

Wesley, Holiness and Culture:
Trans-Pacific Perspectives for the 21st Century

Proposal

Present in summary form the issues that plague the Body of Christ associated with the hindrances of the practical application of holiness in the life of the believer. Key areas of emphasis include biblical and theological constructs of holiness coupled with the missiological imperatives and practical application.

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to rearticulate the doctrine of holiness in this Church era in light of relative morality and cheapening grace. The Church is living in the midst of an age in which morality is spoken of in a negative sense inasmuch as it encroaches on the rights of individuals. The Church is subtly drawn into an individualistic morality that mirrors the world causing a cheapening of God's grace. The Church is called to be the light and salt of the world. There is to be a distinct difference between the two, which entails the submitting of individual will and rights to the will and work of God. As the Church perfects holiness and comes into the fullness of Christ, the Kingdom of God is advanced. To further explicate this viewpoint, key biblical and theological themes surrounding the terms holiness, sanctification, regeneration, perfection, ethical faith, and God's love will be revisited. This paper also examines the origin, nature, and character of holiness and posits that there are two natures of holiness, divine and human, and both are essential to the holiness journey. This duality is demonstrated throughout Scripture and is the basis for the tensions that existed in the early Church as articulated in Pauline theology and the writings of early Church fathers such as Augustine. In rearticulating the doctrine of holiness it is essential to dialogue about both the internal and external aspects of holiness. This paper will commence this discussion with the *imago dei* progressing to the work of Christ on the cross, the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church, and leading to the eschatological hope of the consummation of all things. The terminology holiness journey is preferred to articulate the progressive nature of holiness, which becomes perfected at Christ's appearance. God's people are to reflect a lifestyle that is distinctively different than that of the world. Although perfection, in the sense of God's perfection, is not obtained until Christ's return there is a level of perfection that is obtainable to those who have been sanctified by the work of Christ on the cross and who are receiving the fullness of God's Spirit for this Church era. The process of this continuing perfection is ignited by our desire of someday seeing our Lord Jesus Christ face to face. God's holiness is revealed to us through the grace of God (the internal work of Christ in the believer). One is able to discern the outward demonstration of this holiness in the believer (the outward manifestation of an inward work) through one's lifestyle, demeanor, and character (the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer manifested outwardly as the fruit of the Spirit), which can only be obtained through a true relationship with God. It is a way of life (in a most ontological sense) that the Church has been called to live to bring others into the Light.

Sincerely,
Lisa Dorsey