

WESLEYAN THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

A FELLOWSHIP OF WESLEYAN ARMINIAN SCHOLARS

ESTABLISHED IN 1965

Seattle

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To the Membership of the WTS:

It is a pleasure to bring this report of my work during the last year. The responsibilities of the promotional secretary are primarily two, working with the executive committee in general but especially in its primary task of program planning and doing other work as possible to promote the society in general.

The first of these tasks I have fulfilled primarily through participation in executive committee meetings, both at last year's annual meeting and at the meeting held last Spring in Columbus at the annual meeting of the Christian Holiness Association. In addition I have met a couple of times in the Chicago area with Howard Snyder as he has worked on next year's program. My own major suggestion for this year's program was to invite David Weddle, with whom I did much of the negotiation and who accepted and planned to be here but was prevented from doing so by his wife's illness.

The second of these tasks was fulfilled in a number of ways (correspondence with those who wrote about the society, distributing programs at various meetings, etc.) but especially in an expanded role as representative of the society to the Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches. In addition to two regular meetings a year in which I chair a sub-section of the apostolic faith study, I have been invited to other consultations and activities. About to be published in both book and periodical form (in the Greek Orthodox Theological Review) is a contribution on the holiness movement to a consultation on pneumatology. I recently served on the planning committee and participated in a program on the role of Pentecostalism in the ecumenical movement. Earlier this fall I was invited to present a major paper on a "holiness perspective" on "mon-theological factors" in ecumenical dialogue before the North American Academy of Ecumenists--at which meeting I was also elected to the executive committee of that group. I reported last year on my presence as a consultant to the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches. Out of this

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and other contacts I have been invited to spend my spring sabbatical in Geneva as a consultant to the World Council of Churches on questions of relationships with non-member churches and traditions. In and around this I am working on at least one book on these themes which will bring our movement into more prominence and attempt to offer interpretations of "evangelicalism" more congenial to our self-understanding. Along a similar line I have been serving as the chair of the evangelical theology section of the American Academy of Religion in which we are engaged in a study of the "limits of evangelicalism." In this role I was able to invite Paul Bassett to represent the holiness movement by presenting a paper in this arena. I think that all of these activities are making us a part of discussions in new ways and bringing us before persons that have been hardly aware of our existence as a church tradition.

In many ways I am still processing the issues in and around this ecumenical involvement and am not yet ready to make final judgement about a number of matters. I have been anxious to master the situation more completely before attempting such, but in the meantime Jeff Gros, head of the Faith and Order Commission of the NCCC comments that I have shown the greatest resistance to cooptation that he has ever seen. There is some discussion of my presenting a paper along this line at the next meeting after my sabbatical in Europe. If that works out, I will be anxious to present my reflections at that time. Meanwhile I will only comment that I have found the issues to be less theological than cultural. Our tradition has in many ways been so marginalized and invisible--obscured by the Pentecostals on one side and the Evangelicals on the other--that the major issue so far has been to create categories on the mind of others by which we are recognized as even being there, let alone being genuine participants in a dialogue. This is changing, but I still believe it to be the fundamental task for the moment. For this reason I believe it to be crucial to continue this sort of representation, and I hope that I can continue to play a role in such work.

In dialogue with the nominating committee I have agreed that I should not stand for reelection as promotional secretary again. I believe that it is now thirteen years that I have served. I have enjoyed very much this work and hope that I have served the society, but I do think that it is time that others bring their own perspective and gifts to the society as well. Thank you very much.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald W. Dayton
WTS Promotional Secretary