

Wilmore, Kentucky  
November 20, 1978

Dr. Mildred Wynkoop  
Nazarene Theological Seminary  
1700 East Meyer Boulevard  
Kansas City, Missouri 64131

Dear Dr. Wynkoop:

Your letter of November 8, 1978, came the fore part of last week. It has been the object of my prayerful concern since its arrival. I have not wanted to reply hastily in order that I might see the situation in its full perspective. In the light of what I hope is careful reflection, I will attempt to answer your letter and its accusations. There are several points to which I would like to call attention.

(1) First of all we should keep in mind that a program was arranged for the recent WTS Annual Conference that had a sort of "built-in" element of controversy in it. I had nothing to do with the arrangement of that program. Among others, my colleague, Dr. Robert Lyon, was invited to present a paper which involved, in part, his own personal views. He was given full freedom to present these views. They were presented in a public forum. It seems only fair to me (as well as to others) that those WTS members present should have the same liberty to ask pertinent, forthright questions that related to the views presented. Dr. George Turner asked the question relating to the two-fold nature of sin and its remedy, directing that question in a judicious manner to Dr. Lyon in the course of his own paper. Later, Dr. Duane Beals expressed a desire for Dr. Lyon to respond to Dr. Turner's question, and subsequently I urged him to do so. I'm only relating this to give us a full picture of the situation. Please bear in mind that the WTS Program Committee arranged the program. They set the stage for a sort of "tinder-box," to use the language of a WTS member who was present. Some of the members of the Program Committee may not have been fully conversant with Dr. Lyon's views, but the program was set up with the concurrence of the WTS president, Dr. Melvin Dieter, who is a member of the ATS faculty, and who certainly knew in general, at least, the view that Dr. Lyon would present. It seems to me that if you are going to place the blame properly then you should lay it at the doorstep of the Program Committee and the leadership of WTS who set the stage for the interchange that took place. If they wanted to avoid what transpired, then why was such a program arranged in the first place? They provided the stage for a very pertinent, forthright, "hard-nosed" question such as Dr. Turner asked.

(2) You spoke of "the unprofessional manner in which you embarrassed your colleague and the whole Society in our recent meeting." In reply, I want to say that my own conscience acquits me of any desire to embarrass my colleague, Dr. Lyon. It was clarification that was the object of my urging, as it was Dr. Turner (as he has told me) and I'm sure this was in the mind of Duane Beals (as well as others, no doubt). Then, secondly, you state that I embarrassed "the whole Society." How can you be so sure of that? Very interestingly, in the same mail in which your letter arrived, I received another letter from a WTS member who was present and who is quite active in the Society. With the recent WTS Conference in mind, he wrote as follows: "THANK YOU AGAIN SO MUCH FOR ALL YOUR FINE WORK AND THE NICE THINGS YOU DO AND SAY.... I CERTAINLY CANNOT AGREE WITH BOB LYON AND WAS GLAD YOU PRESSED HIM TO REPLY TO A QUESTION THAT WAS VERY MUCH IN ORDER AS STATED BY DUANE BEALS." And yet you say I embarrassed "the whole society"! It is quite apparent that both of you cannot be right. This person wrote kindly, appreciatively, commendably. Your letter is censorious, judgmental, condemning, and it could be added, arbitrary, arrogant, and pontifical. You can understand why I am suspicious of the kind of omniscience you arrogate to yourself in saying that I embarrassed "the whole society."

(3) You spoke about a "quarrel" between myself and Dr. Lyon. Is that what you call the very obvious differences of opinions and/or views among the faculty of

Nazarene Theological Seminary? While we have been colleagues on the ATS faculty, there has been communication between Dr. Lyon and myself. Just the week before the WTS Conference, Dr. Lyon gave three lectures at the annual Holiness Emphasis Conference on our campus. It was the most public manner in which his views on Holiness have been expressed since he has been on our faculty. Prior to the recent WTS Conference, I communicated with Bob about some views presented in his lectures. He handed me his reply on the first morning of the WTS Conference. To my knowledge, there has never been a harsh or bitter word between us. I have mentioned these facts only to let you know that the lines of communication are open between us. But in candor, there is something else that I must tell you frankly in this regard. To use your own language, it is certainly very "unprofessional" for you to project yourself into the affairs of our campus when you know so little about them and to suggest pontifically to us how to handle them!

(4) I'm appalled at your description of what happened: "To have conducted a 'heresy trial' at the Society meeting...." Such a gross ~~work~~ misunderstanding astounds me. Did Dr. Turner initiate the "heresy trial" by asking a pertinent question? Did Duane Beals augment that "heresy trial"? Was I any more blameworthy than they? I want to repeat that what was being asked for was clarification of a very vitally related matter. Dr. Turner has told me that was the intention of his question, and it certainly was my intention as well. To be so grossly misunderstood and falsely accused really staggers me.

(5) Your final sentence is equally astounding: "To treat him as a child, demanding a statement far removed from his research report, completely out of the program context is reprehensible." "...a statement far removed from his research report..." Certainly Dr. Turner did not think it "far removed from his research report," or he would not have proposed the question in the first place. Dr. Beals thought it in order. The person to whose letter I have previously referred under (2) states that he was glad that I pressed for a reply "TO A QUESTION THAT WAS VERY MUCH IN ORDER AS STATED BY DUANE BEALS." In addition, your reference to "a statement far removed from his research report" can only reveal the lack of depth in your own theological insights and understanding. Please remember that a view was presented (as brought out in the paper and the discussion) that "receiving the Holy Spirit," "the gift of the Holy Spirit," "baptism in (with) the Holy Spirit," and "filled with the Holy Spirit" represent "conversion language." If Dr. Turner's question regarding the two-fold nature of sin is not pertinent to that view, then my name is not "Arnett," neither do I know anything about holiness theology! "Fuzzy" theology did not bring the Holiness Movement into existence, and "fuzzy" theology will not maintain it, or fruitfully propagate it.

I would like to say in closing that I'm not anxious to engage in a lot of "in-scrapping" where WTS is concerned. The purpose of Asbury Theological Seminary is "to prepare and send forth a well-trained, Spirit-filled, evangelistic ministry." This is my main purpose and concern. It has been my joy and privilege to share in this work for nearly twenty-eight years, and, among other things, to help students and others into the precious realities of God's saving and ~~and~~ sanctifying grace. I'll enclose a recently printed tract written by one of my colleagues -- a layman. As Gladstone of England was wont to say, one example is worth a thousand arguments! I do want to continue my activity in WTS, and in so doing, I aspire to be as John Wesley states, as one who "LOVES HIS BROTHER ONLY LESS THAN THE TRUTH" (and his 'sisters' in Christ as well, I would add).

A xeroxed copy of this letter is being sent to those whom you have written, plus a xeroxed copy of your letter to me so that they will know precisely the context to which I have written in this letter. May GOD bless you -- and I trust that a merciful God may help us all.

Sincerely, in HIS Glad Service,

*William M. Arnett*

cc: Dr. Robert Lyon  
Dr. Melvin E. Dieter  
Dr. John A. Knight

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