

October 8, 1970

Dr. Ralph Perry, President
The Wesleyan Theological Society
Olivet Nazarene College
Kankakee, Illinois 60901

Dear Dr. Perry:

Greetings in the name of our Lord. I hope this finds you improved in health under God's blessings.

First, in accordance with our phone conversation last evening I drove to the NHA Convention at Indianapolis this morning (Oct. 8) and met with the NHA Executive Committee under the chairmanship of Bishop Boyd in the early morning at about 7:30 a.m. in Room 218 of the Holiday Motel N.W. for an hour or more concerning the WTS-NHA problems. NHA Executive Secretary Dr. Dale Emory explained to Dr. Boyd and the committee that you had authorized me to represent you as President of the WTS at this meeting. Several non-official members of the WTS were present as representatives of the NHA Executive Committee, including Bishop M. Boyd, Dr. Leo Cox, Dr. Paul Petticord, and perhaps others. George Blackstone, President-Elect of the WTS was not present, and Dr. Ralph Thompson, WTS Sect.-Treas. was absent. Both had been notified.

Second, I was questioned concerning the action of the WTS in adopting the Constitution at the November 1969 Convention of WTS, but especially as it included the statement on the inspiration of the Scriptures which differs in wording, though not in actual doctrinal content, as appeared to be the consensus of all present at this meeting. At least no objection to the statement was raised by anyone present. It was indicated, however, as of course we knew, that some members of the WTS and possibly some of the NHA (of this I am not too certain) had raised objections to the adoption of this statement mainly on the ground that the word "inerrant" was not included, as it is in the NHA statement.

Third, I explained fully to the committee the rationale for the wording of this statement as it is printed in the published constitution, including the fact that we were faced with losing prized members of the WTS who objected to the word "inerrancy," and that many others refused to join the WTS because of the use of this word in the doctrinal statement. I also explained that Dr. Ralph Thompson informed me last night by phone that the society had gained an appreciable number of members this year as a result of the more satisfactory statement on the Scriptures contained in the adopted constitution. He mentioned no withdrawals then, though he has since informed me that there has been one withdrawal during the year, for what reason he did not say, if indeed any reason was given. No complaints were mentioned.

Fourth, I conveyed to the NHA Committee the position expressed to me by both you and Dr. Ralph Thompson by phone last evening that no change in the WTS Constitution should be imposed by the NHA at this time, and that only if the WTS should for any reason order any change subsequently by vote of its body in session should such change be made. The question arose as to the official relation of the WTS to the NHA and whether the WTS had the right to adopt a Constitution which differed in wording on the Scriptures from the NHA statement. This question hinged upon the official relationship of WTS to the NHA. Consensus appeared to favor WTS right to do so. No objection was raised.

Fifth, there was evident lack of clarity of the official relationship of the WTS to the NHA. Dr. Cox, who has been regarded as the Father of the WTS expressed doubt that the WTS actually grew out of or was officially authorized at any time by the NHA. He stated that he and certain others had gotten together in the interest of a WTS and started it, and that it seems to have operated as an organization without any official constitution until last November when the present Constitution was adopted, and that the WTS was simply assumed to maintain an affiliate relation to the NHA. No one possessed any copies or knowledge of minutes or records that indicated any official record of action indicating the WTS' relationship to the NHA. Certain statements of doctrine had indeed been borrowed verbatim from the NHA Constitution and were printed in the WTS Journal for the direction of the WTS. However so far it remains an open question concerning the actual WTS relationship officially to the NHA. I do not know if this question can be answered in the light of the absence of recorded evidence. Possibly such evidence can be discovered, but no one seemed to be certain.

Sixth, I explained that the present statement, in the WTS Constitution, seems to a majority of the members of the WTS to express as strongly and as high a view of the Scriptures as does the NHA statement. This position was not challenged at the meeting. I further indicated that any return to the use of the word "inerrancy" now could mean the withdrawal of an X number of the present WTS membership, would prevent others who object to the word from joining and that if the WTS were pressed unduly in the matter by the NHA it could even mean the possible withdrawal of the WTS from official relationship with the NHA and that it would then become an autonomous body.

Seventh, the entire spirit of the meeting was kindly, Christian, courteous and considerate with no evident disposition to sensure the WTS in any way, and devoid of any disposition to bring any pressure upon the WTS to revise its officially adopted Constitution at the 1969 November Convention. In fact as I sensed the sentiment and attitude of the NHA Committee, there appeared a disposition to allow the WTS the right to express this doctrinal statement (or perhaps others) in the verbage judged best suited to its particular needs, so long as the essence of such statements were in agreement with the intention and sense of the doctrinal position of the NHA. I trust my inference in this respect is correct. It appeared that there was a disposition on the part of the committee that the NHA should have such an official provision spelled out.

Eight, I was informed by the Chairman of the NHA Committee that the NHA had taken action authorizing the WTS to be the official Editorial Committee of the NHA, in addition to its own editorial concerns. I was further advised that the NHA had taken official action authorizing the WTS to be responsible for the Direction of the NHA Seminars, and that the WTS should bear all expenses connected with these seminars.

I trust I have correctly and clearly conveyed herein the business of this special session with the NHA Executive Committee. Personally I left the meeting with a high degree of satisfaction.

Sincerely in Him,
Charles W. Carter, WTS, Ed. acting,
for Dr. Ralph Perry, President, WTS

CWC:ec
cc- Drs. R. Thompson, George Blankstone,
Bishop Boyd and Dale Emory