The following articles or “conversations” by Dr. Henry Spaulding, President, Mount Vernon Nazarene University, on the Nazarene Articles of Faith were originally presented in a series of weekly letters to the MVNU faculty and staff in which he methodically spelled out the Nazarene Articles of Faith. They were reproduced, with Dr. Spaulding’s permission, in consecutive installments in the Ezine, the weekly e-mail publication of the East Ohio District Church of the Nazarene.

They are presented here as a ready resource for those who are unable to obtain an archived copy of the Ezine. The papers are organized in their entirety broken only by the logical page endings and headings. Excerpts from the original article have been added for emphasis and the headings have been modified for this special edition.

-L. Farthing, Ezine
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Faculty and Staff,

I hope that Christmas was a time of spiritual and physical renewal for you. The season of Advent is the time of year when Christians are reminded that we serve a God who comes to where we are. Fall 2010 certainly had its challenges and joys, but amid all that transpired, Advent reminds us that God is present in all the moments of life. When this University was founded it was in the deep conviction that the Christian faith serves as a rich resource for intellectual pursuits. This also means that we take seriously the "N" in MVNU. This University is proudly an institution of the Church of the Nazarene. Four words help to locate our doctrinal history: Christian, Protestant, Evangelical, and Wesleyan. Each word progressively locates our faith.

The Church of the Nazarene is Christian in that we affirm the divinity of Jesus as we celebrate our Hebraic roots. We are Protestant because we affirm the primacy of Scripture, the priesthood of all believers, and justification by faith. Nazarenes are evangelical because we believe that the grace of God can transform one’s life in a moment. Finally, we are Wesleyan because we believe that the power of sin can be subverted in the life of the believer. Yet, being Nazarene does not diminish our appreciation of the broader contours of the Christian family. MVNU seeks to honor all Christian traditions, but we do this with the pride of knowing who we are in the family. All of us, Nazarene or not, need to understand the basic tenets of the faith, which define our particular history and this University.

I will use the first few paragraphs of the Monday Memo for several weeks to spell out our doctrinal convictions. This week I want to begin by arguing the importance of doctrine for a vital faith.

First, what is doctrine? Donald McKim defines a doctrine as, "that which is taught and believed to be true by a church, [he adds] in various ways churches sanction their official teachings in doctrines" (81). A doctrine represents the considered judgment of a church in dialogue with its experts, the scriptural witness, and the consensus of the faithful. The doctrinal history of a denomination represents the faithfulness of God to a people in the power of the Spirit. Doctrines are not the scripture and they are not delivered by God to the "blank slates" of believers or theologians. Rather doctrines represent the interaction between scripture, tradition, reason, and experience in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition. Doctrines give evidence of the consensus found among the faithful. Doctrine delivers the Church from the fads and whims of sentimentality which often lead the Church astray.

Second, why do we need to worry about doctrine? After all, we have the Bible and that should be all we need. The debate regarding the role of the scripture in our faith cannot be over emphasized. Doctrine names our biblical faith in a manner that provides direction. Wesleyan-Holiness theology and the theological traditions of the Church of the Nazarene affirm the importance of doctrines/catechism/liturgy. There is a sense in which doctrines provide a grammar for our faith. Doctrine serves as a fence which provides boundaries, a sense of history, and an expression of our common faith. Another metaphor for doctrine is beacon in that it guides our work in times of confusion. So long as we can see the beacon we have a point of reference by which to understand how to proceed.

The sixteen doctrines of the Church of the Nazarene express our kinship with the universal Church, but it also names our particularity. Our faith has been hammered out by faithful men and women who have learned to listen to the scripture and the Holy Spirit. While some doctrines have been more difficult to finally settle in the Church of the Nazarene, the continued work of its theologians can be trusted. The level of conversation on our campus can testify to our desire to be found in the truth. Our doctrinal history reflects the dynamism evident in the Church of the Nazarene. But we begin our journey with the understanding that the Church of the Nazarene has doctrines worth understanding. A mind enlivened by the Holy Spirit and disciplined by scripture, tradition, reason, and experience is capable of giving the reason for the hope within.
Theology is the practice of discernment whereby the Church witnesses to the world. Doctrines are essential for theology, but they must never be confused with it. This fundamental difference accounts for why doctrines are in such constant flux in the Church of the Nazarene. We seem to want to do our theology by amending and re-amending our doctrine. The pathway to an adequate theology begins with biblically informed doctrines which serve as markers for the Church to theologize and witness to the world.

Next Monday we will look at Article I - The Triune God. Robert Jenson, the most significant living American theologian, calls the Trinity a compressed telling of the entire Christian narrative. I am looking forward to taking the journey with you.
Sixteen Articles of Faith of the Church of the Nazarene
by Dr. Henry Spaulding

Last week, I began a conversation about the Nazarene Articles of Faith. I want to look at what we believe about God.

Article I:

The Triune God

We believe in one eternally existent, infinite God, Sovereign of the universe; that He only is God, creative and administrative, holy in nature, attributes, and purpose; that He, as God, is Triune in essential being, revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

(Genesis 1; Leviticus 19:2; Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Isaiah 5:16; 6:1-7; 40:18-31; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19-20; John 14:6-27; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 4:4-6; Ephesians 2:13-18)

The Church of the Nazarene affirms the God of the scriptures and the Christian tradition. Little time is spent attempting to prove God to a doubting world. Rather the posture of the Church has been to proclaim God as the eternal gift of presence. The psalmist declares, “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God’” (53: 1a, RSV). Anselm in the medieval person explains that it would take a fool to deny the existence of a Being who by definition exists – God. Nazarenes spend little time on the so-called proofs because the scriptures begin with a God who creates the world. The question is not “Does God exist?”, but “What is God like?” Article I attempts to provide just such a basic description.

God transcends our world, but at the same time He chooses to link with human life. According to Robert Jenson, “God’s story is committed as a story with creatures. And so He too, as it is, can have no identity except as He meets the temporal end toward which creatures live” (The Triune God, 1:65). God stands over the world, but He stands in the world. This is the genius of the Christian faith. Therefore, God who everlastingly exists is related to His creation, especially to His creatures. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the God we address in prayer. Randy Maddox of Duke Divinity School comments on Wesley’s understanding of God,

Wesley’s sympathy lay with those who emphasized how little we humans are capable of knowing or comprehending about the being and attributes of God. And yet, he was convinced that God had entered into meaningful communication with us. For this to happen, God must be willing to condescend to our limited capacities. [Responsible Grace, 49]
The mystery of the Christian faith is that God, who is beyond understanding, links His life to ours forever. Put another way - we are as we are related to God. We are as we are loved.

Article I provides a basic grammar for understanding the nature of God: eternal, infinite, sovereign, creative, holy, and triune. It remains the work of the Church, its theologians, and all believers to think faithfully about how to speak God into the temporal, finite, and dependent. When we speak of the nature of God we join people of faith from Moses to the present in naming the whirlwind (Ezekiel). We do this as a doxological response to the world as proclamation and invitation.

We affirm that God is the Lord of history. It makes a difference when we believe that ultimately history is going somewhere. The will of God reaches across time to lovingly guide life, so that we best understand events from the end. This way of thinking of about God denies the idea that life is merely a matter of the choices we make. While decisions are important and they ultimately make a difference, the most important affirmation for Nazarenes is that God is at work in the world. It is too much to say that God determines all events and it is too little to say that God merely observes the world. God respects our freedom as he fashions the future He intends. This means that God empowers us rather than overpowers us. Article I affirms the transcendent, yet immanent nature of God.

We affirm that God is love. This means that the most basic concept that one can say about God is that He is related to and affected by creation. God makes room in his life for us. He enjoys us. He is affected by us. The power of God is made manifest by His capacity to be present. God hears our prayers. God is moved by our life. The holy love of God defines His essential nature.

We affirm that God is Triune. No doubt this is the most complex, yet fundamental affirmation about God. The doctrine of the trinity is the climax of doctrinal development in the early church.

Robert Jewett writes:

The first Christians were Jews for whom the truth about God was summed up in the familiar words of the Shema, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord. (Deut 6:4)" As they bore witness to their faith, these early Jewish Christians were joined by Gentiles who turned from their many idols to serve this one, true, and living God (1 Thess. 1:9). By such behavior they witnessed to a profound change in their understanding of God. Jewett, God, Revelation, and Creation: 261)

The seeming contradiction that God is both one and three is overcome in the fundamentally Christian affirmation that the one God is revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All attempts to rationalize this end in heresy. Yet, we are called to proclaim the incredibly difficult, but simple truth that God is everlastingly an act of unity. Jewett summarizes this well:

God is the Father of Israel, who in the fullness of time sends the Son to save his people. The Son, in turn, pours out the Spirit on the gathered community at Pentecost. However, it is not salvation history but the eternal relations of the members of the Godhead that account for the universally recognizable order of the trinity. (Jewett: 287)

Article I expresses the hope that in a world of difference and strife the God who is three-in-one everlastingly brings redemption and unity to the world. Yet, it is in Jesus, the Christ that we see all the attributes of God come together. Next week we will look at what we believe about Jesus – the God who walks among us.
Article II

Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Triune Godhead; that He was eternally one with the Father; that He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and was born of the Virgin Mary, so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say the Godhead and manhood, are thus united in one Person very God and very man, the God-man.

We believe that Jesus Christ died for our sins, and that He truly arose from the dead and took again His body, together with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith He ascended into heaven and is there engaged in intercession for us.


The central figure of the New Testament and Christian faith is Jesus Christ. The first four books of the New Testament begins with four voices regarding the story of Jesus. The first reflective affirmation concerning Jesus is simply that he has dwelt among us. Our primal formulation of the gospel is 'Jesus has risen'.

Article Two affirms:

- Second Person of the Trinity
- Eternally with the Father
- Became Incarnate by the Holy Spirit
- Born of the Virgin Mary
- Two whole and perfect natures
- Died for our sins
- Rose from the dead
- Took again his body together with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature
- He ascended to heaven
- Interceding for us

These basic affirmations provide guidance for our reflections on Jesus. The form of our first "Christology" is witness. I made that confession at the end of a Vacation Bible School many years ago. This is a simple (yet, profound) profession that Jesus is our savior and Lord. By this profession we are united with a vast communion of believers who name Jesus as Lord and have been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ. We are united by this simple act of faith which gives witness to the reality of Jesus.

There is a second form of "Christology" and it involves reflection. While there is no substitute for the simple act of witness for some the profession goes deeper to reflection. Here the move is toward the meaning of the Christ. This involves a disciplined study of history and doctrine in light of the wisdom of the Church. The labors of our theologians help us to see the meaning of Christ more clearly. Nazarene Higher Education is dedicated to being the place were serious questions are asked within a community.
of faith. Every day on this campus we practice both forms of Christology. Senior theologian or a new born Christian nothing is more important than the simple profession that Jesus the Son of God and our savior.

Article II begins by affirming that Jesus participates in the very Being of God. Jesus is God and as such he is fully divine. We affirm that there has never been a time when Jesus was not with the Father. Trinitarian theology, which we hinted at last week, helps to narrate an appropriate Christology. Article II includes an affirmation that Jesus became fully human through the Holy Spirit. In fact, Jesus is so human that he was born of a woman (a virgin). The question of how Jesus was God and Human at the same time has never been far from the theological work of the Church. The creeds and for that matter Article II does not attempt to explain "how" Jesus is both God and Human. Rather Article II affirms what we know for sure - Jesus is God and Jesus is Man. The Church is called to both give witness of this grand truth and reflect on its meaning.

Article II also makes the point that Jesus became human in order to defeat an evil we could not. Because Jesus was divine he had the power and because he was human he accomplished this at eye level having emptied himself of all the privileges of divinity. Our salvation is comes from an incarnate God who dies on a cross and then rises from the grave. Article II affirms that Jesus is present with the Father and the Spirit in his divinity and humanity. This means that the Father and the Son share not only divinity was the resurrected humanity of Jesus. This constitutes the intercession present in the life of God for the world.

What we say about one member of the Godhead pertains to all. Next week we will look at Article III - The Holy Spirit, but the beauty of thinking about the Christian faith is that it is all connected. There is no distance between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Yet, the centrality of Jesus for the Christian faith suggests that the face of God will always be Jesus. In fact, Jesus shows us the depth of God's love and the power of the Holy Spirit. I love the story told of Karl Barth, perhaps the most important theologian of the twentieth-century, when he visited America in 1962. When asked to summarize the multi-volume Church Dogmatics, he reportedly said, "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so". Let that truth sink in and we will begin to see the profundity of Article II.
Article III

"The Holy Spirit"

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is especially important to the Church of the Nazarene. In fact, it was Wesley who in large measure sought to recover the importance of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit for Western theology. This is not to suggest that Wesley emphasized the Holy Spirit at the expense of his Christology, but the sanctifying work of the Spirit was crucial. The genius of Wesley is precisely that by emphasizing our faith in Jesus Christ we must think clearly about the Holy Spirit. Perhaps, the words of Paul express part of this interest, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Corinthians 3:17).

According to John Wesley,

Here lies the great difference between the two dispensations: That the law was indeed spiritual in its demands, requiring a life consecrated to God in the observance of its many rules; but, not conveying spiritual assistance, its effect was only to kill and mortify man, by giving him to understand, that he must needs be in a state of great depravity, since he found it so difficult to obey God; and that, as particular deaths were by that institution inflicted for particular sins, so death, in general, was but the consequence of his universal sinfulness. But the ministration of the New Testament was that of a 'Spirit which gives life;' - a Spirit, not only promised, but actually conferred; which should both enable Christians now to live unto God, and fulfill precepts even more spiritual than the former; and restore them hereafter to perfect life, after the ruins of sin and death. The incarnation, preaching and death of Jesus Christ were designed to represent, proclaim, and purchase for us this gift of the Spirit; and therefore says the Apostle, 'The Lord is that Spirit,' or the Spirit." [On the Holy Spirit," Wesley's Works, 7:508-509]

Here is how Article Three reads:

Article III - - The Holy Spirit

3. 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.


The third article makes the following claims regarding the Holy Spirit:

Third Person of the Triune Godhead
Present and efficiently active and in the Church
Convinces the world of sin
Regenerating those who repent and believe
Sanctifying believers
Guiding into all truth
Thinking about the Holy Spirit brings us once again to the Triune God. The Father speaks the Son through the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit returns the Word in praise to the Father. Thus, the everlasting Being-in-Communion is poured out toward a thirsty world. An appropriate emphasis upon the Holy Spirit is essential for a whole reflection upon what God means for us. A mature theology of the Holy Spirit raises several important theological themes.

First, the Holy Spirit is gift. Since God is Spirit we can say with assurance that the offer of gift lies at the very heart of God. "Spirituality" is born through the reception of this gift - Holy Spirit.

Second, we should seek to avoid the tendency to underemphasize the doctrine of the Holy Spirit by an overemphasis on experience and ecclesiology. Clearly, experience is important for a vital faith. Likewise as significant as the Church is for a mature faith we must never forget that it is the Holy Spirit who calls the Church into being through the Word.

Third, the term "spirit" defines God. The affirmation of the "Holy Spirit" is the personhood of gift in the Triune life of God. Spirit is not a dimension of God, it is God. The Church has from the beginning sought to affirm that God is fellowship of three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), but in that "threeness" there is an everlasting unity.

Fourth, the Holy Spirit names the way in which God seeks to invite all finite (created) life to participate in His life. The Holy Spirit is the everlasting presence of God in the world seeking to convince of sin and draw all human beings toward salvation and renewal.

Fifth, an appropriate emphasis upon the Holy Spirit will help us to avoid decisionistic/self-help Christianity. When I choose, I do so through the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit takes from what Christ is and brings it to the world. Article III suggests that the Spirit guides us in following the will of God and interpreting the scripture. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit into the world signals the eschatological work of God. Pentecost is not only the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, but the birth of God's new creation - the Church.

The Holy Spirit prepares the heart for salvation by awakening a person to the need for salvation. Once the Spirit awakens a person sees the need for repentance and enables him/her to believe unto salvation. It is the Holy Spirit who witnesses with our Spirit that we are indeed the children of God.

A carefully constructed theology of the Holy Spirit, one that honors the scriptural affirmation and the Christian tradition, is essential for a vital faith. Article III is an important part of the vital faith of the Church of the Nazarene.

John Wesley concludes his sermon on the Holy Spirit by quoting the Collect of our Church (Church of England). This suggests a measure of the importance of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit for vital faith.

"O God, who in all ages hast taught the hearts of thy faithful people, by sending to them the light of the Holy Spirit; grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Savior; who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, world without end." [7:520]
Article IV

The Holy Scriptures

*We believe in the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, by which we understand the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, given by divine inspiration, inerrantly revealing the will of God concerning us in all things necessary to our salvation, so that whatever is not contained therein is not to be enjoined as an article of faith.*

*Luke 24:44-47; John 10:35; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:20-21*

The fourth article affirms the following about the scripture:

- Inspired
- Sixty-six books
- Inerrant regarding matters pertaining to salvation
- What is not there should not be enjoined as doctrine

The Church of the Nazarene affirms that the Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit. We believe as a Church that the scripture is breathed by the Holy Spirit thought for thought. It is difficult to overstate the importance of the scripture for the Church of the Nazarene. We believe that we find the words of life in the pages of the scripture. Christianity is a religion of the Book. A basic canon emerged in the second century, but it was not until the fourth century that a final canon existed for the Christian church. The canon for the Church of the Nazarene is constituted by the sixty-six books of the Protestant tradition.

The Church of the Nazarene also affirms that the scripture is without error on any matter relating to salvation. Inerrancy has been a hotly debated issue in the evangelical/conservative church for more than a decade. The Church of the Nazarene does not assert that any errors exist in the Bible on any account. Rather we affirm that the scripture asserts its authority in matters regarding salvation, teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness. The Bible exists so that a child of God might be completely equipped for every good work. Finally, the Church of the Nazarene understands that all of its doctrine must be grounded in the faith affirmations of the scripture.

The Church of the Nazarene owes a debt to John Wesley. He understood the scripture as the bedrock of theological authority. It is possible to state the Wesleyan convictions regarding the authority of scripture in the following way:

- Emphasis is placed on the plain sense of the scripture
- We should look for the whole tenor and scope of scripture
- We must balance scripture and tradition, maybe there is some point in looking for something even more fundamental - - gospel
- The scripture's authority is clearest at the point of salvation
The scripture is clear on essentials and its message is open to all

According to Randy Maddox of Duke Divinity School, "To summarize, Wesley identified Scripture as the most basic authority for Christian faith and life; he approached Scripture in terms of the best scholarly principles of his day; he focused on the major soteriological (salvation) themes of Scripture and sought to interpret all passages in their light; and, he was explicitly aware that Scripture did not definitively address every possible issue. While several of the specific appeals to Scripture may have been called into question by more recent scholarship, his general approach seems congenial to postmodern trends (such as canonical exegesis) - Responsible Grace, 39-40.

The scripture answers the question of substance concerning matters of faith. Where it is clear, there is no room for other perspectives. It is most authoritative at the point where it helps us to understand the nature of God and the meaning of grace.
Article V

Sin, Original and Personal

We have now traveled together through the first four Articles of Faith in the Church of the Nazarene. Hopefully, this journey is making it clear that the Church of the Nazarene stands within the boundaries of classical Christianity. The first three articles affirm the Triune God. This doctrine captures the drama of salvation and the vast story of God. Article IV affirms that the Church of the Nazarene believes in the full authority of the scripture. This week we turn toward one of the most significant events in the Christian faith - the Fall (original sin).

Article V - Sin, Original and Personal

5. We believe that sin came into the world through the disobedience of our first parents, and death by sin. We believe that sin is of two kinds: original sin or depravity, and actual or personal sin.

5.1. We believe that original sin, or depravity, is that corruption of the nature of all the offspring of Adam by reason of which everyone is very far gone from original righteousness or the pure state of our first parents at the time of their creation, is averse to God, is without spiritual life, and inclined to evil, and that continually. We further believe that original sin continues to exist with the new life of the regenerate, until the heart is fully cleansed by the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

5.2. We believe that original sin differs from actual sin in that it constitutes an inherited propensity to actual sin for which no one is accountable until its divinely provided remedy is neglected or rejected.

5.3. We believe that actual or personal sin is a voluntary violation of a known law of God by a morally responsible person. It is therefore not to be confused with involuntary and inescapable shortcomings, infirmities, faults, mistakes, failures, or other deviations from a standard of perfect conduct that are the residual effects of the Fall. However, such innocent effects do not include attitudes or responses contrary to the spirit of Christ, which may properly be called sins of the spirit. We believe that personal sin is primarily and essentially a violation of the law of love; and that in relation to Christ sin may be defined as unbelief.

Original sin: Genesis 3; 6:5; Job 15:14; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9-10; Mark 7:21-23; Romans 1:18-25; 5:12-14; 7:1-8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:1-4; Galatians 5:16-25; 1 John 1:7-8


The fifth article affirms the following about the nature of sin:

- Sin came into the world through the disobedience of our first parents
- The Fall lead to death by sin
Two kinds of sin: original sin/depravity and actual/personal
Corruption of the nature
The Fall leads to the Loss of original righteousness
All humans are born averse to God
Humans are born without spiritual life
Humans are inclined to evil
Original sin continues to exist in the life of the regenerate
Original sin can be cleansed by the Holy Spirit
Original sin differs from actual sin in that it is an inherited propensity to actual sin
Not accountable for sin until its divinely provided remedy is neglected or rejected
Actual sin is voluntary violation of a known law of God by a morally responsible person
Sin is not involuntary, inescapable shortcoming, infirmities, faults, mistakes, failures, or other derivations from perfect conduct. This does not include attitudes contrary to the Spirit of Christ (sins of the spirit).
Personal sin is primarily a violation of the law of love and it can be called unbelief.

The Bible begins with the creation story. The narrative of Genesis 1 and 2 affirms according to the Christian faith that creation is "out of nothing". Therefore, God is the original cause of all that is according to the Christian faith. In other words, "to be" is equal to "that is good" according Genesis 1 and 2. The height of these chapters is that humankind is made in the "image of God". This means among other things that human beings are called into a unique and intimate relationship with the Creator. Human beings are called to pray and there is a sense that human life is a prayer when it is lived as God intended. Adam and Eve lived and walked in the gentle breeze of the Garden of Eden. Only one rule [limit] is given to them, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you will die" (Gen. 2:16a-17). One rule, clearly given, but Adam and Eve did not obey. "The Fall" is a dark moment in the primitive history of humankind. According to the story, Adam and Eve are driven out of the Garden of Eden and "he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life" (Gen. 3:24b). Now humankind will work the land by the sweat of his brow and the woman will deliver children in terrible pain. This is what life looks like "East of Eden".

The most empirical doctrine in the Christian faith is the sin. We know deep down that most people are selfish, if not evil. We lock our doors at night and we seldom immediately trust strangers. The doctrine of sin is evident in one way or another in all Christian traditions.

The most basic understanding of sin is doing what God does not want. When sin is analyzed it is easy to see that it is unbelief. Other dimensions of sin can be expressed as guilt, injustice, sensuality, pride, death, disordered love, and original. Simply put, sin arises from disordered love.

The Church of the Nazarene teaches that all human beings and indeed all creation experiences the effects of the first sin of Adam and Eve - the Fall. According to Robert Jenson, "Sin is thus 'original' in two ways. First, none of us has an origin priori to it, from which to transcend and so perhaps deal with it; each of us is a sinner
'from the mother's womb.' . . . Second, this is so because humanity as a whole somehow sins as one." (The Works of God, 2: 149). Wesley characterizes original sin as loss of original righteousness, temporal and spiritual death, inheritance of sin, incapability of making a positive response, and the necessity of spiritual cleansing. Wesley came to believe the quandary of sin was to ground our culpability in our present refusal of God's gracious restoring work in our lives.

One way to think of original sin is as co-determination. This idea arises from our social existence where my choices are affected (not determined) by forces external to me. For example, I am coming to work at 6:15 a.m. and three miles down the road an accident has occurred which will make me late to work. I did not choose the event, but I am affected by it. Likewise, I did not choose to eat from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but I am affected by it. Original sin is really a testimony to "negative" co-determination.

John Wesley speaks to the meaning of original sin:

And yet I do not know that ever it was controverted in the primitive Church. Indeed there was no room for disputing concerning it, as all Christians agreed. And so far as I have ever observed, the whole body of ancient Christians, who have left us anything in writing, declare with one voice, that even believers in Christ, till they are "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might," have need to "wrestle with flesh and blood," with an evil nature, as well as "with principalities and powers." ["Sin in Believers" in Wesley's Works, 5:145]

By sin, I here understand inward sin; any sinful temper, passion, or affection; such as pride, self-will, love of the world, in any kind or degree; such as lust, anger, peevishness; any disposition contrary to the mind which was in Christ. [5:146]

Referring to Galatians 5:17 - - The Apostle here directly affirms that the flesh, evil nature, opposes the Spirit, even in believers' that even in the regenerate there are two principles, "contrary the one to the other". [5:147]

I cannot, therefore, by any means receive this assertion, that there is no sin in a believer from the moment he is justified; First, because it is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture; - Secondly, because it is contrary to the experience of the children of God; - Thirdly, because it is absolutely new, never heard of in the world till yesterday; - and, Lastly, because it is naturally attended with the most fatal consequences; not only grieving those whom God hath not grieved, but perhaps dragging them into everlasting perdition. [5:140-150]

The sum of all is this: There are in every person, even after he is justified, two contrary principles, nature and grace, termed by St. Paul, the flesh and the Spirit. Hence, although even babes in Christ are sanctified, yet it is only in part. [5:155]

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually - - Genesis 6:5

How widely different is this from the fair pictures of human nature which men have drawn in the ages! The writings of many of the ancients abound with gay descriptions of the dignity of man; whom some of them paint as having all virtue and happiness in his composition, or, at least, entirely in his power, without being beholden to any other human being; yea, as self-sufficient, able to live on his own stock, and little inferior to God himself. ["Original Sin" in Wesley's Works, 6:54]
Wesley draws several inferences from the doctrine of original sin:

· While Heathenism understands the vices of humankind it tends to think that goodness overcomes them. Christianity calls this the carnal mind.

· Heathenism believes that human beings are by nature virtuous. Christianity believes that human beings are prone to evil and that continually. Deny it, and you are but a Heathen still.

· The only way to deal with the problem truly is in repentance and faith.

The doctrine of original sin establishes the need of the grace of God for a human being to wake up to sin or even to do any good. The plain fact is that we human beings do not have the capacity of good without God's grace. This means that original sin is a call not only to understand the immensity of sin, but the universality of grace.
Article VI

Atonement

The sixteen articles of faith affirmed by the Church of the Nazarene include six that are linked to a larger theology of salvation: Article VI - Atonement, Article VII - Prevenient Grace, Article VIII - Repentance, Article IX - Justification, Regeneration, and Adoption, Article X - Entire Sanctification, and Article XVI - Resurrection, Judgment, and Destiny. This illustrates the importance of a theology of salvation for Wesleyan-holiness theology and the Church of the Nazarene. The large umbrella under which this theology operates is Article VI - Atonement. Reflection on the atonement must begin with two acknowledgements. First, the scripture does not prescribe a particular theory of the atonement. Rather it provides certain parameters for understanding the work of Jesus Christ. Article VI reflects those parameters by the considered judgment of the Church. Second, the Wesleyan-holiness tradition requires that we re-think the normal patterns of atonement theology. This is true for several reasons: a) if the salvation offered in Christ is an irresistible and unconditioned defeat of sin, then either Christ died for a predestined number of people or all will be saved, and b) if salvation is the sovereign act of God, then there is no necessity to respond to God and thus no need for holiness.

Article VI - Atonement

6. We believe that Jesus Christ, by His sufferings, by the shedding of His own blood, and by His death on the Cross, made a full atonement for all human sin, and that this atonement is the only ground of salvation, and that it is sufficient for every individual of Adam's race. The Atonement is graciously efficacious for the salvation of the irresponsible and for the children in innocency but is efficacious for the salvation of those who reach the age of responsibility only when they repent and believe.


According to Albert Outler in Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit, "Even so, it is a fact - it is the central fact in the Wesleyan Revival - that from 1738 onwards, Wesley taught the sola fide as the first and last article by which the church (and with it the gospel) stands or falls. And yet, he sought a third alternative even here: a fusion of imputation and impartation that included both Protestant and Catholic emphases and that brought him reproaches from Anglicans and Calvinists emphases alike. But I have come to believe that it is just this alternative that has become more and more relevant for ecumenical theology today - especially when all the old forensic images in morality and religion are fading fast or have already lost their decisive influence. Wesley's evangelistic message combines radical faith in God's reconciling love in Christ (the inward, personal dimension of salvation) with a moral and social agenda implied in and by this love that energizes and guides the Christian life from new birth to maturation always 'in Christ'" (108-109).

Randy Maddox sets forth the three dimensions of salvation: a) Pardon - salvation begun, b) Holiness - salvation continued, and c) Heaven - salvation finished. He talks about deliverance immediately from the
penalty of sin, progressively from the plague of sin, and eschatologically from the very presence of sin. (Responsible Grace, 143)

The sixth article affirms the following about the Atonement:

- Jesus Christ: a) by His suffering, and b) by the shedding of His own blood and His death on the Cross - made a full atonement for all human sin
- This atonement is the only ground of salvation
- The Atonement is sufficient for every individual of Adam's race
- The Atonement: a) efficacious for the salvation of the irresponsible and for children in innocence and b) the salvation of those who reach accountability only when they repent and believe

Article VI recognizes that while all human beings are born in a condition of helpless slumber because of sin (Article V), Christ takes on the power of sin in order defeat it at eye level. Some assert that Christ is a ransom or a satisfaction or even a moral example. All of these historic theories of atonement have a rich history, but there is an even more ancient understanding - Christus Victor. Simply put, Christ takes on a problem we could not handle (sin) and defeats the power of sin on our behalf. Atonement equals Christ the Victor.

"Simply put, Christ takes on a problem we could not handle (sin) and defeats the power of sin on our behalf. Atonement equals Christ the Victor."

Soteriology (theology of salvation) is the heart of Wesleyanism. Prevenient grace is an important concept for understanding Wesley's Soteriology. It means preventing grace, literally, it means 'the grace that comes before'. It is necessary because of the power of co-determination/total depravity. We will look more carefully at prevenient grace next week.

Wesley distinctly relates each of these offices to justification and sanctification:

Prophet - perfect revealer of divine truth. This occurs both in his person and in his teaching. Jesus as prophet proclaims and embodies both gospel and law. We need to look at how Wesley understands the law. The law is the embodiment of the nature of God. It is also reflective of human nature as it was intended to be. Jesus in the incarnation becomes the perfect embodiment of the law. Function of the law: 1) convince of sin, 2) awaken the sinner to Christ as a schoolmaster, and 3) keep us alive.

Priest - most comprehensive title of all. A priest is a go between. Two important ideas: those that indicate the establishing of covenant relation (reconciliation) and those that signify maintaining and developing that relation. Two key concepts - identification and representation. Christ identifies himself with man.

King is an expression of His eternal Godhead. It is demonstrated in the miracles. The grand revelations of his Kingship clearly occurs in the Cross, Resurrection, and Ascension. Christ engages the powers of darkness in mortal combat, He was our representative. All this brings into our consideration the Kingdom of God - reign or rule. (This is analysis is drawn [I am indebted to H. Ray Dunning, Grace, Faith, and Holiness for this analysis.]
Salvation is both a present reality and future hope according to Wesley and the Church of the Nazarene. According to Maddox, Wesley saw the very essence of salvation as a therapy by which the Great Physician leads our sin-diseased souls, restoring the vitality of life that God intended for us. Salvation must involve not only inner holiness but also the recovery of actual moral righteousness. (Maddox, Responsible Grace, 145)
Article VII

Prevenient Grace

Doctrine is the language and culture of the Church. Since MVNU is part of the Church of the Nazarene, our doctrinal history is significant. This week we turn to a very important part of the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition - prevenient grace.

Article VII - Prevenient Grace

7. We believe that the human race’s creation in Godlikeness included ability to choose between right and wrong, and that thus human beings were made morally responsible; that through the fall of Adam they became depraved so that they cannot now turn and prepare themselves by their own natural strength and works to faith and calling upon God. But we also believe that the grace of God through Jesus Christ is freely bestowed upon all people, enabling all who will to turn from sin to righteousness, believe on Jesus Christ for pardon and cleansing from sin, and follow good works pleasing and acceptable in His sight.

We believe that all persons, though in the possession of the experience of regeneration and entire sanctification, may fall from grace and apostatize and, unless they repent of their sins, be hopelessly and eternally lost.

Godlikeness and moral responsibility: Genesis 1:26-27; 2:16-17; Deuteronomy 28:1-2; 30:19; Joshua 24:15; Psalm 8:3-5; Isaiah 1:8-10; Jeremiah 31:29-30; Ezekiel 18:1-4; Micah 6:8; Romans 1:19-20; 2:1-16; 14:7-12; Galatians 6:7-8

Natural inability: Job 14:4; 15:14; Psalms 14:1-4; 51:5; John 3:6a; Romans 3:10-12; 5:12-14, 20a; 7:14-25


The seventh article affirms the following about prevenient grace:

- God is at work in the world seeking to regenerate the lost.
- Moral acts are possible in the unregenerate through prevenient grace.
- Prevenient grace is the work of God drawing all people to a salvation.
- Prevenient grace does not save a person.
- Prevenient grace is resistible.

Article VII has a curious history in that it was originally called "Free Agency". The 1989 General Assembly entertained a motion from a special appointed commission to change the name of the article to "Free..."
Grace", but that motion failed. There was a general sense on the floor of the General Assembly that the proposed new title reflected a shift toward Calvinism or "left-wing" forces in the Church of the Nazarene. The motion to change the name of the article was rejected by the vote of the assembly. The current title represents the work of a later General Assembly.

Prevenient grace is a distinctive doctrine of the Church of the Nazarene and the Wesleyan-holiness tradition. One of the issues that defined the difference between Roman Catholicism and the German Reformation was revelation. Augustine of the fifth century talked about the vestiges of the trinity by which he meant that the God who created the world is reflected in some ways in creation. Thomas Aquinas of the thirteenth century felt that reason and revelation are both ways in which God makes himself known. What comes by reason is revealed by God and what comes by faith is revealed by God. Aquinas determined that there is a glory present in creation reflecting God. Luther strongly disagreed with this. He thought of revelation as coming only in the Cross of Jesus Christ. In other words, Augustine and Aquinas held that there is some sense in which we are able to recognize the God in creation. Luther, on the other hand, felt that we are so lost that apart from the direct intervention of the Cross we would not be able to recognize God. Article V affirms "that corruption of the nature of all the offspring of Adam by reason of which everyone is very far gone from original righteousness or the pure state of our first parents at the time of their creation, is averse to God, is without spiritual life, and inclined to evil, and that continually". Therefore, revelation cannot come by reason since the image of God is so marred that no recognition of God is possible. The Roman Catholics or at least the Augustinians and Thomists hold that enough of the image remains, so that some recognition of God is possible. This represents a real impasse.

Article VII is one strategy whereby the Wesleyan-holiness tradition attempts to bridge this impasse. While the doctrine of original sin is taught just as the Lutheran tradition and for that matter the Protestant tradition has affirmed it, the doctrine of prevenient grace affirms that the Holy Spirit begins the regeneration of the image of God before salvation, so that it is possible to do good before salvation. Prevenient grace also teaches that when we meet the Lord in saving grace we do so feeling that we meet One who we have always known. According to H. Ray Dunning, "Wesley only avoided the morass of Calvinism by a 'hair's breadth' to use his own words. But that 'hair' was enough to stand as a continental divide so that the two theologies (perspectives) lie miles apart in their fully developed expressions. The truth that holds them but a hair's breadth apart at the point of the watershed is the doctrine of prevenient grace. It could even be argued that this teaching was the most far-reaching and pervasive aspect of Wesley's thought.

Prevenient grace is the key to unlocking many theological problems; and following its implications to their logical conclusions reveals that Wesleyan theology has a distinctive approach to numerous issues that is neither fundamentalist nor liberal" [Grace, Faith, and Holiness, 49]. Dunning wants to use prevenient grace not only as a soteriological conception, but also an ontological and epistemological conception for interpretation. Wesley's theology was Christological in emphasis - - "As the work of the
Holy Spirit and preventing grace are virtually synonymous concepts, the work of the Spirit is seen by Wesley as Christological in nature." [Dunning, 50]

According to the prevailing theological paradigm of Western Theology humankind originally included the ability to choose between right and wrong and thus responsibility. Because of the Fall all human beings have become depraved - - because of this human beings cannot of their own natural strength and works turn. The grace of God through Jesus Christ is freely bestowed upon all people, enabling all who will to turn from sin to righteousness, believe on Jesus Christ for pardon and cleansing from sin, and follow good works pleasing and acceptable in His sight.

Yet, all persons though in the possession of the experience of regeneration and entire sanctification - - may fall from grace - -and if they remain in this condition are eternally lost.

Theological Perspectives on Prevenient Grace in Wesley

- This doctrine in Wesley deals with God's first activity in fallen human lives.
- This grace is universally available, but resistible.
- Prevenient grace is both pardon and power. This is because Wesley was increasingly uneasy with the idea of inherited universal guilt. According to Maddox, "Any present human culpability for our fallen condition results from our rejection of God's restoring work in our lives, not any continuing responsibility for the Original Sin." [Maddox, 87]
- Prevenient grace represents power in that it reflects a partial restoring grace of our sin corrupted human faculties at the point that we see the need and respond to God's offer of salvation. This takes the form of rudimentary knowledge of divine insight and it offers some basic knowledge of right and wrong.
- Prevenient grace partially restores our liberty and will.
- Prevenient grace includes "all the drawings of the Father . . . [and] all the convictions which his Spirit from time to time works in every [person]. "The Scripture Way of Salvation" - - According to Maddox, "Put in other terms, we might silence the overtures of Prevenient Grace, but would not drive its very Presence from our lives. Therein lies our only hope of a latter 'awakening' to God's further overtures." [88]

According to Maddox, "To summarize, Wesley understood Prevenient Grace to be God's initial move toward restored relationship with fallen humanity. As a first dimension, this involved God's merciful removal of any inherited guilt, by virtue of Christ. A second dimension of God's initial move to restored Presence is a partial healing of our debilitated human faculties, sufficient for us to sense and respond to God. The final dimension of God's specific overtures to individuals, inviting closer relationship. If these overtures are welcomed, a grace-empowered relationship of co-operative and progressive transformation sets forth. Since God's grace is universal, so is the possibility of such a relationship. Since God's grace is resistible, no individual's participations is inevitable" [90].

Prevenient grace affirms that, even though we are lost, the Holy Spirit is at work attempting to awaken all who are lost in sin to accept Jesus as savior. A person does not just decide to become a Christian. He/she is invited/awakened by the Spirit of God. Prevenient grace also explains how we are capable of knowing God before salvation. It is the Spirit of God at work in the world who is at work inspiring all
that is good, noble, and beautiful. Prevenient grace also affirms that salvation is not just a moment, but the duration in time of a continuous decision. Faith is a journey where the gift of the Spirit meets our response in time throughout our life.
Article VIII

Repentance

8. 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 they may believe unto pardon and spiritual life.


Article eight affirms the following:

· Repentance must be sincere and represents a change of direction in life.
· Repentance means to turn away from sin.
· When a person repents God offers grace and pardon.

John Wesley writes, "And this is undoubtedly true, that there is a repentance and a faith, which are, more especially, necessary at the beginning: A repentance, which is a conviction of our utter sinfulness, and guiltiness, and helplessness; and which precedes our receiving that kingdom of God, which, our Lord observes, is 'within us;' and a faith, whereby we receive that kingdom, even 'righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost' [Repentance of Believers, Works, 5: 157].

The doctrine of repentance is a universal Christian conviction. While subtle differences are apparent across the Christian tradition there is little doubt that all humankind must repent.

· Article VI - Atonement begins to set the doctrinal parameters of a theology of salvation within the Church of the Nazarene. Therefore, it begins the "Ordo Salutis" or "The Way of Salvation". Accordingly, from a doctrinal point of view it becomes plain that "Atonement" is the umbrella from which the signposts are erected for the Church of the Nazarene to comprehend salvation.

· Article VII - Prevenient Grace underscores the fact that the regenerating (this process is present from one end to the other of the salvation process) work of the Spirit gives evidence not only of the origin of all goodness, but the awakening of the sinner to his/her lost condition. Therefore, it sets forth not only soteriological convictions, but epistemological and ontological ones as well.

· Article VIII - Repentance affirms that, once awakened, the only legitimate response is Godly sorrow. It is important to note here that we are talking about more than regret or sorrow, but the profound awareness that we have sinned in the presence of our loving Father.

· Article IX - Justification, Regeneration, and Adoption sets out the conviction that as the Holy Spirit awakens us to our sin and as we respond in faith we are justified (pardoned) for sins committed and adopted into the Kingdom of God as a child. All of this happens simultaneously in the life of the believer. Therefore, salvation is a gift.
Article X - Entire Sanctification sets forth what some have called the "distinctive" doctrine of Wesleyanism. Therefore, the blood of Jesus Christ that covers our sin in justification now washes us clean and enables us to live without the continual struggle with sin, even if we are not fully free of its presence. These doctrines help to define the parameters by which Wesleyans comprehend salvation.

One of the earliest indications of repentance in the OT can be found in 2 Samuel 12:13, "David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.' Nathan said to David, 'Now the Lord has put away your sin; you shall not die'". While one consequence of David's sin is the child he had with Bathsheba dies, David is forgiven by the grace of God. The logic of repentance shows how the mercy of God flows through "Godly sorrow". Psalm 51 reflects on this same incident with more detail. David admits "against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment (v4)." This is further developed later, "The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart" (v17a). Repentance is also evident in the later chapters of Amos after major pronouncements of judgment: "Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (5:23-24). Earlier in this chapter Amos says, "For thus says the Lord to the house of Israel: Seek me and live" (5:4a) and again "Seek the Lord and live . . . " (5:6a). Hosea is a sustained call for Israel to repent. Hosea 14:1-2a is just one example of how clearly the call to repentance comes through, "Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity. Take words with you and return to the Lord . . ." Jonah records the words of the king of Nineveh who heard the condemnation of the prophet, "All shall turn from their evil ways and from the violence that is in their hands. Who knows? God may relent and change his mind; he may turn from his fierce anger, so that we do not perish" (3:8b-9). It is Ezekiel that paints a clear picture of individual responsibility, "But if the wicked turn away from all their sins that they have committed and keep all my statutes and so what is lawful and right, they shall surely live; they shall not die" (18:21). This is further set forth later, "And when the wicked turn from their wickedness, and do what is lawful and right, they shall live by it" (33:19). 2 Chronicles 33:12 depicts the prayer of Manasseh, who was a wicked king, "He prayed to him, and God received his entreaty, heard his plea, and restored him again to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord indeed was God."

The New Testament depicts John the Baptist as calling for repentance. His call changes from a national to an individual repentance. Jesus says, "unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3). 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Two Greek words are used generally for repentance in the New Testament; metanoia which means "change of heart" and metamelesthai "experiencing remorse". The first is used to indicate the divinely effected change of heart which leads to salvation. The second is used for human regret for some action or another, but not sinful action.

The theme of repentance is unmistakable in the pages of the scripture. The Christian tradition has a deep conviction that repentance is empowered by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, self-help culture is dramatically disputed by the teaching on repentance.”
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The Way of Salvation

Awakening which is becoming aware of the need, it is the removal of apathy, it should be widely conceived. Prevenient grace opens the door to our sinful circumstance and points us to the need for repentance.

Repentance happens prior to justification. We should also note that there is a continuing need to repent. Repentance is our sorrow for sins committed and a desire to change direction.

Justification should be understood first as pardoned by the merits of Christ and then pardoned in order to participate. When we receive the gift of faith which accompanies justification it reaches toward the capacity to enjoy a justified life.

Sanctification should be understood as our deliverance from the plague of sin.

Wesley's theology has a great deal to say about repentance. According to Dunning, "The Wesleyan doctrine of prevenient grace leads to a significantly different view from Calvin, but close to Luther in many ways. Wesley comes very close to identifying repentance with self-knowledge. In fact, it is quite clear that this is the fundamental ingredient in his thinking. But it also includes ceasing from doing evil and learning to do well, and all this is necessary to salvation" [GFH, 438]. Wesley makes a clear distinction between repentance as a doorway to justification and the need for repentance within the Christian life. According to Maddox in Responsible Grace, "Some scholars conflate these overlapping distinctions. The best evidence that Wesley was dealing with two distinct issues is that he specifically mentions the contrast between self-knowledge and change of heart within his treatment of repentance after conversion in Sermon 14 'The Repentance of Believers'. Likewise, it is clear in this sermon that Wesley understands believers to be repenting of more than their remaining inward sin, they repent also for the sins that cleave to their actions (and omissions)!" [162, note 36]

Wesley understands the possibility of sin in the life of a believer, "I cannot, therefore, by any means receive this assertion, that there is no sin in a believer from the moment s/he is justified; First, because it is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture; - Secondly, because it is contrary to the experience of the children of God; - Thirdly, because it is absolutely new, never heard of in the world till yesterday; and, Lastly, because it is naturally attended with the most fatal consequences; not only grieving those whom God hath not grieved, but perhaps dragging them into everlasting perdition ["Sin in Believers" - Works, 5: 149-150]. The early Wesley constantly urged believers to undertake the spiritual disciplines that would lead them to perfection. Thus, no matter how much transformation we may experience along our Christian journey, we never outgrow our need for the facet of repentance as part of the Way of Salvation. According to Wesley, "It does not reign, but it does remain." [Repentance of Believers, Works, 5:158]. Wesley adds, "But we should likewise be convinced, that as sin remains in our hearts, so it cleaves to our words and actions. Indeed it is to be feared, that many of our words are more than mixed with sin; that they are sinful altogether. . . ." [Repentance of Believers, Works, 5: 161].

The Wesleyan-Holiness tradition has tended to define sin as "a willful transgression against a known law of God". When sin is understood in this way the need for repentance may not be necessary. But any
serious look at our entanglement in the structures of sin will necessitate the finding a place for confession. Sin is best defined as doing what God does not want us to do.

Historical tempers, while part of our human finitude are nonetheless sinful when they lead to action. Holiness does not mean it is impossible to sin, merely that we do not have to sin. Whether arising from rebellion or historical tempers sin weakens our relationship with God. Confession of sin not only reminds us our lives are lived in the presence of God, but provides us with a practice that depends upon grace. Therefore, holiness allows for (perhaps, encourages) the practice of confession.

Another and perhaps more basic argument for the need of confession in the life of the entirely sanctified might be constructed as follows. When a person is entirely sanctified the perfection that characterizes life is a regenerated will. The life of holiness does not promise absolute perfection/sinless perfection, but it does transform our basic transformation. Therefore, a healthy form of Christian holiness will engender the practice of confession. After all, Christian holiness may not always change our reaction, but will always change our reaction to our reaction.

Finally, the Church of the Nazarene believes in the importance of repentance and confession because of a profound sense of grace.
Article IX

Justification, Regeneration, and Adoption

9. 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.

10. 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.

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

12. 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.


Article IX affirms the following:

Justification is the gracious and judicial act of God
Justification grants full pardon of all guilt
Justification offers complete release from the penalty of sins committed
Justification constitutes acceptance as righteousness (imputed)
Regeneration or new birth is the gracious work of God
The moral nature of the repentant believer is spiritually quickened in regeneration
Given distinctively spiritual life, capable of faith, love, and obedience (initially imparted)
Adoption is the gracious act of God by which the justified and regenerated believer is constituted a child of God (relational)

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
The human creature is an entity whose good is to belong to the totus Christus and who exists only in that he or she is directed to that good. Robert Jenson, The Works of God, 289.

The gospel proclaims the good news that a "new reality" has dawned in history. This new reality is initiated by the Father, effected by the Son, and perfected by the Holy Spirit to appropriate the phrasing of Robert Jenson. The writer of the Letter of the Hebrews puts in this way:

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification of sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs [Hebrews 1:1-4].

Article IX provides the language for addressing the meaning of salvation. As such the Church of the Nazarene gives voice to a new reality in Jesus Christ. John Wesley articulates this new reality in a very clear way in a sermon titled, "The Circumcision of the Heart":

Our gospel, as it knows no other foundation of good works than faith, or of faith than Christ, so clearly informs us, we are his disciples while we either deny him to be the Author, or his Spirit to be the Inspirer and Perfecter, both of faith and works. 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' He alone can quicken those who are dead unto God, can breathe into them the breath of Christian life, and so prevent, accompany, and follow them with his grace, as to being their good desires to good effect. And, 'as many as are thus led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.' This is God's short and plain account of true religion and virtue; and 'other foundation can no man lay.' [5: 209-210]

Justification

Justification means to be declared or pronounced just in the context of a law court, that is, covered by the righteousness of Christ. Justification comes from God by faith as a gift. According to Jenson, "God the Father mandates and defines righteousness; this fact is underviable and always unprecedented" [The Works of God, 300].

The primary ways in which we look at justification are to be found in Western/Latin theology. According to Maddox, from 1738 Wesley became a vigorous champion of 'justification by faith alone', defending the doctrine by appealing to the Anglican standards and calling it the fundamental doctrine of the Anglican Church (149).

Luther, the German Reformer, gave definitive shape to the manner in which most of the Protestant Church talks about justification. Luther articulates the importance of inward as well as outward repentance. He sees it as coming to one's senses - "a knowledge of one's own evil, gained after punishment has been accepted and error acknowledged; and this cannot possibly happen with a change in our own heart and our love." (Disputation on Indulgences, vol. 1, 40). Luther suggests "A contrite heart is a rare thing, and a great grace, and is not attained by thinking of sin or hell, but only by receiving the in poured Holy Spirit" (An Argument in Defense of All the Articles of Or Martin Luther Wrongly Condemned in the Roman Bull, vol. 3, 44).

According to Dunning, "righteousness becomes a concept of relationship. The one who fulfills the demands laid upon him by the relationship in which he stands is righteous. It does not refer to the
personal ethical character of the person involved, but to faithfulness to a relationship." [Grace, Faith, and Holiness, 347]

Regeneration

The favorite NT reference to regeneration is the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus recorded in John 3:5, "Jesus answered, 'Verily, Verily, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit'". Regeneration or sanctification has already been addressed in Article VI - Prevenient Grace. This article articulates the clear Wesleyan understanding that no one is capable of responding to God without the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. According to Jenson, "I become ontically righteous as I hear the gospel - which is in itself true for me independently of my righteousness - and in hearing am formed by the righteousness that its narrative displays, that is, God's own righteousness of love." [The Works of God, 295]

The Christian understanding of regeneration refers to the real change made possible through the work of the Holy Spirit. While justification is a judicial term equated more or less to "not held guilty," regeneration can be linked to a real transition in "being".

John Wesley addresses the relationship between justification and regeneration in a sermon titled, "The Great Privilege of Those that are Born of God":

But though it may be allowed that justification and the new birth are, in point of time, inseparable from each other, yet they are easily distinguished, as being not the same, but things of a widely different nature. Justification implies only a relative, the new birth a real change. God in justifying us does something for us; in begetting us again, He does the work in us. The former changes our outward relation to God, so that of enemies we become children; but the latter our inmost souls are changed, so that of sinners we become saints. The one restores us to the favor, the other to image, of God. The one is the taking away of guilt, the other the taking away of the power, of sin; so that, although they are joined together in point of time, yet are they of wholly distinct natures. [5:223-224]

Regeneration gets at the truth given witness to by Paul, "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new" [2 Cor. 5:17] Article IX presents an understanding of regeneration that reflects initial sanctification, but the depths of regeneration are evident in Article X- Entire Sanctification.

Adoption

Article IX affirms that justification, regeneration, and adoption all happen simultaneously. Therefore, the work of God that pardons also begins the process of regeneration that finds its logical end with entire sanctification. The paragraph on adoption makes it plain that we are made a part of the Kingdom of God when we are first saved. Some have wrongly taught that one must be entirely sanctified in order inherit the Kingdom of God, but no one of any real understanding has held this view. Quite simply we are invited to join the kingdom when we repent and believe.

One aspect of adoption is the assurance. Paul addressed this issue in Romans 8:15-17:

For all who are lead by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, 'Abba! Father! it is that very Spirit
bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ - if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we also be glorified with him.

This defines salvation in terms of a relation of trusting and assurance.

Wesley's Aldersgate Experience is in some sense the hallmark for understanding adoption/assurance:

In the evening I went unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed, I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and assurance was given to me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. [Richard P. Heitzenrater, The Elusive Mr. Wesley: John Wesley His Own Biographer, vol. 1,101]

For Wesley, the process of salvation means that "believers recover a capacity of spiritual life, are reunited with God, and made partakers of the Divine Nature" [Maddox, 168]. Christian life is a participation in the Triune life of God. We do not become God, but through gracious restoration we become like God.

Article IX articulates the drama of salvation. Building upon prevenient grace and repentance this article provides a language for a broad understanding of salvation. The Christian faith is about a new reality that has dawned in history according the will of the Father. The earliest stages of our conversion can be described as sanctifying when we are awakened to our sinfulness and called to respond in faith. Salvation means to be awakened, pardoned, changed, adopted, and perfected.

Salvation is not just a blanket of grace designed to hide sin from God. Salvation is a restoration in the presence of God - - it is a new life. The Holy Spirit witnesses to the fact that we have been forgiven and that we are participating in the life of God by faith.
Article X

Entire Sanctification

This week we consider one of the most important and yet controversial doctrines in the Church of the Nazarene. Fundamentally, this doctrine claims that it is possible to live without a daily struggle with sin. This article does not imply flawlessness, but it does suggest that our heart can be purified by the expelling love of Christ.

Article X - Entire Sanctification

13. We believe that entire sanctification is that act of God, subsequent to regeneration, by which believers are made free from original sin, or depravity, and brought into a state of entire devotement to God, and the holy obedience of love made perfect.

It is wrought by the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and comprehends in one experience the cleansing of the heart from sin and the abiding, indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, empowering the believer for life and service. Entire sanctification is provided by the blood of Jesus, is wrought instantaneously by faith, preceded by entire consecration; and to this work and state of grace the Holy Spirit bears witness. This experience is also known by various terms representing its different phases, such as "Christian perfection," "perfect love," "heart purity," "the baptism with the Holy Spirit," "the fullness of the blessing," and "Christian holiness."

14. We believe that there is a marked distinction between a pure heart and a mature character. The former is obtained in an instant, the result of entire sanctification; the latter is the result of growth in grace. We believe that the grace of entire sanctification includes the impulse to grow in grace. However, this impulse must be consciously nurtured, and careful attention given to the requisites and processes of spiritual development and improvement in Christlikeness of character and personality. Without such purposeful endeavor one's witness may be impaired and the grace itself frustrated and ultimately lost.


"Heart purity": Matthew 5:8; Acts 15:8-9; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:3


Basic Affirmations of Article X:

- Entire Sanctification comes as a gift of God and not by human effort.
- Entire Sanctification comes as a part of the deepening work of regeneration in the heart and life of the believer.
- Entire Sanctification frees us from the necessity to sin.
- Entire Sanctification is wrought by the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- Entire Sanctification comprehends in one experience: cleansing of the heart from sin, abiding, indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, and empowering the believers for life and service.
- Entire Sanctification is provided by the blood of Jesus and is wrought instantaneously by faith.
- Entire Sanctification is preceded by entire consecration.
- The Holy Spirit bears witness to our Entire Sanctification.
- Entire Sanctification is known by different expressions: Christian Perfection, Perfect Love, Heart Purity, Holiness, Baptism with the Holy Spirit, Fullness of the blessing, Christian Holiness.
- There is a marked distinction between a pure heart (instantaneously/entire sanctification) and a mature character (growth in grace).
- Entire Sanctification is manifest in an impulse to grow in grace.
- Holiness must be consciously nurtured and without such purposeful endeavor one's witness may be impaired and the grace itself frustrated and ultimately lost.
- Attention should be given to spiritual disciplines.

Entire Sanctification can be simply defined as Christ-likeness in character.

Article X expresses the optimism that the Christian life is more than a fight against guilt for sins committed. In fact, Article X teaches us that the Christian life can be characterized by overcoming the necessity of sin.

The following verses provide a clear sense of the biblical support for Christian holiness:

- Deuteronomy 30:6 - Circumcision of the heart
- Jeremiah 31: 31-34 - New Covenant
- Matthew 8:19-22 - Discipleship
- Romans 6:1/6:15 - Continue to sin/released from the law
- Romans 12:2 - Living sacrifice
- Galatians 5:22-26 - Fruit of the Spirit
- 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 - Sanctify them through and through
The Church of the Nazarene was born in the revival fires of late nineteenth-century America. A powerful movement of spiritual renewal was born across the United States. This movement was sustained in summer Camp Meetings, a desire to re-vitalize the Church, a message of victory over the power of sin, and a mission to work with the poor. There is a sense in which the movement was indebted to John Wesley, but sometimes it is the discontinuity with Wesley's theology that is most striking. This fact is evident in Article X, which has been the most contested of the sixteen Articles of Faith. This fact as well as the inherent difficulty of explaining, perhaps understanding entire sanctification, contributes to our distinctive doctrine and the fear that it will soon become a memory.

While the nature of this debate in the Church of the Nazarene has many features and a full analysis could well fill a book-length study, it is possible to simply state the challenge. The choice seems to be whether entire sanctification comes through a process or a specific crisis experience (baptism of the Holy Spirit). After studying this challenge and having had the privilege of teaching theology in the Church of the Nazarene for twenty-seven years, I have strong feelings about this issue. First, entire sanctification comes in a moment because it is a gift of grace - it is a crisis. Second, entire sanctification means that we do not need to wallow in sin, but it does not mean that we are flawlessly perfect. Entire sanctification fundamentally changes our reaction when I do commit a sin. Third, entire sanctification sets me on a path toward spiritual growth which will attend the entirety of life.

The theological identity of the Church of the Nazarene is wrapped up with Entire Sanctification. At least the following conclusions seem warranted:

- A theology of holiness is part of the larger systematic theological enterprise.
- A theology of holiness is most influenced by Greek theology (therapeutic atonement).
- The resources of holiness theology can be located across the entire Christian tradition.
- John Wesley recovers a unique blend of forensic (justification) and therapeutic (sanctification) images of salvation.
- Our task is to consider the larger task of how to engender holiness theology now.
- From the start the issue is always character and not a prescribed experience.
- The strongest argument for scriptural holiness is logical - based on an understanding of grace and sin - human nature.

Crisis experience or discussions about the meaning of second-ness inform a good bit of discussion regarding entire sanctification. Several theological insights indicate the appropriateness of the language of second-ness regarding holiness. First, holiness is a gift of God; it comes not from our doing, but from His grace. As a gift it comes to us in a moment and is received by our decision to accept it. Second, holiness is an intensification of what begins in justification (1 Thess. 3: 11-13). This is logically subsequent, that is, second. Third, holiness points to that moment in life when the power of sin is broken. Theologically, it makes sense to distinguish this from the forgiveness of sins committed. Fourth, holiness as a "form of life" must be shaped in God's cleansing and empowering grace. If holiness
is not the result of our doing, then it is a "moment-by-moment" testimony to the gift of grace. To say that entire sanctification is second is to make a claim about how holiness happens in time. The scripture is most interested in interpreting holiness as participation in the triune life of God. For some this constitutes an insurmountable barrier to understanding entire sanctification as a second. Yet, the genius of the holiness message is that we participate in God's nature in time. Second-ness is one way to describe holiness in time. While second-ness should not be made the litmus test for heart holiness, it must be a part of any serious discussion of Article X.

Reflection on Article X suggests the importance of holiness theology for the Church of the Nazarene. Many in the Church of the Nazarene have asked "Does Wesleyan-holiness theology have a future"? While this question is deliberately provocative it is not merely academic. It has been my privilege to welcome a freshman class of men and women to a Nazarene college/university campus each year of my teaching ministry. And if Wesleyan-holiness theology has a future it must be capable of capturing the imagination and passion of these students. It is evident, however, that if these students graduate with the confidence that holiness theology has a future, it will begin first in the minds of those of us who live out our vocation as teachers on Nazarene college/university campuses.

Those under the Wesleyan-holiness banner have been talking for at least two decades about the importance of a paradigmatic shift in theology. This shift or these shifts have been lamented, celebrated, and/or ignored by those within our tradition. Perhaps, some might have even theorized that all this talk about paradigmatic shifts is little more than a theological discontent among ivory tower professors. But if there were ever any truth to this theory, it now appears that the current ferment in Wesleyan-holiness theology and in 'holiness churches' rises to suggest that the impact of these shifts have reached, even our shores.

There are many noticeable signs of these shifts. For example, the current flux, some might even suggest crisis in worship within our tradition. This crisis lays bare the depth to which Wesleyan-holiness theology has been captured by an experience-driven trajectory of worship and life. It may indicate the degree to which our worship has become a vehicle for producing certain kinds of response rather than a doxological response to the gracious invitation of a triune God. There also seems to be a genuine crisis of identity within the Wesleyan-holiness camp. Increasingly, the horizon of Wesleyan-holiness theology seems to be determined by fundamentalism on one hand and charismatic influences on the other. The intellectual and spiritual sense of nausea experienced by many seems to drive some to look for either absolutes or defining experiences as a 'foundation' amid the shifts. Still another sign of these shifts is the substitution of conservatism for spirituality. This leads us to take up causes and issues that differ from their secular counter-parts only in name. All of this makes a litmus test for true Christianity much easier to define than having the mind of Christ. Perhaps, the most noticeable signs of these shifts is the degree to which we have substituted morality for holiness. We have become content with talking about holiness as if its deepest meaning lay in ethical discourse. These as well as other issues at some level indicate that the intellectual and spiritual shifts of our time have long since reached the shores of the holiness tradition.

These realities must drive us to do what our forefathers and foremothers did in the days of the holiness revival. It is time for us to dream big and to expect big for our tradition. It is time to stand up and shout from the rooftops that Wesleyan-holiness theology is not about some small piece of a larger and more mature Christian tradition. Our time and those who force us to answer to questions concerning the future of Wesleyan-holiness theology require us to affirm that theological work is about a construal of
all life and practice through the lens of holy God. This will require that we begin at the beginning, not in
some sort of apologetic appeal to secular space, but as a biblical, systematic, and pastoral extension of
Wesleyan-holiness theology. The place where this must begin is a sustained attempt to define an
intellectual space where Wesleyan-holiness can be located and developed. By refusing to begin
theology as apology it will be possible to say again the holiness mythos, pronounce holiness logic, and
call again for holiness practice. This will mean that the intellectual space, which opens up will allow
Wesleyan-holiness theology to become the strange and beautiful reality it was in the beginning. It might
even summon the creative capacity of the next generation to make the bold claims that seem to find
their native home in Wesleyan-holiness theology.

The attempt to re-narrate Wesleyan-holiness theology might drive us beyond the definition of the
question of intellectual space to consider whether there might be other rubrics by which to understand
theology than the moral imperative. It just might be that broadening the borders of Wesleyan-holiness
theology might help us once again to entertain beauty as a theologically rich category. That is to say
that we might come to see the beauty and harmonic peace of a triune God become incarnate in the life
of faith with such clarity and power that holiness can be understood in fresh ways. Such a re-narration
of Wesleyan-holiness theology will frame holiness beyond human striving and deciding.

A Few Final Thoughts:

- Entire sanctification should be understood in the context of a larger theology of holiness.
- The current form of the doctrine of entire sanctification represents a slow shift from Wesley's
  emphasis through British Methodism, American Methodism, and American Holiness.
- The fundamental problem is an unreflective convergence of Latin (forensic) and Greek
  (therapeutic) theology.
- The unreflective combination of the moral imperative and holiness frustrates the meaning of
  entire sanctification.
- The "baptism with the Holy Spirit" has unfortunately become a litmus test for crisis and
  experience. The issue comes down understanding holiness as a gift of God's grace received in a
  moment.
- Holiness theology has a future only if we are able to capture the imagination of this generation.

Robert Jenson closes The Works of God in order to comprehend the meaning of salvation and as such he
has something to say to us about holiness in general and entire sanctification in particular:

God will reign: he will fit created time to triune time and created polity to the perichoresis of Father,
Son, and Spirit. God will deify the redeemed: their life will be carried and shaped by the life of the
Father, Son, and Spirit, and they will know themselves as personal agents in the life so shaped. God will
let the redeemed see him: the Father by the Spirit will make Christ's eyes their eyes. Under all rubrics,
the redeemed will be appropriated to God's own being.

The last word to be said about God's triune being is that he "is a great fugue". Therefore, the last word
to be said about the redeemed is Jonathan Edward's beautiful saying, cited at the end of the first
volume to the converse point: "When I would form an idea of a society in the highest degree happy, I
think of them . . . sweetly singing to each other."
The point of identity, infinitely approachable and infinitely approached, the enlivening telos of the Kingdom's own life, is perfect harmony between the conversation of the redeemed and the conversation that God is. In the conversation God is, meaning, and melody are one.

The end is music. [Jenson, The Work of God, 369]
Article XI

The Church

15. 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.


Article XI affirms the following:

- The Church is a community constituted by the confession of Jesus as the Christ.
- The Church stands on the shoulders of Israel, but it is the new thing that God is doing in the world.
- The Church exists in the unity brought about by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Word.
- The Church expresses itself in worship, preaching of the Word, observance of the sacraments, service, and mutual accountability.
- The Church is the mission of God in the world to call people to holy living, evangelism, discipleship, and service through the Holy Spirit.
- The Church is both in history and transcends history.

Much of the New Testament is taken up with the Church. Reading the epistles offers a window into the life of the early church. According to Barry Harvey, "The first Christians consistently described themselves as citizens of an altera civitas, another city, with a population garnered from every tribe and language, people and nation" [Another City: An Ecclesiological Primer for a Post-Christian World, 23]. The earliest picture of the church is found in Acts where all things were held in common. But this picture is soon shattered by those who lie about giving to the Lord and pay with their life. The church
was consumed by what it meant to live in the presence of Israel and yet to be something different. Should those in the early church be circumcised? Was the early church answerable to the Sanhedrin? Challenges in Corinth and Thessalonica forced the early church to define itself. There was no New Testament and no official statement about the divinity and humanity of Jesus during the earliest days of the Church. The church began to worship and to hammer out doctrine along with canonizing the scripture as it expanded through the proclamation of the gospel. The church was from the beginning the body of Christ, that is, it incarnated the Christ. John Milbank says, "The logic of Christianity involves the claim that the 'interruption' of history by Christ and his bride, the Church, is the most fundamental of events, interpreting all other events. And it is most especially a social event, able to interpret other social formations, because it compares them with its own social practice" [Theology and Social Theory, 388].

It is one of the curious points in the history of the Church of the Nazarene that it was not until 1989 that Article XI was approved by the General Assembly. More than twenty years prior a motion was approved by the Nazarene Theology Conference recommending that an article on the Church be written. After a heated debate on the floor of the General Assembly, the article on the church was approved and sent to the districts for ratification in 1989. This article presents a challenge for the Church of the Nazarene of the twenty-first century to engage in ecclesial reflection.

The four paragraphs of Article XI spell out the nature, marks, mission, and historical reality of the Church. According to Jenson, "Through most of the church's history, she has understood herself as a presupposition of theology rather than as a problem within it; and until the second Vatican Council no great council had supposed it necessary to promulgate doctrine about the church simply as such. Ecclesiology became a direct object of theological concern when the threat appeared that the communal presupposition of theology might not be in place." [Works of God, 2:168]. Article XI begins to provide the language for understanding how we can begin to think ecclesially, that is, theologically.

Avery Dulles sets forth several models for thinking about the Church:

· The Church as Institution which is associated most clearly with the Roman Catholicism. The Church is understood to be a perfect society, not merely an institution. Three areas are important for this understanding of the Church: teaching, sanctifying, and governing. This view includes a hierarchical conception of authority.

· The Church as Mystical communion which is a view held by the fifth-century theologian Augustine. According to this view the Church is an organic reality: body of Christ and the people of God. Emphasis is placed on the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit according to this view.

· The Church as Sacrament is set forth by Karl Rahner, who was an important Roman Catholic theologian. According to this view the sacraments mediate God's grace. The high moment for the Church is the Eucharist. Emphasis is placed upon the church's incarnation into society. The church becomes an actual event of grace. One way to put this is that the Church happens in time.

· The Church as Herald is held by Barth. This view is very close the way that many Protestants see the Church. The preaching of the Word is primary and the pulpit stands at the center of the platform. Emphasis is placed upon being a witness before the world. The Church is understood to be a lighthouse.
The Church as Servant which is set forth by Bonhoeffer. The church operates between the tensions of secularity and the sacred. The church is only the church when it exists for others. This leads to an emphasis upon justice, peace, and social issues.

While Dulles ends his analysis of the Church with these models, Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon (Duke Divinity School) set forth another possible way of thinking of the Church - Resident Aliens. Here the Church is to be understood as an alternate kingdom. Hauerwas and Willimon call for the Church to resist underwriting of prevailing culture.

All of these models contribute to a deeper understanding of the Church. Together they form points of emphasis for developing a way of thinking about the Church. Some theologians in the twentieth-century began to think of institutions as problematic. This view places persons in conflict with institutions. Sometimes the Church is understood as just one more institution characterized as a problem. Yet, the Church as the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit is no mere institution. Surely, tares sometimes exist in the Church, but it does not stop being the Church. Most of all the Church is real as all of the models suggest.

The church exists as the new relationality of those who have been discovered in the call of God through the Word and the Spirit a new way of being. As Eve is formed from the sleeping Adam's side, so the Church was born from the pierced side of Christ hanging on the cross. The church exists to embody the continuing presence of God through the power of the Spirit and as such to be the community of the Incarnation. The church is manifest to the world in worship, sacramental faithfulness, spiritual unity, transmission of the faith, discipline, and healing presence through the gifts of the Spirit: kerygma (the report of the gospel), leitourgia (the celebration of the story), diakonia (service), and koinonia (fellowship). The church is characterized by a fundamental tension between its grounding in history and its fulfillment in the future. The church struggles so as to never make the relative absolute as it is empowered by the vision of its consummation at the end of history. The church is that community which is bound by the grace of God. When the Church is true to its calling, it intends to be a place where love becomes incarnate in freedom, mutuality, respect, justice, and expectation.

Article XI represents a dramatic moment in holiness theology. The article recognizes that the Church is crucial to the life of holiness and that God sanctifies the Church so that it might be the place where new life takes root in individuals. The Roman Catholic tradition tends to think about the Church as One, Holy, Apostolic, and Universal. The Protestants (and for that reason the Church of the Nazarene) affirms this as it tends to lift living faith, biblical preaching, sacraments, and discipline as ways to understand the Church. What does it mean to be a part of the Church or to understand our faith in an ecclesial way? This is, in part, what Article XI calls us to think about. It is not the business of Article XI to resolve this question, but it provides a language to begin addressing it.

Article XII
Baptism

16. 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.

Baptism may be administered by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, according to the choice of the applicant.


Article XII - Baptism affirms:

- Commanded by our Lord
- Sacrament signifying acceptance of the benefits of the atonement of Jesus Christ
- To be administered to believers
- Declarative of faith in Jesus Christ as savior
- Declares the intention of live obediently
- Symbol of a new covenant
- Young children may be baptized if parents give assurance of Christian training
- Can be administered by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion

The Christian tradition teaches that God created the world from nothing out of His love. The God worshipped in the Church was not and is not content to be alone. God's love sought an object and the most intense love comes to rest with the creature with a human face. God and humankind walked together in full fellowship until that creature with a human face decided to ignore the finitude that partially defined him. So the creature whose telos was to be perfected in the love of God went astray. The vast wasteland that the world became was defined by a disordered love. The sickness is so great that even the attempts to love are twisted into evil in one way or another. Into this sickness and darkness a light has come to deliver us unto life. The practices (sacraments) are a part of the way that this deliverance reaches to every aspect of life. According to L. Gregory Jones, Duke University, "baptism is a training in dying - specifically to sin, to the old self - so that people may be raised to newness of life. Further, this new life is given its shape by the Kingdom that Jesus announced and enacted" [Embodying Forgiveness: A Theological Analysis, 4]. Baptism is at the deepest level a means of grace. In fact, baptism is an instituted means of grace in the Church of the Nazarene. The means of grace or the Christian practices are the habits of
faith that begin to shape the world for the Christian. This means that it is in and through the waters of baptism that new life comes to those who believe. According to John Wesley, "By 'means of grace' I understand outward signs, words, or actions, ordained of God, and appointed for this end, to be the ordinary channels whereby he might convey to men, preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace" [John Wesley, "The Means of Grace," Wesley's Works, 5:187].

Augustine, the fifth century theologian, defines a sacrament as visible word. A sacrament is a sign of a sacred thing in that it conveys grace, strengthens faith, enhances unity with Christ, and offers reassurance of God's promise toward us. The sacraments are tied into the life and work of the Church. The sacraments mediate God's grace. Human beings are sign-makers, that is, we sing, write, and draw. Because we are self-transcendent beings, we lift our eyes beyond the immediate to the transcendent. The Christian faith affirms that God's grace can be located both in the immanent and the transcendent. This is the genius of the gospel. Human beings live with our feet on the ground, but with the sense that we participate in something more. The sacraments and the sacramental are means of grace.

Dr. Rob Staples, retired theologian from Nazarene Theological Seminary, sets forth the criteria for defining the sacraments in the Protestant tradition: a) instituted by Jesus, b) necessity of a physical sign, and c) biblical word of promise. Staples adds "The sacraments were practiced mainly because Christ had commanded them, but also because they were a part of the Methodist heritage" [Outward Sign and Inward Grace: The Place of Sacraments in Wesleyan Spirituality, 22]. John Wesley captures a measure of this in a sermon titled "On Zeal":

In a Christian believer love sits upon the throne which is erected in the inmost soul; namely, the love of God and man, which fills the whole heart, and reigns without a rival. In a circle near the throne are all the holy tempers; - long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, fidelity, temperance; and if any other were comprised in "the mind which was in Christ." In an exterior circle are all the works of mercy whether to the souls or the bodies of men. By these we exercise all holy tempers, but these we continually improve, so that all these are real means of grace, although this is not commonly adverted to. Next to these are those that are usually termed works of piety; - reading and hearing the word, public, family, private prayer, receiving the Lord's Supper, fasting, and abstinence. Lastly, that his followers may the more effectually provoke one another to love, holy tempers, and good works, our blessed Lord has united them together in one body, the Church, dispersed all over the earth; a little emblem of which, of the Church universal, we have in every particular Christian congregation. [Wesley's Works, 7: 60-61].

The sacramental emphasis of the Methodist heritage distances it from a religion defined purely by subjective aspiration. The practices of the Christian faith are grounded in history and link the particular faith of a community with the broader contours of the work of God. Staples defines a particular dilemma associated with the combining of this Wesleyan heritage with the American holiness tradition, "The dilemma of the American holiness movement of the 19th -century had roots in Wesley's own theology and practice, as he struggles to harmonize this high churchmanship and his evangelical experience. In turn, the American holiness movement passed the dilemma on to its late-20th-century offspring" [Staples, 25].

Staples argues for a sacramentalist vision which is "the theological perspective that sees the physical as potentially the vehicle of the spiritual. It is the view that God can work the spiritual through the material" [Staples, 63]. This vision of the world calls for a renewed emphasis upon the material. Perhaps, this sacramental vision will lead to a genuine spirituality grounded in the ancient practices of
the Church and not the subjective aspiration of isolated believers. Staples voices this vision in the following:

The sacramentalist knows that everything we are and have on this pilgrimage from womb to tomb belongs to God. We are but stewards of whatever portion of planet earth’s crust has been entrusted to us. Idolatry is not something that only the ancient Canaanites practice; we engage in it whenever we forget that everything we have is a gift. One function of sacraments is to help us remember. In short, baptism and Eucharist, when all their remarkable nuances are appropriated by the religious imagination, stand as sentinels guarding the priceless treasure of the created world whose essential goodness was declared by the Creator himself in the very beginning [Staples, 114].

According Robert Jenson, "Yet true membership in the church is a sign visible only as the baptism that signifies it. That I am numbered among the elect is visible only as my washing in the triune name; no amount of church activity will make it certain nor any amount of vice quite certainly disprove" [The Works of God, 252].

According to Staples five interrelated but distinguishable means present themselves for baptism:

- It is the mark of our inclusion in the new covenant that Christ established.
- It is the symbol of our identification with the death of Christ.
- It is the symbol of our participation in the resurrected life of Christ.
- It is the symbol of our reception of the Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of Christ.
- It is the action through which we are part of Christ's body, the Church.

Biblical Material

The practice of baptism is highly significant in the Bible. Part of the significance is tied up with the confession of the risen Savior. Baptism is administered in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38; 10:48; 8:16; 19:5; 1 Cor. 1:13-17).

The ministry of John the Baptist is important to the NT understanding of baptism. His baptism was closely related to proselyte baptism. Some have asserted that it was the same thing, but important differences existed. In proselyte baptism the rite is self-administered. The baptism of John was administered by John to others. The proselyte baptism was only for gentiles, while John baptized both Jews and Gentiles. Proselyte baptism was more ceremonially oriented, while for John the emphasis was on morality. John was conscious of bringing in a new age for he took up the moral fabric of the prophets and the Messianic hope and welded them into a combination that has profound significance for the Christian faith.

Throughout history, the theologians of the church have understood the importance of baptism, Barth says, "Baptism testifies to a man that this event is not his fancy but is an objective reality which no power on earth can alter and which God had pledged Himself to maintain in all circumstances" (The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism, 9). He says further, "Its potency lies in the fact that it comprehends the whole movement of sacred history" (10).

Baptism has traditionally been administered in a threefold manner. The Didache says, "Baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit". A little later we read Justin Martyr saying,
"For in the name of God the Father and the Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they receive the washing of the water" (The First Apology of Justin, 183). Martin Luther agrees, "we are thrust into the water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (Treatise on Baptism, 56). This bases the meaning of baptism in the Godhead and locates the source of salvation history.

The practices of the Christian faith are visible habits that engender faith. The sacraments are means of grace, that is, through them we receive the gift of grace. Baptism is the name given to the practice of the Christian faith. The practice of baptism relieves the Christian from reducing life to willing.

Next week we will look at the other instituted sacrament of the Church of the Nazarene - The Lord's Supper.

**Article XIII**
The Lord's Supper

17. We believe that the Memorial and Communion Supper instituted by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is essentially a New Testament sacrament, declarative of His sacrificial death, through the merits of which believers have life and salvation and promise of all spiritual blessings in Christ. It is distinctively for those who are prepared for reverent appreciation of its significance, and by it they show forth the Lord's death till He come again. It being the Communion feast, only those who have faith in Christ and love for the saints should be called to participate therein.


- Article XIII affirms regarding the Lord's Supper:
  - It is an essential New Testament sacrament
  - The sacrament declares the sacrificial death of Christ (through which believers have new life)
  - It is for those who are prepared for reverent appreciation
  - It is the way the believer shows forth the Lord's death until he comes again
  - It is only for those who have faith in Christ

Article XIII has received considerably less attention in the Church of the Nazarene when compared to the debate on Article X and perhaps even Article IV. Partly, this is the case because we have not really practiced the sacrament regularly. Too often when we do take the sacrament it is little more than an add on or insert into worship. Perhaps, the main reason for this has been the fear of being too formal or liturgical. There are probably other reasons for the lack of emphasis upon the Eucharist in the history of the Church of the Nazarene. For example, an emphasis upon the Lord's Supper might require that we conceive of heart holiness in a fundamentally different way. We would need to think of holiness as less a single event than a lifestyle defined by practices larger than our willing. The focus would be less on the moment and more on the quality of life emerging from the practices of the Christian faith. This does not to suggest that we need to de-emphasize the moment, but it does infer that holiness is more than "a" moment. The seeming lack of interest in Article XIII coupled with the fear of being too liturgical has resulted in little reflection on communion.

H. Ray Dunning in Grace, Faith and Holiness begins his treatment of the "means of grace" with the qualification that he intends "to understand the mediating position of Wesley on the sacraments, a position that follows the Church of England" [542]. He goes on later in the same chapter to talk about three ways in which the sacrament of the Lord's Supper has been conceptualized: atonement remembered, atonement applied, and pledge of Glory to come [557-562]. Dunning admits that Wesley also talks about it as sacrifice [562]. Beyond this small reflection Dunning has little to say about the practice that Wesley terms a constant duty. J. Kenneth Grider in his A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology spends only thirty-six pages of his 549 on the sacraments of which only seven specifically deal with the
Lord's Supper. This is strange in light of Grider's own comment, "To receive the Lord's Supper is a most important way by which a Christian believer grows in grace" [510]. From the work of the two prominent theologians in the Church of the Nazarene one can easily conclude that much work is left to be done before we can truly say that we believe in the duty of constant communion. According to Wesley, "Let everyone, therefore, who has either any desire to please God, or any love of his own soul, obey God, and consult the good of his own soul, by communicating every time he can; like the first Christians, with whom the Christian Sacrifice was a constant part of the Lord's day service"

"The Duty of Constant Communion", Wesley's Works, 7:148

Referring to the call in Luke 22:19 to "do this in remembrance of me" Wesley says, "It is no wonder that men who have no fear of God should never think of doing this. But it is strange that it should be neglected by any that do fear God, and desire to save their souls; and yet nothing is more common" ["The Duty of Constant Communion" Wesley's Works, 7:147]. He goes on to suggest that one reason people might neglect the Lord's Supper is that they are afraid to take it unworthily. Wesley wants people who think this to come to see things differently. He argues that one should receive the Lord's Supper because it is plainly commanded by Christ. Another reason for this is that there are many benefits. Wesley says, "The grace of God given herein confirms to us the pardon of our sins, and enables us to leave them" [7:148].

One of the consistent issues related to communion is the fear of taking it unworthily. Wesley addresses this issue specifically:

If then you fear bringing damnation on yourself by this, you fear where no fear is. Fear it not, for eating and drinking unworthily; for that, in St. Paul's sense, ye cannot do. But I will tell you for what you shall fear damnation; - for not eating and drinking at all; for not obeying your Maker and Redeemer; for disobeying his plain command; for thus setting at nought both his mercy and authority. Fear ye this; for hear what his Apostle saith: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all (James 2:10) [7:152]

It is the conviction of the church from the beginning that the Lord's Supper was commanded of the Lord. The early church felt that the Bible taught this clearly as is indicated in Matt 26: 27-28: "And while they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' And he took a cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is to be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins'" (NASB). This is reinforced by Paul, "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night in which He took bread . . ." (1 Cor. 11: 23). Lampe says, "The Eucharist stands at the heart of the early church's faith and life; it embodies and proclaims in a simple rite the entire richness of the gospel." ["The Eucharist in the Thought of the Early Church" in Eucharistic Theology Then and Now, 34].

Three general views have been held on the Lord's Supper:

1. Sacrifice is one major emphasis of the Eucharist. This emphasis is most closely related to transubstantiation. Ambrose is the father of this view and several outstanding people have held the view as well. Here the emphasis is upon the elements being transformed and of the offering of the transfigured body. This implies the real presence of Jesus in the elements. Beyond this there is emphasis on the change in mode. Paschasius Radbertus holds this view, "this must be
believed to be fully, after consecration, nothing but Christ's flesh and blood." [The Lord's Body and Blood, Library of Christian Classics, 94]. The sacrifice view is identified primarily with the Roman Catholic Church and grew to wide acceptance during the Middle Ages. Theodore Tapperts says, "in the course of the Middle Ages, in spite of protests by some theologians, decrees of councils strengthened an interpretation which had its roots in popular piety" [The Lord's Supper, 9].

2. Sacramental View holds that the Lord's Supper must be understood in the light of what happened on the cross for us and for our salvation. Here the emphasis is upon thanksgiving rather than sacrifice. This view can also be called Consubstantiation and is held by Martin Luther. Seeberg expresses this view "The elements retain not only their external characteristics but also their own material substance, while at the same time serving as the bearer of the presence of Christ as a new heavenly substance" [Textbook of the History of Doctrines, vol. 1,165]. This view can also be called the co-existent theory because it talks about real presence without the conversion of the substance. Gabriel Biel held this view, "The body of Christ is not seen by us, neither is it bitten by the teeth, nor perceived by the taste, but the species of the bread is both bitten and tested, and under it is contained the true, whole, and perfect body of Christ" [Quoted in Smith, A Short History of Christian Theophagy, 96]. The most important person who held this view is Luther. He speaks against transubstantiation in The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, "it gives a new and foolish twist to the words to hold that 'bread' means the form, or the accidents, of the bread." [Readings in Christian Thought, 148].

3. Memorial View is defined by Elmer Freemer in his book The Lord's Supper in Protestantism in the following way, "it is a memorial of Jesus, an act of thanksgiving, recognition of fellowship, a self-sacrifice, and a sacred mystery" [32]. The emphasis of this view is thanksgiving while the other elements are here with varying degree. Here the elements are symbols of Christ's body. Preserved Smith says of this view, "But in every age there were great Fathers of the Church who endeavored to give a more spiritual and therefore more symbolic meaning to the mode of the real presence" [81]. This can be illustrated through the writing of Jerome who talks about the Lord's Supper as "showing forth the body of the Savior and as a memorial of redemption" [quoted in Hagglund, History of Theology, 117]. Ratramnus is an important representative of this view. He attempted to deal with two questions: a) does the Lord's Supper contain a mystery which only faith can recognize? and b) is it the historical body of Christ? He deals with this in Christ's Body and Blood, "Those who are here willing to take nothing in a figurative sense, but insist that everything exists in simple truth, must be shed in reference to what a change has been produced, so that the elements now are not what they previously were, that is, bread and wine, but are Christ's body and blood. . ." [Library of Christian Classics, vol. 9, 122]. He says further, "Wherefore, as in the mystery that bread is eaten as Christ's body, so also in the mystery of the members of the people who believe in Christ are suggested and as that bread is called the body of the believers, not in a corporeal sense but in a spiritual, so of necessity Christ's body must also be understood not corporeally but spiritually" [139]. Zwingli of the Reformation period held this view. He referred to the Eucharist as a memorial ceremony, a dramatic reminder of the Lord's sacrifice and a communal attestation of the loyalty to the Church's founder. Calvin represents a middle ground between Luther and Zwingli. His view is something more than symbolism and something less then consubstantiation. Essentially, this is the view affirmed in Article XIII.

Wesley notes five possible objections to taking communion:
a) fear of taking it unworthily,  
b) too busy,  
c) abates our appreciation for the sacrament,  
d) no visible benefits, and  
e) Church only requires that it be taken three times a year

Wesley summaries his answer to each of the objections:

It has been particularly shown, first, that unworthiness is no excuse; because though in one sense we are all unworthy, yet none of us need be afraid of being unworthy in St. Paul's sense of "eating and drinking unworthily." Second, that the not having time enough for preparation can be no excuse; since the only preparation which is absolutely necessary, is that which no business can hinder; nor indeed anything on earth, unless so far as it hinders our being in a state of salvation. Thirdly, that its abating our reverence is no excuse; since he who gave the command, "Do this," nowhere adds, "unless it abates your reverence." Fourthly, that our not profiting by it is no excuse; since it is our fault, in neglecting that necessary preparation which is in our own power. Lastly, that the judgment of our own Church is quite in favor of constant communion. If those who have hitherto neglected it on any of these pretenses, will lay these things to heart, they will, but the grace of God, come to a better mind, and never more forsake their own mercies ["The Duty of Constant Communion," Wesley's Works, 7:157].

According to Maddox, "He [Wesley] referred to it as the 'grand channel" whereby the grace of the Spirit is conveyed to human souls, and identified partaking communion as the first step in working out our salvation" [Responsible Grace, 202]. Wesley saw the Lord's Supper as a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice. This should be understood as "re-presenting" the sacrifice of Christ for our salvation.

The grace of God is conveyed in the Lord's Supper by the "real presence" of Christ in the partaking of the sacrament. While Wesley denies any change in the substance of the elements and even the ubiquity of the body of the risen Lord he finally seeks to more than merely think of the presence of Christ as heavenly and spiritual. Wesley lands here because he is not so much interested in the elements of the Supper as he is interested in the persons taking communion. Wesley emphasizes the agency of the Holy Spirit in communicating the grace of God to the person taking communion. The Spirit is present in the elements, but it is in the response of the believer that the grace is conveyed.

Article XIII suggests that it is essential that the Christian observe the Lord's Supper because it conveys grace to those who partake in faith. It might be possible to understand that Christ is present in the holy meal, but not in the elements. Rather Christ is present by faith through the Holy Spirit in the one who partakes. It is also important to understand that the practice of the Lord's Supper lifts Christian life beyond pure will and puts it into the historically mediated practices of the Church. Finally, properly understood taking the Lord's Supper can have a preventing, justifying, and sanctifying effect.

Article XIV
Divine Healing

18. We believe in the Bible doctrine of divine healing and urge our people to seek to offer the prayer of faith for the healing of the sick. We also believe God heals through the means of medical science.


1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; James 5:13-16

Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven.
James 5:14-15

With a long life I will satisfy them, and show them my salvation.
Psalm 91:16

The Bible tells many stories of healing. In fact, the gospels record forty-one instances of physical and/or mental healing. One such story is found in Matthew 9:18-26. This story is really two events in one. The leader of the synagogue approaches Jesus heartbroken that his daughter has just died. This man wants Jesus to come and lay his hand upon her, so that she might be healed. The scripture tells us that Jesus got up to follow him and an older woman somehow gets close enough to touch the fringe of his garment. Jesus turns and heals her of a twelve year hemorrhage. Jesus then continues to the place where people are mourning the death of the young girl. Matthew 9:24 reads, "He [Jesus] said, 'Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping.' And they laughed at him." But when these people had been dismissed Jesus goes into the room where the young girl is laying. He reaches for her hand, and then she gets up. News of this event spread throughout the district. While this is just one of the many stories of healing in the scripture it represents the firm conviction of biblical Christianity that the creator of the universe is also the great physician.

The Church of the Nazarene added an article of faith on divine healing to the Manual in 1928 and then slightly revised it in 1997. The earlier version read, "We believe in the Bible doctrine of divine healing and urge our people to seek to offer the prayer of faith for the healing of the sick. Providential means and agencies when deemed necessary should not be refused." This last sentence was replaced in 1997 with the following statement, "We also believe God heals through the means of medical science."

Article XIV affirms the following:

- The Bible teaches divine healing
- We are urged to pray for the healing of the sick
- Praying for the sick does not preclude seeking medical treatment

Article XIV affirms our belief that it is appropriate to pray for those who are sick and to seek competent medical treatment.

The basic meaning of healing is "to make whole or well; to restore to health, more specifically by miraculous, divine intervention" [J. Fred Parker, "Heal, Healing," in Beacon Dictionary of Theology, 248].
David prays in Psalm 41:4, "As for me, I said, 'O Lord, be gracious to me; heal me, for I have sinned against you.'" This carries with it the implication of spiritual health. Jeremiah 30:17 reads, "For I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal, says the Lord". Taken together these two verses illustrate the conviction that healing extends to spiritual concerns.

It is interesting that the Hebrew word for harmonious peace is shalom and the word for healthy is shalem, thus connecting the spiritual and the physical. The New Testament word most often used for healing is therapeuo from which therapy comes. Luke prefers to use iaomai which carries with it the spiritual as well as the physical dimension of healing. [This analysis reflects the reading of the Beacon Dictionary of Theology article already cited].

Healing is listed as a gift of the Spirit. According to H. Orton Wiley, "The gifts are the divinely ordained means and powers with which Christ endows His Church in order to enable it to properly perform its task on earth" [Christian Theology, 2:317]. 1 Corinthians 12:9-10 talks about gifts of healings and miracles. W. T. Purkiser lists from the Corinthian account: faith (to claim and receive extraordinary answers to prayer), gifts of healing (specific gifts for specific instances), and miraculous powers (producing results not fully accounted for by natural agencies). [Beacon Dictionary of Theology, 234]

One dimension of popular Christianity is a strong emphasis upon faith healing. This term connotes healing that comes by faith as opposed to medical resources. The narrative cited above from Matthew is an example of the role of faith in healing. Faith healing presents an image of God that can obligate God to heal when great faith is evident, but no such connection can be sustained theologically. According to C. Neil Strait, "True divine healing, wherever it occurs will be consistent with the character of God" ["Faith Healing" in Beacon Dictionary of Theology, 208]. Many who are considered faith healers make a strong connection between the atonement and the healing of our physical bodies, but no such link is appropriate. Several scriptural passages seem to make this point:

- Romans 8:23, "and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

- 1 Corinthians 15:44, "It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body".

- 2 Corinthians 4:10, "always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies".

- 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, "Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, but instead he said to me. 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.' So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong".

Therefore, it seems clear that Christianity is not a way around the difficulties of life. The just suffer along with the unjust. The message of the Christian faith is "my grace is sufficient for you".

David Hume, an 18th-Century philosopher defines a "miracle (as) a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof"
against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined" ["Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding" in Miracles, 27]. It is not possible to sufficiently establish the truth of a miracle according to Hume and many others. Alastair McKinnon, for example, agrees with Hume on this definition and for this reason denies the possibility of a miracle. He argues this way because it is self-contradictory to believe that a natural law could be violated. He concludes that "all the properly descriptive senses of miracle are logically improper" ["Miracle and 'Paradox'" in Miracles, 52]. But this judgment is dependent upon the meaning of the phrase "violation of the laws of nature". R.F Holland disagrees and questions the characterization of a miracle as a "violation of the laws of nature". Perhaps a miracle is less about the irrational as Hume would suggest. Rather a miracle is something that is not normal. Richard Swinburne doubts that it is really possible to know the physical laws of the universe in any final way. Therefore, all laws of nature are open to change. So the conclusion of Hume is not necessarily warranted. With this understanding the focus turns toward the capacity of a miracle to open up dimensions of reality previously unknown.

While miracle is a debatable point among some philosophers and theologians it is not a necessary problem. Miracles are depicted often in the scripture and biblical faith asserts with confidence that God is able to accomplish events that are not fully explainable in rational terms. For example, a bush that burns without being consumed, the ten plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, changing water into wine, healings, and so on. Therefore, the capacity of God to intend and actually accomplish miracles is not in question in the scripture. This leaves a question about the essence of religion. Is the highest expression of religion a "signs and wonders" religion? To this question the unequivocal answer must be No! Immanuel Kant, a 19th-century philosopher, wrote a book titled Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone where he argues for two types of religion. The first type is characterized by a lack of rationality. It is also linked to superstition because the people are able to bear a higher form of religion. The second type of religion is within the bounds of reason. This version of religion is for those with a strong intellect. This distinction has worked its way into the Nazarene circles by the expression "folk theology". This term is often used in order to contrast an "educated" faith with an "uneducated" faith. Such a distinction is worth reflection upon, but it can result in a diminished understanding of the Holy Spirit. In other words, if the Holy Spirit is at work in the life of the Church there ought to be significant convergence in the actual expression of faith.

Given this argument it is possible to hold to an understanding of faith that allows for miracles, but does not seek to make them central to the life of faith. Healing is one kind of miracle and any conception of the Christian faith that never gets beyond miracle tends toward shallowness. While miracles can and should be prayed for in times of crisis our faith must finally reach to a more mature expression.

Wesley writes in a letter to Rev. Dr. Middleton concerning healing:

But "diseases, though fatal and desperate, are oft surprisingly healed themselves." And therefore "we cannot pay any great regard to such stories, unless we knew more precisely in this case the real bounds between nature and miracle." Sir, I understand you well. The drift of the argument is easily seen. It points at the Master, as well as his servants; and tends to prove that, after all this talk about miraculous cures, we are not sure there were ever any in the world. But it will do no harm. For, although we grant, (1.) That some recover, even in seemingly desperate cases; and (2.) That we do not know, in any case, the precise bounds between nature and miracle; yet it does not follow. Therefore I cannot be assured there ever was a miracle of healing in the world. To explain this by instance: I do not precisely know how far nature may go in healing, that is, restoring sight to the blind; yet this I assuredly know, that if a man born blind is restored to sight by a word, this is not nature, but miracle. And to such a story, well attested, all reasonable men will pray the highest regard. ["Letter to the Rev. Dr. Middleton" Wesley's Works, 10: 40-41]
The relationship between faith and health is often contested. Some studies suggest that the more often you attend church, pray, or read the Bible the less likely it is that you will be healthy and happy. Others suggest the exact opposite of this. There are those who believe that those who pray recover more quickly from surgery than those who do not. Article XIV affirms that faith has a positive relationship to health and happiness.

John Wesley actually wrote a Medical Handbook for those people who could not afford to go to the doctor. This underscores the seriousness with which he took the body and also his appreciation for participating in one’s own health.

Here are some examples of treatments found in his Medical Handbook:

- To Cure Baldness: Rub the part morning and evening, with onions, till it is read; and rub it afterwards with honey. Or, wash it with a decoction of box-wood. Or, electrify it daily.
- To Cure a Swelling from a Bruise: Forment it half an hour, morning and evening, with cloths dipped in water, as hot as you can bear.
- A Cold: Drink a pint of cold water lying down in bed. Or, to one spoonful of oatmeal, and one spoonful of honey, add a piece of butter, the bigness of a nutmeg; pour on gradually near a pint of boiling water; drink this lying down in bed.
- A Cold in the Head: Pare very thin the yellow rind of an orange. Roll it up inside out, and thrust a roll into each nostril.
- A Cough: Make a hole through a lemon and fill it with honey. Roast it and catch the juice. Take a tea-spoonful of this frequently.
- The Ear-Ache: Rub the ear hard a quarter of an hour. Or, be electrified. Or, put in a roasted fig, or onion, as hot as may be. Or, blow the smoke of tobacco strongly into it.
- Dull Sight: Drop in two or three drops of juice of rotten apples often.
- The Heart-Burning: Drink a pint of cold water. Or, a teaspoonful of crab's eyes, grounded to an impalpable power.

The final challenge for the Christian faith is death: If sickness is evidence of our finitude, then death is the ultimate defeat of our finitude. Genesis 2: 17 reads, "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die". Paul extends this understanding by linking death to sin and saying that "death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses . . .(Romans 5:14a). He adds in verse 17a, "If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through the one . . ." Paul also says, "For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be alive in Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:21-22). The Christian tradition links physical death and spiritual death. The fact of death is wrapped in the penalty of sin, but according to Paul the resurrection has taken the sting from death (1 Corinthians 15:55). Therefore, while death will ultimately claim the life of every human being it is not the final victor, since Christ has conquered even death. The promise of the Christian faith is that in the resurrection the final healing takes place for those who are in Christ.

Article XIV clearly affirms that God can heal. It does not and cannot determine why God heals. Rather it simply states - God heals. Further, article XIV links the prayer of faith with healing. This means that God makes room in our life for our fears, hurts, and diseases. There is no contradiction in believing that God can heal while we seek medical attention.
Article XV

Second Coming of Christ

19. 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.


Article XV affirms the following about the Second Coming of Christ:

- Jesus will come again.
- Those alive at His coming shall not precede them that are asleep in Christ Jesus.
- Those that are abiding in Him will be caught with the risen saints to meet the Lord in the air.
- We will ever be with the Lord.

This week we will examine Article XV which affirms our belief in the blessed hope of Christ’s return. Fundamentally, Article XV teaches that the future is not up to us. God is at work in history to weave a future of His own making. A Christian understanding of history is akin to exodus. We are, after all, a pilgrim people. Eschatology is the theological activity of the Church which addresses the last things. Eschatology reflects upon the point where evil will be completely defeated and the reign of Christ evacuates the very presence of sin in the world. According to Rob Staples:

> Eschatology and history belong together. Clues to the meaning of last things are best discovered by a careful reading of past things. When theology severs these two, eschatology is life without safe moorings, cast adrift on a sea of speculation. An apt illustration of this is a man in a rowboat. The rower does not face the direction in which the boat is moving, but rather faces backward – to give him better leverage on the oars.

> Now and then he may glance over his shoulder to catch sight of his destination, but this can easily cause an unequal pull on the oars, which will throw the boat off course. Mainly his gaze is backward – toward where he has been rather than where he is going. It is a bit like this in eschatology. The Christian hope is best understood and appropriated by an appreciation of the history of salvation, of the acts of God in creation and redemption. [“The Theology of the Final Consummation,” in *The Second Coming: A Wesleyan Approach to the Doctrine of the Last Things*, 247]

The blessed hope of the gospel shines through history. Eschatological reflection is central to the Christian faith. From the very start those who followed Christ expected him to return. The central Christological title, the Son of Man, was also an eschatological title. The Christ who first comes in humility will come at the end of the age bring history, as we know it, to a close.

Nietzsche in the nineteenth-century captured a rather different view of history with the idea of eternal recurrence. This view asserts that history is cyclical, that is that the past is eventually reconstituted into
the present. The hope that is within comprehends history from another view. The Christian view of history conceives of time as going somewhere, it has an end. Salvation is, thus, understood in history. Articles XV and XVI (which we will treat next week) attempt to set the doctrinal parameters for discussion of the eschatological themes in the Church of the Nazarene.

Eschatology, as a central topic of theological reflection, is rather recent. In fact, the term is not used before the 19th century. Eschatology is defined as that branch of theology which deals with the end times. A classic biblical text for eschatology is the Olivet Discourse (Matt 24). Some themes in this discourse are:

- People will come in the name of Jesus, but actually be false prophets,
- Wars and rumors of war,
- Christians will be handed over to be persecuted,
- Abomination of desolation,
- No one knows the hour, and
- Keep watch.

The prevailing view of fifty years ago minimized the significance of eschatology and apocalypticism. Adolf von Harnack's view treated the apocalyptic element as insignificant to the real message of Jesus which was the fatherhood of God, the infinite value of the soul, and the ethic of love. Jurgen Moltmann changed all of this with the publication of *A Theology of Hope* when he affirmed the centrality of eschatology for Christian theology. He has sought to make eschatology central to Christian theology. He says,

In actual fact, however, eschatology means the doctrine of the Christian hope, which embraces both the object hoped for and also the hope inspired by it. From first to last, and not merely in the epilogue, Christianity is eschatology, is hope, forward looking and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present. The eschatological is not one element of Christianity, but it is the medium Christian faith as such, the key to everything in it is set, the glow that suffuses everything here in the down of an expected new day (16).

Eschatology should be the beginning of all theological reflection. Moltmann argues against allowing Christianity becoming a utopia “in this hope the soul does not soar above our vale of tears to some imagined heavenly bliss, nor does it sever itself from the earth.” This helps to clarify the meaning of the present. He says, “the present is nothing else but the eternity that is immanent in time, and what matters is to perceive in the outward form of temporality and transience the substance that is immanent and the eternal that is present. . .” (27). The believer is “not set at the high noon of life, but at the dawn of a new day at the point where night and day, things passing and things to come, grapple with each other” (31).

Moltmann expands on the meaning of promise, which important for eschatological reflection:

- A promise is a declaration, which announces the coming of a reality that does not yet exist.
- The promise binds man to the future and gives him a sense for history.
- The history initiated by promise tends toward fulfillment as opposed to cycles.
- Promise stands in contrast to reality.
• Promise creates tension.
• Promise should not occasion calculation.
• Promise as it relates to history gives a wider vision.

The task of the church is clear for Moltmann,

As a result of this hope in God's future, this present world becomes free in believing eyes from all attempts at self-redemption or self-production through labor, and it becomes open for loving, ministering self-expenditure in the interests of a humanizing of conditions and in the interests of the realization of justice in the light of the coming justice of God. This means, however, that the hope of resurrection must bring about a new understanding of the world. This world is not the heaven of self-realization, as it was said to be in Idealism. This world is not the hell of self-estrangement, as it is said to be in romanticist and existentialist writing. The world is not yet finished, but is understood as engaged in a history. It is therefore the world of possibilities, the world in which we can serve the future, promised truth and righteousness and peace. This is the age of diaspora, of sowing in hope, of self-surrender and sacrifice, for it is an age, which stands within the horizon of a new future. Thus self-expenditure in this world, day-to-day love in hope, becomes possible and becomes human within that horizon of expectation, which transcends this world. The glory of self-realization and the misery of self-estrangement alike arise from the hopelessness in a world of lost horizons. To disclose to it the horizon of the future of the crucified Christ is the task of the Christian Church (338).

It is always tempting to speculate on the “what”, “when”, and “how” of the second coming. Some believe that Jesus will come after seven years of tribulation. Others affirm the rapture of the Church and then after the tribulation another rapture. Others feel that since the ascension of Jesus we have been living in the millennium. Some in the twentieth-century tended to believe that our own death was a personal eschaton. During the early days of the Church of the Nazarene there was dispute on these issues. Amid this dispute, the decision was made to affirm where there must be unity about for the Church of the Nazarene. We affirm that Jesus is coming again. Those who have already died will be caught up in the air with those who are alive to meet the conquering Christ is clearly affirmed in Article XV. This is our great hope and because of this we are called to live the resurrection life now.

Article XV and XVI begin to sketch out a Christian understanding of history. Part of what this means is that history has a destination. God is the Lord of history and He will accomplish his will for the Church. A Christian view of history affirms that heaven is somewhere, it is where those who are in Christ will gaze upon the Triune God and proclaim --Holy, Holy, Holy.
Article XVI

Resurrection, Judgment, and Destiny

20. 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."

21. 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.

22. 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.


Article XVI affirms the following about Resurrection, Judgment, and Destiny:

- The resurrection of the dead.
- Bodies of the just and the unjust will be raised to life and united with their spirit.
- Those that have done good to life.
- Those that have done evil to damnation.
- Future judgment.
- Every person will appear before the Lord to be judged account to his or her deeds.
- A glorious life awaits the obedient.
- The finally impenitent shall suffer eternally in Hell.

Our examination of the Articles of Faith in the Church of the Nazarene comes to an end this week as we look at XVI. During these weeks, I have attempted in outline fashion to review where we as a denomination stand on important doctrinal convictions. This week we look at the important issue of resurrection, judgment, and human destiny. These are important matters for us as we continue to think about the grammar of our common faith.

Article XVI affirms that the Church of the Nazarene believes in the resurrection of the body. Other versions of everlasting life paint a picture of non-corporeal existence, but from the start the major voice of the Christian faith has mostly affirmed the resurrection (re-creation) of the body. While the influence of Plato did influence some early theologians the largest portion of the Christian faith has affirmed a bodily resurrection. This affirms the seriousness with which the Christian faith and the Church of the
Nazarene give to the body. An affirmation of the resurrection denies the comfortable separation of the physical and the spiritual. This reminds us that in some manner that we do not fully understand we will persist everlastingly as a body. Yet, we affirm that it is as a body that we will enjoy the everlasting fellowship of the God who redeemed us in Jesus Christ. For others, there will be the self-pronounced to exist everlastingly in complete alienation from the God who will never cease loving.

Article XVI completes the Nazarene understanding of how history ends by adding more texture to the shape of our everlasting existence in the presence of God. Much discussion is taking place in some corners of the Church regarding the meaning of salvation and existence of Hell. Some would argue that only an unjust God would condemn a person to everlasting torment. Article XVI affirms that Hell exists for those who do not finally accept the grace of God provided through Jesus Christ. Hell is that place of utter alienation which exists as a futile attempt to deny the reality of God. At least, in this sense, Hell is a place that lives in the shadows of existence. If all that is finds its origin in God, then Hell finds its origin in anti-creation. In fact, Hell is anti-existence, that is to say, Hell is the ultimate denial of God. There is a real sense in which Hell is a futile attempt to un-create the world. Therefore, God does not so much condemn a person to Hell as He accepts our own self-condemnation.

Article XVI invites us to think of the meaning of judgment. We know that making judgments is a part of life. Every day we make judgments about the appropriateness of a certain course of action. Of course, life presents us with the prospect of momentous decisions/choices as well. What will our vocation be? Who will be we marry? Will we accept the invitation of the Holy Spirit to be renewed in the image of God? These are, after all, about making judgments and they reflect the pathways of discernment given to all of us as creatures made in the image of God. Likewise, the scripture affirms the separation of the sheep from the goats. It is easy to think of this as an arbitrary judgment of God, but it might be important to understand this parable is about a separation that has always been made by the sheep or the goat. The Christian tradition teaches us that God creates us all in His image and for His glory. Even though we are born into a circumstance which biases us toward sin, it is not necessary that we sin... Yet, the scripture affirms that we all do sin. We are not judged by the circumstances into which we have been placed. Rather, we are judged by what we do in those circumstances. A cursory reading of the gospels reminds us that Jesus who was born into a world of brokenness and sin did not know sin. His obedience opens the door for our new life, but God does not decide for us. The mystery of salvation is the gracious message that God in Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit finds us in our sinfulness in order to offer us redemption. Judgment is the acceptance that God has for our response to his gracious offer.

Finally, Article XVI affirms that those who accept the redemption offered by God and continue to believe will enjoy an everlasting and intimate face-to-face fellowship with the Lord God Jehovah. The scripture paints many images for this heavenly existence, but Article XVI does not indulge is a reflection upon these kinds of specifics. Yet, it does affirm that those who continue to believe will know the full presence of God in a manner that will fill us with life. When Jesus came to earth the Kingdom of God/the reign of God broke in to history and even then the demons understood what many did not - the end of sin has arrived. Jesus died on a cross to do for us that which we could not do for ourselves - defeat the enemy. One man, Jesus, the Christ, looked Satan in the face and said no for all of us for all of time. When Jesus was raised from the dead evil was defeated once and for all. Yet, in these days of suffering, evil, and sin it is easy to ask - What changed the day after the resurrection? Article XVI affirms that one change was death and evil were dealt a defeat as a foretaste of the ultimate defeat that is yet to come. For now, we wait for the total defeat of sin, as we are able to live without the necessity of sin in the
present. We often watch the terrible things that people do to one another. We watch natural disasters. We watch our loved ones grow old and pass away. Disease causes great suffering and even death. Life includes more than a few tears, but Article XVI reminds us that all of this will pass away in the great morning of our everlasting life in the light of the Triune God. This is what really matters about heaven - we shall behold Him.

These weeks have been a great deal of fun for me. I find great comfort in the doctrinal language of the Church of the Nazarene. We know who we are and I celebrate the clarity and profundity of our doctrinal heritage. Years of reading theology and teaching students in our institutions of higher education remind me these doctrines bring balance and depth to our spiritual journey. We are not cast out on our own to create a history for ourselves. Rather, we are given the labors of the Christian tradition and the theologians for the Church of the Nazarene to equip us for a full life of faith. These sixteen articles of faith are not intended to end debate or deliver pre-established answers to every question. Rather, these articles of faith offer us a grammar, a way to go on with the confidence of a particular set of convictions, which are capable of enriching life. When I bought my last vehicle I discovered a most wonderful device - OnStar. I have often remarked to my wife that this device means I never have to be lost again or even ask directions. When I am unsure of my destination, I can push the button and directions will be downloaded to my vehicle. Perhaps, these sixteen articles mean the same thing - we do not ever have to be lost in the midst of defining our faith. Like with my OnStar, I do not have to take the directions given, but when I do, I can drive with confidence... Doctrines to do not finally dictate, they offer us assistance, as we travel toward that grand City of light together. Let us determine to use these sixteen articles of faith as a resource designed to guide us toward that great City.

“We often watch the terrible things that people do to one another. We watch natural disasters. We watch our loved ones grow old and pass away. Disease causes great suffering and even death. Life includes more than a few tears, but Article XVI reminds us that all of this will pass away in the great morning of our everlasting life in the light of the Triune God. This is what really matters about heaven - we shall behold Him.”