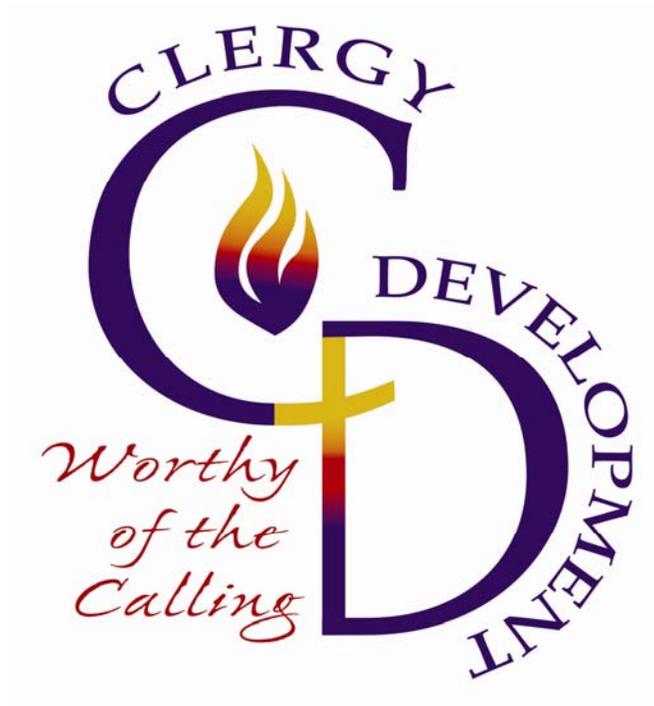

Faculty Guide

Investigating Christian Theology 2



Clergy Development
Church of the Nazarene
Kansas City, Missouri
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2003

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The **Modular Course of Study** is an outcome-based curriculum designed to implement the educational paradigm defined by the Breckenridge Consultations. Clergy Development is responsible for maintaining and distributing the Modular Course of Study for the Church of the Nazarene.

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Series Foreword

A Vision for Christian Ministry: Clergy Education in the Church of the Nazarene

The chief purpose of all persons—indeed, all of the creation—is to worship, love, and serve God. God has made himself known in His deeds of creation and redemption. As the Redeemer, God has called into existence a people: the Church, who embody, celebrate, and declare His name and His ways. The life of God with His people and the world constitutes the Story of God. That story is recorded principally in the Old and New Testaments, and continues to be told by the resurrected Christ who lives and reigns as Head of His Church. The Church lives to declare the whole Story of God. This it does in many ways—in the lives of its members who are even now being transformed by Christ through preaching, the sacraments, in oral testimony, community life, and in mission. All members of the Body of Christ are called to exercise a ministry of witness and service. No one is excluded.

In God's own wisdom He calls some persons to fulfill the ministry of proclaiming the gospel and caring for God's people, in a form referred to as the ordained ministry. God is the initial actor in this call, not humans. In the Church of the Nazarene we believe God calls and persons respond. They do not elect the Christian ministry. All persons whom God calls to the ordained ministry should continue to be amazed that He would call them. They should continue to be humbled by God's call. The *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene states, "we recognize and hold that the Head of the Church calls some men and women to the more official and public work of the ministry." It adds, "The church, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, will recognize the Lord's call" (*Manual*, Church of the Nazarene, paragraph 400).

An ordained Christian minister has as his or her chief responsibility to declare in many ways the whole Story of God as fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. His or her charge is to "tend the flock of God . . . not under compulsion, but willingly, not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock" (1 Pet 5:2-3, NRSV). The minister fulfills this charge under the supervision of Christ, the chief Shepherd (1 Pet 5:4). Such ministry can be fulfilled only after a period of careful

preparation. Indeed, given the ever-changing demands placed upon the minister, "preparation" never ceases.

A person who enters the Christian ministry becomes in a distinct sense a steward of the gospel of God (Titus 1: 7). A steward is one who is entrusted to care for what belongs to another. A steward may be one who takes care of another person or who manages the property of someone else. All Christians are stewards of the grace of God. But in addition, in a peculiar sense a Christian minister is a steward of the "mystery of God," which is Christ, the Redeemer, the Messiah of God. In all faithfulness, the minister is called to "make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel" (Eph 6: 19, NRSV). Like Paul, he or she must faithfully preach "the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places" (Eph 3: 8-10, NRSV).

In fulfilling this commission, there is plenty of room for diligence and alertness, but no room for laziness or privilege (Titus 1: 5-9). Good stewards recognize that they are stewards only, not the owners, and that they will give an account of their stewardship to the master. Faithfulness to one's charge and to the Lord who issued it is the steward's principal passion. When properly understood, the Christian ministry should never be thought of as a "job." It is ministry—uniquely Christian ministry. No higher responsibility or joy can be known than to become a steward of the Story of God in Christ's Church. The person who embraces God's call to the ordained ministry will stand in the company of the apostles, the Early Fathers of the Church, the Reformers of the Middle Ages, the Protestant Reformers, and many persons around the world today who joyfully serve as stewards of the gospel of God.

Obviously, one who does not recognize, or who understands but rejects, just how complete and inclusive a minister's stewardship must be, should not start down the path that leads to ordination. In a peculiar sense, a Christian minister must in all respects model the gospel of God. He or she is to "shun" the love of money. Instead, the minister must "pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness." He or she must "fight the good fight of the faith" and "take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called" (1 Tim 6: 11-12, NRSV).

Hence, the Church of the Nazarene believes “the minister of Christ is to be in all things a pattern to the flock—in punctuality, discretion, diligence, earnestness; ‘in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left’ (2 Cor 6:6-7)” (*Manual*, Church of the Nazarene, paragraph 401.1). The minister of Christ “must be above reproach as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, ⁸but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, ⁹holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching . . . able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.” (Titus 1:7-9, NASB).

In order to be a good steward of God’s Story one must, among other things, give oneself to careful and systematic study, both before and after ordination. This will occur not because he or she is forced to do so, but out of a love for God and His people, the world He is working to redeem, and out of an inescapable sense of responsibility. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the attitude one brings to preparation for the ministry reveals much about what he or she thinks of God, the gospel, and Christ’s Church. The God who became incarnate in Jesus and who made a way of salvation for all gave His very best in the life, death, and resurrection of His Son. In order to be a good steward, a Christian minister must respond in kind. Jesus told numerous parables about stewards who did not recognize the importance of what had been entrusted to them (Mt 21:33-44; 25:14-30; Mk 13:34-37; Lk 12:35-40; 19:11-27; 20:9-18).

Preparation for ministry in Christ’s Church—one’s education in all its dimensions— should be pursued in full light of the responsibility before God and His people that the ministry involves. This requires that one take advantage of the best educational resources at his or her disposal.

The Church of the Nazarene recognizes how large is the responsibility associated with the ordained Christian ministry and accepts it fully. Part of the way we recognize our responsibility before God is seen in the requirements we make for ordination and the practice of ministry. We believe the call to and practice of Christian ministry is a gift, not a right or privilege. We believe God holds a minister to the highest of religious, moral, personal, and professional standards. We are not reluctant to expect those standards to be

observed from the time of one's call until his or her death. We believe Christian ministry should first be a form of worship. The practice of ministry is both an offering to God and a service to His Church. By the miracle of grace, the work of the ministry can become a means of grace for God's people (Rom 12: 1-3). One's education for ministry is also a form of worship.

The modules comprising the Course of Study that may lead a person to candidacy for ordination have been carefully designed to prepare one for the kind of ministry we have described. Their common purpose is to provide a holistic preparation for entrance into the ordained Christian ministry. They reflect the Church's wisdom, experience, and responsibility before God. The modules show how highly the Church of the Nazarene regards the gospel, the people of God, the world for which Christ gave His life, and Christian ministry. Completing the modules will normally take three or four years. But no one should feel pressured to meet this schedule.

The careful study for which the modules call should show that before God and His Church one accepts the stewardly responsibility associated with ordained ministry.

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Introduction

Intended Use of This Faculty Guide

This faculty guide serves as an instructor's guide for teaching principles of *Investigating Christian Theology 2* to adult learners who are preparing for ordination in the Church of the Nazarene. The content is based on intended outcomes defined through the collaborative process conducted at Breckenridge, CO, USA, between 1990 and 1997. The materials prepare the pastor-teacher to present the topic by providing background reading, lesson plans, lectures, instructions to the teacher, and teaching resources for each class session. In most lessons complete lectures, questions for guided discussions, and defined learning activities are provided.

The pastor-teacher who will lead this module should hold a master's degree. Ideally, the pastor-teacher should have participated as a student in a module using this material prior to teaching the material to others. This faculty guide assumes that the pastor-teacher has some basic understanding of Christian theology.

It is further assumed that learners participating in a module using this material will be high school graduates and be adult learners beyond the traditional college age. Learners are assumed to be motivated to learn, and to have adult life-experiences. No prior college classroom experience is assumed on the part of the learners.

Acknowledgments

Every module is the accumulation of effort by many people. Someone writes the original manuscript, others offer suggestions to strengthen the content and make the material more easily understood, and finally an editor formats the module for publication. This module is not different. Many people have contributed to this module. Every effort has been made to represent accurately the original intent of the principal contributors.

Principal Contributor

The principal contributor for this module is Rodrick T. Leupp. Dr. Leupp was born in Portland, Oregon. His parents provided wonderful Christian nurture within the Church of the Nazarene, a church he has attended all of his life. He was educated at Northwest Nazarene University, Pacific School of Religion, and Drew University, earning the Ph.D. in Theology at Drew University.

Dr. Leupp has fifteen years of teaching experience, including eight formative years at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary in Metro Manila, the Philippines, from 1992 to 2000. There he met Stephanie Brank, and they were married in 1993. Their two daughters were both born in the Philippines.

In 1996 Rod's first book was published, a work in trinitarian theology entitled *Knowing the Name of God*. He has written dozens of book reviews and several articles for *Holiness Today*. He has also pastored many small, United Methodist congregations. He is devoted to the Wesleyan theological heritage.

Responder

Each module was reviewed by at least one content specialist to ensure that the content did not represent a single, narrow view or opinion. The responder provided suggestions the principal contributor could integrate into this module.

The responder for this module was Wesley D. Tracy. Dr. Tracy has coauthored several books on spiritual formation. *The Upward Call: Spiritual Formation and the Holy Life*, written with Morris Weigelt, Janine Tartaglia, and Dee Freeborn, was published in 1994 by Beacon Hill Press and has gone through several printings in English and Spanish. Dr. Tracy was the principal author of *Reflecting God*, a layperson's

textbook on spiritual formation published by Beacon Hill Press and the Christian Holiness Partnership and sponsored by the 23 supporting denominations of CHP. This book is supported by three other items written by Wesley Tracy: *The Reflecting God Workbook*, *Reflecting God Leader's Guide*, and *The Reflecting God Journal*.

Tracy holds five higher education degrees including degrees from Southern Nazarene University, Nazarene Theological Seminary and two doctorates from San Francisco Theological Seminary. He has published more than 1,000 articles and has written or coauthored some 25 books. He has served as a pastor, as editor of eight Christian periodicals, and as an educator at MidAmerica Nazarene University, Nazarene Theological Seminary, as well as special adult education projects in Europe, Latin America, and Asia.

Revision History

Second Quarter 2005, Revision 4, the current version,

- Module guides edited for gender inclusiveness

First Quarter 2004, Revision 3,

- Module title change from *Christian Theology 2* to *Investigating Christian Theology 2*

Fourth Quarter 2003, Revision 2, the current version,

- Copyright was transferred to Nazarene Publishing House

Second Quarter 2003, Revision 1,

- the Lesson Overview, Introduction, Body, Close format was established.
- a corresponding student guide was created.

About This Module

Historically, theology has been known as “the Queen of the Sciences.” While calling it that today may seem overly dramatic, all pastors-in-training will agree that a basic grounding in Christian theology is essential. Everything a pastor does—praying, counseling, preaching, leading in worship—can and in one sense *must* be understood theologically. Whether acknowledged or not, theological implications assert themselves throughout the entire pastoral task, from first to last, top to bottom, front to back, side to side. It is too much to claim that theology is “the only game in town,” so far as the pastor is concerned, yet no other game makes any sense without theological awareness.

Even a seemingly non-theological task like conducting a church board meeting may be the occasion for theological reflection. For example, current approaches to God as triune suggest the Trinity is itself the model

for perfect human community, being more than one that yet always functions, acts, and believes as one. Applied to the church board situation, this may mean the pastor does not dominate the meeting, but shares collegially with all present, working with them toward consensus or even unanimity.

It has been said that practical theology is the “crown jewel” of all theological study. These two modules are not strictly speaking courses in practical theology, and yet the practical dimension of theology must always be kept in view. Noted Nazarene theologian J. Kenneth Grider liked to talk about theology wearing overalls, and this homespun example is exactly correct. Albert Outler has well defined John Wesley’s theology as an example of a “folk theology” at its best. Regarding Wesley’s theology as a whole, “practical divinity” is the operative watchword.

Overall Hopes for These Two Modules

1. To survey the grand heritage and great tradition of orthodox Christian theology. Our survey will touch on biblical foundations, selected historical developments, and some contemporary problems and restatements.
2. The tone of these two modules is intentionally *irenic* (leading to consensus and peace) rather than *polemic* (tending to seek conflict and emphasizing disagreement with other Christian traditions). To use a cliché, this means we are more interested in building bridges than walls. Doctrines such as the trinity of God, Jesus Christ as fully divine and fully human, the reality of sin, and Jesus Christ as God’s anointed Redeemer are universally accepted across the Christian spectrum.
3. Having said that, Wesleyan distinctives such as prevenient grace and entire sanctification will be stressed where appropriate.
4. To understand something of how theologians work and what theologians do, which also means to appreciate the craft of theological thinking. We do this remembering that the local pastor is also a theologian. We desire to appreciate theology as both an intellectual and a practical discipline.
5. It is important to see links between Christian theology and both ethics and worship.
6. At times we may engage in some theological analysis of culture.
7. Overall, the goal of a deeper knowing of the Triune God must motivate our every impulse. Recall that Søren Kierkegaard said, “Only that which edifies is true for me.” This is our goal: edifying truth.

A Few Governing Assumptions as We Begin

Virtually all systematic theologies have two or three central emphases that serve to govern and guide everything said, claimed, and articulated by that particular theology. Wesleyan or Nazarene theology has often been guided by

- a. the grace of God, especially the Wesleyan view of prevenient grace.
- b. the hope that Christian theology may be seen as an integrated whole. The *ordo salutis* (Latin, meaning “the order of salvation”) is for Nazarene theology the organizing principle of the whole.

In “The Scripture Way of Salvation” John Wesley expressed the order of salvation in fluid and dynamic terms: “So that the salvation which is here spoken of might be extended to the entire work of God, from the first dawning of grace in the soul till it is consummated in glory.” Nazarenes have often stressed the two moments of justification (initial sanctification) and entire sanctification (Christian perfection). Wesley’s quote means both of these two “moments” need to be taken in the broader context of the entire drama of salvation.

- c. the classic meaning of theology is that it is simply the study of God. To intend to study God may of course mean very many things, but it cannot mean *only* an intellectual and rational approach to God. Experiential knowing of God has always been important for Nazarene people. Studying God must always lead to praising Him. *Orthodoxy* (right or correct doctrine) cannot finally be separated from *Doxology*, the true worship of God. These must be wedded to correct conduct or action, which is *Orthopraxis*. These three realities—Doxology, Orthodoxy, Orthopraxis—in some ways function as a “holy trinity” of theological method and formulation. They can be conceptualized separately, but each needs the other two to be complete.
- d. Phineas F. Bresee believed Nazarene theology ought to be characterized by this dictum, which was not original with him, and yet reflected his way of theologizing and Christian ministry: *in essentials unity, in nonessentials liberty, in all things love.*

Module Materials

We have tried to design this module to be flexible and easy to adapt to your situation. For each lesson, there are several support pieces, which we have called

simply “resources.” These can be used in many different ways. Resources have been reproduced in the student guide for this module. The instructor will want a copy of the student guide for his or her own use.

1. The instructor may photocopy these to use for his or her own lecture outlines. There is space to add notes from the faculty guide, from the textbook, or from the additional suggested readings. Add in your own illustrations too!
2. The pages may be photocopied onto overhead transparencies for use in class.
3. These pages appear in the Student Guide for the students’ use and participation.

One reason for developing this module is for the benefit of extension education. We understand that teachers all over the world are called upon to teach courses not in their area of specialty, but they teach them because they want to see pastors trained and leaders developed for the church. Extension education is basic to rapid church growth. We want to provide this as a resource for extension educators. If it helps others along the way, that’s fine too.

Another reason for developing this module is to equip indigenous faculty. We believe a class like this is best taught and contextualized by someone from within the culture of the students. Many fine teachers, who are leaders in our churches around the world, do not have higher degrees in theology but have the skills to teach a module like this effectively. We want to set them free to do so, and in so doing, to actually improve the module and make it more dynamic and meaningful for their context than it would have been had we held onto it and insisted on teaching it ourselves.

Intended Outcomes for the Module

The *Manual*, Church of the Nazarene, and the *International Sourcebook on Developmental Standards for Ordination* define educational preparation for ordination. Additionally, each region of the International Church of the Nazarene has developed educational guidelines to qualify educational programs for ordination offered within their region.

The USA Region *Sourcebook for Ministerial Development* defines outcomes for the overall ministerial development program. The module assists candidates in developing these skills. Other modules in the program may also address the same outcomes.

The specific outcomes that relate to this module are:

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- CN 18 Ability to list and explain the Nazarene Articles of Faith
- CN 19 Ability to identify and explain the main characteristics of the nature of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Human Person, Sin, Salvation, the Christian Life, the Church and Sacraments, and Eschatology
- CN 20 Ability to reflect theologically on life and ministry
- CN 21 Ability to demonstrate understanding of the sources of theological reflection, its historical development, and its contemporary expressions
- CN 22 Ability to articulate the distinctive characteristics of Wesleyan theology
- CN 23 Ability to identify and explain the doctrine of Holiness from a Wesleyan perspective
- CP 10 Ability to synthesize, analyze, reason logically for discernment, assessment, and problem solving, and live with ambiguity
- CP 11 Ability to analyze the validity of arguments and to identify their presuppositions and consequences
- CP 21 Ability to envision, order, participate, and lead in contextualized, theologically grounded worship

OUTCOME STATEMENTS

- Ability to integrate Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience for theological reflection
- Ability to describe the role of systematic (or Christian) theology in the life of the church
- Ability to systematically reflect on the Christian faith
- Ability to reflect theologically on specific activities in parish ministry and discover adequate foundations for appropriate actions
- Ability to give a theological rationale for leading a church-in-mission (i.e., a missional church)
- Ability to integrate Wesleyan disciplines into spiritual practices that are becoming significant enrichments to one's personal journey
- Ability to reflect systematically and comprehensively about the nature and content of the Christian faith, and to do so for the sake of Christ's church and His world
- Ability to discern theological trends in the wider culture, especially as these trends impact the progress of Christian ministry

- Ability to defend the historic Christian faith. Christian Theology 1 is not primarily an *apologetic* venture, yet everyone who takes this class must emerge with a defined sense of the integrity of the Christian faith, which would necessarily translate into the ability to be a defender of the faith to one degree or another.

Recommended Books

Each module within the Modular Course of Study is intended to be textbook independent. This does not imply that the modules are textbook irrelevant, or that the module content cannot be enriched by selecting and requiring that students study a textbook along with the lessons provided in this faculty guide.

If these modules are adapted for use outside of the English-speaking countries of North America, a specific textbook may not be available in the language of the students. Therefore, the module does not rely on one textbook. The instructor may select any doctrinally sound textbook available to the students.

The following books by Nazarene authors are used extensively in these modules on Christian Theology. They provide a rich understanding of theology for study in these modules and also for continued reference throughout the student's career. Whenever possible, they should be a part of every Nazarene pastor's personal library.

Dunning, H. Ray. *Grace, Faith, and Holiness: A Wesleyan Systematic Theology*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988.

Grider, J. Kenneth. *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994.

Lodahl, Michael. *The Story of God: Wesleyan Theology and Biblical Narrative*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994.

Staples, Rob L. *Outward Sign and Inward Grace: The Place of Sacraments in Wesleyan Spirituality*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1991.

Staples, Rob L. *Words of Faith: An Easy Reference to Theological Terms*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2001.

Wynkoop, Mildred Bangs. *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1972.

Suggested Meeting Schedule

The module lessons are designed to last 90 minutes each. Each lesson is complete in itself with an opening, a middle, and a closing. They are sequential. Each lesson assumes the learners have mastered material presented in previous lessons. The lessons can be grouped in a variety of ways to accommodate the schedules of your learners.

When lessons are taught in the same meeting, instructors will need to adjust homework assignments because participants will not have time between lessons to prepare homework. It is very important for the instructor always to be looking ahead and planning for upcoming lessons.

Here are three suggestions (out of many) for ways the meetings can be organized.

1. Resident campus. The class can meet two days a week for 90 minutes. Present one lesson per meeting time. Total time: 9 weeks.
2. Extension education. The class can meet one day (or evening) each week for 3 to 3½ hours. Present two lessons per meeting with a break period between lessons. Participants will need to travel to a centralized location for meetings, so make it worth their time. Total time: 9 weeks.
3. Intensive module. The class can meet five consecutive days for 7 to 8 hours per day. Present two lessons in the morning with a break period between lessons and two lessons in the afternoon with another break period between the lessons. Participants must complete reading assignments before arriving at the module site, and written assignments can be submitted 30 to 60 days following the class meeting. Total meeting time: 1 week. (Elapsed time including reading and written assignments: 2 to 3 months.)

The module is divided into 17 lessons. The progression of these units can be seen in the chart below. Space is given for you to fill in the dates when your class sessions will meet.

| Date | Lesson |
|------|--|
| | 1. The Person of Jesus Christ, Part 1 |
| | 2. The Person of Jesus Christ, Part 2 |
| | 3. The Person of Jesus Christ, Part 3 |
| | 4. The Meaning of Atonement |
| | 5. Atonement and Grace |
| | 6. The Way of Life |
| | 7. Justification, Adoption, and Resurrection |
| | 8. Thinking Theologically About Christian Perfection |
| | 9. Nazarene Theologians on Entire Sanctification |
| | 10. Theology of the Holy Spirit, Part 1 |
| | 11. Theology of the Holy Spirit, Part 2 |
| | 12. The Doctrine of the Church, Part 1 |
| | 13. The Doctrine of the Church, Part 2 |
| | 14. Theology of the Sacraments, Part 1 |
| | 15. Theology of the Sacraments, Part 2 |
| | 16. Eschatology |
| | 17. Now and Future Shapes of Nazarene Theology |

About This Faculty Guide

Note: It is critical to remember that active participation by the learners will enhance their learning. That means you will not be an information giver. This module is not about you. The focus of the module is helping students learn. Your role is to design an environment in which your students will learn. Sometimes you will give lectures. At other times you will guide discussions or assign your students to work in groups. These kinds of activities keep the participants actively involved in the

The faculty guide has been written to guide an instructor as he or she prepares to teach this module. It contains complete lesson plans and resources to provide a solid educational design for the topic. You will need to prepare for each lesson well in advance of the meeting time. Often there are background reading suggestions for the instructor, or you may know additional reference materials you want to interject into the lesson. Questions intended to be answered or discussed by the students are in italic type.

learning process. Learning is a team activity.

A two-column format was chosen for the faculty guide. The right-hand column contains the content of lectures, descriptions of activities, and questions to keep students involved. The left-hand column is to give suggested instructions to you, the teacher. It also contains examples you can use to illustrate concepts in the lectures. Whenever possible you should use examples from your own experience and from your students' real-life context.

Large white space has been left in the left column to allow you to write notes and personalize the faculty guide.

The faculty guide has three major components: the Faculty Guide Introduction, the Lesson Plans, and the Teaching Resources. The Introduction and Lesson Plans are in this document and the Resources are contained in the companion student guide. You are reading the Faculty Guide Introduction now. It provides a teaching philosophy for adult learners, background information for organizing the module, and ideas about conducting the lessons.

Each section of the faculty guide is numbered with a two-part page number. Page 5 of Lesson 3 would be numbered "3-5." The first number is the lesson number and the second is the page number within the lesson. Each resource sheet is numbered for the lesson in which the resource is first used. The first resource page for Lesson 2 is numbered "2-1."

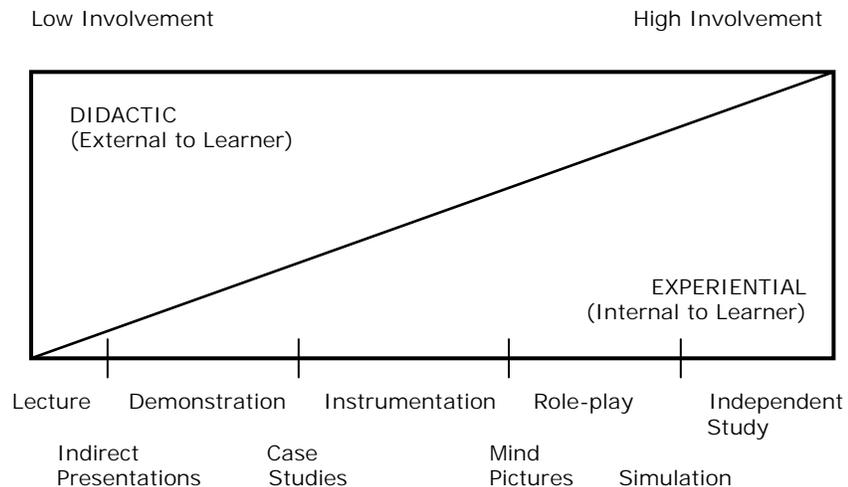
The Lesson Plans are complete in themselves. They contain an Overview, Introduction, Body, and Close. The Lesson Overview provides you with a planning tool for preparing and conducting each lesson.

The Lesson Introduction should get participants' attention, orient them to the place this lesson holds in the overall module, define the intended objectives, and prepare them for the learning activities.

The Lesson Body is the core message of the lesson. The key is to keep the learners actively involved. Even in lectures, ask questions that prompt learners to think about the content, not just hear the lecture.

The following chart shows a continuum of learner involvement in different teaching methods. Lecture requires the least learner involvement, and independent study requires the most learner involvement.

METHODS CONTINUUM



A variety of learning activities are used to present information and allow learners to experiment with their new knowledge. Each learner has a set of preferred methods of learning and has different life experiences that can color or filter what one actually learns. A variety of learning activities help adults adapt to the learning task—by hearing, by doing, by reading, by discussing, or by combinations of these. The learners should have opportunities to test and clarify their new learning by talking with the instructor and other participants, and applying new knowledge in real or contrived situations as soon as possible.

The Lesson Close provides a time for answering questions, reviewing the information, connecting this lesson to future lessons, making assignments, and punctuating the finish. The close does not provide any new information but gives a sense of closure to the lesson.

Homework assignments are important learning activities. They provide the student with an opportunity to synthesize classroom learning. Working on these assignments also extends the learning experience beyond the time constraints of class time.

The student—especially the adult student—needs frequent and timely feedback about his or her learning. While interaction with other students helps the learner refine what he or she is learning, feedback from the

instructor is also critical to the quality of learning and ultimately to his or her persistence in the Course of Study.

It is your responsibility as the instructor for this module to provide students with timely responses to homework assignments in order to enhance the learning process. Reviewing and responding to homework will also provide you with critical information about what your students are learning and whether or not the teaching-learning process is succeeding.

Since these modules are preparing the learner for ordination rather than leading to a university degree, a letter grade may not be appropriate. Your response to the learners' assignments should be thoughtful and in most cases it should be written. Its purpose will always be to refine and enhance the learning of the student.

Teaching Resources are reproduced in the student guide. Each resource sheet is numbered for the lesson in which the resource is first used. The first resource page for Lesson 2 is numbered "2-1."

You must determine how each resource will be used in your context. If an overhead projector is available, transparencies can be made by replacing the paper in your photocopier with special transparency material.

The student guide for this module contains the series foreword, acknowledgments, syllabus, copies of all resources, lesson objectives, and assignments. A copy of the student guide should be made available to each student.

Recommendations for printing You may print this faculty guide if desired. The introduction and lesson plan segments are formatted for printing on both sides of the paper. The resource pages of the student guide should be printed on one side for use as transparency or handout masters.

The student guide should be printed on one side.

A Hidden Agenda

Hidden curriculum issues . . . because the way we teach teaches

In each session, there are certain methodological and environmental things to consider.

First, consider the classroom arrangement. Whenever possible, the room should be arranged to encourage a sense of community. Either the group should sit in a circle or around a table. If the group is very large, chairs can be arranged for easily moving into clusters for discussion.

Second, consider how you present yourself as teacher. Standing behind a lectern with your students facing you in rows says you are above the students and have something to give them (although in a very large group this standing to teach may be unavoidable). Sitting as part of the circle makes the teacher a co-learner at the same level as the students. Speak naturally. Pay close attention to your students, and value the things they share. Learn their names. Encourage participation. Remember that you are modeling for them, and the way you teach will teach them far more than the words you say.

Third, invite the Holy Spirit's presence in the classroom. Do this each time the class meets.

Fourth, the sharing-of-stories activity does more than help the students begin to reflect on their own Christian experiences. It is a way to build community between the students. This is more than an exercise to be checked off. It is vital to set the tone of your intentional community.

When meeting times exceed 90 minutes, consider adding break times. The break between segments is an important time for community building. Remain available to the students during this time. Consider offering coffee or tea during this time as a way to encourage fellowship.

Journaling: The Key to Spiritual Formation

Journaling is a major assignment of each module in the Ministerial Preparation Course of Study. It is the integrating element that helps you draw spiritual

meaning and ministerial application from the content of each module whether the module concentrates on content, competency, character, or context. It ensures that the “Be” component of “Be, Know, and Do” is present in every module in which you participate. What is journaling and how can it be meaningfully accomplished?

Journaling: A Tool for Personal Reflection and Integration

The Syllabus contains this explanation of journaling. Journaling provides the spiritual formation component for the module and is an integral part of the learning experience.

Have students read the journaling section during the Syllabus review in Lesson 1 and emphasize that journaling is an assignment for each lesson in the module.

When giving assignments in each lesson, assign journal writing each time the group meets.

Participating in the Course of Study is the heart of your preparation for ministry. To complete each module you will be required to listen to lectures, read several books, participate in discussions, and write papers. Content mastery is the goal.

An equally important part of ministerial preparation is spiritual formation. Some might choose to call spiritual formation devotions, while others might refer to it as growth in grace. Whichever title you place on the process, it is the intentional cultivation of your relationship with God. The module work will be helpful in adding to your knowledge, your skills, and your ability to do ministry. The spiritual formation work will weave all you learn into the fabric of your being, allowing your education to flow freely from your head to your heart to those you serve.

Although there are many spiritual disciplines to help you cultivate your relationship with God, journaling is the critical skill that ties them all together. Journaling simply means keeping a record of your experiences and the insights you have gained along the way. It is a discipline because it does require a good deal of work to faithfully spend time daily in your journal. Many people confess that this is a practice they tend to push aside when pressed by their many other responsibilities. Even five minutes a day spent journaling can make a major difference in your education and your spiritual development. Let me explain.

Consider journaling time spent with your best friend. Onto the pages of a journal you will pour out your candid responses to the events of the day, the insights you gained from class, a quote gleaned from a book, and an ah-ha that came to you as two ideas connected. This is not the same as keeping a diary, since a diary seems to be a chronicle of events without the personal dialogue. The journal is the repository for all of your thoughts, reactions, prayers, insights, visions, and plans. Though some people like to keep

complex journals with sections for each type of reflection, others find a simple running commentary more helpful. In either case, record the date and the location at the beginning of every journal entry. It will help you when it comes time to review your thoughts.

It is important to chat briefly about the logistics of journaling. All you will need is a pen and paper to begin. Some folks prefer loose-leaf paper that can be placed in a three-ring binder, others like spiral-bound notebooks, while others enjoy using composition books. Whichever style you choose, it is important to develop a pattern that works for you.

Establishing a time and a place for writing in your journal is essential. If there is no space etched out for journaling, it will not happen with the regularity needed to make it valuable. It seems natural to spend time journaling after the day is over and you can sift through all that has transpired. Yet, family commitments, evening activities, and fatigue militate against this time slot. Morning offers another possibility. Sleep filters much of the previous day's experiences, and processes deep insights, that can be recorded first thing in the morning. In conjunction with devotions, journaling enables you to begin to weave your experiences with the Word, and also with module material that has been steeping on the back burner of your mind. You will probably find that carrying your journal will allow you to jot down ideas that come to you at odd times throughout the day.

It seems we have been suggesting that journaling is a handwritten exercise. Some may be wondering about doing their work on a computer. Traditionally, there is a special bond between hand, pen, and paper. It is more personal, direct, aesthetic. And it is flexible, portable, and available.

With regular use, your journal is the repository of your journey. As important as it is to make daily entries, it is equally important to review your work. Read over each week's record at the end of the week. Make a summary statement and note movements of the Holy Spirit or your own growth. Do a monthly review of your journal every 30 days. This might best be done on a half-day retreat where you can prayerfully focus on your thoughts in solitude and silence. As you do this, you will begin to see the accumulated value of the Word, your module work, and your experience in ministry all coming together in ways you had not considered possible. This is integration—weaving together faith development and learning. Integration

moves information from your head to your heart so that ministry is a matter of being rather than doing. Journaling will help you answer the central question of education: "Why do I do what I do when I do it?"

Journaling really is the linchpin in ministerial preparation. Your journal is the chronicle of your journey into spiritual maturity as well as content mastery. These volumes will hold the rich insights that will pull your education together. A journal is the tool for integration. May you treasure the journaling process!

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Wainwright, Arthur W. *The Trinity in the New Testament*. London: S.P.C.K., 1962.

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_____. *For Our Salvation: Two Approaches to the Work of Christ*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.

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Wiley, H. Orton. *Christian Theology*, 2 Vols. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1940.

Williams, Colin W. *John Wesley's Theology Today*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960.

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Wilson, Charles R. "Christology." In *A Contemporary Wesleyan Theology*, Vol. 1. Edited by Charles W. Carter. Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1983.

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Lesson 1

The Person of Jesus Christ, Part 1

Lesson Overview

Schedule

| Start Time | Task or Topic | Learning Activity | Materials Needed |
|------------|--|--------------------|--|
| 0:00 | Introduction | Orient | Student Guide Resource 1-1 |
| 0:10 | Jesus Christ | Lecture | Resource 1-2 Resource 1-3 Resource 1-4 |
| 0:25 | Singing Our Faith | Small Groups | Resource 1-5 |
| 0:40 | New Testament Evidence for the Divinity of Jesus Christ | Lecture/Discussion | Resource 1-6 |
| 1:00 | Christological Heresies | Lecture | Resource 1-7 Resource 1-8 |
| 1:20 | Lesson Close | Review, Assign | Resource 1-9 Student Guide Hymnals |

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Bloesch, Donald G. *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*.
Vol. 1, *God, Authority, and Salvation*. San
Francisco: Harper and Row, 1982, 1978, ch. 6.

_____. *Jesus Christ: Savior and Lord*. Downers
Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997.

- Deschner, John. *Wesley's Christology: An Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988, chs. 4-6. Wesley uses the traditional motifs of Prophet, Priest, and King to understand Jesus Christ's person and work.
- Dunning, H. Ray. *Grace, Faith, and Holiness*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988, ch. 10.
- Grider, J. Kenneth. *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994, ch. 11.
- Lodahl, Michael. *The Story of God: Wesleyan Theology and Biblical Narrative*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994, Part 5.
- Oden, Thomas C. *Systematic Theology*. Vol. 2, *The Word of Life*: San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989.
- Pelikan, Jaroslav. *Jesus Through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985. An illustrated version of this book is also available, published in 1997 by Yale University Press. Beautiful works of art illustrating the career of Jesus Christ are included. It contains less text but correspondingly more images and works of art.
- Schwarz, Hans. *Christology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Staples, Rob. "Incarnation." In *Words of Faith: An Easy Reference to Theological Terms*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2001, 45-46.
- Wilson, Charles R. "Christology." In *A Contemporary Wesleyan Theology*, Vol. 1. Edited by Charles W. Carter. Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1983.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Orientation

Spend a few minutes looking at the Student Guide—making sure every student has a copy and that they are familiar with the format.

Read the Rationale together.

Motivator

Refer to Resource 1-1 in the Student Guide.

From Jesus Through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 1.

“Regardless of what anyone may personally think or believe about him, Jesus of Nazareth has been the dominant figure in the history of Western culture for almost twenty centuries.”

Jaroslav Pelikan

“Jesus whom I know as my Redeemer cannot be less than God!”

Athanasius

“You should point to the whole man Jesus and say, ‘That is God.’”

Martin Luther

“The most pressing question on the problem of faith is whether a man, as a civilized being . . . can believe in the divinity of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, for therein rests the whole of our faith.”

Fyodor Dostoyevsky

“This Man Jesus Christ . . . does not only live through God and with God. He is Himself God.”

Karl Barth

The person of Jesus Christ has obviously been decisive for the Christian church. Yet the Pelikan quotation just cited says much more than this. Jesus has also been dominant in *all* of Western culture. Why is this? In this lesson we will not address the cultural question as such, but will concentrate on the theological question. But the cultural influence of Jesus Christ is certainly worth considering. It is one thing to have “In God We Trust” stamped on our coins. It is a deeper affirmation still to have history itself divided into “Before Christ” and “Anno Domini” (In the Year of Our Lord). It is truly and wisely said that Jesus Christ is the “hinge of

history." He is decisive not only for individuals but also for the entire scope and sweep of civilization.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

Because of the nature of this module you might suggest that the students bring both their Bible and Manual to each lesson.

At the end of this lesson, participants should

- understand the importance of the doctrine of the Incarnation for Christian theology
- bring theology of Incarnation into ministry
- survey some New Testament witness to the Incarnation
- discover the New Testament testimony to the deity of Jesus Christ
- realize the dangerous allure of some Christological heresies

Lesson Body

Lecture: Jesus Christ

(15 minutes)

The Center of the Center

While there may be sermons preached about the doctrine of the Trinity, and in fact there *should be*, the church does not strictly speaking *preach* the Trinity, because the gospel is of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Admittedly, the Lordship of Christ means nothing apart from a Trinitarian framework and perspective, but it is Jesus Christ whom the church preaches.

Jesus Christ is the only Mediator between the divine and the human, because only Jesus Christ is fully divine and at the same time fully human. Phillips Brooks, who gave us the immortal Christmas carol "O Little Town of Bethlehem," captured this when he wrote, "Jesus Christ, the condescension of divinity, and the exaltation of humanity."

Refer to Resource 1-2 in the Student Guide.

Hebrews 4: 15 identifies both Jesus' divinity and His humanity: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin." The final clause of this verse, "yet without sin," testifies to the divinity of Jesus Christ. Everything up to that point bears witness to His humanity.

The Christological Meanings of Epiphany

While the typical Nazarene congregation may not observe the Day of Epiphany, January 6, the significance of this day is relevant here. Historically, this day carries four interrelated meanings. Perhaps first and foremost is the continuation of the Christmas celebration, of which Epiphany is the end. The birth of Jesus is remembered on January 6.

The second meaning is the arrival of the wise men and the gifts they bear. Gold signifies the kingship of Jesus Christ, frankincense His divinity, and myrrh looks ahead to His passion and death.

The baptism of Jesus Christ is the third meaning of Epiphany. Some ancient Christian traditions suggested

that at His birth Jesus was announced only to those present at the time, whereas His baptism was a universal announcement of approval and commissioning by God His Father.

The first of Jesus' many signs and miracles, as recorded in the Gospel of John, namely, the water turned into wine, is the fourth meaning of Epiphany.

Epiphany means an appearance, showing, or manifestation, especially of divinity. Early Christian testimony was convinced that "in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Col 2:9, NRSV), for that is exactly the meaning of Incarnation.

Not only was deity fully manifest in Jesus Christ, but humanity also. It is frankly, *more correct* to claim that Jesus Christ, and not Adam, is truly the "first" or "representative" human being. The humanity of Jesus Christ is what everyone should aim for, enabled by the grace of God.

Too many of our models for true humanity come from non-Christian sources, such as sports, entertainment, business, even psychological models that do not agree with the gospel. Therefore we need to redouble our efforts to pattern our lives after Jesus Christ.

Allow for student response.

What are some ways in which we can return to Jesus Christ as the image of the true human?

If Jesus Christ is *both* fully divine and fully human, how are these two dynamics related? This is the doctrine of the *two natures*—divine and human—and the *one person*. In the classic formula, Jesus Christ is *two natures in one person*.

How are the human and the divine kept in harmony? Why does one dynamic not "swallow up" the other one? Jesus Christ is not schizophrenic, and does not have a split personality. He is indeed the only fully integrated human being ever to walk the face of the earth. We will devote more attention to this vital issue later.

Here, obviously, the words "nature" and "person" are used differently than in the doctrine of the Trinity, where we speak of *one nature*—that is, of God—and *three persons*—Father, Son, Holy Spirit.

The Reality of Incarnation

Refer to Resource 1-3 in the Student Guide.

Quoted in Donald G. Bloesch, *Jesus Christ: Savior and Lord* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 53.

Thinking truthfully and biblically about Jesus Christ, which is the goal and aim of Christology, does not allow us to veer off into saying Jesus was some sort of “man made divine” or even “God made human.” There is profound wisdom in Augustine’s ancient declaration, “the meaning of the Word being made flesh is not that the divine nature was changed into flesh, but that the divine nature assumed our flesh.”

Augustine simply means that the truth of the Incarnation is *not* human elevation, but is rather divine *condescension* and coming into our human situation in a redemptive and decisive way.

Donald Bloesch reminds us of the crucial difference between the Incarnation and metamorphosis. The latter is true of Greek mythology, not of Christian proclamation. The “humanized God,” which Spurgeon disclaims, would be a metamorphosis, where God changes into a human being. Bloesch continues, “The Son of God adopted human nature and united it with his divine nature in the unity of one person. . . . Christ in his incarnation did not cease to be God, but he chose to meet us on our level in the garb of human flesh.” Bloesch also cites the Athanasian Creed: “He is one not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God” (Article 35).

From *Essentials of Evangelical Theology, Vol. 1, God, Authority, and Salvation* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1982, 1978), 127-28.

“The garb of human flesh” is Bloesch’s way of stating the dramatic humiliation the Eternal Word of the Father willingly undertook as the incarnate Son of God. C. S. Lewis likened this humiliation to the human becoming a crab or insignificant insect.

Søren Kierkegaard wrote of both the “qualitative degradation” and the “quantitative degradation” that marked the life of Jesus Christ. The latter is the easiest to grasp, for Kierkegaard simply meant that among the human family, Jesus Christ was the lowliest. As Jesus said himself, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head” (Mt 8:20). The qualitative degradation is not less true, but more theological. It is the willingness of the Logos to come into flesh, who “did not consider equality with God something to be grasped” (Phil 2:6). The difference between being divine and being human is the qualitative degradation.

For some philosophers, especially the German thinker Hegel, incarnation is stated as a general principle whereby the divine Spirit or Absolute comes into

history. Some religions of the world, especially Hinduism, also convey the sense of incarnation—that the divine comes to earth in some recognized form.

The Christian doctrine of the Incarnation is quite different from either philosophical or religious treatments. Brian Hebblethwaite explains the Christian proclamation:

God, in one of the modes of God's triune being, was once for all made human in the person of Jesus Christ. He alone was and is God incarnate. Out of God's steadfast love for humankind, a particular human venue—the history of Israel—was prepared for the coming of the divine Savior. Jesus of Nazareth was a Jew, and it was Jewish faith alone that could express in human form God's nature and will for our salvation. The cross and resurrection of Jesus constitute God's own self-involvement with suffering, sinful humanity, and God's costly triumph over sin and death. Men and women are invited to respond in faith to what God has done for them in Christ, to accept the divine forgiveness and reconciliation, and to participate in the divine life through the indwelling spirit of the crucified and risen Christ.

"Incarnation," in A New Handbook of Christian Theology, ed. Donald W. Musser and Joseph L. Price (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 251.

Refer to Resource 1-4 in the Student Guide.

New Testament foundations for the doctrine of the Incarnation are especially three:

"The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

John 1:14

"For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him."

Colossians 1:19

"But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe."

Hebrews 1:2

During the Christmas season we often sing the following famous words, perhaps without pondering their true impact and import:

- Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing
- Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail the incarnate Deity, Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel

"O Come, All Ye Faithful," verse 3.

"Hark! the Herald Angels Sing," verse 2.

These two hymns may represent a continuum of hiddenness and revealedness. Charles Wesley, author of “Hark! the Herald Angels Sing,” stresses that even though incarnate, even though “with us”—the meaning of Immanuel—deity yet remains veiled. The author of “O Come, All Ye Faithful,” on the other hand, notes how God has now appeared “in flesh.”

Really, however, the great mystery of the Incarnation is such that we can confidently declare both statements to be true at one and the same time. The incarnation is a genuine *unveiling* of deity, as “O Come, All Ye Faithful” knows, but is not yet at the same time the giving of everything that can be known about God. Charles Wesley testifies to the need for the “eyes of your heart” to be enlightened and illumined (Eph 1:18). Without eyes of faith, we look upon Jesus as merely human. But with eyes of faith we see not only the full flowering of deity, but also true humanity.

We often forget that the Incarnation is a teaching not only about God but also about humanity. Recall Irenaeus’s ecstatic statement that the glory of God is the human made fully alive. The Incarnation, as the fourth-century theologian Athanasius and others saw, is exactly the restoration of humanity to the divine image. Dunning explains Athanasius’s logic at this point, by saying:

If a portrait has been effaced by a stain . . . it has to be restored by the painter painting it over again from the original, who must come and sit for him a second time. So the Word had to come to earth, that the image might again be visible, and copied afresh in the nature of man.

Grace, Faith, and Holiness (*Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988*), 305.

Some theologians, especially those of Eastern Orthodoxy, almost come to the point of saying that *in and of itself* the Incarnation is all that is necessary for the salvation of the human race. But this stance seems to make unnecessary the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. A more realistic view is that the Incarnation makes possible once again our receiving the *Spirit-life* Jesus came to earth to give us, which we can appropriate by having faith in the atoning death of Jesus Christ.

Small Groups: Singing Our Faith

(15 minutes)

Divide the class into groups of 3-4 students.

Refer to Resource 1-5 in the Student Guide.

In your small group read the three classical Christological hymns—quoted from NRSV.

Call for group reports at the end of the discussion time.

Discuss the questions as pertaining to all three hymns.

Lecture/Discussion: New Testament Evidence for the Divinity of Jesus Christ

(20 minutes)

Jesus Christ, the Son of God

As mentioned in our discussion of the Trinity, Trinitarian theology begins by asking the question about the relationship between Jesus Christ the Son and God the Father. The doctrine of the Trinity is designed to demonstrate that God is a God-in-representation. That is the entire point of the teaching of *perichoresis* that we surveyed in the Trinity lessons from Christian Theology 1.

Refer to Christian Theology 1, Lesson 14, 14-7.

To *confess* the reality of God is not to believe in a generic god, or a least-common-denominator god, or some vague god who is somehow the basis for American cultural values and social institutions, but decisively to confess the *God and Father of Jesus Christ*. The relationship between Jesus and His “Abba” Father is one that can be examined from either side—from the side of Jesus or from the side of the Father—because the Holy Spirit is the bond of their mutual knowing of each other. And that same Holy Spirit unites our hearts with the triune God, to know the fullness of the divine life.

The Trinity in the New Testament (London: S.P.C.K., 1962), 53.

Arthur W. Wainwright asserts, “the central problem of the Trinity is that of the divinity of Christ and the relationship of Christ to the Father.” Wainwright devotes half of his book to investigating the divinity of Christ, confirming that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed Jesus the Christ, the only-begotten Son of the one true God. He analyzes Jesus’ being called God, notably the titles applied to Him such as Son of God, Son of Man, Wisdom, and Word. If Jesus is worshiped, if Jesus shares in such divine functions as creation, judgment, and salvation, then surely Jesus Christ *is* God. Such are Wainwright’s conclusions.

A more recent book that works in the same direction is Murray J. Harris, Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1992).

Bible Study

Refer to Resource 1-6 in the Student Guide.

In pairs work together on Resource 1-6.

After students have completed the matching exercise, allow them to respond to the questions.

How have these passages shaped your lives?

How are these biblical testimonies relevant for the Christian ministry?

How do these scriptures influence our view of God?

Lecture: Christological Heresies

(20 minutes)

During the first five or six centuries of the history of the church, there was much theological discussion and ferment. Gradually the shape of what we today call Christian orthodoxy took shape. At times during these early centuries the main current of orthodoxy was threatened by heresy. Virtually all of these heresies failed at the point of Christology, which stresses that at one and the same time Jesus Christ is *both* fully divine and fully human.

See *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), 303-07.

J. Kenneth Grider provides helpful summaries of the best known heresies. Two heresies erred by over-emphasizing the humanity of Jesus Christ. The net effect of these aberrant teachings was to nullify and set aside the divinity of Christ. Grider names three errant views that overemphasize Christ's deity to the neglect of His vital humanity.

Overstress on Christ's Humanity

Refer to Resource 1-7 in the Student Guide.

Ebionism views Jesus Christ as human only. This designation may come from a Hebrew word meaning "poor." While the identification of Jesus Christ with the poor ones of His time was salutary, in ebionism it comes at the high price of denying His divinity. This view of Christ is similar to how Judaism views Him, as an exemplary prophet but not the Anointed One of God.

Ibid., 303.

Adoptionism, in Grider's words, "is the view that Christ has not existed eternally as the Father's Son or in any other way, but that He was human only and that He was adopted—especially at the time of His baptism—as the Father's Son."

Overstress on Christ's Divinity

Docetism denies the real humanity of Jesus Christ. The Greek word on which "docetism" is based means "to appear," and docetists taught that Jesus only appeared to be human. Jesus wore His humanity like a flimsy cloak that was not really part and parcel of His true identity. Physical matter is for docetists inherently evil, which is one of the tenets of Gnosticism. Docetism taught:

See 1 Cor 15:13-22, Rom 5:17, Phil 2:5-8 and Col 2:1-22.

Mary Timothy Prokes, *Toward a Theology of the Body (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 10.*

Christ had only an apparent body. He only seemed to suffer and die. Were that so St. Paul's instruction concerning the *reality* of Christ's death and resurrection would apply once more: if Christ had not become truly embodied, then he had not died or risen and Christians were only to be pitied because there had been no redemption from sin.

The opening verses of First John stress the reality of the Incarnation and thereby refute a docetic Christology:

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:1-3.

Also anti-docetic in tone is 1 John 4:2, with its insistence that "every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God."

Apollinarianism is named for the fourth-century teacher Apollinarius. The humanity of Jesus Christ, so argued Apollinarius, consisted only in His having a human body and soul. Everything else about Jesus, including His spirit and what truly defined His humanity, was divine, because He was taken over and filled by the divine Logos. In explaining Apollinarianism Grider states, "Christ did not think or make decisions from within human nature, as a human being who was also divine. He did not possess a human psyche."

Wesleyan-Holiness Theology, 304.

Ibid.

Because Apollinarianism does in fact make room for the humanity of Jesus Christ, Grider allows that among Christological heresies this one is "somewhat more acceptable than others." Although Grider does not in fact teach Apollinarianism, in his opinion H. Orton Wiley did, and others have suggested that the Christology of John Wesley shaded very close to this perspective, because Wesley undervalued Jesus' true humanity.

The danger of Apollinarianism is that the Jesus Christ it propounds lacks a human personality. However we may choose to define the constituent elements of personality—drives, motives, aspirations, preferences,

habits—these are all taken over by the Logos in the Apollinarian scheme.

Eutychianism taught that after His Incarnation, Jesus Christ had only one nature, which was divine. Eutyches was condemned for this teaching at a synod in Constantinople in AD 448.

Two additional heresies arose from Eutychianism, and both of them followed its overemphasis on the divinity of Jesus Christ: Monophysitism argued that Christ had only one nature, being divine, and Monothelitism said the same thing about the will of Christ, namely, that He had only one will, which was divine.

Against this tendency of the divinity of Christ to consume or “swallow up” His humanity, many of the Church Fathers, especially Athanasius, claimed “what he did not assume, he has not saved.” Athanasius simply means that for our redemption to be truly effected, Jesus Christ must himself be totally human. If He did not assume genuine humanity, then He cannot redeem *our* humanity.

Two Additional Heresies

Arianism argued that Jesus Christ was not after all either divine or human, but was instead a sort of third being, sometimes referred to as “a tertium quid.” The Logos who became incarnate in Jesus was for Arians a created being. As such, He was not coequal with God the Father.

The kindest thing we can say about Arius is that he desired to protect the divinity of God the Father. J. N. D. Kelly writes that the starting point of Arius’ theology is “the affirmation of the absolute uniqueness and transcendence of God, the unoriginate source of all reality.” The Arian creed was this: “We acknowledge one God, Who is alone ingenerate, alone eternal, alone without beginning, alone true, alone possessing immortality, alone wise, alone good, alone sovereign, alone judge of all.”

Kelly summarizes the teaching of Arianism under four points:

- The Son is a creature, whom God the Father created out of nothing.
- Because He is a creature, the Son must have had a beginning.
- The Son can have no direct knowledge of or relations with the Father.

Early Christian Doctrines (*Rev. ed.*, San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978), 227.

Ibid.

Ibid., 227-29.

- The Son is liable to change, and possibly even to sin.

The first ecumenical council to be called, at Nicea in 325, condemned Arianism.

Nestorianism is named for Nestorius, who was deposed from his office in 431. He affirmed the dual nature of Jesus Christ, fully human and fully divine, but could not bring these two natures together into one person. Grider suggests, "it is as though, in Christ, God and humanity are Siamese twins—not that in Christ the deity and the humanity are interpenetratingly unified in one Person."

Wesleyan-Holiness Theology, 307.

Likewise, Nestorius is sometimes accused of "dividing the sayings" of Jesus in the Gospels. When He thirsts on the Cross or when He cries out that His Father has forsaken Him, the humanity of Jesus Christ must be speaking. But when Jesus performs a miracle or preaches the Sermon on the Mount, surely it is His divinity that has manifested itself.

At the Council of Chalcedon in 451 the controversy concerning Christology came to a head. The council put forth this statement, which is today taken to be the benchmark for orthodox Christology:

Refer to Resource 1-8 in the Student Guide.

Following the holy Fathers, we all with one voice confess our Lord Jesus Christ one and the same Son, the same perfect in Godhead, the same perfect in humanity, truly God and truly man, the same consisting of a reasonable soul and a body, of one substance with the Father as touching the Godhead, the same of one substance with us as touching humanity, like us in all things apart from sin; begotten of the Father before the ages as touching the Godhead, the same in the last days, for us and for our salvation, born from the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos, as touching humanity, one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way abolished because of the union, but rather the characteristic property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one person, or hypostasis, not as if Christ were parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God, Word, Lord, Jesus Christ; even as the prophets from the beginning spoke concerning him, and our Lord Jesus Christ

instructed us, and the Creed of the Fathers was handed down to us.

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Are there any questions or comments concerning the lesson?

Look Ahead

During the next session we will continue our investigation of the person of Jesus Christ. A special part of our lesson will be the study of the threefold office of Jesus Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Study the Chalcedonian statement—Resource 1-8.

- Write a two-page essay showing how the various Christological heresies are refuted by the statement.
- What positively does the statement say about Christological orthodoxy?

Read Resource 1-9 in the Student Guide. Write out three discussion questions the material raises for you.

Write in your journal.

- Read the hymn “Fairest Lord Jesus.” Record two or three of the poetic images ascribed to Jesus by the hymn writer. Do you “resonate” with these images, or are they too sentimental for you?
- How does Christian orthodoxy inform the Christian in these pluralistic times?

Punctuate the Finish

Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” (Jn 20:28).

Close the class session by singing together the Nicene hymn “Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty,” in Sing to the Lord, ed. Ken Bible (Kansas City: Lillenas Publishing Co., 1993), 2.

Lesson 2

The Person of Jesus Christ, Part 2

Lesson Overview

Schedule

| Start Time | Task or Topic | Learning Activity | Materials Needed |
|------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| 0:00 | Introduction | Orient | Student Guide Resource 2-1 |
| 0:10 | Our Divine-Human Savior | Guided Discussion | Resource 1-9 Homework |
| 0:45 | The Offices of Christ | Lecture | Resources 2-2—2-4 |
| 1:05 | Threefold Office of Christ | Small Groups | Resource 2-5 |
| 1:20 | Lesson Close | Review, Assign | Student Guide Resource 2-6 |

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Elizabeth A. Johnson. *Consider Jesus: Waves of Renewal in Christology*. New York: Crossroad, 1990. This book originated as lectures delivered by one of today's leading Roman Catholic theologians. Hence it is very readable. Although Johnson engages mainly with Catholic writers, the topics she addresses and the ease of her address make this highly recommended for all theologians.

Geoffrey Wainwright. *For Our Salvation: Two Approaches to the Work of Christ*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, Part II: "The Threefold Office."

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Call on 2-3 students to read their essays from the homework assignment.

Collect the essays.

Orientation

Every branch or subject of Christian theology is careful about its starting point or first thought. This is especially true for the discipline of Christology.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should

- ask about the proper starting place for Christology, whether “from above” or “from below”
- survey biblical evidence related to this question, especially that of the more traditional and conservative option of “from above”
- gain familiarity with the phrase “scandal of particularity”
- understand something of the classic approach to the person and work of Jesus Christ known as the “threefold office,” namely, Prophet, Priest, and King

Motivator

Refer to Resource 2-1 in the Student Guide.

Elizabeth Johnson, in response to the Christological dogma of Chalcedon briefly mentioned at the close of the last lesson, has this to say:

Human nature is a deep questing mystery, thirsting for the infinite. Divine nature is the incomprehensible mystery of holy Love seeking to give Godself [God’s very own self] away. The two come together in the incarnation in a personal unity which enables the human nature of Jesus to flourish. In this way of reading the dogma [of Chalcedon] we do not say, “Jesus is God, and in addition human as well.” Rather, we start at the other end and say, “As this human being, Jesus is the Son of God. Precisely as this human being he is God in time. He is fully human, fully free, fully personal, and as such he is God who has self-

From Consider Jesus: Waves of Renewal in Christology. (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 30-31.

emptied into our history." At the end of this progression of thought, what is restored to our consciousness is a way of envisioning Jesus to be genuinely human at the same time that the confession of his genuine divinity does not slip from view.

Johnson proposes that Christology may plausibly be started from one of two vantage points:

- Jesus is God, and in addition human as well.
- As this human being, Jesus is the Son of God.

Clearly, Johnson favors the second point of departure.

Allow for student response.

Do you agree with Johnson, and why or why not?

Lesson Body

Guided Discussion: Our Divine-Human Savior

(35 minutes)

The students were to have read Resource 1-9 as homework and also prepare three discussion questions from the reading.

Using the questions the students prepared, lead a discussion over the topic.

Lecture: The Offices of Christ

(20 minutes)

Jesus Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King

What Is in a Title?

Not long after arriving in the Philippines Dr. Leupp mentioned once or twice that his father had been mayor of a small city in Idaho. Although he had left office more than 30 years ago, some of the students were impressed that he had once occupied such a lofty position.

In most Western countries professional titles are given to members of the clergy, physicians, professors, various levels of governmental officials, and members of the judiciary. The Philippines had all of these, but also certain interesting additions. American lawyers are usually called Mr. or Ms., but in the Philippines "Atty." preceded an attorney's name. Engineers and even architects were similarly titled.

The extravagance of titles in Asia makes one believe titles are more important worldwide than they are to Americans, but the titles of Christ are important to us all.

Approaching the person—and not incidentally the work—of Jesus Christ through various titles given to Him is a time-honored and venerable tradition. It is a staple of New Testament Christology. New Testament scholars have unearthed literally dozens of titles accorded to Jesus Christ. Some titles were given to Jesus by the Gospel and Epistle writers; others—the Son of Man, for example—Jesus seems to have applied to himself. The several "I Am" sayings of the Gospel of

John—I Am the light of the world; the good shepherd; the door; the way, the truth, and the life; the resurrection and the life—may be ones Jesus Christ chose for himself.

The use of titles in human speech often expresses social, economic, and even psychological dynamics. If a student calls me “Doctor” or “Professor,” I accept it as a compliment. If a mature worker in the university library, older than I, gives me a title, I am a little embarrassed. I typically give titles to those in the university governance who are above me in rank, although I find it humiliating if they are chronologically younger than I. When there are cross-cultural variables in play, if for example one person is from a wealthy country and the other from a poor country, great care must be exercised not to “lord it over” anyone.

Historically, all popes after Gregory the Great (590-604) have taken the title “Servant of the Servants of God.” The scriptural basis for this must surely be the climax of the story of the overzealous mother and her two sons of Zebedee. She asked Jesus for preferential treatment for her boys, and He replied, “whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mt 20: 26-28). All truly Christian uses of title, place, power, and prestige must be governed by these trenchant words of Jesus.

We may be confident that at no time did Jesus Christ allow any title accorded to Him to diminish His sense of calling or His availability to minister to those under His care. Jesus’ acceptance and use of titles:

- expressed but never obscured the mission He came to accomplish
- beckoned the needy to Him, not drove them away
- revealed the heart of a Servant
- were not about reinforcing a stratifying hierarchy, but about breaking down walls and barricades

Many Christian Voices Agree

British Methodist theologian Geoffrey Wainwright masterfully unpacks the splendor of the *munus triplex*, meaning the threefold office of Jesus Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King. Wainwright ranges far and wide across the historic terrain of Christian theology, showing that the threefold office has been widely embraced across the theological spectrum. The following three theological traditions have all made

Refer to Resource 2-2 in the Student Guide.

From Part II of For Our Salvation: Two Approaches to the Work of Christ (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

significant use of the *munus triplex*: Reformed, Roman Catholic, and Methodist.

Refer to Resource 2-3 in the Student Guide.

Reformed

Friedrich Schleiermacher

- “the prophetic office of Christ consists in teaching, prophesying, and working miracles.”
- “the priestly office of Christ includes his perfect fulfillment of the law (his active obedience), his atoning death (his passive obedience), and his intercession with the Father for believers.”
- “the kingly office of Christ consists in the fact that everything which the community of believers requires for its well-being continually proceeds from him.”

Quoted in For Our Salvation, 101.

Karl Barth

- “Jesus Christ, the Lord as Servant” represents the priestly office.
- “Jesus Christ, the Servant as Lord” is the kingly office.
- “Jesus Christ the Witness” or “the Guarantor” is the prophetic office.

Modern theology has typically seen the prophetic office as pointing to “Jesus as the supreme teacher and example of perfect divine and human love.” But for Barth this falls far short of the power of the gospel. Teacher and example light up the darkness but do not at the same time overcome and cast off the power of sin. When seen in the full blaze of the gospel, the prophetic office confesses, “he [Jesus Christ] who is himself the material content of the atonement, the mediator of it, stands securely with man as well as God that it is our atonement, he himself being the form of it as well as the content.”

Quoted ibid., 102.

John Calvin:

“In order that faith may find a firm basis for salvation in Christ, and thus rest in him, this principle must be laid down: the office enjoined upon Christ by the Father consists of three parts. For he was given to be prophet, king, and priest. Yet it would be of little value to know these names without understanding their purpose and use. The papists use these names, too, but coldly and rather ineffectually, since they do not know what each of these titles contains.”

Quoted ibid., 105-6.

Notice Calvin acknowledges Roman Catholic use of the threefold office, but doubts Catholics have understood the true richness of the *munus triplex*.

Roman Catholic

In 1992 the universally accepted *Catechism of the Catholic Church* stated:

Jesus fulfilled the messianic hope of Israel in his threefold office of priest, prophet, and king. . . . Jesus Christ is the one whom the Father anointed with the Holy Spirit and established as priest, prophet, and king. The whole People of God participates in these three offices of Christ and bears the responsibilities for mission and service that flow from them. . . . In the Church, Christ has entrusted to the apostles and their successors the office of teaching, sanctifying, and governing in his name and by his power.

Quoted ibid., 107.

More decisively than the Protestant statements above, the Roman Catholic approach moves in the direction of empowering the laity to carry on and share in the three offices. Obviously, this empowerment is not contrary to Protestant understandings either. The Protestant statements we quoted simply do not stress this, although Schleiermacher's explanation of the kingly office knows that Christ as king gives His kingly gifts to the laity.

Methodist

Wainwright notes that while Wesley may have referred explicitly to the *munus triplex* a scant ten times in his voluminous writings, "the substance of the three offices is heavily present in Wesley." An important work in Wesleyan theology, John Deschner's *Wesley's Christology: An Interpretation*, uses the threefold office as the hermeneutical key to this part of Wesley's thought. The two uses Wainwright quotes are both highly informative.

Refer to Resource 2-4 in the Student Guide.

The first is from Wesley's "Letter to a Roman Catholic," wherein Wesley explains how a true Protestant believes, taking into account the Nicene Creed:

I believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the Savior of the world, the Messiah so long foretold; that, being anointed by the Holy Ghost, he was a Prophet, revealing to us the whole will of God; that he was a Priest, who gave himself a sacrifice for sin, and still makes intercession for transgressors; that he is a

King, who has power in heaven and in earth, and will reign till he has subdued all things to himself.

The second reference comes from Wesley's *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, expounding Matthew 1:16:

The word Christ in Greek, and Messiah in Hebrew, signify "Anointed"; and imply the prophetic, priestly, and royal characters which were to meet in the Messiah. Among the Jews, anointing was the ceremony whereby prophets, priests, and kings were initiated into those offices. And if we look into ourselves, we shall find a want of Christ in all these respects. We are by nature at a distance from God, alienated from him, and incapable of a free access to him. Hence we want a Mediator, and Intercessor; in a word, a Christ in his priestly office. This regards our state with respect to God. And with respect to ourselves, we find a total darkness, blindness, ignorance of God and the things of God. Now here we want Christ in his prophetic office, to enlighten our minds, and teach us the whole will of God. We find also within us a strange misrule of appetites and passions. For these we want Christ in his royal character, to reign in our hearts, and subdue all things to himself.

Quoted Ibid., 108.

Small Groups: Threefold Office of Christ

(15 minutes)

Divide the class into groups of 3-4 students each.

In your small group use Resource 2-4 to complete the activity in Resource 2-5.

Refer to Resource 2-5 in the Student Guide.

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Do you have any questions or comments on this lesson?

Look Ahead

In the next lesson we will conclude our discussion of the threefold office of Jesus Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King. In addition, we will consider some other theological questions raised by the discipline of Christology. Finally, we will look at some contemporary ways of describing and defining Christology.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

In her book *Consider Jesus*, Elizabeth Johnson summarizes how each of the five major New Testament writers looked at Jesus Christ.

- Paul—Jesus is the crucified and risen Christ.
- Mark—Jesus is the suffering Messiah.
- Matthew—Jesus is the new Moses, teacher of the new law.
- Luke—Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, is Savior of all.
- John—Jesus is the Word of God made flesh.

The assignment is to find at least two, but not more than four, scriptures in each of these five sources that support the description provided by Johnson. After these scriptures have been identified, write a two- or three-page descriptive essay showing how these scriptures taken together support the New Testament preaching of Jesus Christ as God's anointed and the world's Savior.

Read Resource 2-6, "Further Investigations into the Threefold Office."

Try to imagine which *one component* of the threefold office is likely to be the most important for each of the following typical church offices (we are assuming that these offices are held by members of the laity):

- Leader of Nazarene Missions International
- Leader of the cradle roll and nursery
- Sunday School superintendent
- Evangelism coordinator
- Chairperson of the church board

- Chairperson of the social committee
- Chairperson of finance
- Chairperson of the trustees
- Spouse of the pastor

Write in your journal. How can I personally know the reality of the incarnation of Jesus Christ in my life and in my world? One time when I believe I experienced or encountered the Living Christ was when _____.

Punctuate the Finish

“Human nature is the grammar of God’s self-utterance” (Karl Rahner). Commenting on this analysis, Elizabeth Johnson writes:

Our human nature is so made that God can speak in and through us. All of this flows out of the incarnation, which is real and not a pretense on God’s part. That God actually became one of us leads us to value all human beings as gifted with a tremendous dignity precisely as human.

From Consider Jesus, 33.

Lesson 3

The Person of Jesus Christ, Part 3

Lesson Overview

Schedule

| Start Time | Task or Topic | Learning Activity | Materials Needed |
|------------|---|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 0:00 | Introduction | Orient | Student Guide |
| 0:10 | Further Investigation into the Threefold Office | Guided Discussion | Resource 2-6 |
| 0:35 | Two Complementary Christologies | Lecture | Resources 3-1—3-6 |
| 1:10 | Matching | Small Groups | Resource 3-7 |
| 1:20 | Lesson Close | Review, Assign | Student Guide <i>Manual</i> |

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Dunning, H. Ray. *Grace, Faith, and Holiness*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988, ch. 12.

Lodahl, Michael. *The Story of God: Wesleyan Theology and Biblical Narrative*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994, especially 134-52.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Call on one or two students to read their reports on the five New Testament authors.

Call on one or two students to share their ideas on the threefold office and church positions.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

In the first section of today's lesson we will discuss different ways of understanding the threefold office of Jesus Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King.

In the second part of the lesson we will consider two important ways of thinking Christologically. The first one is Spirit Christology, which stresses that Jesus was the Human anointed by the Holy Spirit, that everything Jesus Christ accomplished was by the Holy Spirit. This is not an adoptionist Christology, which means at some point God the Father saw Jesus of Nazareth as a virtuous and pure human, and decided to "elevate" Him to divine status. No, Spirit Christology affirms the classic Christological solution of Jesus Christ's being fully divine and fully human.

The second Christological option, Logos Christology, overlaps Spirit Christology. For one thing, both are rooted in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Logos Christology stresses passages such as John 1, which tell of the Incarnation of the Father's Eternal Word.

These two ways of speaking of the person of Jesus Christ are fully in keeping with the biblical evidence for His person and fully in keeping with the best of the Christian tradition.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts

At the end of this lesson, participants should

- discuss and explain the threefold office of Jesus Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King

learners to key information and concepts.

- consider two complementary views of Christology: Spirit Christology and Logos Christology
- examine other important Christological questions
- demonstrate awareness of the way all Christians share in the ministry of the offices of Christ

Motivator

This parable from the hand of Søren Kierkegaard is meant to demonstrate the great lengths to which God will go to demonstrate the divine love for the creation. In this story, a king (God) must demonstrate his great affection for and devotion to a humble maiden (humankind):

In order that the union may be brought about, the God must therefore become the equal of such a one [*as the object of the divine love*], and so he will appear in the likeness of the humblest. But the humblest is one who must serve others, and the God will therefore appear in the form of a *servant*. But this servant-form is no mere outer garment, like the king's beggar-cloak, which therefore flutters loosely about him and betrays the king; . . . It is his true form and figure. For this is the unfathomable nature of love, that it desires equality with the beloved, not in jest merely, but in earnest and truth. . . . This is the God as he stands upon the earth, like unto the humblest by the power of his omnipotent love. . . . But the servant-form is no mere outer garment, and therefore the God must suffer all things, endure all things, make experience of all things. He must suffer hunger in the desert, he must thirst in the time of his agony, he must be forsaken in death, absolutely like the humblest—behold the man! . . . Is it then only the omnipotent wonder-worker that you love, and not him who humbled himself to become your equal?

Philosophical Fragments (*Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967*), 39-40.

Lesson Body

Guided Discussion: Further Investigation into the Threefold Office

(25 minutes)

Students were to have read Resource 2-6 and prepare discussion questions.

Use the prepared questions to lead a discussion of the resource.

At the end of the discussion time, call on the students to write a three-minute paper that begins: "From my personal point of view, the primary significance of studying the offices of Christ is ____."

Collect the papers. This will give you a quick idea of how the students are understanding the material.

Lecture: Two Complementary Christologies

(35 minutes)

Refer to Resource 3-1 in the Student Guide.

You may have wondered why in discussing the five uses of the threefold office no explicit mention of the Holy Spirit was made. Should there not also be a "pneumatological use" of the threefold office? Geoffrey Wainwright sees that woven in and around and through all the various uses of the threefold office is the Holy Spirit. There is no cause for a separate accounting of a pneumatological use because

the Holy Spirit is the Father's gift by which Christ himself, Christians, and the church and its ministers are all anointed. The threefold office is *christocentric* but it is not *christomonist* [italics added]. It is set within a fully trinitarian frame. This means that a "Spirit-christology" should not be seen as an alternative to an "incarnation of the Word."

For Our Salvation, 118.

Spirit Christology

Michael Lodahl discusses the two complementary Christologies in his book *The Story of God*. By building upon the insights offered by recent theologians and New Testament scholars, Lodahl locates Spirit

The Story of God: Wesleyan
Theology and Biblical Narrative
(Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of
Kansas City, 1994), 135.

Christology primarily in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts. This perspective believes "Jesus' life and ministry are best understood in terms of the dynamic presence of God's Holy Spirit at work in and through Him in a unique and decisive fashion."

Refer to Resource 3-2 in the
Student Guide.

Ibid., 135-36.

Salient Features of Spirit Christology

- In the Bible, the Holy Spirit is often represented as not only a life-giving breath, but also as an order-preserving constant who defeats chaos. To call Jesus Christ the "anointed one" is to acknowledge that this same "Breath of God" (*ruach* in Hebrew and *pneuma* in Greek) is animating, vivifying, and strengthening the Son of God.
- Jesus' being born of a virgin is direct witness to the Spirit's work in Him (Mt 1:18-23; Lk 1:34-35). Lodahl's description is both accurate and poetic:

It was God's own mighty and creative Spirit, the Source and Giver of life, who initiated new life in this obedient Jewish maiden. . . . Truly, the conception and birth of Jesus by the Virgin Mary is God's sign that He is "Immanuel" or "God with us" (Mt 1:23). Jesus is not simply the best man the human race has to offer; rather, Jesus is the very fruition and fulfillment of God's redeeming activity in human history!

Ibid., 136.

- At crucial times in His ministry, for example the baptism and wilderness temptations, Jesus was sustained and established by the Spirit. Lodahl finds the symbolism of the dove especially rich and pregnant, in several senses. Primarily, the dove represents new life, initially in the overcoming of chaos in Genesis 1, where the "brooding" or "hovering" Holy Spirit could be seen as a dove, and then finally and conclusively in Jesus Christ, because He is God's new creation. As new creation, Jesus Christ is "the new Adam, God's new Man, the re-creation of humanity in God's image through the life-giving anointing of God's *ruach*."
- The ministry of Jesus, especially of deliverance, cannot be conceived of apart from the Holy Spirit. At the start of His public ministry in Luke, Jesus is handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and reads the first two verses of chapter 61:

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,
because the Lord has anointed me to preach
good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind

Ibid., 138.

up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn.

Ibid., 139.

Lodahl believes that through Christ's appropriation of Isaiah's prophecy "we are given a glimpse into Jesus' own self-understanding, His own consciousness of the meaning and motive of His mission. His is to be a ministry of deliverance, release, enablement, and healing—a liberating ministry empowered by the Spirit of Yahweh." Jesus' exorcisms, healings, and teachings were constantly underwritten by the Spirit's continual anointing of the Son as the Father's chosen vessel.

Two scriptures are especially relevant here:

"But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Mt 12:28).

"But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you" (Lk 11:20).

Ibid., 140.

H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology, Vol. 2 (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1940), 307.*

In Luke the "finger of God" is taken to represent all that the Spirit of God can enact through Jesus Christ. Lodahl believes, correctly, that "finger of God" and "Spirit of God" "are not essentially different, since both refer to God's own active presence in Jesus' ministry." In this he agrees with H. Orton Wiley, who viewed "the finger of God" as "interchangeable with 'the Spirit of God.'"

For examples, see Heb 9:14 and Rom 8:11.

- Jesus' self-offering on the Cross and His being raised by the Father together bear witness to the Spirit's continual presence in His life. There may be relatively few scriptures that speak explicitly to this point, but the entire tenor of the Gospel message is Jesus Christ empowered by Holy Spirit. As the crucifying power, the world's perverse and mistaken views of power are shattered. Resurrection power vindicates the Son's belief that the Father would raise Him from the grave.

Lodahl's analytical statement is both synthesizing and satisfying:

For Jesus' death on the Cross is not a sudden, absurd end to His life; rather, it is the zenith point, the eminently appropriate symbol of His entire

Story of God, 141.

ministry of sacrificial love. And here, as nowhere else, we witness that the nature of the power of the Spirit is not power according to the world's standards, which thrives on manipulation and heavy-handed enforcement of the desires of the one "in power." Rather, the power of God's Spirit finds its clearest expression in the bleeding, vulnerable figure of the Crucified.

Refer to Resource 3-3 in the Student Guide.

Summarizing Spirit Christology

Ibid., 143.

- It is a truthful reflection of the early Christians' experience of their resurrected Savior. The primal Christian knowing of Jesus Christ is given and mediated by the Holy Spirit. Just as the Holy Spirit is the "bond of love" (Augustine) between God the Father and God the Son, so is the Spirit our point of union with the Son. How the first Christians knew Jesus Christ "was in terms of the presence and power of God's holy, creative and re-creative, life-giving Spirit."
- Spirit Christology provides continuity between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The same Spirit seen brooding over the waters (Gen 1:1) is the dove of the Father's benediction upon Jesus' baptism. The same Spirit animating the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness" during the creation now gives us "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2 Cor 4:6).
- Evangelism and world missions are both furthered and clarified by Spirit Christology. In the case of world missions, missionaries arriving in new lands can look for the presence of the Holy Spirit, who has gone before them. But since the Holy Spirit must always bear witness to Jesus Christ, only those eruptions of the Holy Spirit that testify to Christ are worthy of following.

The same idea is fruitful for evangelizing in a secular culture. Every modern and even postmodern place has an infinite array of spiritual choices making an appeal for the allegiance of its inhabitants. When Jesus Christ is the focal point of the Holy Spirit's activity, we have a very good criterion for discerning the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Truth.

Logos Christology

Refer to Resource 3-4 in the Student Guide.

It is overwhelmingly clear and certain that there can be no absolute contrast between Spirit Christology and

Logos Christology. Nowhere is this more powerfully demonstrated than in Luke 1: 35, where the angel of the Lord announces to the Virgin Mary, “the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.” It is only through the Holy Spirit that the Logos of God can assume human flesh.

In Lodahl’s treatment of the Logos Christology he initially stresses that “the power of the Most High” is not power as we customarily conceive it. Rather than being a power of force and coercion, it is a power of humility and emptying out. He draws upon the footwashing episode in John 13 and the *kenotic* “emptying” Christology of Philippians 2 to establish this important point. Both passages, Lodahl believes, may be said to begin with a “high” Christology stressing the equality the Son enjoys with His Father, moving then to a “humiliation” Christology where Jesus washes the disciples’ feet in John 13 and empties himself out in Philippians.

Ibid., 144-46.

Pondering Logos Christology

Earlier in these lessons regarding the person of Christ we have paid attention to the central Christian claim of Incarnation, meaning simply and decisively the coming into human flesh of the Eternal Word of God. Here, of course, “human flesh” refers not merely to tissue, hair, fingernails, blood vessels, brain cells, and all that comprise our human bodies. Human flesh means all that is or represents what it means to be human. In that sense, Jesus Christ and not Adam is the only true human ever to have lived.

Lodahl’s discussion of Logos Christology begins by pointing toward the profound humiliation Jesus Christ underwent as Word Incarnate:

Lowly birth, humble life, crucified, dead, and buried: at every fork in the road, Jesus took the path of servanthood. He emptied himself, made himself nothing, humbled himself, and was obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

Ibid., 148.

This manifest and total emptying out leads Lodahl to assert, “though the usual confession of the Church is that Jesus is God, it is more precisely the case that *God is Jesus!* God shares himself with us, He descends to us, and He reveals His nature in the self-emptying and humiliation of the Crucified One.”

Ibid., 149.

Consider Jesus, 31.

Lodahl's assessment calls to mind what we quoted earlier from Elizabeth A. Johnson, who teaches that "as this human being, Jesus is the Son of God. Precisely as this human being he is God in time."

The lens through which we must see God, Lodahl believes, is not a set of theological and philosophical capacities such as the infinity, omnipresence, almightiness, changelessness, etc., of God. In saying that *God is Jesus!* Lodahl believes the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is our best way of knowing God.

Of course, as Lodahl understands, to immerse oneself fully in the career of Jesus Christ is immediately to be ushered into the company of God the Father and God the Spirit. Jesus the Anointed One shows by His life and death His perpetual devotion to the Father, who in turn exalts Jesus Christ as Lord. Lodahl believes

The Story of God, 149.

God himself has poured out His own honor, name, and authority upon this One who was obedient unto death. Jesus bears the name of Lord because it has been conferred on Him by the Father, that at His name all will bow and confess that He is Lord, but most significantly, and often overlooked, that He is Lord *to the glory of God the Father!* In other words, God has bestowed the title of Lord upon the humble Jesus, but Jesus' own Lordship itself points back to God the Father and God's glory!

Logos Christology as analyzed by Lodahl is a synthesis of both the exalted and the humbled. There is an unmistakable pattern of exaltation, descent, ascent. The exalted Word of the Father came among us in flesh, condescended to live as part of the human family. This descent, this self-forgetting, was genuine, not a sham or show. Through the earthly career of Jesus Christ, He was exalted by His Father, ascending to the Father's right hand.

In Jesus Christ the finite takes on infinite weight and importance, and the infinite truly enfolds itself in human time and history. H. Orton Wiley lucidly expresses:

Christian Theology, 2:76-77.

This Logos or Word was the Eternal Son, the second person of the Trinity. In Him as the express image of the Father were comprehended all the principles of truth, order, beauty, goodness and perfection. Hence as long as the relation between the finite and the Infinite was mediated through the Logos, it retained its true relationship to God.

Lodahl closes his consideration of the Logos Christology by quoting the fifth-century document known as the Tome of Pope Leo, often called Leo the Great. Leo's Tome was approved by the Council of Chalcedon, and many of its main points influenced the Chalcedonian statement we earlier quoted as defining orthodox Christology.

He assumed "the form of a servant" without the defilement of sin, enriching what was human, not impairing what was divine: because that "emptying of himself," whereby the Invisible made himself visible, and the Creator and Lord of all things willed to be one among mortals, was a stooping down in compassion, not a failure of power. Accordingly, the same who, remaining in the form of God, made man, was made man in the form of a servant. . . . For the selfsame who is very God, is also very man; and there is no illusion in this union, while the lowliness of man and the loftiness of Godhead meet together. For as "God" is not changed by the compassion exhibited [in the Incarnation], so "Man" is not consumed by the dignity bestowed [in the Incarnation]. . . . And as the Word does not withdraw from equality with the Father in glory, so the flesh does not abandon the nature of our kind. For, as we must often be saying, he is one and the same, truly Son of God, and truly Son of Man.

The Story of God, 152.

Bible Study Opportunity

Refer to Resource 3-5 in the Student Guide.

In pairs carefully read John 13:1-17 and Philippians 2:5-11.

How do these passages relate to what we learned about doing Christology from "above" and from "below"?

What would "Spirit Christology" thinkers say the difference is between their claims and the claims of "Logos Christology" thinkers?

Lodahl adeptly marks the contrast John 13 and Philippians 2 describe:

In John's account of Jesus' last supper with His disciples, he portrays the very Son and Word of God on His knees, washing His disciples' feet—including the feet of a traitor! This is the One who has "explained" or "interpreted" the invisible and mysterious God of all creation to us (John 1:18), the One who makes God known in His words and actions. Simply stated, the revolutionary portrait

Ibid., 146.

John offers us is of a Creator and Sustainer who is humble and gentle, a God with a servant's heart. This, in fact, is also the thrust of the Philippians passage.

Postscript: Is There a Better Way of Speaking?

Time-honored and definitive Christological treatments like the Tome of Pope Leo and the Chalcedonian statement are not definitive in the sense of quelling all future questions. But they are definitive in marking off boundaries within which all future Christological thought must take place. The classic statements show what questions can and cannot be asked, what speculations might be plausible in a biblical way, and what must be dismissed as heresy.

The Christological formula of "two natures in one person" may be viewed in different ways. Both the Spirit Christology and the Logos Christology try to account for both natures—divine and human—in the one person of Jesus Christ.

The influential theologian Donald G. Bloesch does not necessarily reject Spirit Christology and Logos Christology. Indeed, he affirms the main tenets of both of these complementary perspectives.

Bloesch. Jesus Christ: Savior and Lord, 57.

But Bloesch believes any Christology, whether "from above" or "from below," is bound to mislead unless it comes finally to rest on this conclusion: "the living God incarnate in Jesus the man." Because of this statement, Bloesch might take Michael Lodahl to task for his bold statement *God Is Jesus!* although it may be that the disagreement is largely over the meaning of words and not substantive and critical. Lodahl surely agrees with Bloesch's evaluation that "Jesus has no independent human personality: he has his personality in God" since Lodahl stressed the Father's gift of glory to the Son, which the Son gives back to the Father in the beauty of the Holy Spirit.

Ibid., 56.

Ibid., 57.

Bloesch is certainly profound when he writes, "Jesus is not autonomous or self-existent. God is the acting Subject in Jesus." Jesus Christ's life was an extended *Doxology* offered to the Father in the Spirit. *Never* was His life's song "I did it my way" (Frank Sinatra).

The summary statement Bloesch offers is well worth pondering, because he weighs in on a question of

perennial relevance for all Christological work, namely, what is the proper starting point?

Refer to Resource 3-6 in the Student Guide.

We should begin not with an abstract concept of deity (as in many christologies from above) nor with the historical Jesus (a christology from below) but with the living God incarnate in Jesus the man. I see Jesus not simply as a historical figure accessible to historical and scientific research but as the Word made flesh, the paradox of Eternity entering time at a particular point and place in history. This Jesus Christ is accessible—not to the probings of the historian nor to the speculations of the theologian but to the petitionings of the humble and penitent, who simply believe even as they try to understand. Those who pretend to see will be made blind; those who confess that they are in and of themselves blind will be made to see (Jn 9:39).

Jesus Christ: Savior and Lord, 57.

Small Groups: Matching

(10 minutes)

Refer to Resource 3-7 in the Student Guide.

In groups of three match the item on the left with its correct answer on the right.

Answer key:

1. J
2. G or H
3. D or H
4. A
5. H
6. B
7. E
8. C
9. I
10. K
11. F

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Call on one student to define in 2-3 sentences what is meant by Spirit Christology.

Call on another student to define in 2-3 sentences what is meant by Logos Christology.

Look Ahead

For the next several lessons we will shift our focus slightly, to a more intentional investigation of the *work* of Jesus Christ.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

We have devoted considerable time to discussing the various aspects of Jesus Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King. Choose any three or four titles and activities from the list given below.

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Chief Executive Officer | Attorney |
| Migrant Laborer | Business Executive |
| Fisherman | Inventor |
| Athlete | Judge |
| Politician | Nurse |
| Explorer | Entrepreneur |

Write a creative essay on how Jesus Christ in this role might address the needs of today's world. This essay should be three to four pages in length. The intent of this assignment is not to put Scripture to the test by seeking wild alternatives to substitute for more traditional meanings attached to the person of Jesus Christ. Rather, the point is to see if more traditional "wine" can fit into newer wineskins.

Write in your journal.

- Think of two or three persons who in your understanding best exemplify the character of Jesus Christ. What sets them apart from the rest of the people you know?
- Something new that I learned (or relearned) in the lesson on the offices of Christ that deserves further prayer and thought is _____.

Punctuate the Finish

In this lesson we have considered five very important ways of looking at the person of Jesus Christ. They are: Prophet, Priest, King; and the complementary Christologies known as Spirit Christology and Logos Christology.

How are these five related to one another?

- As the five members on a basketball team? Competing superstars do not win basketball championships, but five well-integrated and compatible players working together do.
- As five members on a multiple-staff ministry team? Senior pastor, administrative pastor, worship and music pastor, youth pastor, discipleship pastor?

Finish the lesson by reading—perhaps in unison—the second Nazarene Article of Faith, “Jesus Christ.”

Lesson 4

The Meaning of Atonement

Lesson Overview

Schedule

| Start Time | Task or Topic | Learning Activity | Materials Needed |
|------------|----------------------------|--------------------|---|
| 0:00 | Introduction | Orient | Student Guide Resource 4-1 |
| 0:10 | The Atoning Work of Christ | Lecture/Discussion | Resource 4-2 |
| 0:35 | Thinking About Atonement | Lecture/Discussion | Resources 4-3—4-9 |
| 1:05 | Propitiation and Expiation | Bible Study | Resource 4-10 |
| 1:15 | The One True Atonement | Lecture | Resource 4-11 |
| 1:20 | Lesson Close | Review, Assign | Student Guide Resource 4-12 Resource 4-13 |

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Aulen, Gustav. *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement*. Translated by A. G. Hebert. London: SPCK, 1950. American edition: Macmillan Co., 1961.

Dunning, H. Ray. *Grace, Faith, and Holiness*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988, chs. 11 and 12.

Grider, J. Kenneth. *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994, ch. 12.

Lodahl, Michael. *The Story of God: Wesleyan Theology and Biblical Narrative*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994, ch. 20.

Oden, Thomas C. *Systematic Theology*. Vol. 2, *The Word of Life*: San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989, ch. 11.

Pelikan, Jaroslav. "Atonement." In *The Melody of Theology: A Philosophical Dictionary*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Staples, Rob L. "Atonement." In *Words of Faith: An Easy Reference to Theological Terms*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2001.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Call on 2-3 students to read their essays from the homework assignment.

Return and collect all homework.

Orientation

Refer to Resource 4-1 in the Student Guide.

Gustav Aulen, Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement, trans. A. G. Hebert (London: SPCK, 1950), 29.

The subject of the Atonement is absolutely central in Christian theology; and it is directly related to that of the nature of God. Each and every interpretation of the Atonement is most closely connected with some conception of the essential meaning of Christianity, and reflects some conception of the Divine nature. Indeed, it is in some conception of the nature of God that every doctrine of the Atonement has its ultimate ground.

The Swedish theologian Gustav Aulen spoke these words in 1930, yet they remain penetratingly relevant today. Thrice Aulen refers to the nature of God, stressing an irreducible link between one's doctrine of God and one's approach to the Atonement. Is God's honor to be stressed over the divine forbearance? What of the proper balance between love and justice in the divine character? These are some of the questions everyone considering the Atonement must wrestle with.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should

- understand the theological meaning of "atonement"
- appreciate how one's view of atonement impacts and affects other aspects of one's theological outlook, notably one's doctrine of God
- realize the uniqueness of the atonement of God-in-Christ

Motivator

The hymn writers Isaac Watts and Elizabeth Clephane place us at the foot of the Cross:

"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," Sing to the Lord, 239.

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Isaac Watts

"Beneath the Cross of Jesus," Sing to the Lord, 231.

Upon the cross of Jesus
Mine eyes at times can see
The very dying form of One
Who suffered there for me
And from my smitten heart, with tears
These wonders I confess:
The wonder of His glorious love,
And my unworthiness.

Elizabeth C. Clephane

New Life in the Cross

May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. . . . I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 6:14; 2:20

Coming to Faith in the Resurrected One

And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

Mark 15:39

Lesson Body

Lecture/Discussion: The Atoning Work of Christ

(25 minutes)

The Person of Christ

Jesus said a tree will be known by its fruit, and by extension a human being by his or her acts. As the twenty-first century dawned, the fields of politics and business were dominated by the question of character. Corporate misdeeds and political corruption caused many average citizens to turn cynical and wonder if any honest people at all were left.

Our first three lessons of Christian Theology 2 examined the person of Jesus Christ from many facets: scriptural evidence for His divinity, the centrality of Incarnation, the threefold office of Prophet, Priest, and King, the complementary perspectives known as Logos Christology and Spirit Christology, among other avenues. We said many times that no neat and final separation is possible between the person and work of Jesus Christ. Of the points we raised, this is especially true of Jesus Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King.

Some people may ask themselves this question: Why is it *always* the person and work of Jesus Christ, and never the work and person of Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ, unlike some of the politicians and business leaders mentioned before, never has to apologize for the fruit His life bears. In fact, many well-known stories and legends suggest that the soil at the foot of Calvary watered by Jesus' blood was exceptionally rich:

O cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from Thee.
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

George Mattheson, "O Love That Will Not Let Me Go," Sing to the Lord, 474.

The simple answer to our question is that from the person of Jesus Christ flow His works. While there is never any inconsistency, hypocrisy, or contradiction between person and works in the Redeemer, the person of Jesus Christ is what forms, constitutes, and discharges His works, deeds, and acts.

Renowned actors such as Julia Roberts, Tom Hanks, Meryl Streep, Jack Nicholson, Robert De Niro, Robin

Williams, and Al Pacino seek variety in the roles they play. No one wants to be typecast. Yet the very diversity of the roles they assume puzzles one as to who the true person *is* behind all of the roles. Perhaps no actor is obligated to play roles that are true reflections of his or her true self.

As teacher, sage, healer, exorcist, visionary, wonder worker, and finally as Savior and Redeemer of the world, the life of Jesus Christ could be analyzed and evaluated in different ways by different people—and of course, has in fact been. Yet for all of their diversity, all the roles Jesus played and capacities Jesus filled came down to doing His Father's will, to inaugurating and establishing the kingdom of God.

The psychologist Carl Rogers defined the best life as belonging to a "fully functioning person." What we divide into two—the person and work of Jesus Christ—was of course for Him surely not two, but one. Jesus gave to the world its only real example of a life fully realized or "fully functioning." There was no work Jesus did that was not a full expression of His person, fully divine and fully human. For the rest of us, being and doing, thought and act, intuition and performance, are often far from connected or integrated.

Role Playing

Try to engage the students in a discussion of "person" and "work" in their own lives. This could be done via "role playing" in which some of the students would play roles contrary to what they perceive their true character to be.

It may also be helpful to reflect at this time on the pastoral office in a theological way, since many of the students are geared to enter the Christian pastorate.

Discuss with the students the many and varied "roles" they will have to assume as Nazarene pastors. Some will come more "naturally" to them than others. Some may feel extremely awkward praying one-to-one with an altar seeker, or may find it embarrassing counseling one-to-one in the pastor's study. Others may have to overcome natural shyness every time they stand behind the holy desk and presume to preach the gospel.

The apostle Paul claimed he strove to become all things to all people, so that by all means at his disposal he could win people to Jesus Christ.

Allow for student response.

How does this comment reflect on the dynamic between "person" and "work" in human terms?

Defining Atonement

In *The Imitation of Christ* Thomas à Kempis wrote that he would rather feel compunction of heart than simply to know the meaning of compunction. A Kempis is exactly correct. The most polished theological definition is worthless without acknowledging the universal and personal weight of atonement's meaning.

Refer to Resource 4-2 in the Student Guide.

Words of Faith: An Easy Reference to Theological Terms (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2001), 47.

The concept of atonement is often approached through seeing its component parts as **at—one—ment**. This means, as Rob Staples expresses, that atonement "has to do with 'being in accord,' or bringing together, two estranged parties. Sin breaks relationship with God, but God's gracious love restores the possibility of having the relationship restored."

The Atonement (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1995), 2.

Michael Winter's definition is crisp and to the point. Atonement is "the restoration of a reciprocal relationship of love between God the Father and the human race."

Neither of these definitions makes explicit mention of Jesus Christ, although the presence of both God the Father and reciprocal relationships certainly points in the direction of Jesus Christ. Martin Luther understood the centrality of Jesus Christ for the Atonement in his majestic hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God: "

Sing to the Lord, 30.

Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God's own choosing.
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus—it is He;
Lord Sabaoth, His name
From age to age the same;
And He must win the battle.

Christus Victor, 20.

Gustav Aulen adds an important idea to the definition of atonement in writing, "it is a work wherein God reconciles the world to Himself, and is at the same time reconciled."

The new element, that God is himself reconciled, is present in the definitions given by Staples and Winter

but underscored by Aulen. Following along in the same vein, Aulen provides a much fuller definition of the whole gamut of atonement. Notice how Aulen stresses the cosmic and universal nature of the drama of atonement, which is exactly what Martin Luther meant in exulting that *He must win the battle*:

God is pictured as in Christ carrying through a victorious conflict against powers of evil which are hostile to His will. This constitutes Atonement, because the drama is a cosmic drama, and the victory over the hostile powers brings to pass a new relation, a relation of reconciliation, between God and the world; and, still more, because in a measure the hostile powers are regarded as in the service of the Will of God the Judge of all, and the executants of His judgment. Seen from this side, the triumph over the opposing powers is regarded as a reconciling of God Himself; He is reconciled by the very act in which He reconciles the world to Himself.

Ibid., 20-21.

Through Aulen's exclamation of God himself being reconciled, one can hear the great poetic voice of Charles Wesley:

My God is reconciled;
His pard'ning voice I hear.
He owns me for His child;
I can no longer fear.
With confidence I now draw nigh,
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And, "Father, Abba, Father," cry.

From "Arise, My Soul, Arise," Sing to the Lord, 432.

The final definition we will survey is from Michael Lodahl. Like many others, he takes special note of the fact that the Church has not yet—and likely never will—arrive at a single, universally accepted position regarding the Atonement, unlike, by contrast, the doctrine of the Trinity (three persons in one nature) and the person of Jesus Christ (two natures in one person). Lodahl asserts:

There has been a common thread running through the Church's understanding of Christ's atonement ("at—one—ment," being in accord): sin breaks relationship with God, but His love, a reconciling and forgiving love, restores the possibility or capacity for relationship.

The Story of God, 158-59.

One of the beauties of describing atonement as "at-one-ment" is that all can spontaneously grasp this meaning.

What are the first thoughts that come to mind when you think of atonement in this way?

Allow time for response and discussion.

When you speak of atonement as "at-one-ment" what dimensions of Christ's work gets the primary emphasis?

Lecture/Discussion: Thinking about Atonement

(30 minutes)

Understanding Atonement in its Theological Context

The widely repeated assessment that there is no "standard" or "official" doctrine of the Atonement does not give us liberty to say whatever we like, preach whatever stirs us at the moment, or think according to the enticements of the passing hour. The very freedom flexible Atonement thinking seems to accord us should provoke all the greater care, discipline, thoughtfulness, and circumspection. The elasticity implied in the lack of an official doctrine is not irresponsibility. A well-developed theology of the Atonement must incorporate mature thoughts about divinity, humanity, incarnation, sin, grace, honor, justice, mercy, and love into a seamless whole, to name only the most obvious component parts.

Refer to Resource 4-3 in the Student Guide.

Formative Factors in Atonement Theology

A Necessary and Proper Balance

What is likely of greatest weight and consequence in atonement theology is a proper, effective, and redemptive balance between the objective and the subjective.

Refer to Resource 4-4 in the Student Guide.

Here, "objective" means basically that which is initiated and enacted by God, that for which God is ultimately responsible, that which can be done only and exclusively by God. "Objective" may also refer to the changed atmosphere that results because of what God has done in Jesus Christ.

The counterpart to "objective" is "subjective." If God is finally responsible for that which is ultimately true, it would be a weak, odd, and forgettable truth that did not become truth in and for *me*, the subject. As Søren Kierkegaard liked to put it, "Only that truth which edifies is truth for me."

The human subject to whom truth comes must receive that truth in the center of his or her being, and be changed by that truth. Human subjectivity is in a sense God's gift to us, God's creation of a place for himself within us. But that space can be fit for God's indwelling only through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, which we must appropriate by grace through faith.

In the simple children's song there is a rich interplay between the objective and the subjective:

Jesus Loves Me, Sing to the Lord,
738.

Jesus loves me! this I know,
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong;
They are weak, but He is strong.

What in this song speaks to the objective truth of God's love for us in Jesus Christ?

What reminds us that while it is Jesus who loves me, it is me whom Jesus loves?

Jaroslav Pelikan, The Melody of Theology: A Philosophical Dictionary (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 13.

Noted historical theologian Jaroslav Pelikan suggests the varieties of atonement theory all sought "to meet two needs simultaneously," of course referring to the hope to represent both objective and subjective. He encapsulates both of these in his valuable analysis, that atonement theology had to emphasize that the Atonement was an act of God and to safeguard human participation in that act.

Some theories were so objective in their emphasis upon divine initiative that the human race seemed to be a pawn in the transaction between God-in-Christ and the Devil. Other theories so subjectively concentrated their attention on the human involvement and the human responses that the divine aspect of the Atonement could vanish from sight.

Refer to Resource 4-5 in the Student Guide.

To stress the objective aspect of atonement means at least these two things, and possibly others that are related:

1. Something has happened or changed within God, something flowing freely from the divine heart, will, and mind. This change does not contradict the nature of God, but rather expresses it fully and completely.

Great is Thy faithfulness,
O God, my Father;
There is no shadow of turning with Thee.
Thou changest not;

“Great Is Thy Faithfulness,” Sing to the Lord, 44.

Thy compassions, they fail not.
As Thou hast been
Thou forever wilt be.

This noteworthy hymn lyric may mean many things to many people. For our purposes here, it means that while God is compassionate to His wayward and sinful children (“compassion” means to feel passion alongside of or with), this compassion is not contrary to God’s nature to love constantly. Compassion is the gift of love to where it is most needed.

2. Because God has accomplished this act of atonement in Jesus Christ, everything is forevermore different and changed. Subjective human neglect, oversight, and rejection can in no way tarnish or minimize the reality of atonement God has effected in Jesus Christ. Atonement is a completed divine act, and one made on behalf of all the human race. Continuing human rejection of God’s mercy sadly means that atonement is not fruitful in every life.

The Church of the Nazarene is well known as a revivalistic and experiential church. Does this stress on “heart religion” automatically mean that *only* the subjective human response is of consequence in Atonement theology in Nazarene eyes?

Thankfully, not. Nazarene theologian J. Kenneth Grider writes:

One way to think of the subjective and the objective aspects of the Atonement is to understand that the bar [or the obstacle] to our salvation lies partly in us, but chiefly in God. Thus its chief accomplishment is an objective one. The Atonement occasions the altogether-holy Father’s becoming kindly toward us rebels.

Wesleyan-Holiness Theology, 325.

Read Romans 5:8.

To speak of the subjective and the objective as related to anything at all may be, and often is, confusing and distracting. Let’s explore the general dynamics of the objective and the subjective, because these terms often occur at important crossroads in both philosophy and theology.

While it will be impossible to explore these vital concepts in any detail, it is important that instructor and student find themselves speaking the same—or closely related—language when it

What would be good working definitions that would help in our lesson today?

comes to the subjective and the objective.

Possible ideas:

Objective: divine initiative, initiator of the event or action, responsible party.

Subjective: human interaction, the responder, recipient of the event or action.

The intent of this discussion exercise is not to confuse a difficult subject further. The intent is rather to explore the dynamics of "objective" and "subjective" and in so doing come to a closer and cleaner understanding of the Atonement.

What or who might be the subjective and objective in the dynamics of the following church practices?

- Preaching
- The altar call
- Choir anthem during worship
- Testimony time
- Retreat for church leaders

Two Difficult Yet Essential Words

The words *propitiation* and *expiation* add new color and shades of meaning to our discussion of the objective and the subjective.

Refer to Resource 4-6 in the Student Guide.

Propitiation

Propitiation is perhaps the easier word to define with clarity, because it has to do exclusively with God, whereas expiation is a bridge or gate that swings back and forth between divine and human, or better, the possibility of expiation resides in the kindness of God, but a human response is necessary to bring the benefits of expiation to resolution.

The holiness of God is a holiness categorically opposed to sin, and a sinned-against God is free to express His holy love in a wrathful way. A God who is not totally indignant at the incursion of sin into His universe is a God far beneath the biblical picture. God's wrath is of course never His final word, but yet it is a word mortals cannot, at will, delete from the divine vocabulary.

Grider alleges, with much truth, that in fact liberal Christians "overemphasize God's love and say little about His holiness, [and therefore] deny that there is a propitiatory element in the Atonement. They oppose the view that Christ's death on the Cross assuaged God's holy wrath against us as rebellious sinners."

Wesleyan-Holiness Theology, 324-25.

The Kingdom of God in America (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959), 193.

An oft-quoted statement that corroborates Grider's assessment of theological liberalism is this from H. Richard Niebuhr: "A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross."

Niebuhr's memorable quotation leaves the reader and theologian with no choice. *Either* accept the interlocked reality of the four anchoring words of his analysis—wrath, sin, judgment, cross—*or* abandon biblical Christianity altogether. There is no other choice.

Propitiation, then, as understood by conservative and evangelical Christians, says that indeed God does stand in need of being reconciled to humankind, because the offense a holy God has taken at sin is well considered, justified, and responsible. The death of Jesus Christ releases God the Father from His justified anger and allows Father and His rebelling creatures to be united in love.

Grider's summary analysis is worth repeating:

God is not capricious, nor is He one who is easily offended and who needs to be placated. Yet, due to His holiness, He is wrathful toward us when we lift puny fists in His face. He does not and cannot overlook such rebellion in the fashion of a doting grandfather. The death of a sinless Christ, on behalf of us sinful humans, the just for the unjust, assuages the Father's holy wrath against sin, reconciles the Father to us, making it possible for Him to forgive all who repent and believe.

Wesleyan-Holiness Theology, 325.

If we agree that the Atonement allows God to forgive us, and that one element in this forgiveness is the release of the Father's justified anger toward sin, we may be faced with the question, "Where did the anger go?" In the case of God, the perplexing issues raised by this question are if anything deepened, heightened, and extended.

Jesus Christ as God's punished Son was a view *formerly* held by many, if seldom expressed in such crude and graphic language. In former days this was sometimes called the penal substitution or punishment theory, stating forthrightly that Jesus Christ had to absorb the Father's wrath in order to atone for the sins of the world.

Can such a view of the Father as Divine victimizer be substantiated on biblical grounds? For Kenneth Grider and many others the answer is, "No!" The penal or punishment view of the Atonement is not scriptural because "it throws God's infinite goodness into question." Grider further argues, "if the Father's justice must be and is satisfied by punishment, then no forgiveness is possible."

Refer to Resource 4-7 in the Student Guide.

Wesleyan-Holiness Theology, 329.

God the Father is *not* a malevolent torture artist who delights in turning His Son into an accursed sinner. The Father's motives for what happened to Jesus Christ cannot be second-guessed, even if they also defy rational human understanding. Perhaps this is why love is such a mystery!

Jesus suffered, even the suffering that accompanies becoming a curse, but this suffering was *not* at the same time a punishment visited by Father upon Son. There is no exact equivalence between suffering and punishment, no exact tit-for-tat identity.

"All punishment is suffering," Grider wisely notes, "but not all suffering is punishment. The difference between the two is that punishment presupposes guilt, and suffering does not. Since Christ was sinless, He was guiltless. When He died for us, therefore, He suffered but was not punished. And since there was a substitution of His suffering for the punishment that believers otherwise would have received in hell, the Father could actually forgive us."

Ibid., 330.

The concept of propitiation must not be recklessly cast aside, but neither may it be seen as venting the Father's anger on a hapless, pathetic, and vulnerable Son. Albert Einstein said God does not play dice with the universe; neither does God victimize His only-begotten Son.

Expiation

Refer to Resource 4-8 in the Student Guide.

The turning aside of the divine wrath toward sin is at the same time the expunging of human guilt. This is expiation. God's wrath is propitiated; human sin and guilt are expiated, not unlike the dramatic resolution in Isaiah 6:7: "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." The seraph's live coal is temporarily availing and expiating, but the Son of God's blood is eternally efficacious.

Thomas C. Oden. *Systematic Theology, Vol 2, The Word of Life* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989), 393.

Thomas Oden suggests, "the focus of expiation is upon the removal of obstacles to the relationship" between ourselves and God. Consequently, "expiation required the removal, cleansing, or forgiveness of sin." Oden further explains, "Christ is said to be the living expiation or 'the atoning sacrifice for our sins' (1 Jn 2:2), enabling God and humanity to draw nearer or be made propitious or favorable."

If an academic dean or scholastic adviser calls a student into his or her office and informs that student of academic failure and expulsion, no one ultimately

wins. The student is humiliated and the reputation of the school, while seemingly defended against mediocrity, may degenerate into the harsh and the judgmental.

In the same way, human alienation from God benefits neither the human in question nor God. God created a world in order to love the world and its inhabitants. Through the atoning death of Jesus Christ, God has provided a means of returning to Him. To speak of the expiation of sin is to say we are ready to undertake this journey, that all is in good order. Our passport is valid, our trip itinerary is in order, our immunizations are up to date—we are ready! And we will arrive to find a loving God with open arms.

Expiation is something that happens *to* us and *in* us, but *not* something we can do for ourselves. Only Jesus Christ the Righteous can provide a sacrifice to expiate our guilt.

Propitiation and expiation can and should be contrasted, but the contrast between them is a relative one and not an absolute one. Each of these vital thrusts needs the other one for wholeness and completeness. Donald Bloesch writes of an “integral relationship” between the two realities, and quotes the well-known preacher D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones to secure his point:

Surely the very idea of expiation in and of itself leads to propitiation! If there must be expiation, why must there be propitiation? There is only one answer—that there cannot be a true relationship between God and man until that sin has been expiated. But that is just another way of saying propitiation.

Quoted in Bloesch, God, Authority, and Salvation, 150.

Three Points

Refer to Resource 4-9 in the Student Guide.

1. *Atonement Was Eternally Planned*

Contrary to those theologians who imagine that God “invented” the provision of atonement in response to human sin, Grider believes, “Scripture teaches that Christ’s atoning death was in God’s plan all along.” Grider refers to Revelation 13:8 as such a verse, “the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.”

Wesleyan-Holiness Theology, 322.

Powerful prophecies such as Isaiah 53 confirm that, as 19th-century American theologian Horace Bushnell once said, “From all eternity there has

Ibid., 323.

been a cross in the heart of God." Grider knows that "Christ came to earth for the purpose of giving His life on our behalf."

Denominations and church traditions with more of a liturgical identity than the Church of the Nazarene may be in a better position to celebrate the continuity that flows from one season of the church year to another. Then the close connectedness between Christmas and Good Friday, between Immanuel and Crucifixion, can be appreciatively seen. There is a crimson line running from Bethlehem to Golgotha, and perhaps a white line also, from Incarnation to Resurrection.

2. *The Wherefore and the Why of Atonement Is Blood*

Grider does not probe the mysterious equivalence between atonement and blood, but he does note the importance. Hebrews 9:22 is a crucial reference: "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." Much Old Testament precedent can be appropriately drawn upon, as Grider is aware.

Our sanitized lives today shield us from blood at practically all costs. In the HIV/AIDS era of the past 20 years, blood is more feared than revered. I have myself given blood to the Red Cross dozens of times, and as I lay back on the blood-drawing chair, as my blood fills the plastic bag, it is not difficult to grasp however dimly the theological significance of blood.

But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

Isaiah 53:5

3. *What Choices Did a Sovereign God Have?*

While Grider insists the Atonement was forever planned in the heart of the triune God, and that blood is of vital importance for the atonement Jesus Christ provided, he yet wishes to defend and protect the freedom of God.

Accordingly, Grider cannot and will not say the Atonement as it actually unfolded was the *only* plan God might have enacted. To say "that the Atonement provided is the only kind that was open to God" is for Grider to stumble into "an evangelical

rationalism." Grider wisely safeguards the divine sovereignty against untoward human intrusion and speculation.

Some Christian spiritual writers and traditions, especially those enamored by Christ's illuminating light, have almost disallowed the importance of the Cross and Resurrection. For such voices, who admittedly are usually outside the grand Christian tradition, Jesus did not need to suffer and die. They erroneously contend that simply by being born and going through the stages of normal human development, Jesus saves us.

Bible Study: Propitiation and Expiation

(10 minutes)

Refer to Resource 4-10 in the Student Guide.

Divide the class into groups of three for this study.

If possible, you might have the students check the wording of The New Living Translation.

If time is short because of questions and discussions, this study could be given as homework.

Grider brings four crucial scriptures to our attention: Rom 3:25; Heb 2:17; 1 Jn 2:2; and 1 Jn 4:10. The NASB renders the key word as "propitiation"; whereas the RSV chooses the more subjective term "expiation." Surprisingly, perhaps, the NRSV, while it does not restore "propitiation" to the text, uses "sacrifice of atonement" and similar phrases, a pattern also evident in the NIV.

Discuss the pros and cons of "propitiation," "expiation," and such usage as "sacrifice of atonement."

Lecture: The One True Atonement

(5 minutes)

While it may be a valuable educational exercise to identify atonement and reconciliation dramas in the real world, in no way do they suggest that atonement realized in human terms is equivalent to God's atoning gift in Jesus Christ.

Refer to Resource 4-11 in the Student Guide.

Mark well the contrasts between human atonement scenarios and the one true atonement given to us in Jesus Christ.

- Human atonement stories presume the sinner and the sinned-against are roughly equivalent in the eyes of the civil or moral law. By contrast, God is the Creator of humankind and hence God and humanity are not equal. God is the Giver of the moral law and the Establisher of standards whereby what is sinful is determined.
- Who is to make the first move? In diplomatic relations between hostile countries, and certainly in the case of strained labor relations, this question is uppermost. "Who will blink at the negotiating

table?" is not of mere speculative interest when tens of millions of dollars are riding on the outcome.

However, with the Lord God all of this changes. God does not first take the measure of us, creatures who have defied God, and then decide whether or not to be gracious unto us.

From first to last, God-in-Christ is a just and merciful God, slow to anger and abounding in mercy. God *always* makes the first move toward us in the drama of redemption, and always will.

- God makes the first move toward humankind and the world because only the Lord God is able to make good on His promises to redeem us. Construction projects are halted for lack of money; businesses fail; contracts are broken. The gospel message is markedly different from the uncertainty pervading all human endeavors. Paul wrote to the Philippians, "he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (1:6).

This does not mean everyone *will* be saved, but all *can be* saved, and further that the atoning act God wrought in Jesus Christ is *full, total, complete, adequate, and perfect* in and of itself. The human acceptance of God's mercies does not make these mercies more merciful. God's love is perfect regardless of whether or not humans choose to acknowledge its perfection. Aided by prevenient grace, the human embrace of the benefits of atonement makes these benefits lively and fruitful in human hearts, but does not make Jesus Christ's perfect sacrifice somehow more perfect.

- To summarize, atonement as provided by God-in-Christ is *qualitatively* different from human atonement because God has made the first move toward reconciliation with humankind, and through the ministry of the Holy Spirit continues to move.

Only the infinite resources of God's love are fully adequate to the task of atonement.

Human acceptance of God's offer of atonement reconciles humanity to God, but does not make Jesus' perfect sacrifice more perfect.

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Call on three different students to define briefly expiation, propitiation, and atonement.

Look Ahead

In the next lesson we will begin by surveying representative theories of the Atonement, and then move on to discussing different benefits of the Atonement.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Make a list of seven ways that what you learned about the Atonement is pertinent to the task of pastor/teacher/evangelist.

Read Resource 4-13. Write out three discussion questions the material raises for you.

Write in your journal. Reflect on the following hymn:

Alas! and did my Savior bleed?
And did my Sov'reign die?
Would He devote that sacred head
For sinners such as I?

Was it for crimes that I have done
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity! grace unknown!
And love beyond degree!

But drops of grief can ne'er repay
The debt of love I owe.
Here, Lord, I give myself away;
'Tis all that I can do.

Isaac Watts

Punctuate the Finish

Refer to Resource 4-12 in the Student Guide.

Read the Litany of Atonement as a responsive reading.

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Lesson 5

Atonement and Grace

Lesson Overview

Schedule

| Start Time | Task or Topic | Learning Activity | Materials Needed |
|------------|--|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| 0:00 | Introduction | Orient | Student Guide Resource 5-1 |
| 0:10 | Theories of Atonement | Group Activity | Resource 4-13 Resource 5-2 |
| 0:30 | Further Developments in Atonement Theory | Lecture/Discussion | Resources 5-3—5-5 |
| 0:50 | A Graced World | Lecture/Discussion | Resources 5-6—5-9 |
| 1:20 | Lesson Close | Review, Assign | Resource 5-10 Student Guide |

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Oden, Thomas C. *The Transforming Power of Grace*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993.

Pelikan, Jaroslav. "Grace." In *The Melody of Theology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Staples, Rob L. "Grace." In *Words of Faith: An Easy Reference to Theological Terms*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2001.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

In groups of three, have the students share their lists from the homework assignment.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

This lesson is about two interlocking themes: grace and atonement.

What are some other interlocking themes in Christian theology?

Faith and works?

Grace and law?

Justification and sanctification?

C. S. Lewis said faith and works are something like two blades of a scissors. One needs both blades to have an effective tool. May something similar be said about grace and atonement?

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should

- recognize, appreciate, and apply four or five of the leading explanations of the Atonement, known in theological language as “theories of the Atonement”
- understand the doctrine of grace
- focus on the doctrine of prevenient grace, and understand how it impacts the entire theological outlook
- offer some contrasts between the Wesleyan view of prevenient grace and the Calvinist perspective of common grace
- consider whether the world as God made it might be thought of as “a graced world”—if so, what this means for our lives as Christians

Motivator

Refer to Resource 5-1 in the Student Guide.

List five or six qualities of grace mentioned in the hymn “Amazing Grace.”

At least one person has changed the line in the first verse from "Saved a wretch like me" to "Saved and set me free."

Is this an acceptable substitution? Why or why not?

Is grace even more amazing when it saves "wretches"?

Lesson Body

Group Activity: Theories of the Atonement

(20 minutes)

The students were to have read Resource 4-13 on Theories of the Atonement. They were also to have brought discussion questions from the reading.

Use the questions to conduct a discussion over the material.

Refer to Resource 5-2 in the Student Guide. During the last 6-7 minutes of this section, have the students work on the matching exercise. This could be done in small groups of 2-3 students each.

Answers:

A. 3

B. 1, 5, 8

C. 4, 6, 7, 11

D. 2, 9, 10, 12

Lecture/Discussion: Further Developments in Atonement Theory

(20 minutes)

Every examination of the Atonement tries to clarify what is finally beyond human description. No theory of human construction can begin to distill the wonders of God's grace into neat and completely accessible packets. The New Testament witness is so deep and resonant, the long history of Christian reflection so rich and effective, three handy theories cannot soothe every conscience and explain every conundrum.

Still, some theories are better than others, and the three we have stressed have presented themselves well. Each of the three has a centuries-long tradition standing behind it, as well as persuasively influencing millions of Christians.

Two other approaches are often mentioned in theological literature, although it is most likely the case that the respective strengths of these two are already represented in the classic view especially, and loosely in the Latin view.

Two Additional Theories

Ransom

The idea and even the mechanics of ransom are very familiar to us in our media savvy and saturated world. The age of terrorism is also the age of ransom. "As a Nazarene missionary in the Philippines," Dr. Leupp writes, "I learned that Chinese-Filipino businessmen were especially susceptible to having their children taken hostage by extremists demanding hefty ransoms."

Refer to Resource 5-3 in the Student Guide.

The strength of the ransom theory of the Atonement is its being mentioned twice in the New Testament.

- Mark 10:45 and the parallel Matthew 20:28:
"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
"Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
- 1 Timothy 2:5-6:
"Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time."

These references state the principle but offer little if any theological detail as to how the ransom theory works.

Jesus gave His life as a ransom, and this gift is clearly given freely and from a heart of love. The Gospel references stress Jesus' servant quality in offering the gift of himself. Can we do less than offer our own lives up in service, yet realizing the gift of our lives can never be a salvific gift, regardless of how well intentioned?

If such good is attached to the ransom approach—the twin goods of Christ's selflessness and our call to emulate Him—what possible objections could there be? The chief and obvious objection has been in answering the question: "To whom was the ransom of Jesus Christ paid or given?"

Here there seem to be two possible answers.

- If to the devil, then *why* was ransom paid to the devil? How can the Prince of Darkness possibly have any claims upon the Prince of Peace? This is absurd on the face of it. The Fathers of the Church discussed whether the devil could indeed exercise any dominion over fallen humanity. Origen, for one, believed in the ransom theory, writing:

Quoted in Aulen, Christus Victor, 65.

To whom did He give His soul as a ransom for many? Surely not to God. Could it, then, be to the Evil One? For he had us in his power, until the ransom for us should be given to him, even the life (or soul) of Jesus, since he (the Evil One) had been deceived, and led to suppose that he was capable of mastering that soul, and he did not see that to hold Him involved a trial of strength greater than he was equal to.

Those who demand a ransom payment are immoral and have no right to collect. In the case of Jesus Christ and the devil, this is infinitely the case.

In the end, Satan can have no claim on the Son of God, as Aulen states:

Ibid., 66.

It is not fitting that the devil, who is a robber, should receive a price in return for what he had taken by violence, and a price of such value as the Son of God Himself. The devil had no rights; on the contrary, it was altogether right that he should be conquered and forced to surrender his prey.

To say Jesus Christ conquered the devil leads naturally to the *Christus Victor* theme so championed by Aulen.

Refer to Resource 5-4 in the Student Guide.

- Could Jesus Christ have paid a ransom to God the Father? That seems the only other possible answer. But why would the Father expect payment from His own Son, the Lamb of God come to take away the sins of the world? To suggest that Jesus owes a payment to His Father may be a subtle form of the "divine child abuse" idea where Jesus Christ is punished by the Father to expunge the world's sins and placate the Father's wrath.

Governmental

Wesleyan-Holiness Theology, 331-34.

Here we seem to be on more solid territory than in the case of the ransom position. Kenneth Grider believes the following strengths are demonstrated by the governmental view.

- It takes seriously that a holy God has been offended by sin, something lacking in the moral influence idea.
- God is the true Actor throughout the Atonement, which is of course a main point in the dramatic theory.
- The governmental view sees God as becoming reconciled to himself through the atoning work of

Jesus Christ, which is also found in the classic position. Grider says this means God did not rely on any "third party" to bridge the chasm between himself and humanity, but did the work himself.

- The benefits of atonement reach to the entire human race. P. T. Forsyth writes, "the first charge upon Christ and His cross was the reconciliation of the race, and of its individuals by implication."
- God governs the world through love and not fear. Here the governmental theory meshes with the moral influence.
- Jesus Christ acts in our stead, or vicariously, as God redeems the world through His Son.

Quoted in *Ibid.*, 332.

Moving Ahead through Review

Michael Lodahl uses the device of alliteration to cinch his understanding of the benefits of the Atonement. In doing so he revisits much of the territory we have already traversed.

The Story of God, 160-62.

Refer to Resource 5-5 in the Student Guide.

Jesus as Prophet

The reconciling aspect of Christ's atonement is front and center here, and the corresponding figure is Peter Abelard, who is of course linked with the moral influence position. For Lodahl, moral influence means, "as we perceive the matchless love revealed in the cross of Jesus, we might be swayed likewise to love God and others. Jesus speaks a word of love, Jesus *is* God's Word of Love, and that Word, said Abelard, is sufficient to melt our fears and embolden our hearts to love."

Jesus as Priest

Lodahl here focuses on Anselm's view, understanding it to promote Jesus as Priest, or the one through whom comes propitiation. The New Testament undoubtedly views Jesus Christ as being our great High Priest. Yet Lodahl senses danger in Anselm's idea, that of "making God into a bit of an ogre who will not rest till every last drop of debt is squeezed out of humanity."

Ibid., 162.

Jesus as Prince

This correlates most closely with the *Christus Victor* motif we have elsewhere unpacked. Lodahl asserts, "Here Jesus is the Prince, the royal Fighter in God's kingdom, our Liberator through whom all forces that oppose us are defeated."

Jesus as Presence

The death of Jesus Christ is here viewed as a necessary expression of "God with us," or Immanuel.

Jesus' death is indeed salvific, but His death is seen as being seamlessly whole with His life.

Lodahl's key words are

- Prophet—reconciliation
- Priest—propitiation
- Prince—liberation
- Presence—participation

How does each pair of words relate to God-in-Christ Atonement?

In what ways does Christ the Prophet deal with reconciliation?

In what ways does Christ the Priest deal with propitiation?

In what ways does Christ the Prince deal with liberation?

In what ways does Christ the Presence deal with participation?

Have the students write this out and share with the person sitting next to them.

In your own words add a one-sentence explanation of the meaning of each set of key words.

Review as Summary

At least five approaches to the Atonement, some of them admittedly overlapping, have now claimed our attention. The weight of testimony found in both the New Testament and the developing history of Christian theology seems to favor what Gustav Aulen named the classic or dramatic view.

The best insights of both the ransom and the governmental theories are subsumed under the classic outlook, including the insights that the Atonement is an act of God from first to last—hence it is “double-sided”; God is both the Reconciler and the Reconciled—and the victory won by Jesus is a victory for every realm of life: the personal, the ecological, the social, the political, the historical, the familial, etc. The classic vision of atonement is at once big and small, sweeping and detailed, cosmic and personal.

The Latin or satisfaction view is valid up to a point, but may falter if Jesus Christ is thought to offer himself up to the Father as a mere human, and not as the Incarnate One. A savior who is only human is of course no real savior at all. Furthermore, a hard-edged satisfaction approach may seem to elevate God's sense

of honor and justice over His mercy, compassion, and love. A God who cannot be appeased may be a God whose wrath cannot be set aside or propitiated.

Helpful Resource: *Volume Two of Thomas C. Oden's systematic theology develops a helpful chart that visualizes many of the distinctions we have mentioned, adding others. See pages 412-13.*

What has traditionally been named the moral influence view is sublime and poetic from some angles, but the common criticism that under it God never really changes is hard to refute. Most damaging of all is the suspicion that sin is not taken seriously.

Lecture/Discussion: A Graced World

(30 minutes)

The Meaning and Relevance of Grace

In lesson 6 we will consider some of the specific benefits of the Atonement, but before that some focus needs to be directed to the reality of grace. All the Atonement accomplished and continues to accomplish is effected by the grace of God, which bears a very close symbolic resemblance to God's love and His mercy.

The word "grace" is sometimes said to mean **God's Riches At Christ's Expense**.

At the instructor's discretion, you may ask the students to write for one or two minutes on the appropriateness of this definition of grace.

Is this is an acceptable definition of grace for you personally?

What would be an acceptable definition?

Regarding this definition, no one would quibble with the idea of God's Riches.

Allow for student response.

But must these riches categorically come at the expense of Jesus Christ?

Is the expense simply the price Jesus Christ willingly paid at Calvary, or something else?

- *Saying "grace" before meals*
- *She moved with style and grace*
- *Gracious sakes alive!*
- *The artistry and grace of figure skating*
- *A gracious plenty*
- *Referring to the pope as "Your Grace"*

How is the word "grace" used in everyday speech?

- *What might be six or eight ways in which grace—and its correlates "gracious" and "graceful"—appears in our common language?*
- *Are these various usages any clue to how well the concept of grace is understood in the general population?*
-

Paul Tillich, the well-known philosophical theologian, often claimed that some traditional religious words were no longer widely understood by the common human being. Instead of "sin," Tillich thought we should speak of alienation and estrangement. Love

might be better figured as reunion or unity, and faith was the condition of being grasped by an “ultimate concern,” one of Tillich’s signature phrases.

I am not aware that Tillich proposed a new term for grace. *Should he have? If so, what?*

Refer to Resource 5-6 in the Student Guide.

Jaroslav Pelikan reminds us that Titus 2:11-12 is a great text about grace, which mentions two of the New Testament’s firm teachings about grace:

“Grace” in The Melody of Theology (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.

What are the two or three most important ideas in these two verses?

Pelikan writes:

Ibid., 106-7.

Grace as healing . . . and grace as discipline have been the two privileged aspects of its definition in the history of Christian theology. Both in the vocabulary of the New Testament itself and in the language of church theologians, the term “the grace of God” is closely related to the “love of God” and to “the mercy of God,” so that it is often difficult to distinguish among them; although the usage is by no means consistent, it is helpful, within the general category of love, to define mercy as forgiving love and grace as mediated mercy.

Here Pelikan chooses to subsume both grace and mercy under the broader umbrella of love. Wesleyan theology is a theology of love, and hence has no quarrel with this. Love is “the heaven of heavens” for John Wesley. Notice how Pelikan interweaves love, grace, and mercy, defining each concept through some reference to one of the other two.

Refer to Resource 5-7 in the Student Guide.

H. Orton Wiley, prior to his discussion of prevenient grace, makes six valuable points about the reality of grace, beautifully cataloguing the full amplitude of grace:

- Grace is an eternal fact in the inner relations of the Trinity.
- It existed in the form of sacrificial love before the foundation of the world.
- It extended order and beauty to the process and product of creation.
- It devised the plan for the restoration of sinful man.

- It is manifested specifically through revealed religion as the content of Christian theology.
- It will find its consummation in the regeneration of all things, of which our Lord testified.

Christian Theology, 2:345.

Wiley wisely ties the definition of grace to the character of God: "The absolute holiness of the Creator determines the nature of divine grace. Its laws ever operate under this standard."

Prevenient Grace: The Grace that Goes Before

Wesleyan theology sees the world as a graced world. Grace, which is often described as the unmerited and undeserved favor of God, is a constant of both creation and redemption. In other words, the very creation is a rich and enduring testimony to the love of God, and the possibility of knowing God through Jesus Christ is further witness to the reality of grace. The Incarnate One, Jesus Christ, is declared to be "full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14).

Refer to Resource 5-8 in the Student Guide.

Prevenient grace, the grace that goes before, has held a prominent place in the structure and enactment of Wesleyan theology. Wiley offers the following foundational definition of prevenient grace, calling it the grace that

prepares the soul for entrance into the initial state of salvation. It is the preparatory grace of the Holy Spirit exercised toward man helpless in sin. As it respects the guilty, it may be considered mercy; as it respects the impotent, it is enabling power. It may be defined, therefore, as that manifestation of the divine influence which precedes the full regenerate life.

Ibid., 2:345-46.

Grider asserts:

It is proper to say that the Arminian-Wesleyan tradition teaches human freedom in the context of prevenient grace. We can either accept Christ or reject Him—and our eternal destiny depends upon our free response to God's offer of salvation.

Wesleyan-Holiness Theology, 245.

Albert C. Outler helps us to understand the basic outline of Wesley's theology, and how in some ways all of what Wesley intended hinged on the prevenience of God's grace:

Wesley brought to this complex heritage [of what he had inherited from the Christian past] two new elements: the first, a distinctive stress on the primacy of Scripture (not merely as “standing revelation” but as a “speaking book”); and, second, as [sic] insistence upon the personal assurance of God’s justifying, pardoning grace (which is what he always meant by such terms as “experience”, “experimental”, “heart religion”). The constant goal of Christian living, in his view, is sanctification (“Christian perfection” or “perfect love”); its organizing principle is always the order of salvation; the divine agency in it all is the Holy Spirit. Thus it was that Wesley understood prevenience as the distinctive work of the Holy Spirit and as the primal force in all authentic spirituality.

The Works of John Wesley, Vol. 1, Sermons 1: 1-33, ed. Albert C. Outler (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 57.

In somewhat more direct language Outler articulates Wesley’s driving theological principle and ties it in with the Wesleyan quadrilateral:

Theology is the interpretation of spiritual and moral insights sparked by the prevenient action of the Holy Spirit, deposited in Holy Scripture, interpreted by the Christian tradition, reviewed by reason, and appropriated by personal experience.

Ibid., 60-61.

H. Ray Dunning offers the helpful reminder that a true grasp of prevenient grace is a tremendous aid to our theology of revelation. This accords well with our conviction that we live in a graced world. God has sown grace preveniently in all that He has made:

This is my Father’s world,
And to my list’ning ears
All nature sings, and round me rings
The music of the spheres.
This is my Father’s world.
I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas
His hand the wonders wrought.

This is my Father’s world.
The birds their carols raise.
The morning light, the lily white
Declare their Maker’s praise.
This is my Father’s world.
He shines in all that’s fair.
In the rustling grass I hear Him pass;
He speaks to me ev’rywhere.

This is my Father’s world.
Oh, let me ne’er forget

Maltbie D. Babcock, "This Is My Father's World," Sing to the Lord, 75.

That though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the Ruler yet.
This is my Father's world.
The battle is not done;
Jesus, who died, shall be satisfied,
And earth and heav'n be one.

Grace, Faith, and Holiness, 338.

The seeds of hope and promise God plants in His creation lead to the fulfillment of creation in Jesus Christ. Sin is a massive contradiction of God's hopes for us and the universe. Prevenient grace is perhaps the door into the kingdom of salvation. Dunning agrees with this in saying that the many understandings of prevenient grace "are all subservient to the soteriological function of this grace. It is here that one of the major distinctives of the Wesleyan perspective comes to light."

Wiley, Grider, and Dunning likely would not go as far as the younger Nazarene theologian, Michael Lodahl, who shows some of the directions in which the theology of prevenient grace can be developed. At its widest possible reach, Lodahl suggests, prevenient grace is a simple and compelling assurance of God's presence in all humans, whether Christian or not. For missionaries, this means God's Spirit has preceded them, arriving long before the boat docks or the airliner touches down.

The Story of God, 44-45.

This "grace that comes (or goes) before us" simply means that God is lovingly and graciously present and active in every human life, from fervent Christian to adamant atheist to mindful Buddhist. This is the Holy Spirit, God's own presence, that "light" of which John's Gospel speaks, "a light that enlightens every person" (1:9). It is this light, this gracious presence of God in human life, taught Wesley, that encounters us, calls us, and woos us from sin and self-centeredness back toward God. Prevenient grace is God never giving up on anyone. It is this gracious presence of God in human life and societies that makes and keeps us human and humane. The doctrine of prevenient grace affirms that no living human being is without at least some light, some glimmering, flickering awareness of the Holy.

Is prevenient grace really the equivalent of the Holy Spirit, as Lodahl teaches? We must exercise caution here. The Holy Spirit does blow as wide and as high as all creation, which might be called the Spirit's preliminary activity. We should not negate the importance of the Spirit's roaming. He meets people

where they are, whether religious, irreligious, or atheist, and encourages them toward the truth of Jesus Christ. This preliminary work of the Spirit shades over into His final and most important task, to witness to Jesus Christ. After all, "no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3).

Allow for student response.

What we have called prevenient grace was typically called "preventing grace" by John Wesley. Remembering that prevenient grace is the grace that goes before, is there any difference of meaning to call it preventing grace?

For example: a spy, a scout, a doorkeeper announcing the president of the USA to the Congress, kindergarten coming before first grade, John the Baptist coming before Jesus Christ, the Old Testament before the New Testament, a younger child before an older child, etc.

Think of things, persons, or situations that go or come before. Does attention to these increase or clarify our own understanding of prevenient grace?

Prevenient Grace and Common Grace

All Christians may agree on a basic definition of grace as God's undeserved favor given to sinners, but each Christian tradition may develop a theology of grace in its own distinctive way.

Calvinists, for example, affirm what is customarily called common grace. At some level, common grace displays marked resemblances with prevenient grace. When Michael Lodahl described prevenient grace as "this gracious presence of God in human life and societies that makes and keeps us human and humane" he very well could have been describing common grace.

Refer to Resource 5-9 in the Student Guide.

At what point, then, do common grace and prevenient grace diverge and part company? Prevenient grace extends to all of humanity God's gracious offer of fellowship. To poeticize a little, it may be like glowing coals implanted within us by the Holy Spirit. For Wesleyans, "whosoever will may come," meaning everyone potentially can blow these coals into flames, or, better, invite the Holy Spirit to come and blow. Prevenient grace directly points to the universality of atonement that is a hallmark of Wesleyan commitment.

Common grace, by contrast, may or may not lead to electing grace, because only God is truly the Electing God, and human alliance or cooperation with God is not often highly valued in Calvinism. Jaroslav Pelikan compactly explains that in the theology of Martin

The Melody of Theology, 108-9.

Luther (1483-1546) and especially of John Calvin (1509-64), "the emphasis on the free and sovereign grace of God led to a thoroughgoing doctrine of predestination. For if grace was not based in any way on the prior merit of the recipient, there was no alternative but to affirm that divine election alone decided who was to receive it."

We cannot here rehearse the entire convoluted debate between Calvinists and Wesleyan-Arminians on the subject of predestination. Nazarenes have often been unsympathetic and ungracious toward Calvinists at this point. John Wesley could not possibly understand how a God who saved (and in some sense damned) a human being *without any hint* of human cooperation could somehow be a more lovely, truthful, and biblical God than One who did encourage and invite human cooperation. Overwhelmingly, Nazarenes have here followed Wesley's lead.

For the Wesleyan, prevenient grace plus human cooperation equals a beginning toward salvation and an eventual full restoration of God's image in humanity. For the Calvinist, common grace will yield to electing grace in those whom God chooses to elect.

The Wesleyan sees the glass as half-full and getting fuller. The Calvinist may not think in these terms at all. The glass *and* its contents—whether half-full or half-empty—belongs to the Lord God.

Grace Is a Christian Identifier

It is commonly observed that of all the religions of the world, Christianity is the one with the deepest and most consistent theology of grace. Some forms of Buddhism are said to be tinged with grace, but there is no comparable theology of the Incarnation, where grace comes to humankind in the person of God's anointed, the only-begotten Son.

Among Christians, there are different intuitions and understandings of grace. Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox, for example, locate grace largely in the seven sacraments observed by these two communions. Pentecostals may see grace visible and evident in the ecstatic manifestations given by the Holy Spirit. Christians may differ in what they would include under the heading of the means of grace, but all Christians believe and practice *some* means. Even Quakers, who do not practice the Lord's Supper, commune in their worship times with the Holy Spirit, which then becomes for them a means of grace like unto the Lord's Supper.

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Call on 2-3 students to give one significant thing they learned from this lesson.

Look Ahead

The next lesson will be our final treatment under the general heading of "The Work of Jesus Christ." There are three particular topics we will consider:

- the *ordo salutis*, or the order of salvation
- a focus on the doctrine of justification
- the importance of resurrection

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Go to a public place such as a public library, a public park, or a shopping mall. Interview 8 to 10 people about their understandings of grace.

- The intent of this assignment is to see what people think of grace. The interviewer should formulate four to six questions that have some flexibility and "life" built into them.
- Try to spend five or six minutes with each person you interview. People will generally cooperate if approached in a polite manner. Allow the sensitivity of the Holy Spirit to guide these interviews.
- At the conclusion of the interviews, compile the results in a paper of three to four pages. Compare and contrast the public views of grace with the Christian views regarding grace.

Read Resource 5-10, "To Grow in Grace."

Write in your journal.

- Prayerfully consider the four couplets in the following verse from "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing."
- Select the couplet that has the most impact on you today. Rewrite it in your own words.

O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace, now like a fetter,
Bind my yielded heart to Thee.
Let me know Thee in Thy fullness;

Guide me by Thy mighty hand
Till, transformed, in Thine own image,
In Thy presence I shall stand.

Robert Robinson

Punctuate the Finish

Grace is a gift, and too often we do not want to receive God's grace as the gift it is intended to be. Søren Kierkegaard spoke of what he called "the reward disease" of our continually trying to assess how acceptable we are in the eyes of God, how much progress we are making toward winning God's favor through our own inherent righteousness and goodness.

In a sermon on grace, Paul Tillich preached that the life of grace means "accepting our acceptance," even though we are not acceptable. That is the paradox of grace, that God accepts us in spite of our unacceptability.

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Lesson 6

The Way of Life

Lesson Overview

Schedule

| Start Time | Task or Topic | Learning Activity | Materials Needed |
|------------|---|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| 0:00 | Introduction | Orient | Student Guide Resource 6-1 |
| 0:10 | The Ordo Salutis and the Via Salutis | Lecture | Resources 6-2—6-6 |
| 0:40 | Wesley and Calvin on the Order of Salvation | Lecture | Resource 6-7 Resource 6-8 |
| 1:05 | Preparing to Teach | Small Groups | Resource 6-9 |
| 1:20 | Lesson Close | Review, Assign | Student Guide |

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Dunning, H. Ray. *Grace, Faith, and Holiness*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988, ch. 12.

_____. "A New Look at Justification." *The Preacher's Magazine* (Sept/Oct/Nov 1993): 4-7. This is a compact and convincing statement of the relational view of justification favored by Dunning.

Grider, J. Kenneth. *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994, chs. 12 and 13.

Lodahl, Michael. *The Story of God: Wesleyan Theology and Biblical Narrative*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994, ch. 19.

Thomas C. Oden. *Systematic Theology*. Vol. 2, *The Word of Life*: San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989, part IV.

_____. *Systematic Theology*. Vol. 3, *Life in the Spirit*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992, part II.

Pelikan, Jaroslav. "Atonement" and "Grace." In *The Melody of Theology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Rob L. Staples. "Atonement," "Resurrection," "Grace," "Conversion," "Justification," "Regeneration," "Adoption." In *Words of Faith: An Easy Reference to Theological Terms*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2001.

Wynkoop, Mildred Bangs. *Foundations of Wesleyan-Arminian Theology*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1967, especially chs. 1-3.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Call on 2-3 students to read their papers on grace.

Return and collect all homework.

Orientation

In this lesson we will study the order of salvation, paying particular attention to the Wesleyan understanding of the *ordo salutis* and the *via salutis*.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should

- be familiar with the terminology of *ordo salutis* and understand several representative orders of salvation
- contrast the Wesleyan order of salvation with the Calvinist

Motivator

Refer to Resource 6-1 in the Student Guide.

Among evangelical Christians, the so-called Romans Road to Salvation has often functioned as an informal *ordo salutis*. Here is the Romans Road in five steps:

1. Understanding of our dire need of forgiveness: *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God* (3:23).
2. Although surrounded by death, in Jesus Christ there is the Way to true life: *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us* (5:8).
3. Repentance of sin leads to eternal life: *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord* (6:23).
4. Confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and believing in your heart that God raised His Son from the dead leads to your salvation: *That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with the heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved* (10:9-10).
5. Simply by calling upon the name of Jesus Christ, you will be saved! There are no other religious

rituals to satisfy: *Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (10: 13).*

Have you found these verses to be helpful in encouraging someone to exercise living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?

Lesson Body

Lecture: The *Ordo Salutis* and the *Via Salutis*

(30 minutes)

Following After: A Search for Christian Consensus

After Jesus Christ healed Bartimaeus of his blindness, he followed Christ along the road or the way (Mk 10:52). The simple act of hastening after Jesus Christ set the first believers apart from those captivated by other religious figures, heroes, and options, such that the first Christians came to be known as the followers of the Way. For them, the figure of Christ separated the light from the dark and the compulsory from the optional. For this man was himself “the way and the truth and the life” (Jn 14:6), and “the author and perfecter” of faith (Heb 12:2).

Refer to Resource 6-2 in the Student Guide.

To set forth unified stages of the soul’s progress is commonly called the *ordo salutis*—Latin for “the order of salvation”—and less frequently the *via salutis*—“the way of salvation.”

The wealth of scriptural descriptions naming the steps of progress one is enabled to make from the sinful life to the sanctified life, and even to the glorified life, suggests that no one word or phrase can hope to encompass the totality. One may give a single designator such as trip, journey, or vacation to a two-week span of time that coheres in memory as more or less a single event, and yet not neglect the rich detail vacation photographs or souvenirs will evoke. A graduation or a parade is a single constellation, a single universe so to speak, yet comprised of diverse sequences, events, and accomplishments.

The drama of salvation, of following the Crucified One as the way and the truth and the life, is dimly like the vacation, graduation, or parade, in the sense of many complementary thrusts cohering into one whole. Every human being has only one life to live, one soul to offer for redemption, and yet any single person’s story of being reclaimed by the grace of God must necessarily be unique and unrepeatable in its own right. Multiple gifts of grace equal the one desired goal of increased conformity to the Resurrected One.

Toward the beginning of one of his renowned sermons, "The Scripture Way of Salvation," John Wesley describes what may fairly—indeed what *must be*—investigated under the general topic of salvation:

From Section 1: 1.

So that the salvation which is here spoken of might be extended to the entire work of God, from the first dawning of grace in the soul, till it is consummated in glory.

While "the entire work of God" remains entire and whole as God sees it, since He experiences space, time, and history as a unified whole, it may aid the one coming to God to be able to describe the journey as stages of progress. Wesley has in mind this continuum of returning to God in naming the beginning—"the first dawning of grace in the soul"—and the ending—"till it is consummated in glory."

Refer to Resource 6-3 in the Student Guide.

Systematic Theology. Vol. 3, Life in the Spirit (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992.) 79.

Here are two representative "orders of salvation" as provided by Thomas C. Oden. First, here is the primitive and apostolic order:

- Repent
- Be baptized
- For the remission of sins
- Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit

Then, more elaborately, pointing especially to the many gifts and promptings of the Holy Spirit to effect our redemption:

- Sin is restrained by the Spirit, allowing time for repentance.
- A sinner is convicted of sin by the Spirit
- Repentance. Here the Holy Spirit leads the penitent soul to remorse for sin, to reform behavior, to repair damage done to others, along with revulsion against sin, and confession of sin.
- Faith, an enablement by the Holy Spirit to put trust in Jesus Christ the Savior.
- Regeneration, by which the Spirit quickens life spiritually so as to begin a new life born of God, born by adoption into the family of God.
- Holy Spirit indwells and takes up residence in the heart.
- Baptism with the Holy Spirit, "by which the new person becomes dead to the old way and alive to the new."
- "The sealing of the Holy Spirit, by which the Spirit confirms the living Word in the heart."
- Assurance, the confirmation of the believer being in reality the son or daughter of God.
- The filling of the believer with the Holy Spirit.
- Sanctification, "by which the Spirit works to bring

Ibid., 83.

the regenerate spirit into full participation in the life of God through union with Christ."

Refer to Resource 6-4 in the Student Guide.

The Church Father Basil summarizes how the ministry of the Holy Spirit guides all of our steps:

Through the Holy Spirit comes our restoration to paradise, our ascension into the kingdom of heaven, our return to the adoption of sons, our liberty to call God our Father, our being made partakers of the grace of Christ, our being called children of light, our sharing in eternal glory, and, in a word, our being brought into a state of all "fullness of blessing."

Quoted by Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, 83-84.

Oden intends by his discussion to arrive at an order of salvation more or less agreed upon by all. The drive to find that which unites Christians is for him a nobler theological quest than to "major" in "minor" differences.

Focus on John Wesley

Refer to Resource 6-5 in the Student Guide.

Noted Wesley scholar Albert C. Outler describes the order of salvation as typically presented by John Wesley. Try to correlate Outler's discussion of Wesley with Oden's extended list. Outler sees Wesley's *ordo salutis* as "an organic continuum":

- conscience (which Wesley sometimes described as "preventing grace," what we would call "prevenient grace")
- conviction of sin
- repentance
- reconciliation
- regeneration (Nazarene theologians typically link regeneration or the new birth with justification and adoption as happening at the same instant in conversion.)
- sanctification
- glorification

Outler summarizes by writing that "all of these are progressive stages in the divine design to restore the image of God in human selves and society."

Outler's summary statement is quite dense and even technical, but worth quoting in full:

Wesley's theology was elliptical in its form. Its double foci were the doctrines of justification and sanctification in a special correlation—two aspects of a single gracious intention, but separated along a continuum of both time and experience. The

problem in justification was how Christ's sufficient merits may be imputed to the penitent believer as the righteous ground for God's unmerited mercy (i.e., the formal cause of justification). And it was on this point of formal cause that Wesley parted from the Calvinists. They had stressed the Father's elective will, the prime link in "a golden chain" of logic which led them link by link to the famous "Five Points" of High Calvinism. Wesley tilted the balance the other way because of his sense of the importance of the Holy Spirit's prevenient initiative in all the "moments" of the *ordo salutis*. He could thus make room for human participation in reaction to the Spirit's activity and for human resistance as well—yet always in a very different sense from any Pelagian, or even "Semi-Pelagian", doctrine of human initiative.

Works, 1:80-81.

At this time we need to explain the meaning of Pelagian and semi-Pelagian, which arose out of the Early Church controversy between Augustine and Pelagius.

Here is how Jaroslav Pelikan describes the controversy:

Augustine's prayer in the *Confessions* asking God to "give what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt" seemed to his contemporary, the Irish monk Pelagius, to be treating individual moral responsibility with inadequate seriousness: every person faced the moral choices faced by Adam and Eve and was to be held accountable for the outcome of those choices. What Augustine interpreted as the Pelagian argument forced him to formulate his doctrine of original sin as the unavoidable consequence of the fall of Adam and Eve passed on to all their natural descendants, together with his doctrine of sovereign grace as the unearned gift of God to those who were the objects of divine election.

The Melody of Theology, 15-16.

The Church of the Nazarene has often been accused by detractors of being overtly Pelagian, or at least semi-Pelagian. Outler suggests that if our theology is solidly grounded in the wisdom of John Wesley, we will not err on the side of semi-Pelagianism, which is the doctrine that we can save ourselves through our own choosing of God's redemption, apart from grace. If we say, with Wesley and with the Apostle Paul, that salvation is *through grace by faith*, we will avoid both Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism. Both of these erroneous doctrines might be called "moral boosterism," or someone saving himself or herself by dint of sincerity

Mildred Bangs Wynkoop,
Foundations of Wesleyan-Arminian
Theology (Kansas City: Beacon Hill
Press of Kansas City, 1967), 24-34.

and moral effort. But the gospel of Jesus Christ contradicts every attempt at self-salvation.

Nazarene Articles of Faith

Refer to Resource 6-6 in the Student Guide.

VIII. Repentance

We believe that repentance, which is a sincere and thorough change of the mind in regard to sin, involving a sense of personal guilt and a voluntary turning away from sin, is demanded of all who have by act or purpose become sinners against God. The Spirit of God gives to all who will repent the gracious help of penitence of heart and hope of mercy, that may believe unto pardon and spiritual life.

IX. Justification, Regeneration, and Adoption

We believe that justification is the gracious and judicial act of God by which He grants full pardon of all guilt and complete release from the penalty of sins committed, and acceptance as righteous, to all who believe on Jesus Christ and receive Him as Lord and Savior.

We believe that regeneration, or the new birth, is that gracious work of God whereby the moral nature of the repentant believer is spiritually quickened and given a distinctively spiritual life, capable of faith, love, and obedience.

We believe that adoption is that gracious act of God by which the justified and regenerated believer is constituted a son of God.

We believe that justification, regeneration, and adoption are simultaneous in the experience of seekers after God and are obtained upon the condition of faith, preceded by repentance; and that to this work and state of grace the Holy Spirit bears witness.

Lecture: Wesley and Calvin on the Order of Salvation

(25 minutes)

Two Orders That Do Not Harmonize

Although it is good to be sympathetic toward those who do not agree with the theological positions of the Church of the Nazarene, at times agreement is not possible. H. Orton Wiley made clear that at some points it is really impossible to harmonize totally the Wesleyan and the Calvinistic orders of salvation.

Refer to Resource 6-7 in the Student Guide.

Christian Theology, 2:416.

According to Wiley, Calvinism holds

that regeneration is the first step in the *ordo salutis*, or order of salvation; that this is effected unconditionally by the Holy Spirit apart from any preparatory steps; and that the mind of man is, therefore, perfectly passive in its reception.

The Calvinist order of salvation thus becomes:

- Regeneration
- Faith
- Repentance
- Conversion

Wesleyan theology rightly notes several objections to this version of the *ordo salutis*.

- It negates the reality of prevenient grace. Wiley cites John 1:12; Galatians 3:26; Acts 3:19 as demonstrating the biblical stance in support of prevenient grace.
- Calvinism argues that God must first purge and purify any vessel before it is fit for divine cleansing and indwelling. Hence regeneration must come first, even before repentance. To place regeneration *before* repentance is wrongheaded in Wiley's opinion:

Thus we have according to this system [of Calvinism], a regenerated person who has not yet repented, who has not been pardoned, and hence is still a sinner. The mere statement of this position is its own refutation.

Ibid., 2:417.

Wesleyanism believes regeneration happens at the same time as justification by grace through faith and adoption into the family of God.

- While Wesleyanism agrees with Calvinism that regeneration comes solely from the Holy Spirit, human agency cannot be set aside as decisively as Calvinism does. Wiley writes, "we are commanded to seek, to ask, to repent, to open the heart, and to receive Christ." An unhealthy and indeed unbiblical passivity marks Calvinism.
- The extreme passivity engendered by Calvinism may lead to either "carelessness or despair" or antinomianism, which is lawlessness.

Ibid., 2:418.

Ibid.

Wesleyan Contrast

One can easily discern the outline of the Wesleyan order of salvation by paying attention to Wiley's criticisms of Calvinism. Regeneration is the particular concern of Wiley, because it is at this point that one can detect the greatest divergence between Wesleyanism and Calvinism. We will summarize Wiley's six points:

Refer to Resource 6-8 in the Student Guide.

1. Foundationally, regeneration is a moral change accomplished in human hearts through the agency of the Holy Spirit. Regeneration is a "spiritual renewal" that touches every facet and component of those enlivened by the Holy Spirit. Regeneration is not the destruction of any God-given human capacity, but is rather the infusion of new spiritual life.
2. Regeneration is closely linked to the new birth, a birth not effected by human instrumentality but through the Spirit of God. Wiley believes whatever means may be used to bring the soul to Christ, the work itself is wrought solely by the direct, personal agency of the Spirit. Prevenient grace acts upon the waiting believer to invite the Spirit to accomplish His work, but regenerating grace is wholly the Spirit's.
3. Calvinists assign to regeneration what Wesleyans attribute to prevenient grace. Because of this, the entire sequence of the *ordo salutis* is thrown off. Wesleyans believe regeneration happens *simultaneously* with justification and adoption. Wesleyans view regeneration "as that work of the Spirit by which grace preveniently bestowed issues in a new spiritual life for the individual soul."
4. Although happening at the same time as justification and adoption, regeneration is yet distinct from them. Wiley's summary statement is worth reflecting upon, defining as it does justification and adoption in distinction from regeneration:

Ibid., 2:421.

While concomitant with justification and adoption, [regeneration] is nevertheless distinct from them. Justification is a work which God does for us in the forgiveness of our sins and in the changing of the relation which we bear to Him; regeneration is the renewal of our fallen nature through the bestowment of life on the ground of this new relationship; while adoption

Ibid., 2:421-22.

is the restoration of the privileges of sonship by virtue of the new birth. The necessity for justification is found in the fact of guilt; that of regeneration in the fact of depravity; that of adoption in the loss of privilege. Arminianism holds that all three, while distinct in nature and perfect in their kind, are nevertheless bestowed by the same act of faith and consequently concomitant in personal experience.

5. The truth and light into which the regenerated soul is brought are not to be separated from the Holy Spirit, but are in fact the Spirit's work. See Jas 1:18; Acts 16:14; Eph 6:17; 1 Pet 1:23.
6. Following Wesley, Wiley names regeneration as "the gateway to sanctification," and makes the familiar distinction between initial sanctification, to which regeneration belongs, and entire sanctification. To contrast initial sanctification with entire sanctification may leave the impression that initial sanctification is of little or no consequence in comparison with entire sanctification, a mere appetizer leading to the main course. But Wiley believes regeneration "is not a remaking of the old life, but an impartation of new life. Regeneration, therefore, 'breaks the power of cancelled sin and sets the prisoner free,' but it does not destroy the inbeing of original sin."

Ibid., 2:424.

Regeneration deals with the consequences of sinful acts, offering cleansing from acquired depravity, depravity which accrues and builds up through our sinful acts in the world. Inherited depravity, a legacy of the fallenness of the human race springing from Adam and Eve, demonstrates that sin is also a condition or state of the heart. This depravity is purged through entire sanctification.

Ibid., 2:418-24.

Return to the Articles of Faith and take another look at the order of salvation.

Small Groups: Preparing to Teach

(15 minutes)

Refer to Resource 6-9 in the Student Guide.

Working in groups of three respond to the following teaching task.

Suppose you are going to teach a class of young adults at your church next Sunday. The class period is 45 minutes in length. The Topic: "The Way of Salvation."

Consider all the resources and information you have from this lesson.

Be prepared to share your "lesson plans" with the whole group.

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Call on two groups to share their lesson plans.

Look Ahead

Next lesson we will continue the discussion of the *via salutis*. Our focus will be justification by grace through faith.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Read the story of the rich young ruler, Matthew 19:16-30, who came to Jesus asking, "What must I do to have eternal life?" After considering the story and what you have learned about the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Atonement, and the order of salvation, compose a letter of not more than 600 words to the man who asked Jesus the question.

Write in your journal. In an earlier lesson we saw the sixth Nazarene Article of Faith made into a litany for public worship. Look again at Articles of Faith 7, 8, and 9 and write a worship litany based on one or more of the articles.

Punctuate the Finish

The Chinese say a journey of 1,000 miles begins with a single step. That single step may be somewhat predictable, but what happens subsequently on the journey will be anything but routine and ordinary. Likewise, for some the *ordo* as order may be a little too prepackaged and tidy.

Spiritual progress that is realistically charted and evaluated will seldom be from "victory unto victory" but more likely "two steps ahead, one step back."

People for whom "the order of salvation" seems too regimented and stifling may prefer the implied spontaneity of the *via salutis*, the way of salvation.

Previously we remarked that early followers after Jesus Christ were said to be following "the Way." *Via* as a descriptor of Christian spirituality has a long history,

for example the *via dolorosa*, or Christ's road to Golgotha. Then, too, Wesleyan theology is sometimes described as a *via media*, or middle way, between, for example, an unyielding fundamentalism and an overindulgent liberalism.

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Lesson 7

Justification, Adoption, and Resurrection

Lesson Overview

Schedule

| Start Time | Task or Topic | Learning Activity | Materials Needed |
|------------|--|--------------------|--|
| 0:00 | Introduction | Orient | Student Guide Resource 7-1 |
| 0:10 | Focus on Justification | Lecture/Discussion | Resource 7-2—7-5 |
| 0:45 | Resurrection—A Lens That Refines, Clarifies, and Heals | Lecture/Discussion | Resource 7-6 Resource 7-7 Resource 7-8 |
| 1:20 | Lesson Close | Review, Assign | Student Guide Hymnals |

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Dunning, H. Ray. *Grace, Faith, and Holiness*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988, ch. 12.

_____. "A New Look at Justification." *The Preacher's Magazine* (Sept/Oct/Nov 1993): 4-7. This is a compact and convincing statement of the relational view of justification favored by Dunning.

Grider, J. Kenneth. *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994, chs. 12 and 13.

Lodahl, Michael. *The Story of God: Wesleyan Theology and Biblical Narrative*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994, ch. 19.

Oden, Thomas C. *Systematic Theology*. Vol. 2, *The Word of Life*: San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989, part IV.

_____. *Systematic Theology*. Vol. 3, *Life in the Spirit*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992, part II.

Pelikan, Jaroslav. "Atonement" and "Grace." In *The Melody of Theology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Staples, Rob L. "Atonement," "Resurrection," "Grace," "Conversion," "Justification," "Regeneration," "Adoption." In *Words of Faith: An Easy Reference to Theological Terms*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2001.

Wynkoop, Mildred Bangs. *Foundations of Wesleyan-Arminian Theology*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1967, especially chs. 1-3.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

In pairs have the students share their letters to the rich young ruler.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

In this lesson we will discuss the importance of the doctrine of justification by grace through faith, also noting how Protestants differ from traditional Roman Catholic views on the subject. We will pause to examine a relational view of justification, as advocated by H. Ray Dunning.

We will close with a brief study of the centrality of the Christian doctrine of resurrection.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should

- comprehend the importance of the doctrine of justification, including some contrasts between Protestant and traditional Roman Catholic views
- understand the centrality of the doctrine of resurrection

Motivator

Refer to Resource 7-1 in the Student Guide.

For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet now God in his gracious kindness declares us not guilty. He has done this through Christ Jesus, who has freed us by taking away our sins.

Romans 3:23-24 (NLT)

Abraham was, humanly speaking, the founder of our Jewish nation. What were his experiences concerning this question of being saved by faith? Was it because of his good deeds that God accepted him? If so, he would have had something to boast about. But from God's point of view Abraham had no basis at all for pride. For the Scriptures tell us, "Abraham believed God, so God declared him to be righteous." When people work, their wages are not a gift. Workers earn

what they receive. But people are declared righteous because of their faith, not because of their work.

Romans 4: 1-5 (NLT)

Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.

Romans 5: 1 (NLT)

Lesson Body

Lecture/Discussion: Focus on Justification

(35 minutes)

Defining Justification

Justification is a central and centering link in any accounting of Christian salvation. It was developed powerfully by Paul in his letters to the Romans and the Galatians, and reemerged decisively through the Protestant Reformation. Passing mention has already been made of its simultaneous occurrence with both adoption and regeneration—the new birth.

Refer to Resource 7-2 in the Student Guide.

Rob Staples draws a neat and memorable contrast between justification as the objective side of our relationship with God through Christ, and regeneration as the subjective. Justification is what Jesus Christ does *for* us and regeneration is what the Holy Spirit works *within* us.

From Words of Faith, 59-62.

Staples notes that Paul develops this idea in Romans (3:23-24; 4:1-5; 5:1), further advising that justification comes from the realm of law and means "acquittal." "That we are justified," Staples writes, "means that our guilt has been removed and our broken relationship with God has been restored by God's act of free grace and forgiveness."

Ephesians 2:8-9 has been called a great Protestant text. It is at least that, and should be called a great text *period*. To believe "it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" is to affirm that faith—or at least the potential to exercise faith—is itself a divine bestowment. Simply to affirm "justification by faith" may leave the impression that faith is *only* a human accomplishment, but adding "by grace" qualifies our faith as being an interplay between divine prompting and human response.

The legal context of justification should not blind us to the religious and existential power of being declared righteous by a holy God. Jaroslav Pelikan captures some of this drama in writing that justification points to "the 'righteousness' by which the defendant, who stands before the judge and in total trust throws

From The Melody of Theology, 144.

himself on the mercy of the court, is pronounced innocent."

It takes little imagination to realize that many exonerated and hence justified—in the legal sense—defendants have no change of heart after being pronounced innocent by the court system. The declaration of righteousness is not necessarily at the same time the turning of the heart toward the good.

For a recent statement of this perspective, that is at times critical of the Wesleyan view, see David Peterson, Possessed by God: A New Testament Theology of Sanctification and Holiness (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

At this very point Wesleyans part decisively with Calvinists. As Kenneth Grider understands, the typical Calvinist affirms that *only* Jesus Christ is really righteous, and therefore all other righteousness is only imputed or derivative. For Calvinists, Romans 3: 10-12 means no mortal can ever be truly righteous.

From Grider, A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology, 362-63.

Wesleyans of course affirm not only the righteousness imputed to believers for the sake of Jesus Christ, but also the righteousness imparted to believers by the Holy Spirit, the soul engrafted onto the vine of God.

Protestant and Roman Catholic Views Compared

Refer to Resource 7-3 in the Student Guide.

A controversy of perhaps greater scope, complexity, and consequence than that between Calvinists and Wesleyans is that between Protestants and Roman Catholics regarding justification. This difference is admirably summarized by H. Ray Dunning. Great Catholic thinkers such as Augustine and Thomas Aquinas believed that through justification humanity is made ethically righteous through the gift or infusion of divine grace. Having made us righteous through His grace, God is then able to accept and even sanctify us. In fact, some would even say that it is precisely on the basis of having sanctified us that God is then able to justify us.

From Grace, Faith, and Holiness, 345.

What is the problem with this view, which in some ways sounds much like the Wesleyan view of "imparted" or actual righteousness? Dunning puts his finger on it when he writes that the Catholic view "fails to understand the meaning of 'the righteousness of God' in Romans, interpreting it as the ethical righteousness God requires and holding that we produce our own righteousness by good works."

Dunning rightly knows the traditional, Roman Catholic perspective put the cart before the horse, confusing the proper order of justification and sanctification. First God must sanctify, taught Catholics, so He can then

justify. Sanctification was demonstrated and proven by the production of good works, so that over time these works, which are necessarily supported by the penitential and sacramental system of the Catholic church, became themselves salvific. It is only a short journey from here to works righteousness.

Classic Protestant Reformers such as Luther and Calvin saw the danger in this, but overreacted, ending in the view of justification as *only* imputation, or in Luther's understanding "alien righteousness." In this case it is possible that justification remains altogether external, that nothing changes within the human heart as it is justified.

A Relational View of Justification

Dunning sees a relational view of justification as the way out of this Protestant-Roman Catholic impasse. He further argues that this relational perspective is fully in keeping with Wesleyan theological priorities. A relational view avoids the excesses of the Catholic teaching that God must somehow make someone ethically righteous before that person can be justified. It also overcomes the "legal fiction" or "alien righteousness" view of Luther and Calvin. This relational view, declares Dunning,

Refer to Resource 7-4 in the Student Guide.

does not involve a prior righteousness that in some way becomes the basis of the new relation [this is the Roman Catholic view], but it is a reality that is created in and with the forensic declaration of God that the man of faith is justified. Justification is God's proclamation that a person is righteous, and that proclamation makes it so. In this way the Catholic way of works righteousness is avoided on the one hand and the Reformation concept of a legal fiction on the other.

Ibid., 347.

Dunning's discussion is a beginning hint of the complexity of the theology of justification. Dunning asserts that viewing justification in a relational light means the "new relation constitutes a real righteousness that may be distinguished from sanctification as ethical transformation of character." This coincides with Wesley's famous declaration that justification constitutes a "relative change" whereas sanctification is a "real change." Both Wesley and Dunning think a relative or relational change yet stops somewhere short of "ethical transformation of character," which is accomplished through entire sanctification.

Ibid.

Refer to Resource 7-5 in the Student Guide.

What is the one unmistakable message of justification by grace through faith that everyone must hear?

Within Michael Lodahl's overarching statement, which also serves as an admirable summary of our brief discussion of this vital doctrine, we hear sounded the positive notes of grace, forgiveness, relationship, and justification:

This triumphant message of God's surprising grace is undoubtedly the distinctive note of the gospel. God's grace is surprising because so often in schools, the workplace, friendships, and, tragically, even within many families, our worth and standing are evaluated on the basis of performance. God's promise to us in the life, words, death, and resurrection of Jesus, however, is that we are loved and accepted by Him just as we are! If we accept that promise and rest in that grace, we like Abraham are "reckoned righteous." We are justified, or brought into proper relationship to God—a relationship that is grounded in the trustworthiness of the One who promises, but actualized in our believing in the promise. Our tendency, learned from society and family, is all too often to attempt to please God by being pleasing, to gain His favor by being good, to merit His mercy and love by becoming lovable. Our very attempts to become worthy of divine love and grace actually obstruct us from receiving what is already freely offered. The good news is that God loves us and offers us forgiveness now.

From The Story of God, 189.

Adoption

As sinners we have chosen to go our own selfish ways, thereby rupturing the bond God established with us through creation.

The reality of adoption is that God accepts us back into His family through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Adoption is an inclusion metaphor, signaling the end of hostilities.

It is closely related both to regeneration, the new birth, and to justification, the being declared righteous by God for the sake of Jesus Christ. In Nazarene theology, all three of these happen at once, and together they are often called initial sanctification.

Justification can be viewed as primarily objective, that is, something that happens TO us more than IN us. The related ideas of the new birth and adoption round out and complete the reality of salvation.

When someone is born again, made fresh and clean in the eyes of God, that person will naturally desire to be included once again within the family of God. Adoption is the name we give for belonging to God's family.

Discussion

Have each of the students spend one minute writing out a definition of justification.

At the end of the minute have the students work in pairs to arrive at a definition of justification.

Have each pair give their definition to the class.

Allow the students to question and discuss the key points of the definitions.

Lecture/Discussion: Resurrection—A Lens That Refines, Clarifies, and Heals

(35 minutes)

An Encompassing Christian Truth

My father and I often attended the Easter sunrise service sponsored by the Christian businessmen's group of Portland, Oregon. It was held for many years in the Memorial Coliseum, and attracted such internationally recognized speakers as Corrie Ten Boom. The climax, usually carried out while the worshipers sang "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today," was the lowering of the gray curtain encircling the interior of the coliseum, letting in the light of day.

Portland—among major U.S. cities the one with the most cloudy days—often did not cooperate with resplendent sunshine when the curtain dropped. As often as not, gray and drizzle greeted the worshipers instead of spring sunshine. Yet no one ever complained. As pleasing as lilies and sunlight may be on Easter morning, nothing that is only physical can prove the spiritual reality of resurrection, although the physical can and indeed does point beyond itself to spiritual meaning.

Pondering the meaning of the Resurrection obviously must include the physical evidence the Gospels take pains to report so faithfully. This evidence cannot simply be ignored or swept away. Consider the empty tomb, the rolled-away stone, the startled soldiers, the graveclothes, the appearing angels, the palpable scars

of the Resurrected Christ, and the numerous witnesses. Perhaps more than any other point of Christian witness, the Resurrection requires our careful synthesis of the physical and spiritual.

Theologically, the Resurrection is a centering event, called the “validating” event by Karl Barth. To one degree or another, thought Barth, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the answer to virtually every theological question. It unifies and corroborates such central Christian stances as the Virgin Birth, the two natures of Jesus Christ, His teaching ministry, the atonement He provided, His mediatorial office, and His coming again.

Refer to Resource 7-6 in the Student Guide.

Resurrection is perhaps the most encompassing and embracing of all Christian teachings. The resurrection of Jesus Christ—a Trinitarian event undertaken by God the Father, raising God the Son in the power of God the Holy Spirit—is a unique and yet also representative happening. It is unique because only Jesus Christ is the Resurrected Son of God, but also representative in that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is God’s promise that those who follow the way of the Cross will also be resurrected. We agree totally with the wise analysis of Rob Staples: “Resurrection is a trustworthy description of our future, because it has already happened in history. Christ’s resurrection is the central event of the New Testament, which gave birth to the Christian faith.”

From Words of Faith, 49.

The Hope for Cosmic Redemption

Staples correctly sees resurrection hope as holding forth the promise that each and every one who believes in Jesus Christ will be resurrected at the last day. Yet to say only that may be to say too little. Resurrection may also hold hope for the entire progress of the world. The conjunction of celebrating Easter amid the springtime renewal of the earth may bode well for the entire creation. Resurrection is not only an individual and personal affair, but importantly it is also a cosmic and universal affair.

The poet Henry van Dyke hinted at resurrection as cosmic redemption in his “hymn to joy”:

Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before Thee,
Opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
Drive the dark of doubt away.

Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day.

All Thy works with joy surround Thee;
Earth and heav'n reflect Thy rays.
Stars and angels sing around Thee,
Center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain
Call us to rejoice in Thee!

"Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee,"
Sing to the Lord, 17.

The world we meet in everyday life—grinding to work on the expressway, helping children with homework, doing home repairs on the weekend—may seem worlds apart from Henry van Dyke's ecstatic speech.

Allow for student response.

What changes might the Lord work in us where we could discern encircling joy in the works of God's hands?

Where could we ourselves witness and then join in the "center of unbroken praise"?

The vision of many evangelical Christians is too constricted. For example, an outside church sign trumpets the virtues of the school sponsored by the church. It says: "Changing the world . . . one child at a time." That is obviously a good and noble work, and yet we must also attend to the deeper currents of the universal Holy Spirit, who is working even now to change the whole world into the ever-increasing likeness of the Resurrected Christ.

Standing Firm on Resurrection Truth

Any casual survey of two dozen passersby on a city street will likely yield a wide variety of representative opinions regarding the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and by implication the hope for personal resurrection in the future. Opinions will range from contemptuous denial to sturdy affirmation. Kenneth Grider breaks down the likely choices into three major headings.

Denial of the Resurrection's Historicity

Here Grider lists such theological luminaries as the 19th-century figure Friedrich Schleiermacher and Rudolph Bultmann from the 20th century. In the case of Schleiermacher, his worldview, which was skeptical regarding the miraculous, could not accommodate a physical resurrection. Whatever theological, religious, and devotional worth the Resurrection imparted,

Refer to Resource 7-7 in the Student Guide.

Schleiermacher believed it could be impressed on the heart from within. Outward proof was not only impossible but also probably unnecessary. Schleiermacher may be said to have interiorized and even romanticized the Resurrection.

Something like that might also be said of Bultmann. He famously probed the relevance of the Resurrection for the "modern man," questioning openly whether such a happening, occurring during a prescientific age before modern tools of inquiry could be applied, was necessary for Christian faith. What counted for Bultmann was the changed lives of the disciples, whose witness ought to change lives in those who looked back at them from the vantage point of the 20th century.

Bultmann is right to emphasize the high calling of Christian commitment, but commitment to what? His existential passion and high idealism collapses without a deep acknowledgment of the power of God the Father raising Jesus Christ to life again through the Spirit. Bultmann's calls to faith may soon devolve into faith in faith, faith validating its own claims. That kind of faith cannot long sustain itself.

Resurrection Is Only a Spiritual Happening

Grider here discusses the neoorthodox figure Emil Brunner, who considered the Resurrection as only a spiritual event. Brunner suggested the evangelist Luke believed in a physical resurrection, depicting the resurrected Jesus eating fish. Paul, on the contrary, knows only of a spiritual resurrection, and Brunner sides with Paul over Luke.

Wesleyan-Holiness Theology, 338.

Brunner does not at all minimize the Resurrection for Christian faith, but he does transpose it into the higher key of the spiritual. Grider writes, "for Brunner, the resurrection is real, significant, and foundational to the Christian faith—but it did not happen on that plane of ordinary history."

Resurrection in Time and Space

Grider surveys some of the New Testament evidence that supports the traditional affirmation of a real and not only a spiritual resurrection:

- The apostolic witness esteeming the Resurrection as a fact to build one's life around, not a theory for endless speculation: "God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact" (Acts 2:32).

- Details of post-Resurrection appearances recorded in the Gospels, such as Jesus' eating food (Lk 24: 41-43). At the same time it must be stressed that resurrection "physicality" is unlike any other physicality. Although physically present to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, the Resurrected Christ yet disappeared from their sight during the breaking of the bread (Lk 24: 30-32).

Students will rightly and naturally gravitate toward the third view Grider discusses, because a real resurrection is the bedrock of Christian, and perhaps especially of evangelical Christian, faith.

List reasons for all to see as the students give responses.

Discussion:

What additional information, data, and reasons are there to support this classic view?

What signs may there be of the Resurrection faith in nature, culture, family life, world events, politics, and the arts?

The Resurrection in a Trinitarian Light

In what may be the most important part of his consideration of the Resurrection, Grider meditates on what he calls its passive voice. This means that in most instances, the Resurrection is something *that happens to* Jesus Christ more than something He in and of himself accomplishes through His own efforts. Grider advises, "the Bible declares that Jesus was raised, not that He rose."

Wesleyan-Holiness Theology, 347; Acts 2:24.

Grider obviously believes Jesus Christ is completely worthy of being brought to life again by His Father. No passive blob of clay is Jesus! But in remembering the relative passivity of Jesus Christ throughout the resurrection process, Grider helpfully brings the Trinitarian setting of the Resurrection to the fore, where it belongs:

Refer to Resource 7-8 in the Student Guide.

This New Testament teaching that God the Father raised Jesus from the dead is of considerable importance. For one thing, it indicates that God the Father, the eternally unoriginated Member of the Trinity, not eternally begotten as is the Son, nor eternally proceeding as is the Spirit, is the One who is "all and in all," purposing our redemption, structuring its means, and finally granting it.

The passive-voice Resurrection also means that there is a significant commonality between the Virgin Conception as the way Christ entered the world, and the Resurrection as the way in which He left it. In both cases Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity, was acted upon by another Person of the Trinity—in the case of the Virgin Conception, by the Holy Spirit; in the case of the Resurrection, by

God the Father. The three Persons of the Trinity work together in harmony to provide and grant our redemption.

The passive-voice Resurrection also means that if Christ himself was this dependent on the Father, surely we merely human creatures are utterly dependent on God the Father.

Wesleyan-Holiness Theology, 348-49.

Markers of the Way of Life

Along state and county highways, especially in the Midwest and the South, one can see makeshift roadside memorials where a loved one has met death through a traffic accident. A white cross and plastic flowers are the standard adornments of such memorials.

Such markers might be said to mark "the place of death," if not necessarily "the way of death," since little or nothing can be known about the circumstances of death or the character of those who died merely by looking at the memorial. Those who tragically died might indeed have been righteous saints.

What markers around you in contemporary society might be said to be markers of the "way of death"?

By contrast, since these last two lessons were about the way of life, what markers around you testify to the way of life, or the way of salvation?

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Call on one student to give a two-sentence statement about justification.

Call on another student to give a two-sentence statement about adoption.

Call on a third student to give a two-sentence statement about resurrection.

Look Ahead

The next two lessons will be about holiness or Christian perfection. These lessons are not meant to replace the module on this vital subject, but instead represent some theological thoughts on this significant doctrine.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Make appointments to speak with two local pastors, one United Methodist and one Lutheran. A Presbyterian pastor might serve as a suitable substitute for either of these. Also visit a Roman Catholic priest. Ask all three of these ministers about their respective understandings of the doctrine of justification by grace through faith.

- If possible, try to ask the same list of six or eight questions to each of the three pastors.
- Summarize what you have discovered in a four- or five-page essay.
- In discussing the Roman Catholic view of justification, care was given to say that the “traditional” view of justification was being discussed. In some Roman Catholic circles of today, the view taught is much closer to the Protestant (we would also say the biblical) view of the subject.

You have just finished several weeks of intense study on the person and work of Jesus Christ. Review your resources, notes, and papers. Write out four questions you would ask if you were preparing a unit examination for this class.

Write in your journal. If the Resurrection is not only a personal but also a cosmic event, there should be signs

of Christ's resurrection glory erupting all over, even in the secular world. Do you discern any such signs in unexpected places? Where and under what conditions?

Punctuate the Finish

If hymnals are available, close by leading the class in singing "Wonderful Grace of Jesus," Sing to the Lord, 36.

If hymnals are not available, read Romans 5:1-8, 11.

Lesson 8

Thinking Theologically about Christian Perfection

Lesson Overview

Schedule

| Start Time | Task or Topic | Learning Activity | Materials Needed |
|------------|---|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| 0:00 | Introduction | Orient | Student Guide Resource 8-1 |
| 0:10 | This Is Our Theological Address | Lecture | Resource 8-2 Resource 8-3 |
| 0:15 | Our Theological Address | Small Groups | Resource 8-4 |
| 0:30 | How Shall We Speak of Christian Holiness? | Lecture | Resource 8-5 |
| 0:35 | Holiness Terminology | Guided Discussion | |
| 0:50 | Christian Perfection: A Many-Splendored Reality | Lecture | Resource 8-6 |
| 1:00 | Christian Perfection—Contextualized | Small Groups | Resource 8-7 |
| 1:20 | Lesson Close | Review, Assign | Student Guide |

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Bassett, Paul M., ed. *Great Holiness Classics*. Vol. 1, *Holiness Teaching: New Testament Times to Wesley*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1997.

Dunning, H. Ray. *Grace, Faith, and Holiness*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988, ch. 15.

Greathouse, William M. *Wholeness in Christ: Toward a Biblical Theology of Holiness*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1998.

Grider, J. Kenneth. *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994, chs. 15-17.

Holiness Today. The denominational magazine of the Church of the Nazarene, published bi-monthly, prints many valuable articles examining different aspects of the truth of Christian holiness.

Lodahl, Michael. *The Story of God: Wesleyan Theology and Biblical Narrative*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994, ch. 24.

Peterson, David. *Possessed by God: A New Testament Theology of Sanctification and Holiness*. Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1995. Peterson takes many positions that are at variance with traditional holiness exegesis and theology, but should nonetheless be consulted. Studying alternative understandings can serve to make the claims of Christian holiness stronger.

Staples, Rob L. "Holiness," "Sanctification," "Perfection." In *Words of Faith: An Easy Reference to Theological Terms*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2001.

Wynkoop, Mildred Bangs. *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1972, chs. 14-16.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

In pairs have the students read each others' essays and respond to each others' questions from the homework.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

This is the first of two lessons that will develop theological reasoning about sanctification or Christian perfection. In this lesson we will consider the significance of entire sanctification as the "signature" Nazarene proclamation. Along with that some of the traditional names or nomenclature used in describing sanctification will be noted. The fact that the Nazarene teaching of sanctification derives from both John Wesley and the American holiness movement will also be mentioned. The related questions of the cultural relevance of sanctification and how to contextualize the doctrine will also be addressed.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should

- recognize and explain such terms and ideas as "evangelical catholicism," Christian perfection, entire sanctification, and contextualization of theology
- explain the central affirmations of faith in Article X of the Nazarene Articles of Faith
- have a deeper appreciation of the rich "holiness" heritage rooted in the Wesleyan tradition and the American Holiness Movement
- express how the content and heritage of the Nazarene doctrine of entire sanctification can inform the student's own present and future ministry

Motivator

Refer to Resource 8-1 in the Student Guide.

"Sanctification is the whole complex of redemption procedure structured by decisive steps under the

A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism (*Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1972*), 338.

guidance of the Holy Spirit and in His immediate presence.”

Mildred Bangs Wynkoop

Ibid., 345.

“True moral experience is not exhausted by or completed in the experience of the grace of justification. Sanctification is not simply a mathematical addition that is needed but the rounding out of what constitutes true spiritual life.”

Mildred Bangs Wynkoop

Allow for student response.

What would be a brief definition of “true spiritual life” as you understand the phrase?

Ibid., 158

“Sin is love locked into a false center, the self. The falseness is always multi-faceted, excentric, destructive. Sin is the distortion of love. . . . Holiness is love locked into the True Center, Jesus Christ our Lord. Being ‘true,’ all of the self—and progressively all of life—comes into harmony and wholeness and strength.”

Mildred Bangs Wynkoop

Lesson Body

Lecture: This Is Our Theological Address

(5 minutes)

For Bresee and every Nazarene theologian since, entire sanctification or Christian perfection has been one of the defining Christian essentials. Indeed, it has been *the* preeminent Christian essential for the Wesleyan way.

To review, let us remember that in Christian Theology 1, it was said there are really only three anchoring Christian doctrines upon which all confessional traditions agree. They are that God is triune, three persons in one nature; that Jesus Christ is fully divine and fully human; and that the only remedy to our undoubted sin problem is to be found in Jesus Christ.

We may summarize these three big themes as being God, Christ, salvation. Every theological tradition of interpretation will have something to say about these three themes. If we line up and examine representative theological statements from different denominations, we will find much more agreement than not regarding the three main themes, although obviously some points of distinction will loom very large indeed.

Refer to Resource 8-2 in the Student Guide.

In formulating his distinctive doctrine of Christian perfection, John Wesley drew from many streams within the wide wealth of Christian tradition. In some ways he was a theological man for all seasons. Wesley was a discriminating and informed reader and thinker. He had a taste for building consensus, yet knew when something essential could not be negotiated away. Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox writers all formed him. Interpreters today who look back at him find all of these emphases, and others as well. Others trace his lineage back to the classic Reformers Luther and Calvin.

Albert C. Outler, ed. John Wesley
(New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), viii.

Albert C. Outler believed Wesley exemplified what Outler called *evangelical catholicism*. It is hard to imagine a more fitting description. "Evangelical" we all know: the urgency of the gospel, the call to repentance, the assurance of the Holy Spirit's indwelling, a heart turned toward the Lord. "Catholic" we may not resonate with as deeply as with "evangelical." Yet all of us should strive to be "catholic

Christians,” meaning those Christians with a universal scope to their beliefs, practice, and proclamation. Expanse of vision, care with the truth, penetration of every secular realm—these are some of the marks of the catholic way.

It is my suggestion that Nazarene theology should see entire sanctification through the lens of evangelical catholicism. In doing so, Nazarenes would forfeit none of their evangelical past, formed as it is of Holy Spirit power. Bresee also urged the Church of the Nazarene to “Christianize Christianity,” which some will hear as arrogance. In Bresee’s heart he only desired that the full measure of gospel power might saturate all personal and social life. He was not necessarily trying to exalt a denominational structure, not even trying to hail a theological doctrine as an end in itself. He was rather imitating Jesus’ speech in John 12:32: “But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” To Christianize Christianity meant to lift up Jesus Christ, to witness to His shed blood, to believe in His redemption, to accept the Spirit’s sanctifying presence.

The “catholicism” part of the evangelical catholic equation will enable the truths of entire sanctification to be addressed to as wide an audience as possible, both within and without the Church, never retreating to the obscurities of arcane terminology or denominational safeguards.

Theologians and church leaders who are not Nazarene, who yet understand the Church of the Nazarene to be the chief proponent of biblical holiness, urge the Nazarene movement not to forsake its holiness identity. Famously, John Wesley believed God had raised up the people called Methodists for the express purpose of propagating what Wesley called “the grand depositum” of Christian perfection. Nazarenes dare not shrink from this legacy.

In hindsight, looking at Wesley, his sources, and back to the beginning of Christian history, the “grand depositum” is to be seen as fully in keeping with the best in Christian devotion that had preceded Wesley. At times holiness teaching and living fell into eclipse, but they were never extinguished.

Holiness Teaching: New Testament Times to Wesley by Paul M. Bassett is a wonderful piece of constructive theology demonstrating just how vital the holiness impulse was from the New Testament up until John Wesley. Nazarene theology has sometimes forgotten

this legacy, imaging that a kind of “dark ages” fell upon the doctrine of Christian perfection between its being stated in the New Testament and its being revived by Wesley in the 18th century. Bassett provides a valuable service by showing how false this belief is.

The fear that mainline Methodism had forsaken the “grand depositum” was one of the factors leading to the American Holiness Movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Much of the evangelical identity of the Church of the Nazarene derives from this holiness impulse. Whoever has been in a Nazarene testimony service knows that this revivalist link is still very much alive.

Michael Lodahl takes important note of the dual legacies of the Wesleys and American revivalism at the start of his discussion of “Scriptural Holiness”:

Refer to Resource 8-3 in the Student Guide.

John and Charles Wesley believed it was the divine calling of the Methodists to “spread scriptural holiness throughout the land” of England and beyond. So, too, Christians of the Wesleyan tradition—particularly those of the Holiness Movement, whose immediate historical roots are in 19th-century American revivalism—continue to view holiness, or the doctrine of entire sanctification, as deserving primary emphasis. They believe their function in the larger, more comprehensive Body of Christ is to bear witness, both by word and by life, to the explicit call toward “holiness of heart and life” in the Story of God.

The Story of God, 192.

Small Groups: Our Theological Address

(15 minutes)

Refer to Resource 8-4 in the Student Guide.

Divide the class into groups of three members each.

In your group discuss the following and be prepared to give a brief report of your group’s response.

1. How important is identity? Think of famous entertainers such as Bob Hope and Frank Sinatra, and others like them, whose entry was often announced by a theme song. For the US president it is “Hail to the Chief.”
2. Is the Nazarene laity reasonably well informed on the historic connection between holiness and the Nazarene movement? How can newer Nazarenes, who may know little or nothing about the history of the Church of the Nazarene, be brought to this awareness?

3. What responsibility does the local Nazarene pastor have to promote the holiness legacy?
4. How well does the typical pastor understand the holiness heritage?
5. Do you agree that “evangelical catholicism” might be a good way to describe the intent of Nazarene theology? Or is the association of “catholic” with Roman Catholic so deep as to render that word unusable in any other context?
6. Read Article X, “Entire Sanctification” from the *Manual*, Church of the Nazarene. What line or section is the most powerful for you personally?

Lecture: How Shall We Speak of Christian Holiness?

(5 minutes)

The Roots That Remain

Back in the late 1920s a new gymnasium was constructed on the campus of Northwest Nazarene College in Nampa, Idaho. It was said to be one of the finest gymnasiums in the entire state at the time, but only 30 years later it was inadequate to hold the basketball throngs. “As a boy in the late 1950s in Nampa I recall,” writes Dr. Leupp, “that games were played about a mile away in the gymnasium at Central Junior High School, and it seemed huge.

“As a college student in the early 1970s I played intramural basketball in the old gymnasium, by then hopelessly outdated. Only dire preservationists wanted it to remain standing, and sure enough it was pulled down two or three years later.

“Did Northwest Nazarene basketball cease when the hallowed gymnasium, which had been built with bricks formed by student labor, tumbled down? Hardly! Crusader basketball is more popular than ever.”

By the same token, Nazarenes continue to seek after and be filled by the Holy Spirit, to be sanctified entirely, even if not all of the old expressions are still spoken or the former practices still in evidence.

Then and now, the doctrine of entire sanctification is biblically grounded. A recent publication, William M. Greathouse’s *Wholeness in Christ* (1998), reminds us once again of the biblical rootedness of Christian perfection. Up to one-third of this book is concerned with holiness as understood in the Old Testament, with

the bulk of the rest on the New Testament, the single longest chapter being on Paul's doctrine of sanctification in the Book of Romans.

A book like this says that even though Wesley and the American Holiness Movement remain crucial for our understanding of entire sanctification, nothing said by either of these vital impulses contradicts what was said in the very beginning by the biblical writers.

The Language of Canaan

J. Kenneth Grider begins his lengthy treatment of "the second work of grace" by reporting on not less than 18 ways entire sanctification has been named and identified by Wesleyan-Holiness people.

Refer to Resource 8-5 in the Student Guide.

These are, in the order given by Grider:

- Perfection or Christian Perfection
- Perfect Love
- The Second Blessing
- The Second Work of Grace
- Love
- Christian Holiness
- Holiness
- Scriptural Holiness
- Second-Blessing Holiness
- Canaan (synonymous with the Canaan Land Experience or Beulah or Beulah Land)
- The Second Rest
- Wesleyanism
- Heart Purity
- The Fullness of the Blessing
- Sanctification
- Entire Sanctification
- Baptism with the Holy Spirit (Grider prefers to write of Christ's Spirit Baptism, believing it to be a more accurate and expressive phrase than "baptism with the Holy Spirit." To use "baptism of the Holy Spirit" is slightly incorrect, Grider believes, because it may imply that the Spirit is disjoined from Jesus Christ.)

Wesleyan-Holiness Theology, 459.

Grider skillfully presents small but excellent cases for the appropriateness and inappropriateness of each term or phrase. Some terms are more acceptable or less unacceptable than others. On balance Grider believes entire sanctification is the single best choice.

Ibid., 367-78.

Guided Discussion: Holiness Terminology

(15 minutes)

Engage the students in a brief discussion of the fitness and suitability of these various expressions used to describe holiness.

Are some of the expressions hopelessly out of date?

Are others too vague or general as to have enough specific meaning?

Are some expressions more biblical than others?

Are some tied to a particular culture and hence not capable of being translated to another culture?

What might be four or five new designations and descriptions that define entire sanctification with biblical integrity and theological creativity?

One commentator concluded that Christian perfection as taught by John Wesley affirms the “optimism of grace” over the “pessimism of nature.” To call entire sanctification the “optimism of grace” may be cumbersome, yet the concept of grace is mentioned only once by Grider in his list. That seems unfortunate, since all agree that prevenient grace is absolutely central for the progress of sanctification.

Lecture: Christian Perfection: A Many-Splendored Reality

(10 minutes)

Cultural Focus

“Approaching one Christmas while teaching theology at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary,” writes Dr. Leupp, “I asked students what gift they would like to bring to the Christ child, and what they would like to receive from Him. The answer given by one perceptive Filipino has stayed with me.

- To give to the Christ child? *A green banana.*
- To receive back from Him? *A ripe banana.*

“The Holy Spirit seemed to apply to my heart another cultural image that brought holiness to mind. Across Asia, to show respect and honor, people typically remove their shoes prior to entering a house or apartment. A tangle of 10 or 12 shoes frequently decorated our porch as our invited student guests slipped inside our seminary apartment.

“My wife, Stephanie, and I typically did not remove our shoes upon our relatively infrequent visits to student apartments; infrequent because Asian students are

often deferential toward their instructors, and we had no desire to “lord it over them” by asserting our rights to visit.

“Our shoes may have remained on our feet, but the symbolic urgency of removing one’s shoes was not lost on us. The messages of respect, honor, and humbleness were a part of our daily walk as foreigners in a region where the outsider is often treated with undeserved respect.

“Those Asian and Pacific students who consistently removed their shoes often brought to mind two great holiness scriptures, Isaiah 6: 1-8 and Exodus 3: 1-6.

Read these scriptures with the class.

The kenotic Christology of Philippians 2 also came to mind, as the students emptied themselves out in taking off their shoes.

Contextual Application

“In teaching the doctrine of holiness to Asian and Pacific students I tried to build connecting bridges with concepts borrowed from their daily lives, realities that were often part of my own daily life. This general approach might be called contextual or local theology.

“Often, I was taught by the students. One man from Samoa, during a campus-wide dinner designed to encourage cultural understanding, in a matter of minutes made a serviceable basket for carrying coconuts. His materials? A few palm fronds.

“Local theology builds with the conceptual materials already close at hand. It may be a stretch to say that an improvised basket unerringly demonstrates a great theological truth, especially one pertaining to holiness. But the crafted agility does prove that “little is much if God is in it,” and also that the Holy Spirit can fashion something useful and edifying from whatever we may bring to Him.

“The Asian terrain, weather, and cultural practices all made a deep impression upon us, such that I tried to suggest how some of these realities, new to me but more or less known to my students, might call forth new understandings of Christian holiness.

“I was never certain how successful these ventures were. I tried to liken the experience of holiness to a trip to market—a daily reality for most of the students—especially to buy *pan-de-sol*, a small yeasty and doughy roll that is a staple in the Philippines.”

Could standing in a rice field, teased by gentle breezes that rippled through the grain, really be likened to the experience of Christian perfection? For the Filipino, how about standing in that rice field and looking away in the distance toward a volcano? Would being an islander, surrounded by the ocean, add new insights to the living of a holy life?

Asians are uncomfortable with dualisms that are second nature to most people of the West. A prime example is the body and soul dualism. Asians do not recognize the place where the body ends and the soul begins. For them it is all one reality. If Christian perfection truly is *entire* sanctification, and if our bodies are called to be the temples of the Holy Spirit, the Asian desire to take and see reality *whole* may have something to say to us in our desire to understand and especially to live Christian perfection more completely.

Cultural standards as to what is pure—and therefore holy—will clearly vary widely around the globe. A lamb is pure on the face of it in ways that a pig probably never will be, although in some local economies the pig is the most valued commodity—as in Papua New Guinea. It stretches the definition of holiness and purity beyond recognition to hail Jesus Christ as “the Pig of God,” however utilitarian and economically sound this correlation may be.

Setting aside the pure and the holy, it may even be difficult to agree upon what is or is not in good taste. For example, Filipinos seemed not at all embarrassed when a dog rambled down the center aisle of the church during Sunday morning worship, perhaps pausing to sniff at the altar rail or ponder the Communion table. In a hot and humid climate, in a church with no air conditioning, not too many people would close the front door. Enter the dog, which may even have added a humble touch, reminding us that if all of nature is graced, this grace cannot exclude this particular dog. There is no question of worshiping the dog as a Hindu might a cow, but rather suggesting that even the dog participates in the graced world God made.”

Can Christian Holiness Be Contextualized?

A glance backward at the 18 to 20 different designations marshaled by Grider is instructive. References to being made “whiter than snow” made

little sense to Filipinos, living in the tropics. Some of the terms on Grider's list may be a good fit when translated into another culture and another language, others not. Every preacher and teacher who addresses the truth of entire sanctification is called upon to speak a contemporary, yet also timeless, word.

Everyone who considers the doctrine of Christian perfection must be involved in the act of interpretation for the audience to whom the truth is directed. Therefore, to work toward contextualizing the proclamation of holiness is not only to work from one culture to another, but also to work with different levels of meaning within a secular culture. One example of this latter process might be the name change of the Nazarene denominational magazine from *The Herald of Holiness* to *Holiness Today*. Many Nazarene old-timers still occasionally slip into the previous name, shortening it to *The Herald*. A habit formed over 50 or 60 years may be very hard to subdue.

There are probably many good reasons for the name change. What seems most obvious is that the prior name struck some people as too "churchy." Who after all today even knows who a herald is and what a herald does? Many people never speak that word unless at Christmas when singing "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing."

The name *Holiness Today* has a compelling quality never quite captured by *Herald of Holiness*. Most important, it moves the heart of the matter, holiness, from the back of the title to the front, and adds the dimension of time, *today*, infusing urgency.

Refer to Resource 8-6 in the Student Guide.

For modern secular cultures tending toward the postmodern, the chief challenge may be simply to protect the integrity of the word "holy," especially as holiness is qualified and defined as *Christian* holiness. The singer and songwriter Bob Dylan lamented more than 30 years ago that by looking around it was painfully evident that not much anymore is really sacred. This sorry conclusion is truer today.

Christians believe the holy is given to us not by rational deduction but by transcendent revelation, although when subjected to critical and rational scrutiny the claims of revelation are shown to be "ecstatic," not against but rather above reason. The person of Jesus Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit fill the content of the holy with moral and relational meaning.

The holy as separation *from* the world and *unto* God, and the parallel definition of purity and cleanliness are two traditional Nazarene beliefs. What might these mean to the postmodern world? Our cash-driven world often embraces consequences and outcomes and forgets about motives. Yet the purity of heart characteristic of Christian perfection cares much more about pure motives than about the bottom line.

Small Groups: Christian Perfection—Contextualized

(20 minutes)

Divide the class into groups of about three members each.

Refer to Resource 8-7 in the Student Guide.

See chapter 14.

In your group discuss the following questions and thoughts. Be prepared to report to the class on your ideas and conclusions.

1. *What does the common person in secular America mean when he or she uses the word “holy”?*
2. *Do you agree or disagree that the doctrine of entire sanctification needs to be contextualized? If so, what are some steps to be taken toward this end?*
3. We speak of *Christian* perfection, which is a very different reality from “perfect” perfection. Albert C. Outler rightly insisted that the Wesleyan view was of “perfecting perfection” and not “perfected perfection.” In her influential book, *A Theology of Love*, Mildred Bangs Wynkoop offers numerous critiques of what she calls “perfectionism,” which is to be contrasted with Christian perfection.

How can we then continue to use “perfection” to describe the experience of entire sanctification?

Rob L. Staples offers some helpful words that go a great distance toward rescuing “perfection” as a vital concept:

“Perfect” in the Bible does not have a legalistic background. Nor does it have a pietist authority as though perfection could be achieved by human effort in the “imitation of Christ.” It belongs in the category of grace. “Be perfect” is the command of God that can call forth from our hearts only one response, that of faith.

Our obedience in faith is not the beginning of some vague progress in climbing up a ladder of moral achievement. It is the acceptance of grace, which is always whole, complete, perfect. In the strength of this encounter we live our lives. “Perfect” belongs only to God. It comes to

Words of Faith, 71.

us through our contact with Him, not as an achievement, but as a gift. All that God is and has is perfect and whole, never partial. Our share in this kind of wholeness is determined by the veracity of our relation to Him.

4. Look again at Article of Faith X. *What lines, phrases, or terms—if any—would be better understood by your generation? Your church members? Your unchurched neighbors? If they were expressed differently?*

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Call on one student from each group to report on the discussion from that group.

Look Ahead

In the next lesson, also about entire sanctification and Christian perfection, we will conduct brief surveys of how three Nazarene theologians have addressed themselves to this doctrine. They are Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, H. Ray Dunning, and Michael Lodahl. The author of the module will also offer some of his own thoughts.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Take the list of the 18 to 20 terms or names Kenneth Grider utilizes as descriptions of entire sanctification.

- With this list in hand, interview at least four people from your local Nazarene congregation. At least one of these should be a Nazarene "saint" who has been a regular attendee of a Nazarene fellowship for at least 25 to 30 years.
- From each of the four people whom you interview, ascertain which of the terms on the list continue to be meaningful, and why, and which terms seem no longer to have the power of explanation.
- Also ask the four people if they have any new names to use in identifying the truth of Christian perfection.
- Compile the results of your interviews in an essay of two pages.

Read Resources 8-8, 8-9, and 8-10. Write out at least one or two questions or ideas that were raised in your mind from each of the three writers.

Write in your journal. Find a copy of Charles Wesley's hymn "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling." Meditate and write on its meaning as describing Christian perfection.

Punctuate the Finish

"The command *Be ye perfect* is not idealistic gas. Nor is it a command to do the impossible. [God] is going to make us into creatures that can obey that command.

He said (in the Bible) that we were 'gods' and He is going to make good His words. If we let Him—for we can prevent Him, if we choose—He will make the feeblest and filthiest of us into a god or goddess, dazzling, radiant, immortal creature, pulsating all through with such energy and joy and wisdom and love as we cannot now imagine, a bright stainless mirror which reflects back to God perfectly (though, of course, on a smaller scale) His own boundless power and delight and goodness. The process will be long and in parts very painful; but that is what we are in for. Nothing less. He meant what He said."

From Mere Christianity (New York: Macmillan, 1960), 174-75.

C. S. Lewis

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Lesson 9

Nazarene Theologians on Entire Sanctification

Lesson Overview

Schedule

| Start Time | Task or Topic | Learning Activity | Materials Needed |
|------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| 0:00 | Introduction | Orient | Student Guide |
| 0:10 | Dunning: Sanctification | Guided Discussion | Resource 9-1 Resource 8-8 Homework |
| 0:20 | Wynkoop: A Theology of Love | Guided Discussion | Resource 8-9 Homework |
| 0:30 | Lodahl: Scriptural Holiness | Guided Discussion | Resource 8-10 Homework |
| 0:40 | Knowing the Holy God | Lecture | Resource 9-2 |
| 0:50 | Dunning's Four Relationships | Small Groups | Resource 9-3 |
| 1:05 | Explaining Entire Sanctification | Writing | Resource 9-4 |
| 1:25 | Lesson Close | Review, Assign | Resources 9-5—9-7 Student Guide |

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Same as last class, and in addition:

Dunning, H. Ray. *Reflecting the Divine Image: Christian Ethics in Wesleyan Perspective*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Call on two students to read their homework papers.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

A measure of theological diversity keeps any Christian denomination from growing stale, complacent, and bored with itself. When the Holy Spirit is present—and all agree the Spirit's movement is essential for sanctification—all that is musty and dying will be swept aside.

In this lesson we will give brief consideration to the sanctification theology of three representative Nazarene theologians. They are H. Ray Dunning, Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, and Michael Lodahl. Collectively they have been active in the church for the past 40 years, in many roles: missionary, seminary and university professor, and pastor.

Time and space will not allow exhaustive investigations of these three writers. It is sincerely hoped that what is said represents the true intent of these voices, and that each of them is allowed to speak representatively and openly.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should

- appreciate commonalities and distinctions in the respective holiness and sanctification theologies of three Nazarene writers
- become familiar with some of the distinctive holiness vocabulary, and how best to understand it
- become encouraged to develop their own sanctification theology by the study of representative Nazarene writers

Motivator

Rudolf Otto's work, *The Idea of the Holy*, is one of the classics of 20th-century religious studies. In this work, Otto claims the holy is *prior* to the ethical. Otto

believes it is the holy that determines religion, because the holy is the primary defining criterion as to what constitutes religion. Abraham standing before God and admitting before God he is only "dust and ashes" is a compelling testimony to the holy (Gen 18: 27).

The *mysterium tremendum* is a phrase Otto employs to describe the holiness of God. Here he gives some context and meaning to this important phrase:

Let us consider the deepest and most fundamental element in all strong and sincerely felt religious emotion. Faith unto salvation, trust, love—all these are there. But over and above these is an element which may also on occasion, quite apart from them, profoundly affect us and occupy the mind with a well nigh bewildering strength.

If we do so we shall find we are dealing with something for which there is only one appropriate expression, "mysterium tremendum." The feeling of it may at times come sweeping like a gentle tide, pervading the mind with a tranquil mood of deepest worship. It may pass over into a more set and lasting attitude of the soul, continuing, as it were, thrillingly vibrant and resonant, until at last it dies away and the soul resumes its "profane", non-religious mood of everyday experience. It may burst in sudden eruption up from the depths of the soul with spasms and convulsions, or lead to the strangest excitements, to intoxicated frenzy, to transport, and to ecstasy.

Rudolf Otto, The Idea of the Holy, trans. John W. Harvey (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 12-13.

Lesson Body

Guided Discussion: Dunning—Sanctification: Renewal in the Image of God

(10 minutes)

Refer to Resource 9-1 in the Student Guide.

The following several questions about the general nature of holiness doctrine will guide our thinking, and discussion for any comparative analysis among the three theologians. Obviously, not all of the three can be made to speak to all of the questions, but the questions remain foundational, ones that need to be addressed, whether explicitly or in spirit.

- What is the common or baseline definition of holiness that emerges?
- What is the understanding of sin?
- How is the holiness of God viewed?
- Is one way of naming or describing the experience of holiness to be preferred over the others?
- How is the legacy of John Wesley appropriated?
- What is the attitude toward some traditional Nazarene ideas?

From the questions and ideas the students prepared, lead a discussion of Resource 8-8.

Guided Discussion: Wynkoop—A Theology of Love

(10 minutes)

From the questions and ideas the students prepared, lead a discussion of Resource 8-9.

Guided Discussion: Lodahl—Scriptural Holiness

(10 minutes)

From the questions and ideas the students prepared, lead a discussion of Resource 8-10.

Lecture: Knowing the Holy God

(10 minutes)

Excerpts of the lecture appear in Resource 9-2.

Isaiah 40:18 reveals that the Lord God is truly incomparable, not to be judged, sifted, or weighed according to any human criteria: "To whom, then, will you compare God?" That verse alone could be the beginning and the ending of the biblical story. If God is incomparable, and if God takes no initiative to make himself known in human terms, what more can be said?

The good news of all biblical faith is that God has chosen to unveil himself to offer covenant friendship between himself and the human family. Through history (especially the biblical history of Israel), the physical creation, family life, conscience, culture, artistic expression, and many other avenues, God has left profound traces of himself implanted in the world and in us through divine grace.

All of these avenues are preliminary pointers to God's final and definitive revelation in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God the Father. "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being" (Heb 1:3). To know the Son is to know the Father: "I and the Father are one" (Jn 10:30). This knowing of the Father's true Word, Jesus Christ, is fruitful only as the Holy Spirit takes us into the company of the Father, through the atoning sacrifice of the Son.

In the Father's presence, what do we find? Whom do we meet? There we meet a God who is holy. The holiness of God is the measure and the standard of every other possible claim to being holy. When we see this holy God, our first response should be to worship Him: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory" (Is 6:3). "'Do not come any closer,' God said [to Moses]. 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground'" (Ex 3:5).

The holiness of God is unapproachable in human terms. To approach God in His holiness with defiled hands is to risk judgment and even annihilation. No one can stand before God dressed in his or her own righteousness. Only the Holy One of God, Jesus Christ the Righteous, can bring us into the Father's company.

The holy God is at the same time the loving, gracious, and merciful Father, like the Father who runs out to embrace the wayward prodigal (Lk 15:20-23). There is no opposition between holiness and love within God. Each of these divine qualities needs the other to complete the essence of God.

Jesus Christ brings us into the company of His Father not for us to be awestruck or overwhelmed—although we should be!—but rather for us to "participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires" (2 Pet 1:4). To take part in the divine nature is the meaning of the Nazarene teaching of entire sanctification.

We share in God's nature through grace, not through any exact identification with His essence. Only God is God. Only God remains God. But God condescends, lowers himself, makes himself available, in the person of Jesus Christ. God's lowering in Christ elevates us and enables us to escape from the corruptions and perversities rampant in the world. Entire sanctification is re-creation in the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In one way or another, every Christian theology and every strand from within the rich tapestry making up Christian doctrine addresses this hope for our re-creation. Some churches—Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox—stress our being conformed to Jesus Christ through joining in the sacramental life of the Church. Some churches—Reformed, Lutheran, some Baptist—embrace the principle of ever-increasing conformity to Jesus Christ, but doubt the human capacity to assimilate enough grace in this life ever really to escape the corruptions 2 Peter mentioned.

The Church of the Nazarene, following John Wesley and solidified in the American Holiness Movement, has stressed the "optimism of grace" over the "pessimism of nature," although Nazarenes are far from naive about the depths of human depravity. Nazarenes have historically stressed "full salvation" made available in an organic continuum of grace applied to the soul by the Holy Spirit. The grace of God always imagines and envisions more for us and in us than we can envision for ourselves. In other words, to be entirely sanctified is to grasp, to hold, and finally to own God's vision of what we can become in the resurrection life of Jesus Christ. It is to accept God's verdict of the restorative power of His Holy Spirit, rather than our own puny efforts.

Entire sanctification is probably the preferred way Nazarenes speak of this pivotal teaching, but Christian perfection is also an accurate descriptor, and probably more widely known in the history of Christian theology and spirituality. Many sensible people stumble over the word perfection, rightly arguing that after all only the sovereign and triune God can truly be perfect.

What do we really mean by perfect? My vision of a perfect vacation or even a perfect steak may be widely discrepant from your vision. The Christian's common denominator of perfection can never be some abstract standard, because we affirm **Christian** perfection, not "perfection in general."

Organic and developmental metaphors work much better here than solid state or fixed-category speech. Our two young daughters might be said to be developmentally perfect for their ages. They can do what is "perfect" for a five-year-old and an eight-year-old. Next year and the year after their horizons for perfection will be clearer, truer, purer. Will they continue to strive after developmental perfection? What more could any parent ask of them?

What more could the Lord God ask of us? One measure of Christian perfection is "to offer your bodies as living sacrifices" (Rom 12:1), as Paul challenged the Romans. Will my understanding of what this means deepen and mature as the years progress? It must, and I must obey these urges toward increasing depth and sincerity before God.

As the Nazarene Article of Faith on entire Sanctification teaches, the *desire* to be pure can be satisfied instantaneously in the moment when God the Spirit descends and baptizes the human heart, routing self-will. The desire toward purity must bear fruit in the lived life of every Christian, and this development of character and Christian virtue, far from being over and done in an instant, is a lifelong task. "The grace of entire sanctification," so states Article X, "includes the impulse to grow in grace."

Take my hands and let them move
At the *impulse* of thy love.
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

"Take My Life, and Let It Be
Consecrated," Sing to the Lord,
455.

To be in the presence of the Holy Spirit invites introspection, but not in a morbid or anxious way. The yoke of Jesus Christ is real, but easy; His burden is palpable, but light. To experience the interior witness of the Holy Spirit and also to bear the fruit of the Spirit in one's life were two tests John Wesley often applied to the early Methodists who wondered whether or not they were walking in sanctified light. Additionally, Wesley stressed that every Christian, and especially those gripped by perfecting grace, necessarily had to observe the means of grace: reading the Bible, public and private prayer, partaking of Holy Communion, "Christian conference" with like-minded souls, and fasting, among other means.

Christian doctrine is not a straitjacket. It is meant to promote and not inhibit the life of God in the human soul, by freeing the full measure of the Holy Spirit.

Entire sanctification or Christian perfection is a faithful representation of the highest calling God can place on the soul: to be re-created in the image of His Son.

Small Groups: Dunning's Four Relationships

(15 minutes)

Refer to Resource 9-3 in the Student Guide.

Divide the class into groups of three for this activity.

Dunning structures his theology around four key relationships. Under each of the four relationships students are to suggest three or four implications of this relationship for the holy life.

Freedom for God

Freedom for the Other

Freedom from the Earth

Freed from Self-domination

What might be evidences or expressions of these four relationships in the holy life?

Writing: Explaining Entire Sanctification

(20 minutes)

Refer to Resource 9-4 in the Student Guide.

A new Christian, who has little background in Christianity or the Nazarene traditions, has come to you with the question, "What does entire sanctification mean?"

Write a one-page explanation this person can understand that is biblically and doctrinally sound.

Give the students about 10 minutes to write and then have them share their paper with the class.

You might also write out your explanation and share it with the class.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

What idea from this lesson of holiness do you find the most exciting?

What words best help people understand the life of holiness?

What language seems to distract from the teaching?

Look Ahead

The next two lessons will be about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, which is also known as Pneumatology.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide

Read Resource 9-5, the selections "Holiness," "Sanctification," "Perfection" from Rob L. Staples' *Words of Faith*. Also read Resource 9-6, John Wesley's sermon, "The Scripture Way of Salvation."

Following the reading of these four selections, write a three-page essay of your personal understanding of sanctification, drawing upon resources as needed.

Read Resource 9-7, "Theology of the Holy Spirit."

Write in your journal. Read Matthew 5:48 and reflect on this commandment of Jesus Christ. Open your heart to the sanctifying Spirit in your life. Write out your prayer.

Punctuate the Finish

"Perfect" in the Bible does not have a legalistic background. Nor does it have a pietist authority as though perfection could be achieved by human effort in the "imitation of Christ." It belongs in the category of *grace*. "Be perfect" is the command of God that can call forth from our hearts only one response, that of faith.

Our obedience in faith is not the beginning of some vague progress in climbing up a ladder of moral achievement. It is the acceptance of grace, which is always whole, complete, perfect. In the strength of this encounter we live our lives. "Perfect" belongs only to

Staples, Words of Faith, 71.

God. It comes to us through our contact with Him, not as an achievement, but as a *gift*. All that God is and has is perfect and whole, never partial. Our share in this kind of wholeness is determined by the veracity of our relation to Him.

Lesson 10

Theology of the Holy Spirit, Part 1

Lesson Overview

Schedule

| Start Time | Task or Topic | Learning Activity | Materials Needed |
|------------|---|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 0:00 | Introduction | Orient | Student Guide Resource 10-1 |
| 0:10 | Winds of the Spirit | Small Groups | Resource 10-2 |
| 0:35 | Nazarene Focus | Small Groups | Resource 10-3 |
| 1:00 | The Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles | Small Groups | Resource 10-4 |
| 1:20 | Lesson Close | Review, Assign | Student Guide |

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Dunning, H. Ray. *Grace, Faith, and Holiness*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988, chs. 13 and 14.

Greathouse, William M. *Wholeness in Christ: Toward a Biblical Theology of Holiness*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1998, ch. 6.

Grider, J. Kenneth. *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994, 141-44.

Gross, Lora. "Holy Spirit." In *A New Handbook of Christian Theology*. Edited by Donald W. Musser and Joseph L. Price. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992.

Ingersol, Stan, and Wesley Tracy. *Here We Stand*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1998, 188-211.

Oden, Thomas C. *Systematic Theology*. Vol. 3, *Life in the Spirit*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992, chs. 1 and 2.

Pelikan, Jaroslav. "Holy Spirit." In *The Melody of Theology: A Philosophical Dictionary*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Orientation

This lesson is a general overview of the subject of the Holy Spirit, a subject that is worthy of far more attention than we can give it here. Because the Holy Spirit is the sanctifying Spirit, and because entire sanctification is so central to the aims and goals of Nazarene theology, this lesson should be seen as an extension of the previous two lessons in some ways.

The Holy Spirit is also vital to a warm and growing Christian experience. Each student is asked to reflect on his or her knowing of the Lord Jesus Christ through the enabling presence of God the Spirit.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should

- have a basic biblical overview of the Holy Spirit
- focus especially on scriptures that confirm the divinity of the Spirit
- consider the importance of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of Jesus Christ
- contemplate the devotional question of how and why we sing and pray to the third person of the Holy Trinity

Motivator

Refer to Resource 10-1 in the Student Guide.

Friedrich Schleiermacher quoted in William Greathouse, Wholeness in Christ: Toward a Biblical Theology of Holiness (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1998), 73.

"The fruits of the Spirit are none other than the virtues of Christ."

Friedrich Schleiermacher

"To explore a theology of the Holy Spirit is to ask fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life. No period in history has been in greater need of God's present activity in the world and a comprehensive and integrated spiritual vision for the future and destiny of planet Earth than the present. The Christian church's theology, however, has been glaringly deficient in setting forth a detailed doctrine of the Spirit, although scripture contains a strong basis for theological reflection. An urgent need exists for a

"Holy Spirit," in A New Handbook of Christian Theology, ed. Donald W. Musser and Joseph L. Price (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 232.

doctrine of the Holy Spirit, especially in light of the new scientific picture of the cosmos, which has evoked questions about humanity's most cherished religious and philosophical perspectives of reality."

Lora Gross

Lesson Body

Small Groups: Winds of the Spirit

(25 minutes)

In this lesson there will be three different small group activities to discuss the homework reading assignment Resource 9-7.

You may divide the class into groups of three that meet together for all three activities or divide the class so the students are in three different groups for each of the activities.

Refer to Resource 10-2 in the Student Guide.

See additional references in Oden, Life in the Spirit, 15-18. George T. Montague, The Holy Spirit: Growth of a Biblical Tradition (Paulist Press, 1976), has extensive discussion of the Holy Spirit in the Bible.

You may want to include the scriptures given after the Article of Faith.

Allow a few minutes for group reports. Also, allow for possible discussion over this section of Resource 9-7.

Biblical Evidence for the Deity of the Holy Spirit

Listed below are several relevant scriptures. Beneath each reference, write a sentence as to why this scripture demonstrates that the Holy Spirit is God, and in what particular way. Be prepared to share answers with the other groups after a few minutes.

Isaiah 40:13
1 Corinthians 2:10-14
Psalm 139:7-10
Job 33:4
Psalm 104:30
Hebrews 9:14
2 Corinthians 3:17-18
Matthew 12:28
Romans 8:2, 11
Ephesians 4:4
Romans 1:4
Genesis 1:2
Matthew 3:16
1 Peter 1:11
Luke 4:18

Read Article III, "The Holy Spirit." Does the Article of Faith include all that Scripture reveals? Does it clearly state the position of the church in a way that communicates to today's world?

III. The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Triune Godhead, that He is ever present and efficiently active in and with the Church of Christ, convincing the world of sin, regenerating those who repent and believe, sanctifying believers, and guiding into all truth as it is in Jesus.

Small Groups: Nazarene Focus

(25 minutes)

Refer to Resource 10-3 in the Student Guide.

Have the students work in groups of three.

Grace, Faith, and Holiness, 415.

Jesus and the Spirit in the Gospel of John—Dunning

Dunning explicates five truths that demonstrate his main thesis that “the Holy Spirit must be understood as inseparably related to the person of Jesus Christ.” They are:

- The Spirit’s coming in fullness is dependent upon Jesus’ departure from earth.
- The very meaning of the Spirit’s name implies a continuation of the work of Christ.
- To receive the Holy Spirit is dependent upon a prior knowledge of Jesus Christ.
- Jesus identifies the Spirit’s coming with His own personal, abiding presence.
- The Spirit’s work is decisively Christ-centered.

Six scriptures from the Gospel of John are prominent indicators to and supporters of the themes Dunning explores. They are as follows: John 14: 15-17; 14: 25-26; 15: 26-27; 16: 5-11; 16: 12-15; 20: 22.

The Assignment: Read the six scriptures above, and correlate the evidence in them with the five themes Dunning sets forth. You may want to make a list of five or six ways in which the scriptures prove or demonstrate the truth of Dunning’s analysis.

Two Cautionary Notes—Greathouse

Especially for students who have been in the Church of the Nazarene for some years, the warnings raised by William Greathouse will ring familiar. Legalism always crouches at the door of Nazarene personal ethics. Speaking in tongues may disrupt the freely flowing life in the Spirit that Greathouse promotes. Glossolalia may be divisive and disturbing.

What are your own personal experiences regarding legalism and glossolalia? Soon you will be shepherding parishioners for whom these may be very real issues. Are you prepared to give biblical answers in keeping with Phineas Bresee’s dictum quoted earlier: “In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity.”

Allow time for reports by each group at the end of this section. Also for discussion on this section of Resource 9-7 on Nazarene Focus.

Small Groups: The Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles

(20 minutes)

Refer to Resource 10-4 in the Student Guide.

Divide the class into groups of three.

It is customary to say that the Acts of the Apostles is really the Acts of the Holy Spirit. The second volume in Luke's two-volume work is replete with references to the Holy Spirit. Luke's Gospel also shows much interest in the reality of the Holy Spirit, more so than either Matthew or Mark.

This learning exercise invites us to reflect on the Spirit's activity in the Acts of the Apostles, and attempt to build bridges between then and now. *How, when, where, and why* is the Holy Spirit active in today's world, and especially in the Church?

See Resource 10-4 for the list of scripture references.

Several scripture references are given on Resource 10-4. Under each of them write two points of relevance to the theology of the Holy Spirit.

Some New Testament scholars claim that in the Acts of the Apostles the Holy Spirit at times is evident more as an impersonal force than a personal comforter and guide. What do you think?

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Are there any questions or comments on today's lesson?

Look Ahead

The next lesson will also be about the Holy Spirit. It will explore some familiar territory in what might be considered some new ways. It will draw especially upon two well-known theologians, Clark Pinnock and Jürgen Moltmann. It will consider some ways of naming the Spirit and His mission that have perhaps been overlooked, and will also discuss some major perspectives through which the Holy Spirit might profitably be understood.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Read Resource 10-5.

Return to the Nazarene hymnal, *Sing to the Lord*, and look once again at the hymns whose primary theme is the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

- Select any three of these hymns. Analyze them in terms of what they say about the Holy Spirit, especially noting the following five areas:
 1. What is the Spirit's relationship with Jesus Christ?
 2. Are there any ethical mandates connected with knowing the Holy Spirit?
 3. How is the Spirit made known in a human life?
 4. What is the Spirit's role within the Trinity?
 5. How does the Spirit sanctify?
- Write a five-page essay.

During the next lesson journals will be checked to verify that the journaling aspect of the homework assignment is being faithfully completed. The individual entries will not be read but the overall layout and organization will be inspected.

Write in your journal. Throughout this lesson there have been many opportunities to look at particular biblical references having to do with the Holy Spirit. Recall the two or three most meaningful references you uncovered, and meditate upon them.

Punctuate the Finish

From William Tilly, attributed to John Wesley, Sermon "On Grieving the Holy Spirit," in The Works of John Wesley (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1979), 7:486, quoted in Greathouse, Wholeness in Christ, 72.

"The title 'holy,' applied to the Spirit of God, does not only denote that he is holy in his own nature, but that he makes us so; that he is the great fountain of holiness to his church; the Spirit from whence flows all the grace and virtue, by which the stains of guilt are cleansed, and we are renewed in all holy dispositions and again bear the image of our Creator."

As part of the next lesson's discussion time, the students will need copies of the hymnal Sing to the Lord.

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Lesson 11

Theology of the Holy Spirit, Part 2

Lesson Overview

Schedule

| Start Time | Task or Topic | Learning Activity | Materials Needed |
|------------|--|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 0:00 | Introduction | Orient | Student Guide Resource 11-1 |
| 0:10 | Constructive Pneumatology from Clark Pinnock | Guided Discussion | |
| 0:30 | Tracking the Holy Spirit as Wind, as Fire, and as Love | Small Groups | Resource 11-2 |
| 0:50 | To Worship the Holy Spirit | Small Groups | Resource 11-3 Resource 11-4 |
| 1:20 | Lesson Close | Review, Assign | Student Guide |

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Moltmann, Jürgen. *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*. Translated by Margaret Kohl. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992, 268-89.

Pinnock, Clark. *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996, Introduction, chs. 1, 2, 5.

Welker, Michael. "The Holy Spirit." In *Constructive Christian Theology in the Worldwide Church*. Edited by William R. Barr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, 168-83; also found in *Theology Today* (April 1989): 5-20.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Call on two students to read their essays.

Return and collect homework.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should

- incorporate the theology of the Holy Spirit's personhood and the ways He is active in the world today
- consider some new ways of thinking about the Spirit's personhood
- reflect on such traditional symbols of the Holy Spirit as wind, water, fire, dove, and so forth
- create a proper worship service to the Holy Spirit

Motivator

Refer to Resource 11-1 in the Student Guide.

Quoted by Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 5.

Church Dogmatics, eds. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956-1975), I/1:5-6.

"The Holy Spirit," In *Constructive Christian Theology in the Worldwide Church*, ed. William R. Barr (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 168.

"Holy Spirit, renew your wonders in our day as by a new Pentecost."

Pope John XXIII

"God's Spirit, the Holy Spirit . . . is God Himself, so far as He cannot only come to human beings, but be in them, and so open up human beings for Himself, make them ready and capable."

Karl Barth

"The Holy Spirit is perhaps the most difficult person of the Trinity to conceive. It is hard even to say what one is talking about when one speaks of the Holy Spirit. The identity of the Holy Spirit is elusive, to say the least. Is it even comprehensible?"

Michael Welker

"How can the actions of Jesus of Nazareth be more today than illustrations, at best, of the concreteness in which the forgiveness of sins would have to operate? And as for the provision and restoration of freedom and the capacity for action, do we not today most effectively call upon our systems of health care and education? . . . What concrete use do we have for the activity of the bearer of the spirit [Jesus Christ] and for

Ibid., 177.

the activity of the Holy Spirit?"

Michael Welker

Ibid., 183.

"The Holy Spirit does not work in a way that bypasses finite human beings, but rather in and with our earthly existence."

Michael Welker

Lesson Body

Guided Discussion: Constructive Pneumatology from Clark Pinnock

(20 minutes)

Allow for student response and interaction.

What idea were you most drawn to in your reading from Pinnock from the homework assignment?

What questions arose from your reading?

You were introduced to ideas of spirit, energy, and power; how do you differentiate meanings are attached to each of these three words?

You earlier studied the Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles; did any of those passages portray the Spirit more as a force than as a person?

Refer to Sing to the Lord for the next part of the discussion.

Open the hymnal to Nos. 297-299. Examine the lyrics of the three songs: "Spirit of the Living God," "Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart," and "Holy Spirit, Be My Guide."

Allow a few minutes for the students to read these hymns.

Pinnock stated that the typical evangelical experience of the Holy Spirit was an ornament of piety—localized to only the individual human heart.

In which direction do the three songs tend?

Toward a personal and even privatized awareness of the Spirit?

Toward a more sweeping and encompassing awareness? Or a balance between the two?

How influential are the songs we sing?

Small Groups: Tracking the Holy Spirit as Wind, as Fire, and as Love

(20 minutes)

Refer to Resource 11-2 in the Student Guide.

Divide the class into groups of three.

Listed below are scriptures Moltmann cites in his discussion of Holy Spirit as Tempest, as Fire, as Love. *How do these scriptures illustrate the "movement metaphors" of God the Spirit?*

Acts 2:2-4
Acts 1:8
Psalm 104:4
Ezekiel 43:2
1 Kings 19:11-12
Exodus 3:2
Numbers 9:15
Deuteronomy 4:24
Psalm 79:5
Psalm 89:46
Zephaniah 1:18
Hebrews 12:29
Psalm 18:8
Luke 12:49
Matthew 3:11
Luke 3:16
Malachi 3:2-3
Song of Songs 8:6

Have the groups give a brief report of their findings.

At the end of the reading assignment (Resource 10-5) you were asked to go outside and look for evidence of the Holy Spirit in light, in water, and in fertility.

What did you find?

Small Groups: To Worship the Holy Spirit

(30 minutes)

Refer to Resources 11-3 and 11-4 in the Student Guide.

Divide the class into groups of two.

You are to craft a service of worship to God the Holy Spirit. In doing so, there is no intent to exclude or deny the Father and the Son, but only to highlight the contributions of the Holy Spirit.

You should be mindful of using the traditional symbols of the Spirit's presence: wind, water, fire, dove. Several of these symbols need to be incorporated into the worship service.

During the small group time check the student's journals. Assure the students that you are not reading the individual entries but looking to see that they are faithfully doing the assignment.

Be available for advice or suggestions on planning thoroughly a service of worship. Challenge the students to be specific and detailed in their plans.

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Have the groups give a brief report on the worship service that they have planned.

Look Ahead

The next two lessons will be about the theology of the Church, also known as ecclesiology.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Return to the Nazarene hymnal, *Sing to the Lord*, and look once again at the hymns whose primary theme is the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

- Select any three of these hymns. Analyze them in terms of what they say about the Holy Spirit, especially noting the following five areas:
 1. What is the Spirit's relationship with Jesus Christ?
 2. Are there any ethical mandates connected with knowing the Holy Spirit?
 3. How is the Spirit made known in a human life?
 4. What is the Spirit's role within the Trinity?
 5. How does the Spirit sanctify?
- Write a five-page essay.

Write in your journal. Read 1 Corinthians 2: 10-12 in two or three different versions. Record two or three key insights the Holy Spirit desires to teach you from these words.

Punctuate the Finish

"The Spirit indwells in human history to attest God the Father and God the Son; to draw together the called-out people for celebration and proclamation; to reveal the truth to those yielded to the Spirit's promptings; to equip for service; to seal the promise of things to come; to elicit faith, hope, and love; and to redress the history of sin."

From Life in the Spirit, 14.

Thomas C. Oden

Lesson 12

The Doctrine of the Church, Part 1

Lesson Overview

Schedule

| Start Time | Task or Topic | Learning Activity | Materials Needed |
|------------|--|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 0:00 | Introduction | Orient | Student Guide Resource 12-1 |
| 0:10 | A Theological Location for the Church | Lecture | |
| 0:25 | Of What Theological Use Is the Doctrine of the Church? | Group Discussion | |
| 0:35 | Biblical and Theological Assertions about the Nature of the Church | Lecture | Resource 12-2 Resource 12-3 |
| 1:00 | Biblical and Theological Assertions about the Nature of the Church | Small Groups | Resource 12-4 Resource 12-5 |
| 1:25 | Lesson Close | Review, Assign | Student Guide |

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Dunning, H. Ray. *Grace, Faith, and Holiness*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988, ch. 16.

Grider, J. Kenneth. *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994, ch. 18.

Leupp, Roderick T. "The Bride of Christ: The Church and the Sacraments." *Holiness Today* (April 1999).

_____. "A Glorious Church?" *Holiness Today* (October 2003).

_____. "The Living Stream of Tradition." *Holiness Today* (October 1999).

Lodahl, Michael. *The Story of God: Wesleyan Theology and Biblical Narrative*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994, 166-75.

Moltmann, Jürgen. *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*. Translated by Margaret Kohl. New York: Harper and Row, 1977, ch. 7.

Oden, Thomas C. *Systematic Theology*. Vol. 3, *Life in the Spirit*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992, chs. 7-8.

Pelikan, Jaroslav. "Church." In *The Melody of Theology: A Philosophical Dictionary*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Staples, Rob L. "Church." In *Words of Faith: An Easy Reference to Theological Terms*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2001.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Call on two students to read their essays.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

This is the first of two lessons concerned with the doctrine of the church, or ecclesiology. In this lesson we will investigate some basic biblical and theological images and understandings of the church. We will also provide some basic information on the four marks of the church found in the Nicene Creed.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should

- survey some New Testament images of the church
- investigate some theological statements and analyses that have been made regarding the church
- inquire about the current state of Nazarene ecclesiology
- familiarize themselves with the *Manual* statements about the church

Motivator

Refer to Resource 12-1 in the Student Guide.

Staples:

There is one body! 'I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.' The unity of the Church is often obscured by the fragmentation of a divided Christendom. Yet the Church remains one. There are many members but one body, and 'to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it' (Eph 4: 7). The Church, which is Christ's Body, is not to be built out of the denominational structures, but *into* them! Baptism expresses our initiation into this one Body. As divergent as our several denominational traditions may be, it is a tremendous truth that one baptismal formula gathers us all together as one body—'in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.' Amen.

Staples, Words of Faith, 80.

Lodahl:

The Church, before it is anything else, is a body of believers that, throughout the ebb and flow of historical circumstance, is gathered together by the God of all grace to recite the story of salvation and to worship the One around whom the story revolves.

The Church, this body of believers gathered to tell, hear, and live God's Story, transcends the normal human boundaries of generation and geography. It includes within itself people of widely divergent denominations, languages, cultures, colors, and historical eras. This variety makes for an incredible richness and diversity of expression in the Church's worship of the living God.

Lodahl, The Story of God, 166.

Lesson Body

Lecture: A Theological Location for the Church

(15 minutes)

At about age 14 or 15 I joined the local Nazarene church I had already been faithfully attending for five or six years. During a Sunday evening worship service each youth joining the church was required to give a brief doctrinal answer in response to a prompt by the pastor. When my turn came, I “improvised” ever so slightly, not repeating my scripted answer word for word. Although I felt it was really unnecessary, the pastor gently corrected my speech to fit with the script. I later realized I was made a theologian in that moment, made not to repeat the correct formula for its own sake, made to consider other theological formulations that would be as good and possibly better.

Possibly hidden underneath the pastor’s correction of my doctrinal misstep was the assumption that the church is primarily a bastion and keeper of correct doctrine. The church as a “repository” of true belief is certainly a defensible way to understand its reason for existing. And yet there is so much more that can and must be said. Even the definition of the church as the defender of the one true faith does not necessarily cancel out other complementary emphases.

The denominational roots of the Church of the Nazarene come principally from the North American Holiness Movement. As the church found expression in various continents and cultures its members may have been unfamiliar with this historical perspective and found it to be confusing to understand why the Church of the Nazarene operated the way it did.

These suggestions are the writer’s own, and he is willing to be corrected.

The instructor should use this section to inform students, and then lead them into a discussion of culturally-based ecclesiology for their own local area.

Traditionally, this writer believes, the Church of the Nazarene—along with other denominations—has suffered from a rather weak and undeveloped ecclesiology. Most of the products of the frontier revivals and camp meetings—that led to the Church of the Nazarene—share the same weakness when it comes to understanding the church.

The reasons for an undeveloped ecclesiology are many, but the following are perhaps most evident:

- An individualistic and even isolationist approach to the Christian faith, supported by American “rugged individualism.”
- The tendency toward legalism where the church might be viewed in the same light as an overbearing parent who was there to spoil the fun and enforce the rules.
- Certain features of typical Nazarene worship, notably the altar call and the testimony service, served to reinforce that every soul needed to stand

Explore with the students their own views of the current state of Nazarene ecclesiology.

You may need to begin with a clear definition of ecclesiology.

alone before God either to bear witness or to seek forgiveness of sins. Perhaps we have taken Martin Luther's famous "Here I Stand" testimony too literally, putting ourselves in his shoes and wrongly supposing this singular stance precludes standing in solidarity with **all** of God's people.

- A fear that a highly developed ecclesiology would turn all Nazarenes into Roman Catholics.

One bright note that has been building on the horizon for many decades is the increasing internationalism of the Church of the Nazarene. Few world areas share the American penchant for individualism. The more communitarian approaches to everyday life in evidence in many world areas will in the long run influence Nazarene theology and practice.

Group Discussion: Of What Theological Use Is the Doctrine of the Church?

(10 minutes)

Several times in these lessons we have discussed the doctrine of the Trinity, and often in those discussions have emphasized the social doctrine of the Trinity, which stresses that God is a family. "In the 1970s," writes Dr. Leupp, "my Nazarene church typically opened the morning worship service by singing the chorus 'The Family of God.' This humble chorus was all about us and nothing about the nature of God. And yet the social Trinity is a family!"

Turn to your neighbor and discuss the following question:

After the students have had time to answer the question to each other call for responses from each group.

Why is the doctrine of the church important theologically?

Record the responses on a chart, overhead, or board for all to see.

Lecture: Biblical and Theological Assertions About the Nature of the Church

(25 minutes)

The Church in the Power of the Spirit, *trans. Margaret Kohl (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 1.*

At the beginning of his study of the church, Jürgen Moltmann writes, "at every period the church has a duty to be clear about its commission, its situation, and its goal." The three criteria for evaluation he mentions—commission, situation, and goal—are by no means identical, although each is interwoven with the other two.

When was the Church of Jesus Christ born? The answer to this question obviously reflects on the commission of the Church, because as it is being born, the Church is also charged with carrying forth its launching orders.

Refer to Resource 12-2 in the Student Guide.

See Genesis 12: 1-3.

See 2 Chronicles 6:3; Isaiah 10:22; Hosea 2:16; Hosea 10:1; Ezekiel 17:6; Genesis 28:17-22; Exodus 23:19; Exodus 29:42-44, 46.

J. Kenneth Grider presents three proposals for when the church was founded:

1. Some have held that with the divine call upon the patriarch Abraham, God founded His Church. Although this view is finally not acceptable, the true origin of the Church was anticipated in the Old Testament.
2. This view is often held by Roman Catholics, that Jesus Christ founded His church upon Peter when He said, "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church" (Mt 16:18). Virtually all Protestants conclude that the rock Jesus refers to is not Peter, but himself, following Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ in Matthew 16:16.
3. In the ministry of Jesus Christ, the coming of the Church in fullness on the Day of Pentecost is anticipated. The church is the culmination of foreshadowings evident in the career of Jesus Christ. These include the reality of the kingdom of God, the called out quality of Jesus' disciples, and Jesus' expectation of undivided service from the disciples.

Regarding Pentecost as specifically the founding of the church, Grider points to seven interlocking realities.

- Now the people of God are known as the Church.
- Pentecost marks the auspicious beginning of greater things to come (Acts 11:15-17).
- The Holy Spirit has now come in fullness.
- Evangelism goes ahead full throttle.
- The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ are living memories inspiring the Church.
- The Lord's Supper has now been instituted.
- The Church is organized for its ongoing tasks.

Minor and Major Biblical Analogies of the Church

Refer to Resource 12-3 in the Student Guide.

As many as 80 "minor" analogies of the church may be found in the New Testament. A representation would be:

Wesleyan-Holiness Theology, 476.

Ask students to look up some of the scriptures associated with each of these three images, and be prepared to relate their relevance for today.

- “the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15)
- “God’s field, God’s building” (1 Cor 3:9)
- bread or a loaf of bread (1 Cor 5:7-8; 10:16-17)
- a vineyard (1 Cor 9:7)
- an olive tree (Rom 11:13-24)
- members of God’s household (Eph 2:19)
- the family of believers (Gal 6:10)

Regarding the “major” New Testament images for the church, Grider analyzes three of them.

The Bride of Christ

- 2 Corinthians 11:1-2
- Ephesians 5:22-32
- Revelation 19:7-8

The Body of Christ

- Romans 12:5
- Ephesians 1:23; 3:6; 4:4, 12, 16; 5:30
- Romans 7:4
- 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:24
- 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 27
- Colossians 1:18, 24; 2:19; 3:15

The True Israel

- Galatians 6:16
- Romans 2:28-29; 9:6-8
- Romans 11
- 2 John 1
- Ephesians 2:11
- 1 Peter 2:9

Wesleyan-Holiness Theology, 476-79.

Small Groups: Biblical and Theological Assertions about the Nature of the Church

(25 minutes)

Refer to Resource 12-4 in the Student Guide.

For the small-group activity, refer to the *Manual* statements about our denominational position.

XI. The Church

We believe in the Church, the community that confesses Jesus Christ as Lord, the covenant people of God made new in Christ, the Body of Christ called together by the Holy Spirit through the Word.

God calls the Church to express its life in the unity and fellowship of the Spirit; in worship through the preaching of the Word, observance of the sacraments, and ministry in His name; by obedience to Christ and mutual accountability.

The mission of the Church in the world is to continue the redemptive work of Christ in the power of the Spirit through holy living, evangelism, discipleship, and service.

The Church is a historical reality, which organizes itself in culturally conditioned forms; exists both as local congregations and as a universal body; sets apart persons called of God for specific ministries. God calls the Church to live under His rule in anticipation of the consummation at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Church of the Nazarene, The Manual 2005-2009 (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 2005), 32.

The General Church

The Church of God is composed of all spiritually regenerate persons, whose names are written in heaven.

The Churches Severally

The churches severally are to be composed of such regenerate persons as by providential permission, and by the leadings of the Holy Spirit, become associated together for holy fellowship and ministries.

The Church of the Nazarene

The Church of the Nazarene is composed of those persons who have voluntarily associated themselves together according to the doctrines and polity of said church, and who seek holy Christian fellowship, the conversion of sinners, the entire sanctification of believers, their upbuilding in holiness, and the simplicity and spiritual power manifest in the primitive New Testament Church, together with the preaching of the gospel to every creature.

Ibid., 35.

Refer to Resource 12-5 in the Student Guide.

Divide the class into groups of three students each.

Allow about 15 minutes for small-group discussion and about 10 minutes for reports.

Write the responses of the group on the board or overhead for all to see.

Seven theological qualities and understandings provide further definition as to the Church's true nature and function.

In your groups give *Manual* statements and biblical references to support the following assertions. Select someone to give a report to the class.

The community of believers. This is "a peculiarly Protestant understanding," that in other words may be known as the priesthood of all believers.

The saved and saving community. This means the Church is comprised of those who have been converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The chief duty of the saved is to worship God, followed closely by the call to evangelize.

An extension of the Incarnation. Living the kind of life urged by Christ, the Church extends the Incarnation into every present moment.

Both human and divine. The Church's four marks—unity, holiness, universality, and apostolic quality—are finally validated by their rootedness in Jesus Christ. Hence the church is divine. But, of course, the Church is all too human, as too often displayed by its members.

Unconquerable and conquering. Not only can the Church *not* be eliminated through persecution, the suffering of God's people often is the occasion for the Church's greatest growth and revival.

A mystery. That Christ should so love the Church is a mystery. The Church is a mystery because of its ministry.

Militant and triumphant. The famous "full armor of God" passage in Ephesians 6 is a resounding witness to the Church's bringing the battle to the powers and principalities of this present age. Those who have died in the faith make up the Church Triumphant.

This list is from Grider, Wesleyan-Holiness Theology, 479-83.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Call on a student to name the seven qualities about the nature of the Church. Allow other students to help if needed.

Are there any questions or thoughts about this lesson?

Look Ahead

The next lesson is also about the church, discussing the four traditional marks of the church.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Choose to do **one** of the following and write a 2- to 3-page paper:

1. Think of five places where people customarily gather; for example, a stadium, the seashore, a shopping mall, etc.
 - How are these "secular" places *like* the church? More importantly, what sets the church *apart* from all other places where people gather?
 - What is the difference between *congregating* and *gathering*?
2. Work with the biblical assertions of the Church discussed in this lesson. Choose at least *three* of them, including at least one major and one minor one.
 - *How* do these images resonate with the world today?

Read Resource 12-6.

Write in your journal.

My first conscious recollection of "church" was . . .

My most recent thought of the church is . . .

Is there a connection between these two?

Punctuate the Finish

"That the church is an article of faith is made clear by its inclusion in the [Apostles'] creed: 'I believe in the holy, catholic church.' If the church did not exist, then there would be no community in which to make this confession. The query, What is the church? whether

Oden, Life in the Spirit, 260.

skeptical or plaintive, always silently presupposes the existence of the church that asks the question."

Lesson 13

The Doctrine of the Church, Part 2

Lesson Overview

Schedule

| Start Time | Task or Topic | Learning Activity | Materials Needed |
|------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 0:00 | Introduction | Orient | Student Guide |
| 0:10 | The Marks of the Church | Lecture | Resources 13-1—13-4 |
| 0:55 | Ecclesiological Story Problems | Guided Discussion | |
| 1:15 | An Experiment in Thought | Lecture/Discussion | |
| 1:25 | Lesson Close | Review, Assign | Student Guide |

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Same list as for Lesson 12, with the following addition:

Point out this book to the students. It is listed in the Bibliography.

Dulles, Avery. *Models of the Church*. Expanded Edition, New York: Image Books, 2002, chs. 2-6, 13. Avery Dulles was recently elevated to the office of cardinal in the Roman Catholic church. A longtime theologian on the American scene, his analyses of various models of the church are reliable and can be trusted. He is sometimes critical of his own Catholic tradition, and at all times is fair and even-handed.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Have one student read his or her homework paper, one from each of the two choices.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

This lesson will explore the traditional marks of the church presented in the Nicene Creed.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should

- study the traditional four marks of the church
- appreciate how one's doctrine of the church impacts many other parts of one's theological thinking, especially ethics, theology of the Incarnation, preaching, worship, sacraments, and theology of the ministry, and topics connected with the sociology of religion
- ask about the uniqueness of the church, when compared with other social and communitarian institutions

Motivator

"Where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and every grace."

Irenaeus of Lyon

"The Church is permanently marked with the image of the Crucified."

Avery Dulles

Lesson Body

Lecture/Discussion: The Marks of the Church

(45 minutes)

Throughout these two modules of Christian theology, the writer has tried to balance the timeless and the timely, the classical and the contemporary. There is no more classic way to begin to think about the church theologically than the marks of the church.

Since at least the end of the fourth century, when the Nicene Creed was ratified by the second ecumenical council convened at Constantinople in 381, the church has been described by four *notae ecclesiae* or marks of the church. Jaroslav Pelikan, perhaps the greatest historical theologian of the entire 20th century, believes these marks together are “the most influential formulation of ecclesiology,” or the doctrine of the church.

The Melody of Theology, 39.

At the outset of his discussion of the marks of the church, H. Ray Dunning offers the following overview:

From the beginning there were threats to the distinctiveness of the Church that had to be countered. These challenges came from both inside and outside the Church. Out of this milieu came efforts to identify the characteristics of the true Church in contrast to pretenders. These proposals came to be termed *marks* or *notes* of the Church. They were present informally even in the Book of Acts, but as they became formalized the number crystallized as four: Unity, Holiness, Catholicity (universality), and Apostolicity.

Grace, Faith, and Holiness, 529.

In addition, Dunning correctly notes that the Protestant Reformers accepted these four marks as authentic, but added two important qualifications:

- the preaching of the Word of God
- the proper observance of sacraments, reduced from the Roman Catholic seven to two

The Church Is One—Unity

On the face of it, it would seem the oneness of the church is easy to understand. After all, this mark of the church can be traced right back to Jesus Christ himself, when He prayed for the unity of all believers, which surely means the church—John 17:21. Ephesians 4:4-6

is probably the strongest New Testament statement in support of a unified church: "There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."

The Melody of Theology, 39.

Jaroslav Pelikan reminds us that, conceptually speaking, the oneness of the church has meant different realities to different people at various times. When the church really was more united, even monolithic, as for example in the Roman Catholic Middle Ages, oneness meant "the description of an empirical reality." When the empirical reality of a badly divided church contradicted the doctrinal mandate of oneness, the church's unity was held forth as a goal to be realized. So the church's oneness has been variously known as the way things *truly are*, or the way things *ought to be*, depending on historical circumstances.

In the face of a divided church, Pelikan says there have been two basic strategies for maintaining the church's overall unity. One of them is simply to identify the "one true church" with one's own church, thereby disallowing all other churches as being true.

The other strategy is perhaps more common, to say that the unity is known only to God and is hence "invisible" or "mystical."

Refer to Resource 13-1 in the Student Guide.

Regarding what constitutes unity, Pelikan reports that there have been three main ways unity has been understood:

- doctrinal cohesiveness and agreement as foundational to any other sort of unity
- sharing Christian charity and compassion with the world ("Doctrine divides, but service unites" would summarize this point of view.)
- a unified pattern of organization where all parts of the church are related to one another, often governed by a hierarchical structure—best example being the Roman Catholic church

Any of the four marks, and perhaps especially unity, cannot be artificially produced by this or that church hierarchy or even by the second ecumenical council that gave official birth to the four marks. We agree with Dunning's assessment that "it is the indwelling Spirit who produces the marks of the Church. They come from within and are not imposed from without. They are not the result of organization or administration but are the creation of the Spirit."

Grace, Faith, and Holiness, 529.

Having said that, we also recognize that on many occasions it is *exactly* within organizations, meetings, and administrations the Holy Spirit chooses to work. Why else would the Church of the Nazarene gather in district assemblies and the general assembly?

Ibid., 530.

Dunning rightly claims that ultimately the unity of the church must rest squarely on Jesus Christ. "It is inappropriate to say that Christ founded the Church or that He was part of the Church; He *was* the Church."

Scriptures that speak of our being *in* Jesus Christ—Colossians 2:6-7, 10-11—are rich testimonies that mandate unity for *all* Christians. The familiar image of the Vine and the Branches—John 15:1-8—is more compelling evidence toward unity.

Wesleyan-Holiness Theology, 484.

Kenneth Grider cites John 17 and 1 Corinthians 12 as vital unity passages, and believes "the purpose of our oneness is evangelism." However, he is wary of denominational unity for its own sake, saying, "a monolithic denomination is not desirable." Grider believes the distinctive Nazarene doctrine of entire sanctification might be "swallowed up" in such an arrangement.

Grace, Faith, and Holiness, 531.

While Dunning has no desire to surrender Nazarene uniqueness, he is more disturbed by the divided state of the Church than Grider seems to be. Dunning writes, "it will not do to speak of the divergences in the existing church as diversities and thus speak of unity in diversity. This is a truism that fails to touch the true situation. One must face the reality and call the church to repentance and seek to identify the sources of the rifts that so weaken the church's witness in the world (John 17)."

Grider and Dunning both agree that a divided church is a very bad public witness to a world that desperately needs to be evangelized.

The Story of God, 172-73.

In Michael Lodahl's hands, the oneness of the church becomes an ethical imperative. Unity "points to Jesus Christ as the One in whom all human cultural and racial barriers are overcome." Ephesians 2:14, "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility," is for Lodahl proof of the intentions of Jesus Christ.

The motto of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, situated at the crossroads of SE Asia, is appropriately "Bridging Cultures for Christ." Barriers of

language, culture, wealth, power, and influence constantly need to be overcome. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, much progress is often made, although in such cross-cultural situations, the push toward unity and even understanding is never finished.

Robert Frost's famous poem, "Mending Wall," begins with the "voice" of the poem claiming, "Something there is that doesn't love a wall." The poem unfolds between two New Englanders who come out in the spring to repair the damage winter has done to the rock wall that separates their respective properties. "He is all pine and I am apple orchard," Frost muses. Halfway through the poem the neighbor utters the famous line, "Good fences make good neighbors." To which the voice of the poem replies:

Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offense.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down.

But the poem closes with the neighbor's refrain, "Good fences make good neighbors."

The Church Is Holy

Refer to Resource 13-2 in the Student Guide.

"A Glorious Church," Sing to the Lord, 672.

'Tis a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle,
Washed in the blood of the Lamb.
'Tis a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle,
Washed in the blood of the Lamb.

When Ralph E. Hudson wrote these well-known words, in 1892, he was reminding us that the holiness of the church consists *first* and even *finally* in Jesus Christ. We have already touched on the differences between imputed and imparted righteousness when discussing entire sanctification. Nazarenes, to refresh our memories, believe in *both* of these dynamics, and accordingly believe the holiness of the church consists *in Christ* and also *in us* to the extent that we are in Christ.

The Church in the Power of the Spirit, 353.

Call on students to read these scriptures.

Jürgen Moltmann writes, "the church is holy in its unity and in all its members, not in itself but in Christ." For him, scriptures such as the following must mean the holiness of the church is in Jesus Christ, and only derivatively, if at all, within us:

- 1 Corinthians 1:30-31; 6:11; 1:2
- Philippians 1:1
- Colossians 3:12

He further asserts:

The church is holy because it is sanctified through Christ's activity in and on it . . . Holiness consists of being made holy, in sanctification, the subject of the activity being God—1 Thess 5: 23; 2 Thess 2: 13. God sanctifies his church by calling the godless through Christ, by justifying sinners, and by accepting the lost. The communion or community of the saints—or the holy or sanctified—is therefore always at the same time the community of sinners; and the sanctified church is always at the same time the sinful church.

Ibid.

Nazarene theology would agree with Moltmann's cautions against the pride of any individual or church claiming to be more holy than he, she, or it really is. However, Nazarenes view such scriptures as 1 Thessalonians 5:23 as *not only* applying to God, but more importantly applying to those who accept God's kind offer of grace, who in that acceptance become themselves remade in the image of Jesus Christ, the Holy One of God. Nazarenes can accept Moltmann's diagnosis of belonging to the "community of sinners" as a way station along the road to Christian holiness, or as a description of our true condition, but *not* as a description of God's desire to remake us from within.

The Story of God, 175.

Michael Lodahl writes that the holiness of the church is "a sanctity the Church does not have in itself but only by virtue of its relationship to the holy God." From Romans 12 we glean several ideas of what a holy church *actually looks like*.

The model of sanctity for the Church is none other than Jesus, and it is by a mutual sharing in the one Spirit of God, who also anointed and empowered Jesus, that the Church may indeed "have this attitude . . . which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil 2: 1-5).

Ibid.

Grace, Faith, and Holiness, 533.

"Holiness is both an actuality and an ideal" is Dunning's wise assessment. In the terms already discussed above, this means Jesus Christ is the ideal, but through the Holy Spirit's presence in the church, its members may approximate ever more closely to that ideal.

Empirically, we know our conduct often disagrees with Ralph Hudson's lyric quoted above. We are not a glorious church because we refuse to be washed continually in the blood of the Lamb. Dunning acknowledges this gap between the ideal and the real,

Ibid.

and suggests that only God knows the true members of the church of Jesus Christ: "One must simply recognize that the boundaries of the Church cannot be drawn synonymously with the boundaries of the institution." The visible church, with its institutional boundaries, is one thing, but the community of the truly faithful is quite another reality.

The Church Is Catholic or Universal

Refer to Resource 13-3 in the Student Guide.

Grace, Faith, and Holiness, 532.

Dunning locates the universal quality of the church in precisely the same place where the church's holiness consists: in Jesus Christ. "The universality of the Church is rooted in the work of Christ as inclusive of all persons. It is not a geographical concept but refers to the all-embracing extent of the Atonement." The witness of Galatians 3:28 is powerful evidence in support of the catholic character of the church: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Ibid.

The catholicity of the church is for Dunning "not an external mark of the church but an inner reality." Another perspective, which seems to broaden that taken by Dunning, is expressed in the classic hymn "Jesus Shall Reign," where the reign of Christ is described in more physical terms than Dunning seems comfortable with:

"Jesus Shall Reign," Sing to the Lord, 271.

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom spread from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

People and realms of ev'ry tongue
Dwell on His love with sweetest song,
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on His name.

The Melody of Theology, 40.

Jaroslav Pelikan, agreeing with the hymn lyric, shares some of his wit: "Whatever may have been true of the British Empire, it is certainly the case that the sun never sets on the Christian Church."

Prevenient grace is universal grace, which for Nazarenes is an important way to understand the universal quality of the church. Wherever grace is accepted and not rejected, there is the church universal.

For Lodahl, the church's worldwide nature

points to the fact that all people (and peoples) are invited by the gospel to participate in divine grace. This distinguishing mark of the Church helps us recognize and affirm that all the cultural, linguistic, and ritual differences that appear within the many divergent historical expressions of Christian faith have a legitimate place.

The Story of God, 173.

Dunning agrees with Lodahl, expressing that as the church comes into increasing conformity with Jesus Christ, "both biblical mandates and cultural distinctives must be taken into account. Only in this way can catholicity become a reality and cultural provincialism be avoided."

Grace, Faith, and Holiness, 533.

The Church Is Apostolic

The last of the four classic marks of the church is probably the least understood.

Aside from the obvious connection with the Apostles' Creed, few Nazarenes are familiar with the idea of apostolicity, and many cannot even pronounce the word properly. The church's foundation on apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ as the Chief Cornerstone, is one scriptural witness to the apostolic mark of the church (Eph 2:20).

Refer to resource 13-4 in the Student Guide.

Pelikan notes that since an apostle was recognized as "one sent," to call the church apostolic signified its missionary thrust. Another early meaning of apostolicity, set aside by the Protestant Reformation, was the centering of authority in the apostolic office of bishops. These Reformers were not rejecting the idea of apostolicity, as Pelikan rightly concludes, but held to "a more authentic apostolicity, expressed above all in the conformity of the church's teaching and preaching with the message of the Bible."

The Melody of Theology, 41.

Ibid.

H. Ray Dunning agrees with Pelikan, that to carry out the apostolic office involves bearing witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as in Acts 1:21-22; 10:41. However, Dunning rejects as untenable one possible meaning of apostolicity, namely, "tracing an apostolic succession handed down in an unbroken chain from Peter," a challenge he deems "historically impossible." Instead, following the Roman Catholic Hans Kung, Dunning believes apostolicity must refer to the entire church, presumably the "invisible church," and not to any certain office within the church, for example, the office of the bishop.

Grace, Faith, and Holiness, 533-34.

Ibid., 534.

Dunning concludes, "this mark is present in the Church when, empowered by the Spirit, the members of the body exercise the apostolic witness to the gospel." In keeping with how Dunning handles the other three marks of the church, he identifies this mark as present when "the truth of the gospel [is] proclaimed in the power of the Spirit," and not in any visible, evident, or empirical test.

The Story of God, 175.

"Faithfulness to the apostolic preaching of the New Testament" is Michael Lodahl's fundamental definition of the apostolicity of the church. As with many other writers, Lodahl asserts that the distinctive Protestant view of apostolicity is to be found in the faithful preaching of the message, first granted to the apostles, and not in any churchly hierarchy, structure, or institution, which is how Roman Catholics tend to define apostolicity. Lodahl also reinforces a point made in the introduction, namely, that for Protestants, the church's true apostolicity is best demonstrated under the preaching of the Word and the redemptive exercise of the sacraments.

Guided Discussion: Ecclesiological Story Problems

(20 minutes)

We have now had brief encounters with the four marks of the church. How do these figure in the real world? We are going to discuss some situations you may encounter as you pastor in the Church of the Nazarene. Please reflect on the situation as it is given, and then indicate which of the four marks might help to clarify the situation. Some situations may call for more than one mark of the church. Be prepared to give a justification for your answer.

Allow for interaction and discussion of these situations.

1. You are being ordained by the general superintendent at the local district assembly. He places his hands on your head and says the words of commissioning and ordaining.
2. One of your leading church board members was born into a Roman Catholic family and was baptized in the Roman tradition. His Christian faith never took root in the Roman Catholic church. Later, while a college student, he was saved in a Nazarene church, and has been a devoted member ever since. At times this board member has some mean and hateful things to say about the Roman Catholic church. He does not believe the pope is the antichrist, but thinks Catholics are idolaters who worship the Virgin Mary and who believe in

salvation by good works, not by grace through faith.

How would you counsel this person?

3. You are starting out as a Nazarene pastor and have joined the town clergy association. You strike up a friendship with a United Methodist pastor and have lunch with her one day. She questions you as to why the Church of the Nazarene is not a member of the National Council of Churches or the World Council of Churches.

What do you say?

4. As a member of the town clergy association you attend the monthly luncheon meetings. At one of them you notice that several of the town clergy order glasses of wine with their lunches. This disturbs you a great deal, because as a Nazarene you follow the path of total abstinence from alcohol.
5. You send your daughter off to attend a Nazarene university. She is a first-year student. She does not have a strong identification with the Nazarene church you pastor. At Christmas vacation she informs you she is in love with a Pentecostal young man she met at the university, and she intends to join this church when she returns to school in January.
6. You pastor a fairly large Nazarene church in a major U.S. city. In the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, you are asked to participate in an interfaith service of healing and reconciliation. You have been asked to pray the benediction. Eight to ten thousand people are expected to attend the service. Islamic clerics and Jewish rabbis will take part in this service, as will three or four Christian ministers and priests. You understand this will not be an explicitly *Christian* service, but yet you have been asked to represent not only the Christian faith but also the Church of the Nazarene.

What do you do?

7. A church member is ill in a Roman Catholic hospital. While you are calling upon her, to offer cheer and encouragement, you happen to meet one of the Catholic hospital chaplains, who is making the rounds. From looking at you, he senses you are a minister. He is interested in theology, and asks

you about some of the distinctive doctrines of the Church of the Nazarene.

What do you say to him?

Lecture/Discussion: An Experiment in Thought

(10 minutes)

No one believes the essence of the church is found in the stained-glass windows, bell towers, fellowship centers, and organs typically found therein. The church is a spiritual reality, and can no more be reduced to physical components than a marriage can be boiled down to its being recorded in the county courthouse. And yet who would doubt the symbolic power of the wedding ring or the meaning imparted by all of the adornments of the sanctuary?

In *Models of the Church* Dulles presents views of the church that can be symbolized by some of the following familiar places where the church happens:

Dulles' six models are

- *The Church as Institution*
- *The Church as Mystical Communion*
- *The Church as Sacrament*
- *The Church as Herald*
- *The Church as Servant*
- *The Church as Community of Disciples*

- cottage prayer meeting
- urban soup kitchen
- Salvation Army street preaching
- massive cathedral
- neighborhood church on the corner
- social service agency

Allow for response.

Which of these typical examples do you associate with best fulfilling the four marks of the church?

Where among these do you desire to worship?

Suggestion for Learning Enhancement

The instructor could bring to class an art book showing the various representative styles churches may take. Ask students to describe where they worship, and whether their church home is a true representation of their theological and spiritual beliefs.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

The four marks of the church were born in the 4th century.

Are they as relevant today as they were then?

Look Ahead

The next two lessons will be about the theology of the sacraments.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

How is the Church of the Nazarene to be evaluated in light of the four marks of the Church presented in this lesson?

- Write a three-page essay answering this question.
- Refer to the Nazarene *Manual* statements about the church.

Write in your journal. Reflect on the hymn, "The Church's One Foundation." What other hymn(s) have come to mind during this study of The Church?

The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ, her Lord.
She is His new creation
By water and the Word.
From heav'n He came and sought her
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her
And for her life He died.

"The Church's One Foundation,"
Sing to the Lord, 668.

Punctuate the Finish

"The Church exists by mission as a fire does by burning."

Emil Brunner

"The Church's existence is a continual alternation between two phases. Like systole and diastole in the movement of the heart, like inhalation and exhalation in the process of breathing, assembly and mission succeed each other in the life of the Church. Discipleship would be stunted unless it included both the centripetal phase of worship and the centrifugal

Models of the Church, 211-12.

phase of mission. Mission, in turn, implies both evangelization and service."

Avery Dulles

Lesson 14

Theology of the Sacraments, Part 1

Lesson Overview

Schedule

| Start Time | Task or Topic | Learning Activity | Materials Needed |
|------------|---|----------------------|---|
| 0:00 | Introduction | Orient | Student Guide Resource 14-1 |
| 0:10 | What Is a Sacrament and Why Does It Matter? | Lecture | Resource 14-2 Resource 14-3 |
| 0:35 | Examining the Sacramental Mystery | Lecture/Small Groups | Resource 14-4 Resource 14-5 Resource 14-6 |
| 1:00 | The Sacrament of Baptism | Lecture | Resource 14-7 Resource 14-8 |
| 1:25 | Lesson Close | Review, Assign | Student Guide |

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Borgen, Ole E. *John Wesley on the Sacraments*. Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1985.

Dunning, H. Ray. *Grace, Faith, and Holiness*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988, ch. 17.

Grider, J. Kenneth. *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994, ch. 19.

Lodahl, Michael. *The Story of God: Wesleyan Theology and Biblical Narrative*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994, ch. 22.

Macquarrie, John. *A Guide to the Sacraments*. New York: Continuum, 1997, chs. 1, 5-7.

Pelikan, Jaroslav. "Baptism," "Eucharist," "Sacrament." In *The Melody of Theology: A Philosophical Dictionary*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.

_____. *The Riddle of Roman Catholicism*. New York: Abingdon Press, 1959, ch. VIII. Although somewhat dated, this is still a valid Protestant overview and critique of the Roman Catholic sacramental system. Pelikan was Lutheran at the time of his writing this, and has since shifted his allegiance to Eastern Orthodoxy, so some of his views may have changed and moderated.

Staples, Rob L. *Outward Sign and Inward Grace: The Place of Sacraments in Wesleyan Spirituality*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1991.

_____. "Sacraments," "Baptism," "Paedobaptism," "Eucharist." In *Words of Faith: An Easy Reference to Theological Terms*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2001.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Call on 2 or 3 students to read their papers.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

This lesson is the first of two concerning the sacraments. Protestants typically recognize two sacraments: baptism and the Lord's Supper. In this lesson we will discuss baptism, preceded by some general considerations of how a sacrament is to be defined, and why the observance of the sacraments is important for Christian worship.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should

- appreciate the meaning of "sacrament" and the overall place sacramental theology has within Christian theology
- encourage students to be both appreciative and evaluative toward their sacramental heritage in the Church of the Nazarene
- focus on the sacrament of baptism

Motivator

Refer to Resource 14-1 in the Student Guide.

"The highest cannot be spoken; it can only be acted."

Goethe

"Teach me, my God and King, in all things thee to see."

George Herbert

"Christianity is the most avowedly materialistic of all the great religions."

William Temple

Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees takes off his shoes,
The rest sit round and pluck blackberries.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Lesson Body

Lecture: What Is a Sacrament and Why Does It Matter?

(25 minutes)

Sacraments Are Pointers to Grace

Dr. Leupp writes, "For many years we lived across the street from a very wise woman who was more conversant in the arts than anyone I have ever known. She wanted to expose herself to the best of everything, by her own admission. She thus watched the World Series, even though not a big baseball fan.

"One Sunday morning I accompanied her to a local movie 'triple,' where one of the theaters hosted a 'new age' worship service. My friend had a long affiliation with mainline Protestantism, and did not have crazy ideas. Yet she was somehow drawn to this new spirituality, even though well past the middle of her life.

"About the only thing I remember from this dreadful service is how it opened with prayer. There were two or three officiates on the stage of this movie theater, and one or two of them offered prayers. The ascending prayers offered no hint of remorse or confession, but only of expected blessings and outpourings of goodness from some great beyond.

"That was fine. I had heard many prayers like that in Christian worship services. But what I could not stomach was how one of them congratulated the other after the prayer, saying what a lovely prayer it had been. At that point I knew I was on foreign, if not enemy, territory."

The Christian God does not limit imagination and creativity, but is and remains a jealous God. Humility, openness, gratefulness, confession, thanksgiving—all of these and a dozen additional attitudes are appropriate when approaching the triune God in prayer. But what *can never be* acceptable is the pervasive sense of *my* worth, *my* eloquence, *my* goodness when standing before God.

Those new age practitioners were not worshiping God. They were really worshiping themselves. When we meet the God of all graces through the sacraments we understand we are meeting the One, True God. We understand this because Jesus Christ was Himself the

one who instituted these sacraments. We further understand that observing the sacraments reminds us once again of the centrality of both Creation and Incarnation; creation, because God fashioned the world out of nothing and called it good, and Incarnation because in the fullness of time the Father's Eternal Word took our flesh upon himself.

The Story of God, 177.

We entirely agree with Michael Lodahl's assertion that the sacraments "are an important means by which most Christians affirm that God not only creates this physical realm but also operates in and through it, blessing it with His own holy presence. In the use of the sacraments, most Christians affirm that the created order is not a roadblock or a hurdle to overcome in reaching God; rather, it is His handiwork and thus a way in which the Creator can touch us with grace."

"Grace" stands at the conclusion of Lodahl's sentence, and stands at the start of any consideration of the Christian sacraments. Indeed, discussion of the sacraments is often included under the broader heading of "The Means of Grace."

John Wesley's sermon "The Means of Grace" is well worth consulting. Therein he names the chief means of grace as

Section II.1.

prayer, whether in secret or with the great congregation; searching the Scriptures (which implies reading, hearing, and meditating thereon) and receiving the Lord's Supper, eating bread and drinking wine in remembrance of him; and these we believe to be ordained of God as the ordinary channels of conveying his grace to the souls of men.

Section V.3.

At other times Wesley also numbered fasting and "Christian conference," meeting with likeminded Christians, among the means of grace. Toward the close of his sermon he writes that these means of grace "are varied, transposed, and [may be] combined together in a thousand different ways." This means there is no limit to the creativity of the Holy Spirit in making grace available to the thirsting soul.

How to Define Sacrament?

If grace is to be a primary pointer to the presence of the sacramental, and if grace is by definition infinite and never-ending, then the same might be said about the sacramental. The sacramental principle might be so

profuse and so widespread as to resist easy definition and “fencing in.” In fact, in the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church recognized as many as 30 sacraments. Acts such as the laying on of hands and an exorcism performed by a priest were thought to be sacraments.

In 1439 the Council of Florence set the list of sacraments at seven: Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. Nazarene theologian Rob Staples dedicates his book on the sacraments to his wife, Marcella, commenting, “we are not Catholics, but our marriage has been a sacrament anyway.” This list of seven was ratified by the Council of Trent (1545-63).

Refer to Resource 14-2 in the Student Guide.

Words of Faith, 85.

Rob Staples borrows wisdom from some of the greatest Christian theologians to aid our understanding of what a sacrament is. John Wesley viewed a sacrament as “an outward sign of inward grace, and a means whereby we receive the same.” Prior to that Augustine had offered “a short and almost perfect definition,” namely, “visible words.” Staples elaborates, “preaching and teaching are audible words that convey a message through the hearing of the ear. But a visible word is any sign or action that conveys a message by being *done* and *seen*.”

Take time for the students to look up a couple of these verses.

The Melody of Theology, 168, 170.

The Latin word *sacramentum* is the source of our English word “sacrament.” This word was used to translate the Greek word for “mystery” in the Latin New Testament, which suggests of course that a sacrament is imbued with mystery. See Colossians 1:26; Ephesians 3:4, 9; 6:19. Regarding the meaning of mystery in the New Testament, Jaroslav Pelikan writes that mystery takes us to the realm of revelation, and mystery thus refers “to awe rather than merely to ignorance.” As related to the sacraments, what makes them mysterious “was that within and beyond—‘in, with, and under,’ to use the phraseology of Luther’s Small Catechism—an empirical reality such as water or bread or oil there was at work a divine reality of grace that could not be empirically verified.”

Staples highlights two meanings of the Latin *sacramentum* that together clarify our understanding of what a sacrament is and how it works.

- One meaning involved “a sum of money that both parties to a lawsuit deposited with a third party,” something like the escrow system of today. This reinforces our view that a sacrament utilizes some physical element—water, bread, juice—to convey a spiritual meaning.

Words of Faith, 85.

- *Sacramentum* also meant an oath of allegiance taken by a Roman soldier in pledge of his honor to defend the Roman Empire. This meaning points to “the word of promise that accompanies the sign and without which the sign would not have its sacramental character.”

As was suggested, sacramental theology builds on insights gained through thinking about Creation and Incarnation. Briefly put:

Refer to Resource 14-3 in the Student Guide.

“Sacrament,” in The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, eds. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

The fundamental mystery is the Incarnation of Christ, and, depending on that, the Church, His Body, through which He communicates Himself to mankind. This communication is accompanied through certain symbolic acts (e.g. the washing of Baptism, the meal of the Eucharist) interpreted by the Gospel and the response of faith.

How have Protestants arrived at only two sacraments, when many Christians observe seven? The simple answer is because *Christ instituted these* and not others. J. Kenneth Grider even suggests that today many Roman Catholics agree with Protestants that only baptism and the Lord’s Supper were in reality instituted by Christ alone. Grider’s analysis is helpful:

Sacraments are needed . . . because they were instituted by Christ himself. Since our Christian faith is rooted in history, a particular history, we are not at liberty to decide the things that will bring special focus to our faith. Christ already did this, in a certain way at a certain time in history, as our Lord and Savior, the Head of the Church. Thus we speak of baptism and the Supper as dominically instituted—instituted by the Lord himself.

Wesleyan-Holiness Theology, 492-93.

In the course of his discussion, Grider mentions several rituals he calls “symbols,” realities such as foot-washing, the holy kiss, laying-on of hands, the lifting up of hands, giving the right hand of fellowship, and anointing with oil. He indicates how sacraments and symbols are similar, and how they differ:

Symbols, like sacraments, are visible acts that aid faith. In both symbols and sacraments, a tangibility of gesture means something more than itself, other than itself. But the New Testament symbols and the two sacraments are also different, in several ways. The symbols are less obligatory than the sacraments are. . . . Life teems with obligations of varying degrees of intensity . . . the obligation to receive the two sacraments is highly intensified. It

Ibid., 495.

is like the obligation to save a friend's life, although it might involve some risk to one's own well-being or even to one's own life. It is like the obligation to maintain one's marriage vows.

The case of foot-washing might constitute a special case, because it seems clear that this was in fact instituted by Jesus Christ himself. Why, then, is foot-washing not to be numbered among the two Protestant sacraments? Grider explains that the New Testament church did not see this act as a sacrament, because it is not urged as obligatory in the Acts of the Apostles or the Epistles, unlike baptism and the Lord's Supper. Christ's institution of the two sacraments was necessarily perpetuated, practiced, and therefore validated by the first Christians.

Lecture/Small Groups: Examining the Sacramental Mystery

(25 minutes)

Doors to the Sacred or God's Body Language

In this section we wish to continue to probe the meaning of sacrament. This might be accomplished in several ways. Grider referred to a "tangibility of gesture" in connection with the sacramental. He also cited Goethe's sentiment that the highest cannot be spoken; it can only be acted.

Small Groups

Divide the class into pairs.

Refer to Resource 14-4 in the Student Guide.

Each pair should make a list of six or eight specific ways in which the human body is used in the course of worship, or the administration of the church's mission.

As missionaries, my wife and I were fascinated by the diverse means different Asian and Pacific cultures chose to greet one another, for example—

- deep bows from the waist, hands behind the back, meaning "I give you my head," used by Japanese and Korean people
- a subtle raising of the eyebrows, to acknowledge the presence of the other, used by Filipinos

Allow about 5 minutes for the students to work together before calling for reports.

Be prepared to demonstrate or act out some of the gestures and body movements.

Possible Examples of Holy Body Language

- the general superintendent lays hands upon the ordinand during the ordination service

You might have other examples to add to those of the class.

- the pastor elevates the Communion cup at the prayer of consecration, or perhaps breaks the one loaf into two
- Sunday School teacher lovingly caresses some young charges as they file out of the classroom
- worshipers “lift up holy hands” during the singing of choruses

The theology of the sacraments teaches that God himself chooses to exercise “body language” in a certain way. Through water, bread, and the cup, the Holy Spirit impresses spiritual meaning upon us, meanings that cannot be divorced casually from the physical qualities that conveyed them to us.

Is There a Nazarene Reluctance?

Some observers might conclude that the Church of the Nazarene does not have a very strong theology of the sacraments. Is this true? If so, why is it true? What can be done to correct this situation?

One of the foundations of Nazarene piety is the freedom of the Holy Spirit. Too much structure, too much form, chases away the Spirit. Rob Staples addresses this very question in the first chapter of *Outward Sign and Inward Grace*, calling it the dilemma between “Spirit” and “Structure.”

H. Ray Dunning highlights the differences between John Wesley’s England and the American frontier, which gave rise to a revivalism that often had little use for the sacramental:

The emphasis on dramatic, emotion-laden, will-oriented experience that resulted in a marked and sudden transformation has resulted in a depreciation of the sacraments.

Nazarenes have tended to view the sacraments too often as mere “outward forms” with little if any spiritual content, but Staples’ entire book is written to correct that falsehood. He writes:

The sacraments, which can ignite and fuel this faith in what God has done for us, are not mere outward forms that are cold, lifeless, speculative, rational, dispassionate, and nonexperiential. On the contrary, they are alive and teeming with *imagination*.

A stronger sense of the Church as the *Body* of Christ will encourage Nazarenes toward a deeper sacramental

Outward Sign and Inward Grace:
The Place of Sacraments in
Wesleyan Spirituality (Kansas City:
Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City,
1991), 21.

Grace, Faith, and Holiness, 549.

Outward Sign, 39.

theology. When baptism is administered, full cognizance must be taken that this is a baptism into the Body of Christ, not a private washing. In connection with a service of baptism I witnessed, the presiding pastor pointed the congregation toward the Apostles' Creed. That was a wise intuition, but what happened next was not: the pastor read the creed by himself, while the congregation sat and listened. How much better it would have been had the entire congregation confessed The Apostles' Creed *with one voice*, thus reinforcing that there is indeed "one body and one Spirit" (Eph 4:4).

The history of the Church of the Nazarene is fast approaching the century mark. Many Nazarenes would trace their history back to the time of John Wesley, and beyond him to the Protestant Reformation. But a more fully engaged sacramental theology would open up all of the riches of Christian history to Nazarene clergy and laity.

Jaroslav Pelikan reminds us of what this "long view" can do for us:

Practically every day for nineteen and one-half centuries, Christians somewhere in the world have gathered around consecrated bread and wine in commemoration of their Lord and in celebration of his presence. . . . this repetition of the sacrament of the Eucharist for nearly three-fourths of a million days in a row stands as a massive instance of the continuity of the church across changes of culture and language, liturgy and theology.

The Melody of Theology, 42.

Are there signs of Nazarene sacramental renewal? The 1991 publication of a major sacramental theology by a Nazarene theologian was undoubtedly encouragement toward sacramental renewal. Has the promise inherent in Rob Staples' *Outward Sign and Inward Grace* yet been realized? It is in the beginning stages.

Refer to Resource 14-5 in the Student Guide.

Encouraging signs would include the following:

- Greater frequency in the serving of the Lord's Supper, to more than once per three months.
- Integration of the time of Holy Communion with the remainder of the worship service, thus avoiding the impression that the Communion observation was only an afterthought that was "tacked on."
- Greater awareness of the church year
- Integration of both baptism and the Lord's Supper with the seasons of the church year.
- Making the option of infant baptism a *real* option to couples inquiring about how best to integrate their

infants and small children into the life of the local church.

Sacraments: Neither an Empty Show nor a Magic Act

Think back to when you graduated from high school or college. *When* was the exact moment of graduation?

- When the president or principal handed you the diploma as you paraded across the stage?
- When you finished the last final examination?
- When your grandmother decided you would be the first one in your family to complete a college degree?

The same series of questions might be applied to marriage. *When* were you really married?

- When the ring was placed on your finger?
- When the minister announced the new couple as husband and wife together?
- When in your heart you knew he or she was the right choice for a life's mate?

Many perplexing questions attach themselves to the observance of the sacraments, but perhaps none more so than how the "outward sign" and the "inward grace" interact with one another. If there is *only* an outward sign, with no accompanying inward grace, it would seem a sacrament might devolve into magic.

A "true believer" might suppose the mere exercise of the sacrament, for example the taking of holy Communion, will have some sort of favorable effect regardless of whether or not the believer really believes in God's grace. On the other side of the fence, if there is *only* inward grace, with no accompanying outward sign, then surely one must wonder what is the point of the outward sign at all. Why not dispense with the sacrament altogether?

John Macquarrie, a theologian of the Church of England, believes we need to hold the inward grace of the sacraments together with the outward sign. If we fail to do this, we disrupt the unity of the sacrament as divine invitation and human response. John Wesley employed the language of outward signs and inward grace when referring to the Lord's Supper—the sermon "The Duty of Constant Communion," Part I, Section 5. He believed God's grace could be and was in fact very effective in the sacraments. Rob Staples allows that Wesley saw the Eucharist as the "sacrament of sanctification."

Refer to Resource 14-6 in the Student Guide.

Staples, Outward Sign, ch. 7.

But this inward and sacramental grace, a continuing gift from God, needs to be expressed in a real, visible, and tangible way. Divine grace may reach us in countless ways, including a well-crafted and convicting sermon. We can rely upon God's inward grace to be abundantly present in the baptismal water and the cup and bread of the Lord's Supper.

A Guide to the Sacraments (*New York: Continuum, 1997*), 72.

If we believe in the unity of inward grace and outward sign, then we may resoundingly answer "yes" to John Macquarrie's question, "Is God active in the whole sacrament, both outward and inward, as we seem to claim when we say that Christ is the true minister of every sacrament?"

God's inward grace is truly and redemptively expressed in the outward sign of the sacraments. Through the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, we participate in and apply the sacramental grace to our lives. For Macquarrie, the real integration of outward sign and inward grace reminds us that the Word of the Father became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Hence a carefully considered sacramental theology supports and is supported by the Incarnation.

Macquarrie writes:

I think we must resist all attempts to separate outward and inward in the sacraments. God has placed us as embodied creatures in a material universe in which things are not *mere* things but bearers of meaning, and, for some poetic souls, every common bush is 'afire with God.' It is a universe which, in the traditional language, God so loved that his very own Son became incarnate in the world.

Ibid., 72.

Lecture: The Sacrament of Baptism

(25 minutes)

Refer to Resource 14-7 in the Student Guide.

Rob Staples designates baptism as the sacrament of initiation and Christian belonging in his extended treatment of this sacrament. In capsule form, he avers:

Baptism marks the Christian as belonging to God. God has always marked His people. Under the old covenant, God ordained the sign of circumcision by which to mark His chosen people (Gen 17: 11). Likewise, baptism is the mark of initiation into the new covenant. In Colossians 2: 11-12, Paul brings the old and the new sacramental symbols together and links them with the death and resurrection of

| | |
|---|---|
| Words of Faith, 87. | Christ. Paul declares that baptism, having replaced circumcision, is now the new <i>outward sign</i> of the <i>inward grace</i> by which the Colossian Christians had been buried and raised with Christ. |
| Outward Sign, 122. | Simply put, "In the New Testament, Christian baptism always carries the meaning of <i>initiation</i> into Christian faith and life." |
| <i>Have different students read some of these references.</i> | Jaroslav Pelikan agrees with Staples as to the initiatory significance of baptism. After surveying some of the New Testament evidence for baptism (Mt 28:19; Jn 3:5; 1 Pet 3:20-22; Rom 6:3-4; Acts 9:17-19) Pelikan concludes, "in the Christian community of the first century baptism was regarded as essential to the new birth and membership in the kingdom of God." |
| The Melody of Theology, 21-22. | Since baptism holds the preeminent place as the normal means of entering the Christian fellowship, it will be helpful to know something about early baptismal practices. Converts underwent a lengthy series of teachings and fasts, lasting several months to a year, to be certain they were truly ready to count the cost of following after the Cross of Jesus Christ. Baptisms ordinarily took place during the Easter weekend. |
| | John Macquarrie gives us some hint of what it was like: |
| Guide to the Sacraments, 62. | The candidates would descend the steps into the water, where they would be immersed three times in the name of the Holy Trinity. Then they would emerge from the pool on the other side, new creations who had died to their old selves and were now incorporated into the body of Christ. At that point they might receive lighted candles, for baptism was sometimes called <i>photismos</i> , "enlightenment" . . . The connection of baptism with enlightenment and the great stress laid on instruction in the early church is an important reminder of the necessity to keep word and sacrament together, for if the word is neglected, the sacrament loses its meaning and becomes a mere convention or even a superstition. |
| | Alert students will note that immersion seems to have been the favored baptismal method for the early Christians. Running water was also favored. From this we might assume that <i>only</i> immersion is acceptable as the preferred method of baptism. However, Staples cautions: |

Words of Faith, 88.

Those who favor immersion must be careful not to denigrate the other modes [sprinkling and pouring]. Some seem to think that the more water there is, the more valid the baptism. But baptism is a *symbolic* action . . . Size and amount are not significant factors in symbolism.

Five Meanings of Baptism in the Theology of Rob Staples

In chapter 5 of *Outward Sign and Inward Grace* Staples offers five interrelated meanings of baptism. We can only hint at his broader picture, summarizing some of his main ideas.

A deep pastoral relevance permeates Staples' work. But that is only in keeping with how the New Testament approaches baptism. Staples is correct in assessing that New Testament ways of describing baptism

Outward Sign, 121-22.

are strikingly natural in their form. They are not cast in rational categories but in experiences from everyday life, such as birth, washing, putting on clothes, death, and burial. They are not abstractions but daily events. They are images with an amazing richness and variety.

Refer to Resource 14-8 in the Student Guide.

Bearing the Mark of Christ

Outward Sign, 123.

Parallels between God's marking of Cain (Gen 4: 15) and baptism are instructive, although not explicitly mentioned in the New Testament. The reality of grace provides one parallel: "In His grace, God finds us where He found Cain—lonely, fearful, guilty, and estranged from the community by our own waywardness."

Ibid., 125.

Baptism also bears some resemblance to circumcision under the old covenant. Like circumcision, baptism "is a mark of the agreement between God's grace and our response. Not of His grace alone, but 'through faith.' Not of our response alone, but 'the working of God.' It is the seal stamped both on His initiative and our response."

Baptism is a powerful reminder that God is a God who makes and keeps covenants with His people. Through the use of a physical reminder, God bound himself to His covenant people. The sign given to Moses was the Passover (Exodus 12) and to Noah the rainbow (Gen 9:8-17). To Abraham was given the sign of

circumcision, and this sign is continued in the New Testament by baptism, as sign in the covenant of grace.

To bear the mark of Christ is at the same time to bear His name. Staples makes mention of the fact that the first Christian baptisms, in the Acts of the Apostles, were in the name of Jesus Christ, and not in the "thrice-blessed" name of the Holy Trinity. There is no conflict here, because baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, and in the triune name, refer to the same person.

Dying the Death of Christ

We often neglect to link baptism with the cross of Jesus Christ, supposing that only the sacrament of holy Communion can bring us into the presence of the Crucified One. On the contrary, Staples writes:

We must let the water and the Blood bind us to Calvary. Failure to remember that water as well as blood flowed from His wounded side has, for many people, made baptism a less-meaningful symbol than the Lord's Supper. When the water of baptism is separated from the blood of the Cross, baptism loses its significance for many Christians, and the focus of attention wanders from Christ to the skill of the minister, or the structure of the baptistry, or the wet clothing after immersion . . . Such "missing of the mark" is nothing short of tragic.

Ibid., 134.

Noted Bible scholar Oscar Cullman sees the "general baptism" of Jesus Christ as an indicator of prevenient grace made available for everyone. This grace is given to all, regardless of how anyone might or might not respond to grace by faith. Cullman believes the baptismal grace provided by Jesus Christ "*is offered in entire independence of the decision of faith and understanding of those who benefit from it.*" Baptismal grace has its foundation here, and it is in the strictest sense 'prevenient grace.'"

Quoted in Ibid., 136.

Jesus Christ underwent a baptism of blood through His crucifixion. Jesus lamented, "I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed!" (Lk 12:50). "This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ" (1 Jn 5:6). "The baptismal death of Jesus completed once for all on the Cross becomes the foundation for Christian baptism." Is the simple act of baptism itself enough to save a person from sin? Staples suggests, "the act of being baptized does not of itself forgive and cleanse me. But

Ibid.

the One who was baptized for me by the death of the Cross, and in whose name I am baptized—*He* forgives me from the guilt of sin and delivers me from its power.”

Living the Life of Christ

The normal New Testament pattern is that one will first come to faith in the Resurrected Christ, and then in testimony to this faith will be baptized. Staples explains:

Ibid., 143.

In the New Testament, to say the least, the road into the Christian life is wet! Not that the mere ritual of “getting wet,” by itself, saves a person—the New Testament does not teach that. Salvation is by God’s grace through faith (Eph 2:8). But if we are to follow the New Testament pattern, our inward response of faith will be accompanied by the outward symbol of baptism, which is the covenant symbol of God’s prior grace. Baptism makes visible our faith response, but this is only secondary to its primary function of making visible God’s action toward us.

Baptism in the New Testament is *not* discretionary or an optional extra. For the Early Church the experience of saving faith and baptism were almost synonymous. Although saving faith and baptism might be nearly synonymous, this is not to say they are interchangeable. To be baptized is thus a general rule for entering into Christian fellowship, but a rule that does admit some exceptions. John Wesley believed baptism was the ordinary means of coming into the kingdom of God, but under certain conditions it might be difficult if not impossible for someone to be baptized.

What might some of these conditions be?

While baptism is necessarily enjoined upon all Christians for whom it is possible, this is not to endorse the idea of “baptismal regeneration.” Emphatically we receive new life in baptism, but that is not to say there is anything magical or mechanical about being exposed to water that is a “sure fire” means of regeneration. The new life is the resurrection life of Jesus Christ sealed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Receiving the Spirit of Christ

Through the sacrament of baptism, the presence of the Holy Spirit is offered to us in a permanent and abiding

way. Baptism gives two inseparable gifts:

- the forgiveness of sins
- the presence of the Holy Spirit

Rob Staples asserts:

Although baptism and the reception of the Holy Spirit stand in close relation in the New Testament Church, allowance must always be made for the freedom of God in bestowing His Spirit. The important element in baptism is not the exact manner in which the rite is carried out but that to which the rite points—the work of the Spirit in the person who acknowledges the claim of the crucified and risen Christ over his or her life.

Ibid., 152.

Becoming the Body of Christ

The four preceding understandings might be taken to support an individualistic and private piety. It is now important to counteract that dangerous tendency. When the Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost, He might have come to each one individually, but He came as they were knit together in common unity and a common obedience. In this unity was this bestowal truly efficacious and fruitful.

“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Eph 4: 4-6).

What are the seven realities that work together in this verse?

The fact that the Trinitarian baptismal formula—“in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”—is so widely used around the Christian world is rich testimony to the oneness permeating Christian baptism.

Nazarene Article of Faith

XII. Baptism

We believe that Christian baptism, commanded by our Lord, is a sacrament signifying acceptance of the benefits of the atonement of Jesus Christ, to be administered to believers and declarative of their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior, and full purpose of obedience in holiness and righteousness.

Baptism being a symbol of the new covenant, young children may be baptized, upon request of parents or guardians who shall give assurance for them of necessary Christian training.

Manual, 36.

Baptism may be administered by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, according to the choice of the applicant.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Call on several students to name one important concept from this lesson.

Look Ahead

The next lesson is also about the sacraments. We begin with a consideration of infant baptism and then proceed to the Lord's Supper or Eucharist.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Rob Staples wisely suggests that the art of preaching sermons about baptism is nearly defunct in today's evangelical churches. Accordingly, the assignment for this lesson is to write a sermon about baptism.

- First of all, identify five or six relevant New Testament scriptures that are relevant to baptism. Locating Old Testament antecedents that point ahead to baptism might also be wise.
- After the scriptures have been found, studied, and meditated upon, write a six- to eight-page sermon exploring the devotional, theological, spiritual, and ethical relevance of Christian baptism.
- If you have an opportunity to preach the sermon, you might consider incorporating a Renewal of Baptismal Vows (Resource 14-9) as part of the service.

Write in your journal. *What I most remember about my own baptism is _____.* *What I would most like to say to someone contemplating baptism is _____.* (What you would say to someone may depend on that person's chronological age.) Recall the baptismal service in which you most felt the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Punctuate the Finish

"By baptism we enter into covenant with God, into that 'everlasting covenant' which 'he hath commanded for ever'. . .

"By baptism we are admitted into the Church and consequently made members of Christ its Head . . .

*John Wesley, "On Baptism," in
John Wesley, 322.*

"By baptism, we who were 'by nature children of wrath'
are made the children of God."

Lesson 15

Theology of the Sacraments, Part 2

Lesson Overview

Schedule

| Start Time | Task or Topic | Learning Activity | Materials Needed |
|------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| 0:00 | Introduction | Orient | Student Guide Resource 15-1 |
| 0:15 | Infant Baptism | Lecture/Discussion | Resource 15-2 Resource 15-3 Resource 15-4 |
| 0:30 | The Theology of the Eucharist | Lecture | Resource 15-5 Resource 15-6 Resource 15-7 |
| 1:00 | Worshiping in a Sacramental Way | Small Groups | Resource 15-8 |
| 1:25 | Lesson Close | Review, Assign | Student Guide |

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Same as for Lesson 14, emphasizing especially chs. 6-8 of Rob Staples' *Outward Sign and Inward Grace*.

Kinnamon, Michael, and Brian E. Cope, eds. *The Ecumenical Movement*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, 183-89.

Hastings, Adrian, Alistair Mason, and Hugh Pyper, eds. "Eucharist." In *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Lesson Introduction

(15 minutes)

Accountability

In pairs, have the students read each other's sermons.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

This is the second of two lessons on the sacraments. We will consider the theology behind infant baptism, the theology of the Eucharist, and ask you to plan a worship service incorporating the Eucharist.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

- At the end of this lesson, participants should
- investigate the theological questions posed by infant baptism
 - survey the theology of the Lord's Supper, including different historical views and theological interpretations
 - have a more reflective approach to the sacraments, including especially the thoughtful integration into worship

Motivator

Refer to Resource 15-1 in the Student Guide.

Words of Faith, 90.

"To ask if baptism does the baby any good is to ask the wrong question. The right question is 'How is the Church proclaiming the gospel?' Baptism is not primarily an act of the parent or of the child, but of the Church, and of Christ in the Church. The Church contradicts herself when she preaches the gospel of grace and then withholds baptism from her own children. Infant baptism is the visible proclamation of the gospel."

Rob Staples

"The Eucharist . . . is a time for celebration, for praise, and for thanksgiving to God for His works in creation and in redemption. In the Eucharist, the Church speaks on behalf of the whole creation, for the world that God has created is represented at every Supper—in the bread and the fruit of the vine, products of the earth and of human labor; and in the people of the faithful, who make intercession for all humanity. The Eucharist

Ibid., 92.

thus signifies what God desires the whole world to become—an offering of praise to God the Creator, a universal communion in the Body of Christ, and a kingdom of justice, love, and peace in the Holy Spirit.”

Rob Staples

Lesson Body

Lecture/Discussion: Infant Baptism

(15 minutes)

Refer to Resource 15-2 in the Student Guide.

Outward Sign, 172.

In Opposition of Infant Baptism

Everyone who thoughtfully considers the question of infant baptism agrees that there are good points to be made both for and against the practice. Staples says that because the scriptural evidence for and against the practice is not conclusive, the question of infant baptism must be answered *theologically*.

Even so, it will serve our purposes to give some attention to the arguments typically arrayed *against* infant baptism.

- It is true that four entire households were baptized in the New Testament (Acts 16:15, 33; 18:8; 1 Cor 1:16), but there can be no guarantee that any children or infants were baptized.
- Scripture seems to argue that repentance and believing are required of those to be baptized, and infants are not capable of this.
- The Great Commission calls for being made disciples *prior* to being baptized, and this is not possible for children.
- Those infants who have been baptized might assume no further works of repentance and belief await them in the Christian life. They would sense no urgency to being born again.
- Infant baptism contradicts the missionary thrust of the Church. In non-Christian cultures the declaration of faith during baptism cannot be expressed in infant baptism.

In Favor of Infant Baptism

Refer to Resource 15-3 in the Student Guide.

From the outset it must be said that Rob Staples is a strong supporter of infant baptism. A broader practice of infant baptism in the Church of the Nazarene would, he believes, serve several useful purposes:

- A return to what John Wesley believed, even at the expense of contradicting the typical practice of most Holiness churches.
- A more certain appreciation that in any sacramental activity, the actions of God are of far greater moment and consequence than our human responses.
- Has implications for Christian education. If we believe our children are under the umbrella of prevenient grace, then why at some point in their religious instruction is there a dramatic shift to reckon them as sinners?
- Staples supports infant baptism because he believes it is in keeping with the principles of grace that lead to the saved life. T. Forsyth states:

The New Testament Church *practice* . . . is that of a missionary Church. But its *principles* are those of a universal, settled, and triumphant Church. And when, early in its history, the practice of the Church changed to infant Baptism, it was not departing from New Testament principles. It was applying them in a changed way to changed conditions—especially such a principle as the sanctity of the children of the saved (1 Cor 7:14).

Outward Sign, 175.

- Prevenient grace is God's offering of His very self in Jesus Christ, an offer humans may embrace or spurn. This must mean that all baptism, including especially that of infants, is first and foremost an act of God.

Rob Staples continues his position:

How can we say that baptism is an act of God? Surely it is obvious that in baptism, whether adult or infant, *human* agency and action are quite centrally involved. The adult comes to baptism, the parents or guardians bring the child to baptism, and the minister sprinkles or pours the water or immerses the candidate under it. These are all human actions.

But wait! Is not Jesus Christ the Incarnation of God? And is Christ not the Head of the Church? And is not the Church the Body of Christ? And did not the Head command the Body to baptize? If all this is true (and who will say it is not?), then when the Church, in obedience to its Head, baptizes a person,

Ibid., 176.

God is then and there performing an action in His world!

Wesleyan theology is always tuned “in the key of salvation,” and the entire drama of salvation—from first to last—is a symphony of grace, and in particular prevenient grace. If the preeminence of God’s grace is admitted, then Staples’ support of infant baptism falls easily into place. He writes:

The crucial theological principle concerns the nature of the gospel. Specifically, with regard to infant baptism, the question is this: In baptism, *who* does *what*? Is baptism merely a human action, a visible human word in which the person baptized gives testimony to his or her faith and acceptance of the benefits and obligations of the covenant of grace? Or is baptism something more than that? Is baptism, in some way, the visible action (and word) *of God*? These questions apply equally to adult and infant baptism, but the answer given to them will determine the validity of the latter.

Ibid., 174.

Opportunity for Discussion

We have said relatively more in favor of infant baptism than against the practice, because we believe many students—and probably not a few pastors also—will have ample arguments against baptizing infants.

Allow for response.

Are there some other arguments against baptizing infants?

What are additional points to be made in favor of the practice?

Forsyth made reference to the “sanctity of the children of the saved.” Does it make a difference when the child is born into a family that is third, fourth generation Christian?

Staples asked several questions in one of his statements. Let’s consider the questions.

- *In baptism, who does what?*
- *Is baptism merely a human action, a visible human word in which the person baptized gives testimony to his or her faith and acceptance of the benefits and obligations of the covenant of grace?*
- *Or is baptism something more than that?*
- *Is baptism, in some way, the visible action (and word) of God?*

Refer to Resource 15-4 in the Student Guide.

Consider this statement:

It is important that we understand that it is God's prevenient grace that saves us. Long before a child can understand or believe—even before the child exists—God initiated that child's salvation. But isn't this true of adults also? Certainly it is. And in a sense, *all* baptisms are really "infant" baptisms Baptism is a sign of our repentance and faith, but this is not its primary significance. Primarily, it is a sign of divine grace—not a sign of anything *we do* at all. It is a covenant sign, and therefore a sign of the work of God on our behalf that precedes and makes possible our own response. When infants are baptized, it is right and necessary that when they come to maturity, they make their own confession of faith. But they do so with the clear witness that it is not their confession alone that saves them, but the work of God already done for them long before they ever believed.

Outward Sign, 181-82.

Allow for response.

How has this discussion expanded your understanding of the sacraments?

Staples favors infant baptism over infant dedication, and believes much is lost when dedication takes the place of baptism. Among his reasons:

- Focus is removed from God's gracious initiative to human activity and volition.
- It relates faith to an intellectual activity based on age.
- It negates trust in God's promise and power over the helpless.
- It fails to understand God's love for the child in sending His Son so this child might become one with the body of Christ.

Lecture: The Theology of the Eucharist

(30 minutes)

Refer to Resource 15-5 in the Student Guide.

The term "Eucharist" comes from the Greek word meaning "to be thankful" and is being used more and more widely today. Some evangelicals might prefer other designations, of which there are many:

- Communion
- Holy Communion
- The Lord's Supper
- The Table of the Lord
- The Breaking of the Bread

In Roman Catholicism it is called The Mass and Eastern Orthodoxy knows it as The Divine Liturgy.

Some more conservative evangelicals, perhaps fearing the term “sacrament” is too closely identified with Roman Catholicism, choose to speak of “ordinances” instead of sacraments. Under this provision, sacraments lose their expressions of the faith and obedience within the Christian community. To turn a sacrament into an ordinance places the *human response* above the *divine initiative*.

Have the students look at these scriptures.

The New Testament contains four accounts of the institution of the Lord’s Supper. Of these, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 is the oldest. Each of the Synoptic Gospels contains words of institution: Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:14-23.

How important is the observance of the Lord’s Supper?

How many Nazarenes would agree the Eucharist is “the central act of the church’s worship”? Probably not very many. Evangelicalism typically views the sermon as the center point of Christian worship.

The company we keep in table fellowship says a great deal not only about our theology, but about our entire approach to living. Not all Christians have been able to rally around a common understanding of the Lord’s Supper. Nazarenes have typically practiced “open Communion,” meaning participation is possible for anyone who testifies to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ whether they are a member of the local church or not.

Not all churches practice open Communion. Progress has been made toward a broader agreement among all Christians regarding the meaning of the Eucharist, although much remains to be done. Within the Body of Christ—the Church—participating in Communion should be a place where we come together in what we believe, in Whom we believe.

Historical Approaches to the Eucharist

Areas of Agreement

Pelikan mentions four broad areas of agreement regarding eucharistic practice:

1. This sacrament is “a memorial action in which, by eating and drinking, the church calls to remembrance what Jesus Christ was, said, and did.”
2. “Participation in the Eucharist enhances and deepens the communion of believers not only with Christ but also with one another.”

See Melody of Theology, 78.

3. Sharing in the Eucharist brings to mind the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross.
4. "Jesus Christ is present in the Eucharist in some special way," although there continues to be disagreement regarding how, when, where, and why Jesus is present.

Five Basic Approaches

Refer to Resource 15-6 in the Student Guide.

Transubstantiation

This is the Roman Catholic position, wherein

Melody of Theology, 78.

the elements of the bread and wine are 'transubstantiated' in the body and blood of Christ; that is, their whole substance is converted into the whole substance of the body and blood, although the outward appearances of the elements, their 'accidents,' remain.

Quoted in Outward Sign, 213.

This teaching developed in the Middle Ages. Alexander of Hales, a theologian from that time, defined transubstantiation as the action "by which an actual being, without being destroyed or annihilated, is changed according to its whole substance into another actual being." Many Catholics base their belief in transubstantiation on the realistic language of John 6, for example in verse 53: "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."

Ibid., 215.

Most Protestants would view this theory as "a superstitious bit of magic," to use Staples' phrase in *Outward Sign and Inward Grace*. John Wesley rejected this teaching, calling it a "senseless opinion," that is "attended with consequences hurtful to piety," and also contrary to Scripture, tradition, reason, and the senses.

Transubstantiation teaches that with each new observance of the Mass, the body and blood of Jesus Christ are "re-presented" or offered once again as an atoning sacrifice. For Protestants, one such offering is sufficient.

Ibid., 217.

Newer approaches to transubstantiation have departed from the traditional "substantialist" view toward a more relational one. Now the substance of anything is viewed as conveying the "meaning and purpose of the thing."

Consubstantiation

Melody of Theology, 80.

This is the view associated with Martin Luther and Lutheranism, which “unequivocally affirmed the real presence of the body and blood of Christ ‘in, with, and under’ the bread and wine in the Eucharist.” This doctrine is one step removed from the literalism of transubstantiation.

Staples explains:

Outward Sign, 217.

In this theory, the bread and wine do not miraculously become the body and blood of Christ. They remain what they are—bread and wine. But in the Lord’s Supper, the presence of Christ is *in, with, and under* the elements. When we receive the elements, we also receive the body and blood of Christ, which comes ‘with’ them (hence ‘consubstantiation,’ i.e., ‘with the substance’).”

Ibid., 219.

Luther desired to retain some sense of the bodily presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, as opposed to only a spiritual sense. “For Luther,” Staples writes, “Christ’s risen body has no location in heaven that is distinct from its location on the table. There is no need therefore for Luther to overcome a spatial separation between Christ’s body in heaven and the bread and wine on the table.”

The Christological doctrine known as the “communication of properties” was appropriated by Luther to explain consubstantiation. This asserts that the deity of Jesus Christ shared the qualities of His humanness, and vice versa. This sharing does not violate the completeness and perfection of *both* Jesus’ divinity and His humanity. Luther could therefore assert, “this bread is my body; this wine is my blood,” and vice versa.

In clearer terms, Luther used the analogy of the iron put into the fire. The iron and the fire are here united into one, and yet each maintains its own identity. This stops short of transubstantiation, which would assert that the iron *becomes* the fire.

John Wesley did not accept consubstantiation either. For him, a real and bodily presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist was unacceptable.

The Memorialist View

To one degree or other, both transubstantiation and consubstantiation draw upon the “reality” of the blood

Ibid., 221.

and body of Jesus Christ as present in the holy Communion. With the memorialist stance, this changes. This view is chiefly associated with Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531), whose reforms unfolded among Switzerland's German speakers. He viewed the Eucharist "from the standpoint of the worshipping believer who in the sacrament commemorates Christ's death and its benefits and openly gives expression to personal faith."

Zwingli believed in predestination, and therefore God's electing grace was applied to the believer through divine election, not through the sacraments. Staples suggests that for Zwingli

Ibid., 222.

the sacraments did not convey grace for salvation but were a sign of grace that had already been received by the individual through faith. They constitute a public confession of faith and of allegiance to the church. They have no supernatural content but are merely an external sign of something that has already been accomplished inwardly.

Ibid.

Simplicity marks Zwingli's approach to the Eucharist. There is no elaborate theory of transubstantiation. Instead, the Lord's Supper is primarily a time of fellowship shared between the believer and Jesus Christ and with fellow followers. "Christ is present in the Supper," Staples analyzes, "not in essence or reality, but only by the contemplation of faith. We 'eat' the body of Christ when we believe. If we were to take the 'eating' of Christ's body more literally, we would come into conflict with the Johannine assertion that 'the flesh counts for nothing' (Jn 6:63)."

Zwingli viewed the Lord's Supper as

- Confessing belief in Jesus Christ in the company of other witnesses, thereby obligating one to live a holy life.
- A memorial that would remind us of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This is a "remembrance by reenactment." However, this reenactment did not mean for Zwingli, as for Luther and Roman Catholics, a "Real Presence." It may not be fair to Zwingli to caricature his views as "the real absence," but it remains true that "he did fail to see the Supper as a real feeding on Christ, as a real means of grace. What was lacking was an understanding that at the table there is a real communion with the living Christ, and a real reception of the body and blood of Christ, albeit in a spiritual, and not physical, manner."

Ibid., 223.

Spiritual Presence

This is the view of Reformer John Calvin (1509-64). His views on the Eucharist are to be distinguished from those of both Luther and Zwingli. The latter's "memorialism" was too subjective for Calvin, and Luther's consubstantiation was too close to transubstantiation.

Calvin believed when believers receive the Lord's Supper there is a genuine partaking of the Lord's body and blood, and yet it is a *spiritual* and not a *physical* eating. Lutherans might wish to "enclose Christ in bread" and deny that a spiritual eating is a legitimate eating at all, but Calvin answers, "For us the manner is spiritual because the secret power of the Spirit is the bond of our union with Christ."

Quoted in Ibid., 226.

Without power infused into it by the Holy Spirit, Christ's physical body is of relative slight consequence for the Christian. Likewise, the Holy Spirit conveys the power of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, so we receive the entire Christ. Calvin taught, "Christ descends to us both by the outward symbol and by his Spirit, that he may truly quicken our souls by the substance of his flesh and his blood."

Ibid., 225-26.

Calvin agrees with Luther that Christ is truly present in the Lord's Supper, unlike Zwingli, who places the accent on the believer's faithful contemplation. However, Calvin sees the presence of the Lord as spiritual, which for him represents the highest level of reality, and not literal or physical.

What Wesley Believed

Staples locates Wesley's stance on the Lord's Supper as being closest to John Calvin among the other possible options we have surveyed. Yet Wesley does not simply repeat Calvin's ideas.

Wesley held to the "real presence" of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, and yet went beyond the mere "memorialist" position. Following Calvin, this real presence is not a physical one that can be understood in a corporeal, bodily, or physical way. It is therefore a living spiritual presence.

"Where God acts, there He is" might be one way to summarize Wesley's view. The presence of Jesus Christ is real because it is a "Living Presence." Christ is objectively present in the Lord's Supper, but this is not

Ole Borgen, quoted in Ibid., 227.

"the static presence of an object, but rather as that of a living and acting person *working* through the means."

Interpreting the Eucharist

Refer to Resource 15-7 in the Student Guide.

Let us consider five understandings of the theological substance of the Eucharist.

Thanksgiving to the Father

In its original setting the Eucharist was at least as much a festive time as a solemn one. The true meaning of the Lord's Supper is *fiesta*, not *funeral*. Biological families are happy when they eat together. How much more should Christians be at the table of the Lord?

The meaning here is thanksgiving for what God has accomplished in the history of salvation, including works of creation and redemption. There is some continuity here with the Jewish roots of Christian worship.

Thanksgiving points ahead to our thanks at the future coming in fullness of the kingdom of God.

The first recorded Eucharistic prayers are prayers of thanksgiving.

Outward Sign, 232.

The Eucharist is emblematic of what God desires to happen to the entire world, namely, "an offering and hymn of praise to the Creator, a universal communion in the body of Christ, a kingdom of justice, love and peace in the Holy Spirit."

Commemoration of Christ

The meaning here is commemoration, memorial, and remembrance. William Barclay called the Eucharist "the sacrament of memory."

Jesus told us to remember Him by doing what we do thrice daily, namely, eating and drinking.

We should not only remember backward, to the past, but remember forward also, the future, especially the promise of Jesus' coming again.

We also implore God the Father to remember the work Jesus Christ wrought for the world's redemption.

Sacrifice of Ourselves

Have the students look up these scriptures.

The New Testament words of institution of the Lord's Supper are filled with the idea of sacrifice (Mt 26: 28; Mk 14: 24; Lk 22: 20; 1 Cor 11: 25).

Quoted in Outward Sign, 237.

The sacrifice we bring is of ourselves, a spiritual sacrifice. Luther believed we do not offer Jesus Christ as a sacrifice, which is the Roman Catholic view of transubstantiation, but rather Christ offers *us* as living sacrifices. Luther said that in the Eucharist "we lay ourselves on Christ by a firm faith in his testament and do not otherwise appear before God with our prayer, praise, and sacrifice except through Christ and his mediation."

Ibid., 239.

Through our worship of God we offer up to Him a sacrifice of praise. God's grace preventively enables us to worship Him truthfully and completely. Prayer is defined in the Westminster Shorter Catechism as "an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies."

Fellowship of the Faithful

Allow for response.

Eucharist is for *koinonia*, meaning fellowship, sharing, communion, participation. See 1 Corinthians 10: 16-17.

Recall meals that were especially joyful and celebratory. What made them special?

Genuine table fellowship assumes a common pulling together and cohering that necessarily excludes all evil.

Can you think of any examples of when you might have "violated" the principle of koinonia?

Dr. Leupp writes, "As missionaries living in the unsanitary conditions of the third world, my wife and I sometimes calculated the risks to our health of eating at an after-church fellowship meal in an indigenous church. The dilemma was real enough: Break koinonia *or* expose ourselves to parasites that would wreak havoc in our digestive tract? Most of the time we stayed and ate with the local people, trying to minimize the risk factors, but at least one time we did not."

Paul's admonition against eating and drinking "in an unworthy manner" (1 Cor 11:27) is really a violation of *koinonia*.

Foretaste of the Kingdom

Have students look up these scriptures.

From a biblical perspective, this is the most important meaning of the Eucharist. Let's consider 1 Corinthians 11:26 and Ephesians 1:10.

Quoted in Outward Sign, 243.

William Barclay has written, "there is nothing in Christian worship which so looks to the past, the present and the future, as the sacrament of the Lord's Supper does."

The early Christian prayer "Maranatha!"—"Come, Lord Jesus!"—has a eucharistic meaning. In early Christian liturgy, Eucharist is linked with the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the eating and drinking with Him in the kingdom of heaven.

Eucharist and eschatology refer especially to the messianic banquet, the hope for the Second Coming, and the firstfruits of the Kingdom.

Older and more traditional meanings of the Eucharist have stressed the past, whereas newer ones look more to the future.

Older Views

- The cross and death of Jesus
- Sacrifice as the theme of the atoning, saving death of Jesus
- Memorial and recollection as modes of our participation
- The past and our sin and guilt, which are relieved by Jesus' sacrificial death
- Communion as personal meeting with Jesus Christ
- The supper as a somber event where we recall death on the Cross, our sin, and the costly salvation provided for us

Newer Views

- Resurrection, emphasizing the Risen Christ
- Banquet of joy and festivity
- The presence of Christ as the host of a present celebration
- The future and coming kingdom of God
- Communion as fellowship, our meeting together in Christ
- The supper as a luminous, happy event where we celebrate in a festive mood

Obviously, these two lists are meant to complement and not exclude each other. Old and new together make for a balanced theology.

Small Groups: Worshiping in a Sacramental Way

(25 minutes)

Divide the class into pairs.

Refer to Resource 15-8 in the Student Guide.

In your group prepare a Eucharist service.

Use relevant scriptures when preparing the service, as well as appropriate hymns, as found in *Sing to the Lord*.

In addition, a resource such as *The United Methodist Hymnal* may be used. In the front of the 1989 version—the most recent—there are several sample Communion services, as well as resources for a baptismal service.

At the outset come to a rough consensus on what sort of service to aim for: more traditional and liturgical, more contemporary, or something borrowing from both traditional and contemporary.

The whole worship service should reinforce the sacramental theme. This will avoid the impression commonly given that the observance of the sacraments is a mere appendage to the rest of the service.

Be prepared to share your plan with the class.

Call for reports from each group.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Are there any questions or comments concerning this lesson?

Look Ahead

In the next lesson we will think together about eschatology or the end times.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

This assignment may need to be revised for the student who is already pastoring a church.

Meet with your local Nazarene pastor, and discuss with him or her an upcoming worship service where the sacraments will be celebrated. Ask permission to assist in the planning and the enactment of this service. Try to incorporate some of the ideas gleaned in the small-group activity. Write a one-page report of the meeting.

Read the *Manual* Article of Faith XIII, "The Lord's Supper." How does our statement respond to the historical approaches to the Eucharist? How does our typical Lord's Supper ritual address the five understandings of the theological substance of the eucharist? Write a three-page paper.

Write in your journal. Think about the time when the Lord's Supper was the most meaningful for you. What were the circumstances? What made it so memorable? What can you do to place yourself in an attitude of celebrating the Lord's Supper each time you partake?

Punctuate the Finish

"As our bodies are strengthened by bread and wine, so are our souls by these tokens of the body and the blood of Christ. This is the food of our souls: This gives strength to perform our duty, and leads us on to perfection."

Quoted in Outward Sign, 240.

John Wesley

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Lesson 16

Eschatology

Lesson Overview

Schedule

| Start Time | Task or Topic | Learning Activity | Materials Needed |
|------------|--|--------------------|---|
| 0:00 | Introduction | Orient | Student Guide Resource 16-1 |
| 0:10 | Gaining an Eschatological Bearing | Lecture/Discussion | Resource 16-2 Resource 16-3 Resource 16-4 |
| 0:35 | Two Areas of Special Focus | Lecture/Discussion | Resource 16-5—16-9 |
| 1:00 | Eschatological Themes in Scripture and Hymns | Small Groups | Resource 16-10 Hymnals |
| 1:25 | Lesson Close | Review, Assign | Student Guide |

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Bloesch, Donald G. *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*, Vol. 2. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979, ch. 9.

Dunning, H. Ray. *Grace, Faith, and Holiness*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988, Appendix 1.

_____, ed. *The Second Coming: A Wesleyan Approach to the Doctrine of Last Things*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1995; especially William M. Greathouse, "John Wesley's View of the Last Things," and Dunning, "Presuppositions of a Wesleyan Eschatology."

Grider, J. Kenneth. *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994, ch. 21.

Lodahl, Michael. *The Story of God: Wesleyan Theology and Biblical Narrative*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994, Part VII.

Staples, Rob L. *Words of Faith: An Easy Reference to Theological Terms*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2001, 101-18.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Call on 2 to 3 students to read their papers on Article XIII.

Return and collect homework.

Orientation

This lesson is a quick survey of some relevant issues connected with Christian eschatology, or the doctrine of the last things.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should

- know what particular topics are addressed under the general heading of "eschatology"
- be familiar with representative Nazarene opinion on "the last things"

Motivator

Refer to Resource 16-1 in the Student Guide.

The Story of God, 219.

Quoted in Grace, Faith, and Holiness, 584.

Quoted in *Ibid.*, 572.

"Eschatology is not simply about what we are waiting for God to do; eschatology is about His vision of *shalom* for all creation, a vision He shares with us and, at least to some extent, entrusts to us. If eschatological reflection should ever encourage us to sit on our hands and wait for deliverance, it is counterproductive to God's commitment to covenantal partnership with us."

Michael Lodahl

"Millenarianism cannot be said to be the 'touch-stone' of orthodoxy as is truthfully said regarding the deity of Christ and of spiritual regeneration."

J. B. Chapman

"All these things [regarding the future], we believe, shall come to pass; but how, or in what order, human understanding cannot perfectly teach us, but only the experience of the events themselves."

Augustine

"The end which brings the individual, man and the world in general to a close is precisely the completion

Quoted in Ibid., 576.

of the beginning which came about with (the risen) Christ, and it is no more than this. This final consummation, as the end of all history, does not derive from another event which is still to come: the beginning, which is Christ, is the sole and adequate law of the end, and hence the fulfillment bears in all things the traits of this beginning."

Karl Rahner

Fire and Ice

Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To know that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.

Robert Frost (1923)

Lesson Body

Lecture/Discussion: Gaining an Eschatological Bearing

(25 minutes)

There's a Wideness in Christian Eschatology

Allow for response.

You may need to write the words on a board or overhead.

What do the following theological ideas have in common?

- Kingdom
- *Parousia*
- Advent
- Time
- Death
- Judgment
- Hell
- Millennium
- Glorification

These nine words, and their attendant explanations, are poised at the end of Rob Staples' *Words of Faith*. They are not tacked on as a mere afterthought, are not a theological "caboose," but rather represent the traditional "last things" addressed by Christian eschatology.

What other words and concepts belong to this list? Destiny? Eternity? Heaven?

Tour any museum, watch any movie, visit any national monument, read any novel, and chances are high that you will encounter many of these themes. We are not, however, interested in just *any* approach to the wide assortment of topics herded together under the general heading of eschatology, but in the *Christian*—or more narrowly, the Wesleyan—approach.

Jaroslav Pelikan suggests that both the secular world and the Christian world often laugh and titter when eschatological subjects are broached.

Has that been your experience?

We have all seen dozens of cartoons or illustrations with a bedraggled, bearded, would-be prophet shouting, "Repent! The End of the World Is Here!"

Refer to Resource 16-2 in the Student Guide.

“Eschatology” comes from the Greek *eschaton*, meaning “last” or “end.” When we think of the last things we obviously think of the “end” of all things. Michael Lodahl persuasively reminds us that the word “end” has two different meanings. The most common meaning of “end” is simply “the temporal conclusion of some process.” When 12 Noon arrives in some sanctuaries, many parishioners slip furtive glances at their watches, wondering if the worship service will ever *end*. The second and related meaning of “end” is “the goal or purpose of some action.” The desired *end* of the evangelist’s sermon was undoubtedly to see sinners lining the church altar questing after forgiveness.

The Story of God, 205.

Lodahl allows that when people wonder about the “end times” of eschatology, typically they have in mind the first of the two meanings. “In this case,” Lodahl writes, “eschatology is thought to address some timetable of end-time events that mark the ticking down of creation’s clock to the finale of the world as we know it, as when the final trumpet sounds. The end of this age, then, is marked by the second coming of Christ, the general resurrection of the dead, and the final Judgment.”

Ibid., 206.

But Lodahl rightly senses that the second sense of “end” is more important for Christian theology. “Here we speak of God’s end or goal for His creation, the universe. Eschatology in this vein attempts to speak about what we believe to be God’s intentions for the created order, or where the universe will ‘end up’ as it is brought to its end by His providential leadings.” The Seer’s vision of a new heaven and a new earth—Revelation 21:1, 3-5—is for Lodahl a pointer to where God intends to take His creation.

Nazarenes Are Circumspect When It Comes to Eschatology

When former U.S. Senator Gary Hart ran for president in the 1988 campaign, his Nazarene background came under scrutiny by the secular media. Not understanding the fine points of evangelicalism, many of these media erroneously portrayed the Church of the Nazarene as a bastion of fundamentalism.

Nazarenes share much history and even many theological perspectives with fundamentalism. Nazarenes believe (or ought to!) in the literal second coming of Jesus Christ, which was one of the original

“fundamentals” advanced against the corrosive acids of modernism.

However, the Church of the Nazarene does not endorse an “official” eschatology, in contrast to many fundamentalist groups. It is safe to say that premillennialism—in which it is believed the Second Coming will precede the thousand-year or millennial reign of Jesus Christ—is far and away the preferred eschatology of fundamentalists.

That may also be true of many Nazarenes. J. Kenneth Grider puts his finger on the fatal weakness of this view:

A problem of premillennialism is its tendency to pessimism: that things will get worse and worse until Christ returns. This view tends to discourage implementation of Christ’s kingly rule in the world by evangelism and social improvement programs.

Wesleyan-Holiness Theology, 533.

A major stride ahead for Nazarene eschatology was the 1995 collection of essays published under the heading, *The Second Coming*, and edited by H. Ray Dunning. The 11 thoughtful articles are subsumed under three headings: Biblical, Historical, and Theological. A much fuller picture than we are able to provide is contained therein, especially on biblical and historical matters.

The motives of the writers of this collection seem twofold. There is initially a strong urge to put some distance between Nazarene eschatology and fundamentalism. Dunning warns about falling prey to popular prophecy. Second, what is a constructive Wesleyan eschatology? Much thought is devoted to this important question.

It seems, then, Nazarene theologians would rather say *too little* regarding eschatological matters than say *too much* and thereby fall into dizzy speculation. No fewer than three Nazarene authorities—Greathouse, Dunning, and Lodahl—quote John Wesley’s letter where he refuses to commit his own theological capital to any particular eschatology.

See Dunning, *Grace, Faith, and Holiness*, 569; Lodahl, *The Story of God*, 211; Greathouse, “John Wesley’s View of the Last Things,” in *The Second Coming: A Wesleyan Approach to the Doctrine of Last Things*, ed. H. Ray Dunning (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1995), 141.

Through his interpretation of Revelation 4-20, Johann Bengel came to believe the millennial rule of Jesus Christ was going to begin in the year 1836. But Wesley countered, “I have no opinion at all upon that topic. I can determine nothing about it. These calculations are far above, out of my sight. I have only one thing to do, to save my own soul and those that hear me.”

Wesleyan-Holiness Theology, 548.

Wesley's sentiment also serves to locate the focus of eschatology exactly where it belongs. Grider argues that the Scripture is very clear on matters eschatological, and, "it is clear in teaching that the *eschaton* has appeared and that the *eschaton*, the last thing, is in the main Christ, who himself is both the last thing and the last word to be spoken to us by the creating, redeeming, speaking God."

The destiny of the entire world, then, and that of each individual within it, is wrapped up in Jesus Christ. For humans and nations who accept the ministries of Christ's grace, glorification and heaven await. But judgment, punishment, and hell await the finally impenitent.

Building an Eschatology with Wesleyan Presuppositions

Grace, Faith, and Holiness, 569.

The Nazarene reluctance to take wild eschatological leaps does not suggest there is no interest in the subject, or nothing constructive to be said. In his valuable contribution to *The Second Coming*, Dunning discusses "presuppositions of a Wesleyan eschatology."

Dunning believes "virtually every doctrine has an eschatological facet." Because Wesleyanism is primarily a theology of prevenient grace and salvation, these truths must assert themselves in any consideration of eschatology.

Refer to Resource 16-3 in the Student Guide.

"Presuppositions of a Wesleyan Eschatology," in *The Second Coming*, 190.

Synergism is a concept with which every student of Wesleyan theology must be familiar. It is implied in prevenient grace, for synergism "is a peculiar interpretation of the divine-human relation" in the words of Dunning. Synergism simply teaches that our knowing of God is initiated by Him through His gracious extension of love and mercy in Jesus Christ. As the Holy Spirit enables us, we respond to this offer of grace. *Monergism* is the contrasting position, which "self-consciously preserves both the priority and exclusivity of grace. God's regenerating power acts upon the human person, whose state of being is much like a stone, totally unresponsive until livened by regeneration."

Ibid.

Dunning notes that the Wesleyan support of synergism often draws accusations of both liberalism and Pelagianism, implying Nazarenes do not believe in original sin. To this charge Dunning replies:

Ibid., 190-91.

This accusation does not understand the Wesleyan version of synergism, which is a synergism of grace. The Wesleyan fully concurs with the priority of grace but interprets the gracious activity of God as extended to all persons, granting a capacity not only to respond but also to reject the gospel. This is one aspect of the Wesleyan doctrine of *prevenient grace*."

What does prevenient grace have to do with eschatology? Simply stated, Dunning desires to extend the logic of prevenient grace to all areas of Christian theology. This must mean that humans are active partners in relationship as granted by God's grace. This activity includes, importantly, human choice as it impacts historical outcomes. Some versions of process theology teach that humans are "co-creators" of history with God. Wesleyanism cannot go nearly that far. The sovereign and gracious will of God is preeminent in steering the course of the world. We do not "co-create" with God, but we do respond to God's initiatives and actions.

Ibid., 192.

Prevenient grace affects the Wesleyan outlook on revelation. Wesleyans believe "revelation has both a giving and a receiving side. . . . This means that the word of God (God himself) comes to humanity in the human situation. The 'word' is heard within the social, cultural, historical, and cognitive limitations of the hearer." In turn, this means that, in the words of Frank Carver

Quoted in Ibid., 192-93.

The Scriptures are *incarnational*. As human documents God has given them to us through human history with its literary forms and processes. The Scriptures are conditioned by both time and culture. Therefore, study of them begins at the literary and historical level.

Prevenient grace therefore takes with utmost seriousness human history, because no historical progress or accomplishment is possible without God's undergirding grace. The continuing presence of sin in the world only means people continue to ignore God's grace.

Ibid., 195-96.

If history is viewed from a monergistic angle, then it can be little else than a "pre-arranged puppet show" as the biblical scholar C. H. Dodd phrased it. Dunning comments, "While this sounds reverent, since it ascribes a rigid control to God and reflects a strong sense of divine sovereignty, it substantially takes away human freedom." Instead, history ought to be seen as

having some “loose play at the joints,” as American philosopher and psychologist William James once said.

Dunning’s describes how Wesleyan theology interprets this historical process:

While God is still sovereign over the total process of history, He guides the process within the context of human freedom—this is synergism. Human choices are real and actually influence the course of history. Human beings are not mere pawns being moved about the chessboard by a master chessman and having no input into the gambits in which they participate.

Ibid., 196.

In this connection Michael Lodahl suggests, “Even more important to God than our salvation is our moral agency, our capacity for authentic response to Him. That means hell is truly a ‘live option.’” Here Lodahl seems to be making the important claim that if God saves us without *any evidence* at all of our human cooperation, the one who has been saved has fallen below the minimum standard of what constitutes humanity.

The Story of God, 235.

Remember that presuppositions lay a foundation upon which a structure of thought may be built. In Dunning’s hands, the presuppositions of synergism and prevenient grace are absolutely crucial for any further thoughts about eschatology.

The tendency of much of popular prophecy to exactly correlate current events with “ancient pictures of end-time events” is hence a dangerous trend that does not allow for any “loose play” within human history. These thrusts are for Dunning “based on a view that is antithetical to Wesleyan theology (and, more important, biblical prophecy).”

“Presuppositions,” 197.

What, then, for Dunning is the best way to view and interpret biblical prophecy? The short answer is that history itself is its own interpreter. A longer and more nuanced answer is that

Refer to Resource 16-4 in the Student Guide.

the Wesleyan presupposition of a synergistic view of history does not invalidate predictive prophecy. It does give it a dynamic character that precludes the possibility of writing history in advance in specific detail. The history of prophecy reflects this truth, since claimed fulfillments usually do not correlate literally with the “prediction” in question.

“Presuppositions,” 197.

Quoted Ibid., 198.

To clarify Dunning's meaning, let us return to the quotation from Augustine used earlier in Resource 16-1: "All these things, we believe, shall come to pass; but how, or in what order, human understanding cannot perfectly teach us, but only the experience of the events themselves." This is not exactly the same as saying "hindsight is 20/20," but the flavor of this familiar aphorism inhabits Augustine's thought. We may begin from the actual events themselves as we experience them, and from that solid basis move backward to the prophecy that predicted what in fact did take place. For Dunning this seems a safer path to tread.

"Presuppositions," 201-02.

All of this may sound confusing, but Dunning finishes his closely argued essay with the clarity of Jesus Christ. All eschatology, and indeed all theology, must necessarily have a Christological focus. "One can say," Dunning confesses, "that in Jesus the eschaton has already occurred, or perhaps more properly, has begun to occur. His resurrection is the firstfruits of the final resurrection. The Spirit He bestows upon His disciples is a foretaste of the glory that shall follow. The salvation He provides is only the beginning of a final reversal of the consequences of the Fall, and the peace (shalom) He places in the hearts of His people foreshadows the universal shalom He intends to establish at the final consummation of the Kingdom."

Lecture: Two Areas of Special Focus

(25 minutes)

The Millennium

Passing mention has already been made of premillennialism, and at least one of its weaknesses. The word "millennium," as all will know, means one thousand.

Refer to Resource 16-5 in the Student Guide.

Three major theories address how this thousand-year reign relates chronologically to the Second Coming:

- Premillennialism—the Second Coming will precede the thousand-year reign of Christ
- Postmillennialism—the Second Coming will follow the thousand-year reign
- Amillennialism—there will be no literal, earthly, thousand-year reign

In each theory are variations and subtheories.

Dunning lays out the various millennial options without really committing himself to one of them. He closes his treatment with the cautionary words of J. B. Chapman quoted in Resource 16-1: "Millenarianism cannot be

Quoted in Grace, Faith, and Holiness, 584.

said to be the 'touch-stone' of orthodoxy as is truthfully said regarding the deity of Christ and of spiritual regeneration."

J. Kenneth Grider is much more forthcoming in endorsing a particular vision of the millennium. He believes in what he calls "realized millennialism," admitting this is a sort of hybrid of postmillennialism and amillennialism. Here is Grider's description:

This views the millennium as the whole Church-Age time between Christ's two advents, during which Christ truly reigns over the dead in Christ now in the intermediate state and especially over the martyred dead (see Rev. 20:1-7), and more or less over the whole world, because Satan is only a limping sovereign due to Christ's resurrection and the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The word "realized" is used with "millennium" to affirm that we are in a real millennium, a real reign of Christ over a kingdom.

Wesleyan-Holiness Theology, 535.

Grider admits his position is very close to postmillennialism, but does not call it that for two reasons. Many of those who call themselves postmillennial do not believe the millennium has actually started, and furthermore affirm that once it has started, it will march inexorably to the salvation of *all* beings. But Grider rejects both of those assertions.

Twelve supports for this view are advanced by Grider. In capsule form, they are:

Refer to Resource 16-6 in the Student Guide.

1. Affirms that Jesus Christ is *presently* reigning over a kingdom.
2. Historical precedent. From Augustine in the 5th century until the 16th-century Protestant Reformation, this view was nearly universally held.
3. Agrees with the plain meaning of Rev 20:1-7.
4. Encourages Christian social action and ministries of compassion.
5. Allows for the belief that the second coming of Christ can occur at any time.
6. The Church is now viewed as the True Israel.
7. This view strongly presses for the universal proclamation of the gospel.
8. Allows for a tribulation.
9. The time of probation is ended when the Second Coming occurs.
10. The important events that will happen at the end of the world are ranged together closely. These are the Second Coming, the defeat of all alien and demonic powers, the Last Judgment, the assigning

of humans to either heaven or hell.

11. This view agrees with the Apostles' Creed. Jesus Christ "will come to judge the quick and the dead."
12. The customary teachings of John Wesley and the Holiness Movement can be accommodated to this perspective.

Heaven and Hell

Jean Paul Sartre, a French writer who did not believe in God, said in one of his works, "Hell is other people."

T.S. Eliot, a poet who was a Christian, said, "Hell is oneself;" that is, each person is capable of dwelling in a hell of his or her own making.

Sartre's diagnosis is much more dire than Eliot's. If hell is oneself, one might through the grace of God do something about it, but if hell is other people, finding release might be much more complicated.

John Wesley has sometimes been called a universalist, meaning all will finally come to repentance and enjoy the eternal bliss of heaven. Wesley did believe in a *universalism of grace*, that grace remains free for all and free in all. But Wesley harbored no illusions that everyone would avail of the grace freely offered. There would be a hell, and it would be populated with those who were finally impenitent.

Michael Lodahl reminds us why Wesleyans must believe in hell:

For many people, both Christian and otherwise, the idea of eternal damnation is distasteful and, according to some, contrary to the biblical emphasis upon God's love. But if in fact love is about mutual relationship, then one could argue that *universalism*, or the idea that all people will somehow finally be saved, is in fact the perspective that is truly contrary to divine love. It is because the Arminian-Wesleyan position is so thoroughly insistent upon the importance of human *response* to divine grace that it cannot embrace universalism, as inviting as it might be. The doctrine of eternal damnation, or hell, is in fact the logical outcome of the biblical affirmation of human responsibility before God.

It obviously remains an open question as to what hell will be like. Some will take the biblical descriptions more or less literally. Lodahl is one who apparently cannot do this, for he claims:

Refer to Resource 16-7 in the Student Guide.

The Story of God, 235.

Hell cannot be thought of as eternal sadistic torture, or it is not worthy of our belief in God as revealed in Jesus Christ. At the same time, it must not be dismissed or taken lightly, because it underscores, again, our final response-ability before God. It must be taken in all its awful seriousness as the condition of horrid Godlessness, as the ultimate pain of having been severed from the very Source and Giver of life and love. One may hope that somehow even hell may serve a divinely redemptive purpose for those whose destiny it is, but that is to speculate beyond what we know.

Ibid., 236.

The Reformed theologian Donald Bloesch believes when thinking about heaven and hell, the two heresies to be avoided are universalism and double predestination, where God elects some to heaven and sentences others to hell. While God does not send anyone to hell, Bloesch believes hell does indeed serve the purposes of God:

We affirm not an ultimate moral dualism but a duality within an ultimate unity. God will be all in all, and therefore his grace and love will finally encompass all. But this does not mean that his grace and love will be manifest in the same way for every person. For those who reject and deny their Lord and Savior, his love will be destructive and chastening. For those who accept and rejoice in their Savior his love will be restorative and liberating. . . . We affirm that both heaven and hell are products of God's love as well as of his holiness. No one can escape from the love of God, even in the nether darkness (Ps 139:8; Nah 1:8). . . . Hell is exclusion from communion with God, but not exclusion from the presence of God. Even redemptive love is present in hell, but not in the sense that the rejected are brought to redemption; nonetheless, they are ineluctably exposed to redemption.

Essentials of Evangelical Theology, Vol. 2 (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), 225.

Focus on Heaven: Bible Study

Assign students the following scriptures, and have them report back to the class.

You are to focus on what these scriptures say about heaven, and what we will do there, and whether or not we will continue to grow in Christian perfection while in heaven.

- Matthew 25:20-21 and Luke 19:17
- Hebrews 12:22-23
- Revelation 5:9
- Revelation 14:3
- Revelation 20:12

- Revelation 21: 9-27
- Revelation 22: 12

Refer to Resource 16-8 in the Student Guide.

Rob Staples provides a compact and yet satisfying definition of heaven, and links it decisively to the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

Among the persistent aspirations of the human race is the vision of a time of peace and blessedness when the suffering and agony of human history will be overcome. In the language of worship and piety, the most common term for this expectation is "heaven." Heaven is beyond our human ability to fully comprehend. At the least, it will be the final, fulfilling relationship between God and His creation that has been realized in Christ and remains to be realized in the rest of humanity. Heaven is that which Jesus went to prepare for us when He returned to the Father (Jn 14:3). Heaven, then, is the consequence of His resurrection and ascension.

Words of Faith, 117-18.

God's Criteria for Judging Humankind

The presupposition to both heaven and hell clearly is God's judgment of us and all human beings. Michael Lodahl identifies three criteria and standards God uses in judging us. These criteria inevitably say a great deal about who God is and how God chooses to deal with us.

Refer to Resource 16-9 in the Student Guide.

- God is a just judge.
- God has given the responsibility of final judgment to Jesus Christ.
- Each person will be judged according to the light he or she received from God the Holy Spirit, and his or her understanding of the will of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

See The Story of God, 227-33.

Small Groups: Eschatological Themes in Scripture and Hymns

(25 minutes)

Divide the class into groups of 2-3 each.

Refer to Resource 16-10 in the Student Guide.

Allow students to examine several of these hymns and readings. When they have finished, invite them to report their findings to the rest of the class. The instructor should write some on a poster board or white board, and discuss their implications with the class.

Selections 278-289 in *Sing to the Lord* deal thematically with many of the issues of this lesson. Identify eight to ten important teachings that are relevant to eschatology.

How do the hymns relate to the Manual Articles of Faith XV and XVI?

XV. Second Coming of Christ

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will come again; that we who are alive at His coming shall not

precede them that are asleep in Christ Jesus; but that, if we are abiding in Him, we shall be caught up with the risen saints to meet the Lord in the air, so that we shall ever be with the Lord.

XVI. Resurrection, Judgment, and Destiny

We believe in the resurrection of the dead, that the bodies both of the just and of the unjust shall be raised to life and united with their spirits—"they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

We believe in future judgment in which every person shall appear before God to be judged according to his or her deeds in this life.

We believe that glorious and everlasting life is assured to all who savingly believe in, and obediently follow, Jesus Christ our Lord; and that the finally impenitent shall suffer eternally in hell.

Manual, 37-38.

Be prepared to report to the class.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Call on several students to name one important teaching from this lesson.

Look Ahead

The next lesson will be the final lesson of Investigating Christian Theology 2. In it we will offer some thoughts regarding the future of Nazarene theology.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

This assignment may need to be adjusted for cultural relevance.

Using an internet search engine, look up such words as "hell," "heaven," and "the afterlife." Obviously, doing that will result in thousands of responses. Refine the search so more definite results are yielded. After examining the results for 90 to 100 minutes, write a short essay of two to three pages describing what you found, and what this says about current thoughts regarding heaven, hell, and the afterlife in the United States.

Read Resource 16-11, "A Devotional Thought: An Eastern Perspective on the Bible."

Be prepared to show your journal to the instructor during the next class time. The specific entries will not be checked. The instructor will be looking at the overall organization and faithfulness to the journaling assignments.

Write in your journal. Reflect on how much hymns have influenced your thinking about eschatology. How much has popular literature influenced you? Do you think most people know more about popular literature than what the Bible says about eschatology? What can you do as a pastor to help your congregation?

Punctuate the Finish

"Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt."

Daniel 12:2

"Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."

John 3:18

"The vague and tenuous hope that God is too kind to punish the ungodly has become a deadly opiate for the consciences of millions."

A. W. Tozer

Lesson 17

Now and Future Shapes of Nazarene Theology

Lesson Overview

Schedule

| Start Time | Task or Topic | Learning Activity | Materials Needed |
|------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| 0:00 | Introduction | Orient | Student Guide |
| 0:10 | Five Areas of Inquiry and Growth | Lecture | Resources 17-1—17-5 Resource 12-2 |
| 0:35 | Theology and the Kerygma | Lecture/Guided Discussion | Resource 17-6 Resource 17-7 Resource 17-8 |
| 1:00 | A Theological Survey | Personal Evaluation | Resource 17-9 |
| 1:20 | Lesson Close | Review, Assign | Student Guide |

Suggested Reading for Instructor

Articles of Faith for the Church of the Nazarene

John Wesley's sermon "Catholic Spirit," available in the module *The Theology of John Wesley*; it is Resource 4-4 of the Student Guide.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Call on 2 or 3 students to read their essays from the Internet search.

Return and collect homework.

Make arrangements for returning the last homework assignment.

Orientation

In this lesson some general comments will be offered about the future of the Church of the Nazarene. We will pursue our theological goal. The lesson's culmination will be your surveying of your theological awareness now and for the future.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

At the end of this lesson, participants should

- think about the theological future of the Church of the Nazarene
- know the reality that Christian theology is a dialectical enterprise; that is, it must be rooted in the past, focused on the present, and pointed toward the future

Motivator

When theology is meshed into life as it ought to be, it is not mere verbiage nor ivory-tower speculation. It is as practical as the next breath we breathe.

It bites into life, huffing home to people. It helps us more or less articulate our experience of God's grace. It puts wonder into our worship—and the work we do within that saved and saving community we call the Church.

Grider, Wesleyan-Holiness Theology, 15.

Lesson Body

Lecture: Five Areas of Inquiry and Growth

(25 minutes)

“All things are yours . . . all are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God” (1 Cor 3: 21b-22). Some might take Paul’s summary statement to the Corinthians as promoting a kind of “the sky is the limit” approach to Christian doctrine. Our ongoing engagement with the broad and enduring themes of Christian theology has often returned to the love, mercy, and grace of the triune God, and most especially to grace’s point of entry into our world and our lives.

This is prevenient grace. No expression of grace can guarantee ultimate outcomes. The grace of creation endowed us with a free will God is not going to revoke. God refuses to manipulate all of the variables of freedom to conform to His fondest wish—that all creatures would return to Him. Grace offers, humans respond, or refuse to respond. This does not hold God hostage to fickle human whims. God could override human freedom and elect some to heaven, dispatching others to hell, as some forms of Calvinism teach. But Wesleyans believe once God committed himself to the covenant of prevenient grace, there was no looking back.

Prevenient grace fills the forms and adds meat to the framework given first by Scripture, and then by tradition, reason, and experience. If God was not motivated by love to create a world and populate it with free, moral, rational, and responsible humans, what did motivate Him? God’s love is disciplined and directed by His holiness, which promotes righteous relationships with God and among all creatures.

“All things are yours” may imply the future of Nazarene theology might develop in many and varied ways, not all of them in conscious harmony with the received traditions of the past. The Wesleyan quadrilateral of Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience presents itself once again as the best defense against transgressing against these very four pillars of our historical faith.

What might the future hold for Nazarene theology? Five key concepts will be briefly developed.

Refer to Resource 17-1 in the Student Guide.

Evangelical

The theological future of the Church of the Nazarene must remain solidly evangelical, although not fundamentalist. Among the several denominations identified as belonging to the “holiness people,” Nazarenes should continue to lead. Within the broad contours of evangelicalism as a whole, Nazarenes should work to continue the holiness identity. It is what we do best.

There are two related tasks here. One is to promote theological unity within the evangelical world. Holiness people may be uniquely poised to accomplish this. Early Nazarene history was often entwined with that of Pentecostalism, and we share a common heritage of vital immersion in the Holy Spirit. Regarding Baptists and those of the Reformed persuasion, we should not eye them warily, but as common promoters of the gospel.

The second task is to present a solid evangelical front as a witness to the secular world. When John Wesley declared the whole world to be his parish, he was in some ways striking down the barricade between the secular world and the sacred world. He was saying that the whole world is a graced world, if only the world would awaken to grace! Wesley did not compromise the integrity of the gospel, but he made certain the gospel encountered the secular world in terms it would find comprehensible. To do so is not to capitulate to the forces of secularity, but to trust in the convicting power of the Holy Spirit.

Experiential

Refer to Resource 17-2 in the Student Guide.

Nazarenes have perhaps made more of one plank of the Wesleyan quadrilateral—experience—than Wesley would have approved. In the dialectic of Spirit and structure discussed by Rob Staples in *Outward Sign and Inward Grace* Nazarenes more often than not have moved to the Spirit end of the continuum. The manifestations of this Spirit-urgency are well known to those who have been Nazarenes on more than a casual basis.

Annie Dillard, a marvelous writer who is frequently sympathetic to the claims of religious experience, wonders if at some churches the ushers would be better off handing out life preservers rather than bulletins. At any moment, she thinks, the Holy Spirit may come in torrents. God the Spirit has often visited

Nazarene testimony services and altar-time “seasons of prayer” with such power. These episodes of Spirit-descent are not “experience of experience,” but a genuine Pentecostal visitation. Nazarenes should never quench the Spirit, and should exercise caution even in attempting to channel the Holy Spirit into desired ends.

See Philip Jenkins, The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

The 20th and the 21st centuries may come to be known as the centuries of the Holy Spirit. Traditional strongholds of Christianity such as Europe and even the United States may be fading. But the Spirit is never without a witness. New uprisings of the Christian movement are very much in evidence in Asia, Africa, and South America, changing the complexion of Christianity.

The missionary thrusts of the Church of the Nazarene work only when under the direct oversight of the Holy Spirit. As the Nazarene movement grows, Nazarene theology will necessarily draw from a wider palette of Spirit-validated experiences of God. North American experience may continue to be normative to one degree or another, but will no longer dominate as it has in the past.

Papers, responses, and summaries of the proceedings from the First Global Theology Conference can be found online at <http://wesley.nnu.edu/2002-GNTC/>. The proceedings were grouped around four themes: Memory, Mission, Holiness, and Hope.

Even within the United States, the fount of Christian experience is being enriched and renewed from new sources. A woman is the managing editor of *Holiness Today*, formerly the province of men, and several women lead Nazarene theological faculties across the land as deans, department chairs, and even college president. The contributions of persons of color are not as pronounced as they should be, but that is coming. A 2002 global theology conference was convened for the first time outside of the United States, in Guatemala. In time, a General Assembly will be conducted outside of the USA, and a woman or person of color will be elected as general superintendent.

Allow for response.

What were your thoughts as you read the article by Dr. Fukue?

It is written:

“No eye has seen,
no ear has heard,
no mind has conceived
what God has prepared for those who love him”—
but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.

1 Cor 2:9-10

One certain revelation of the Holy Spirit for *this* hour is that His presence cannot be limited to any one segment of the population or any one global area.

Engaging

Refer to Resource 17-3 in the Student Guide.

Nazarenes have a great deal to contribute to the ongoing conversation of Christian theology. Contribution involves not only certain proclamation but also attentive listening. “Engaging” here means Nazarene theologians should become, to a greater extent than they already are, “theologians of culture.” Whereas with both “evangelical” and “experiential” the Nazarene theologian might be able to work with primary or even exclusive reference to the strictly religious, “engaging” casts the net of theological inquiry wider and deeper.

The Church of the Nazarene is in no immediate danger of rejecting Paul’s admonition to the Romans: “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Rom 12: 2). Nazarenes must continue to be vigilant toward the attractions of the world, inasmuch as they align themselves against the purposes of God to redeem the world.

It is difficult if not impossible to work to transform a world one is more or less ignoring. To work toward a theological engagement with culture does not mean accepting the world’s deprivations, but it does mean taking seriously the hopes and aspirations of all people, including those who are indifferent and even hostile to Jesus Christ.

See Christ and Culture (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951).

Recall that among H. Richard Niebuhr’s five paradigms for how Christians are to relate to the world, he lists John Wesley as belonging to his preferred type of “Christ the Transformer of Culture.” Yet many if not most Nazarenes might see themselves as more naturally fitting in with Niebuhr’s first model, “Christ Against Culture.”

Article of Faith X: Entire Sanctification.

Entire sanctification means the soul is “brought into a state of entire devotement to God.” The modifier “entire” might also suggest that in presenting this doctrine to secular people, the disciplines of philosophy, sociology, and psychology cannot be ignored, because they offer competing and often discrepant views about salvation and holiness. In a culture where television talk shows are the arbiter of the whole and fruitful life, Nazarene theologians cannot

shrink back in the comfortable oblivion of preaching to the already committed.

Some Protestant seminaries suggest potential students should take literature, history, philosophy, economics, political science, psychology, etc., at the undergraduate level. The seminary can then infuse theological wisdom into this receptive bed of knowledge. The hope to broaden one's education and overall view of the world is behind "engaging." Some theological seminaries are offering elective classes in the interface between science and religion. Good for them!

Ecumenical

Refer to Resource 17-4 in the Student Guide.

One leading evangelical publisher has sometimes stated its publishing approach to be "ecumenical, yet evangelical." Or perhaps "evangelical, yet also ecumenical." It has been estimated that as many as 70 million Christians trace their theological roots in one way or another to John Wesley. If that is true, the Church of the Nazarene constitutes only a tiny fragment of this whole, and a smaller fragment still of the nearly 2 billion Christians around the world.

Nazarene theologians can and should dip their toes into more ecumenical waters without fear of being carried away on a tide of liberalism. Reference has already been made to how Rob Staples' understanding of the Eucharist is roughly parallel to that of the ecumenical document on "Baptism, Eucharist, and the Ministry." Similar results in other areas of Christian theology might not be typical, but should not be discounted out of hand at the outset.

Phineas Bresee's dictum of "in essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity" need not be a forsaking of Nazarene distinctives. To find the theme of Christian perfection and entire sanctification present in every Christian tradition to one degree or another is no invitation for Nazarene theologians to crow, "I told you so" to their theological colleagues in other denominations. But it is an opportunity to search for deeper unity among Christians.

John Wesley's sermon, "Catholic Spirit," has often been cited as an example of his charitable attitude toward those who did not always agree with him. But this writing and others like it have also led to his being derided as "patron saint of theological indifferentism," meaning Wesley cared nothing at all for theological integrity and taking a firm theological stand when he

believed himself to be supported by Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience.

Wesley did sometimes distinguish between mere “opinion” and essential doctrines that could not be negotiated away. He once wrote, “As to all opinions which do not strike at the root of Christianity, we think and let think.”

What Wesley meant by such sentiments, in Albert Outler’s analysis, was

that religious reality lies deeper than religious conceptuality—as evidenced by those simple yet true believers whose ‘opinions’ may be incompetent and those impeccably ‘orthodox’ persons whose hearts nevertheless remain estranged from God and man. Opinions, then, are ways of comprehending (or miscomprehending) reality. The important thing is that reflection upon reality not be confused with reality itself.

John Wesley, 92.

Nazarene theologians should remain on Wesley’s side in this equation, on the side of those essential truths are the root of Christianity. It is a delicate balancing act—agreeing to broad ecumenical consensus while articulating Nazarene distinctives—but one well worth undertaking.

Ecclesiological

Refer students to Resource 12-2.

The Nazarene Article of Faith on the Church reads as follows:

We believe in the Church, a community that confesses Jesus Christ as Lord, the covenant people of God made new in Christ, the Body of Christ called together by the Holy Spirit through the Word.

God calls the Church to express its life in the unity and fellowship of the Spirit; in worship through the preaching of the Word, observance of the sacraments, and ministry in His name; by obedience to Christ and mutual accountability.

The mission of the Church in the world is to continue the redemptive work of Christ in the power of the Spirit through holy living, evangelism, discipleship, and service.

The Church is a historical reality, which organizes itself in culturally conditioned forms; exists both as local congregations and as a universal body; sets

apart persons called of God for specific ministries. God calls the Church to live under His rule in anticipation of the consummation at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Of the 16 Nazarene articles, this one is number 11. The ten before it are in some ways more “theological” than “practical,” while the five that follow might be more tilted toward the practical. The article on the Church, therefore, functions as a sort of bridge between the theological and the practical. Obviously, the distinction between the theological and the practical is relative, not absolute. Remember that John Wesley’s entire work is often called “practical divinity.”

Refer to Resource 17-5 in the Student Guide.

Nazarene pastors would do well to familiarize themselves with this article. Careful attention to its provisions would promote a richer and fuller preaching of the gospel and worship of the triune God. Nazarene practice has often contradicted the wisdom of this article. The article insists on the communitarian and covenantal reality of the Church, something not sufficiently appreciated by many Nazarenes. The awareness that the Church lives *both* as local congregation *and* universal body is also highly significant, and may reinforce the section on the ecumenical. “Universal body” surely means more than the aggregate total of all Nazarenes around the world. It must refer to the “invisible” Church and the Church universal, meaning all Christians everywhere.

The assurance that the Church “organizes itself in culturally conditioned forms” serves to reinforce the comments in the “engaging” section, because there we suggested a deeper immersion in the surrounding culture, for the sake of knowing it and offering to it the redemption of Jesus Christ.

Some Christian traditions, perhaps especially the Roman Catholic church, begin theology with the doctrine of the Church. Nazarene theology is typically a theology of “what must I do to be saved?” Surely this question of salvation is at the heart of biblical theology, yet the world we find in the Bible is much more communitarian and family oriented than 21st-century America. It is to our great loss if we continue to ignore and sell short the biblical push for true community and covenant. Too many Nazarenes—equally true of too many Christians as a whole—seem concerned with only their own salvation. When that is assured, the broader questions of caring for the earth and social justice are muted and cast aside. As important a question as

salvation must be, it must be seen in a truly biblical light, and not one trumped by American individualism.

Allow for response.

What do you see as what the future holds for Nazarene theology? What issues will be at the forefront?

Lecture/Guided Discussion: Theology and the Kerygma

(25 minutes)

Refer to Resource 17-6 in the Student Guide.

Beacon Dictionary of Theology, ed. Richard S Taylor (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1983), 299.

Ibid.

Christian Theology, Vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), 1246.

Refer to Resource 17-7 in the Student Guide.

The New Testament word *kerygma* means “that which is cried by the herald.” In most New Testament passages it signifies “the proclamation of the redeeming purposes of God in Christ.”

The herald—*kerux*—was the public servant of the king. He summoned the assembly and declared the king’s message. The early Christians saw in this servant who proclaimed the message of the king the role of the Christian preacher. The verb *kerusso* means to preach, to proclaim, to discharge the duties of the herald’s office.

You have not been studying theology merely to meet ordination requirements, nor to arm yourself with big words. As Millard Erickson said, “Theology is not simply to be learned, understood and appreciated . . . There is the additional issue of communication of the message.” The Church certainly hopes your study of theology will make you a more effective servant of the King and the assembly as you proclaim the gospel of God’s redeeming grace revealed in Jesus Christ.

While the whole New Testament is *kerygmatic* in nature, some passages summarize the kerygma into what might be called the preacher’s mission statement. The passages give the essence of the gospel to be proclaimed.

Let’s consider two of these passages:

Romans 1:2-6, 16-17 (NLT)

This Good News was promised long ago by God through his prophets in the holy Scriptures. It is the Good News about his Son, Jesus, who came as a man, born into King David’s royal family line. And Jesus Christ our Lord was shown to be the Son of God when God powerfully raised him from the dead by means of the Holy Spirit. Through Christ, God has given us the privilege and authority to tell Gentiles everywhere what God has done for them, so that they will believe and obey him, bringing glory to his name.

You are among those who have been called to belong to Jesus Christ.

For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes . . . This is accomplished from start to finish by faith.

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 (NLT)

Now let me remind you, dear brothers and sisters, of the Good News I preached to you before. You welcomed it then and still do now, for your faith is built on this wonderful message. And it is this Good News that saves you if you firmly believe it. . . .

I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me—that Christ died for your sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the twelve apostles. After that, he was seen by more than five hundred of his followers at one time . . . Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. Last of all, I saw him, too, long after the others . . . For I am the least of all the apostles, and I am not worthy to be called an apostle after the way I persecuted the church of God.

But whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out his special favor on me . . . yet it was not I but God who was working through me by his grace . . . The important thing is that you believed what we preached to you.

Ministry Mission Statement

Refer to Resource 17-8 in the Student Guide.

Allow time for the students to get some ideas written down, but it will not be a finished product.

The students will probably struggle with this, but it is important for them to form a statement to guide them in their ministry.

Again allow time for the students to get some ideas written down, but again it will not be a finished product.

You or one of the students can be the scribe that writes out ideas.

For the next two minutes you are to write a Pastoral Mission Statement. Consider the reading from Resource 16-11, the comments about the *kerygma*, and the scriptures just read.

Now, pair up with another student and spend about three minutes combining your ideas to write a single statement that represents both of you.

Let us now come together as a class and form a Pastoral Mission Statement that incorporates you the

Use an overhead or board so all can see the ideas presented.

Begin by just writing down all the ideas presented, and allow the class to work out a statement that flows and is comprehensive.

The students may not fully agree on the statement but work for a class mission statement and then challenge them to write a statement to put in their file to which they can frequently refer.

student, the knowledge gained through our study of theology, and what Scripture teaches.

Personal Evaluation: A Theological Survey

(20 minutes)

Refer to Resource 17-9 in the Student Guide.

This survey may take longer than the time allowed.

You can choose to

- *have the students hand in what they have finished in class*
- *take it home to finish and send to you when completed*
- *challenge them to complete it for their own growth and awareness but not turn it in for your review*

While the students are working on the survey check their journals. Make sure they understand that you will not be looking at the specific entries but looking for their faithfulness to the assignment.

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

What more needs to be done to encourage and extend your theological education?

Look Ahead

This concludes the two modules of Christian theology; however, your study and learning has just begun.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Read Resource 17-10, "The Study of Christian Theology." You read this essay for the first lesson of Christian Theology 1. It is now time to revisit its message.

Write in your journal. *Am I now a theologian? Why or why not?*

Punctuate the Finish

A quite specific *astonishment* stands at the beginning of every theological perception, inquiry, and thought, in fact at the root of every theological word. This astonishment is indispensable if theology is to exist and be perpetually renewed as a modest, free, critical, and happy science. If such astonishment is lacking, the whole enterprise of even the best theologian would canker at the roots. On the other hand, as long as even a poor theologian is capable of astonishment, he is not lost to the fulfillment of his task. He remains serviceable as long as the possibility is left open that astonishment may seize him like an armed man.

Karl Barth, Evangelical Theology: An Introduction, trans. Grover Farley (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), 64.

End with a time of prayer for each of the students.

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