitution. Booth envisioned his plan as "a scheme for the working out of social salvation."⁹

In the United States, the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition reflected both the social holiness of Wesley and the temporal salvation of Booth. Speaking of "sanctified compassion,"¹⁰ historian Timothy Smith observed:

all the socially potent doctrines of revivalism reached white heat in the Oberlin and Wesleyan experience of sanctification — ethical seriousness, the call to full personal consecration, the belief in God's immanence, in his readiness to transform the present world through the outpoured Holy Ghost, and the exaltation of Christian love.¹¹

Social holiness was especially evident in ministries to the urban poor and women. Also, it spawned a zeal for education. Love fueled holiness outreach to those in need. Holiness churches sponsored missionary homes in cities where newcomers could live while seeking work and permanent housing. Such homes existed in Detroit, Spokane, Denver, Seattle, Cincinnati, and elsewhere. Phineas F. Bresee, a founder of the Church of the Nazarene, planted churches "in the heart of the city . . . where the gospel could be preached to the poor."¹² Bresee wanted church buildings "to be 'plain and cheap' so that everything should say welcome to the poor."¹³

The inclusive ministry of Jesus, the outpouring of the Spirit on men and women at Pentecost, and Galatians 3:28¹⁴ motivated Wesleyan/Holiness

8. William Booth, *In Darkest England and The Way Out* (London: International Headquarters of the Salvation Army, 1890), pp. 219-220.

9. Booth, *In Darkest England*, p. 271.

10. Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform: Revivalism in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Abingdon, 1957); reprinted as *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Revivalism on the Eve of the Civil War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), p. 176.

11. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, p. 154. Although Smith described holiness prior to the Civil War, the social holiness activities of the following paragraph continue the emphasis of Wesley and Booth.

12. "Our Social Service Heritage: Unto the Poor," *Herald of Holiness* 72 (October 1, 1983): 18.

13. "Our Social Service Heritage," p. 18.

14. Galatians 3:28 (NIV) says, "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."

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leaders to value and ordain women as ministers. Benjamin Titus Roberts, founder of the Free Methodist Church, penned *Ordaining Women*¹⁵ to expound Galatians 3:28 as the key text on women in ministry. Alma White, founding bishop of the Pillar of Fire Church, published *Woman's Chains*, a monthly magazine lobbying for women's rights in church and society. Susie C. Stanley has documented a holiness hermeneutic supporting women's equality and ministries of Wesleyan/Holiness women.¹⁶ In 1908, 20 percent of Nazarene clergy were women, and in 1925 the Church of God (Anderson) reported that 32 percent of its clergy were women, while a majority of Salvation Army officers have always been women.

Wesleyan/Holiness churches founded schools such as Adrian College as early as 1848 and Roberts Wesleyan College in 1866. Several later schools grew out of urban mission homes. Schools often served as regional training centers for churches. Although a strong belief in the imminent return of Christ led people to sing "This World Is Not My Home," a concern for this-worldly obedience prompted them to establish rescue missions and plant colleges to train leaders for future generations.

These ministries of social holiness were the external dimensions of the doctrine and experience of sanctification which was understood as holiness embodied in love. As a social ethic based on the call for moral integrity or purity in persons and society, social holiness is possible — holiness advocates contended — because the Holy Spirit empowers believers to serve in ministries of love and justice.

What Has the Wesleyan/Holiness Tradition Contributed to Christian Higher Education?

Having defined three distinctives of the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition, it is essential to consider how the Wesleyan quadrilateral, the doctrine and experience of sanctification with its call to holy living, and social holiness have influenced Christian higher education both positively and negatively.

15. Benjamin T. Roberts, *Ordaining Women* (Rochester: Earnest Christian Publishing House, 1891).

16. Susie C. Stanley, *Feminist Pillar of Fire* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1993), pp. 98-104; also her "Empowered Foremothers: Wesleyan/Holiness Women Speak To Today's Christian Feminists," *WTJ* 24 (1989): 103-116, and "'Tell Me the Old, Old Story': Analysis of Autobiographies by Holiness Women," *WTJ* 29 (Spring/Fall 1994): 7-22.

The Quadrilateral in Wesleyan Higher Education

The Wesleyan quadrilateral fostered a sense of theological tolerance. That tolerance becomes apparent in light of how holiness schools have understood and studied Scripture. Amid the debate on biblical authority between fundamentalism — and its successor, evangelicalism — and liberalism, the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition understands itself as a third alternative. The nineteenth-century Wesleyan/Holiness revival occurred during the period when modernism was embracing historical criticism, along with its tendency to discount the supernatural dimensions of biblical revelation. Fundamentalism was a theological and social response to modernism. In 1919 the World Christian Fundamentals Association insisted upon inerrancy as essential to the doctrine of biblical authority. Fundamentalism, with its doctrine of inerrancy, made inroads into Wesleyan/Holiness schools and churches.¹⁷ However, both fundamentalism and evangelicalism differ from the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition on the three basic issues of social holiness, sanctification, and the understanding and use of the Bible as informed by the Wesleyan quadrilateral.

Fundamentalism seeks renewal in a millennial dispensation at the end of time whereas the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition, with its social holiness emphasis, seeks renewal through compassionate ministries of love and justice in this world while awaiting God's ultimate action. Fundamentalism is pessimistic regarding human nature and the reign of sin whereas the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition's doctrine of sanctification is intrinsically optimistic regarding human renewal. The fatal flaw of fundamentalism and a broad swath of evangelicalism is that the doctrine of inerrancy turns the Bible into a self-authenticating revelation. The Bible is defined as the Word of God rather than being a witness to the Word which became incarnate in Jesus Christ. On the other hand, the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition has insisted that the Spirit gives life and applies Scripture to the needs of the believer and church, as has been indicated in the quotations from John Wesley and A. F. Gray. The Wesleyan/Holiness heritage values the confirming and continuing presence of the Spirit in validating the truth of what the Bible claims, renewing human potential, and empowering and actualizing social holiness.

Despite its intrinsic theological incompatibility, fundamentalism with its doctrine of inerrancy did infiltrate the Wesleyan/Holiness movement. At the same time, the early history of the Wesleyan Theological Society (WTS) reflects both tolerance for diversity and a conscious effort to preserve the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition as a third viable alternative to the contesting claims of fundamentalism/evangelicalism and liberalism. The WTS began in 1965 as

17. See Paul Bassett, "The Fundamentalist Leavening of the Holiness Movement: 1914-1940," *WTJ* 13 (Spring 1978): 65-91.

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the academic and theological commission of the National Holiness Association, now known as the Christian Holiness Association. Kenneth Geiger, in a paper at the initial meeting of the WTS, described the inerrancy of the original autographs of Scripture as "the official position of the National Holiness Association and, quite uniformly, the view of Wesleyan-Arminians everywhere."¹⁸ Doctrinal statements in the 1966-69 issues of the *Wesleyan Theological Journal* (WTJ) also affirmed inerrancy. At the 1967 meeting of the WTS, however, a panel on "Biblical Inerrancy" debated the issue. W. Ralph Thompson, secretary-treasurer of the society, ended his 1966-69 annual report with a plea for reconciliation. Thompson stated his own commitment to the doctrine of inerrancy. Then he added:

Let us be exceedingly careful lest we take any step that will weaken our position with respect to the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures. But if a change in the wording of our doctrinal statement could be made that would protect our position and at the same time respect that of our brethren whose intellectual honesty will not allow them to subscribe to our statement, I recommend that such an action be taken.¹⁹

Members of the society, all of whom were inerrantists, revised the doctrinal statement in the 1969 meeting by removing the inerrancy clause. That revised statement on Scripture appeared in the 1970 edition of the *WTJ*.

Two recent Wesleyan/Holiness publications reflect the continuing diversity within the tradition. *The Wesley Bible*²⁰ required "that all participating scholars sign a statement affirming their belief in the verbal and plenary inspiration of Scripture and in the inerrancy of the original autographs."²¹ On the other hand, William Cannon in his "General Introduction" to the 1992 *Asbury Bible Commentary* advised,

Rather than speak of the inerrancy of Scripture or verbal inspiration, it is much better to speak of the defectability of the Bible or its infallibility, the breathing of the Holy Spirit upon its authors to assure their accuracy in presenting God's plan of salvation in its perfection.²²

18. Kenneth G. Geiger, "The Biblical Basis for the Doctrine of Holiness," *WTJ* 1 (Spring 1966): 43, as quoted in John G. Merritt, "Fellowship In Ferment: A History of the Wesleyan Theological Society, 1965-84," *WTJ* 21 (1986): 189.

19. Secretary-treasurer's report to the annual meeting, Wesleyan Theological Society, November 1967, as quoted in Merritt, "Fellowship In Ferment," 195.

20. *The Wesley Bible*, ed. by Albert F. Harper (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1990). Frank A. Spina pointed out this diversity in "Wesleyan Faith Seeking Biblical Understanding," *WTJ* 30 (Fall 1995): 26-49.

21. "Preface," *The Wesley Bible*, p. xiii.

22. William Cannon, "General Introduction," *Asbury Bible Commentary*, p. 18.

In summary, although the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition is in many ways incompatible with fundamentalism and its inerrancy approach, a minority within the tradition has affirmed and continues to affirm a form of inerrancy while still stressing the confirming, authenticating work of the Spirit. A tolerant willingness to agree to disagree has prevailed.

How has the Bible actually been taught in Wesleyan/Holiness schools? Most institutions have utilized the historical critical method. Robert Traina at Asbury Theological Seminary, for example, used an inductive method of Bible study and related his inductive approach to other contemporary exegetical and hermeneutical methods.²³ During the period from 1920-1945 — the very period when fundamentalists voiced their alarm most loudly over critical study of Scripture — many holiness schools employed the historical critical method with modifications to allow for a belief in biblical miracles and healings.²⁴

For all of this, however, the quadrilateral's accent on reason was late blooming in Wesleyan/Holiness schools. Early theologizing, for example, often involved little more than statements of church doctrine. Yet there were exceptions. In 1919, the Church of the Nazarene requested H. Orton Wiley to write a systematic theology, which was eventually published in 1940 by the Nazarene Publishing House. In addition, Russell Byrum produced a systematic theology for the Church of God in 1925.

Likewise, the quadrilateral's notion of tradition received mixed responses in the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition. Schools sponsored by primitivist churches, such as the Church of God (Anderson), initially valued tradition only if the tradition could be traced to the New Testament church. Ironically, some primitivist theologians knew and used church history and systematic theology to argue their case for primitivism.²⁵

Because of the emphasis on the Holy Spirit as the guide to and authenticator of truth, Wesleyan/Holiness advocates have understood knowledge as a matter of the heart as well as of the mind. A liability of this posture has been an attitude that says, "trust the Spirit rather than rely on human planning and reasoning."

The Wesleyan quadrilateral's holistic inclusion of Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason implies that all facets of a liberal arts curriculum embody

23. Robert Traina, "Inductive Bible Study Reexamined in the Light of Contemporary Hermeneutics" in Wayne McCown and James Earl Massey, eds., *Interpreting God's Word For Today* (Anderson: Warner Press, 1982), pp. 53-109. Essays in the book document the methodological diversity of Wesleyan/Holiness biblical scholars in the early 1980s.

24. For two accounts of how they experienced the Bible being taught at Wesleyan/Holiness schools, see Spina, "Wesleyan Faith Seeking Biblical Understanding," *WTJ* 30 (Fall 1995): 27-29; and John E. Stanley's "Elements of a Postmodern Holiness Hermeneutic Illustrated by Way of the Book of Revelation," *WTJ* 28 (Spring/Fall 1993): 23-43.

25. See John E. Stanley, "Unity Amid Diversity: Interpreting The Book of Revelation In the Church of God (Anderson)," *WTJ* 25 (Fall 1990): 74-98.

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God's truth. Ideally, therefore, Christian higher education would involve learning to write, to speak, to read widely, to know how to ask critical questions, to use the scientific method, to appreciate the fine arts, to value physical fitness, and to integrate faith and learning. On this view, the humanities and the sciences would be vital parts of the curricula of liberal arts colleges in the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition.

But this ideal has not always been implemented. Melvin Dieter contends that many in the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition are unclear whether they belong to a church or a revival movement. This ambivalence plays itself out in the educational institutions these people have established. Thus, while supporting the classical liberal arts college, every holiness denomination, according to Dieter, has also established Bible schools to train ministers.²⁶ Sometimes the Bible school founders felt motivated by an urgent mission to restore a sense of evangelism which they thought dormant in the liberal arts colleges. Some Bible schools do not offer courses in the humanities and sciences because their administrators view them as unnecessary. Sometimes, however, Bible schools have developed into liberal arts colleges. Individual denominations within the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition vary in their educational requirements for ministry: some require seminary training; others require no higher education at all.

Sanctification in Wesleyan Higher Education

The emphasis on sanctification and holy living has had positive and negative repercussions on campus life. At times this emphasis has produced a vital worship life. The size and prominence of the chapel buildings at Anderson University and Asbury College, for example, reflect the centrality of a strong chapel ministry. Indeed, some of the calls to commitment and holy living issued in chapel at Anderson College rank for many students as important moments of spiritual formation. Many experience there the full meaning of the Wesleyan quadrilateral with its emphasis on holistically appropriating Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience.²⁷ In this way, worship integrates faith and learning, links theology to the arts, and issues a call to committed holy living — all an essential outgrowth of the traditional Wesleyan emphasis on sanctification.

26. Melvin E. Dieter, "Theological Education in the American Holiness Movement" (unpublished manuscript, December 6, 1993), p. 37. After establishing Nazarene Theological Seminary in 1944, for example, the General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene in 1964 founded Nazarene Bible College at Colorado Springs.

27. This was the experience of John E. Stanley, one of the authors of this essay, when he was a student at Anderson College (now Anderson University) from 1961 to 1965.

Moreover, sound holiness theology often becomes incarnate in relationships between faculty, staff, and students, and these relationships often shape lives, motivate ministries, and transform shy, social wallflowers into confident leaders. Periodically we meet persons who feel overwhelmed by the pressures of college, work, and family, or feel baffled by vocational indecision. In the belief that the Spirit sustains students in their seasons of preparation, we encourage them to seek staying power from the Spirit who is the heart of the Wesleyan/Holiness legacy. That has been a dynamic asset to higher education in the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition.

On the other hand, the theme of sanctification can sometimes foster legalism and a fanatical "Christ against culture" stance. As a result, extreme separate-from-the-world behavior patterns sometimes exist on campuses aligned with the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition. Dieter suggests that legalism has often "shattered the vitality of the movement's spirituality and its outreach in evangelism and mission."²⁸ As a result, campus lifestyle codes occasionally convey mistrust of the sanctified student's ability to be a disciplined dresser, dater, or driver. Some colleges and universities in the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition, for example, restricted unchaperoned off-campus dating in the 1950s, prohibited the wearing of shorts to class or chapel in the 1960s, and forbade women to wear slacks to class or chapel in the 1970s. A continuing challenge is the task of implementing the call to holy living in lifestyle agreements which meet the requirements for integrity, as perceived by diverse campus constituencies, without compromising trust in students.

Social Holiness in Wesleyan Higher Education

Social holiness, the third component of this heritage, has also continued to thrive on campuses aligned with the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition. This tradition's historic commitment to the poor manifests itself especially when colleges understand themselves as opportunity schools, willing to accept some students with weak academic backgrounds and to provide them with an opportunity to develop their gifts and talents. Twice in the last twelve years at Warner Pacific College, for instance, the presidential award, annually given to the senior who best exemplifies the college's service values, has gone to a graduate who was admitted on conditional status.

Service through compassionate ministries has also characterized these campuses. At Anderson College, for example, Professor Marie Strong developed a student led Christianity-In-Action program in the 1950s. On a weekly basis, students participated in jail and prison ministries, shut-in visitation,

28. Dieter, "Theological Education," p. 8.

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literacy clinics, children's home visitation, mental hospital visitation, a ministry at a home for troubled girls, and a cooperative ministry with clients of the local county's Department of Social Services. By 1963-64, 25 percent of the student body was actively involved in Christianity-In-Action ministries. From 1986 to 1994, Warner Pacific College sponsored the first on-campus shelter in the United States for homeless families. Both Azusa Pacific University and Warner Pacific College sponsor annual spring break mission trips to Mexico which involve social outreach to the poor. Several schools sponsor student summer service projects which plug students into internships or ministries, often of a cross-cultural nature. These ventures incorporate service into the informal curriculum, provide leadership development opportunities, extend the classroom into the hurting world, foster internal reflection and prayer, and preserve the legacy of social holiness. Through compassionate ministries like these, biblical admonitions to social holiness become internalized.

Historically, a commitment to the equality and ordination of women has characterized most Wesleyan/Holiness churches. This commitment declined after World War II, however, except in the Salvation Army, until a renewed concern began to develop in the 1970s for recapturing this Wesleyan/Holiness distinctive. At least 25 students attended the first Wesleyan/Holiness Women Clergy Conference in 1994. Thirteen sponsoring schools subsidized a publication resulting from that conference, *Wesleyan/Holiness Women Clergy: A Preliminary Bibliography*,²⁹ and covered expenses for at least one of their students.

A disturbing collapse of this tradition, however, occurs each year when outstanding women who graduate from Wesleyan/Holiness colleges discover that the promise of their call and their preparation does not culminate in ministerial placement as readily for them as for some of their less qualified male peers.³⁰

Over the years a significant percentage of faculty in Wesleyan/Holiness institutions have been women, and especially in recent years several women have served as academic deans. However, as of 1995, there are fewer than ten women with doctoral degrees in a theological discipline in the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition. Students, therefore, have very few models of women serving as leaders in theological disciplines. Obviously, Wesleyan/Holiness schools in recent years have not lived up to the promise for women that is inherent in their theological heritage.

Likewise, on many Wesleyan/Holiness campuses, a powerful strain of social

29. Susie C. Stanley, *Wesleyan/Holiness Women Clergy. A Preliminary Bibliography* (Portland: Western Evangelical Seminary, 1994).

30. C. S. Cowles speaks of this dilemma in *A Woman's Place?: Leadership in the Church* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1993).

and political conservatism currently threatens to smother the theme of social holiness intrinsic to the heritage. Two examples will suffice. First, people who have spoken on gender-related issues at various Wesleyan/Holiness colleges report hostility and intolerance. This was especially the case in the aftermath of the 1992 presidential election. Second, faculty who teach at Wesleyan/Holiness institutions report a growing unwillingness among students to debate political and social issues. Faculty who attend Wesleyan Theological Studies meetings, for example, speak of a growing intolerance on campuses and an insensitivity to human needs which would have been the focus of compassionate ministries in earlier years.

Conclusions

One wonders if the threat to social holiness, and perhaps to the entire Wesleyan/Holiness tradition, stems from a loss of institutional identity. Given the increasing pressures toward uniformity, many find it easier to identify with evangelicalism and the Christian College Coalition than to nurture and sustain their own Wesleyan/Holiness heritage. Further, the cost of institutional survival has made many Wesleyan/Holiness institutions more market-driven than mission-driven. To increase their enrollments, these schools often seek to attract fundamentalist and evangelical students who have little sense of the Wesleyan/Holiness heritage.

One important way to resist absorption into a broad evangelical culture is to revisit one's own institutional identity on a regular basis so that faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees can remember and affirm their heritage. Seattle Pacific University's religion faculty is a case in point. Sensing the possibility of absorption of that school into a broad evangelical ethos, SPU faculty members actively call their school to remember its Wesleyan/Holiness origins.³¹ Likewise, in 1994, the administration, faculty, and trustees of Northwest Nazarene College inaugurated the Wesley Center for Applied Theology. The center features three components: the Wesleyan Studies Program, Compassionate Care, and the Church Growth and Ministerial Resource Program. According to Richard Hagood, president of Northwest Nazarene College, the

31. Frank Spina has delivered a series of faculty discussion papers on this topic including "Hiding Our Lamp Under a Bushel: The 'Secret' Wesleyan Factor at Seattle Pacific University" (unpublished manuscript, September 11, 1991), and "*Christianity Today* or *The Christian Century*? Where Is Seattle Pacific University headed?" (unpublished manuscript, no date); also, Robert W. Wall distinguishes Seattle Pacific University's Wesleyan/Holiness identity from that of evangelicalism in his review of *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation*, by James Davidson Hunter, in *Seattle Pacific University Review* 6 (1989): 44-55. Wall defines six characteristics of Wesleyan/Holiness Christian higher education on pp. 53-55.

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center's purpose was to "bring the essentials of the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition into creative and redemptive contact with the contemporary world."³² Such efforts can preserve and renew the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition.

The lifeblood of the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition flows through the three arteries of the Wesleyan quadrilateral as a theological method, the emphasis on sanctification and holy living, and social holiness. Schools within the tradition must not allow these arteries to become clogged through cultural absorption into the larger movements of evangelicalism or liberalism.

32. Letter from Richard Hagood, president of Northwest Nazarene College, to Susie C. Stanley, January 9, 1994. Subsequently, Point Loma Nazarene College has established the Wesleyan Center for 21st Century Studies.

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