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A Study of the History and Philosophy of Holiness Ecumenicity

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A STUDY OF THE HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY
OF HOLINESS ECUMENICITY

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of The
Western Evangelical Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Divinity

By
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	2
Statement of the Problem	2
Justification of the Study	2
Limitations of the Study	3
Methods of Procedure	4
Sources of Data	5
II. APPROACHES TO THE ECUMENICAL PROBLEM	8
What Is Ecumenicity?	8
Transconfessional Approaches to Ecumenicity	11
Modern Ecumenical Movements	16
III. THE HISTORY OF HOLINESS ECUMENICITY	28
Introduction	28
Holiness Movements before Wesley	29
John Wesley and Holiness Ecumenicity	37
Ecumenicity and Methodistic Sect Formation	42
Ecumenicity and the National Holiness Movement	46
IV. THE PHILOSOPHY OF HOLINESS ECUMENICITY	53
Introduction	53
The Unity of the Spirit	54
The Unity in the Spirit	62

CHAPTER	PAGE
V. CONTEMPORARY HOLINESS ECUMENICITY	69
Introduction	69
The Present Situation	70
Holiness Ecumenicity and the Proposed Federation . . .	75
The Study Conferences on Federation	79
Holiness Ecumenicity and the Prospective View	86
VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	90
Summary	91
Conclusions	92
BIBLIOGRAPHY	95

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The problem, of this study, was to investigate the history and philosophy of holiness ecumenicity, its relationship to the holiness movement, and in particular, to the National Holiness Association.

Justification of the Study

Although books have been written concerning the history of the National Holiness Association and the Holiness Movement, and studies have been made of historical figures who have been influential in its formative process, organization, and corporate state, little has been written in relation to the co-operative, merger, and associate efforts of the holiness people and denominations among themselves. Very little has been written concerning the part of the holiness segment of Christendom in ecumenical trends and their view concerning ecumenicity.

Today, much material is available on ecumenical relations among the churches of the National and World Councils of Churches, the Roman Catholic Church, and others such as these. But little is found written concerning the holiness view of ecumenicity and the trends among the holiness people toward unity and corporate endeavors. Such material is a prime necessity in this day when a Federation of Holiness Churches is pondered, proposed and advanced.

It is felt that a philosophy of ecumenicity resulting from this research and investigation will be of value and benefit to the holiness bodies and the government of the organization called the National Holiness Association. It is hoped that it will be of value not only to this area of Christianity, but also to those denominations involved in merger or separation; in ecumenical bodies or separatist bodies.

Limitations of the Study

By reason of the numerous church bodies claiming to be of holiness persuasion, this study was limited to the organization of the National Holiness Association and the churches affiliated with it. Again, it was limited to a general approach to the holiness movement with the historical idiosyncrasies of each denomination not being included. Mention of certain historical facts in relation to individual denominations was made only where it was beneficial to the presentation of the theme: holiness ecumenicity. Thus, much detailed investigation was eliminated since it would have burdened and distorted the main area of study. The endeavor was to be objective and treat the entire holiness movement as it relates to the ecumenical idea.

Another limitation which was made was that of limiting the study to that area of Christianity which is of the holiness-evangelical strain. Comparison and evaluation of this area's view of ecumenicity with the views of other areas of Christianity was made only in so far as it was necessary for the clarification of the holiness position. The total potpourri of philosophical speculation was not dealt with, but only the

philosophical position of the Holiness Movement.

Methods of Procedure

First, an attempt was made to study the area of ecumenicity as it relates to the totality of Christianity or the Church. This was done by defining the word 'ecumenicity' and presenting the need of understanding its contemporary meaning as it relates to every Christian. The feelings which are varied regarding ecumenicity and the ecumenical movement were presented and many sides of the question were observed. Also, a presentation of the transconfessional approaches to ecumenicity was made. This was done in order to gain a total Christian perspective of the term and the various movements which endeavor to incorporate it. Three principal approaches or philosophies of ecumenicity were studied: Erasmian, Ecclesian, and Evangelion. Then, a brief analysis of the five major ecumenical movements was made as they vary in their approaches to the development of ecumenicity.

Secondly, a historical review of holiness ecumenicity was made. This was done by investigating in chronological fashion, the movements and events producing the Holiness Movement, the National Holiness Association, and the present trend toward corporate federation. A study of five pre-Wesleyan holiness movements, John Wesley's view of ecumenicity, ecumenicity and the methodistic sect formations, and the development of the National Holiness Association as it relates to holiness ecumenicity brought the study up to recent years.

Thirdly, a philosophical and Scriptural approach to the definition of holiness ecumenicity was presented. A study of unity of the

Spirit and of unity in the Spirit consisted mainly of the ontological and empirical approaches to the idea and visible evidences of holiness ecumenicity. A search of Scripture was made in this area of study as it presents the concept of holiness ecumenicity.

Fourthly, a study in research fashion of holiness ecumenicity in recent years was made. This was nothing more than a continuation of the history of holiness ecumenicity. A view of the present situation in holiness circles was presented, followed by an analysis of the proposed federation of holiness churches. A study of the study conferences in process was presented as best available.

Lastly, a summary of conclusions was made. Throughout the paper, it was found best to use the chronological-historical approach with a pattern of philosophical nature.

Sources of Data

Much data on ecumenical policies in the Roman Catholic Church and the Ecumenical Movement advanced by the World Council of Churches was used in this study. The works of Kenneth Scott Latourette were also found very helpful. In relation to specifically holiness material, Dr. Delbert R. Rose's thesis and book on the National Holiness Association and Joseph H. Smith were incorporated in the research. A microfilm of Merrill Gaddis' work in the area of perfectionism in America was extremely helpful in tracing the developments of the Methodist sects in America. The magazines of the various holiness denominations were found extremely beneficial in this study. An investigation of the many histories of holiness denominations was good in determining

position and policy in regard to ecumenicity. Articles by the officials of the National Holiness Association and official reports of the association itself were used. Access to the minutes of the study conferences on the federation movement was inexpressibly helpful in this study. This was made possible by the president of Western Evangelical Seminary, Dr. Paul P. Petticord. Throughout the paper, factual primary data was used where possible.

CHAPTER II

APPROACHES TO THE ECUMENICAL PROBLEM

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There can be no escaping the conclusion that the main stress of the New Testament is upon fellowship rather than upon separation. The call is not so much to come out as to come together.¹

The main goal of ecumenicity is to bring peoples of the Christian faith together. According to Billy Graham, in the statement above, this is also the goal of the New Testament. It may then, be affirmatively concurred that the problem of ecumenicity must be faced. One cannot run from it or be indifferent towards it. One cannot bury one's head in the sand as did the proverbial ostrich, but must face it and understand it. It is a present and a contemporary issue which affects all of Christianity and every Christian whether he wishes it to or not.

Although the intention has been to study ecumenicity as it relates to the churches or denominations of the National Holiness Association, it is necessary that a perspective of the goals of ecumenicity in Christendom of past history be determined and also the various ecumenical movements abroad in our world today. Before this can be done, however, the meaning of the term 'ecumenicity' must be presented.

What is Ecumenicity?

The word 'ecumenicity' is derived from the Greek word oikoumene which traditionally means 'the inhabitable earth'. This word is in

¹Billy Graham, "Fellowship and Separation". Decision, August, 1961, p. 14.

contrast to cosmos which refers to the material orderly universe, and to aion which refers to time or age. Thus, ecumenicity refers to man as he dwells on the earth, or the world of man as far as it is inhabited. The term could also refer to the household of God or the universal household of mankind as created by God. One person has referred to its usages in Hebrews 1:6 and 2:5 as meaning the empire of Messiah in the mystical sense.²

The use of the word 'ecumenical' became associated with the Church as the Church became identified with the Roman Empire which the Caesars had extended over the then known world. The Roman Catholic Church was the universal Church since it extended over the whole of the Holy Roman Empire. Ecumenicity may then be viewed as it relates to Christ and to the world community of those who espouse the headship or kingship of Christ. The early Catholic Church referred to its general councils as ecumenical in emphasis in that church representatives from all areas of Christendom were convened at one place to discuss doctrines and propose actions which would have a bearing upon the people of the universal Church.

Today, however, the term ecumenicity in Protestant circles has been developed into a somewhat related, yet new, meaning. The Ecumenical Movement, which began in the Nineteenth Century and is connected today with the World Council of Churches, views ecumenicity as the move

²Handley Dunelm, "World (General)", International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1947), p. 3109.

toward union among all Christians under one organizational body. It is the coming together of all who call themselves Christians into one world Church. This would include Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Nazarenes, and all other denominations; and yours and mine.³

A Nazarene pastor defines ecumenism as "the attempt of Christians who love and serve the same Lord to discover what they have in common and to minimize the things which divide them".⁴ Just as ecumenicists mean unification to those in the larger Protestant Ecumenical Movement, they mean co-operation in the evangelical circles. Such organizations as the National Association of Evangelicals and the National Holiness Association are co-operative organizations seeking denominations to fellowship with each other and are as much a part of the ecumenical trend abroad on the face of the earth today as is the World Council of Churches.

A pastor of the Evangelical United Brethren Church feels there are at least two meanings to the term 'ecumenicity'. First, he feels it is "the cooperative effort of Protestants to work together in relief, organized charity, institutional ministries, public relations, community

³Lukas Vischer (Ed.), "Report of the Commission on Faith and Order to the Central Committee on the Subject of the Future of Faith and Order", A Documentary History of the Faith and Order Movement, 1927-1963. (St. Louis, Mo: The Bethany Press, 1963), pp. 208 ff.

⁴T. E. Martin, "The Holiness Churches and Ecumenism", Herald of Holiness, December 15, 1965. p. 4.

witness".⁵ Secondly, he feels it is "the move to merge denominations into a visible organic unity".⁶ So, in this instance, both views are seen being presented as valid approaches to the ecumenical problem by one man. He goes on to say that

Some view the ecumenical movement as the direct intervention of God in the life and thought of the contemporary church. Others see it as a device of Satan to emasculate the pure Gospel. There seems to be no middle ground.⁷

It can be seen, then, that there are a variety of views as to the meaning of ecumenicity. Thus, a survey of the various approaches helps to clarify this many-faced and diversely interpreted term.

Transconfessional Approaches to Ecumenicity

From the previous statements and positions it is safe to conclude that when Christians work together, fellowship one with another, and have a common goal, there is ecumenicity. Since the Reformation, in particular, various attempts have been made to reconstitute a single body of Christians. Also, there have been many organizations, both co-operative and confessional which have sought to stop quarrels, schisms, and divisions within the Christian Church. Since the Great Schism of the Roman Catholic Church in Luther's day to the present, Christianity has known a multitude of divisions and 'come-out-ers'. Only within the past two centuries has there been a trend toward cooperation and mergers.⁸

⁵Harvey N. Chinn, "Ecumenicity: How Much? How Soon?" Church and Home, March 15, 1966. p. 7.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Kenneth Scott Latourette, The Emergence of a World Christian Community. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949), p. 11.

In all of the efforts to reorganize and reconstitute the Church into a fellowship of Christians, three main approaches or trends can be found. Dr. Visser T' Hooft, former General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, names them as the Erasmian, the church-centered, and the Pietist.⁹ Each is found in various periods of Church History since the Reformation and is especially distinct prior to the Reformation. Each is transconfessional as well as international in intent and extent. Because of the trans-historical, transconfessional, and trans-cultural quality of these three approaches, they serve well as a means to the end of understanding the nature of ecumenicity as it has in all practicality, been sought.

The first main trend of Christianity toward ecumenicity is termed Erasmian. This is because it was Erasmus who was the first main progenitor of this approach to the problem of ecumenicity. By this approach, is meant 'assent to doctrine'. This view teaches that those people, churches, or groups who agree to a given set of doctrines, compose the Church. Dr. Visser T' Hooft has stated it this way: "Church unity is possible and only possible on the basis of common agreement concerning a few necessary and fundamental points of doctrine".¹⁰ Agreement to a given creed or set of fundamental articles constitutes membership in the Church and thus the universal body of Christ. According to this position there is no need of following the rules of an organization, nor is there

⁹W. A. Visser T' Hooft, "Our Ecumenical Task in the Light of History", The Ecumenical Review, July 1955. p. 310

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 313.

need of an inner experience of conversion. Merely to give assent, whether it be enthusiastic or passive, is necessary. Erasmus felt that all that was needed was to "reduce everything to the nucleus of faith: Christ and the Gospel".¹¹ Although Erasmus formulated this view of unification, a number of noted scholars and Christian leaders have accepted it as the primary vehicle for ecumenicity down to the present day. Such men as Cassander, Grotius, King James I, Calixtus, and even Harnack have through the decades and centuries espoused this approach.¹² Today, many churches hold as their only means of constituting themselves Christian, the Apostles' Creed. If this were the only basis of constituting themselves as the Church, then they would be among those who follow the Erasmian approach.

The second main trend of Christianity is that of church-centeredness. This view may, for easier clarification, be called the Ecclesian approach. According to this view, only as the many churches become one giant super-church, will they become an instrument for Christ in speaking to the lost world. It is this approach which has engulfed the thinking of the World Council of Churches since 1937 at the Oxford Conference when its slogan was 'Let the Church be the Church'.¹³

It is this position which feels that God intends for the invisible

¹¹ Johan Huizinga, Erasmus and the Age of Reformation. (Harper & Brothers Publishers: New York, 1957, p. 131.

¹² Visser T' Hooft, op. cit., p. 311, 312.

¹³ Ruth Rouse & Stephen Charles Neill (Eds.), A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517-1948. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), pp. 576, 577.

Church to also be visible as a single and united body. To those who follow this view, disunity or denominationalism is a grievous sin. A problem arising here is that the Church members become more Church-conscious than Christ-conscious. This approach has the concept that the Church as the robe of Christ in symbolic teaching was seamless and always one in substance. Thus, since early Church history times to the present, there has been an attempt to either maintain unity as in the Roman Catholic Church, or to gain unity as in the Protestant Ecumenical Movement.

The third main approach to Christian unity is that of Pietism. This approach may be re-termed as the Evangelion view. This view is not organization-centered as is the Ecclesian; nor is it doctrine-centered as is the Erasmian. It is focused on the individual and his relationship to God. According to Dr. Visser T' Hooft, to the Pietists, "Christianity is first of all an individual experience and a life; all Christians who are truly saved belong together, whatever their allegiance".¹⁴ This evangelical approach emphasizes the concept of the believers' Church. The Church is not a visible organization in the ultimate sense but is an invisible body of believers past, present and future. It is this view which emphasizes the priesthood of all believers and the tasks of every Christian as being evangelism and mission.¹⁵

¹⁴ Visser T' Hooft, op. cit., p. 315

¹⁵ Ibid.

This view could easily be referred to as being the Gospel-centered view for that is just what evangelical, the chief characteristic of Pietism, means. To be evangelical is to be Gospel-centered and Gospel-bearing. The many evangelical bodies such as Mennonite, Moravian, and Brethren in Christ arose mostly from German and English Pietism as the case may be. Methodism was greatly influenced by the Pietists. This view places individual conversion as the basis of church membership. The Church then, is the sum total of all those who experienced conversion to Christ. This view, however, lays great stress upon the Holy Bible. Unity to the evangelical is only important insofar as it assists in the propagation of the Gospel and the perfecting of the example of Christ. Fundamental doctrines are important but only as they are Biblical. They serve as a basis of cooperation and common witness.

These three approaches are but basic in the fundamental understanding of the problem of ecumenicity. They are three philosophical attitudes and positions which have been taken by various scholars and groups throughout history and the history of the Church. They can be found in Christian society today. However, to get a closer view of ecumenicity as it is sought by certain organizations and men, our attention must, indeed, be focused upon the variety of ecumenical movements in the world today. A look must, then, be taken at present day movements toward ecumenicity.

Modern Ecumenical Movements

In order to understand the import of the ecumenical problem, it must be realized that it is in each neighborhood and most likely in each local church. By viewing the many movements toward fellowship or unity which exist today, each person can better comprehend his own position and better understand other points of view.

In order to gain a wide spectrum of these views, we have dealt with them as they range from the strict organization view to the loose and unorganized view of an invisible Church. First, with this in mind, it is necessary that the Roman Catholic Church be viewed as it promotes an ecumenical movement of its own. The Roman Catholic Church eagerly looks forward to an eventual unity of all Christians. It prays for this and works for this. However, the Roman Catholic Church cannot see any organized unity being valid outside of its own body. She is the 'catholic' Church. According to one scholar of that church, "The unity conceived is the unity of the Catholic Church, and reunion means the acceptance of Catholicism by non-Catholic Christians".¹⁶ The Roman Catholic Church maintains that she is the only true Church. For the true Church of Christ to be constituted as viewed by the Protestant Ecumenical Movement, the Roman Catholics say the 'separated brethren' must recognize their sin and be converted to the 'true' Church again. The Roman Catholic Church does not condemn the other ecumenical movement but sees them

¹⁶ Gustave Weigle, S.J., A Catholic Primer on the Ecumenical Movement. (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1963), p. 39.

as a process toward the eventual return of those who have departed from the Church. Pope John XXIII stated on one occasion,

We have taken note that almost all those who are adorned with the name of Christian, even though separated from us and from one another have sought to forge bonds of unity by means of many congresses and by establishing councils. This is evidence that they are moved by an intense desire for unity of some kind.¹⁷

In light of this, George Tavard mentions that

It is no longer possible to ignore the fact that the See of the Apostle Peter has adopted a friendly attitude towards Christians who are searching for the unity for which Jesus Christ so ardently prayed to His Heavenly Father.¹⁸

The Roman Catholic believes in the visible display of the Church and that this is found only in her own organization. The Protestants are sincere, they say but have not as yet 'seen the light'.

To further their ecumenical movement, the Roman Catholic Church has made efforts to seek rapport with Protestants and has adapted a number of her practices so as to woo them into her fold. Such means as native language usage in the mass, and meetings for dialogue with protestants have been profitable for her. Allowance of inter-faith marriages has also been an attempt to win the Protestant. But the Roman Catholic Church maintains her strong position on the doctrines of the Church and appears to not be ready to change her many dogmas.

Secondly, a study must be made of that ecumenical movement in the segment of Protestantism which is associated with the World Council

¹⁷ Pope John XXIII, The Pope Speaks. Vol. 5, no. 4. (Autumn, 1959), p. 369.

¹⁸ George H. Tavard, Two Centuries of Ecumenism. (Notre Dame Inc.: Fides Publishers Association, 1960 p. 190.

of Churches and the National Council of Churches. This movement is a result of various smaller movements or attempts to organize and effect unity in world evangelization. It appears that basic beginnings were on the mission fields where distinction of denominational lines presented a problem in winning converts. A divided religion appeared weak to the native populations. This ecumenical movement began with missionary zeal and the desire of its leaders was to seek close cooperation so as to win, more easily, converts to the religion of Christianity. The present form of this movement is organizational in nature with the concept of the Church being central. The WCC began actually in 1920 although many other meetings preceded it in the pre-organization years. The WCC became an actual fully organized council in 1948 in Amsterdam. The goal of the movement today is to bring all denominations together as one unified body under broad doctrinal lines so as not to jeopardize denominational traditions and distinctives. In 1961, the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council merged and, since that merger, more study has been centered around the mission fields and the 'grass-roots' level of the Church.

The World Council of Churches does not wish to set up a set of creeds or doctrines but simply recognized that all who believe in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of all men ought to be united together as one. This is their assumption and from this assumption, they take action. The WCC does not formulate a set of doctrines which must

be agreed upon in order to join that organization. It only proposes a basis of membership as follows:

The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.¹⁹

All those churches which accept this basis are allowed membership. Thusly, both Liberal and Conservative are found in its ranks. Today, the liberal form of theology predominates the conferences of the WCC and also the MCC. The view that this movement has of the Church has some resemblance to that of the Roman Catholic Church except that it does not feel that one denomination has exclusive rights on the term Church. When denominations cease to exist as separate organized societies, all fellowships desist for the good of the whole, and all fellowship under one organizational structure, will the unity of the Church of Christ be made manifest to the world. George H. Tavard puts it this way: "The purpose of the WCC and the sole reason for its existence is to help the Churches rediscover the Church, and if possible, to help the Church penetrate the Churches and make them one".²⁰

The WCC does not wish all to believe as that organization does, nor does she wish all to believe that she is the ecumenical movement. The WCC is just the major promoter of the ecumenical movement. The WCC has, however, produced her own kind of ecumenical movement. The WCC now has over one-hundred and sixty denomination members and is now dialoguing with the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches.

¹⁹ W. A. Visser T' Hooft (Ed.), The New Delhi Report. (New York: Association Press, 1962), p. 152.

²⁰ George H. Tavard, op. cit., p. 141.

Thirdly, a consideration of the Evangelical Ecumenical Movement must be made. It is not an organization thus termed but is represented by an organization entitled the National Association of Evangelicals. This unit does not purport to represent all evangelicals since many, indeed a large number of evangelicals, are in such organizations as the NCC. The evangelicals as previously discussed in the coverage of the third main approach to ecumenicity, arose mainly from Pietism and are more individualistic in character. In the NAE, however, the evangelicals have found a common ground of agreement and seek cooperation of their churches for the propagation of the Gospel throughout the world. They seek a united voice and promote an instantaneous experience of salvation.

Thus the evangelical, with his view that the denominations do not necessarily need to unite into one corporate organization, seeks more of an action of cooperation or association of the many churches, voluntary, and missionary organizations. To most evangelicals the True Church is all believers throughout the world: past, present and future. This concept of a believer's church necessarily calls for the conclusion of the Church being invisible and earthly organizations being but various bodies which are composed of members of the one Church of Christ. Christians are called to merely cooperate as they fellowship with Christ and fellow-man in the extension of the Kingdom of Christ. The evangelicals would say that mere acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as Son of God is not enough qualification for membership in the Church. They would add that belief in the Bible as the revealed and inspired Word of God is just as essential. They would declare that the Scriptures are infallible in the

originals. The evangelical bases his membership in the Church of Christ on his conversion experience, not his acceptance of a certain formula or creed. He is a member of the Church when he is 'born again' not when he is accepted into a denomination.

In relation to evangelical ecumenicity, one of the past presidents of the National Association of Evangelicals stated:

Protestant evangelical ecumenicity has a direction which is found in the Bible, the infallible written word of God... the evangelical ecumenist believes that evangelicals can work together without sacrificing theological belief and can have a united voice that will assist in the proclamation of the Gospel of saving grace around the world.²¹

Fourthly, the Holiness Ecumenical Movement must be considered. This movement properly termed the Holiness Movement, but for purposes in this paper and without detriment to the movement itself termed ecumenical, is mainly associated with the organization known as the National Holiness Association. This organization was begun in the late Nineteenth Century but most members of this organization will state that they find their teachings and doctrines in John Wesley as he interpreted the Bible in the Eighteenth Century.²² They refer to themselves mainly as Wesleyans in theology, this being the key connecting link between their various denominations and groups. Most of the holiness bodies originated in the Methodist tradition or were affected by it in some way during the Second Evangelical Awakening in the Nineteenth Century.

²¹ Paul. P. Petticord, "The Ecumenical Umbrella", (pamphlet). Portland, Oregon: Published by Western Evangelical Seminary, Nov., 1965. p. 3.

²² Delbert R. Rose, A Theology of Christian Experience. (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1965), p. 25.

That which distinguishes holiness bodies from evangelical or conservative bodies is their teaching that subsequent to the conversion experience, an experience of heart cleansing is both possible and necessary. This is termed Christian perfection or entire sanctification. Most of the holiness scholars would be quick to note that this is an instantaneous experience but that one continues to grow in grace following this experience. The NHA began with small group meetings; later became an organization for promoting holiness camp meetings; then, an association of individuals and auxiliary organization; finally, developing into an organization composed of voluntary membership of denominations and auxiliary organizations to assist in a united effort for the promotion of holiness of heart and life. The organizations which make up the organization compose also an international structure, state organizations, and still emphasize camp meetings. There is a possibility that in the near future, a federation of holiness churches will be formed with the NHA playing a large part in its formation and function.

The holiness view of the nature of the Church is quite similar to that of the Evangelicals since the two organizations overlap much in their memberships. It seems that the holiness people speak more of the unity of the Spirit and in the Spirit, however. Although the other various movements speak of unity being found in the Spirit, the holiness movement emphasizes also purity in the Spirit as being essential to true Christian fellowship. Denominational units are justified but not when the walls are isolationistic. Too often, however, this is the main hindrance to true fellowship among them. Schism and separation

are the main problems for them according to leading ecumenicists. They see a need for a united front, but cling to tradition and individual emphases. One leader of bygone days has said,

While I would be happy to see a united front on the part of all denominational units which stand for holiness, yet I am convinced that there has been an overruling providence in the fact that these different denominational units, each one pushes the holiness battle with an aggressiveness which might possibly fail to characterize a united ecclesiasticism.²³

The Holiness Movement was begun intensively only after the Methodist denomination began to wane in its position on holiness. It is quite unique to note that it began in the Methodist denomination since the Methodist at the time of its inception held a natural monopoly on the perfectionistic tradition. With the rise of other holiness denominations they began to cooperate but only after the holiness-oriented Methodists were rejected and ostracized by their more liberal brethren. One Methodist of this view of holiness stated,

The direct mode, therefore to promote Christian unity is to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit. A Pentecost settles a world of disputes, opens blind eyes, unstops deaf ears, blends Christian testimony into an harmonious whole, shows the common work to be done, and awakens a deathless enthusiasm for the propagation of the Gospel and the salvation of the world.²⁴

The Holiness Movement has at all periods during its existence

²³ C. W. Butler, "Units of the Holiness Movement", Art. II. The Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness. June 20, 1946

²⁴ August C. George, Proceedings of the Ecumenical Methodist Conference. (New York: Phillips and Hunt, 1882), p. 556.

had those who felt deeply the lack of unity in its ranks and they have mourned over it. Even before the foundation of the WCC or, for that matter, even before the modern ecumenical movement got off the ground, the Reverend S. B. Shaw, an early leader of the Holiness Movement state that

For several years there has been a conviction on the part of many of the leaders of the holiness movement of the great need of deeper union of heart and effort. No one can doubt that thousands upon thousands of souls will praise God to all eternity as a result of what is known as the modern holiness movement; but none can doubt but that much more might have been done and would have been done if the holiness people had at all times been of one mind and of one heart in the work of God and in utter abandonment of self to His will and His glory.²⁵

It appears that the Holiness Movement feels that Christian unity is found in the cooperation of Christians, in the fellowship of the Gospel, and in the united effort to win souls and seen them filled with the Holy Spirit. This movement rallies around the doctrine of Christian Perfection as taught by John Wesley which is a second definite work of grace in the heart of the believer.

This movement sees the true Church as being invisible as the body of Christ. All believers are members of that Church but as members of churches on earth also whereby they may serve God in an organized manner.

Unity to the holiness people is not just unifying believers but also purifying believers, for as the Spirit controls the life,

²⁵ S. B. Shaw, Echoes of the General Holiness Assembly. (Chicago: S. B. Shaw, Publisher), p. 3.

jealousies and selfishness vanish away. This movement represents over a million people.

Fifthly, and lastly, the Pentecostal Ecumenical Movement must be studied. Although there are many Pentecostal denominations today, they all began with a movement around the turn of the century. One writer terms the Pentecostal Movement as being ecumenical.

The Pentecostal movement started as an ecumenical revival movement within the traditional churches, the Anglican and High Lutheran not excepted, and in some places even within the Roman Catholic Church.²⁶

It was not the intention of this movement to form a denomination but to be a spiritual force within Christianity. Dr. Hollenweger of the WCC states that "The European Pentecostal denominations were originally conceived as an ecumenical movement within the churches".²⁷ He further states that "The Pentecostal Movement was started in order to reconcile the different Christian denominations".²⁸

The Pentecostal Movement arose out of the Holiness Movement with which the previous study was concerned. One of the major writers and leaders of the Pentecostal Movement states:

Its rise at the turn of the century appears to have been almost spontaneous. Its roots were principally in the holiness movements of the latter part of the Nineteenth Century.²⁹

²⁶ Walter J. Hollenweger, "The Pentecostal Movement and the World Council of Churches", The Ecumenical Review, July, 1966. p.313

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 314.

²⁹ Donald Gee, "Movement without a Man", Christian Life, July, 1966. p. 27.

The major point of departure of these groups from the holiness groups seems to have been at the point of the doctrine of the gift of speaking in tongues. The Pentecostals linked this gift with the baptism in the Holy Ghost and this resulted in the straw which broke apart the holiness bodies. The formulation of the dogma of the necessity for speaking in tongues in order to be recognized as Spirit-baptized produced distinctive churches termed 'Pentecostal'. Although those of the Holiness Movement had used this term frequently, after the rise of the Pentecostal Movement, they soon dropped this word from their vocabulary somewhat since it gave others a wrong impression of their emphasis.³⁰

Today, the Pentecostal Movement is the fastest growing of all the ecumenical movements. It still has the goal of uniting all Christianity in the bond of Christian fellowship. It has had to settle down to forming its own denominations, however, but is still strong on missions and evangelism. Today, four out of every five non-Catholics in Latin America are Pentecostals. They do not seek one large organization since all forms of government exist in their ranks. The Pentecostal Movement is organized under what is called the Pentecostal World Conference which meets regularly with headquarters in Springfield, Missouri.

³⁰ Delbert R. Rose, op. cit., pp. 20, 21

CHAPTER III

THE HISTORY OF HOLINESS EXUMENICITY

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Introduction

In the previous chapter, having observed ecumenicity throughout the whole arena of Christianity, first in the three main approaches to it and then as it is seen in the various demonstrative movements, the focus must now be on the main stage whereon ecumenicity may be investigated in relation to the Holiness Movement in particular. In light of the organizational idea, the study will involve the holiness sects and the National Holiness Association. This area of ecumenicity was touched in the principles of the various movements in the previous chapter, but throughout the remainder of this thesis it will be dealt with in depth. In this particular chapter, an attempt is made in investigating the history of holiness ecumenicity. Herein, an attempt is made to view the Church empirically and historically. A tracing of the lineages of the holiness sects as to their basic pre-sect influences in the form of movements is presented leading up to the Wesleyan Revival.

This establishes the fact that Methodism did not arise out of nothing nor was it founded merely upon the Scriptures alone. A view of the development of Methodism and co-operation and ecumenical relations manifested therein is surveyed. Then, some comments as to reasons for the foundations of various Methodist sects is forwarded, followed by a look at the development of the NHA and its concepts of interdenominational cooperation. A look at the Twentieth Century sect formations in the

holiness trend then introduces the more recent developments in the Holiness Movement and prepares for the next chapter. To begin with, a brief analysis of the forces leading up to and influencing John Wesley, founder of Methodism, and his view of ecumenicity is presented. This will be helpful in a personal understanding of the present-day concept of ecumenicity in holiness circles.

Holiness Movements Before Wesley

Since the Sixteenth Century, when what is known as Protestantism developed, Christianity has adopted the widest variety of forms imaginable. Dr. Kenneth S. Latourette, noted historian, points to this fact, when he says, "the fact remains that Protestantism was in its origin primarily a group of religious movements".¹ Many of these movements, having their influence on Wesley, may be called holiness movements in the loose sense. All of these, in some way, have had their influence upon the present-day holiness sects composing the National Holiness Association.

Before looking at these movements, it must be realized that there have been holiness advocates of some kind or other throughout all of Christian or Church History. God has always had a remnant of those who endeavoured to live a holy life. It is also necessary to understand that each of these movements had the influences of other forms of religious belief which in themselves contained holiness doctrine. And then, it must be perceived that the Holy Spirit was con-

¹ Kenneth S. Latourette, Three Centuries of Advance (Vol. III of A History of the Expansion of Christianity. 7 Vols. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1936-1945), p. 14

tinuing to work and to provide a witness to people of the holiness persuasion (which it is His desire to impart to those who will receive it).

In a survey of these pre-Wesleyan movements, it is more logical to view them historically, that is, in chronological order as to their beginning rather than as to their theological intents and contents. It must also be discerned how each had some influence on the holiness doctrine as it was developed into our present-day denominations.

Anabaptism was the first of these Post-Reformation and Pre-Wesleyan movements and was a movement which had somewhat of an influence on its day and during the following few centuries. Thus it was influential on Wesley and other holiness men. Anabaptism began around the turn of the Sixteenth Century and came into prominence around the middle of the century. The Anabaptists, according to Dr. Kenneth S. Latourette,

taught that a true church is a voluntary congregation of believers and that he who has experienced the new birth which is his introduction into the Christian life is directly guided by Spirit of God, is responsible to God for his own conduct, and must not be coerced.²

One can readily see how this type of doctrine could have had a favorable effect on the doctrine which John Wesley later formulated. But what did the Anabaptists themselves have to say regarding the Holy Spirit? Menno Simons, main founder of the Mennonites, says of the Holy Spirit that He indwells, and that it is He who directly in-

² Ibid., p. 383.

fluences the daily lives of Christians. He says of the Holy Spirit that,

He guides us into all truth; He justifies us; He cleanses, sanctifies, pacifies, consoles, reproves, cheers and assures us; He testifies to our spirit that we are the children of God...We believe the Holy Ghost to be the true Spirit of God Who adorns us with His heavenly and divine gifts, frees us from sin, and makes us cheerful, peaceful, pious, satisfies our hearts and minds and makes us holy in Christ Jesus.³

Later on, he states that "we do not agree with those who teach and introduce a mere historic, dead faith which is without a change of heart, without Spirit, power and fruit".⁴ This objection to formalism and emphasis upon a living faith was characteristic of nearly all of the reformers but in the Anabaptist Movement more so. This movement not only rejected Catholicism, but also the state church of Lutheranism and proposed a return to the Apostolic Church. It continued in small groups, mostly determined by geography and customs emphasizing the universal invisible view of the Church and also the purity of the community of believers. Several of the prohibitions were carried over into Methodism and have descended to us today. One of the Anabaptist leaders of today, a member of the Mennonite Church, states that "John Wesley would probably have been one of those Anabaptist disciples, had he had the opportunity".⁵ The Anabaptist movement, a holiness movement, was then influential regarding the Holiness Movement in its inception

³ John Horsch, Menno Simons: His Life, Labors and Teachings. Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1916), p. 235.

⁴ Ibid., p. 118

⁵ Harold S. Bender, "Walking in the Resurrection: The Anabaptist Doctrine of Regeneration and Discipleship". Mennonite Quarterly Review, Vol. XXXV, April, 1961. p. 25

days during the Reformation period and also during the Wesleyan Revival. It still is influential today.

Perhaps no other movement in pre-Wesleyan days had more effect on Methodism than that of Puritanism. This movement was a composite of political, ethical, and social principles combined with theological ideas stressing purity of life and government. This movement did not emphasize the separation of Church and government as did the Anabaptist Movement but felt it was the Church's task to reform the government. It was a revolt against state churchism and sought to purify the Anglican Church. Puritanism advocated simpler forms of faith and worship. This movement may be called a father of many movements and groups since the Independents, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians evolved from it. It was the Puritans who sought for social reform and succeeded in overthrowing the monarchy and setting up democratic rule for a time. Such men as John Locke were puritans who sought for democracy in state as well as Church.

How, then, did this type of movement affect Wesley? One authority states that "Wesley's parents were born and educated in Non-conformist families, and their religious life was strongly and permanently moulded by Puritan principles".⁶ From them and Oxford University he received an anti-Calvinistic theology. He was taught that holy living

⁶ N. Burwash, Wesley's Doctrinal Standards. (Toronto: William Briggs, 1881), p. xi.

was as necessary as church attendance. He learned the need for social reform and the need also for social work. His comrade and cohort in the Holy Club, George Whitefield, was influenced greatly by the Puritans and stated in a letter to John Wesley on February 26, 1741 that, "I am more and more in love with the good old Puritans".⁷ It must be accepted, then, that Puritanism had a great effect upon the formation of the Holiness Movement both of that day and of this.

Another movement which had somewhat of an effect on the Wesleyan doctrines and practices was that of Quakerism. Quakers, often known as Friends, according to Latourette in their movement were "the most prominent of the English radical religious movements of the Seventeenth Century".⁸ So, following in the wake of Puritanism was this form of mystical and yet practical religion termed Quakerism. In the second half of the Seventeenth Century, Quakerism was what Puritanism had been only a few generations previously.

The Quakers, or Society of Friends, were begun by George Fox, and this movement was definitely a holiness movement. They stressed living a pure and holy life and having the 'inner light' which comes from having the Holy Spirit in the heart. They were perfectionists just as was John Wesley, stressing the experiential infilling and

⁷ L. E. Elliot-Binns (quoting George Whitefield), The Early Evangelicals: A Religious and Social Study. (Greenwich, Conn.: The Seabury Press, 1953), p. 120.

⁸ Latourette, op. cit., p. 195

living of that experience. Surely the influence which was felt upon Wesley by such a group as the Quakers cannot be minimized or doubted. One historian states that "For Quakerism and Methodism...the driving force was a doctrine of holiness and...both arose in the form of a reaction against the conventional piety of the day".⁹ Today, they are still having their influence in the Holiness Movement.

Fourthly, Pietism, which arose about the same time as Quakerism, though perhaps a little later, had its effects upon the holiness trend in Wesley's day. This was a movement in the Lutheran Church in Germany between the latter part of the Seventeenth Century and the middle of the Eighteenth Century. It was mainly an effort to stir the dead Church out of a settled attitude in which dogma and intellectual religion seemed to be supplanting Bible rules and heart religion. This movement began with Spener, around 1790, and continued through August Francke and Count Zinzendorf. It stressed the use of devotional meetings for the purpose of Bible study and Christian fellowship. The essential aim of this group was to get away from the doctrinal laws and to find fulfillment in the spirit of Christian living.

Count Zinzendorf, the Pietist of Moravianism, in Pietism and yet a true Moravian, was one of the major influences of the Pietist Movement upon Wesleyanism. At one time, John Wesley stated that he desired, "union with them (Moravians)...above all things under heaven".¹⁰ Later

⁹ R. Newton Flew, The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology. (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 399.

¹⁰ John Wesley (Nehemiah Curnock (Ed.) The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., Vol. III, (London: The Epworth Press, 1938), p. 260

in relation to these Quietist mystics,

I grew acquainted with the mystic writers, whose noble descriptions of union with God and internal religion made everything else appear mean, flat, and insipid...These gave me an entire new view of religion---nothing like any I had before.¹³

Wesley testifies to having enjoyed the writings of Madam Guyon who offered the Quietist view in books and pamphlets. He stated:

I know not whether we may not search many centuries to find another woman who was such a pattern of true holiness.¹⁴

Wesley himself states that he read the works of Madam Guyon. In his journal he states:

I rode for Epworth. Before we came thither I made an end of Madame Guyon's Short Method of Prayer, and Les Torrents Spirituelles.¹⁵

Dr. Flew states that he also read a great deal from Fenelon, another Quietist.¹⁶

All of these movements stressed the holy life and the Holy Spirit. All began before the life of Wesley and had books and teachers available in the times of Wesley. Each was a thorough-going movement in the days of Wesley. Though each differs from the others in small ways, each is a holiness movement in itself. One can see how the Wesleyan movement could have come to pass from any one of these movements. From these

¹³ John Wesley, op. cit., p. 420

¹⁴ John Wesley, The Works of John Wesley, Vol. XIV. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1872), p. 278.

¹⁵ John Wesley, The Journal of John Wesley, op. cit., Vol. III. (London: The Epworth Press, 1938), p. 18

¹⁶ Flew, op. cit., p. 274.

views plus the ever-precious Bible came the views of Wesley and the doctrine of holiness ecumenicity promoted by him. Other influences such as the Church of England and Lutheranism of course, bore upon his position but did not distract him from his main theme of holiness.

John Wesley and Holiness Ecumenicity

By the previous five movements Anabaptism, Puritanism, Quakerism, Pietism and Quietism, an attempt was made to show that in some way or other, each had its effect on the days of Wesley and on Wesley himself. It was demonstrated that Wesley and his holiness movement was not alone in a vacuum of ritualistic church thought. Others thought along the same lines as did he, and from them and with them was an exchange of ideas and doctrines.

What was John Wesley's view of ecumenicity? By determining this it is possible to come close to the answer concerning his view of holiness ecumenicity since he is often called the Father of the Holiness Movement. One person feels that to Wesley, "the experience of God's love to man, resulting in sanctification becomes the foundation of the unity of all Christians".¹⁷ He goes on to state that in Wesley "this ecumenical feature is clearly discernible soon after 1738".¹⁸ The group which developed from the 'Holy Club' at Oxford was soon known

¹⁷ Harald Lindstrom, Wesley and Sanctification. (London: The Epworth Press, 1946), p. 193.

¹⁸ Ibid.

as the Methodists. Wesley himself spoke of this group as being a sect, but he did not emphasize isolation from the rest of Christianity since this would prevent true Christians from being a leavening influence on the rest of Christendom. The salt would soon lose its savour. He felt, however, that Christians should fellowship with the rest of Christianity by means of love. In putting this concept into words John Wesley stated that:

By these marks, by these fruits of a living faith, do we labour to distinguish ourselves from the unbelieving world, from all those whose minds or lives are not according to the Gospel of Christ. But from real Christians, of whatsoever denomination they be, we earnestly desire not to be distinguished at all, not from any who sincerely follow after what they know they have not yet attained..."Whosoever doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister and mother". And I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that we be in no wise divided among ourselves. Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thine? I ask no further question. If it be, give me thy hand. For opinions, or terms, let us not destroy the work of God. Dost thou love and serve God? It is enough. I give thee the right hand of fellowship.¹⁹

In another place, and along the same line, he reiterates the thought that opinions divide and love unites as it is centered in God.

I will not quarrel with you about any opinion. Only see that your heart be right toward God, that you know and love the Lord Jesus Christ; that you love your neighbor, and walk as your Master walked, and I desire no more. I am sick of opinions: I am weary to hear them. My soul loathes this frothy food. Give me solid and substantial religion; give me an humble, gentle lover of God and man; a man full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy; a man laying himself out in the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labour of love. Let my soul be with these Christians, wheresoever they are, and whatsoever opinion they are of.²⁰

¹⁹ John Wesley, The Works of John Wesley, op. cit., Vol. VIII, p. 346 ff

²⁰ Ibid., p. 244.

Love, to Wesley, was never separated from holiness when it came to relationships. He felt that a true Christian would seek to live a holy life before God and man. This was again one of the bases of his view of ecumenicity.

Whether they embrace this religious opinion or that, it is no more concern to me, than whether they embrace this or that system of stromony. Are they brought to holy tempers and holy lives? This is mine, and should be your inquiry; since on this, both social and personal happiness depend, happiness temporal and eternal. Are they brought to the love of God and the love of their neighbor? Pure religion and undefiled is this... The plan religion now propagated is Love.²¹

Thus, with these two fundamentals or bases, the developments of Wesley's view of ecumenicity can be seen. Wesley was not concerned with the gathering of all people into one organization nor was he concerned that all accept his creed or doctrine, but he was very concerned that all possess the love which only comes from knowing Jesus Christ as Lord and that all endeavour to live holy lives by the power of the Holy Spirit. One writer interprets Wesley in the light of the modern ecumenical movement in this manner:

The ecumenical attitude in Wesley follows the line later called "Life and Work" as distinguished from "Faith and Order". The unity refers to the heart, not opinions. All Christians, Wesley maintains, may be one in faith and experience, although differing in opinion and expression.²²

Another theologian feels that Wesley's view of ecumenicity is revealed in a composite of his doctrines, his catholic spirit, his de-

²¹ Ibid., p. 246

²² Lindstrom, op. cit., p. 194

scription of the character of a Methodist, his philanthropic and benevolent activities, and his concept of the Church.²³

In regard to Wesley's doctrines, Nicholson states that "Wesley's aim was to cultivate practical godliness and to spread scriptural holiness".²⁴ He did not minimize doctrine but was staunch as he could be on the main fundamental particulars of Scripture. But he did distinguish between doctrine and opinion: he had a desire "to avoid 'needless dispute'".²⁵ By refraining to argue and dispute he was able to manifest love and concern even while he continued to be Biblical and doctrinal. Nicholson states that Wesley's catholicity of spirit led him to exercise the most generous charity toward those who did not agree with him on all points".²⁶ Holiness ecumenicity is, then, seen in Wesley's doctrines.

Again, Wesley's view of ecumenicity is seen in his catholic spirit. By this he did not mean that all people must conform to certain rules or be uniform as is found in the Roman Catholic Church. He meant merely the idea of being "truly ecumenical in his personal attitudes".²⁷ Love which does not trifle over opinions is true ecumenical love. This is Christian love; this is perfect love.

²³ Roy S. Nicholson, "John Wesley and Ecumenicity", Wesleyan Theological Journal. Spring, 1967., p. 66-81.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 68.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 69.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 68.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 72.

Thirdly, his view of ecumenicity is observed in his description of a Methodist. Wesley felt that a Methodist was not known by his opinions, schemes, notions, espousals, actions, customs, or usages. A Methodist was known by his love for God and man, and by the fruits of his faith. In fact, he stated that Methodists ought not to be distinguished at all from real Christians. Thus, a Methodist to Wesley was ecumenical in his religion of love.²⁸

Fourthly, Wesley's ecumenical view is noted by his philanthropic and benevolent activities. In regard to Wesley's philanthropy and benevolence, Nicholson states that "the current ecumenical movement's emphasis on social righteousness has not progressed beyond John Wesley's interest and effectiveness in that area".²⁹ Wesley spoke out on almost every area of social reform and rectitude. Not only did he speak on behalf of the poor, sick and persecuted, but he also acted upon his own position. In this manner, he manifested an ecumenical attitude and life.

Fifthly, and lastly, John Wesley's concept of the Church reveals his view of ecumenicity. By turning to the New Testament view of the Church and that manifested by the Early Church Fathers, Wesley reiterated the view that the Church is the body of Christ and a believers' Church. It is universal and invisible though all men on the face of the earth who believe in Christ are a member of it: these being past, present, and

²⁸ Wesley, Works, op. cit., p. 340-347.

²⁹ Nicholson, op. cit. p. 73, 74.

Oft-times the remark is heard that holiness divides people and churches. But does it in fact? Does purity of heart necessitate isolation from all other hearts? In the Methodist Episcopal Church, some accepted scriptural holiness as Wesley taught it and experienced it in their hearts. This holiness did not cause schisms, but rather became an occasion of divisions. The regular Methodist people, refusing to accept the doctrine and way of life, in fact, ostracized them socially and finally from the fellowship. One may argue, as many have, that these people could have remained in the Methodist Episcopal Church and have been leaven for the total membership and thus spreading scriptural holiness. The fact is, that the Methodist Church of the mid-Nineteenth Century was quite similar to the Church of England in the Eighteenth Century. The Methodists in America did not remain in the Anglican Church in the days of Wesley and soon after since it would have restrained their efforts and their teachings would have fallen on rocky ground or by the wayside. They sought the best organization for the purposes of evangelism and found the itinerant system to be one of the best. This coupled with campmeetings won many of the people of the western frontier. For quite similar reasons, the holiness sects could not remain in the Methodist Church in the Nineteenth Century.

It must be noted that these sects were formed only after the preaching of holiness by Finney. Gaddis describes the situation after Finney.

He states,

The Wesleyan Methodist perfectionists in 1843... and the Free Methodist perfectionists in 1860 were organized in the burnt over district of the perfectionist Finney... These movements were schisms from the Methodist Episcopal Church which, by the dates named, had allowed its primitive perfection to decline.³³

In view of holiness ecumenicity, these people cannot be regarded as 'come-outers', for they were already socially ostracized by the doctrine as practiced by the then Methodist Episcopal Church and the leaders of it. Holiness preachers were shunned, and holiness people avoided by the ordinary Methodists. It was the only possibility for them to organize themselves since they were already excommunicated officially or unofficially.

But these people in their various organized sects could not long remain isolated from each other. Each was, however, isolated in their formative years. Soon before the Civil War began, certain people were proposing a united effort on behalf of the propagation of scriptural holiness. Gaddis refers to this also and states that:

There seems to have been a large holiness literature on the eve of the Civil War...in the number of these writers were those who believed that the cause of holiness might best be advanced by a movement in which all interested persons, regardless of denomination, might co-operate.³⁴

The holiness people were not isolationists nor separationists but

³³ Ibid., p. 318.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 439.

were ever willing to introduce people to their Lord as both Saviour and Sanctifier. They soon learned that as little groups, they would be unsuccessful. Thus, they began the National Holiness Movement.

Ecumenicity and the National Holiness Movement

About two decades prior to the Civil War, honest efforts were being made among holiness people to effect holiness ecumenicity as such. Although holiness sects had been formed before this time, they exemplified more of a separatist nature than that of a coming together for mutual benefit.

Perhaps the first note holiness ecumenicity distinctive enough for mention, is that of the "Tuesday Meetings" begun by Mrs. Thomas Lankford in August of 1835. This meeting began with a union of two prayer meetings or groups with holiness as its main theme. So, the National Holiness Movement even before it was officially organized, was begun by the joining of two groups into a corporate body for prayer. It is worthy of note also that

From the time of Upham's attendance at the Tuesday Meeting (in 1839) it became a mixed gathering of both the sexes and the several branches of the Protestant Churches.³⁵

Dr. Delbert Rose quotes a Congregational paper as it referred to the Tuesday Meeting. He quotes this statement:

Friends, we assure you that these meetings are not for sectarian or party purposes. A free, hearty, gen-

³⁵ Delbert R. Rose, A Theology of Christian Experience. (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1965), p. 32.

eral invitation is extended to all...Our very soul has leaped joyfully in witnessing how completely the Spirit of God annihilated the spirit of sectarianism, and leaps over the boundaries of Shibboleths.³⁶

The meetings were not intended for Methodists alone but for all those who sought for more grace and more purity of whatever denomination they belonged. Mrs. Lankford and her sister, Phoebe Palmer, sought to unite the holiness forces. In 1865, in the promotion of holiness literature, the Palmers expanded their periodical business "in an effort to unify the ranks and advocates of the holiness doctrine".³⁷ From its beginning in New York City in 1835, the Tuesday Meetings were carried on in many more areas of the East and were spreading both South and West. This was holiness ecumenicity in action.

But, though traces of a desire for a united holiness force can be seen just prior to the Civil War, no true organization was implemented until soon after it. The National Holiness Movement was not officially begun until 1867. Gaddis states:

The National Holiness Movement got fully under way--under Methodist leadership, but on an essentially interdenominational basis--in 1867, when the first general holiness camp was held in July of that year at Vineland, New Jersey.³⁸

It is interesting to note that this campmeeting was not sectarian

³⁶ Ibid., p. 35

³⁷ Ibid., p. 39.

³⁸ Gaddis, op. cit., p. 443.

in nature; it was ecumenical. Dr. Rose Quotes one of the founders of this campmeeting as he traced the nature and aim:

We affectionately invite all, irrespective of denominational ties, interested in the subject of the higher Christian life,...to come together and spend a week in God's great temple of nature...the special object of this meeting will be to offer united and continued prayer for the revival of the work of holiness in the churches... Come, brothers and sisters of the various denominations, and let us, in this forest-meeting, as in other meetings for the promotion of holiness, furnish an illustration of evangelical union, and make common supplication for the descent of the Spirit upon ourselves, the Church, the nation, and the world.³⁹

The beginning of the National Holiness Association was characterized by holiness ecumenicity not holiness separatism.

From the beginning of the Holiness Movement until around 1893 or 1894, there was little, if any, organization. A group of men promoting campmeetings was about the only real organization in it. The movement was composed of mostly spontaneous gestures and meetings held when the occasion demanded it. This, however, did have a great effect upon the national scene. At no other time in history had holiness been promoted so widely and so zealously. By means of bands, conventions, and campmeetings, an interdenominational message was being spread; that of scriptural holiness. This was done by an interdenominational body of people all of which, or most of which, belonged to their own denom-

³⁹ Rose, op. cit., p. 52

inations. Rose quotes one leader in the movement as saying in 1900

...a great danger is...that real holiness will be wasted or weakened in losing sight of a genuine catholicity, in one's zeal for some local or denominational interest.⁴⁰

The National Association promoted a movement, not an ecclesiasticism as such. It was to be an agreement of men to promote holiness in their own churches.

But churches did develop from the National Holiness Movement and denominations as well. According to one of the early writers of the Church of the Nazarene, it was not the original intention of the Association for this to be, but conditions warranted it. Gaddis quotes J. B. Chapman, historian of the Church of the Nazarene, and shows this very clearly:

The hope was that the existing churches would furnish a nucleus for the work and that they would prove proper folds for the converts and for those entering into the experience of entire sanctification. But in spite of all, these meetings usually left a distinct people who were never quite at home in churches where the leaders actively opposed or were frigidly indifferent to the doctrine and testimony that had meant so much to them. This situation gave rise to the charge that 'holiness splits the church'.⁴¹

Gaddis again states that from 1893 to 1907

no less than twenty-five holiness sects, among or contributing to the formation of those existing today, sprang into existence in various parts of the United States.⁴²

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 75.

⁴¹ Gaddis, op. cit., p. 453.

⁴² Ibid., p. 458.

These small groups began with little, if any, knowledge of each other. This was due either to geographical and travel conditions in which developed or to each one's absolutistic attitude and individualistic tendency. However, it does seem likely that in a struggle for existence, each one was too busy with its own problems to even associate with another group. J. B. Chapman is again quoted by Gaddis as believing

that had the early holiness leaders of this national movement not been so loath to give up the idea of remaining in the existing churches and had proceeded at once to form one great holiness denomination, there was a time when such a denomination of small holiness sects would have been obviated.⁴³

But these holiness sects did come into existence. The idea of holiness ecumenicity was not dead, however. The Nazarene Church was formed as a composite of eight smaller sects and the Pilgrim Holiness Church of six such groups. Some of these smaller sects composing these larger unions were themselves formed by union and amalgamation. One writer of the Nazarene denomination states that:

One outstanding characteristic of the Church of the Nazarene is the very marked tendency toward union with other holiness groups of the right wing...⁴⁴

From the days of the 1900's to the present day, there has been a process of consolidation in the holiness movement and the holiness sects. A few new groups have been formed such as the Evangelical Methodist Church, in 1946, but for the most part the holiness bodies have

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ M. E. Redford, The Rise of the Church of the Nazarene. (Kansas City, Mo.: Nazarene Publishing House, 1948), pp. 43, 44.

remained the same as in 1910, and have grown considerably. A number of bodies have made negotiations with one another but no major union has taken place until recent days.

Holiness ecumenicity, as a characteristic was still advocated in those years of development in the National Holiness Movement, but those who wished to hold on to distinctives, which were mere opinions, hampered true Christian fellowship among holiness bodies. But the essence of the National Holiness Association had been to co-ordinate the work and friendship of all member denominations and organizations and today is still advancing this cause. This is holiness ecumenicity.

With this historical analysis of the past events of holiness ecumenicity, a preparation has been made for the study of the philosophy of holiness ecumenicity. This is our next chapter.

Nearly all of Christendom would certainly agree that in the truest sense there is but one Church. There is one spiritual oneness, wherein is manifested the unity of God. This koinonia, or fellowship of all believers, is officially called the ecclesia. It is this organism of which is spoken of when it is said in creed, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church", or of which the Apostle Paul speaks, indeed, when he says, "There is one body, and one Spirit".² With this in mind, it would seem proper that any body of believers, in an organized sense such as in a denomination or federation, having this concept, would certainly demonstrate to the world and to itself the unity of the Church better than those joined together pretentiously for the sake of unity, who believe the true Church to be only an earthly organization.

The Unity of the Spirit

In the highest sense, then, the Church is a spiritual organism. Paul pictures this in symbolic terms in Ephesians as 'the body of Christ', 'the household of God', as a building of which Christ is the chief corner-stone, 'the bond of peace', 'the bride of Christ', and simply as 'the brethren'. He also pictures the members of this organism according to roles in ordinary life. He symbolizes the Church as a family, as fellow-citizens, as fellow-heirs, fellow-workers, and as fellow-soldiers. Thus, throughout is the concept of close fellowship, harmony,

² Ephesians 4:4a, K.J.V.

is termed 'esprit de corps'. According to Webster, this military term means "the common spirit pervading the members of a group".⁷ How true this is of Christians who have the Divine Spirit within them and among them as the One who creates enthusiasm, devotion, and jealous regard. Because of this Spirit of the Christian corps, a common sentiment exhibited in the fruits of the Spirit makes for unity which only divinity can give. There is a common cause which develops harmonious enthusiastic service. Thus, a spirit-centered group is established.

Thirdly, for a group to be united, there should be rivalry. This is not internal rivalry of which is spoken, for a group divided against itself will not long stand. The watchword of Caesar was 'divide and conquer'. The rivalry of which is spoken is outward rivalry. The Church must be in rivalry with the world, not herself. Rivalry between denominations leads the Church's eyes off the true race. If the Church does not enter the race with the world for men's lives how does she expect to win? Is it not the Holy Spirit who convicts the world? Rivalry with the world gives the Church a common task with the Holy Spirit and each other Christian. This was Christ's commandment when He spoke the Great Commandment in the Commission. This is necessary for unity and effects cohesion. Thus, a task-centered group is established.

⁷ Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, Mass.: G & C Merriam Co., Publishers, 1943).

Fourthly, these professional men contend that unity in a group demands a common code of conduct or ethic. Some call this tradition. Human tradition has developed over the years in the Church and has effected separation of one body of persons from another. But it is not human tradition of which is spoken here. Divine tradition, a code and ethic, was given to the Church by revelation; by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This Logos of God written in human words by human men, is the common code which unifies believers. It is the timeless tradition which time cannot abolish. Thus, by the inspiring of men of God, unity is again of the Holy Spirit. Thus, a Bible-centered group is established.

And fifthly, there must be in the group a differentiation of function. Paul, in I Corinthians 12, lists this differentiation as it deals first with gifts or talents, and then as it deals with our callings to vocations. He states that "all these worketh that one and selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will".⁸ So we see that the Church is the most unified of all groups. It has a group mind. Paul says "we have the mind of Christ".⁹ He also mentions the "mind of the Spirit".¹⁰ It is the Spirit who is the great director of the Church. It is not the mind of one man who in himself determines policies and actions nor that of a board, but the Spirit who Master minds the progress of the Church. It is He who effects this unity (Ephesians 4:3). It is, according to the same reference, the Church's

⁸ I Corinthians 12:11, K.J.V.

⁹ I Corinthians 2:16, K.J.V.

¹⁰ Romans 8:27, k.j.v.

task to maintain this unity. Thus, a Spirit-centered group is established.

Prior to the opening of the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians Paul states, "and yet show I unto you a more excellent way".¹¹ In holiness circles, this is said to be perfect love. Jesus summed it all up in the two great commandments. Men are to love God with their whole beings and their neighbor as themselves. Is not this love one of the fruits of the Spirit, and is not the greatest of fruits love? One scholar, speaking of John Wesley's concepts, defines this love in terms befitting holiness ecumenicity this way:

The Christian fellowship is based on brotherly love between all Christians, a love that overrides distinctions of doctrine, ritual or ecclesiastical organizations. It excludes all sectarianism and partisanship. Yet it need not involve indifference in these respects. It does not mean latitudinarianism,...whether speculative or practical. The man who is actuated by this catholic spirit is steadfast in his judgment concerning the main points of Christian doctrine. His religious views are clear and definite although he is always ready to hear and ponder anything that can be said against them.¹²

Psychologists contend that the hardest thing to express is warm feelings. It is very easy to speak coldly to people, but to show that we care is difficult.¹³ Paul describes this in Ephesians 4:1-5:21. The true Christian is one who practices the fruits of the Spirit and thus does not grieve the Holy Spirit. Christians "forbear one another in love", that they might attempt to preserve the already existing unity. They speak that which is "good to the use of edifying", and are

¹¹ I Corinthians 12:31, K.J.V.

¹² Harald Lindstrom, Wesley and Sanctification. (London: The Epworth Press, 1946), p. 194.

¹³ Judson D. Howard, "Pastoral Experiences in Interpersonal Groups", Pastoral Psychology. April, 1955. Vol. 6, No. 53, pp. 27, 28

"kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another". He says also that Christians submit themselves one to another in the fear of God. This is the secret of Christian unity. As Christ said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another".¹⁴ Is not this the prayer of Jesus in John 17:26 (K.J.V.), "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them?"

Psychologists tell us that love is what the juvenile delinquent should have had. They say that love is what holds families and couples together. It is love which maintains sanity and soundness.¹⁵ Should love among holiness Christians be any less? It is perfect love in the heart of every believer which will sustain and maintain the unity of the Spirit in the family of God, the Church.

Holiness ecumenicity is inter-denominational and also intra-denominational. In the ontological sense, it involves all Christians. This unity which is from the Spirit and effected by Him implies several things. But it must be noted that unity must of necessity be simultaneous with purity. Individual salvation or commitment to Christ precedes that person's place in this spiritual unity. As his heart is purified and he becomes blameless before God, he is united with all other believers and, thus, is a part of the koinonia and ecclesia.

¹⁴ John 13:35, K.J.V.

¹⁵ Paul E. Johnson. Psychology of Religion. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1959), p. 230.

would tend to disparage koinonia? Asa Mahan mentions two things which would break fellowship or brotherly love. These are "a loss of Christian virtue, or an eclipse of Christian character; an eclipse in which...sancitized minds for a time appear to each other as they are not".¹⁹

By loss of Christian virtue it would seem that a return to sinful like would be understood. Of course, if Christ is dethroned in the Christian's life, he is no longer in the real sense a member of the ecclesia; he has separated himself from the oinonia. Also, if the character of a Christian appears to be what it is not, fellow-Christians are liable to separate themselves from him, thus causing another loss of koinonia. It should be kept in mind, however, that once the true nature of the forsaken one is brought to light, reunion should be effected. Is not this one of the causes of many sharp criticisms in the Church? Misunderstanding can cause or lead ot a lot of separations and schisms. Billy Graham has properly interpreted the Bible, it seems, when he states that "there is more emphasis on separation from evil than on separation from error".²⁰ Herein lies the importance for the Christian to maintain his Christian character before his fellow-Christians. The Church must separate from sin in order to be the pure Church, but it must not separate from error in order to be the loving and true Church.

The Unity in the Spirit

Thus far, ecumenicity has been discussed in ontological terms or

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 193

²⁰ Billy Graham, op. cit., p. 14

ation of another's thoughts or attitudes. There is the possibility and this has been true in the past, that because of an error in judgment whole denominations have been split. When the error has been discovered, the people fear to humble themselves and admit error. As Dr. McLaughlin stated "nothing but the experience of perfect love in a heart cleansed from all sin will preserve harmony among the people of God".²² This is the key seential unity of the Spirit and also for the manifestation of unity in the Spirit. More often than no, "strife among Christians indicates the need of entire sanctification".²³ But what of inter-denominational organizations such as the National Holiness Movement? What of the proposed plan for federation? It is evident that the Church takes many forms. Essentially, the Church must take the form which best allows for the worship of God, the true fellowship and edification of believers, and the propagation of the faith. The Bible says nothing about denominations or association. It merely refers to the idea that Christians must preserve in the Church the unity of the Spirit. Being in the Spirit is the first main pre-requisite for maintaining unity in the Spirit. Having and developing the fruits of the Spirit follow from this.

In conclusion, it would be well to note what a few well-known holiness men of past history have said concerning this unity. Around

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., p. 246

the turn of this century, several general holiness assemblies were being held. These quotes are from one of these. A. M. Hills stated that:

We want the holiness forces united. We want them melted down, melted together and fused until every heart beats in sympathy and unison, laboring together for the cause of holiness.²⁴

This concept was emphasized also by G. W. Ridout. In expressing his views of togetherness in the cause of holiness, which appears to have been the desire of the majority of those attending that assembly, he prayed:

We pray Thee that this assembly may be blessed from heaven; that it may be instrumental in unifying and harmonizing the holiness people; that greater impetus may be given to the holiness movement everywhere. We praise Thee that this is not a matter of creed, nor of doctrine, but a matter of experience.²⁵

Actually, in this prayer, Mr. Ridout states that unification and harmony are subsequent to the experience of heart holiness. Prayer is seen as an instrument in the unification and harmonizing of holiness people. Prayer was one of the high points at this assembly.

C. B. Jernigan testified that his prayer was:

That God will melt the whole thing down until all the holiness forces will run together.²⁶

Alexander McLean, another of the great holiness men of the past, expressed

²⁴A.M. Hills (quoted by S.B. Shaw, Ed.), Echoes of the General Holiness Assembly. (Chicago: The Christian Witness Co., n.d.), p. 83.

²⁵G. W. Ridout, Ibid., p. 91.

²⁶C. B. Jernigan, Ibid., p. 208.

the same desire when he stated that:

advantage and blessing to Christianity will be brought by a concentrating the power of the holy people...efforts that scatter, and dissuade from holiness need not be sought alone in ancient history. We can see so much of it now,--this disposition to scatter and divide...O, how my heart has bled through the years past, over the serious lack of solidarity in the Holiness cause.²⁷

J. R. Allen, reminiscing in 1901 at this meeting about assembly meetings and holiness people of the past stated that:

They saw that the desire to be leaders, and, hence, the separation into factions, and the mutual criticism of these leaders and factions, led people to lose the true spirit, and sink the true object in the desire to be great in leadership...Oh, how the people prayed for that Spirit which would unite and not divide.²⁸

Throughout the prayers and messages, the need for holiness is advanced. The messages were made clear and plan as for holiness of heart and that God wanted men to be holy. George Hughes was at this assembly and presented the holiness message. In seeing the many people there and the many holiness groups represented, he stated:

I believe it is possible for these holiness forces to be brought nearer together, knit with love and Christ-like bonds, and riveted by the Holy Ghost so that we may go out in unity to do His work.²⁹

²⁷ Alexander McLean, Ibid., pp. 287-298.

²⁸ J. R. Allen, Ibid., pp. 317, 318.

²⁹ George Hughes, Ibid., p. 55.

Perhaps Joseph H. Smith, who was not at this assembly but who in later years expressed the feeling of the assembly, speaks to the greatest need today in the Church and especially among the holiness forces. He states:

Oh! Will not all true lovers of the Church of God cry aloud for such a revival of the truth and testimony and life and power of Christian perfection as will heal her divisions, perfect her works, and adorn her with the wisdom that is from above.³⁰

³⁰ Joseph H. Smith, Pauline Perfection. (Chicago: The Christian Witness Co., 1913), p. 75.

CHAPTER V

CONTEMPORARY HOLINESS ECUMENICITY

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Introduction

In this chapter, holiness ecumenicity is considered as it now exists in light of recent developments, present situations, and proposals for the future. In doing this, the National Holiness Association is our focal point. A study of the last fifteen years of organizational growth and change is helpful as is discussion regarding present trends toward a federation type of structure among holiness churches. An attempt is made to envision a prospective view in relationship to the present perspective and in this manner define present holiness ecumenicity.

In 1956, a news release of the NHA stated that:

Cooperating in the sponsorship of the NHA and its annual convention are 23 holiness denominations, 75 colleges and schools, 175 state and county associations, and 12 foreign missionary schools, or boards.¹

Since its early days, when it was largely sponsored and administered by the Methodists, the NHA has developed into a totally interdenominational coordinating agency. Since its organization, several holiness denominations have been formed, and most of the Methodists advocating scriptural holiness have joined these denominations. This

¹ "Annual Convention of NHA, News Release", The Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness, March, 1956, p. 14.

has left the Methodist Church without almost any doctrine of entire sanctification. Until recently, the NHA has operated apart from any denomination or auxiliary but now has enlisted the approval of many of the holiness groups and has received them as affiliates in the association. Dr. Paul L. Kindschi, present president of NHA stated in 1956:

In recent years, the leadership of NHA has been securing the approval of the various holiness denominations by receiving them as affiliates to the National. Nearly all of them have now established this affiliate relationship. A much closer liaison between these groups is vitally necessary.²

The Present Situation

Today, the world is enthralled with the ecumenical idea. But just the desire for a united organization or business does not necessarily require holiness ecumenicity. Neither does the need for a united voice to the nation of the world necessitate holiness ecumenicity. Unity already exists among those who know Christ and especially those who are entirely sanctified. The need for the hour, appears to be, first of all, the expression of the fruits of the Spirit in social situations and, secondly, a re-structuring of Church economy in situations which will effect fellowship but at the same time allow freedom. Modern ecumenism or ecumenical modernism seeks to change laws and institutions and thus see a change in people. They begin with social organization

² Dr. Paul L. Kindschi, "An Analysis of the National Holiness Association", The Wesleyan Methodist, February 8, 1956, p. 3.

union may or may not be the best answer. Union for union sake is poor union. But union for fellowship sake and the ongoing of God's kingdom; and more efficient and quicker witness because of less dissipation of personnel and funds is good.

Much thought and work is today being given to the idea of a federation of holiness churches. This idea has developed since around the middle of our present century until today when action is being taken on it. An investigation in depth needs to be presented of the steps toward federation and the resulting action by the NHA Board of Administration. A look need to be taken at this process as it relates to the total field of holiness ecumenicity and the holiness people.

Dr. Kindschi, president of the NHA, stated in regard to this organization, "In the past it has seemed as though it's special mission and objective has been states singularly in the motto, 'Giving Scriptural Holiness a United Voice'."⁵ He feels that this has not been accomplished, however. It is his definite analysis that the message has done well to be even preserved by this organization in such troublesome times as these and with such an un-united stand by the holiness forces. He feels that the NHA ought to "find a basis for closer, practical cooperation in propagating the faith".⁶ Dr. Myron F. Boyd, one of the main exponents of the federation concept, feels that it is necessary because

⁵ Paul L. Kindschi, "Church Federation and the National Holiness Association", paper delivered to the Study Conference on Federation of Holiness Churches, Chicago, Illinois, December 1, 1966. p. 1.

⁶ Ibid., p. 2.

of the scriptural teaching regarding this unity, the ecumenical spirit of the age, our doctrinal agreement, and the many ministries which could be performed together rather than apart.⁷ Another writer is pro-federation because "world needs call us to a larger sympathy, a greater concern, and a more powerful, united Gospel thrust".⁸ These are wonderful reasons why a federation ought to be effected but it appears that the main stress is on organizational structure from man to God rather than from God to man. Organizational unity ought to be wanted because of an already existing spiritual-unity. Spiritual unity ought not to be sought through organizational unity.

Before an endeavour is made to think about the evangelical commission as a united group, thought ought to be given to the idea of groupness. What type of an organization or organism is the Church and what ought the Church to become? It appears that the nature of fellowship and brotherly love ought to be the main stress in planning toward federation and 'big business' endeavours to be secondary. Theology and the theologians must not be forsaken when undertaking the task of effecting a structure for easier maintenance and advancement of the unity of the Spirit.

The Eighth Mennonite World Conference did not neglect this area of the Church. In a message of that conference in Amsterdam they stated

⁷ Myron F. Boyd, "Why Federation?" paper delivered to Study Conference on Federation of Holiness Churches, Chicago, Ill., Dec. 1, 1966.

⁸ Walter C. Reynolds, "United for Mission", The Free Methodist. July 5, 1966, p. 7.

and agreed that:

We want God's Spirit to overcome in us any tendency toward an unchristian separatism or withdrawal. We beseech God to help all His children to realize more fully the spiritual unity which is theirs in Christ.⁹

In a recent panel discussion, the idea of neighborly love in the Church was brought out by Billy Graham:

We need neighbor love...If a man is converted to Christ, he repents of his sin and receives Christ as his Saviour, and then he has the capacity to love his neighbor...to me, this is the thing we need today more than anything else, not only in the Church but throughout the world...When we are in a right relationship with God, we have the ability to be in a right relationship with our neighbor.¹⁰

It appears from these statements that perhaps the foundation must be reinvestigated before the superstructure is built. In 1955, the NHA spoke of possibilities of a closer cooperation in "an agency whereby holiness people are brought more fully into the spirit of harmony and love".¹¹ It appears, then, that simply because modern ecumenicists look at the organization of a world Church as a big business and secularize their thinking, practically isolating the spiritual from discussion, the Holiness Movement must not be guilty of mimicking them in the formulation of a federation. Instead, in the proceedings and discussions, the Holiness Movement should emphasize the spiritual aspect of fellowship and neighbor love. This will more effectually unite holiness forces. If the

⁹ "Message of the Eighth Mennonite World Conference", The Mennonite, August 29, 1967, p. 524.

¹⁰ Billy Graham, "The Gospel and a Lost World", (A panel discussion moderated by Carl F.H. Henry), Christianity Today. Jan. 15, 1968, p. 10.

¹¹ "Annual Convention of NHA, New Release", op. cit., p. 11.

holiness movement is to have any impact upon contemporary Christianity and today's world, it will be a spiritual impact.

Holiness Ecumenicity and the Proposed Federation

Since the federation of holiness denominations and auxiliaries has not been consummated as yet and since study conferences are still in progress in regard to it, it is impossible to give a complete summation of the federation. It does appear, however, that a tracing of the events and positions to the present in historical and chronological fashion would help to understand the current thrust for holiness ecumenicity.

In 1956, Paul Kindschi was the Executive Secretary of NHA. In that year he wrote in The Wesleyan Methodist magazine what he felt was the need of the hour.

More and more people are expressing the need and urgency of having a closer fellowship with all holiness people. The need of forming a coordinating agency with the holiness movement, one that would truly "give scriptural holiness a united voice", has been suggested. Ways must be found of joining hands for a united front. We cannot ignore trends. The present generation is following the trend of cooperation in church, in civil areas, on community and national levels, and in all social and economic areas. Ignore these if we will, but to our own hurt. It is not a question of compromise, no never. It is a pattern and method we must recognize to keep abreast in evangelizing our generation.¹²

In that same article, he stated the willingness of the NHA personnel to begin such a movement forward toward a coordinating agency for federation of the many holiness denominations.

The leadership of NHA is willing to launch heavily into

¹² Paul L. Kindschi, "An Analysis of the National Holiness Association", op. cit., p. 3.

this program if it will be accepted and promoted by those wanting to see the work of God the Holy Spirit carried to this generation more than anything else.¹³

Within a few years, many of the holiness denominations were using the same Sunday School lessons and literature. More support was given to such a move by NHA in areas of cooperation than ever before. Organic unions by many denominations were being attempted.

Dr. Bryon S. Lamson, editor of The Free Methodist magazine was quoted in 1964 as he wrote to Dr. George E. Failing, editor of The Wesleyan Methodist, as saying:

I hope it is not too optimistic to believe that in the not-too-distant future there might come to pass at least a world fellowship of holiness bodies...perhaps an actual union of several of them.¹⁴

Dr. W. T. Purkiser, editor of the Herald of Holiness, is quoted as having the same feeling as Lamson when he stated that:

There would be some real advantages to be gained if the holiness churches did work more closely together and might eventually be brought into organic union. It is not chiefly a matter of size. It is chiefly a matter of effectiveness and service.¹⁵

Everek R. Storms, editor of the Gospel Banner, the official church magazine of the United Missionary Church, states that he feels that actual merger of holiness churches would be good:

In the holiness denominations Jesus Christ is our Great Common Denominator with an emphasis on heart purity, cleansing from all sin, and being filled with

¹³ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁴ Byron S. Lamson (quoted by Everek R. Storms), "Why not a merger of Holiness Churches?" The Gospel Banner. December 3, 1964, p. 6.

¹⁵ W. T. Purkiser, Ibid.

We are not here to discuss merger. We are thinking only of some form of federation in which all of us have an integral part and yet maintain our own identity and carry on our own program.²²

In regard to the unity spoken of, it appears that Dr. Boyd speaks of an organizational unity which develops from a doctrinal agreement already in existence. In a plea for unity among the holiness denominations, he stated:

If we have been in harmony with the doctrinal emphasis upon entire sanctification as taught by the apostles on down through John Wesley to the strong holiness leaders of our day, then it seems to me that we ought to be more united in presenting an effectual image of the holiness movement to the world.²³

Harold K. Sheets, a general superintendent of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America, stressed the need for emphasis on spiritual unity prior to any form of federation. He stated at the study conference:

We shall need to underscore the fact that the real unities of Christian holiness are not based upon denominational organization, or federation. They are based on unities of the spirit, or commitment, of shared vision, and of unqualified loyalty and unwhimpering sacrifice to Jesus Christ ---unities anchored in the cleansing blood...Moreover let us be reminded that organizational pattern largely follows, rather than precedes, demonstration of this unity.²⁴

It seems that the majority of writers and speakers at the conference emphasized the need to be united for witness, rather than fellowship. It appears that the latter must precede the first, however, at

²² Myron F. Boyd, op. cit., "Why Federation", p. 1.

²³ Ibid., p. 2.

²⁴ Harold K. Sheets, "Ideals and Goals of a Church Federation Relationship", A paper read at the Study Conference on Federation of Holiness Churches. LaSalle Hotel, Chicago, Ill. Nov. 30-Dec. 2, 1966, p. 1.

least one person did emphasize the idea of fellowship in the area of federation. He felt that the concept of fellowship is absolutely necessary in any organizing of structures within the Church. Bishop Walter S. Kendall stated:

Since fellowship is the basic purpose and need in church membership, it behooves us as holiness people to exemplify this obvious truth in the area of fellowship, rather than to become complicated at the start with legal and corporate problems of organizational union.²⁵

Another writer stated that "The unity which is God's will and gift for His Church can be realized only by a committed fellowship empowered by the Holy Spirit".²⁶ It appears that much more work must be done, especially on this area of the federation movement termed 'fellowship', than is being done at present. Throughout the conference, however, it appeared that structure, organization, and the thrust for Christ which could be effected by such a body were the principal issues. Thus, discussion must be given to these areas as they relate to the issue of holiness ecumenicity.

In relation to structure of organization, the plan which was envisioned was pictured as a group of denominational representatives composing the ruling body. This conference would not have power to act on behalf of the Federation unless a majority of those represent-

²⁵ Bishop Walter S. Kendall, "Church Federation and the Development of a World Fellowship", (paper delivered at Chicago meeting), p. 1.

²⁶ Charles D. Kirkpatrick, "Minimal Organizational Structure for Mission Federation", Ibid., p. 1.

atives or bodies agreed. It would then be possible for one, or as many as wanted to, of the denominations to choose not to cooperate in the endeavour. It is to be a voluntary organization with no power of control over the separate entities. Each would be autonomous in its own denomination. Each could withdraw from the federation if it desired. Under the organized body would be a board of administration which would control the business of the bodies but function only upon those issues passed by the representative body. Under this administrative board would be the executive director who would represent the board in carrying out these issues. Under him would be the various ministries of the federation such as education, missions, evangelism, and publications which would each compose a board or committee.

In the structural sense, according to this study conference, the saving of personnel and the united witness to the world are ultimately the basic factors which necessitate federation of the holiness churches. This idea of a united witness, however, became the compelling force behind the study conference. Bishop Paul N. Ellis put this into his own words at the conference when he suggest that:

If love and passion and zeal for the redemption of mankind is truly our motivating impulse in this conference, I am confident we can find meaningful areas of cooperation in the common ministry we have today.²⁷

²⁷ Paul N. Ellis, "Church Federation and Comity", Ibid., p. 5.

Perhaps the greatest work of the conference was in the formation of a steering committee to operate as the study group in the formation and the coordinating of such a federation. This steering committee was composed of eight men plus two representatives from each denomination participating. This committee had the "authority to call a 'federating conference' when in their opinion and upon recommendation of several denominations it was thought wise to do so".²⁸

In March, 1967, a meeting of the Steering Committee was called and held in Cleveland, Ohio. This first meeting was held with twenty men in attendance representing eleven denominations. Perhaps the function of this meeting was one more of development rather than of conclusions. At this meeting a committee was formed "Whose duty is to prepare a proposed constitution which could become a basis for federation".²⁹ Other than this action, several other matters were cleared up and greater organization was set up for the purpose of studying in depth the federation idea and plausibility of such a move. Several other committees were formed to cover other areas important to the federation study.

In December of 1967, a meeting of the Steering Committee on Research and Planning was held in Indianapolis, Indiana in the Pilgrim

²⁸ Myron F. Boyd, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Committee on Research and Planning", held at the Pilgrim Holiness Church Headquarters in Indianapolis, Ind. December 5, 6, 1967.

²⁹ "Minutes of the First Steering Committee Meeting", held at the Sheraton-Cleveland Hotel, Cleveland, Ohio. March 28, 1967. p. 2.

may be an organizational integration without a oneness of spirit and that there may be a spiritual unity without corporate mergers. They hold that spiritual unity must precede organizational union if the latter is to be meaningful. Ecumenicity is a hollow thing if it is not rooted in deep spiritual agreements. It is an empty thing if it represents outward union without inner harmony. In such a case it is actually destructive to the spiritual interests of the Kingdom of God.³⁶

Dr. Mavis states that "If a religious movement believes that all things are changeless it congeals at a certain point of development and it becomes irrelevant to the changing world".³⁷ He admonishes Christianity by writing that "The hope of the Christian movement today, as throughout all of history, is thoughtful change within a framework of loyalty to eternal principles".³⁸ This is the expression of the movement toward federation in the Holiness Movement. Spiritual unity is possessed as we are possessed of the Spirit, and for effectiveness in witness and to meet the demands of present-day trends, a move must be made toward corporate union. The maxim of the Holiness Movement in these days ought to be that of the Pietists when they stated: "In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in all things, charity".³⁹

An article in the Herald of Holiness recently, by R. B. Acheson, best expresses the present concept of holiness ecumenicity. He feels that:

There is a spiritual affinity among the sanctified that loathes division and maintains a deep-down harmony in spite of superficial differences.⁴⁰

³⁶ W. Curry Mavis, "Beyond Conformity", Winona Lake, Indiana: Light and Life Press, 1958), p. 146.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 160. ³⁸ Ibid. ³⁹ Ibid., p. 155.

⁴⁰ R. B. Acheson, "Biblical Ecumenicity", Herald of Holiness January 10, 1968, p. 3.

He is alarmed at the fact that:

While ecumenism is the word among formal denominations, "split-up-ism" seems to be the popular theme in Holiness ranks. The former seek union often at the expense of fundamental compromise. This is unfortunate. The latter, too, often divide over nonessentials. This is equally unfortunate.

Mr. Acheson does not foresee uniformity among holiness people as being the answer. Instead, to him, variety among them is good. He states:

Heart holiness will not erase our differences, but it should deepen the fellowship of those to whom the cause of Christ is bigger than themselves...Variety is one of the attractive features of holiness people. A pleasing balance of shouters and shiners, of the testifiers and the timids, of exhorters and expositors, of radicals and conservatives, forms a wonderful gospel net for God to use in His fishing for souls.⁴²

Perhaps the best statement on holiness ecumenicity is stated by

Mr. Acheson. He expresses the heart throb of Jesus Christ as he states:

The common denominator is a clean heart filled with love for Christ and for each other...There is a profession of holiness that causes cleavage among good people. There is an experience of entire sanctification that promotes fellowship and unity among those of like precious faith. Only the latter can cause the world to believe.⁴³

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 4.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions

In this paper, on the basis of the research contained herein, the following conclusions were made:

1. The Wesleyan concept of heart holiness and perfect love portays the ecumenical idea better than all other concepts studied.
2. In Church history, prior to the present-day Protestant Ecumenical Movement, holiness or purity in the Church was pictured as the area where ecumenicity was most emphasized.
3. The pre-Wesleyan holiness movements had a definite effect upon John Wesley's concept of catholic love and, thus, upon the present view of holiness ecumenicity.
4. In Christian history, the doctrine of holiness has not effected division and schism, but was merely the occasion for such to occur. Non-holiness factors effected the divisions, since holiness is a main attribute of the Church.
5. The Scriptural view of holiness ecumenicity was found to be best identified with the Wesleyan concept of perfect love and with the National Holiness Association.
6. It was perceived that spiritual unity should preced organizational unity.

7. It was concluded that a federation form of church structure would not only be good, but is necessary, since it would provide for not only fellowship but also freedom and would envelop the idea of the Church of Christ in that it would not bind or enslave nor divide and desecrate the body of Christ.

Throughout this thesis the goal was to present holiness ecumenicity in the context of the National Holiness Association. The denominations connected with this association were not in themselves traced as to historical happenings or their peculiar doctrines. It was the Holiness Movement which had carried the theme of holiness ecumenicity prior to the formation of the association and to the present day. For the future, it may be a federation or coalition; perhaps organic union will eventuate.

The primary concern of the holiness people is the fact that it is the Holy Spirit who effects love and concern in people for God and other people. The fellowship of believers is made possible by this love which only the Holy Spirit can effect and which causes people to be concerned for each other. Before people can be in tune with one another, they must first be in tune with God. A structure such as a federation among holy people would make this fellowship larger and stronger, allowing for better and united witness to the saving power of the blood of Christ and the purifying power of the Holy Spirit. May Jesus Christ be uplifted thereby and God's people seek to develop the fruits of the Spirit. In this way, perhaps the world will realize the true meaning of ecumenicity.

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