Sanctification as Virtue and Mission: The Politics of Holiness

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SANCTIFICATION AS VIRTUE AND MISSION: THE POLITICS OF HOLINESS

by

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This dissertation considers the political implications of the doctrine of holiness. I proceed by demonstrating the neglect of holiness in political theology, the viability of the holiness movement as an embodied witness of the political implications of the doctrine of holiness, and a biblical trajectory in Leviticus that extends into the New Testament. I describe this scriptural holiness as vocation for all of God’s people through personal formation and outward societal action to extend God’s holiness.

With attention to the approaches of political theology and formation, I demonstrate that the holiness movement of the nineteenth century offers an example of holiness in practice that addresses societal problems (e.g., urban housing crisis, intemperance, and slavery). I then propose three theological issues that undermined the political vision of the holiness movement in the twentieth century. First, the scope of sin narrowed resulting in a less hopeful expectation of sanctification’s power. Second, most of the holiness movement adopted premillennial eschatology, which altered the way it viewed social structures. Third, the holiness movement was marginalized by its theological rejection of the Third Great Awakening, which served to influence religious and civil approaches to social problems in the twentieth century (e.g., the New Deal and Social Gospel).

Three case studies (race, global missions, and temperance) demonstrate the influence these respective theological shifts had on social action. I argue that a theological interpretation of Leviticus 17-26 guides the holiness movement to embody the vocation of holiness as an alternative vision to the formation of modern politics regarding social orderings. I extend Israel Knohl’s insight that Leviticus 17-26 responds to prophetic critiques of cultic practices and reconceives holiness to address social challenges. I argue that Jesus picks up this stream when he recites, “love your neighbor as yourself,” and that Christian embodiment of this scriptural holiness sustains the political vocation of holiness in changing contexts (including the modern bifurcation of life into private and public spheres). I conclude that vocational holiness enables a Christian understanding of political community.
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Nathan Willowby, B.A., M.Div.

First, in as much as this is a project about vocation, I must first acknowledge my gratitude to God who has seen fit to call me to the vocation of studying theology. I strive to serve Christ in all that I do and find great meaning in the sense of vocation that I have been given. Second, I want to thank the formative influences that made this project possible. My parents, siblings, extended family, and friends have encouraged me to use my time, talents, and gifting in a manner oriented to my sense of vocation. They have modeled lives of vocation for me in such a powerful way that I was formed to believe in the power of vocation to direct life towards ends that are determined by God. In a more practical sense, my wife’s parents created a writing space in their home that proved very productive during fall visits in 2014 and 2015. My mother also came to Milwaukee on several occasions to watch my daughter and provide me with additional time to write.

Once I began to see my vocation as directed towards serving the church, I found remarkable people ready to help me grow into a life-long pursuit of that calling. My academic journey was guided by my professors at Anderson University, where Fred Burnett, James W. Lewis, and the late Gilbert Stafford helped me to see my calling as appropriately oriented towards research, teaching, and writing that could serve the church. They opened my eyes to the prospect of graduate work beyond seminary. Professor Merle Strege was part of that too, but deserves special mention for the continued mentoring and encouragement that he has offered to me since I left Anderson.
Professors Douglas Campbell and Stanley Hauerwas at Duke oriented my research interests and gave me the confidence to pursue a Ph.D.

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The Marquette Theology Department has shaped me in further ways. Dr. Sharon Pace guided me into Leviticus scholarship and willingly accepted the role of co-director late in this project. I also appreciate the guidance of Fr. David Schultenover, S. J. who was my academic adviser upon entering the program and continued encouraging me once my file was passed on to Dr. Long. I am also thankful for Dr. Joseph Ogbonnaya and Dr. Mickey Mattox for serving on my dissertation committee, and for their guidance that I expect will come through comments and defense questions.

I also want to thank several friends who have been important for my work on this dissertation. First of all, Dr. Jacob Shatzer read much of this project in draft form. His familiarity with William Cavanaugh was helpful as I searched for a particular political theologian to guide my critique of the political action of the holiness movement. More importantly his friendship and accountability have been influential for my formation as a person and scholar. Dr. Brian Sigmon helped me proofread Hebrew, helped me process recent Old Testament scholarship, and read the Leviticus chapter prior to my final draft. Dr. Andy Alexis-Baker helped me work through the vision
analogy I use in chapter one, and I am thankful for his friendship and for regularly stretching my theological imagination to consider issues and questions that I had not previously considered.

In addition to my work as a graduate student, I have been honored to serve as the pastor of Crossroads Church of God for the past six years. The people of Crossroads are truly remarkable. They have been gracious and understanding of the demands on my time that doctoral work requires. They embody a political community that is not yet perfect and sometimes shows marks of the state’s formation; however, they consistently blur the categories and combat the polarized ideologies that are so often separate in our present day. Crossroads Church has taught me so much about what it means to strive to be God’s holy people. I love the way they gather many different backgrounds and perspectives together each Sunday morning. I love that I look out from the pulpit at the political community that is Crossroads and know that only Jesus would bring this particular group of people together. They have taught me that we all learn more about ourselves and, more importantly, the God we worship because of our willingness to be in holy mission together.

Finally and most importantly I want to thank my wife and daughter. I am so grateful for the way my wife, Jill, has journeyed with me to see this project to completion. I love her immensely and cannot imagine life without her. We have been doing life together since before I was thinking seriously about the relation of political theology to holiness. She has taught me that what I study is important, and yet in order for it to have the impact that I hope my work and research will have for the church, it must be
communicated by a form of life that makes what I think, believe, and write intelligible.

She has selflessly adapted her career and zip code to share in my vocation to the church through seminary, pastoral ministry, and now finally completing this dissertation. I cannot place into words how important her friendship and companionship is to me. I can only hope that I am able to remind her that I am truly grateful daily by the way that we live and seek holiness together.

My daughter Emerson entered our life after this project was already underway. But, the bulk of writing happened in time that created separation from her. She has learned to read the signs that daddy is about to “go to work” and graciously says goodbye and joyously welcomes me back home. She profoundly reminds me that time spent with others (and especially time that is often viewed as “wasted”) is formative and meaningful when she requests my presence on the floor to read or play. Her flourishing amazes me and reminds me how important it is for theology to keep the long view of the future in mind.
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1, “Leviticus in a Ring.” .......................................................... 234
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS........................................................................................................... iii

LIST OF FIGURES............................................................................................................... vii

INTRODUCTION: THE VIRTUE AND MISSION OF HOLINESS.............................. 1

1. Theses and Method ........................................................................................................ 1

2. Summary of the Argument ........................................................................................ 9

3. The Meaning of Terms .............................................................................................. 17

CHAPTER

I. THE HOLINESS MOVEMENT AND POLITICAL THEOLOGY: TWO LENSES FOR SEEING HOLINESS IN THE WORLD ......................... 22

1. Introduction .................................................................................................................. 22

2. “Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.” ........................................... 26

3. Political Theology: Engaging Societal Questions, Neglecting Vocational Holiness .............................................................. 31

   3.1 Political Theology .................................................................................................. 32

   3.2 Review of Political Theology .............................................................................. 38

   3.3 Where is Holiness? .............................................................................................. 46

4. Scriptural Holiness: Personal and Social, Spiritual and Political .................. 60

5. A Tenuous Place of Influence ................................................................................. 80

II. THEOLOGICAL DRIFT AWAY FROM SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS ............. 87

1. Introduction: Something Happened ....................................................................... 87

2. Waning Scope and Power of Holiness ................................................................... 97

   2.1 Populist Organization and Influence .................................................................. 98
2.2 A Narrowing Scope of Sin and a Narrower Expectation for Experience .......................................................... 105

2.3 Case Study in Sin Language........................................... 117

2.4 Conclusions on the Loss of Sin................................. 122

3. The Rise of Premillennial Eschatology in the Holiness Movement...125

3.1 Invigorated Personal Holiness with a Changing View of Society............................................................. 130

3.2 Missions Contrast—Amillennial Missions Committed to Local Flourishing.................................................. 138

4. The Cultural Shift from Second to Third Great Awakenings........ 146

III. CONTEXTUAL CHALLENGES: LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS, FORMATION, AND RELATION TO NATIONAL TEMPERANCE REFORM.................................................................................. 164

1. Transitions................................................................................ 164

2. Generational Shifts in Priorities and Commitments............... 171

3. Case Study: Abolition Energy Aimed at Temperance and Prohibition............................................................. 173

   3.1 The Alcoholic Republic................................................. 176

   3.2 Philosophical and Theological Rationale for Total Abstinence from Alcohol.................................................. 184

4. Limited Theological Imagination........................................... 195

   4.1 Scriptural Holiness and Theopolitical Imagination.......... 200

   4.2 Returning to Scriptural Holiness..................................... 203

IV. LEVITICUS AND SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS........................................ 205

1. Introduction............................................................................. 205

2. Theological Creativity in Levitical H Material.................... 207
2.1 Introduction into Levitical H and P Material and Its Theological Significance ........................................ 209

2.2 "Priestly Writings": Right Relationship to God through Cultic Worship .................................................... 217

3. H Material as Theological Fusion and Critique ................. 228

3.1 Textual Examples ................................................................. 231

3.2 Leviticus 19: A New Decalogue ........................................ 232

3.3 Leviticus 11:43-45—Dietary Laws as Ladder of Holiness .... 242

3.4 Leviticus 25—Expansion of Content and Context of Holiness ................................................................. 243

4. Overcoming Polarization and Compartmentalization .......... 247

4.1 The Prophetic and Priestly Fusion Against Compartmentalization ......................................................... 249

4.2 The H Fusion in the New Testament ................................. 251

5. Conclusion ........................................................................... 255

CONCLUSION: EXTENDING THE HOLINESS OF GOD INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY ................................................................. 258

I. A Positive Construction of Holiness ................................. 258

II. Holiness as Formation for Political Community in Christ .... 260

III. The Relation of Holiness and Political Theology ............... 263

BIBLIOGRAPHY ................................................................. 269
INTRODUCTION: THE VIRTUE AND MISSION OF HOLINESS

1. Theses and Method

The holiness movement has neglected political theology. Political theology has neglected holiness. In the following work, I will present two related theses. First, the holiness movement can enhance the field of political theology in general and the stream that is concerned with the formative power that modern states have on the church in particular (for which William T. Cavanaugh and Stanley Hauerwas are dominant voices). Second, political theology, especially insights from Cavanaugh’s work on the state, modernity, and intermediate associations, can improve the formation of Christians who are pursuing the renewed interest in social reform activity as an extension of the holiness movement’s commitment to sanctification.

I present these theses in five steps. First, I demonstrate a lacuna with respect to holiness in political theology. Second, I present positive examples and a trajectory of holiness that led to social action in the nineteenth-century American holiness movement. Third, I offer three theological influences that diminished the social reform activity of the holiness movement in the twentieth century. Fourth, I consider the changes that were experienced in terms of leadership generations and the holiness movement’s acceptance of a marginalized moral authority in its engagement with national prohibition political efforts. Finally, I present a close reading of scriptural holiness in the book of Leviticus where I see an important synthesis of vertical and horizontal formation as a result of a reformulation of the doctrine of holiness.
My argument incorporates several of the often isolated fields of theological scholarship including: theology, ethics, historical theology, and theological and historical critical interpretation of scripture. I draw from political theology in order to diagnose threats to faithful holiness movement social action and turn to economist Robert Fogel to make sense of the holiness movement’s retreat from public influence in the twentieth century. I also engage source critical arguments in Leviticus to posit a context for redaction by a school of priests that was deeply concerned with allowing holiness to guide Israel’s life and practice (through cultic observance that extends beyond the temple). And yet, the way in which I apply the redactional activity extends beyond the typical concerns of historical critical scholarship by explicitly engaging the theological question that I am bringing to the text: What does this redaction say about the politics of holiness for God’s people? I follow the premise of theological interpretation of scripture that emphasizes “a return to the practice of using Scripture as a way of ordering and comprehending the world rather than using the world as a way of comprehending Scripture.”

The particular form that my analysis and proposals take has been influenced by my own particular theological formation. I offer three quotations that present the way I have approached the doctrine of sanctification as virtue and mission:

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“Being the holy people of God is not to be unplugged from the world; it’s to be plugged into the divine mission in the world.”

“[A]ny account of Christianity that does not make witness constitutive of the practice of the faith cannot be true.”

“Decisions in any community...depend upon a prior vision of what constitutes that community, and what goods it believes it should be pursuing.”

These three statements by influential theologians in my theological formation point to the approach that I have taken towards the theological analysis and constructive proposals in this work. The first statement provides an example of what I have learned as a disciple being formed in the Church of God Reformation Movement. We are people who understand that God has called us to holiness and unity. Most often, our holiness has been understood as necessarily leading us to seek unity of the body of Christ. The second statement summarizes well the connection between doctrine and ethics that I have learned from Stanley Hauerwas and the various scholars who have been influenced by him. These have included teachers in my undergraduate work, my


5 The Church of God Reformation Movement is also commonly referred to by itself and others as the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana) as a way of identifying itself by the location of its national offices in relation to other ecclesial groups with the name or variation of the name “Church of God.” Unless otherwise noted, when I use the title, Church of God, I am referring to the Church of God Reformation Movement.
doctoral adviser, and Dr. Hauerwas himself in my Master of Divinity studies at Duke Divinity School. Finally, the third statement presents the reason that I think I have done important work in this dissertation. The communities that make the first and second statements intelligible rarely overlap; yet, they are both my communities. The two communities do not have the same vision regarding what they are supposed to be pursuing, but I think they can serve to make each other stronger. This dissertation is my attempt to bring the two visions together under the rubric of sanctification by which I mean scriptural holiness that forms God’s people in virtue and sends them out in mission.

I have been formed to understand holiness as an essential pursuit for Christians. And yet, it was not until being introduced to political theology that I realized the scope of my understanding of holiness needed to be extended. Fortunately, I had mentors who initially guided me away from a narrow understanding of holiness, but political theology opened my eyes to theologically grounded ways of conceiving of social responsibility, political arrangements, and church-state relationships that went far beyond any “political” theological introduction I saw within the Wesleyan and free-church influences interpreted through my own holiness movement tradition.

When I set out to articulate the politics of holiness, I found that I would need to explain the change in vision and goods that my own holiness movement tradition experienced over the past 150 years. As my subtitle suggests, I present the politics of holiness, but it is a particular meaning of holiness that I address in this dissertation. I return to positive examples of holiness that led to political reform. I identify resources
from political theology that can strengthen the way holiness was being lived even in those places that I celebrate where social action grew out of the personal conversion and formation of “being made holy” that is strong in the holiness movement. In the end, I judge that the holiness movement and Wesleyan theology more broadly have not directed their attention to questions of Christian conceptions of political space and time. Wesleyans have resources to consider social and political issues like poverty and justice for the vulnerable, but they have not developed a political theology per se. For example Theodore Weber states,

Wesleyanism does have strong social and humane commitments rising out of Wesley’s concern for the poor and his history of establishing educational and charitable institutions, but it has no characteristic, commonly accepted, publicly recognizable symbols for contextualizing these commitments politically. It is true, of course, that Methodists and their Wesleyan kinfolk do politics in various and sundry contexts, including the church itself, but they do not see politics with a common clarifying vision and they do not speak politics with a common tongue.6

The holiness movement needs political theology’s critical insights of contemporary political arrangements and its language for addressing the important formation that creates people who can do, see, and speak politics in a way that resists formations that are counter to the formation of Christ’s disciples into the identity and practices befitting

6 Theodore R. Weber, Politics in the Order of Salvation: Transforming Wesleyan Political Ethics (Nashville, Tenn.: Kingswood Books, 2001), 19. Weber goes on to describe a general passive form of political ideology that grew in Methodist circles after Wesley’s death. This has perhaps prevented Wesleyans from fully engaging political theology. It also perhaps leads those within “Wesleyan” traditions to draw their political theology and philosophy more strongly from their other historical influences. For example, the Church of God (Anderson) evinced its Brethren/Anabaptist influence during World War I as it was granted status as a tradition in which one could reasonably register as a conscientious objector.
God’s holiness. Furthermore, formation matters because those who dismiss theology as irrelevant and those who criticize the church for its moral and practical failures typically bring their charges from a frame of reference that has tacitly embraced a way of thinking about religion and society that I think needs to be reformed.

Chad Pecknold describes the changes in the way Christianity and the cultures in which it has existed have understood politics in *Christianity and Politics*. One of his salient points is that a political vision of human community pre-existed Christianity. In the first four centuries of the Common Era, Christians provided “a different way of thinking about human community” that “challenged and eventually transformed the older way of thinking about political community.” He argues that “Christianity relativized politics and changed the way political obligation was perceived.” As Pecknold narrates this Christian view of political community, God has gifted Christians with their own obligation for the common good through the gift of Jesus and his presence in the Eucharist and body of Christ. This gift constituted “a new birthright” and “an identity, and a citizenship, that trumped allegiance to any nation, state, or empire.” William Cavanaugh offers what I judge to be the most cogent analysis of how this arrangement and assumption regarding the primary locus of obligation for


8 Ibid., 27-28.

9 Ibid., 26-27.

10 Ibid., 29.
promotion and protection of the common good has shifted. He states, “In Christian social ethics the assumption is often made, with a minimum of examination, that the responsibility for promoting and protecting the common good falls to the state.”[^11] In other words, it is not even the detractors of Christianity, but Christian social ethicists themselves who evince the complete reversal of priority that Christianity once claimed in relation to the state with respect to political community and the common good. I agree with Cavanaugh and Pecknold that this reversal is a problem for the church. In as much as they both observe the importance of formation of a people who are capable of embodying community that derives its meaning, purpose, and political imagination from Christ, I offer an extension of their concerns through my attempt to facilitate the necessary formation through the vocation of holiness. I conceive of the vocation of holiness as a form of theological imagination that draws all of life under the rubric of seeking to be God’s holy people.

An example from daily life can illustrate the way that I think the vocation of holiness is a powerful way to broadly communicate the important reform of political community that Pecknold and Cavanaugh demonstrate is necessary. My dental hygienist asked me that question that is both well meaning and at the same time terrifying for any doctoral student—“So what is your dissertation about?” I did my best to explain in non-technical jargon that I am writing about holiness and political theology. This particular conversation went much better than an earlier experience when my

attempt at a concise description of my project led a friendly neighbor to respond, “So you want to set up your own Jonestown?” After that response, my wife said—“you need to come up with a better way to tell people what you do.” Fortunately, I must have done a better job of explaining my work and interests because my dental hygienist responded by mentioning that she recently attended a talk hosted by her parish addressing the challenge of raising children in consonance with the church’s teachings. She was struck by the guidance to teach her son that saying no to sex before marriage was actually a choice of saying yes to a different vision of life and the world. Then she asked me, “maybe that is different from what you call political theology?” I answered that issues like what to teach your children and how to describe life choices as positive responses to and for a Christian understanding of life is exactly the sort of thing that I was trying to write about.

Life presents human beings with innumerable questions about how to live. The difference between two moral visions of sex is just one of a myriad of theological distinctions and decisions that people make. How should a person understand her or his identity? Who is my neighbor? What does it mean to confess that, “Jesus is Lord” in a world that is increasingly suspicious of such an exclusive and potentially triumphalist claim? How do I relate welcome of refugees to issues of national security? Questions of how individuals and faith communities live in, with, among, or against societies and their implicit and explicit values are theological. These are also opportunities for Christian theology to address the foundational questions of life and the shape and form that Christian witness will take.
2. Summary of the Argument

This dissertation enters into the conversations that are already taking place regarding the questions above as a work of Christian theology and ethics that is intentionally attentive to Christian scripture. More explicitly, this is a political theology founded upon the Christian vocation of holiness that is given by God in Leviticus—“You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.”\(^\text{12}\) I begin with the vocation of holiness because it is often overlooked by political theologies and because the vocation of holiness is a theme that runs through scripture, from the Pentateuch through the New Testament and forward into the life of the church. Furthermore, I demonstrate that one strength of founding a political theology on the vocation of holiness is that it overcomes a tendency of many theologies of holiness and political theologies to emphasize either personal holiness or social justice to the neglect of the other.\(^\text{13}\) A properly conceived political theology of holiness can navigate this bifurcation between piety and justice and challenge the framing of modern politics that often leads to the bifurcation.

Chapters one and two will present the strengths and weaknesses of the American holiness movement. Part of this narration entails demonstrating ways that the holiness movement has receded its political and social influence, but it will also show that holiness has been neglected by political theology. Ultimately, what I will argue is that

\(^{12}\) Leviticus 19:2 (NRSV). Unless otherwise noted, biblical citations will be from the NRSV.

\(^{13}\) An excursus on the meaning of various terms relating to holiness (including “personal holiness”) will follow in part three of this introduction.
holiness is crucial for theology and yet, if holiness loses its political nature, it fails to be *scriptural* holiness. The foray into political theology is more than just an exercise to show that theologians who write political theology have neglected holiness. William Cavanaugh helps to show why a return to nineteenth-century holiness should not be the ultimate goal of the holiness movement. In other words, more than a retrieval is needed; and my third and fourth chapters will present the problems with a pure retrieval and the possibilities of scriptural holiness that takes account of the politics in Leviticus. Political theology helps to explain why a return to the political capital and influence available to Protestants during the early nineteenth century and culminating in the Volstead Act should not be the goal of faithful scriptural holiness.

The survey of political theology texts that I consider is not exhaustive because my goal is merely to present the case that political theology has neglected the doctrine of holiness. Key thinkers including Carl Schmitt and Oliver O'Donovan are noticeably absent because their works do not develop a doctrine of holiness as politically relevant. I chose to focus space and attention on those political theologians who might be perceived as addressing holiness (e.g., Luke Bretherton's *Hospitality as Holiness*¹⁴ and Pedro Casaldáliga’s and J. Ma Vigil’s *Political Holiness*)¹⁵ or those books that might challenge my argument that the holiness movement has neglected political theology (e.g., Stanley

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Hauerwas’s *Sanctify Them in the Truth*], I analyze four introductions to political theology in order to most efficiently demonstrate the lacuna with respect to holiness. I also utilize the *Blackwell Companion to Political Theology* as justification for pursuing a political theology through the doctrine of holiness since it has a section in which different theological loci serve as foundations for respective political theologies.

The historical narration of the synthesis of personal conversion and social action in chapter one depends heavily on the work of historians Timothy Smith and Donald Dayton. Smith and Dayton are the most prominent voices within the holiness movement on the relation of the movement to social action in America. Their histories provide the details to demonstrate the political engagement and activity of the holiness movement in the nineteenth century.

Chapter two turns to description of what happened. American religious historians broadly and summarily present the holiness movement in the twentieth


century as primarily concerned with personal conversion instead of social action.

Examples of this come from within the tradition (e.g., David O. Moberg’s *The Great Reversal: Evangelism Versus Social Concern*) and from outside the holiness movement (e.g., Martin Marty’s chapter, “The Two-Party System” in *Righteous Empire*). None of these accounts offered a satisfying explanation for what had happened. Most of them merely categorized groups based on the way they participated or resisted participation in the politics of American life. Smith and Dayton presented a picture of the holiness movement that was offering something akin to Pecknold’s identification of Christian political community that provided an alternative vision of political community. These nineteenth-century holiness adherents acted in ways that evinced an integration of holiness conversion and political action.

Just as Pecknold offers an important description and diagnosis of what changed for Western society and Christianity’s relation to the state, I propose an explanation of what changed within the holiness movement to result in its changed relation to the state. I argue that internal theological changes combined with a reaction against the social/cultural change in the United States that saw the Social Gospel and Third Great Awakening rise to political influence in the 1930s.

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22 Pecknold, *Christianity and Politics*, 27.
Chapter two describes the change in relation between the holiness movement and social action by considering three issues. First, the scope of sin narrowed resulting in a less hopeful expectation of the power of sanctification. Second, most of the holiness movement adopted premillennial eschatology, which altered the way the movement viewed social structures. Third, the holiness movement was marginalized by its theological rejection of aspects of the Third Great Awakening, which served to influence religious and civil approaches to social problems in the twentieth-century (e.g., the New Deal and the Social Gospel).

In chapter three, I suggest that generational shifts in leadership could have contributed to the way that respective holiness movement churches saw the decline in their social action at different points on a timeline (e.g., the shift away from local social outreach shifted earlier for the Free Methodists (established in 1860) than it did for the Church of God (established in 1881). I observed that often the retreat from social engagement appears in the second or third generation of each ecclesial tradition’s existence as an independent body. I was not able to find adequate historical resources to include the generational influence with the issues addressed in chapter two. I also do not think that it was as significant of an influence, nor is it required to understand the retreat from social action; however, the generational leadership effects remain part of the nexus of issues that relate to how the holiness movement approached theological formation vis-à-vis social practices and political engagement in the twentieth century.

In the second half of chapter three, I turn to the particular case of temperance and the prohibition movement. By considering holiness movement articles in the Gospel
Trumpet (the primary theological voice of the Church of God), I show that a shift takes place in how the issue of temperance was discussed. The articles also evince an embrace of political lobbying efforts of which the state was the target instead of seeking to form the moral imagination and practices for those within the body of Christ. The new relation to the state as enforcer of morality is indicative of the rising complication of identity for holiness adherents in the twentieth century. A people who have strongly claimed a mission to be God’s holy people “in the world but not of the world” were acting as if their own means of formation was insufficient for the social problem du jour—American alcohol abuse. The embrace of government morality enforcement clearly marks the holiness movement as capitulating to a modern view of the state.

I then turn briefly to William Cavanaugh’s diagnosis of the loss of intermediate associations and the importance of recognizing that the state offers its own formation. The solution that I propose is a return to the original holiness movement emphasis on scriptural holiness. However, as I demonstrated in chapter two, the meaning of holiness changed for the holiness movement in the twentieth century so a return to theological interpretation of scripture is required.

Chapter four serves as my exercise in re-conceiving scriptural holiness. Throughout this dissertation, a presupposition lays in the background of my argument: as the understanding of God and what it means to be a faithful member of God’s people changes, the corresponding understanding of holiness and sanctification must grow and change as well. The fourth chapter considers Leviticus and the way in which a portion of the book (chapters 17-26) reclaims the concern that God has for maintaining the created
order and caring for people (especially the marginalized classes) through a new understanding of holiness that is both prophetic and priestly. Subsequently, the demands placed on Israel shift and the concept of holiness changes to accommodate the new understanding of God’s holiness.

My reading of Leviticus relies heavily on the scholarship of Israel Knohl and Jacob Milgrom. These two scholars make a compelling case that a group of priests responded to a prophetic critique of the eighth century BCE (e.g., Isaiah 1:10-17) that wanted Israel to shift its emphasis from sacrifices and offerings to care of the widow and orphan. Knohl and Milgrom do not argue against the prophetic critique, but rather shed light on the book of Leviticus as presenting the priestly response that offered its own manner of learning to do justice, rescuing the oppressed, defending the orphans, and pleading for the widows (Isa 1:17). I summarize their source critical work and explicate the way that the doctrine of holiness was maintained as central, but the way that it functioned within society expanded to include all of life (including a broader scope vis-à-vis people and places).

In the conclusion, I reiterate the implications of the vocation of holiness in terms of formation. I then suggest that holiness theology, and its commitment to sanctification and formation into holiness for all Christians, can aid political theology. I also show how political theology helps holiness theology assess and acknowledge the formation of

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cultures and contexts in which the holiness movement pursues its mission to be God’s holy people.

In summary, this dissertation describes the holistic scriptural holiness that maintained public and private practice of holiness as well as a complicated web of impulses that constricted the breadth and practice of holiness in private and individualistic directions. I also show that the constriction of the practice of holiness had lasting effects on the integration of public and private holiness, such that by the last quarter of the twentieth century, insiders within the holiness movement begin calling for the holiness movement to recover “social holiness”24 or “social justice” in what appears to be a recognition that something has been missing. Instead of arguing for a retrieval of the nineteenth-century traditions of sanctification and holiness, I turn to Leviticus in order to recover scriptural holiness as an example of how the church can once again imagine political community that refuses the way in which the state expects people to be political. I suggest scriptural holiness (like that seen in my reading of Leviticus) can once

24 Social holiness is a common topic for twenty-first century Wesleyan theologians. For example, a Series in Explorations in Social Holiness has been launched through Emeth Press. The first book of the series, *Holy Imagination: Rethinking Social Holiness* (Lexington, Ky.: Emeth Press, 2015) seeks to imagine social holiness as an aspect of the doctrine of holiness often neglected. This study acknowledges the common taking out of context of Wesley’s one reference to social holiness. It offers chapters that are akin to case studies of holiness in response to social problems. It demonstrates the renewed focus on social action by holiness movement people without specifically addressing the insights of political theology. It does not adequately rethink political community outside the terms and framing of modernity (as I will critique in chapter one). For the particular way that Wesley used “social holiness” and the problem of using the term interchangeably as a Wesleyan version of “social justice” see, Andrew C. Thompson, “From Societies to Society,” *Methodist Review*, Vol. 3 (2011): 141–72.
again help “Christians to think about a new way of being human, and thus a new way of
being political.”

This new way of being human requires formation that creates holy
people who are gifted by God, directed towards God, and necessarily problematic to the
modern distinctions between public and private, individual and communities, and
religious and political. I present the vocation of holiness (informed by political theology)
as central to this formation.

3. The Meaning of Terms

Ludwig Wittgenstein convinces me that mere definitions are unhelpful. That is
not to say that there are not particular meanings at work in this dissertation that are
integral to understanding my argument. The way that I use certain terms is connected to
my own particular location and the theological commitments within which this
argument will make sense. Wittgenstein discusses the method by which we learn what
is “good” in relation to the family resemblance and affinities we see with various things
described as “good.”

As “good” is used, it acquires a particular meaning. Each
community alters the meaning of terms and concepts by their respective uses of them.
The term holiness is of central importance for my proposal. Holiness as a Christian
doctrine has different meanings in various communities. The holiness movement itself is

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25 Pecknold, Christianity and Politics, 19.

26 Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophische Untersuchungen = Philosophical
Investigations, German text, with English translation by G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S.
Hacker, and Joachim Schulte, Revised fourth edition, Hacker and Schulte, eds.
not objectively univocal in its use of the term holiness. Sometimes, holiness is used interchangeably for entire sanctification or Christian perfection. However, there is a family resemblance to the way in which the terms holy, holiness, perfection, and sanctification are used within the holiness movement and Wesleyan theology. Throughout their use, the particular emphasis changes, but a likeness to God is always a component. The expectations and understandings of what God’s likeness will require have changed across the centuries of Wesleyan theology, but being like God and pursuing the things that are important to God has been a constant connotation of being holy, seeking holiness, being made perfect in Christ, and experiencing sanctification.

I contribute to the way in which my community alters the meaning of holiness in the chapters that follow. I add several modifiers to the term holiness, including the vocation of holiness, political holiness, vocational holiness, personal holiness, social holiness, private holiness, public holiness, and corporate holiness. In those cases where I add these adjectives to holiness, I am trying to describe the direction or emphasis for that particular situation or context in which persons are seeking to image God or live into their identity as God’s holy people. For example, I use the term political holiness to describe an understanding and emphasis of holiness that sees the likeness of God as being towards organizing society, similar to the use of political in The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology—“the use of structural power to organize a society or
community.” By social holiness, I am pointing out the way in which understanding and pursuit of imaging God’s holiness is directed towards living with other people. Private or personal holiness indicates the way in which persons cultivate the likeness to God’s holiness through practices that are intentionally restricted to the person’s own life instead of it extending out to others (in as much as that may even be possible). The same pattern holds for the way that I use public or corporate holiness—an emphasis on the way that embracing the status and vocation of being God’s people is directed towards public action or corporate action and identity.

Additionally, I use language of vocational holiness or the vocation of holiness at many points in this dissertation. I understand vocation to be the fundamental orientation and purpose of a person’s life. In the Christian context, a person who accepts God’s claim on their life and the identity as a member of God’s people, the Body of Christ, should view all aspects of life as deriving their meaning, purpose, goodness, beauty, and truthfulness from the fittingness for one of God’s chosen people. By connecting the concept of vocation to the doctrine of holiness, I am intentionally reiterating the primary role of personal identity as “in Christ” or as a member of Israel as “God’s people.” Therefore, I am using vocational holiness and the vocation of holiness as the primary calling for people to accept God’s intended identity, active

27 Scott and Cavanaugh, “Introduction” in Blackwell Companion to Political Theology, 1.

28 In a future project, I plan to consider the centrality of the personal and communal identities “in Christ” with respect to holiness.
formation through the church as Christ’s body, and God’s gifting through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, I use the term *scriptural holiness*, which is firmly rooted within the context of Wesleyan theology. And yet, by John Wesley’s own use of it and example of theological reasoning, I understand the term to require continual re-evaluation of its meaning through study and interpretation of holiness in scripture. I do not present a study of Wesley’s use of the term. Instead, I use it in the sense that scripture determines the meaning of holiness because of its authority for Christianity as a source of divine revelation. God is holy and holiness is always related to status in relation to God, but Christian theology depends on God’s revelation in scripture to understand who God is and what it means to be holy as God is holy.

Scriptural holiness is the thread that weaves through my analysis and proposal going forward. I point to ways that it animated conversion (e.g., formation in virtues and personal piety) while at the same time driving social action (the centrifugal energy of God’s people in mission to be a blessing to the world). I will suggest ways that the meaning of scriptural holiness lost its centrifugal component. In the end, I return to scripture to highlight an example of God’s people taking challenges to its faith and practice seriously and responding with a renewed commitment to holiness, but aligning their practices of holiness to account for the critique against its failings. In the course of this story, I hope that the strengths of the holiness movement and the field of political theology offer a way forward for Christians to be formed once again into a people who are so powerfully guided by God’s holiness and the vocational understanding of the
church’s life as consisting in its identity as God’s holy people that their neighbors will see the way that they live and conceive of political community so that once again the words can be written of the church that it “challenged and eventually transformed the older way of thinking about political community.”

29 Pecknold, Christianity and Politics, 28.
I.

THE HOLINESS MOVEMENT AND POLITICAL THEOLOGY: TWO LENSES FOR SEEING HOLINESS IN THE WORLD

1. Introduction

The central Christian confession that “Jesus is Lord” must inform and order every aspect of the life for those who make it.1 The church and individual Christians are called to live holistic lives that exhibit love of God and neighbor. For the church to do this, theologians must apply Scripture and theological doctrines to the question of what it means to follow Christ in each new context. One way that Scripture describes the expectations of God’s people is by calling them to vocational holiness. Jesus invites his followers to a way of life that is distinct from the traditions of the world and prays that the Father will “Sanctify them in the truth…for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.”2 Furthermore, we can see this call repeatedly in the book of Leviticus, in 1 Peter’s quotation of the levitical refrain, “be holy as I am holy,” the letter to the Hebrews’ warning that “without holiness no one will see the Lord,” and the letter of Ephesians’ claim that God intended for us to be holy before the creation of

1 The conclusion will point towards the importance of this confession for the Apostle Paul and the way in which Jesus’ lordship had drastic influence over Christian life, including the importance of making that confession within a community and space in which Jesus’ lordship was determinative of daily life. See also, Michael J. Gorman, Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001) 19-49.

2 John 17:17-19.
the world. Throughout the biblical witness, holiness persists as a calling for the people of God.

This chapter will present the American holiness movement as an example of holiness in practice that is political theology. I address the ways that the American holiness movement initially pursued vocational holiness as the result of their commitment to “spread scriptural holiness” and show that the field of political theology has neglected the doctrine of holiness as a constructive possibility. The pursuit of

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4 I will use scriptural holiness throughout this chapter and dissertation as a particular interpretation of the trajectory of holiness that is placed as an expected emphasis and practice of those who accept the identity of being people of God and disciples of Jesus throughout the biblical witness. I think that this usage is consistent with the way that John Wesley used it in his writings and sermons. He regularly emphasizes the importance of living out love of God and love of neighbor instead of allowing belief and understanding to remain theoretical. This usage will, therefore, be different from an attempt to offer a word study of the various and particular meanings of words deriving from the Hebrew root, קָדַשׁ (qadash), or even the way that “biblical holiness” might seek to separate the meanings of holiness at different locations within the Bible. I am most concerned with the ways that holiness is consistent throughout the canon as an expectation of Israel and Jesus’ followers. Chapter four will explicate scriptural holiness with special attention to Leviticus; however, even that chapter will not be a biblical word study. Church of the Nazarene General Superintendent, G. B. Williamson invokes this foundation in his 1956 quadrennial address. See W. T. Purkiser, Called Unto Holiness: Volume 2: the Second Twenty-Five Years, 1933-58 (Kansas City, Mo: Nazarene Publishing House, 1983), 288. “‘The Church of the Nazarene was born amid revival fires,’ Williamson declared. ‘It is the product of a great evangelistic crusade to spread scriptural holiness throughout the world.’” This commitment derives from the theology and instructions of John Wesley in the first Book of Discipline of the Methodist Church, in Russell E. Richey, Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt, The Methodist Experience in America: A Sourcebook (Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon Press, 2000), 62. “First Book of Discipline Prescribes Duties of Members and Ministers, Sets Guidelines for Worship and Preaching, and Establishes Rules on Slavery,” states, Q. 4. “What may we reasonably believe to be God’s Design in raising up the Preachers called Methodists? A. To reform the Continent, and to spread scriptural Holiness over these Lands.”
scriptural holiness united a nineteenth-century movement of Christians in the United States from a variety of ecclesial backgrounds to work together to reach the world with the experience of entire sanctification. The effects in America were similar to the revival in Methodist societies in England in 1760 and 1762. In 1837 and 1839, the Oberlin Evangelist and Timothy Merritt’s Guide to Christian Perfection were founded to communicate the teachings on holiness that had grown since the revivalism of the Great Awakening. From the 1830s through the early- to mid-twentieth century, The American holiness movement ushered in a conception of scriptural holiness that entailed social and personal holiness. Over time, however, the movement also encountered a set of forces that shifted its theology and practice towards a personal, individual, and private holiness that ultimately lost its social and political nature. Chapter two will detail the ways that these forces undermined scriptural holiness and its vocational richness.

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6 Ibid., 1, 9. The Oberlin Evangelist represented the perfectionist views of Charles G. Finney and others from Oberlin while Merritt represented American and British Methodism.

7 Social and personal holiness can be seen in parallel to social reform and evangelism too. See J. Edwin Orr, *The Flaming Tongue: The Impact of Twentieth Century Revivals* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1973). Orr offers a helpful distinction between evangelism and social action: “the former the presentation of the Good News of Jesus Christ with the object of bringing men to vital faith in God, which is their great commission, and the latter the application of Christian truth to human situation, whether individual or social” (ix).
The movement’s retreat from socially and politically engaged holiness enabled the movement to maintain commitments to many of Jesus’ teachings, Trinitarian theology, and an egalitarian message (even if the practice did not always fit the theology). The challenge the movement faced regarded changes in theories of biblical authority and a rising secularism that encouraged a bifurcation of public and private spheres. However, the loss of the integration of scriptural holiness for reformation of individual and society relegated the holiness movement to addressing political questions from an almost exclusively individualistic locus of concern. At the same time that the holiness movement was receding from social and public influence, newer forms of theology were taking up the questions regarding how Christian interaction with public life should be informed by theology.

The Social Gospel rose out of these theological emphases. But, the holiness movement rejected—or at least kept at arms’ length—the Social Gospel for a variety of reasons, fearing that it was not appropriately concerned with personal accountability or an orthodox doctrine of God. More recently, the growing field of political theology continues to be one active inheritor of the Social Gospel’s concerns. Political theology as a field addresses the way that public life should be influenced by theology over a variety of social and political issues. Political theology offers important insights for the holiness movement if it seeks to renew its commitment to scriptural holiness that, when rightly understood, integrates personal conversion with political and social action and formation. The holiness movement can draw from political theology even if many voices within the field do not easily translate into the theological idiom of the holiness
movement. By integrating insights from political theology, the holiness movement can also offer a stream of political theology that is grounded in the Christian doctrine of scriptural holiness that can be applied in broader ecclesial contexts than just the Wesleyan holiness movement. In this way, the holiness movement can aid the work that political theologians are already doing through its particular emphasis on holiness.

2. “Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.”

God’s people should be holy, but holiness does not mean isolation. Jesus’ kingdom was not one of separation from the various challenges of life lived with neighbors. Increasingly, biblical scholars are highlighting ways in which Jesus proclaimed a kingdom with present political implications instead of an interiorized and

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8 Jacob Shatzer, A Spreading and Abiding Hope: A Vision for Evangelical Theopolitics, Theopolitical Visions, 18 (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books, 2015) offers one example of a segment within Christianity that has often held suspicion towards or struggled to translate the field of political theology into its own way of framing theological questions. Shatzer shows ways that Baptist theologian A. J. Conyers offers resources that extend political theology’s concerns in more accessible than the ecclesially specific practices like the Eucharist as it is used by William Cavanaugh.

9 Holiness entails being separate from certain unholy things and actions; however, it does not mean isolation from lived relationships or the worshipping community. John Wesley stated that “there is no holiness except social holiness” to make this point. Unfortunately, his language to make this point is often used unclearly when people turn social holiness into half of a binary with “personal holiness.” For more on this point see, Andrew C. Thompson, “From Societies to Society,” Methodist Review, Vol. 3 (2011): 141–72. Thompson also demonstrates that the modifier of “personal” coupled with holiness by Wesley was used to distinguish the holiness of persons from the holiness of God—again not as part of a bifurcated understanding of holiness that included or correlates to private and social aspects of holiness.
apolitical kingdom of escape from public life. Furthermore, the first generation of his followers understood his message and mission as one with implications for the present world. Therefore it should be no surprise that a recent vein of scholarship on Paul’s theology has emphasized his soteriology as participation in the christological trajectory of Christ’s life of service, suffering, and triumph in the present age. One of the theological streams that has been applying these biblical insights is the growing field of political theology. However, while political theologians have approached theological


11 That Christian ethics needed to catch up to the understanding of Jesus as a political figure was part of the thesis in John Howard Yoder, The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1994). John Nugent in his book on Yoder states, the thesis of The Politics of Jesus “was simple: contrary to the prevailing winds of mid-twentieth-century ethical thought, the Jesus of Scripture was a political figure who was interpreted by the apostolic generation as teaching and exemplifying truths that were relevant to the public life of first-century churches.” John C. Nugent, The Politics of Yahweh: John Howard Yoder, the Old Testament, and the People of God (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books, 2011), 3.

12 There have been continually shifting approaches by theologians treating political concerns from a theological perspective. Elizabeth Phillips, Political Theology: A Guide for the Perplexed (New York: T & T Clark International, 2012), follows the Scott and Cavanaugh definition that I will present in the section on Political Theology and identifies two generations of political theology (42-54). Phillips notes that Carl Schmitt brought the term political theology back into use. Then she bypasses him in her framing of two generations of political theology because her focus is upon Christian political theology and Schmitt insisted that he was not a theologian. She does discuss the way that Jürgen Moltmann, Erik Peterson, and Michael Kerwin respond to Schmitt’s differentiation between spiritual and political powers. The first generation includes three groups, “Political Theology ‘proper’” (e.g. Johann Baptist Metz, Moltmann and Dorothee Sölle), Liberation Theology (e.g. Juan Luis Segundo, Leonardo Boff and Gustavo Gutiérrez), and Public Theology (e.g. David Tracy, Richard John Neuhaus and
politics from a variety of perspectives, the field has not produced a thorough scholarly engagement that focuses on holiness.

The American holiness movement is one group that has focused on holiness. During the first several decades of its activity, the holiness movement practiced a scriptural holiness that incorporated both social and personal implications without a full bifurcation between the two. And yet, as chapter two will demonstrate, a recovery of that tradition will not sufficiently answer all questions today of what it means to pursue holiness in both public and personal life. Holiness theology and political theology work well together as two lenses that enable each to see more clearly what it means for the church to embrace a vocation of holiness that eschews a privatized role of religion. Often holiness theology has not provided an adequately theological account for its positions. In other situations, holiness theology has failed to recognize the political nature of its understanding of holiness. And yet, holiness is a doctrine that can frame the answers to the questions of how Christians should approach their neighbors, society, and politics.

The human sense of vision can serve to demonstrate the idea that combining these two theological traditions and approaches produces a clearer understanding of contemporary theological questions and their corresponding answers than merely

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13 By “theological politics,” I mean to emphasize the theological nature and purpose of political activity broadly conceived. I want to resist limiting politics to a neutral discourse or sphere of public life that is separate from one’s Christian identity.
accepting one tradition’s presuppositions. A visit to the eye doctor usually begins with an exam where the patient uses a paddle that will force her or him to view the eye chart with only one eye. On my most recent visit, I was struck by how clearly I could see the four letters with both eyes, though they became very distorted and blurry when I was asked to use only one eye. But the limitations of human vision go even further in ways that are analogous to the task of theology too. Healthy human eyes certainly work better in pair, but within the human population, some people see better than the 20/20 standard, others need glasses and/or contacts, others see without assistance because of surgical procedures, and others cannot see at all or rely on only one healthy eye to see. Even when working perfectly, the human eye is limited. Humans need telescopes to see things far away and microscopes to see small things. We see only in one direction while other animals can see two things at once. Our eyes simply do not see everything that actually exists. Our eyes function in a particular way to meet our specific needs in a situation where two healthy eyes work better in a pair; the same can be said of theology.

Just as the human eye is always limited, so too are our various theologies. Pairing healthy theologies should serve to produce a clearer understanding of God. Not all theological approaches would work together to present a clearer vision of God and the way in which humans should worship God. Others may even conclude that political theology and holiness theology are not the ideal candidates for “seeing God.” Though political theology and holiness theology have their own respective flaws and shortcomings, when placed together, they help bring a clearer vision into focus of how Christians can live as disciples amidst the particular challenge that can be seen in Jesus’
prayer in John 17:14-19—how are we to live in the world as people who are sanctified in the truth without belonging to the world?

This chapter will present an historical narrative of the social and political involvement of the holiness movement, but it is important to be clear that it is being interpreted with the lens of political theology. At the same time, the lens of holiness theology informs my assessment that political theology has missed the fruitfulness of mining the doctrine of holiness. My aim is for these two lenses to work together to produce a clearer reading of the challenges and opportunities facing theology and the church in its mission to properly understand God as described by Karl Barth when he writes that the church’s mission is to convert people from the worship of false gods.¹⁴ Being faithful to this mission requires God’s people to witness to and reveal God’s character and holiness to the nations by embodying a faithful vocational holiness within the world in which we live.

This chapter will proceed in two sections. First, I will show that political theology has resources for utilizing theological doctrines (like holiness) as avenues for answering questions of how theology should speak into contemporary contexts and challenges. This demonstration will make clear that holiness has been neglected in political theology; thus to date, there has not been an explication of vocational holiness in its rich personal and social/political integration. Second, I will turn to the early roots of the

¹⁴ Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. IV.1, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936), 671. See also, Rustin Brian, Covering Up Luther (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books, 2013) 180. Here, Brian also touches on this view of the church as a missionary people sent to call men and women out of false religious communities to worship the true God.
American holiness movement and its foundation of pursuing and spreading scriptural holiness, which entails the vocation of holiness as a crucial component of faithful discipleship. These two sections will point forward to the second and third chapter and their analysis of the demise of scriptural holiness within the holiness movement and insights from political theology that a mere retrieval of nineteenth century holiness theology would fall short of scriptural holiness too.

3. Political Theology: Engaging Societal Questions, Neglecting Vocational Holiness

In order to understand the way holiness theology and political theology work together to offer a clearer vision of faithful theology and practice, I turn now to a brief overview of political theology and the various emphases that drive certain political theologies. Then I will consider the dominant emphases of holiness theology and present some of the challenges that have ushered in the breakdown of its holistic social and personal holiness and dissuaded it from engaging questions of political theology. When understood as a vocation given each Christian by God, holiness is a powerful lens that can draw all of life into the realm of Christian thought and practice. And yet, while political theologies have addressed many different contemporary issues facing Christianity, holiness itself has not been the focus of their work. Likewise, holiness theologians have not offered a thorough account of the doctrine of holiness with an eye towards political theology.
Two collections of essays—The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology and The Future of Political Theology—along with two introductory texts—Michael Kirwan’s Political Theology: A New Introduction, and Elizabeth Phillips’ Political Theology: A Guide for the Perplexed—provide a broad picture of the field and help to clarify some of the ways that different theologians are addressing the question of how the church and Christians are to relate to society, culture, and government. This sample of readers and introductions (and the breadth of authors these four texts include or cover) also demonstrates a lacuna in these approaches with respect to the doctrine of holiness since none of them expressly considers holiness.

3.1. Political Theology

First, what is “political theology”? The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology identifies political theology as, “the analysis and criticism of political arrangements


17 Hent de Vries and Lawrence E. Sullivan (eds.), Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006) is another introduction. It is not considered here because, despite its title, the essays included are primarily written from other academic approaches (e.g., philosophy, anthropology, or political science). Though there is an essay by Pope Benedict XVI. It presents a comprehensive collection of approaches and questions facing the relation of religion and politics, but does not provide much in way of fundamentally theological answers. For this reason, it is not surprising that holiness and sanctification are not included as significant approaches being utilized within the field. Thus, this book further demonstrates the lacuna with respect to the doctrine of holiness as a foundation for political theology.
(including cultural-psychological, social and economic aspects) from the perspective of differing interpretations of God’s way with the world.” As Cavanaugh, Bailey, and Hovey state, “it is being increasingly recognized that debates about faith in public life, if they are to be conversations of any substance, are debates about theology, about the way a tradition has reasoned about God and God’s relationship with the world.” Theology’s presence in the discussion is recognized, and yet, just as it becomes clear that theology cannot be overcome in favor of secular thinking, answers for how and why theology is essential remain contentious. In many ways, theology finds itself every bit at the center of several conflicts or changes: between conservative and liberal forms of theology, the shift in the population of Christians that continues to grow in the southern hemisphere (including the significance of Pope Francis being elected from Argentina), and the strained relations between explicitly Islamic governments in the Middle East and the secular governments of the West.

The meaning and notions of the relation between religion and politics are at the heart of the issues being addressed by political theology. Commonly, the relation entails a bifurcation in Christian vocation between ordering relationships among

18 Scott and Cavanaugh, The Blackwell Companion, 2.

19 William T. Cavanaugh, Jeffrey W. Bailey, and Craig Hovey, An Eerdmans Reader in Contemporary Political Theology (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2012), xviii.

20 For example, William Cavanaugh, Migrations of the Holy: God, State, and the Political Meaning of the Church (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2011), argues that electoral politics in the nation-state system in North-America is religious and offers its own soteriology, saints, origin stories, and embodies all the marks of religion.
humans and relationships between humans and God. As Political Theology addresses this bifurcation, one issue that arises is how respective proposals will describe what it means to hold these two concerns (political as horizontal and religious as vertical) together without at the same time embracing a bifurcation that each area is mutually sufficient in and of itself. There are several ways that these areas of life can be related: for example, the religious can annex the political in a way that the church attempts a coup and takes over the social and economic organizing role that has been served by the nation-state. Or, the political can collapse into the religious so that participation in political activities is re-narrated to entail spiritual or religious purpose. A third alternative entrenches the bifurcation and endorses the church offering a separate politics. This third approach rolls the various right relations to neighbor and right relations to God into an alternative social order. Negotiating the two-fold task of maintaining right relation to God and right relation to neighbor (especially as it relates to societal and political imagination) stands at the forefront of any attempt to conceive the ways that political theology and holiness theology can work together to accomplish

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21 In Wesleyan language, this would be “love of neighbor” and “love of God.” In more Evangelical language, we might see these described as evangelism (making people right with God) and social action (working for right relationships among persons). Others classify the difference as the horizontal and vertical dimensions of particular religions. We also see distinction between rights and obligations compared to outcomes that can relate to these orderings in a more functionalist account of civil religion (particularly in a Hobbesian state) where rights and obligations are the vertical relationship markers between individuals and the state while the outcomes derived from each individual acting in ways that are consistent with his or her relationship with the state such that a market will determine the ordering of persons with each other in valueless exchanges.
the church’s mission of embodying God’s holiness as a means of converting men and women from false gods to the true God. My proposal follows this third approach in part because of the recognition by political theology that secular government is often functionally religious, such that granting sphere sovereignty to governments for ordering political relationships is dangerous.

How will the new political imagination conceive of space? William Cavanaugh presents this crucial question to any alternative to the religion/politics bifurcation. For Cavanaugh, a primary problem with the modern nation-state is the total eclipse of intermediate associations. Instead of the family, church, and trade union having their own respective telos and importance, these associations must all be subsumed under the required primary loyalty to the nation-state. He argues that the “nation-state” is not a thing as such, but “a disciplined imagination of a community occupying a particular space with a common conception of time, a common history and a common destiny of salvation from peril.” In fact, the church has alternative conceptions of time, history, and salvation that conflict with the imagination of the nation-state in many cases. When space is conceived through the lens of the modern nation-state, the social witness of the church is necessarily undermined. Instead of understanding humans as theologically

22 Cavanaugh addresses this throughout Migrations of the Holy, but expressly in the ninth chapter, “A Politics of Vulnerability,” 170-195. He emphasizes that a crucial aspect of theological politics is to remember that the nation-state is not the whole within which the church is granted space, but that the church has space of its own creation by its boundaries, truth-telling, and Eucharist.

originated in God’s creation in which humankind is not meant to be alone, “our creation in the image of God is replaced by the recognition of the other as the bearer of individual rights, which may or may not be given by God, but which serve only to separate what is mine from what is thine.” 24 Within this logic, the state secures these rights of individuals such that social relationships are only necessary when it is to the advantage of individuals to enter into relationship with another individual person, corporation, or other intermediate association like the church. 25 All of these relationships

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24 Cavanaugh, Theopolitical Imagination, 44.

25 I find Cavanaugh’s description of the nation-state’s influence on intermediate associations, its offer of a counter version of soteriology, and its often un-acknowledged influence upon its citizens to be compelling. There are, however, some key thinkers who offer alternative conceptions of the state and its influence or relationship to rights, justice, and idolatrous allegiance. These thinkers critique Cavanaugh and Stanley Hauerwas. Ephraim Radner disagrees with the narrative that Cavanaugh offers in Myth of Religious Violence, and argues instead that the state was a positive influence that diminished religious violence and that the liberal state enhances moral accountability of churches. See Radner, A Brutal Unity: The Spiritual Politics of the Christian Church (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2012), 22-32. Nicholas Wolterstorff also offers a different conception of justice than Cavanaugh through his notion of justice that is aimed at Alasdair MacIntyre and Hauerwas in Justice: Rights and Wrongs (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008). See chapter four, “On De-justicizing the New Testament,” in which Wolterstorff presents a markedly different account of rights than Cavanaugh or Hauerwas will accept (nor one that either would find helpful for the faithfulness of the Church). Wolterstorff does not accept the argument from Cavanaugh and Hauerwas that the modern notion of rights is actually dangerous to Christian belief and practice. Finally, Jeffrey Stout critiques Cavanaugh through his larger argument against “Radical Orthodoxy” and its refusal of the secular. See, Stout, Democracy and Tradition (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004) 92-117. Stout sees a much more positive role and place for the “secular state” because of its guarantee of religious perspectives to have a voice in the way that the state makes decisions and determines governance. Stout is also concerned that if Christians do not participate in democratic society, their particular important voice will be missing and contribute to the possibility of all political systems to be tyrannized. Here again, the difference lies in Cavanaugh’s (and Hauerwas’s) argument that the secular state has formative influence on its citizens that are
are logically secondary to the individual’s relation to the state, which is viewed as the protector and savior for individuals who are free from any imposition on those rights that have been granted. Therefore, if theology seeks to address the problem of this ordering of loyalty, these intermediate associations must be considered. For example, theology must address the ways in which family, church, and national or tribal associations relate to each other. The way these associations are prioritized and related to each other informs a theological proposal to answer the question of how the church and Christians are to maintain right relation to neighbor.

Cavanaugh’s insight regarding the way that the nation-state subsumes communities and identities including church citizenship is important for the American holiness movement. Even in those places where the endeavor to spread scriptural counterproductive to Christian belief and practice. Stout thinks that this claim is overstated. Luke Bretherton briefly invokes Hauerwas, Cavanaugh, Stout, and Wolterstorff in his chapter on Church-State Relations in Christianity & Contemporary Politics: The Conditions and Possibilities of Faithful Witness (Chichester, West Sussex, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 31-70. As I stated in the “Introduction” to this dissertation, the issue of formation is crucial for a proper political theology of holiness and I too find Stout, Radner, and Wolterstorff to be under-estimating the power of formation that the secular state has on churches within a nation-state context.

26 History shows that the state can and will debate who gets to claim and receive protection for various rights. Marriage in the United States is a poignant example of the state getting to determine what rights are to be protected and granted to which individuals. The church is expected (and quite often obeys) to accept the determinations made by the state instead of asserting its own theological positions on matters of rights. When ecclesial bodies make statements about whom clergy are allowed to marry with caveats such as “where such marriages are legal,” it is clear that the church functions socially in a subordinate role to the state (E.g. see Jerry L. van Marter, “Assembly Approves Allowing Pastors to Perform Same-Gender Marriage Where Legal,” General Assembly News, Presbyterian Church of the USA, June 19, 2014, http://www.pcusa.org/news/2014/6/19/assembly-approves-allowing-pastors-perform-same-ge/, Accessed 12/5/2014).
holiness led to sweeping social change, the locus in which the movement sought social changes was often nation-state based (e.g. the Volstead Act). Moving forward, any political/theological proposal for tending to scriptural holiness will need to address the way in which political arrangements treat the church among these intermediate associations. Chapter four will point to the priestly reaction to a prophetic critique in ancient Israel as an example of the way that worship practices can incorporate the concerns of social problems. Furthermore, the conclusion will point to the Christian community in Paul as being understood “in Christ,” as a formative identity through which all other associations and identities are understood and evaluated. Paul’s “in Christ” has clear implications along the lines of idolatry, but also determines the valuation of other potential vocations and secondary associations. The way in which the primary identity in Christ forms community members’ evaluations of other associations is an important example of an alternative imagination (as opposed to a reordered hierarchy of associations).

3.2. Review of Political Theology

There are a number of approaches to answering questions of identity, loyalty, and political engagement. The ways these have been addressed in Christian theology is presented most clearly in The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology, which serves as

27 Unless stipulated, The Blackwell Companion refers to this book and not one of the other Blackwell Companions that has been published for other fields of theology e.g.,
an important source for defining the field of political theology since subsequent field introductions by Michael Kirwan and Elizabeth Phillips draw upon the *Blackwell Companion* in their definitions for political theology and reference the compilation as an important text throughout their respective books. Furthermore, the editors for the collection of essays, *The Future of Political Theology* explicitly frame it as a continuation of the *Blackwell Companion*. The positive evaluation and use of it within the field places the Cavanaugh and Scott edited volume as the most important introduction to consider in an effort to present the variety of approaches and discern whether the doctrine of holiness has been mined as a foundation for political theology.

Cavanaugh and Scott organize *The Blackwell Companion* into five sections. The first section includes essays on primary resources for political theology: Scripture, Augustine, Aquinas, the Reformation traditions, and the liturgy. The second section presents a broad survey of approaches to political theology and includes essays on different ecclesial or theological streams, as well as important individual theologians including: Eastern Orthodoxy, Carl Schmitt, Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, John Courtney Murray, William Temple, Reinhold Niebuhr, Feminist Theology, Jürgen Moltmann, Johann Baptist Metz, Asian Political Theology, Black Political Theology, Gustavo Gutierrez (and Liberation Theology), and Stanley Hauerwas. Section three includes essays that begin with individual theological doctrines or loci as foundations for constructive work in political theology. The loci include Trinity, creation, Spirit,
Christology, atonement, church, and eschatology. For each of these essays, the respective doctrine informs the ways in which theology and the church provide answers to questions of how to relate political and societal arrangement with particular understandings of God, faith, and religion.

In the fourth and fifth sections of *The Blackwell Companion*, the emphasis shifts to considering concepts, intellectual movements, and non-Christian faith traditions from a theological angle. Therefore, section four assesses and analyzes several ways of conceiving political arrangements, power structures, and human relations. These essays address state and civil society, democracy, critical theory, postmodernism, and globalization. Then section five concludes with two essays that present non-Christian reflections on the Christian theological material and tradition.

Throughout the companion, contrasting and competing approaches are held together, such that a diverse view of theological responses to the question of societal organization and power distribution emerges. The various contributors do not all speak with one voice, thus the introduction provides the reader with a launching point for various ecclesial and academic schools and approaches, all while presenting the most significant and commonly utilized resources in the first two sections. Holiness is overlooked in the collection, but the *Blackwell Companion* does provide a way of understanding the potential for including holiness among the loci that inform political theology.

In comparison with the broad compilation of texts in *The Blackwell Companion*, Michael Kirwan provides a concise introduction to the field of political theology that
guides the reader through a particular explanation of the development of political theology. Kirwan offers a more classical introduction for those who are trying to understand what political theology is doing and how it has come to develop and become a distinct theological field. As the story unfolds, he introduces the respective voices and sources of each era or generation of political theology. In narrating the historical developments of political theology, Kirwan provides an overview.

Kirwan begins with definitions of what has passed for political theology and the various questions that these thinkers have been answering. Then he offers a concise but broad assessment of the ways that political theology has been defined. He presents the three approaches that are identified by William Cavanaugh and Peter Scott in the introduction to The Blackwell Companion. The three approaches include: “the maintenance of a cordon sanitaire between politics and religion”; “reflection on unjust and alienating political structures”; or “the production of metaphysical images around which communities are organized.” After presenting these various approaches, Kirwan clarifies the difference he sees between political theology and political mythology. This prepares readers for his brief summary and historical assessment of the development of “The High Traditions” of political theology in Augustine and Aquinas. He then considers the ways that the Reformation and Enlightenment challenged the inheritance from the High Traditions and turned the politico-theologico discussion in new directions.

28 Kirwan, Political Theology.

29 Ibid., 9.
Finally, Kirwan considers the crisis of modernity with special attention to the *Shoah* and the way that theology began responding alongside other critical theories (this comprises sections three and four of the book). Then he concludes by addressing the various scriptural and ecclesial ways that the questions raised in the crisis have been addressed. Kirwin’s introduction is European focused with some North American voices included. He does not really broaden his treatment to include Liberation Theology or Black and Womanist theological voices in the way that *The Blackwell Companion* does (and we will see, Elizabeth Phillips’s introductory text does). As an introduction, Kirwan’s text presents much of the philosophical thought and historical developments that shaped the field of political theology. The constructive work that he provides is distilled through his interpretation and narration of this development.

Elizabeth Phillips utilizes a different approach than Kirwan in her introduction. She categorizes the schools and approaches to political theology instead of organizing her work around developmental causes. By presenting the thinkers in this manner, she highlights commonalities of approach instead of origination. Her text paints a picture of political theology as a broad but important stream of theology that had grown from its biblical foundations into its own discipline by the 1960s. She first introduces the field and its historical emergence within two generations (Political, Liberation, and Public Theologies in the first and Postliberalism, Radical Orthodoxy, and ‘Contextual’
Theologies in the second). Then she considers these thinkers with respect to various issues including ecclesiology, biblical interpretation, violence, liberalism, marginalized groups of people, and creation/eschatology. Along the way readers are introduced to major voices including John Milbank, John Howard Yoder, Stanley Hauerwas, Jürgen Moltmann, Gustavo Gutierrez, Reinhold Niebuhr, William Cavanaugh, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Rosemary Radford Reuther, Marcella Althaus-Reid, Oliver O’Donovan, and Martin Luther. The endnotes serve as the third part and point to places for further investigation.

Phillips’s book helps to demonstrate the ways that ecclesial background has influenced different theologians as well as the way in which the different generations have approached theology with different goals in mind. She also follows the Scott and Cavanaugh definition of political theology. Her categorization of political theology into “generations” serves to group together theologians and theological movements around their shared approaches and goals.

Phillips elucidates the ways that theologians from different backgrounds have shared ground in the way that they relate to modernity and contemporary political arrangements through her categorization of political theology into generations. The first

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30 These traditions or schools cover a number of theologians. Their works have not addressed holiness specifically as it relates to political theology as I will show in the following discussion of political theology and its lacuna regarding holiness. Two works from Liberation Theology deserve mention here. Pedro Casaldáliga and J. Ma Vigil, Political Holiness, trans. Paul Burns and Francis McDonagh, Theology and Liberation Series (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1994) and Jon Sobrino, Spirituality of Liberation: Toward Political Holiness, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1988).
generation includes the three groups, “Political Theology ‘proper’” (e.g. Johann Baptist Metz, Jürgen Moltmann and Dorothee Sölle), Liberation Theology (e.g. Juan Luis Segundo, Leonardo Boff and Gustavo Gutiérrez), and Public Theology (e.g. David Tracy, Richard John Neuhaus and Max Stackhouse). Phillips notes that, “while first generation political theology grew out of Christian convictions, it tended to aspire to movement from the particularly Christian towards the shared or universal – from what is peculiar to Christians towards what is ‘public’ and commonly held.”

In contrast, the second generation shifted the focus from making particularity public, to critique the concept of “the secular” and seeks to open space for the political nature of specific Christian doctrines and practices. The shift by the second generation is important because it helps to protect the church from always being subsumed under other commonly held authorities like the state or “neutral” secular speech requirements. This second generation of political theologians pursues the ends of theology and the church on its own terms, thus seeking to fulfill the purposes for which Christian bodies and communities exist. When the church seek its own ends, communities act in ways that can go beyond the voluntarist association of individuals that solely seek personal advantages. The second generation of political theology emphasizes shared ends that

31 Phillips, Political Theology, 50.

32 Ibid., 50-51.

33 Cavanaugh has demonstrated that participation in the church that sees its own telos is actually threatening to the state because “participation in God and in one another is a threat to the formal mechanism of contract, which assumes that we are essentially
undermine the more Hobbesian notion of a commonwealth where members cohere to
the sovereign instead of each other.34 A rich theological space is necessary if the church
is to be a real place of relationship where love of neighbor can overcome the tendency to
only seek relationships that are clearly to one’s personal advantage.35

In her introduction, Phillips demonstrates the way that other thinkers are
working in similar veins to Cavanaugh’s attempt to reconceive political space and
intermediate associations. For example, Phillips includes the work of Nathan Kerr, for
whom political theology must be the outward movement of the church specifically in
liturgical mission instead of building up institutions or focusing on participation with
coop-erated state political structures.36 Kerr’s work does not easily translate into many
alternative conceptions of church or mission and eschews attempts to map it on to
formal social and political ecclesial orders. While they are remarkably different in terms
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individuals who enter into relationship with another only when it is to one’s individual
advantage to do so” (Theopolitical Imagination, 44).

34 Ibid., 45.

35 See “Killing for the Telephone Company,” in Migrations of the Holy, 7-45. Here,
Cavanaugh demonstrates the rise of state sovereignty and the way that it shifts from
being a product of society to creating society. This shift necessarily changes the way that
political space is conceived.

36 Kerr makes a concerted effort to avoid a foundation or ground on which this
faithful mission can be located. He is concerned that structures and institutions require
commitments for their continuation that limit the centrality of mission and thus offer
potential idols. His critique of Stanley Hauerwas demonstrates this concern. See, Nathan
generation that presents a more critical angle towards the political arrangements of power in the early twenty-first century.

Thus my proposal is that scriptural holiness is a specific Christian doctrine and practice that operates from this theologically determined space where love of God and love of neighbor drive relationships between persons whose relation derives from their shared *imago dei* instead of personal choices to seek advantages from a contractual relationship. As Christians embrace this vocation to scriptural holiness, political and social practices will result from shared ends. In this sense, my present study of the fruitfulness of the vocation of holiness as a foundation for political theology fits within Phillips’s classification scheme as a second generation of political theology approach. I am advocating particularly Christian ways of understanding the practice of scriptural holiness instead of trying to translate those particular understandings (and the practical value) of holiness to the rest of secular society. This approach aligns with Jesus’ claim in Matthew 7:20, “Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.”

### 3.3. Where Is Holiness?

None of these introductions addresses holiness, nor does the collection of essays, *The Future of Political Theology* that seeks to extend the *Blackwell Companion* to present an overview of the twenty-first century approaches to political theology, philosophy and political theory. The essays cover Judaic, Islamic, Buddhist, and Christian perspectives,
which the editors see as the future rather than the past of political theology.\textsuperscript{37} The Blackwell Companion presents a wide variety of contributors to the field and briefly frames these works within their historical eras and covers the breadth of historical sources and approaches that are being pursued in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Kirwan describes a rise, fall, crisis, and rebirth of political theology. Phillips delineates schools, generations, and issues that drive political theology. Despite their differences, one constant in all of these treatments is a lacuna with respect to holiness.

More than failing to use the word “holiness,” these introductions demonstrate that the field of political theology has ignored the ways that the holiness movement has accomplished social reform. In the second half of this chapter, I will consider some of the ways that the holiness movement participated in social and political activities because of their commitment to holiness. I will also consider the implications that the holiness movement understood the doctrine of holiness to entail for persons who accepted Christian discipleship that seeks full consecration of life to the pursuit of scriptural holiness. Even when there are places that would seem fitting to consider the doctrine of holiness, political theologians neglect the doctrine and the holiness movement that has championed it.

The Blackwell Companion includes a section in which political theology is approached from a foundation in particular doctrines. However, the section does not consider holiness or sanctification. The section on political theology that works through

\textsuperscript{37} Losonczi, Luoma-aho, and Singh, The Future of Political Theology, 3.
and from particular doctrines is particularly important as I bring together the two lenses of political theology and holiness theology. Through this approach, the opportunity emerges for political theology to be done by focusing on the doctrine of holiness, thereby adding another doctrinal angle to consider and understand the complex contemporary theological questions that must be answered.

The absence of holiness in political theology goes beyond the introductory texts. The *Eerdmans Reader in Contemporary Political Theology* offers a breadth of texts on political theology, and yet, none of the essays is expressly about holiness. The moderately sized index does not include entries for “holiness” or “sanctification,” and those entries for “Holy Spirit” do not address sanctification either. Neither Elizabeth Phillips’s nor Michael Kirwan’s introductory texts on political theology deals with holiness, and neither of their subject indexes includes holiness or sanctification. There have been several books that resemble political theologies that focus upon holiness; however, none of them offers a political theology that is driven by the particular doctrine of holiness.

A brief summary of these alternatives will both further evince the absence of a political theology of holiness and elucidate several ways in which tying holiness to political activity can fall short of providing a thick account of holiness that can overcome the tendencies towards private piety, social holiness, or the demands within the state’s

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38 The earlier collection of essays that was published as a reader in political theology from 1974 does not include essays that deal specifically with holiness either. See Alistair Kee, ed., *A Reader in Political Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974).

way of thinking that scriptural holiness can only have a seat at the table of ideas if Christian theologians explain it in secular terms.\footnote{Demands for secular translation of religious ideas presume a neutrality; however, commitments to non-religious language are themselves pushing forward a particular vision of thought and meaning that is not value-free.} My concern for this thick account of the doctrinal implications of holiness derives from the necessity for complex theopolitical imagination of political space that Cavanaugh has identified as crucial if the church is to avoid being subordinated to the nation-state. He argues that too often Christian theology has accepted the identities of what counts as political and social from a secular logic. Instead, theology must “begin to recover true theological imaginings of space and time around which to enact communities of solidarity and resistance.”\footnote{Cavanaugh, Theopolitical Imagination, 4.}

Revisiting the influence and potential of the holiness movement and specifically scriptural holiness is one of the ways that Christian theology can imagine political involvement.

I will consider three texts that potentially challenge my claim regarding a lacuna of holiness in political theology. These authors use language of holiness or sanctification without adequately addressing scriptural holiness as a politically significant vocation on its own terms. Alan Kreider’s Journey Towards Holiness: A Way of Living for God’s Nation\footnote{Alan Kreider, Journey Towards Holiness: A Way of Living for God’s Nation (Basingstoke, England: Marshall Pickering, 1986).} walks the reader through the biblical narrative while identifying the broad meaning of holiness in scripture and the comprehensive nature of God’s desire for Israel and Jesus’
disciples to live holy lives. Kreider addresses the compartmentalization of life in which people often view holiness as merely a private matter, and he presents the theme that God has called a holy nation that is supposed to live and act in the world. He also identifies many of the same political challenges facing those who seek to follow Christ that political theology often identifies and addresses.

However, there are several reasons that Kreider’s work falls short of allowing the central doctrinal focus of holiness to serve as the foundation for a political theology. First, Kreider frames his book as a journey that is broken into small pieces and targeted towards laypeople.\(^{43}\) This approach serves his purpose well, and makes his book an incredibly valuable addition to what I seek to offer, but also means that there is a depth to the logic of his arguments that can and should be further established. For example, his approach and scope prevents the type of engagement with political theology concerns like Cavanaugh’s questions about simple space and the soteriology of the nation-state that is at odds with those who embrace the primary identity of being part of God’s people.

Furthermore, while I agree with Kreider’s emphasis on God’s comprehensive call throughout scripture that God’s people are to be holy and that holiness is supposed to carry forth God’s own holiness to the rest of the world, the leverage that he and I seek to gain from the doctrine of holiness will be aided by a deeper consideration of the biblical

\(^{43}\) Ibid., xii. “Christian social strategy—how we live our workaday lives as disciples of Jesus—is not something for the ‘professionals’ alone. It is for us all. I want to communicate with laypeople who are so busy with job and family that it is hard to find time for church, to say nothing of time for reading.”
scholarship regarding holiness and what it means to be identified with Christ’s holiness. Finally, the case studies and concrete examples that Kreider uses to illustrate his description of the biblical journey towards holiness are dated and do not expressly articulate these implications as “political,” nor do they overcome the tendency to attempt translation to explain political meaning instead of allowing holiness to stand on its own as a doctrine and vocation. Thus, Kreider offers a theology of holiness, but he does not engage with important questions raised by political theology. The opportunity remains to offer a deeper consideration of the comprehensive call to holiness and bring the emphasis of holiness to bear on the field of political theology.

In the next book to consider, Luke Bretherton addresses holiness in *Hospitality as Holiness*. While his book can be understood as political theology, it is primarily an account of the practice of hospitality as moral practice instead of really offering a political theology of holiness. Bretherton describes Jesus’ ministry as teaching that holiness is to be understood as coming from practicing hospitality instead of isolating

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44 More specifically, chapter four will investigate the implications of Leviticus scholarship with respect to God’s holiness and the recurrent call for Israel to be holy.

45 I will point towards the importance of identity in Christ to frame intermediate associations in the conclusion.

46 Luke Bretherton, *Hospitality as Holiness* (Burlington, Ver.: Ashgate, 2006). He approaches hospitality, as do MacIntyre and Kant in respectively different ways, as a political practice. Bretherton prefers the MacIntyrian approach and also draws on O’Donovan to emphasize the importance for hospitality to “shape relations between Christians and non-Christians with regard to ethical disputes” (127).
oneself for purity maintenance.\textsuperscript{47} Tying holiness to practices of welcome instead of isolation is an important aspect of understanding holiness politically; yet, Bretherton does not provide a sustained treatment of why this vocation of holiness should go beyond hospitality.\textsuperscript{48} One important aspect of this book is the way that Bretherton wrestles with the concept of purity in relation to hospitality and holiness. He presents the purity laws and the book of Leviticus in general as concerned with securing Israel’s set-apart status through purity and religious ritual. In the fourth chapter, I will complicate the depiction of purity in Leviticus as chiefly for the purpose of securing set-apart status.\textsuperscript{49} Yet, Bretherton’s portrayal of Jesus as reacting against ritual purity serves

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 130.
\item \textsuperscript{48} D. Stephen Long also frames “theological economics” as a practice of holiness in a similar way to Bretherton’s framing of hospitality as a practice of holiness in D. Stephen Long, Nancy Ruth Fox, and Tripp York, \textit{Calculated Futures: Theology, Ethics, and Economics} (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2007). Here also, a deeper engagement is required to fully investigate the ability for holiness to serve as a primary and universal vocation for disciples. Long and Bretherton demonstrate how respective practices are means to holiness. I will be investigating the doctrine in a reversal, such that holiness is understood as the ground for hospitality and “theological economics.”
\item \textsuperscript{49} Israel Knohl, Jacob Milgrom, and Leigh M. Trevaskis all provide exegetical arguments for an inherent ethics within Leviticus that goes beyond religious ritual. See Knohl, \textit{Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School} (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995); Milgrom, \textit{Leviticus: A Book of Ritual and Ethics; A Continental Commentary} (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004); and Trevaskis, \textit{Holiness, Ethics and Ritual in Leviticus}, Hebrew Bible Monographs (Sheffield, Eng.: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011). Perhaps the most poignant image is of a “ladder of holiness,” used by Milgrom to explain the role of the various commandments. For Milgrom, chapter 19 in Leviticus presents commandments as rungs on the ladder for Israel to rise ever closer to God’s holiness—the result of which is for the nations to see Israel so that “the \textit{imitatio Dei} will generate a universal \textit{imitatio Israel.” This is certainly not a separation from the world for the purpose of avoidance and maintaining purity. See, Milgrom, \textit{Leviticus: A Continental Commentary}, 179-180. This will be addressed at length in chapter four.
\end{itemize}
to place one more hermeneutical question before an attempt to write a constructive political theology of the vocation of holiness; how does holiness relate to purity, exclusion, and inclusion?

The third example of non-introductory texts that appear to merge the concerns of holiness and political theology comes from Stanley Hauerwas. *Sanctify Them in the Truth* is a collection of Hauerwas’s essays and lectures in which a thinker often identified with political theology expressly deals with the doctrine of holiness. However, Hauerwas does not offer a sustained application of these thoughts on holiness as a political theology. The essays contained in this volume offer implicit ways in which sanctification has political implications, but he does not directly draw out the ways in which his emphasis on sanctification and truth leads to a particular political vocation for the church. Hauerwas presents some possibilities that an emphasis on virtues and character can bring to sanctification since he urges the church to see its own worship and character formation as a political act in and of itself. By emphasizing the role of Christian response to God’s activity through nurturing the virtues, Hauerwas helpfully connects virtue ethics to the Wesleyan desire to receive sanctification.

Furthermore, Hauerwas notes in the introduction that “the work of theology is never done” and identifies Karl Barth’s theology as instructive and illustrative of that point. For Hauerwas, Barth demonstrates that any attempt to treat one doctrine


51 Ibid., 2-3.
requires one to reconsider all other doctrines in light of that work. Along that line, what Hauerwas presents in Sanctify Them in the Truth, is in many ways a start for a political theology that is rooted in the doctrine of holiness. That I find it important to go further than truth-telling and embrace of virtues to consider the doctrine of holiness in light of recent scholarship on Leviticus (chapter four) seems completely consonant with what Hauerwas offers here. In some ways, his approach to theology animates my recognition of the opportunity to approach political theology through the doctrine of holiness and the importance for holiness theology to take account of political theology.

Hauerwas has championed the importance of the church as a political community. Several essays in his book, In Good Company: The Church as Polis, emphasize the significance of the church as a political community that offers an alternative concept of political community of the nation-state. And yet, despite the strength of his work in highlighting the importance of character formation and the political nature of the church qua church, Hauerwas has been rightfully criticized for not adequately addressing the “plain politics” that are involved in his case for the church as political space that serves as an alternative to the nation-state.52 In many ways, the work of Michael Baxter and William Cavanaugh (two of his students) can be seen as developing some of Hauerwas’s political-theological insights in more concrete ways. I would add to their work the critique that Hauerwas has not adequately attended to the issues of how these virtues

might relate vis-à-vis scriptural holiness (a concept from his own Methodist tradition) as both societal and personal vocations. Though Hauerwas is helpful in reclaiming Christianity as a practiced faith instead of merely a “believed” faith, he has not addressed the way that practices of holiness are essential for the church’s political witness. Hauerwas has worked so diligently to emphasize the importance of character and virtue for the community that he neglects the ways in which personal holiness is linked not only to the holiness imparted in receiving the Eucharist, but also in the personal transformation that is linked to sanctification as individual submission to God’s holiness. Much of his work on practices revolves around communal practices and his work becomes most concrete in the ecclesial practices of baptism and Eucharist. I do not want to deny these concrete forms of political activity by Christians, but rather, seek to attend to the implications of scriptural holiness that push beyond sacraments to individual and communal practices, activities, and participation in the kingdom of God.

53 For example, Hauerwas and Baxter make the point that the church is importantly more than just a set of beliefs in “Why Freedom of ‘Belief’ is Not Enough,” 199-216 in In Good Company: The Church as Polis, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995). And yet, within this collection of essays about how the church is a political community, the index does not list “holiness” or “sanctification.” The absence of these terms/concepts/doctrines seems even more significant given his comment in the preface, “I am indebted to [Dr. Jim Fodor] for the index, which readers of my past work will note is far superior to any I have done” (xv). I will push some of Hauerwas’s conclusions about the importance of the church as polis to include practices of holiness while also applying his critique that Christianity is more than belief to the holiness tradition, which I think has shifted away from practices of holiness towards questions about how we should understand or believe sanctification happens and what we believe it can be trusted to accomplish in particular individual believers.
Along these lines of truncated concrete holiness, Hauerwas emphasizes the importance of Christians developing holy virtues. Because the church has become “spiritual” and disembodied, he seeks to overcome the secondary nature of the church in America; however, his approach often results in individuals and their particular vocation to scriptural holiness being subsumed under the church body.\textsuperscript{54} As Michael Baxter has noted, Hauerwas’ “strategy” has been to counter the shared liberal and conservative Christian assumption that salvation is concerned with “religious meaning and eternal destiny of individuals.”\textsuperscript{55} I agree that this assumption needs to be corrected if the church is to pursue scriptural holiness. And yet, I find that scriptural holiness actually requires a thicker account of the way that individuals approach the vertical dimension of holiness as relation to God than Hauerwas has developed.\textsuperscript{56} Ironically, Hauerwas has under-developed and undermined one of the fruitful aspects of Wesleyan spirituality that can sustain the church as polis in his concern to overcome the church as “spiritual” and a group with shared “beliefs,” by which he sees practices excluded and find a church where “we can do what we want with sex or money and thus live as

\textsuperscript{54} E.g., Hauerwas goes so far as to say in In Good Company, that “the church’s politics is our salvation” (8). When his concrete examples usually entail church sacraments, he has truncated the importance of a Wesleyan personal piety that offers more breadth than just the sacraments of Eucharist and Baptism (for the vertical dimension of relationship between persons and God).

\textsuperscript{55} Baxter, “The Church as Polis?,” 133.

\textsuperscript{56} My assessment and interpretation of Leviticus (chapter four) will enable the doctrine of scriptural holiness to avoid the assumption that salvation is merely about eternal destiny for individuals but also accomplish the embodied practice of God’s worshipping community.
I seek to demonstrate that scriptural holiness can overcome that kind of “spiritual” while also holding onto the more individual holiness that can be formative for members of the body of Christ who seek to live out their relationship to God in a way that I think Hauerwas could affirm.

The final two books to consider will be treated together because of their similarities and the fact that they come from an entirely different tradition than the Wesleyan sources I considered and Western political theology texts. As texts of liberation theology, they offer an example from within Roman Catholicism that is seeking to hold together their Ignatian spirituality and the pursuit of social justice. And yet, for the purposes of my study, they are beyond the scope of an adequate evaluation because of their difference from the other political theology texts and the holiness movement literature. On the surface, these two books appear to be doing exactly what I have claimed is missing—offering a political theology of holiness. Pedro Casaldáliga’s and José-Maria Vigil’s *Political Holiness: A Spirituality of Liberation* and Jon Sobrino’s *A Spirituality of Liberation: Toward Political Holiness* explicitly connect holiness and politics, yet there is a very subtle but important difference between their approach and the one I am suggesting. Sobrino, Casaldáliga, and Vigil represent an approach to theology that prioritizes justice and pushes towards integrating personal asceticism into political action. Still, in their work on political holiness, the emphasis is on how liberation is not

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58 *Political Holiness*.

59 *Spirituality of Liberation*. 
an evil means to a good end and therefore should be understood as a good for Christians. In its most basic form, they are arguing that engaging politics does not exist outside of holiness per se. That claim is different than arguing that holiness is necessarily political, and that is where these approaches fall outside of the scope of what I present in this dissertation.

These treatments of “political holiness” fall into what Elizabeth Phillips identified as the approach of the first generation of political theology with respect to holiness theology. This liberation theology speaks to holiness theology, but instead of a true explication of the doctrine, their work primarily serves to correct the conception of holiness as apolitical discipleship. The prioritization of the option for the poor and challenging the systems of power that are present is in fact a political issue that should be understood within the scope of religious activity and thus an opportunity to live out holiness. While they rightly question power, the form of their politics takes the shape of translating their theological vision into the political landscape that exists. The next step of reimagining how political holiness can mean more than baptizing political action still remains to be done. Whereas Sobrino, Casaldáliga, and Vigil offer some insights for holiness theology and political theology, their work does not directly translate to the concerns of the second generation of political theology or the way in which holiness theology has used the term “holiness.”

Kreider, Bretherton, and Hauerwas introduce additional issues to the discussion of political theology and holiness beyond what was emphasized in the introductory texts and readers. And yet, none of the resources presently available has focused its
attention on the particular importance of holiness with respect to political theology. Into this complex mix of political theological imagination, character formation, importance of hospitality, and questions of identity and sovereignty, the doctrine of holiness is a profound resource of political imagination. Furthermore, holiness can drive a theological understanding of the church in a way that helps it avoid being co-opted and subordinated to the modern nation-state logic (as identified by Cavanaugh and Hauerwas), while also serving as a means for embodying the difference between worship of false gods and the true God (borrowing from Barth’s notion of the church’s mission).

The holiness movement inspired its followers to tackle some of the most important political challenges facing society in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Holiness was the reason that many Methodists addressed the tenement problem in New York City, provided the resolve for the temperance movement, and was a foundational theological doctrine at the heart of the abolition movement. The fact that holiness could inspire these kinds of political movements should cause us to reconsider its importance for political theology. Furthermore, the overview of introductory texts demonstrates precedence for considering the political implications of specific doctrines and themes such as scriptural holiness. Given the lacuna regarding holiness in these introductions to political theology and within the field as a whole, holiness stands as a proper Christian
theological theme ready to be developed in a direction that provides a new way of
seeing and answering political questions from a Christian theological foundation.60

In order to attend to this task, I turn to the American holiness movement because it offers a case study in how the doctrine of holiness can guide the personal and social practices of the church. I will demonstrate that at certain points in time, the holiness movement held together personal and societal dimensions of its embrace of the identity as God’s holy people in a form that can be recognized as politically relevant and intentionally practiced scriptural holiness.

4. Scriptural Holiness: Personal and Social, Spiritual and Political

The American holiness movement began with the application of a new theological emphasis on the specific doctrine of holiness61 as the guiding biblical theme

60 One additional observation about this lacuna is in order. Perhaps, part of the neglect of the holiness movement and the doctrine of holiness by political theology can be attributed to the tendency by formal theology and history to focus on those groups and thinkers that are near the center of culture instead of those groups and thinkers that often work at the periphery. The holiness movement is not anti-intellectual, but it does not have the kind of educational institutions that carry the reputations of mainline and Catholic institutions. Nathan Hatch, The Democratization of American Christianity (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), 221-222, argues that this kind of culture-bias has led to the neglect by historians to consider the influence of popular religion in his call for a re-evaluation of the Second Great Awakening, which he sees as being interpreted inversely to its actual thrust as raising individualism instead of clinging to religious order and clerical power. He states, “Conventional contemporary religious histories retain a bias toward elite churches. Institutions that were at or near the center of culture have been the focus of study rather than movements at the culture’s periphery. The danger, of course, is that we have ignored the most dynamic and characteristic elements of Christianity during this time.”
for the theology and practice of the church within the revivalism of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Protestant Christianity in America. Melvin Dieter describes the American holiness revival of the nineteenth century as “the meeting of the American mind, prevailing revivalism, and Wesleyan perfectionism in as widespread a popular quest for the beatific vision as the world had known.” One unique aspect of this movement was the pragmatism of their pietism, which was “a Wesleyan pietism oriented much more towards Christian activity than pietistic introspection.” Though not exclusively Wesleyan, the movement has been deeply formed by the theology of

61 Holiness, sanctification, and perfection are often used synonymously within Wesleyan writings on holiness.

62 The most comprehensive look at the history of this movement is, Dieter, The Holiness Revival. The Wesleyan holiness tradition has a complicated history and indistinct boundaries with the Pentecostal-Holiness movement and the charismatic movement. Douglas Sweeney offers a helpful definition of the differences between Holiness, Pentecostal, and charismatic Christian groups in The American Evangelical Story: A History of the Movement (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2005), 192. He notes that though the boundaries are blurry, “Holiness people are evangelicals with an unusually strong commitment to living a higher Christian life—that is, a more holy life, one set apart from worldliness and devoted to supernaturally empowered spirituality. Pentecostalism is rooted in the concerns of the Holiness movement but also includes a more fervent commitment to the special gifts of the Spirit (the supernatural gifts depicted in the biblical book of Acts and treated at greatest length by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12-14)—most distinctively, the gift of speaking in tongues (glossolalia). Charismatics have imported the goods of both groups back into the so-called mainline denominations and, more recently, into newer, independent congregations and networks of congregations (often called ‘neo-charismatic’). Chronologically speaking, the North American holiness movement arose within the Protestant mainline during the early-nineteenth century; Pentecostalism began in newly separated groups of Holiness adherents at the end of the nineteenth century; charismatics rose to prominence toward the middle of the twentieth century.”

63 Dieter, Holiness Revival. 3.

64 Ibid. Emphasis mine.
John Wesley and his theology of scriptural holiness. When the Methodists in America established the Methodist Episcopal Church with John Wesley’s blessing, they also adopted Wesley’s mission statement at the Christmas Conference in Baltimore (1784) by including in the first *Discipline* that “God’s Design, in raising up the Preachers called Methodists” was “to reform the Continent, and spread Scriptural Holiness across these Lands.”\(^{65}\) Furthermore, Francis Asbury, one of Wesley’s successors in theological and ecclesial leadership, understood the spread of scriptural holiness as his dominant purpose. Asbury was loyal to Wesley’s theology, but “was even more deeply committed to his special calling to spread scriptural holiness throughout his ‘circuit’.”\(^{66}\) In its early generations, the holiness movement held together the mission to spread scriptural holiness that was understood to involve persons engaging in social reform as one of the fruits of their conversions, including the requirement for all Methodists to release their slaves in that initial 1785 *Discipline*.\(^{67}\) There is evidence that much social reform happened at the hands of individuals and congregations who understood their social


\(^{67}\) Ritchey, Rowe, and Schmidt, *Sourcebook*, 64-65.
practices and actions as inherently connected to the pursuit and emphasis on holiness in their individual and corporate lives.

This movement serves as an example of the theological possibilities and challenges that face primary pursuit of the vocation of holiness within a group that “has carried in its heritage the commitment to a personal transformation of life that has social and public impact around Kingdom principles consistent with the nature of God.”

This commitment to personal transformation is the crux of the movement’s understanding of holiness (under the various terminology including sanctification, entire sanctification, or perfection). The American holiness movement includes those church traditions that rise out of the broader recognition of a movement of revivalism in the nineteenth century, given the name by J. Edwin Orr “Second Evangelical Awakening” (1857-1907).


69 J Edwin Orr, The Second Evangelical Awakening (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1955). With respect to Orr’s designation of the second great awakening, economist Robert Fogel, has followed a different set of dates in his classification of historical awakening periods. See, The Fourth Great Awakening & the Future of Egalitarianism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 19-22. The time period that Orr identifies as the Second Evangelical Awakening includes several years of overlap with the period in which Fogel sees the revival phase of the Third Great Awakening (1890-1930) that would ultimately be rejected by these American holiness churches that drew much of their impetus from values and characteristic theological emphases in the Second Great Awakening. Fogel does see the same characteristics present in what he classifies as the second great awakening but lists its growth and maximum influence earlier than Orr (for Fogel, the revival phase of the second great awakening was 1800-1840 and the political phase was 1840-1870). For my purposes, it is most important to see the ways that the American holiness movement does rise out of these second awakening impulses. See this dissertation chapter two for more on Fogel’s analysis of the rise of the second and third great awakenings and their differences.
this “Awakening,” the American holiness movement is the segment that developed in a predominantly Wesleyan context and focused upon sanctification or Christian perfection.70 This movement continues today through several ecclesial groups,71 the Wesleyan Theological Society and its journal The Wesleyan Theological Journal, and many colleges, universities, and seminaries.72

In addition to John Wesley, Francis Asbury, and other prominent Methodist Episcopal leadership, different lay and revival leaders shaped the emphases and

70 Donald Dayton, American Holiness Movement: A Bibliographic Introduction (Wilmore, Ky.: B. L. Fisher Library, Asbury Theological Seminary, 1971), 10. Mark Noll describes the Holiness churches as those “of a particular expression of revivalistic Protestantism [that] emerged in the nineteenth century as a way of designating [churches with an] emphasis on holy living that had been a major theme of Methodists such as Phoebe Palmer and revivalists such as Charles Finney.” The Old Religion in a New World: The History of North American Christianity (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2002), 149. For more on the holiness movement and its development as a grass-roots movement that emphasizes democratic structure and spirit, see the “Epilogue” and “Redefining the Second Great Awakening” in Hatch, The Democratization of American Christianity, 210-226. For example, Hatch points out one of the decisions by the Church of the Nazarene was to give final authority to local congregations in contrast to the episcopacy of the Methodist church. He also emphasizes the restorationist nature of the holiness movement in its emphasis on the primitive church in scripture.

71 These include: Church of the Nazarene, Free Methodist Church, The Salvation Army, The Church of God (Anderson), Shield of Faith, Brethren in Christ, Evangelical Friends, Church of God in Christ, International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, Christian and Missionary Alliance, International Pentecostal Holiness (see Mannoia and Thorsen, Holiness Manifesto, 6).

approaches of the subsequent holiness ecclesial traditions and denominations. Phoebe Palmer, perhaps the most important early leader of the Wesleyan holiness movement, led the Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness for more than three decades. Central to her influence and work was her message that believers did not need to wait for entire sanctification. She invited people to “count themselves dead to sin immediately, and to offer their lives—by faith—on the altar of the Lord.” Thus develops the expectation that a second crisis would occur at an altar during a revival or home meeting. Palmer emphasized this experience of sanctification to the point of proclaiming that sanctification was the duty of every Christian. The crisis moment and emphasis that

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73 Peter W. Williams, America’s Religions, Third Edition (Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 2008), 272. Williams includes the holiness movement with fundamentalism and Pentecostalism as “reactions to modernity.” Concerning the holiness movement he notes: “Though this interdenominational movement differed in details from Wesley’s earlier theological formulations, it resembled his own movement in its origins not as a new church but rather as a religious climate of opinion promoted by a powerfully effective network of parachurch structures” (272). This description helps explain the difficulty in delineating which groups comprise the Wesleyan holiness movement.

74 The “Tuesday Meetings for the Promotion of Holiness” were hosted by Methodist layperson Sarah Worrall Lankford. These were meetings of prayer groups that initially met in the Allen Street and Mulberry Street Methodist Episcopal Churches before moving to the parlor of her home in New York City. Soon after the meeting was moved to Lankford’s home, her sister, Phoebe Worrall Palmer had an experience of sanctification and became involved in the meetings. The meetings were initially for women only, but they were opened to everyone in 1839. Two years after Sarah Lankford moved the meetings to her parlor, Phoebe Palmer became the leader and the meetings moved into her home. It was similar to the early band meetings of the Methodist Revival in England and drew countless people to gather in their joint pursuit of sanctification. This meeting was the major platform for Palmer’s influence (in addition to her writing). For more on the Tuesday Meetings and Palmer’s influence through them, see Dieter, Holiness Revival, 22-42; 51-55.

was championed by Palmer came to be one of the primary hallmarks of the holiness movement and revival services of groups like the National Campmeeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness. The importance of personal commitment to sanctification persists today as represented in the ministerial credentialing manuals of holiness traditions including the Church of the Nazarene and the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana).

Palmer’s was not the only voice proclaiming the importance of holiness, however. Charles Finney (along with his Oberlin College colleague Asa Mahan) was teaching a parallel version of aggressive sanctification that would come to be named “Oberlin Perfectionism,” taking the name of his academic post at Oberlin. Finney offered an understanding of perfection that was not in line with the mainstream of Reformed theology, but did carry a more Reformed heritage in comparison with the Wesleyan-

76 This group has also existed as the National Holiness Association and is presently operating under the name, Christian Holiness Partnership.

77 Church of the Nazarene Manual 2013-2017 (Kansas City, Mo.: Nazarene Publishing House, 2013) includes several statements regarding the importance of entire sanctification. E.g., “The critical objectives of the Church of the Nazarene are ‘holy Christian fellowship, the conversion of sinners, the entire sanctification of believers, their upbuilding in holiness, and the simplicity and spiritual power manifest in the primitive New Testament Church, together with the preaching of the gospel to every creature.’” And “Our well-defined commission is to preserve and propagate Christian holiness as set forth in the Scriptures, through the conversion of sinners, the reclamation of backsliders, and the entire sanctification of believers” (5). See also, The Church of God Credentials Manual (Anderson, Ind.: Church of God Ministries, 2011). It lists as the second bullet point regarding the mission of the Church of God, “To enable persons throughout all the world to experience redemptive love in its fullest meaning through the sanctifying power of the gospel,” and the third bullet is, “To call persons to holiness and discipleship” (9).

78 Sweeney, The American Evangelical Story, 139.
inspired teaching by Palmer. Finney’s influence persisted throughout the holiness movement and left its mark on the tradition. His preaching on holiness led him into conflict with many from his Reformed tradition, to such an extent that Finney is more influential in holiness groups than Reformed theology. To this point, though the holiness churches most often describe themselves as the successors of John Wesley and early Methodism, Donald Dayton argues that “the movement is perhaps best viewed as a synthesis of Methodism with the revivalism of Charles G. Finney.”\(^79\) In other words, Finney and the Oberlin School left their mark on the movement even though the Wesleyan stream differed theologically.

Palmer and Finney were the two most influential leaders of the early nineteenth-century holiness movement, yet they offered significantly different positions on entire sanctification. For Palmer, the second blessing was a duty for all Christians, while Finney pushed for perfection now, but not through a necessary second blessing. Palmer emphasized an experience that enabled total consecration and submission and Finney emphasized the ability to truly obey God’s will that was grounded in salvation instead of a second work of grace. The next wave of holiness preaching took the methods of Finney and Palmer to new places and ministry contexts. One important development was the inauguration of formal itinerant ministries and camp meetings (e.g., the

National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness). The development of the National Camp Meeting Association was a response to a growing sense that within American Methodism and other ecclesial groups, holiness was not being treated as the central doctrine that more committed holiness advocates conceived as necessary.

Since the ecclesial groups were resistant to championing the holiness message, these extra-ecclesial groups emerged.

And yet, the emergence of holiness groups did cause problems for established denominations. Holiness advocates within American Methodism in particular created tension by the 1870s, and bishops from northern and southern Methodist branches “denounced the growing independence of holiness associations.” The censure by the ecclesial authorities did not dissuade the grassroots movements; they struck out on their own often through “come-outer” theologies against denominations. These holiness camp meeting associations and grassroots groups often formed publishing houses and

80 Sweeney, The American Evangelical Story, 140. This group hosted a ten day revival on the theme of sanctification in Vineland, New Jersey in July of 1867.

81 This new context would serve to both extend the movement into new regions of the United States and make the group susceptible to the loss of local social ministry in favor of traveling evangelism, which I will address in chapters two and three.

82 Williams, America’s Religions, 273.

83 Come-outer theologies claimed that the denominational structures were sinful and one must come-out of that sin to remain in holiness and be part of the true church, the body of Christ. For examples of groups that proclaimed this theology see, Dieter, The Holiness Revival, 207-233. According to Williams, America’s Religions, 273, The Church of God (Anderson), Campbellites, Church of the Nazarene and Wesleyan Church all have “come-outer” histories but have transitioned to varying levels of Protestant organizational structures.
distributed print materials widely to proclaim that holiness must not be neglected because it was a central doctrine necessary for the moral health of individuals and for faithfulness to the gospel itself. 84 These groups and camp meeting associations often adopted Finney’s revival techniques, or “New Measures,” even when eschewing his particular understanding of sanctification. 85 As the movement continued, it maintained a presence within American Methodist groups but these newer associations continued to grow and new ones emerged. 86

84 Williams, America’s Religions, 273. Williams identifies the Church of God (Anderson, Ind.) as “among the first group to forge ahead on its own.” The Church of God (Anderson) serves as an example of the power publishing efforts had to sustain these growing movements that began to form outside of the established Methodist church conferences. The Church of God began out of a commitment to holiness to the point that early leaders found the denominational membership requirements of the various church groups of which they were a part to compromise their holiness because the divisions among these church groups evinced a brokenness of the unity that was demanded by the New Testament. Church of God leader, D. S. Warner would state that the holiness of the church required holiness of the members and the unity would be dependent upon coming out of divisions that were sinful. See Daniel S. Warner, The Church of God; or, What Is the Church and What is Not (Moundsville, W.V.: 1890). Charles Edwin Jones notes that the publishing house was the centralizing and stabilizing force for the Church of God: “Though unplanned, the stabilizing role of the Gospel Trumpet Company…can scarcely be overestimated. Its presence (and that of its successor Warner Press) in Anderson from 1906 to 1996 gave an authoritative voice to the movement. It remains to be seen whether the group, which reported 2,353 churches and 234,311 members in the United States in 1998, can flourish without it.” Jones, The Wesleyan Holiness Movement, 274.

85 Dayton, The American Holiness Movement, 20. Dayton emphasizes the impact of the techniques but seeks to distinguish the American holiness movement from the groups that branched away from Wesleyan understandings of sanctification (19).

86 To this day, there are those within the United Methodist Church who would claim association with the Holiness Movement and participate in the Wesleyan Theological Society; however, the majority of paper presentations and membership of
These groups extended the American holiness movement and its influence while also laying the groundwork for the loss of rooted ministries that were addressing societal ills. For example, Palmer and Finney both emphasized and practiced a synthesis of personal conversion of sinful actions and benevolent social ministries that addressed issues like housing, education, slavery, and temperance. Finney claimed that, “the loss of interest in benevolent enterprises was usually evidence of a ‘backslidden heart.’” His ministry pushed a wide range of concerns including: “good government, Christian education, temperance reform, abolition of slavery, and relief for the poor.” For her part, Palmer was one of the first leaders to address the destitute living conditions in the Five Points neighborhood of New York City. In 1850 she was instrumental in founding the Five Points Mission. In a diary entry from 1858, Palmer comments that she attended a service at the Five Points Mission, but rather than highlighting conversions, she notes,

the WTS in the past decade have come from theologians and pastors with ties to the groups that make up the Wesleyan Holiness Project (see note 72).


88 Ibid., 170. After its founding, the New York Methodist Conference appointed a minister, Lewis Morris Pease to the project. He and his wife were not allowed to make their home there, so he resigned and founded another organization, the Five Points House of Industry in 1854. These two missions continued concurrently after his resignation as the Methodist women continued their work at the Five Points Mission. See also, Noll, The Old Religion in a New World, 99-100. While Noll acknowledges Palmer’s commitment to not “abandon the world,” he also intimates that her emphasis on holiness tips the balance away from engagement with structures of society and world. I will take this up in the next chapter as part of my analysis of the shift away from holiness engagement in social concern. I do not think that waning of holiness social work should be attributed to an emphasis on “holiness” as Noll suggests.
“I especially marked the improvement of scores of children rescued from the haunts of crime and degradation.”

Historian Kathryn Long argues that the spiritual revival of 1857-1858 actually led Palmer away from more socially rooted ministries towards speaking and writing. Long presents a trajectory away from interest in social concern for Palmer, though Palmer’s personal diary entry from 1858 calls into question how clearly we can assess a shift away from a synthesis of personal evangelism and social benevolence work. Chapter two will consider Long’s argument regarding Palmer, and point to a general shift by the movement more broadly away from rooted social ministries. However, it is important to acknowledge the synthesis that was present in the nineteenth century with respect to personal holiness and benevolent humanitarian work.

Despite the tendency today to view revivals and revivalist traditions as conservative, individualistic, and less progressive, Timothy Smith describes the nineteenth-century revivals as both progressive and humanitarian. He states,


91 Chapter two will consider the holiness movement’s conflict with Progressive Christianity. Though “progressives” are thought of as addressing social issues, the holiness churches were often the groups with which impoverished people worshipped. Nathan Hatch states, “While Progressive prophets attacked structures that permitted poverty and need, it was Pentecostals, Nazarenes, and Fundamentalists that founded churches among the dirt-poor farmers of Oklahoma, the automobile workers of Detroit, and the millhands of Gastonia” (*Democratization of Christianity*, 216).
It is difficult but necessary for modern students to realize, moreover, that in the nineteenth century revival measures, being new, usually went hand in hand with progressive theology and humanitarian concern. Only thus could they have won the support of so many, both in and outside the churches, who wished Christianity to become a dynamic force for the reformation of society.\textsuperscript{92}

While many view revivalist traditions as sectarian and isolated, Smith also presents the resurging revivalism as connected to broader religious influences. He describes a connection between the revivals and educational leadership from respected colleges and seminaries including Oberlin, Amherst, Lane, Yale, Andover, and Union, where “men of piety and scholarship purged American revivals of their fanaticism, grounded them on liberalized Calvinist or Arminian doctrines, and set their course in a socially responsible direction.”\textsuperscript{93} The revivalist fervor from the rural West that was typical of religious movements in the early part of the nineteenth century moved into the cities where the connection with educational institutions and the commitment to social responsibility took hold in many educational, temperance, poverty-relief, and abolition societies.\textsuperscript{94} This shift would continue to marshal rural morality and revival understandings of holiness into the urban context as revivalist evangelicals gained political power but also consequently encountered widespread local humanitarian needs demanding their

\textsuperscript{92} Smith, \textit{Revivalism and Social Reform}, 60.

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 61.
attention. Instead of the second awakening’s influence burning out around 1840,\(^{95}\) it gained momentum in the migration into urban and educational settings. In these settings, revivalism’s emphases of personal conversion and social reform contributed to the influence of the American holiness movement on the broader political goals of society as a whole.

Leaders like Palmer and others who attended to the importance of Christian perfection within the Wesleyan stream in the nineteenth century understood conversion as demanding a social vision and discipleship that addressed both personal and societal sin. Timothy Smith states, “Out of the heart of revival Christianity came by mid-[nineteenth] century a platform more widely acceptable and as realistically concerned with alleviating social evil.”\(^{96}\) This Wesleyan approach was in contrast to the Unitarian revolt by which Americans demonstrated a preference for ethics over dogma. Smith sees a difference between these evangelical holiness leaders and the way revivalism was invoked by right-wing Calvinists and Episcopalians. For the Wesleyans, liberalism on social issues, not reaction, was the dominant note which evangelical preachers sounded before 1860. The most influential of them...

\(^{95}\) Ibid., 62. Smith makes a compelling case against suggestions that the social influence of the holiness movement was waning by the 1830s or 1840s. For example, Mark Noll writes that reform movements had failed by the 1830s. He states, “In the 1830s…the dream of a moral Christian society, transformed outwardly by the voluntary efforts of the inwardly converted, began to collapse” (Old Religion in a New World, 104). As I have already noted, Phoebe Palmer (whom Noll mentions as an important holiness leader) did not even open the Five Points Mission until 1850. The chronology of the demise of holiness revivalism seems to be misrepresented in several historical accounts.

\(^{96}\) Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform, 146.
improvement and never tired of glowing descriptions of the social and economic millennium which they believed revival Christianity would bring into existence.  

The second chapter will evaluate the influence of millennial thinking on the practice and emphases of the holiness movement, but as far as the nineteenth century was concerned, the holiness movement understood that conversions to holiness required engagement with neighbors in one’s respective community for the good of society.

Because of the great social progress during the widespread revival of 1858, “revivalists were convinced that the conquest of social and political evil was near at hand. For long afterward they were apt to ascribe humanitarian progress to the force of the gospel.”

For nineteenth-century Methodism, the social implications of their holiness and Christian perfection were made explicit by William Arthur’s *The Tongue of Fire*, where he “warned that the two most dangerous perversions of the gospel were to look upon it as ‘a salvation for the soul after it leaves the body, but not salvation from sin while there,’ and as ‘a means of forming a holy community in the world to come, but never in this.’” Additionally, the Methodist perfectionist newspaper, the *Zion’s Herald*, urged the reform of society as part of spirituality, lest non-Christians be seen to care more about human well-being than “friends of the gospel.” Furthermore, holiness

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97 Ibid., 151.

98 Ibid., 153.

99 Ibid., 154.

100 Ibid., 155.
advocates did not shy away from specific social sins, as evidenced by the response to the financial collapse of 1857 when, “it was a revivalist editor who most fearlessly denounced the sins of the wealthy.”\textsuperscript{101}

Editor William Arthur urged his readers that Christians who were indifferent to systemic fraud, bad living conditions that undermined the family unit, poor treatment of workers, and licentiousness were unfaithful Christians and lived “contrary to gospel truth.”\textsuperscript{102} Arthur argued that people needed conversion and baptism by the Holy Spirit’s power to bring about the regeneration of the earth that was needed in order to move towards Christ’s personal reign on earth in the here and now.\textsuperscript{103} His was a message of optimism and hope for the power of transformed individuals who were necessarily grafted into work for the kingdom of God. Importantly, however, was the necessary connection between the spiritual conversion and living according to “gospel truth” with respect to social issues. Arthur compared indifference regarding “fearful social evils” to failures of Christian morality when the importance of “spreading practical holiness to individuals” was ignored.\textsuperscript{104}

Arthur was not the only voice pushing forward the synthesis of personal spiritual conversion and social concern. Smith also points to Boston University professor

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 156.

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 157.

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.

Daniel Steele, who in 1883 wrote the preface to Catherine Booth’s *Aggressive Christianity* in which he “praised her for believing that the gospel aims both to destroy sin in the individual soul ‘through the power of the Holy Spirit wholly sanctifying it by the instantaneous finishing stroke given to original sin’ and to banish sin from society as well, until the whole world is subdued ‘to Jesus, its rightful King.’”

Finney, Palmer, Booth, Arthur, and Steele all promote an understanding of holiness that lies at the center of Christian experience, but cannot be relegated to a personal and private locus of faithfulness to the gospel. For example, Palmer warned against selfish pursuit of ecstatic enjoyment instead of recognizing that “holiness made one a servant—at times a suffering servant—of his [or her] fellow [humans].” As these leaders linked social concern and activity to holiness, the Holy Spirit’s personal power over sin was essential. Furthermore, according to Timothy Smith, these preachers and evangelists were also laying the groundwork for the Social Gospel. He reiterates Wellman J. Warner’s assessment that sanctification “socialized the individual disposition and released in men the mystic power to make benevolent motives work,” and further claims holiness reformers influenced the Social Gospel. Smith states,

105 Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 157-158.

106 Ibid., 158.


Thus did the mid-century preachers furrow the ground from which the social gospel sprang. Evangelists facing urban challenges early proclaimed the unity and interdependence of the race. Edward Beecher, E. N. Kirk, Albert Barnes, George B. Cheever, and a host of lesser men saw with surprising clarity the social implications of their prized ideals of righteous living, brotherly love, and the immanence of God through the outpoured Holy Spirit. They moved rapidly toward a systematic elaboration of Christian humanitarian doctrine. Perfectionists like Finney and William Arthur, who added to these ideals a passion for full personal consecration and freedom from all sin, actually led the way. By the time of the Civil War the conviction had become commonplace that society must be reconstructed through the power of a sanctifying gospel and all the evils of cruelty, slavery, poverty, and greed be done away.109

Smith also acknowledges a difference between these holiness preachers and the social reformers of the social gospel movement with respect to “their evangelical trust in divine grace to supplement human efforts and their retention of the historic ‘heavenly hope’ of the faith.”110

Evangelical movements did not yet have a theology of social salvation. My argument for the holiness movement as a politically and socially relevant expression of holiness theology does not dispute that claim. In fact, as my chapter two will show, the shift to social salvation by the Social Gospel and those it influenced caused the holiness movement to recede from active political activity in the twentieth century. Dorrien’s second chapter, “The Social Gospel” (pp. 60-145), is an important correction to Niebuhrian dismissal and ridicule of the Social Gospel. He presents the theology of Washington Gladden, John Fiske, Josiah Strong, Walter Rauschenbusch, and Harry F. Ward.

109 Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform, 161.

110 Ibid. There is some debate regarding Smith’s presentation of leaders like Arthur and the evangelical revivals of 1857-1858 as precursors to the Social Gospel movement. For one, Jean Miller Schmidt suggests that Smith’s claim that the flourishing revivalism that first grew in the frontier and settled in cities and social efforts from the quest for Christian perfection would be more accurately attributed to “the reorientation that took place in American Protestantism by 1837, producing evangelicalism—out of which, or better, in reaction to which, the social gospel arose in the last quarter of the century” (Souls or the Social Order: The Two-Party System in American Protestantism
Timothy Smith is not alone in seeing an era of holiness movement integration of spiritual reformation and social influence. Donald Dayton has also emphasized the social concern of holiness groups prior to the “Great Reversal” when holiness churches and evangelicals moved away from social concern to emphasize individual spiritual conversion almost exclusively in the first half of the twentieth century. George Marsden also tacitly recognizes a period of integration when he points to the connection between the liberal Social Gospel and the disappearance of social concern by stating that from 1900 to 1930, “all progressive social concern became suspect” for revivalist

(Brooklyn, NY: Carlson, 1991), 19. Schmidt argues that Smith has drawn too close of a relation between revivalistic Christianity and the social gospellers for whom “their conception of the relationship of the individual to society had changed drastically by the end of the century” (20). There may be a tangible distinction on this issue; however, Smith’s argument that the nineteenth-century holiness preachers and message entailed social concern remains intact, even with Schmidt’s critique or nuance. Furthermore, the difference to which Schmidt points is crucial in order to understand my argument regarding scriptural holiness. Her dissertation is the first to address the split that emerged within evangelicism between (using her terminology) saving souls or the social order. David O. Moberg has addressed the same issue using Timothy Smith’s terminology of the “Great Reversal” and Leonard Sweet has addressed this issue as the Great Split. See David O. Moberg, The Great Reversal: Evangelism and Social Concern (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1977) and Leonard Sweet, The Evangelical Tradition in America (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1984), 34-41. It is certainly the case that ecclesial groups and theological streams tend to emphasize either a theology of redeeming society or one of redeeming individuals; and yet, scriptural holiness requires these two to be held in concert instead of competition.

111 See, Schmidt, Souls or Social Order, xxviii; Donald W. Dayton, Discovering an Evangelical Heritage (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1976), 135; and Moberg’s argument in The Great Reversal, 28-46.
evangelicals. And yet, it is important to note that revivals were not monolithic events that had identical influence and outcomes.

Smith’s thesis has received decades of evaluation and critique. Some authors minimize his insights by painting the century with a broader brush of evangelical or social change, while others question if the Social Gospel is actually an heir to the holiness revival tradition. These are certainly fair questions to ask, but the main argument of Smith’s book remains intact; holiness preaching led to social change and social concern. We may debate exact dates of sweeping influence or intellectual and spiritual influences of the social gospellers, but Smith helps to clarify a movement within American Protestantism where holiness preaching led to spiritual conversions centered on the Holy Spirit’s power to rid believers of sin and its influence over their lives that necessarily entailed an engaged social response. Smith has identified evidence of a fully scriptural holiness that was consistent with the insight and wisdom of John Wesley’s own teaching. In emphasizing love of God and neighbor, Wesley picked up Jesus’ teaching of the two great commandments as well as the realities of what scriptural holiness required—you cannot pursue holiness alone or in isolation. Wesley was right and his teaching achieved great influence in the nineteenth century.

112 Fundamentalism and American Culture (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 86.

113 See Long, Revival of 1857-1858 and Schmidt, Souls or Social Order, 3-48.

114 Andrew C. Thompson, “From Societies to Society,” 155-157, is very helpful in explicating the nuance of Wesley’s meaning of social holiness in such a way that eschews equivocation with “social justice.”
5. A Tenuous Place of Influence

Despite the picture that Timothy Smith paints regarding the influence of revivalism in the years leading up to the Civil War in the United States, the legacy of holiness revivalism was tenuous. On one hand, there were other streams of revivalism that held sway over public social trends. Therefore, just invoking “revivalism” as a univocal expression of spiritual and social concern is insufficient. For example, Kathryn Long describes a revival prayer meeting in which,

Presbyterian minister and journalist Samuel Irenaeus Prime (1812-85) recalled as a young man attending a prayer meeting...where an African-American woman [who he later learned was a Baptist] rose and gave an ‘ardent address.’ Prime, used to...highly controlled revivals informed by Princeton theology, a tradition where women did not speak in mixed religious meetings, was shocked at her behavior... In terms of race, gender, class, and denomination, Prime and the anonymous woman had experienced revival in radically different ways.115

This brief example demonstrates the variables at play as well as the challenge to delineate the influences and outcomes from various revival meetings and particular movements that grew out of the revivalism of the nineteenth century.116 For the woman


116 The disconnect of experiences and different forms and expectations of worship eventually resulted in the establishment of separate African-American denominations. Within the Wesleyan stream of Christianity, these included the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and the Christian Methodist Church. For an introduction to these churches as “Institutionalization of Black Religious Independence,” see C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, The Black Church in African American Experience (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990) 47-75. Henry H. Mitchell adds the experience of relation between slave, exslave, and free, the
in this example, we can see a clear liberation that the revival brought her with respect to social conventions of public speech, whereas Prime’s experience of revival had not included that liberating message or outcome.

Both this example of disparate experiences of revivalism in the nineteenth century and the various attempts to diagnose the causes for the impending Great Reversal or social/soul saving split point to the tenuous nature that revivalism, and holiness revivalism in particular, held on any broader social reform movements. Within revivalism, we can see a differentiation between holiness revivalism and older forms of revival. Kathryn Long offers one method to nuance revivalism through a helpful broad identification of two groups resulting from their respective tendency towards freedom

influence of the pioneer generation of black church members being denied the privilege of learning to read, and the issues of class and gender to the experiential dimension of Black Church denominational establishment. He specifically highlights the tension in Bishop Richard Allen who had so strongly stood up for African-American independence while later did not allow Jerena Lee license to preach on account of the white Methodist polity against female preachers. See Mitchell, Black Church Beginnings: The Long-Hidden Realities of the First Years (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2004), 71-81.

117 A commitment to holiness has contributed to the social equality granted women and African American leadership within the holiness movement. For example, in comparison with the theologically similar Methodists, the holiness groups supported female preaching and ordination more than a century earlier than Methodists (1956). Jennifer Lynn Woodruff Tait argues that women preachers helped to build the holiness movement stating, “as Methodism and the holiness movement began to part ways, many holiness groups practiced in their earliest years an openness to the ministry of women that the more theologically liberal mainline denomination frequently lacked. Most Wesleyan/Holiness denominations gave licenses to and ordained women and men alike” (“I Received My Commission From Him, Brother,” Mutuality 14, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 15). Holiness was foundational for this practice. Chapter two includes a case study on sin language with respect to racial equality. Early Church of God practice illustrates the way that racial inequality was framed as sinful lack of holiness.
or control and class dynamics, e.g. populists and elites.\textsuperscript{118} Among the populist/freedom group were the Baptists and Methodists, which were the most common backgrounds for those who became part of the American holiness movement. Long cites Curtis Johnson in saying that this group was suspicious of elite attempts to Christianize society and reform the nation, opting instead for slow results from one by one conversion of individuals.\textsuperscript{119} This tendency can help to explain why a group that was marked by commitment to liberation and social and gender egalitarianism would eventually opt out of the sweeping movement of the Social Gospel in America. In the second chapter, I will consider the important differences between the egalitarian concerns of the second and third awakenings that Robert Fogel identifies.

Over time, the holiness minded evangelicals had diminished influence. One reason for this could be Kathryn Long’s argument that instead of mid-nineteenth-century revivalism leading to social reform, it instead pushed socially concerned evangelicals into the political processes in order to advance their moral agenda.\textsuperscript{120} The evacuation of social action from within church structures to the broader American political processes points to the rising influence of modernity on American society in the

\textsuperscript{118} Long, \textit{The Revival of 1857-1858}, 6.


\textsuperscript{120} Long, \textit{The Revival of 1857-1858}, 95.
late nineteenth century. Jean Miller Schmidt has acknowledged that two decades after writing her dissertation, one of the influences that she missed was the rising power of modernity to push on the private and public split within religious practice. While the following chapter will provide an internal and theological explanation for the diminished social action by the holiness movement, the influence of modernity needs to be considered. In the third chapter, I will consider the temperance movement and the shift in modernity to federal oversight of moral issues.

And yet, Kathryn Long’s argument with respect to holiness revivalism needs careful consideration. Since the American holiness movement derives from and understands itself in the line of both Finney and Palmer, Long helps to make the case of the socially relevant revivalism of the American holiness trajectory of nineteenth-century evangelicalism. Her argument against Timothy Smith’s link between revivalism and social reform is that the Revival of 1857–1858 “marked a public triumph of socially conservative revivalism and consequently a narrowed focus of northern revivals along the Old School lines.” She goes on to state that, “it signaled a de facto rejection of the combination of revivalist piety and community moral reform that had been a part of the New England formalist tradition reinvigorated through the early Finney revivals.”

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121 One major shift in holiness church social concern was the rise of the temperance issue. This was something that was carried forth as both ecclesial social action and through initiatives to enact legislation through the courts. I will address the rise of the temperance issue in more detail in the second chapter.

122 Schmidt, Souls or Social Order, xviii-xxv.

Long’s critique of Timothy Smith’s thesis that revivalism led to social reform activity is founded upon her claim that the Finney style of revivalism was rejected by the 1857-58 revival. The shadow side of her argument supports my thesis (and that of Timothy Smith, whom she is questioning) in saying that the influence of Finney’s form of revivalism entailed “the combination of revivalist piety and community moral reform.” Long is merely defining an earlier date for the same phenomenon that has been observed as happening at a later date by Smith himself, Moberg, Schmidt, and Marsden.

Long goes on to contrast the concern of Finney’s Chatham Chapel revival that sought to address poverty and anti-slavery with the upper-middle class audience of the 1858 Burton’s Theater revival that only mentioned slavery twice in two weeks, including the most publicized by Henry Ward Beecher who used a female slave’s petition for safety in travels to Canada as a metaphor for Christian men to have such a strong urgency to escape sin as she did slavery. Comparing the revivalism in New York City between the 1830s and late 1850s, Long notes, that “the different revival traditions that captured public attention during each period [provide insights into] the shift in attitudes toward moral reform over a 30-year span.” In a sense, as the stream of revivalism shifted away from those groups that maintained strong holiness emphases, the locus of the social action and reform moved out of the context of the worshipping body towards broader societal organizations like governmental authority.

As Timothy Smith recognized,

124 Ibid., 96.

125 Ibid.
Enthusiasm for Christian perfection was evangelical Protestantism’s answer to the moral strivings of the age. The Unitarian revolt had earlier shown that Americans would be less interested in dogma than in ethics... Out of the heart of revival Christianity came by mid-century a platform more widely acceptable and as realistically concerned with alleviating social evil... Men such as [Horace Bushnell] and Frederic Dan Huntington united for a sophisticated audience the principles of Christian liberalism and evangelical faith which were fused among the masses by the fires of the perfectionist awakening.126

This narration shows that holiness has provided an important impetus for political and social action that grew out of the particular doctrine of holiness. Unfortunately for the legacy of the American holiness movement as bearers of scriptural holiness, the influence of this perfectionist awakening had become almost entirely focused on personal evangelism and private morality of overcoming vices by 1930.

What factors worked against an enduring influence of scriptural holiness that looked so promising in mid-nineteenth century? How would institutionalization of the movement and a shift in eschatology influence these holiness churches? What other social forces and historical conflicts contributed to the eroded social action of holiness Christian groups? I turn to these questions in the next two chapters. In order to answer these questions, the insights of political theology will help to diagnose a temptation to pursue social action within unfaithful avenues and prescribe a way forward that more properly conceives scriptural holiness as a politically significant raison d’être of the American holiness movement.

126 Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform, 146.
II.

THEOLOGICAL DRIFT AWAY FROM SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS

1. Introduction: Something Happened

The holiness movement offered a politically relevant witness of holiness in the nineteenth century, but it did not maintain its influential role in social reform throughout the twentieth. Evangelical Protestantism was seemingly united during the 1858 revival at the center of Timothy Smith’s claims about the social influence of Christian reviver church churches. However, as Martin Marty has noted, “then something happened.”

Protestantism split into two groups. One consisted of churches that “met society’s ills and problems by transforming individuals and calling them to serve.” The second group included churches that “believed that the structures of society themselves were in need of redemption.” The holiness movement followed the former approach despite the way it had engaged in structural reform in the nineteenth century. This chapter will address “what happened” within the holiness movement to enable the shift towards personal conversion and a predominantly individual conception of holiness (to the neglect of viewing political and social action as part and parcel of the vocation of holiness).


2 Marty, “Editor’s Preface,” xiv.
Christian perfection is a sine qua non for the American holiness movement. More than any other Christian theological tradition, the holiness movement emphasizes Christian perfection or “holiness in heart and life.” Yet, despite Timothy Smith’s demonstration that “the quest for personal holiness...geared ancient creeds to the drive shaft of social reform,” the American holiness movement (and its emphasis on personal holiness) is not primarily known for being the Christian standard-bearer of social influence and reform. As the holiness movement institutionalized into respective church groups, movements, and coalitions, the holiness movement realized Charles Finney’s fear that the church would be perjured by failing to speak about social issues. The importance of virtue (holiness of heart) was emphasized to the neglect of mission (holiness of life). Instead of emphasizing the vocation of holiness to champion broad

3 I like the language of virtue and mission as a fresh but resonant framing of the way that Wesleyan holiness theology has emphasized the importance of both inward formation and outward actions and practices of holiness. “Holiness of heart and life” is a frequent phrase among Wesleyan theologians that seems tied to a variety of meanings. Too often, I think the contemporary usage of “holiness of heart and life” neglects the way that Wesley understood life as inherently social. Because holiness of heart and life can easily be limited to an individual locus of holiness, I prefer to articulate the message of formation and outward mission with a less individualistic phrase while seeking to resonate with the way that holiness of heart and life is used so often within John Wesley’s sermons (e.g., The Sermons of John Wesley – Sermon 23, “Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount: Discourse Three”). See also a group of sermons categorized together under the heading, “Holiness of Heart and Life” at the Wesley Center Online (http://wesley.nmu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-theological-topic/).


5 Donald Dayton, Discovering an Evangelical Heritage (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1976), 18.
political expressions of holiness (e.g., the abolition of slavery or the temperance movement), by the mid-twentieth century, living into God’s holiness came to be associated primarily with the personal journey of avoiding prohibited sins in the realm of private holiness taboos. For example, one holiness movement church historian states that holiness living was understood as kingdom living in which, “To live according to the holiness taboos was, in the Church of God movement, to practice Kingdom living.”

In the century that followed Smith’s primary research window (1840-1865), the holiness movement experienced important theological shifts that changed the way it approached social problems and political systems. As the nineteenth century turned into the twentieth, the holiness movement wrestled with a changing understanding of sin, the rise and acceptance of a different eschatological outlook, and a profound shift in relationship to society. The movement finds itself internally changed theologically and now existing in a society that no longer reinforced its own understanding of biblical authority, divine creation, and individual responsibility. Societal changes birthed a new theological movement, the Social Gospel, and seemed determined to undermine presuppositions of the holiness movement.

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7 It is important to note that some of the groups would experience these shifts at different moments in their history in ways that do not fully fit a linear chronology. For example, I will consider the social ministry of Missionary Homes in the Church of God as a positive example of rooted mission in this chapter even though it occurs chronologically later than the demise of social ministry in the movement as a whole. Part of this phenomenon can be attributed to the power of reforming leaders that offered renewed first generation energy and vision to respective groups to renew seriousness about scriptural holiness that overcame some of the vexing influences that I will discuss as well.
These three theological shifts undermined the social influence of the holiness movement. Others have observed the demise of social action by holiness movement churches, but their theories and explanations have not been comprehensive. Alternative explanations range from attempts to undermine Smith's thesis, in *Revivalism and Social Change*, that revivalism and Christian perfection actually influenced progressive political and social reform movements,\(^8\) to lumping the holiness movement into the fundamentalist-modernist debates that greatly influenced evangelicalism.\(^9\) My argument is more thorough than these earlier proposals and focuses on the internal theological changes within the holiness movement. However, I want to acknowledge some of the alternatives.

One perspective, which takes a cynical view of evangelical and holiness movement participation in political and social activities in the nineteenth century, comes from Sandra Sizer:

The boundaries between the religious-moral-social sphere on the one hand, and the political arena on the other, had often been gerrymandered in one direction or another at various times, resulting in an interesting ambivalence between evangelicalism and politics. The church and other religious organizations were not to participate directly in the political process; but if issues could be formulated in moral-social terms, if they could be understood in terms of right or wrong structures of the emotional life, religious people were bound to act, using their influence wherever possible to persuade others.\(^10\)

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Viewed this way, the evangelical participation in the social reform activities that Smith described is not evidence of a positive commitment to social action. Instead, Sizer proposes that the relation between revivalism and social reform in the mid nineteenth century was a result of religious revival and conversion that coincidentally overlapped with political opportunities.

Sizer’s explanation suggests that churches and religious organizations were exploited through outright manipulation by political leadership to harness the energy of religious people. She buttresses that view by connecting the types of “conversions” described in revival meetings with the great “secular” political concerns of the 1850s: slavery, nativism, and temperance. She explains, “In light of these considerations, it is remarkable that in the reports from the 1857-58 revival there are three kinds of conversions which recur again and again: first, turning of men from their preoccupation with business affairs, which of course relates to the general sin of acquisitiveness; second, the reform of drunkards; and third, the conversion of Roman Catholics.”

Sizer attenuates the influence of nineteenth century holiness revivals on the political and social concerns of their time, but her argument still serves to corroborate the connection of holiness and evangelical social action to the social problems of the nineteenth century.

Kathryn Long also questions the attribution of social action to the 1857-58 revival. She argues that despite increasing religious conversions, social reform activity did not

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11 Ibid., 89.
increase in the years following 1858. Though Long questions the actual influence of the revival in 1857-58, she acknowledges that holiness minded individuals were engaged in social concerns. However, she emphasizes that social reform activity did not increase in equal relation to the numbers of people converted in the revival. In that sense, Long raises important questions for the consistency with which conversion led to social action, but does not undermine the reality that mid-nineteenth century holiness adherents were engaged in social concerns like housing, education, and poverty alleviation. Was the social action of the holiness movement in the nineteenth century a coincidence of religious energy and secular concerns in the nineteenth century? Or are there other reasons that can explain the social action (and subsequent lack thereof) by the holiness adherents?

12 Kathryn Long, *The Revival of 1857-58: Interpreting an American Religious Awakening* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 120-126. There is an important distinction that can be missed between my understanding of Timothy Smith’s work and the questions posed to it by Kathryn Long in her sections “Holiness, Revivalism, and Reform: Did They Combine in 1857 and 1858?” and “Revivalism without Social Reform” (pp. 120-126). She suggests that the impetus for social action by holiness people, including Phoebe Palmer, was not because of spiritual revivals. She seeks to show that the spiritual revival led to conversions but not an uptick in social reform activity. While the claim shows the failure of the 1857-58 revival to *increase* social reform activity, she still highlights ways that holiness adherents were involved in social reform *and* evangelistic pursuits. In that sense, she does raise important questions for the consistency with which conversion led to social action, but has not undermined the reality that in the mid-nineteenth century, holiness adherents were engaged in social concerns like housing, education, and poverty alleviation.

13 Ibid. I also think it is important to note that Long acknowledges in her introduction that she will address the revival in depth, whereas “[Timothy] Smith investigated the revival primarily to buttress his case for the close connection between the perfectionist impulse of revivalism and nineteenth-century social reform movements” (4). As such, she does not frame her study as undermining Smith’s research. Long gives pause before making too much of one revival, but does not attempt to undermine a connection between revivalism and social action per se.
movement? I think the latter is more accurate and the former diminishes the
intentionality and agency with which holiness movement Christians turned their
spiritual energy and revivalism towards the good of serving one’s neighbor.

Mark Noll attributes the demise of the holiness movement’s social action to
consequences of the theological and geographical moves of well-known leaders of the
early holiness movement. He presents the shift as a result that “holiness” could not
coexist with social reform since Phoebe Palmer’s emphasis on holiness had the long-
term effect of “tip[ping] the balance of Christian ideals toward inner spirituality and
away from full-blown engagement with the structures, institutions, and events of the
developing American society.”¹⁴ Noll sees the implications of Palmer’s theology
overlapping with Charles Finney’s move to the Ohio frontier. Finney’s geographical
shift and the consequences of a “holiness” emphasis served to re-orient their followers
(and the movements they influence) away from social engagement towards private and
rural expressions of Protestant Christianity.

Concern for inner spirituality and the geographical relocation of Finney (and
other holiness movement leaders) may have had something to do with the decline of
holiness involvement in social reform, but both Finney and Palmer were personally
active in social ministries after the date (1830s) that Noll notes as the end of revivalism’s

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¹⁴ Mark A. Noll, The Old Religion in a New World: The History of North American
Christianity (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2002), 100.
social influence.\textsuperscript{15} Noll sees the roots of trends in these two key leaders, but these two examples do not offer a substantive case for the demise of the holiness movement’s social influence. However, for Noll, the story quickly moves past the failures of Palmer and Finney to accomplish societal transformation. I am not satisfied with putting politically relevant holiness aside so quickly.

Noll’s work is not primarily concerned with the holiness movement and Palmer and Finney are minor figures in his historical narrative. However, his treatment of Palmer in particular offers a problematic framing of her influence. On the one hand, Noll acknowledges the power of revivalism and specifically biblical holiness in the first decades of the nineteenth century. He states,

\textit{The social promise of revivalism was that converting individuals could transform society; social reform inspired by biblical holiness would grow naturally from the actions of the converted. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, this formula seemed to be working. The voluntary societies effectively channeled the religious energies of the converted into the doing of good for the whole society.}\textsuperscript{16}

And yet, on the other, he seems to conclude that holiness itself leads people to withdraw from social institutions and American society.\textsuperscript{17} Noll both presents Palmer as socially active in urban reform movements and states that her theology had the long-term result

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 104. Noll states that the 1830s served as the transition away from the promise that revivalism could effect societal transformation. However, Palmer was active in 1850 to establish the Five Points Mission in New York City.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 100.
of causing societal withdrawal.\textsuperscript{18} His diagnosis requires us to view Palmer as either a confused woman living inconsistently from her theology or as a Christian super-servant who was socially involved despite her theological commitment to pursue holiness. Furthermore, based on Noll’s own description of social influence of biblical holiness in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Palmer was not the only person for whom biblical holiness elicited social action as a response. Was there simply a time lapse before people realized that holiness really should not lead them to engage social reform movements? Or did something else alter the way the doctrine of holiness was understood? Later in this chapter I will argue that there were theological reasons for holiness adherents’ societal withdrawal that were far more important than Palmer’s emphasis on inner spirituality.

Martin Marty offers a third diagnosis. He frames the demise of social reform by the holiness movement as a consequence of their relation to fundamentalism. Marty affirms the combination of a vital social agenda \textit{and} soul-saving of the 1857-58 revival.\textsuperscript{19} He concludes that “those who advocated revivalism, soul-saving, and rescue out of the world were the same people who wanted to devote virtually equal energies to the reform of the society.”\textsuperscript{20} The holiness movement is barely mentioned in his description and explanation of the two-party system of Protestantism (Private and Public). However, he does identify the holiness movement as one of the varied groups that were vivified

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 99-100.

\textsuperscript{19} Marty, \textit{Righteous Empire}, 180.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
by *The Fundamentals*. Marty’s broader claim is that Protestants who affirmed the *Fundamentals* committed themselves to maintain doctrinal conservatism, which quelled their progressive social reform activities in the early 1900s. His treatment of doctrinal conservatism focuses on the mainline wings of the Baptists and Methodists, but ecclesial transiency in the first decades of the twentieth century also carried the influence of doctrinal conservatism to the holiness churches. Baptists and Methodists who were frustrated by the growing moderation within their own groups migrated into Holiness sects. Therefore, these denominational transfers came to the holiness churches with what Marty describes as a rooted individualistic view of salvation that had long been held by “revivalists against the social gospel innovators.” The result was an “otherworldly individualism” and from World War I to the Great Depression, social agendas were ignored. Marty states, “the decade after 1919 did not see much extension of the postmillennialist or liberal attempts to relate the Gospel to all the spheres of life including the political and economic.”

These explanations often treat the holiness movement tangentially. They also fail to wrestle with the particularities of the holiness movement. In order to understand why the doctrine of holiness failed to sustain a politically relevant vocation of holiness, we must consider the theological shifts that led the holiness movement into the “Private”

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21 Ibid., 216.

22 Ibid., 226.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid., 227.
Protestant side of Marty’s two-party system. I turn now to the theological issues that coalesced to diminish the scriptural holiness initially practiced by the American holiness movement in the nineteenth century.

2. Waning Scope and Power of Holiness:

Several forces undermined the link between holiness and social action for the American holiness movement in the first half of the twentieth century. Three theological developments were happening simultaneously. First, the movement narrowed the scope and power entailed in sanctification because its understanding of sin changed. Second, most of the holiness churches adopted a new eschatology that influenced their relation to social institutions. Third, the holiness movement rejected key theological commitments of the Third Great Awakening. Their rejection isolated them from powerful cultural circles and many of the political/social reform activities in the 1920s-40s (particularly reforms associated with the Social Gospel and the New Deal). 25 These theological changes coincided with the practical challenges of organizing the holiness movement into respective holiness churches. Furthermore, the movement experienced leadership transitions that brought new articulations of holiness. The new conceptions of

holiness moved the holiness movement away from the creative theological utopian edge of the first generation of holiness leadership.

2.1. Populist Organization and Influence

Before addressing the specific theological developments that encouraged a diminished program of social action, I will consider two cultural/sociological influences that coincided with the explicitly theological factors. First, the social function of organizing the movement into various ecclesial bodies changed priorities. Second, the holiness movement’s populist tendencies meant that cultural shifts in America led to theological reactions by church leaders and theologians.

Organizationally, some practices that were helpful in maintaining certain doctrinal commitments also served to undermine the earlier connection between conversion and social action. The success of camp meeting revivals also served to undermine some rooted urban ministries. Leaders who had been working in local ministry transitioned to a preaching circuit in the United States and Great Britain. The ubiquity of holiness revivals in America at the turn of the nineteenth to twentieth century enabled scattered individual holiness adherents to attend camp meetings and maintain a “holiness” identity without participating in the rooted discipleship and formation that were crucial to Wesley’s understanding of scriptural holiness.26 In one

26 For a detailed account of the centrality of rooted discipleship and formation in Wesley’s understanding, see Kevin M. Watson, Pursuing Social Holiness: The Band Meeting in Wesley’s Thought and Popular Methodist Practice (New York: Oxford University
sense, the weekly gathering of holiness folks in Phoebe Palmer’s parlor, that provided consistent rooted formation, gave way to the traveling and punctilior operation that was the National Campmeeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness. The itinerant expression of holiness evangelism and formation helped the holiness movement grow, but it did not provide formation to sustain the nineteenth-century holiness commitment to social action. Slowly, the self-understanding of the holiness movement’s identity changed from a people primarily called to scriptural holiness to a movement that had to defend and explain their doctrine of entire sanctification. In as much as scriptural holiness remained a concern and commitment of the American holiness movement, the practice and understanding of holiness no longer held together the commitments to evangelism and social action that had been the legacy of the movement in the nineteenth century.

Populism also had a profound influence on the holiness movement in the twentieth century. The populist nature of the American holiness movement both enabled its growth in a season of national optimism and facilitated a narrowed sense of the power of holiness when the popular sentiment of optimism changed.

Chapter two presents Wesley’s structure and theology of discipleship that articulates Wesley’s belief that “holiness was best nurtured through a supportive and disciplined community” (39).

Nathan Hatch, The Democratization of American Christianity (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) 212-214. Hatch highlights the connection of the holiness movement to populism and anti-centrist ideology. This populism and democratic spirit helped to make the holiness message appealing to American Christians, but also opened the movement up to require a redefinition of holiness and sanctification once the spirit of optimism gave way to realism and failures of transformation and perseverance of sin outweighed confessions of victory and eradication.
all people—a kind of democratic leveling that could draw the poorest rural citizen alongside people with power and connections like Phoebe Palmer and Charles Finney.\textsuperscript{28} However, this populist emphasis and decentralized authority left the movement open to a theological crisis when the codified understanding of holiness began to raise questions for later generations of holiness believers and leaders. As the nation shifted towards an ethos of realism instead of optimism, the holiness movement was faced with a crisis to define what exactly was meant by entire sanctification and what it meant to be holy and free from sin.

Latent pietism within the American holiness movement provided the theological mechanism for the changing popular experience to effect a change in doctrinal understanding and biblical interpretation. As Dieter points out, the holiness movement blended historic pietism, American revivalism, and Wesleyan perfectionism. He adds that the movement claimed “biblical authority and experiential authentication for what they believed was Wesley’s own teaching on Christian perfection.”\textsuperscript{29} The experiential authentication of the movement’s interpretation of the biblical meaning of holiness led to expectations that all Christians need the experience of a second blessing subsequent to

\textsuperscript{28} The importance of democratization as a powerful component of growth for multiple protestant denominations (including the Methodism that largely influenced the Wesleyan Holiness Movement in the nineteenth century) has also been treated thoroughly in Hatch, \textit{Democratization}, 193-219.

the crisis of conversion.\textsuperscript{30} Therefore, experience served as a crucial theological category across the holiness movement. The role of experience to change doctrinal understanding has been articulated by Merle Strege as he describes the doctrinal practices of the Church of God (Anderson). Strege presents personal experience as a lens through which church teaching was confirmed or even changed.

In the theological lexicon of the Church of God, few words have been of greater importance than experience. By this term believers referred to and described conversion and sanctification. Penitent sinners did not simply come to faith; they were saved, and salvation was an experience to which they testified. Moreover, the experience of salvation was the doorway into the church. On the letterhead and signboards of hundreds of congregations across North America there appeared the slogan, “The Church Where a Christian Experience Makes You a Member.” Salvation was the experience that determined church membership....

Under the reviverist style of preaching featured throughout the movement, salvation started the new believer on an experiential journey through life... Experience validated church teaching and new experiences sometimes required theological change. Church of God people never substituted experience for Scripture, but they did read the Bible through the lens of their experience and at certain points altered church teaching and doctrinal practice on that basis. By a variety of measures, experience has been a crucial category in the theology of the Church of God movement.\textsuperscript{31}

As Strege demonstrates, personal experience was important for the way in which holiness adherents interpreted Scripture and understood their membership as part of holiness churches.

The experiential focus limited the holiness movement’s theological imagination of social sin. For example, personal experience does not easily map onto concepts of sinful systems or the way that whole industries and cultural values might ensnare

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{31} Strege, \textit{I Saw the Church}, 225.
Christians in sin. When experience is expected to validate church teaching, people often overlook systemic sin if they do not have conscious encounters with racism, poor working conditions, economic exploitation, discrimination, sexism, xenophobia, etc. In the first half of the twentieth century, the holiness movement had language to address an individual who owned a business and enacted racially prejudiced policies and practices. However, it did not have the theological language to properly address people’s experience of benefitting from a housing system that advantaged whites and disadvantaged blacks in the federal loan subsidy program that followed the Great Depression.32 Especially when it comes to the civil rights movement in the later half of the twentieth century, the limitation of the category of experience serves as one reason that the holiness movement was not more active as a whole in striving for civil rights.33

32 See, Richard Rothstein, "Why Our Schools Are Segregated." Educational Leadership 70, no. 8 (May 1, 2013): 50-55. Consider, “The federal government led the development of policies contributing to segregation. From its New Deal inception, federal public housing policy respected existing “neighborhood composition” by placing projects for low-income blacks in black ghettos and those for middle-income whites in white neighborhoods” (53).

33 Because of the way that the holiness movement did address abolition in the nineteenth century, I do not think that the problem of constricted personal understanding of sin can adequately explain the scant role played by the holiness movement in the American civil rights movement. I will address Robert Fogel’s analysis of the second and third great awakenings in American religion later in this chapter, and I think his analysis of the different types of equity that animated each awakening offers a stronger explanation of why abolition would matter to the holiness movement in a way that the civil rights movement did not. Nonetheless, the continued evolution of the holiness movement towards a personal purity understanding of holiness and sin should be understood as a significant hurdle to addressing a system of sin like Jim Crow and segregation. For example, if a holiness person was not themselves exploiting African-Americans in direct relationships, then they would not have theological language to explain the importance of addressing segregation in the south. (I will develop this
Strege also shows the potential variability for the category of experience since it was applied theologically in divergent ways over time, such that by the 1940s, “the term experience began to lose some of its coherence in the Church of God.” 34

Strege’s remarks about the important category of experience are tied to the history of the Church of God, but Mark Quanstrom also demonstrates a theological change for the Church of the Nazarene that was tied to people’s experience of sanctification. 35 The Church of the Nazarene’s doctrine of sanctification shifted in the twentieth century in response to the effects of the waning spirit of optimism and disconnect in holiness expectation and experience. After considering Quanstrom’s account of the narrowing meaning of sin within the Church of the Nazarene, I will return to the Church of God for a case study that illustrates the way that shifts in theological meanings of “sin” contributed to changed stances on social reform and action within the holiness movement.

Because the doctrine of entire sanctification was essential to the holiness movement and the Church of the Nazarene in particular, movement theologians rallied to defend and redefine the meaning of entire sanctification in order to reconcile the gap between expectation and experience. Quanstrom demonstrates that the slipping sense of cultural optimism led to diminishing expectations of victory over sin for sanctified

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34 Strege, I Saw the Church, 225.

people. In order to maintain the doctrine of entire sanctification, Nazarene theologians carefully explained exactly which types of sin would be eradicated. While this definition served to protect the holiness commitment to entire sanctification, it also resulted in a much narrower scope for which holiness people’s sanctification required action and expected transformation. Quanstrom frames the Nazarene doctrine of entire sanctification as mirroring the broader society at both the beginning and end of the twentieth century respectively. Once again, it is important to remember the relation of the holiness movement to populist movements. Nathan Hatch notes that a major commitment of the holiness movement was its departure from Methodist tradition by granting final authority to local congregations (a staple for the two largest groups the Nazarenes and the Church of God). The holiness movement also sought to connect with common people by eschewing formal theology in deference to plain readings of the Bible and utilizing popular communication (e.g., holiness periodicals) to communicate accessible theological doctrinal interpretations and expectations. As Hatch argues, the populist impulse enhanced the power of individualism by rejecting common loci of authority and encouraging common people to think for themselves and read the bible

36 Unfortunately, not all of the ecclesial groups that identify with the Wesleyan Holiness Movement have been researched this specifically regarding their changing understanding of sin and sanctification. Yet, other groups such as the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana) have also gone through an evolution of expectations and understanding regarding entire sanctification and it creates different expectations in the ministerial credentialing processes across the various regional governing assemblies.

37 Quanstrom, A Century of Holiness Theology, 215-216.
for themselves. The holiness movement’s populist tendencies make it susceptible to changes in the national cultural attitudes.

Thus, it is no surprise that the optimism about the positive consequences of sanctification aligned with the optimism of the early 1900s just as the more tempered “theological realism” of the late 1900s was also consistent with the broader shifts in American religious attitudes.\(^{38}\) However, merely attributing the shift in Nazarene theology to mirroring societal trends with respect to optimism or realism would overlook the influence of additional theological reasons for the doctrinal shift. Within Quanstrom’s account, a logical progression emerges with respect to the way that holiness was stripped of its positive consequences and especially its social influence.

2.2. A Narrowing Scope of Sin and a Narrower Expectation for Experience

What holiness is, means, and how it should be pursued are of utmost importance when a tradition is identified primarily by its commitment to holiness. The turn of the nineteenth century was the beginning of a profound shift with respect to what holiness people meant when they talked or wrote about holiness. The identification as a sanctified person and claiming the Holy Spirit’s victory over sin took on new meanings. Holiness is the raison d’ être for groups that make up the American holiness movement and the founding church bodies from its contemporary cooperative association, the

\(^{38}\) Ibid., 24.
Wesleyan Holiness Consortium. Members of these church bodies are expected to seek and experience holiness, often called sanctification, Christian perfection, or whole-hearted consecration. For example, Mark Quanstrom comments on the largest of these church bodies, “The Church of the Nazarene understood its reason for being the proclamation of the possibility of life without sin as a consequence of a second work of grace.” This section will consider the way that shifting use and understanding of sin as well as waning hope in sanctification’s capacity to reform individuals and society constringed holiness groups’ social reform activity in the twentieth century.

The doctrine of holiness and the experience of sanctification both stabilized and animated holiness movement preaching and teaching. Near the end of the nineteenth century and into the early decades of the twentieth, the holiness movement shifted from auxiliary status with ecclesial backing from older forms of Protestantism to organize and establish their own church structures. As these groups organized themselves outside of

39 For more information, see http://www.holinessandunity.org/. The group has expanded beyond its initial founding collection of church traditions to include traditionally Pentecostal ecclesial groups that do not fit fully within the history and emphases of the American holiness movement, though have many strong affinities and a somewhat parallel history that was created by an early-twentieth-century dispute of glossolalia. The founding Wesleyan Holiness Consortium groups were: The Church of the Nazarene, Free Methodist, Brethren in Christ, Christian & Missionary Alliance, Salvation Army, Evangelical Friends, and Church of God (Anderson). The full list of participating groups in 2015 includes: Assemblies of God, Brethren in Christ Church, Christian & Missionary Alliance, Church of God (Anderson), Church of God (Cleveland), Church of the Nazarene, Free Methodist Church, Grace Communion International, International Pentecostal Holiness Church, Shield of Faith, The Evangelical Church, The Foursquare Church, The Salvation Army, the United Methodist Church, and the Wesleyan Church.

40 Quanstrom, A Century of Holiness Theology, i.
Methodist or Reformed Church oversight, the purpose and mission of each new church body centered on expanding the network of committed holiness people. These new institutions and organizations were also products of and influenced by the broader cultural attitudes of optimism of the day.

Quanstrom points to this optimism as part and parcel of the thrust to organize the Church of the Nazarene out of several separate holiness church groups in 1908. Other holiness groups evince influence from the historical context of optimism that followed the Civil War in America. For example, the Church of God (Anderson) was established on a grand vision of a unified church that was holy in its freedom from corporate sin. Within these holiness groups at the turn of the twentieth century, the prevailing American optimism emboldened the expectations of impending victory over the sins of individuals and society as increasing numbers of people responded to the holiness preaching and teaching that was presented from pulpits, camp meeting revival tents, and holiness periodicals.

41 On October 13, 1908, the Holiness Church of Christ of Texas and the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene united at Pilot Point, Texas. They called themselves the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene and are now known as the Church of the Nazarene. For clarity, I will refer to the ecclesial body as the Church of the Nazarene in all cases following the union of October, 1908. These two groups were already themselves the results of unions of several other holiness groups including the Independent Holiness Church, New Testament Church of Christ, the Los Angeles Church of the Nazarene, and Association of Pentecostal Churches of America. In 1915, the Pentecostal Mission of Tennessee and the Pentecostal Church of Scotland joined the Church of the Nazarene and in 1922, the Laymen’s Holiness Association of Jamestown, ND joined (Quanstrom, 13).
The merger in 1907 of two groups that would eventually join others to become the Church of the Nazarene occasioned a “state of the church” address that embraced the “task and privilege of uniting the Holiness people of America, so that they may accomplish the grand work of re-christianizing the continent.”\textsuperscript{42} The American holiness movement believed that preaching holiness and inviting people to experience entire sanctification would bring about the realization of promises that America had been granted. Other Christian groups were similarly optimistic about America’s identity as the land of promise, even if they disagreed about the vision of what the coming realized “kingdom” would entail.\textsuperscript{43} The holiness movement entered the twentieth century with a culturally characteristic optimism. In order to accomplish the grand re-christianization of the continent, groups that formed the Church of the Nazarene and other holiness adherents established institutions where holiness could lead them unencumbered by derision and conflict with denominations where their core theological concerns were being undermined, de-emphasized or ignored. And yet, the movement’s optimism was unable to sustain their mission in the face of perduring challenges to the sweeping revival that was expected.

The broad sweep of Quanstrom’s study tracks the doctrine of sanctification through five phases across the twentieth century: initial optimism for an instantaneous work of grace, the emphasis on the freedom of the will and rejection of human depravity,

\textsuperscript{42} “Proceedings from the First Annual General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene: 1907,” Cited in Quanstrom, \textit{A Century of Holiness Theology}, 15.

\textsuperscript{43} Quanstrom, \textit{A Century of Holiness Theology}, 17.
the crisis of experience not matching the promised victory over sin, a resulting
narrowing of sin and expansion of infirmity, and a final radical reformulation in
relational terms. In thinking about the importance of a vocational holiness, the shift in
how sin was understood in the 1960s and 70s is of primary importance.

Yet, prior to the full shift in the second half of the twentieth century, H. Orton
Wiley laid the groundwork. From 1940 to 1952, Wiley published three volumes covering
the full range of theological doctrines with precision and an aim of elucidating
Wesleyan-holiness positions in a manner that was “faithful to the Holiness tradition of
the late [nineteenth] and early [twentieth] centuries.” Wiley also specifically addressed
the creedal statement on entire sanctification from the “Articles of Faith” by quoting it
verbatim, thus signaling his intentions not to stray from the official stance on entire
sanctification, though he was concerned with popular misconceptions.

Wiley was the first Nazarene theologian to emphasize a definition of the doctrine
of sanctification with clarity on what it did not accomplish—a shift from “the early
Nazarene church [which] was not too interested in defining their glorious doctrine in
limiting terms.” For Wiley, the most important misconception was the failure to
understand the difference in maturity and purity. Purity could be obtained
instantaneously by reception of the Holy Spirit, while maturity of the Christian could

\[44\] Ibid., 79. See, H. Orton Wiley, Christian Theology, 3 Vols. (Kansas City: Beacon

\[45\] Quanstrom, A Century of Holiness Theology, 89.
grow over time.\textsuperscript{46} The second misconception was the failure to recognize the difference between infirmity and sin.\textsuperscript{47} Sin was intentional while infirmity was involuntary. On this point, the importance of the human will comes to the fore. Wiley returned to Wesley’s language on sin, “properly so called” and sin, “improperly so called.”\textsuperscript{48} This distinction protected the doctrine of entire sanctification from unrealistic expectations of human behavior. Wiley’s third distinction regarding misconceptions related to temptation. He emphasized a qualitative distinction between the temptation faced from evil and that wrought from inbred sin. For the entirely sanctified, the temptation met from inbred sin would be eradicated and the orientation of the mature Christian in sanctification would be “immediate recoil and rejection” of temptation from the enemy.\textsuperscript{49} Despite his attempt to maintain the historical holiness movement articulation of sanctification, his clarification about sin language opened the door for later holiness movement thinkers to narrow the category of sin while expanding the concept of infirmity.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 86.

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{49} Quanstrom, \textit{A Century of Holiness Theology}, 87.

\textsuperscript{50} Quanstrom’s sixth chapter (pp. 117-136) details the way these categories shifted in the years following Wiley’s publication of volume three of his \textit{Systematic Theology}.
The distinction between sin, properly so called and sin, improperly so called derives from Wesley in *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. Here, Wesley states that the doctrine of Christian perfection requires this distinction because, “I believe there is no such perfection in this life as excludes these involuntary transgressions, which I apprehend to be naturally consequent on the ignorance and mistakes inseparable from mortality.” He goes on to explain the importance of not too broadly calling infirmity sin because if any sin is allowed to be consistent with perfection, “few would confine the idea to those defects concerning which only the assertion could be true.” In other words, there need to be distinctions so that proper accountability can exist for right expectations of Christian perfection without at the same time allowing too many defects that should be considered intentional sin (properly so called) to be overlooked as infirmity. The distinctions drawn in a doctrine of sin were crucial to maintaining the doctrine of sanctification. In fact, Wesley had warned, “Let those who do call [infirmities sin], beware how they confound these defects with sins, properly so called.”

Wesley was deeply concerned with sanctification and his theology provides the language and framing for the American holiness movement’s doctrine of entire sanctification. And yet, the context in which Wesley articulates his doctrine of sin,


53 Ibid., 170. Emphasis in original.

54 Ibid. Emphasis in original.
salvation, and sanctification is much different than Wiley’s context of defending the specific doctrine of entire sanctification. Wesley believed that entire sanctification and a sinless life was possible as a gift of the Holy Spirit, but he more commonly discussed it as an event that one would have in a process (or “method”) oriented context. In that sense, Wesley’s use of the categories of sin and infirmity had formational importance within the Band structure. Kevin Watson describes the central formational role of regular band meetings. These mid-week meetings focused on communal formation that created growth in holiness. The band meetings were such a thoroughgoing component of Methodist formation that Watson argues that, “the decline of the band meeting [in the American context] must be seen as an important indication that Methodism was failing in its efforts to ‘spread scriptural holiness.’” When a Christian is regularly meeting with others and reflecting on the way they are working out their salvation—the natural progression is to reflect on sins, improperly so called and recognize the ways that a person might grow to avoid that too. Therefore, within Wesley’s formational context, the categories of sin and infirmity could more easily expand the scope of intentional holy living; however, the absence of Methodist societies and band meetings in the holiness movement enabled the distinctions to narrow the scope.

Where the distinction between sin and infirmity is drawn has a profound influence on the possibility of the experience of victory over sin, properly so called. And yet, issues and actions relegated to sin, improperly so called can evade the community

55 Watson, Pursuing Social Holiness, 184.

56 Ibid.
demands for holy living. Formation is effectively limited by the distinctions drawn regarding sin and infirmity.

Here again, the theological category of experience in the holiness movement influenced doctrine. As people’s experiences of holiness failed to measure up to the cultural and ecclesial optimism of the early-twentieth century, church members and theologians alike began to re-evaluate the way that sanctification was being articulated. In order to maintain a doctrine of entire sanctification and the possibility of being without sin, that which counted as sin was narrowed to willful acts against one’s conscience when that person was aware that the act was sinful.57

Wiley’s context altered the way the distinctions would influence social action. The American holiness movement paired the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification with revivalism to proclaim and expect an instantaneous experience of sanctification. Within that view of sanctification, the demand to be free of sin is still present, but the formation inherent in Wesley’s Methodist societies is lost.58 In Wesley’s context, the process of

57 Quanstron, A Century of Holiness Theology, 86. “A person who was entirely sanctified would never intentionally sin, and Christian perfection was the state of never sinning volitionally. Christian perfection did not mean however that one was exempt from sinning accidentally or involuntarily. That was considered sin ‘improperly so called.’”

58 I am not arguing to alter the holiness movement’s biblical interpretation that sanctification is accessible to Christians by Holy Spirit gifting and indwelling, but I do think that the difference between Wesley’s use of these categories for sin become dangerous in a context whereby people have religious experiences that advance beyond the habituation and formation in virtues and character necessary to live up to the ideals and expectations of sanctification. In that sense, the holiness movement’s distinctions between what individual Christians are accountable for with respect to maintaining a sinless state of sanctification are crucial and helpful ways of matching experience with
band meeting reflection encouraged a person to take issues of infirmity, recognize them, and move the action or problem into the category of sin once he or she had grown in holiness and matured enough to overcome the particular sin. There were expectations for continuing discipleship in the holiness movement too, but the point at which a person expected to triumph over sin leapt forward. The influence of populism also contributed to the effect of the narrowed category of sin, improperly so called.

Changing popular attitudes because of the persistent urban crisis and global war in the first half of the twentieth century narrowed the expectations of sanctification. These popular attitudes filtered into the holiness churches. Where once, the Church of the Nazarene and other holiness groups "believed the holiness message would 'Christianize Christianity,' unite denominations, transform American culture and eventually the world at large," now the same tide that led to the "theological realism" of Reinhold Niebuhr was pushing the holiness groups to take human failing more seriously. The holiness movement’s distinctive doctrine of sanctification, which had realistic expectations of religious practice. The shadow side, however, is that whole swaths of actions and sinful systems are necessarily categorized outside of the primary locus of theological description. I demonstrate in the fourth chapter that Leviticus offers an example whereby the priests defended their categorizations of sins while at the same time directing the religious rules and expectations in such a way that these worship rituals formed people who also addressed the societal problems that prophets were criticizing the priests for neglecting. My desire is that the holiness movement can similarly hold onto its commitment to entire sanctification but extend the scope of personal, economic, and political actions and issues that are claimed theologically. That which is framed and described as sin can then be addressed through the vocation of holiness.

59 Quanstrom, A Century of Holiness Theology, 93.
served as a de facto mission and purpose, was both under attack from external and internal forces. Externally, theological realists questioned the possibility of “perfection.” At the same time, many from within the holiness movement failed to experience the heady and optimistic power over sin that was to come instantaneously in sanctification as a second work of grace.

Though the Nazarenes recommitted themselves in 1948 to conserve and promulgate the doctrine of sanctification, “subsequent explications of the doctrine reveal the subtle influence of a ‘theological realism.’” The generation of Nazarene theologians that followed Wiley were much more humble regarding “exactly what it was that was eradicated by the grace of entire sanctification.” Writers began warning of exaggerating the deliverance that sanctification entailed. The trajectory begun by Wiley continued. A watershed move to further clarify sin language was Richard S. Taylor’s, *A Right Conception of Sin,* in which he “carefully distinguished between the sinful nature and the human nature, between willful transgressions of known laws and infirmities.” These are crucial distinctions for explicating the doctrine of sanctification, which does require

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60 Ibid., 94. Quanstrom notes that the 1948 address by the Church of the Nazarene general superintendent called the preachers to “major in scriptural holiness” in order to fulfill their unique calling to proclaim entire sanctification.

61 Ibid., 97.

62 Ibid., 98.


64 Quanstrom, *A Century of Holiness Theology,* 100.
reasonable definitions of what exactly falls within the scope of the deliverance
experienced after the infilling of the Holy Spirit. However, the absence of Wesley’s
“social” context altered the formation offered by the holiness movement and therefore
undermined the connection of conversion to social action.65

The importance of the theological category of experience contributed to the
narrowing of the scope and power of the doctrine of sanctification. Since the movement
is committed to proclaiming and pursuing entire sanctification, the possibility of
experiencing the sinless life after Spirit filling is a necessity. However, in order to make
the expectation of experience realistic, much of what could otherwise be approached
from a theological vocation of holiness was abandoned or cordoned off as secondary.
Once social evils were classified as infirmities, they were no longer within the scope and
power of sanctification. The resulting narrowing served to undermine the social witness
and political action of holiness groups. The irony was that the holiness retreat occurred
in response to theological realism, populism, and experience at the same time that other
Christians in America were being prodded towards social work because of the rising
influence of theological realism.

65 I described Wesley’s meaning of “social” holiness in chapter one. It is
important once again to remember that Wesley’s sense of social had to do with the
community formation of bands that reflected together in order to grow in holiness. See,
72. Thompson’s scope is Methodism, but the band meetings were not embraced by the
holiness movement either. The loss of band meeting formation accentuates the
narrowing of the scope for which holiness is perceived to matter in typically political,
economic, and social issues.
Relativizing social issues as infirmity or “sin improperly so called,” undermines the power of the doctrine of holiness with respect to complicated systems of brokenness, bondage, and poverty that undermine human flourishing. This relativized status of infirmity also impedes the important Christian critique of cultural formation that leads to “accidental” sins like racism, sexism, classism, or xenophobia. Looking back to the fruits of the early holiness movement, the formation to care about big issues like poverty, the tenement crisis, abolition, and women’s suffrage all came from persons who tackled issues and problems that were not directly part of personal experience and approached them theologically as part of their commitment to holiness.

Where the holiness movement once championed a comprehensive life of holiness, the new shifts in holiness theology undermined the depth and breadth of the implications of holiness. Consequently, the vocation of holiness is limited by the scope of that which is understood as sin. Areas of political and social life that should be addressed through a theological vocation of holiness risk falling outside the pursuit of holiness. However, something that is clearly identified as sin must be addressed in a context where holiness matters.

2.3. A Case Study in Sin Language:

The early teaching on racism by the Church of God (Anderson) demonstrates the way that a shift in language about a social issue can dull the prophetic edge of holiness. In his social history, *African Americans and the Church of God*, James Earl Massey
scrutinizes the shift within the movement regarding racial equality.\textsuperscript{66} After highlighting the various experiences of the early leader D. S. Warner (1842–1895), Massey suggests that Warner’s commitment to racial equality grew from his connection to John Winebrenner (1797–1860), whose tradition of “testifying against sin in every form and place,” likely led Warner to push against the color line.\textsuperscript{67} Winebrenner had an established history of speaking against slavery, refusing to uphold color line restrictions in his ministry, and serving as a vocal leader for the antislavery movement in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.\textsuperscript{68} Therefore, the birth of Warner’s and thus, the Church of God’s view of racial equality was founded upon an identification of inequality as \textit{sin} that required them to take a stand motivated by holiness considerations. The Church of God doctrine and commitment to Christian unity demanded all persons experienced salvation to be understood and treated as equals. Therefore racial inequality was sin as a failure of Christian unity. As a group committed to holiness and Christian unity, racial inequality was problematic from both doctrinal emphases.

Despite Warner’s early commitment to rooting out the sin of racial inequality, the movement’s practice of labeling racism as sin eroded. Warner did not offer a definitive statement or suggested program of how to implement racial equality in his lifetime. Instead, the evidence supports his commitment to and support for racial equality by


\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 12.

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 12-13.
practice instead of doctrinal declaration. There were reports from the field of his ministry being attacked for ignoring customs of segregated worship. The historian Charles E. Brown notes: “Friendliness to the colored people was part of the charge against Warner.” As the Church of God pioneers spread their understanding of the dual commitment to holiness and unity, racial division was not permissible.

However, there was a conceptual shift by the Church of God leaders who followed Warner. Enoch Byrum succeeded Warner as Editor-in-Chief of the Gospel Trumpet. The editor carried de facto authority over doctrinal matters of biblical interpretation for the movement. In 1897, Byrum issued a statement that dulled the edge of reform begun by Warner. Byrum recommended that in those places where the custom was to have segregated worship, the ministries would be wise to comply with local customs and expectations. In the centennial Church of God history, John W. V. Smith concludes, “the zeal which the pioneers had held concerning the ideal of racial unity began to wane after the turn of the century. The pressures of society finally became so great that the worthy goal which was pursued began to crumble.” In effect,

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71 Massey, African Americans, 17-18.

Byrum and the theological leadership after him lost the prophetic edge of clearly identifying racism expressly as sin.

Yet, as Massey unpacks the early history of the Church of God, he notes that the unity ideal strongly emphasized within the movement was attractive to African Americans who responded to the literature and preachers even after the crumbling that Smith notes in the first few decades of the 1900s. There is a significant shift that can be seen in Smith’s analysis of Byrum (and the second generation of leadership in the Church of God) and Massey’s identification of the message of Christian unity as central to the ability for the Church of God to incorporate African Americans in profoundly different levels of inclusion and participation in comparison with other holiness denominations. Though Warner did not make statements regarding a social platform, he inherited a formation and practice of naming and speaking against sin in all its forms—including racial inequality. This early description of the color-line as sin meant that racial equality became part and parcel of Christian unity for the Church of God. In effect, Warner cemented racial equality within the doctrine of unity. Therefore, even if racism as a whole was not clearly discussed in movement literature, racial inequality within the church was clearly identified as sin through the doctrine of unity.

Massey offers an important difference between the practice of racial unity in the Church of God and other holiness church groups. He states,

Although in the course of its history the Church of God reform movement has witnessed the same problems and stresses other church bodies have had to face

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with respect to race relations, the challenge of the biblical insistence upon unity has always been present in the group’s heritage and message as a prodding factor toward resisting racist concerns in the national environment. The unity ideal that is central to the church’s heritage and reason for being has never allowed lapses from this ideal to stand unchallenged.

Interestingly, among the six largest holiness-teaching denominations in the nation which have had prolonged contact with African Americans, the Church of God reform movement has been the most fruitful in terms of gaining and holding black members... The Church of the Nazarene put forth well-planned, organized efforts during the 1940s to promote holiness evangelism among African Americans, but those efforts yielded rather meager results. 74

The Church of God still deviated from the ideal practice by the pioneer generation that was so attractive to African Americans. However, even as the movement leadership shifted the way it addressed and classified racial inequality, there existed within the movement the connection to holiness through the doctrine of Christian unity. 75

The level of commitment to Christian unity is unique to the Church of God among the holiness movement. In light of the failure of social strategies by other holiness groups to successfully incorporate African Americans, a major difference was the ability within the Church of God to address racial problems within the scope of sin because of race being associated with holiness demand for Christian unity. 76 These

74 Ibid., 19.

75 For example, John W. V. Smith chose the title, The Quest for Holiness and Unity, in order to describe the two guiding doctrinal commitments of the Church of God movement when he wrote the movement’s centennial history.

76 Though it has not been shown and would go beyond the scope of this dissertation to fully investigate the question, I suspect that the limited embrace of the civil rights movement by the broader Church of God movement is related to the locus of its theology of race being an internal issue of Christian unity instead of a social sin framework. I have found no evidence in John W. V. Smith’s or Merle Strege’s movement histories to indicate that civil rights was an active concern for the Church of God.
differences offer a probable reason that the Church of God has maintained African American membership in drastically higher proportions than other holiness groups.

The doctrine of holiness is not a strategy. As a doctrine, there are implications for the life of a community committed to holiness, but it is not primarily an approach, plan, or platform. As a doctrine, the implications of holiness are much greater against that which is clearly identified as *sin* than infirmities that escape full Christian responsibility.

**2.4. Conclusions on the Loss of Sin:**

The implications of the holiness movement’s shift in how sin was understood and addressed also enabled a more private morality. The theological category of experience and influence of populism made the doctrine of sanctification susceptible to the cultural waves of optimism and realism. More is expected in times of optimism than realism. As the cultural wave of theological realism swept over the holiness movement, the vices to be avoided and the virtues to be expected both narrowed towards personal and private issues. Areas that fell into the category of faults instead of things that deserved blame grew and found further elaboration in the 1960s and 70s.77

These theologians did not embark on clarifications in order to undermine the social witness of the holiness movement. Their distinctions and clarifications were

77 Quanstrom points to writer Henry E. Brockett as a key thinker who drew this distinction. The distinction between fault and blame is crucial to the reigning doctrine of sanctification in the 1960s. What deserves blame, however, receives the full force of a doctrine of holiness. If systemic sinfulness is only a fault and cannot be envisioned as carrying blame, then the doctrine of sanctification has been privatized. See *A Century of Holiness Theology*, 99-100.
essential for the explication and defense of the doctrine of entire sanctification. My recognition that these shifts ended up undermining the social witness of the holiness movement should not be taken as a direct critique of these clarifications that were necessary to maintain the holiness movement in the face of misconceptions over inherited language like Christian perfections and entire sanctification. Rather, what I seek to demonstrate is the manner in which a movement with a rich history of social reform ended up turning its attention towards more narrowly personal vices and sins instead of maintaining the holistic approach to sin for those who encountered God’s sanctifying work. In other words, a very crucial and unintended consequence of the defense of entire sanctification was the loss of vast swaths of social issues because they no longer measured up to the definition of sin that had been established. The holiness movement had effectively ceded ground when it narrowed its theological definition of sin. That which is no longer sin is no longer front and center for people seeking holiness.

Voices inside the holiness movement recognized that the march towards clarification and diminished expectations for holiness churches continued to recede the movement’s social relevance and expectations. The holiness leaders of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries expected the conversion of the whole world to a thoroughgoing holiness. As such,

Their writings were filled with optimistic descriptions of what the eradication of the sinful nature would accomplish, both personally and in the world at large. As the century wore on, these expectations began to appear unrealistic and were strictly qualified by subsequent Holiness authors. The qualifications to the doctrine that were made in the ‘40s and ‘50s continued to be made so that by the sixth and seventh decades of the 20th century, the expectations of what entire
sanctification could accomplish, both personally and corporately, were a mere shadow of what had appeared in earlier declarations.\textsuperscript{78}

Eventually the holiness movement took a leap forward in order to make sense of this changed expectation and the rising reality of sinfulness throughout the world. When it did so, the driving impetus was described as a “credibility gap.”\textsuperscript{79} Too many people were asking questions about the newly qualified doctrine of sanctification. Even as the category of sin that could be overcome was narrowed, the power given to the category of experience drove future generations to struggle with the classical holiness movement articulation of sanctification as an instantaneous second work of grace. There was simply too much distance between the promises and experiences of sanctification within the Church of the Nazarene.\textsuperscript{80}

And yet, by the time Wynkoop’s radical revision gained influence, holiness theology had already moved far from the relationship to society that it had in the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{81} The grand movements for social, racial, and economic equality had

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Quanstrom, \textit{A Century of Holiness Theology}, 118.
\item Ibid., 137-169. In this chapter on the radical reformulation of holiness, Quanstrom discusses the rise of relational holiness in the work of Mildred Bangs Wynkoop.
\item Ibid., 142.
\item Wynkoop along with Ray Dunning offered an alternative conception of sanctification that gained widespread influence in the Church of the Nazarene. However, the old view remained and Quanstrom’s conclusion is that by the end of the twentieth century, the Church of the Nazarene offered two alternatives—“either a doctrine of entire sanctification that left persons, while not strictly sinful, still very much infirmed, or a doctrine that acknowledged that a gloriously transformed human nature was the result of a lifelong process that included an experience of entire sanctification” (180).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
marched on with little influence and participation from the holiness movement. The movement had salvaged the doctrine of sanctification, but had lost the cultural capital from the nineteenth century and spent the latter half of the twentieth century mending the credibility gap of personal experience and understanding of holiness without extending that holiness to its earlier cultural influence. Part of the reason that the holiness movement was no longer a major participant in the culture at large had to do with its own rejection of societal structures. The rejection was driven by a theological shift in eschatology.

3. The Rise of Premillennial Eschatology in the Holiness Movement

The holiness movement experienced a shift in its predominant eschatological framework in the early twentieth century. This shift changed the way that holiness movement churches viewed the social systems around them and led to prioritization of individual conversion over social reform. In its nineteenth-century form, the holiness movement was guided by postmillennial hope for the coming millennial kingdom of Christ that motivated revival and social reform. And yet, by 1931, postmillennialism no

There is no other comprehensive study of the doctrine in other holiness groups; however, the tone of Kevin W. Mannoia and Don Thorsen, eds. *The Holiness Manifesto* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008) (written in response to a gathering of many Wesleyan Holiness church groups in 2004), indicates that the other churches are sensing the same lack of integration between social holiness and personal holiness.
longer inspired the holiness movement. Wesleyan holiness theologians were not even trying to defend the earlier postmillennial eschatology that had inspired Finney, Palmer, and the nineteenth-century synthesis of personal conversion and social reform. This theological shift in eschatological expectation, carried with it an important logic regarding the present world and how faithful Christians should conceive of mission after conversion.

Wesleyan historian Harold Raser identifies hopeful anticipation for the millennial return of Christ as a powerful theological influence on the nineteenth-century holiness movement:

The work of individuals like Finney and Palmer, the numerous prayer and Bible study groups, the books and magazines, the special church meetings, all emphasizing holiness of heart and life through the sanctifying grace of God, bore a strong eschatological stamp. Members of the movement believed that God was graciously and powerfully at work in the world and was quickly bringing history to a triumphant close.

Despite the suffering and disillusionment of the American Civil War, in the nineteenth century holiness Christians interpreted the atrocities of the war as purifying events meant to aid the American nation in its divine purpose of bringing about God’s millennium to earth. The millennial expectation animated several of the various approaches to ministry, too.

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83 Ibid., 168.

84 Ibid.
As the National Camp Meeting Association gained a powerful leadership role in the holiness movement after the Civil War, its president John S. Inskip articulated his vision of ministry as an endeavor to bring about the millennium. His biographers state that Inskip “had come to believe that Christian perfection was not only ‘the spiritual standpoint of the Methodist Church’ but also ‘the most significant and powerful impulse leading to the speedy conversion of the world’ and hence to the millennium.”

However, just as the optimism regarding entire sanctification waned in the face of a credibility gap, so too did the postmillennial expectation that marked the late-nineteenth-century holiness movement.

Perduring social problems and experiences of suffering unseated the prevailing postmillennial anticipation. In turn, the realism of the current events called for a new way of reconciling God’s power and activity with lived experience. In response to these new experiences, holiness movement thinkers turned to dispensational premillennialism. They seized the opportunity to interpret their experiences within a dispensational framework as “many American Protestants in the latter decades of the nineteenth century were becoming uneasy over events.”

Dispensational premillennialism is generally traced to John Nelson Darby, nineteenth-century theologian from the Plymouth Brethren movement. The basic

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87 Ibid.
outline of dispensational premillennialism focuses on the identities and outcomes for two groups: Israel, the earthly people, and the church, a heavenly people. This form of premillennialism shifted from trying to interpret biblical prophecy historically to a futurist approach where “everything in the dispensationalist system seemed to rest on the conviction that God has two completely different plans operating in history,” one for each of these two respective groups.88

Popular evangelists Dwight L. Moody, W. J. Eerdman, and Billy Sunday adopted premillennial eschatology in the face of rising disillusionment with postmillennial expectations in the second half of the nineteenth century.89 While these evangelists were not explicitly part of the holiness movement, their broader influence created ripples throughout most conservative forms of Protestant Christianity. Moody was especially influential on many of the holiness movement since he professed a “second blessing” experience after an encounter with two Free Methodist women who encouraged him to seek the filling of the Holy Spirit.90 Though some continued to defend postmillennialism (and the Church of God maintained its amillennial understanding), the prominence of premillennial evangelists and the “close association of Wesleyan and deeper-life Calvinistic holiness adherents in holiness associations and conventions” resulted in


89 Ibid., 32-33.

premillennialism overcoming the postmillennial eschatology that had prevailed. The change in eschatology altered the holiness movement’s understanding of the purpose and mission of the church.

For many of those who were converted by these evangelists, dispensational premillennial eschatology “provided a way for many evangelicals to maintain their traditional millennialism under changing conditions.” Since it held a strong emphasis on God’s imminent interruption in the present age, Dieter adds that premillennialism also “meshed easily with the movement’s message of the central importance of the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit in cleansing the hearts of Christians and establishing them in perfect love in the crisis of entire sanctification.”

Furthermore, as an influential trend within evangelicalism, there was a natural correlative influence on the holiness movement. As Raser observes,

The Holiness Movement could not, of course, remain untouched by these developments. It was somewhat insulated from the ‘new premillennialism’ at first by the fact that many of the most ardent Holiness promoters were Methodist, and very few Methodists were among the early converts to dispensationalism… Even so, dispensationalism did eventually affect thinking in the Holiness

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91 Ibid., 253-4.

92 Weber, Living in the Shadow, 41.


94 Dieter also explicitly cites the influence of A. B. Simpson and the Christian & Missionary Alliance church and H. C. Morrison at Asbury College and Seminary as well as stating that the Wesleyan Methodists became predominantly premillennial and “Premillennialism eventually became the dominant eschatological position of most holiness adherents” (254). Dieter also notes that the Church of God adopted an amillennial position and others from within the holiness movement clung to postmillennial eschatological approach to mission.
Movement about last things... By 1930 or so, premillennial eschatology informed by dispensationalism had actually replaced postmillennialism in the thinking of most Christians in Holiness churches.\textsuperscript{95}

As dispensational thinking influenced the holiness movement, its logic would also inform the holiness churches’ pursuit of conversion, personal holiness, missions, and social action.

3.1. Invigorated Personal Holiness with a Changing View of Society:

Premillennial eschatology functioned as a theological resource that was effective in aiding conversions and accountability for those who were striving for holiness in their lives. Timothy Weber concludes, “In the last analysis, premillennialism must be seen as an authentic part of the conservative evangelical movement at the end of the nineteenth century” and was appealing for those “who recognized in premillennialism a way to remain both biblical and evangelical under difficult circumstances.”\textsuperscript{96} Therefore, as for many other conservative evangelical Christians, premillennialism helped the holiness movement reconcile its commitments as a biblically focused Christian movement with the experiences and circumstances of the first third of the twentieth century.

On the one hand, premillennial eschatology invigorated evangelism and personal holiness. Timothy Weber notes that perhaps the most basic effect of premillennialism was a renewed focus and urgency for evangelism, for “if Christ might


\textsuperscript{96} Weber, \textit{Living in the Shadow}, 42.
come for his church at any moment, then there was simply no time to lose.” The influence of Christ’s imminent return and the prospect of the rapture were also effective in keeping the already converted “on the straight and narrow,” a path that generally consisted of personal habits of “worldly resistance” that included taboos of not breaking the Sabbath, attending the dance or theater, using alcohol or tobacco or gambling. The purpose of this straight and narrow path was not transformation of these social issues, but rather personal preservation until the time of reckoning was at hand. Furthermore, the prospect that God might return and instantly interrupt a Christian amidst some worldly practice led premillennialists to claim that the imminent return of Christ was the best inspiration for personal holiness of life. As a theological motivator, it would seem that the shift towards premillennialism should not be problematic for the forms of conversion and social action that had been present in the nineteenth century.

On the other hand, the benefits in terms of motivation towards evangelism and holiness were also undermined by the concurrent logic of the dispensational aspect of this particular understanding of premillennialism. There were theological positions inherent to the premillennialism of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries that undermined social and political involvement. The imminence of Christ was helpful in

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97 Ibid., 52.

98 Ibid., 56-57.

99 Ibid., 57.

100 To be fair, people who hold premillennial eschatological positions may escape some of these views of society and God’s plan and expectations. And yet, what I will
moving people into serious discipleship in personal matters, but the theological understanding of the world as fallen and beyond redemption led many of those who sought personal holiness and work towards evangelizing new believers to ignore or even at times celebrate social ruin and problems. Consider again the “straight and narrow” path of “worldly resistance.” Instead of this resistance being articulated as striving to transform economic systems that denied a Sabbatarian understanding of work and creation, the emphasis in the premillennial view was for believers to not have Christ return on the Sabbath and find them breaking the commandment.

Instead of seeing the world as fallen and in need of Christian improvement, “premillennialists viewed the world as a sinking vessel whose doomed passengers could be saved only by coming one at a time into the lifeboats of personal conversion. Since the course of the world was downward, only souls, not societies, could be saved from

address in this section is the way in which Weber, Raser, and others have chronicled the form of premillennialism that did shape and affect the social attitudes and practices of conservative Christians, including the holiness movement in the century following the rise of Darby’s interpretation of dispensational premillennialism in 1875. A helpful reminder regarding the blame that is often placed on premillennialism can be found in Tony Richie, “Can Anything Good Come Out of Premillennialism? A Response to Robert O. Smith,” *Dialog: A Journal Of Theology* 48, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 292-300. E.g., “Two improper assumptions I would assiduously avoid are, one, that premillennialism necessarily makes for bad politics, and, two, that the difference between a ‘good’ premillenialist and a ‘bad’ premillennialist is that a good one knows to stay out of social activism or political involvement. Both are quite incorrect. Rather, good premillennialism makes for good politics just as bad premillennialism makes for bad politics. What distinguishes them is a sane approach to social and political arenas supported and directed by a sound theology of the eschaton and of the kingdom of God” (296).
certain destruction.”¹⁰¹ This fatalistic view of Christian mission to society was further coupled with an understanding of God’s present activity that was exclusively understood to seek conversion and redemption of “souls” from among the lost people with “absolutely no intention of saving the world before the second coming of Christ.”¹⁰² Furthermore, if God was not intent to save the physical world now, some premillennialists were opposed to any involvement whatsoever because if God had given this dispensation over to evil, there is no reason for Christians to try and meddle with God’s plan.¹⁰³

Churches and Christians logically prioritized personal evangelism and social reform that had an individual focus within their outlook that the world was doomed to destruction. The most important aspect of social work within this dispensational mindset was to pursue reforms that would free people to receive salvation.¹⁰⁴ Social issues that could be tied to vices that directly affected individual’s salvation (e.g., temperance)¹⁰⁵ were pursued in the early twentieth century while opportunities to


¹⁰² Weber, Living in the Shadow, 70.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 92.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 100-101.

¹⁰⁵ Temperance as a cause was a response to terrible social ills that resulted from high levels of alcohol consumption that peaked in the mid 1800s. However, holiness materials often describe alcohol as a barrier to personal conversion in ways that suffrage and civil rights were not. I will address the legacy of alcohol and the holiness movement
continue social reform that was seen as important for enabling participation in an improved society was abandoned (e.g., suffrage movements and civil rights). The holiness movement largely abandoned the social agenda of nineteenth-century holiness and evangelical Christians who were involved in women’s suffrage, abolition, and anti-graft movements.

The premillennial pessimism about the current age also led some of its adherents to view the demise of society as a positive sign that Jesus’s second coming was near. When coupled with the tendency to avoid social reform work and not interfere with God’s plan for this dispensation, premillennial eschatology wreaked havoc on the social legacy of evangelicals and the holiness movement. The impetus to work for societal improvement was undercut by the view that the current dispensation had been given over to the devil. In this view, social reform was perceived as an evil but clever tool to in particular in the next chapter. However, from as early as the nineteenth century, the Methodist General Conference from which most holiness groups trace their legacies, understood abuse of alcohol was understood as a threat to salvation. The holiness movement was heavily influenced by the logic of alcohol and the truth of the gospel that is described in: Jennifer Woodruff Tait, *The Poisoned Chalice: Eucharistic Grape Juice and Common Sense Realism in Victorian Methodism* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 2011), 88-107. Interestingly, the rhetoric of eliminating barriers to conversion appears again with respect to the moral question of war participation in the holiness movement. During the Vietnam War, a series of articles were published by the Church of God publishing house that articulate the cause of defeating communism and its exclusion of missionary activities as a reason to support the war in Vietnam. See, Robert Hartley, “Viet Nam: My View,” *Vital Christianity*, Vol. 86 No. 2, Jan. 16, 1966, 4-6; and W. A. Donaldson, “Let’s Talk It Over,” in *Vital Christianity*, Vol. 87 No. 23, Nov. 5, 1967, 11. See also, Merle D. Strege, “An Uncertain Voice for Peace: The Church of God (Anderson) and Pacifism.” in *Proclaim Peace* ed. Theron F. Schlabach and Richard T. Hughes (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 115-127. I have also addressed this issue in more detail in “When the Empire Calls: A Peace Church [?] and War,” unpublished paper presented to the Wesleyan Theological Society, Southern Methodist University: March 2011.
divert energy and resources from what actually mattered. Weber describes the premillennial view of those who tried to build the kingdom of God on earth as “wasting their time, diverting effort from the only activity open to God’s people in this age—evangelism.” Though not all premillennialists would adopt extreme logical positions regarding the benefits of societal demise, there were those who argued on even personal vice issues that, “despite the fact that intemperance was an unmitigated evil, it should not be opposed because it was one of the predicted signs of the times… Since drunkenness was a sign of Christ’s near approach (Matt. 24:37-39), reformers were preventing Christ’s return.” This line of argument illustrates the logic of premillennialism that was most damaging to social efforts.

Comparing the logic of dispensational premillennial to amillennialism demonstrates the way that expectations of Christ’s return were less damaging to social involvement than was the view that the world had been abandoned as a target of redemption. Expecting Christ to return at any moment logically caused the calculus of limited human resources to swing towards urgent evangelism, but amillennial eschatological positions maintained the expectation of Christ’s return without the correlative interpretation of current events where the world’s demise can be understood as an evil means to a good end. In addition to the general demise into chaos that dispensational premillennialism was able to explain as positive, there was a further implication that social systems affecting human flourishing were now cast as

106 Weber, Living in the Shadow, 93.

107 Ibid., 96.
unredeemable components of a forlorn realm of worldly organization. Those holiness premillennialists who did offer social welfare, organized their work so that it “dealt with individual needs, could be related directly to evangelism, and did not require any long-term commitment to social reconstruction.”\textsuperscript{108} At the same time that the Social Gospel and other socially involved Christian movements were recognizing the power of social and economic systems to ensnare people in sin, the influence of the dispensational premillennialism was undermining the holiness movement’s delicate balance of personal conversion and social action.

Not all premillennialists took these extreme positions, and Weber is clear to point out that moderate forms of premillennialism did engage some of the pressing social problems of their times; however, Weber also notes that the premillennialists were viewed as treating symptoms instead of problems and “dealing with individual problems and sins,” for which they “said they were doing the best they could, given the nature of the dispensation in which they lived.”\textsuperscript{109} Once the influence of dispensational thinking had taken root, holiness movement social reform could not sustain the kinds of influence that had been possible in the nineteenth century. Even Weber, who tries to quell the notion that all premillennialists were extremists who abdicated social reform, acknowledges that,

\begin{quote}
Though not all premillennialists have accepted the extreme position on the futility of reform activities, one must finally conclude that in many cases premillennialism broke the spirit of social concern that had played such a
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 101.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 99.
prominent role in historic evangelicalism. Its hopeless view of the present order left little room for God or for themselves to work in it.\footnote{110}

Looking forward to the 1960s, it seems that the rising hopelessness for the present age and the dismissal of the possibility for social system redemption was one of the reasons that the same group that was so vocal in championing abolition was disengaged from the civil rights movement.

The premillennialism that dominated the holiness movement subsumed social action beneath “saving souls” — the proper goal for Christians and priority of God’s action. The conception of salvation that was dominant in this particular premillennialism was so focused on one’s status in eternity or at the imminent time of rapture that it severed the synthesis of conversion and new creation that earlier holiness soteriology had held together. Thus, social reform and missionary work became means to evangelistic ends instead of vocational callings with their own respective and inherent teloi. No longer were social equity or transformation of society appropriate purposes for Christian efforts.

The dispensational logic that altered domestic social reform attitudes also gained traction in the form and approach of foreign mission work. Many of the mission groups understood their work as part and parcel of creating the conditions into which Christ would come again. For these groups, the church had to finish its work of spreading the gospel to all people and language groups. This led some missionaries to seek speed and efficiency of dissemination over-against pursuing actual conversions and ongoing

\footnote{110 Ibid., 234.}
discipleship programs. Among the tools used to spread the gospel to new people groups were the “faith missions” that developed independent from formal ecclesiastical bodies and were “often geared more to evangelism than church planting.”\textsuperscript{111} The China Inland Mission was perhaps the most explicit example of this approach.\textsuperscript{112} Their leader expressly stated that the aims of the group were to move on to the next place quickly, trusting someone else to deal with the daily grind of discipleship, even to the point of prioritizing speed over converting the largest number of people.\textsuperscript{113} In this sense, the dispensational purposes changed the goal from conversion to dissemination—a completely different approach and purpose for foreign missions. These “faith missions” took the concept of traveling evangelism and altered concepts of discipleship and ecclesiology by ignoring the long-term discipleship necessary for any semblance of healthy congregations or social action. In the perceived dispensation, there was not time to attempt to better society.

3.2. Missions Contrast—Amillennial Missions Committed to Local Flourishing:

Eschatology has a profound influence on the way Christians approach mission work and the task of spreading the gospel. While eschatology was not the only theological influence on mission work that sought evangelistic concern over rooted

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 74.


\textsuperscript{113} Ibid.
social reform, an amillennial holiness example can highlight some of the difference in approach to missions. The Church of God is unique in its dismissal of the rising premillennialism that grew in other holiness movement churches. Church of God mission work in India that was contemporary to the China Inland Mission demonstrates an approach that was much more rooted in communities. I turn to this case study primarily to demonstrate the contrast between a mission model that functioned more similarly to the nineteenth-century holiness synthesis and the kind of mission work that results from the logic of premillennial dispensationalism.

In fact, within the Church of God, a reversal from scattered “flying ministry” was led by the movement’s strongest voice regarding eschatology. During his period of leadership, H. M. Riggle was largely considered the “expert” on the proper understanding of the kingdom of God within the Church of God Reformation Movement.114 He wrote on the kingdom as an amillenial kingdom that is present in those who experienced the filling of the Holy Spirit in sanctification.115 In response to the

114 Strege, I Saw the Church, 165. Strege states, “key members of the first generations of the Church of God were known for their expertise on certain of the movement’s distinctive doctrines... [among these was] a distinctive perspective on the doctrine of the kingdom of God, and the person who wrote and spoke extensively on that topic was H. M. Riggle” (165).

115 H. M. Riggle, The Kingdom of God (Gospel Trumpet Publishing Co., Moundsville, West Virginia: 1899). The preface states that this book addresses the fallacy of a thousand year literal reign of Christ. Riggle introduces the kingdom about which he is writing when he states, “possessing the kingdom, and enjoying this glorious reign [of Christ] is not located in some future age” (18). He adds, “the truly saved now possess that for which blind formalists are looking in the future” (20). And he further explains that the command to seek the kingdom and its righteousness means believers must
inefficiency of informal traveling evangelists, Riggle proposed the formation of the first ecclesial committee of the Church of God movement in 1909. Riggle proposed the formation of what came to be called the Missionary Committee that would oversee the fund-raising and commissioning of foreign missionaries so that their work was not redundant or financially parasitic on each other. Riggle, was an early advocate of flying ministry bands that spread the message of holiness far and wide through revivals and evangelistic opportunities. However, he “had come to regret the era of the flying ministry for its inefficiency and repetitiveness.”

At first glance, Riggle’s concern appears consonant with the logic of the faith mission approach to achieving the broadest presentation of the gospel. However, his real concern was having outreach-preaching take root. Riggle and other leaders realized that “ministerial labors were wasted when an evangelist started up a meeting of saints only to leave for a new appointment while the little band dwindled waiting for the next traveling preacher to hit town.” Another significant element of the shift in Riggle’s position and that of the movement was the positive experience of ministerial formation and training that happened within the missionary home model of urban ministry.

The primary concern was sustaining the conversions that were obtained through evangelist efforts. Instead of worrying about dissemination, Riggle was willing to minister in fewer places, with the aim of establishing healthier congregations or “bands” present themselves “a living sacrifice” after which “the Holy Ghost with the blood of Christ destroys the body of sin” and Christ is “fully enthroned within” (23).

116 Strege, I Saw the Church, 84.

117 Ibid.
of saints. The balance of conversion and social action is possible when rooted discipleship is valued as part of the mission.

The missionary home model in the Church of God grew from the experience of the Gospel Trumpet Company family that lived in a commune-style arrangement in which work, evangelism, business, and spiritual formation were all knitted together within the “family” home. The members of the family did not receive wages and addressed their work and giftedness towards the full spectrum of necessary tasks (both spiritual and menial). During an evangelistic tour in the western states in 1892, D. S. Warner observed unique needs in large cities and turned to the missionary home to answer those challenges. The first missionary home was started in San Diego and before the end of the missionary home era in the Church of God, more than fifty homes were operating across the country.\textsuperscript{118} John W. V. Smith describes these homes and their work,

\begin{quote}
The missionary home era in the Church of God covered a span of approximately three decades, beginning in the 1890s and continuing into the 1920s. Although each home had its own characteristics they developed generally as large multi-purpose residences whose communal occupants engaged in rescue mission work, colportage activity, community service, evangelistic work, and hospitality functions for visiting ministers and missionaries.\textsuperscript{119}
\end{quote}

The home in New York City served as a launching point for foreign missionaries and seems to have had an influence on the missionaries who stayed there in preparation for their assignments.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[118] Strege, \textit{I Saw the Church}, 80.
\item[119] John W. V. Smith, \textit{Quest for Holiness and Unity}, 231.
\end{footnotes}
Riggle and other leaders in the early 1900s received considerable practical experience in these missionary homes. It was here that many of them learned the trade of managing an organization as well as observing the difference in how work that was rooted in urban or small town environments was different than the flying ministry program that had dominated evangelistic approach in the first two decades of the movement’s history. Riggle and the leaders who instituted the Missionary Committee seem to have recognized the benefits of more rooted work for the purpose of spreading, teaching, and training people about following Christ whose kingdom was present in the lives of those who were fully committed to holiness.

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, the shift from flying messengers to missionary homes and the particular approach to mission work in India presents a marked contrast between the amillennial Church of God and the premillennial “faith missions.” The Church of God in India has been marked by the strength of its indigenous leadership as well as the holistic approach of ministry taken by these pioneering leaders, especially John A. D. Khan and James Nichols-Roy. The missionary home influence on Riggle and those who initiated the Missionary Committee was also likely influential on Khan and Nichols-Roy.

The first American to visit India on behalf of the Church of God was Gorham Tufts. He was sent with the India relief fund in 1897, which was collected in response to the famine that was happening in India. Tufts himself had started and led the Open Door Mission in Chicago, in which he reports, “from January 1 to March 10, 1896, we
have kept and fed 10,172 poor men and preached the gospel to them.”\textsuperscript{120} George Tasker (who worked in Chicago with Tufts and later served as the assistant superintendent of the New York City missionary home) was perhaps the most significant foreign influence on the indigenous Indian work. He and Khan became very close friends and Tasker’s approach to ministry was markedly non-colonial. He worked with, instead of over, the Indian church leadership—an approach that eventually became part of a conflict with the Missionary Board. In Tasker’s response to a reproof from the Missionary Board, he articulated an understanding of the particular context in India that required him to adjust the American approach to other Christian groups in order to properly assist “God’s cause” in India.\textsuperscript{121}

The approach taken by Kahn, Nichols-Roy, and Tasker was controversial in its own time and ultimately led Tasker to break formal ties\textsuperscript{122} with the Church of God leadership in the United States in 1924. Kahn died shortly after the break between Tasker and the Church of God missionary board and Nichols-Roy ended up working independently in the Meghalaya region before finally reconciling with the Missionary Board on a visit to the United States during the Second World War.

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 232.

\textsuperscript{121} Strege, \textit{I Saw the Church}, 186.

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 187. Tasker was dismissed by the Church of God Missionary Board on June 11, 1924. One of the major contributing factors of his dismissal was the way that Tasker allowed for indigenous control instead of pursuing a colonial mindset of administration. He also clashed with the church leadership in America over how he should relate to other Christian groups in India.
The mission work in India had the marks of the holistic approach to ministry outreach that harkens back to the synthesis of conversion and social action from the Church of God mission homes. Khan, Nichols-Roy, and Tasker approached the work similarly to the first generation of the holiness movement groups as described by Timothy Smith in *Revivalism and Social Reform*. In an era when much of the holiness and evangelical mission work was being approached from a colonial mindset with an almost exclusive emphasis on conversion or dissemination, the Church of God relied on indigenous leaders who were concerned with social transformation. Khan founded an orphanage in Cuttack, India, which went into brothels through cooperation with a government inspection program and rescued young girls.\(^\text{123}\) Nichols-Roy saw the plight of Native Americans in the United States when he visited in 1916 and returned home to add a business and political component to his ministry in order to both financially support his and other church members’ ministry and protect the people of his region from economic and social exploitation.\(^\text{124}\) Indian leadership of the Church of God realized that people who converted to Christianity faced significant family and societal challenges so they put considerable energy into providing housing, job training, and

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\(^{124}\) Ibid., 109-117. This was not an aside to his ministry, but was approached as a particular avenue to pursue the calling that he and all Christians had to see their entire lives as part of their discipleship. Later in this chapter, I will briefly consider Nichols-Roy as a case-study for theological imagination that pursues the vocation of holiness politically while also avoiding a nation-state mindset and eschewing the modern public/private split.
Unfortunately, their approach came under scrutiny from the American leadership who thought their priorities needed to be different (less cooperative with other Christians and different forms of organization). However, the priorities that were being suggested were not antagonistic to local and social transformation, but rather stemmed from ecclesiological concerns.

Financial, doctrinal, and organizational issues eventually led to a break between the indigenous Indian church and American leadership. Yet, Nichols-Roy maintained a social transformation approach even as those in the United States shifted their emphasis to the priority of evangelism over social reform. The American leadership tension with the Indian ministry coincided with a domestic shift away from the mission home model. As the American church shifted away from its commitment to rooted social transformation, the church in India serves as a counter-image of holiness that was turning towards individuals in the American context. Many factors were involved, but in the same decades that Nichols-Roy was broadening his approach to ministry in Meghalaya, stateside leadership was turning away from the missionary home model. Holiness guided a form of social engagement in India that was much different than the approach to social reform in the United States. Nichols-Roy and other indigenous leaders in India serve as an example of how the doctrine of holiness led to social reform.

125 Ibid., 49-56.


in a context without the influence of premillennialism or the American context that was rapidly changing in the first half of the twentieth century.

The American holiness groups experienced a shift in the way they approached social action in the first third of the twentieth century. The American context exerted pressure on the holiness movement that was different from the context in India. The broad influence of evangelical Protestant Christianity was waning as the cultural phenomenon of the Second Great Awakening gave way to what Robert Fogel has described as a Third Great Awakening.128

4. The Cultural Shift from Second to Third Great Awakenings:

A third factor influenced the holiness movement’s demise of social action. The movement largely rejected an American religious shift towards modernism, liberalism, and the Social Gospel in the early-twentieth century. The theological shifts regarding sin previously addressed were certainly influenced by broader societal and cultural trends of lost optimism; however, that theological response was an internal conversation and debate that cannot adequately account for the retreat from cultural discussions and social action with broader political engagement. In other words, why was the holiness

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128 William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reforms* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978) addressed the periodization of Four Great Awakenings prior to Fogel’s, *The Fourth Great Awakening*. Fogel acknowledges his indebtedness to McLoughlin, but also offers a more nuanced evaluation of the dynamic interaction of religious and political changes that make up Awakenings (Fogel, 11-12). Because I focus on the interaction of religious and political developments, I follow Fogel’s periodization of the awakening periods in this chapter.
movement less influential on the broader society in the twentieth century than the
nineteenth? One explanation is that the holiness movement retreated from public policy
decisions or was pushed out because of its particular commitments. The most powerful
American expressions of social action in the first half of the twentieth century were the
Social Gospel and the New Deal. Both of these were influenced by the Third Great
Awakening. As a movement with theological roots in the Second Great Awakening, the
holiness churches largely rejected many theological presuppositions of the Third Great
Awakening. In doing so, the holiness movement did not participate in the broad public
discussion about social problems in the twentieth century.

Robert Fogel presents a framework that explains the dramatic loss of political
capital and influence that the holiness movement experienced by the middle of the
twentieth century. He recognizes an overlay of similar characteristics shared by four
religious awakenings or revivals across American history. Each of these awakenings
responds to a new technical revolution that precipitates a cultural crisis that rises from
the influence of that particular new technology on the structure of the economy and
American society.\footnote{Fogel, The Fourth Great Awakening, 15-16.} For example, surplus corn in the Ohio River Valley combined with
increased distilling efficiencies (technological change). The surplus drove down the price
of spirituous liquors and provided inexpensive alcohol that subsequently creates new
problems for American society. While Fogel does not specifically address the relation of
the holiness movement to these various awakenings, it is clear from those people and
groups that are considered (e.g., Charles Finney and Wesleyan Methodists) that the holiness movement has its roots within the Second Great Awakening.\footnote{Ibid., 92-93.} His analysis of the rise and fall of the Second Great Awakening and its conflicts with the Third Great Awakening suggests that the loss of political influence by the holiness movement can be partially attributed to their rejection of the next wave of religious social revival—the Social Gospel.

Fogel divides the Second Great Awakening into three phases. The revival phase (1800–1840) saw camp meetings and the rise of Methodist theological influence that emphasized personal and social perfection in order to "make America a fit place for the Second Coming of Christ."\footnote{Ibid., 21.} During the revival phase, persuasion was applied to issues of temperance, abolition, and nativism. The second phase (1840–1870) was political and the movement turned to state and local governments. Moving beyond the persuasion of the revival period, the political phase pushed for legislation regarding temperance, removing graft from local governments, women’s suffrage, and child labor and

\footnote{Ibid., 92-93. Fogel’s analysis as an economist does not offer the level of theological nuance to engage the differences and ways that groups like the Wesleyans might differentiate their relation to the trends that he identifies. And yet, his analysis illuminates the way that the broader Christian power and influence in America was shifting, thus placing the withdrawal by holiness groups from social action into contrast. For more specific treatments of the holiness movement and its Wesleyan difference from fundamentalists and evangelicals as it relates to rising theological trends of modernism and the shift in American religious influence over politics and power, see Kenneth J. Collins, \textit{Power, Politics and the Fragmentation of Evangelicalism}, 45-48.}

\footnote{Ibid., 21.}
compulsory education. The third phase of this and each of the great awakenings was the ethical confrontation with the next revival and a decline in influence. From 1870 to the 1920s and the New Deal, the Second Great Awakening still controlled the political imagination of the majority of governmental legislation, but the broader cultural trends were turning already towards the Third Great Awakening that was precipitated by the perduring urban crisis.

The institutional organization of the holiness movement occurred at the same time as the cultural trends that helped birth it were on the decline. These ecclesial organizations served to preserve the theological heritage of the Second Great Awakening within the American holiness movement, even as the dominant culture turned towards different theological positions (modernism/liberalism) and the social gospel movement. Fogel sees this shift, or “victory of the modernists and Social Gospelers,” as laying “the basis for the welfare state, providing both the ideological foundation and the political drive for the labor reforms of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, for the civil rights reforms of the 1950s and 1960s, and for the new feminist programs of the late 1960s and early 1970s.” In other words, the social challenges in America from

132 Ibid.
133 This insight by Fogel will be illustrated later as I consider the way that the Anti-Saloon League capitalized on political constructions that were not fully representative of the broader American society in the successful campaign for a prohibition amendment.
135 Ibid., 25.
the majority of the twentieth century were addressed from a social gospel perspective at the same time that the holiness movement was now both dislocated to the margins of societal influence (both through its rejection of the Third Great Awakening and the influence of dispensational premillennialism) and caught in internal debates over how to best defend and define its stances on holiness and entire sanctification.

Though the holiness movement rejected many of the modernist theological positions of the Social Gospel (especially where it waivered on approaches to biblical interpretation and the importance of individual responsibility for sin), there were issues like temperance and women’s suffrage around which the holiness movement churches and the social gospelers could work together—even if they addressed those issues for different reasons. Fogel sees the issues of expansion of education, protection of working children and women, female suffrage, and alcohol prohibition as remnant Second Great Awakening issues that were “embraced by those steeped in modernism and the Social Gospel.”¹³⁶ Once these issues were tackled, the Social Gospel moved on to address big business, fight for unions, and alter fiscal policy to address income inequality,¹³⁷ yet the holiness movement would no longer play a leading or even auxiliary role in these public discourses and activism. At this point, Fogel offers cogent analysis of the actual animating spirit behind the second and third awakening concerns when he concludes,

The reforms of the Second Great Awakening stemmed from the assumption that egalitarianism would be promoted by increasing equality of opportunity. The application of that principle gave rise to some of the most radical demands in

¹³⁶ Ibid., 134.

¹³⁷ Ibid.
American history, including equal rights for indigenous Americans, women’s rights, prohibition, and the most radical of all demands, the abolition of slavery.\textsuperscript{138}

For the Second Great Awakening, the social reforms that were sought could be understood within the theological commitment to personal responsibility and personal rights. Each individual deserved access to the same opportunities. The theme of equal opportunity fit well with the holiness movement in both the movement’s view of access to grace and the way holiness groups understood the possibilities for all those who did embrace whole-hearted Christian lives.

First, the born-again experience was proclaimed as available for any and all who came to the revivals. Fogel notes that the rise of the Second Great Awakening coincided with the Methodist theological influence “that held that anyone was capable of achieving saving grace through a determined inner and outer struggle against sin.”\textsuperscript{139}

While Nathan O. Hatch has shown that this democratic and egalitarian access is not unique to the holiness movement,\textsuperscript{140} there are ways in which the holiness movement was overtly egalitarian in removing distinctions among those who sought, experienced, and accepted sanctification. Some traditions like the Church of God (Anderson) emphasized the equality with which the Holy Spirit would guide and gift the church, such that women and African Americans were granted positions of power and authority that were

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., 135.

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 21.

\textsuperscript{140} The Democratization of American Christianity identifies democratic tendencies in the Christian movement, the Methodists, the Baptists, the black churches, and the Mormons. See chapter four, 67-124.
strikingly more advanced than the broader American society. The radical position of equality was founded on the Wesleyan theological commitment to prevenient grace that made sense of primary divine agency in salvation while also affirming that every person can therefore respond to God’s grace. Therefore the holiness revivals articulated the mass message that all could be changed when they sought God’s holiness and transformation; those who did accept God’s grace expected and were assured a positive trajectory of improving life circumstances.

Second, within the theological vision of the holiness movement, those who accepted God’s justifying grace were encouraged to push on to receive sanctifying grace. In the state of sanctification, one’s whole life was expected to be oriented towards the values, virtues, and purposes that mattered to God. Furthermore, the strong theology of the Holy Spirit and the conception of spirit-filling that dominated holiness movement

141 For example, as long as the Church of God has recognized clergy ordination, women and men have had equal access. John W. V. Smith, The Quest for Holiness and Unity, mentions Mary Cole as a preacher who “pioneered the way to an open door for ministry by many women in the movement” in the section describing the 1880s (the Church of God as a movement marks its beginning to 1881) (71). Furthermore, Smith details the egalitarian theology of the “unity of all believers” as making “a very strong interracial position inherent to the message itself.” Within Smith’s chapter on early ministry among African Americans, he points to a book written by Church of God theologian William G. Schell that “supported the full equality of blacks to whites in the sight of God” in response to another book that sought to demonstrate disturbing inequality. Smith then turns to a key leader in South Carolina and Georgia—Jane Williams who worked hand in hand with several white leaders in establishing churches in the South (162-163).

142 See Randy Maddox, Responsible Grace (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994) for the nuance of the Wesleyan theological understanding of the relation of prevenient grace to the responsibility on each person to accept or deny that grace which is offered by God for salvation.
theology (as opposed to the later Pentecostal understanding of spirit-filling) promised believers that the Spirit’s presence in their lives would provide the gifting, abilities, and power that they needed to fulfill the vocations God had for them. This strong view of Spirit-gifting contributed to the radical gender equality\(^{143}\) and racial equality within holiness groups in their earliest generations and has kept a pathway to ordination open to this day for those who have been called to ministry but do not have formal theological education.\(^{144}\)

Because of the strong role for the Holy Spirit in gifting and calling, equity of opportunity logically addresses the problems of the world. Once people accept God’s grace and sanctification, the holiness movement believed that the Spirit’s power in their lives would address problems like poverty. Fogel states that those who accepted God’s grace were assured that “they would be healthy and prosperous because God rewarded

\(^{145}\)One example can be seen in the language used by the Church of the Nazarene in their statement on “Theology of Women in Ministry” which states, the Church of the Nazarene supports the right of women to use their God-given spiritual gifts within the church and affirms the historic right of women to be elected and appointed to places of leadership within the Church of the Nazarene” (2013-2017 Manual, Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 186)

\(^{144}\)For example, the ordination process in the Church of God does not require any level of formal education. Each regional authority is encouraged to use the credential manual and certain books are expected to be read, but former seminary theology professor Gilbert Stafford articulates a clear informal educational trajectory that should be viewed as appropriate for the theological emphasis of Spirit-gifting. See Gilbert W. Stafford, \textit{Signals at the Crossroads} (Anderson, Ind.: Warner Press, 2011) 163-178. Also, in the Church of the Nazarene Manual, which has a stronger emphasis on formal courses of study, it still explicitly issues a claim for flexibility to see that all who are called by the spirit can minister, “When [seminary training is] not possible, the Church will utilize as much flexibility in delivery systems as feasible to prepare every person called by God to ministry in the Church” (201).
This view led to tension with the social program of the Third Great Awakening, since the shadow side of expecting divine financial reward for virtue is the corollary that poverty is a sign or result of sin. In fact, poverty was increasingly viewed as a sign of sin after the Civil War.\textsuperscript{146}

Thus the Second Great Awakening extended the revival to more people, both geographically (through the success of urban and frontier revivalism) and theologically (given the Arminian/Methodist influence that undermined the limits of predestination). At the same time, the social reform movements that grew out of the Second Great Awakening carried in their practices, the emphasis that all persons they served were also offered the same egalitarian accountability and opportunity. Within the vision of the holiness movement and its strong expectation for spirit-filling, equitable opportunity was understood as sufficient to bring about the social changes needed.

And yet, Fogel’s analysis of the changed economic context demonstrates the barriers and limits to this newly obtained “equal opportunity.” Jean Miller Schmidt also observes challenges to addressing social problems through personal accountability language,

From 1837 to 1877, the rising forces of industrialization and nationalism were rapidly transforming American society. The kind of personal morality stressed by Finney as the solution for economic ills was more appropriate in the 1830s when business was carried on in terms of person-to-person relationships. It fast became inadequate as the country industrialized.\textsuperscript{147}

\textsuperscript{145} Fogel, \textit{The Fourth Great Awakening}, 21.

\textsuperscript{146} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{147} Schmidt, \textit{Souls or Social Order}, 25-26.
Fogel also argues that diminished expansion opportunities contributed to the changed context. He explains, “ordinary workers in such industries as public utilities, transportation, iron and steel manufacturing, petroleum refining, food distribution, and chemical and electrical appliance manufacturing could no longer expect to become the masters of their own modest enterprises or to rebuff the attempts of their employers to lower wages, nor could they expect to find new, more expansive opportunities in the West.”

Schmidt and Fogel point to the new economic landscape in which reform potential is inherently diminished once “forty acres and a mule” was no longer available. After western expansion was closed, there was no longer a sustainable alternative livelihood if you thought your boss at the factory was exploiting you. As the economy evolved through industrialization and the population grew to fill the farmable frontier, the principle of equality moved beyond opportunity to emphasize cultural and conditional equality.

These economic shifts precipitated an urban crisis that included inadequate housing, poor working conditions, rising poverty, and nativist/immigrant tensions. As the tide gradually moved from Second to Third Awakening treatment of these problems, the revival phase of the Third Awakening elicited response by both modernists and modernizers.


149 Ibid., 115: “What had once seemed like a limitless empire of potential farmland was now fully occupied, a point that became clear when the 1890 census announced that the frontier was closed. Horace Greeley’s call for unemployed young men in Eastern cities to go west no longer made sense when Western farmers were also protesting their economic distress and seeking to limit the increase in the agrarian labor force.”
conservatives. The revival forced the separation of Protestants over a latent split that coexisted until the publication of *The Fundamentals*, the battles over teaching evolution in schools (and specifically the Scopes trial), and the near vilification of conservative religion by a “powerful liberal press.” Eventually, the modernist wing gained cultural influence, especially as evidenced in the New Deal. After their clash with the modernists, the fundamentalists opted to withdraw into their own “all-encompassing subculture…within which they pursued their educational, religious, and personal goals. It was not until the 1950s that they again sought to engage the public at large.”

The holiness movement should not be fully understood and mapped onto the fundamentalists that Fogel discusses because there are several important theological and historical differences, but they too turned towards creating their own subculture in the first half of the twentieth century. Holiness churches and movements established publishing houses, higher educational institutions, seminaries, and international mission organizations that enabled limited contact with and influence from other Christian denominations. Along with other evangelicals who rejected the modernism of the Social Gospel, the holiness movement largely ignored this new social context and therefore

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150 Ibid., 123-124. See also Kenneth J. Collins, *Power, Politics and the Fragmentation of Evangelicalism*, 40-45. Collins argues that the framing of the Scopes trial by the liberal press, including especially well known journalist H. L. Mencken from the *Baltimore Sun*, was “neither an accurate nor an even-handed account of the events in Dayton” (41). Collins judges that some national papers characterized the fundamentalists as cartoonlike buffoons (41).


152 Ibid., 124.
further distanced themselves from robust social action, opting instead to focus on individual sins and vices.

Interestingly, the modernists who propelled the Third Great Awakening on a trajectory that was at odds with the holiness movement would also engage in their own redefinition of sin. Instead of parsing the particulars of which sins for which humans could be held volitionally responsible, modernists, “undermined centuries of intricate theology based on the doctrines of original sin and innate depravity” and reinterpreted sin “chiefly as error and limitation which education in morals and the example of Jesus could mitigate, or else as the product of underprivilege which social reform could correct.”153 As the Social Gospel articulated its theology of social and structural sin, the reality of living in an industrial society meant all were tied to sin in some ways, but the lines of responsibility were not clear.154 This theological shift was challenging for groups like the holiness movement to accept. Even though the Wesleyan influence of the holiness movement put them on the theological spectrum of supporting human freedom and being accused by other theological traditions of undermining the doctrine of original sin—the Wesleyan conception of human responsible acceptance of God’s grace still viewed humans and not society as ultimately responsible for sin in individuals’ lives.


154 David O. Moberg, The Great Reversal, 122. See also Collins, Power, Politics, and the Fragmentation of Evangelicalism, 49.
The shift with respect to original sin was not the only theological aspect of disconnect between the holiness movement and the social gospelers. One component of this was a turn against the modernism of the Third Great Awakening that was prepared to jettison supernatural religion (which was at the heart of second crisis sanctification), adopt evolution (which was interpreted by holiness theologians as undermining divine creation),\textsuperscript{155} and alter the way that the bible was interpreted. Additionally, Kenneth Collins notes, “the Social Gospel leaders engaged in an ongoing critique of personal salvation” and articulated a vision of the kingdom of God that was nearly synonymous with “the American nation, as a liberal and democratic society.”\textsuperscript{156} For the holiness movement, the kingdom of God was distinct from the social and political ordering of the world.\textsuperscript{157} The broader theological tradition of the holiness movement has since reconciled these biblical interpretive tools and the Wesleyan Theological Society regularly hosts papers and panels that reconcile evolution with theological divine creation.

Fogel details the three factors that led to the shift in economic policy between the Second and Third Great Awakenings: “structural changes in the economy; the inadequacy of older theories of poverty in an industrial age; and a shift in the theories of

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\textsuperscript{155} Many holiness theologians now affirm forms of evolution alongside versions of evolutionary science within their doctrines of Creation.

\textsuperscript{156} Collins, \textit{Power, Politics, and the Fragmentation of Evangelicalism}, 49-50. Collins goes on to explain ways that the Social Gospel and Rauschenbusch in particular were also blind to gender and race issues. Thus making the vision of the kingdom in the Social Gospel an inherently white, Anglo-Saxon, bourgeois vision.

\textsuperscript{157} E.g., Riggle, \textit{The Kingdom of God}.
[human] relationship to God.”

On this third factor, the holiness movement rejected the changing approach. The point that Fogel makes regarding the changed understanding of human and divine relationship stands apart from the minutia of biblical interpretation. As the Social Gospel gained momentum and influence in political legislation, a so-called “New Theology veered away from the tenet of free will...by emphasizing the social corruption of the innocent young. Those who grew up in a corrupt society could not be blamed if they failed to rise above their environment.”

When the nineteenth-century holiness movement was actively addressing the corrupt society they did not remove the culpability and need of God’s grace for those who were negatively affected by it. Yet Fogel’s description of personal culpability for sin evinces a considerable change from the holiness movement approach. He states that, in the modernist view, people were “not sinners in the original meaning of that term: individuals who purposely violated the known will of God.”

In essence, the Third Great Awakening was engaging in similar determinations of infirmity versus sin. However, Wesleyans in the holiness movement fell back on their doctrine of original sin and prevenient grace. To holiness people, the Social Gospel had engaged in both classifying too many things as infirmity and neglected the importance of prevenient grace in soteriological considerations. Fogel’s recognition that for the modernists of the Third Great Awakening, people were “victims of a corrupt society”

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159 Ibid., 120.

160 Ibid., Emphasis mine.
who “could not be blamed” explains why the holiness movement would reject this new framing of humans vis-à-vis God, which is irreconcilable with the holiness movement’s theological commitment to conversion, grace, and Wesleyan soteriology.

The theology of the Social Gospel, thus, discouraged the holiness movement from participating in the broader societal concerns—or politics—that were being pushed by leaders who were influenced by the Third Great Awakening. One result of this disillusionment is a gap in the language of holiness politically (since holiness was often associated with personal conversion) and also a gap in the political activity of the holiness movement that turned inward and focused upon personal sin and personal experience. As the social gospelers gained momentum and political leverage in the political phase (1930–1970s), the equity of opportunity from the Second Great Awakening morphed into an attempt to create equity of condition. Instead of seeking to transform people who would go on to be actively involved in the work of social ministry

\[161\] I think it is an important distinction to make that it was the theology of the Social Gospel and Third Great Awakening that disillusioned the holiness movement. Fogel details a split between two approaches of the Third Great Awakening and had the approach which allowed space for belief in the supernatural triumphed over the one that ignored or outright rejected conversion experiences, the holiness movement would have been more likely to participate in the social agenda of the Third Great Awakening. See Fogel, 121-136.

\[162\] For a more theological account that agrees with the theological issues identified by Fogel regarding the changes of evolution and higher biblical criticism, see Kenneth J. Collins, Power, Politics and the Fragmentation of Evangelicalism. 25-45. Collins adds the rise of premillennialism (which was already considered with respect to the holiness movement) to those issues identified by Fogel.
and further benevolence, “social reform increasingly replaced personal reform as the center of the struggle to perfect American society.”

The Third Great Awakening emphasis on social reform was not the main issue that alienated the holiness churches. Collins notes that for conservatives and fundamentalists, the crux of the matter was the exclusivism with which the Social Gospel pursued social action to the neglect of personal conversion. In reaction, the holiness movement charted its own path away from the new commitment to equity of condition that was the hallmark of the Social Gospel and the Third Great Awakening. In the perception of the holiness movement, the Social Gospel lost clarity on human responsibility, changed the nature of the relationship between humans and God, and interpreted the bible in ways that raised problematic questions for divine creation. In response, the holiness movement withdrew from the public debates and the cultural influence they had gained in the nineteenth century and focused on a personal and individual gospel.

The social gospelers and those who embraced the political phase of the Third Great Awakening achieved immense strides in tackling inequality of condition between the 1920s and the 1960s. This group championed what Fogel calls “modern egalitarianism” which has three tenets: society is improved with income redistribution from rich to poor, the state is the proper vehicle for that transfer, and public policies and

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institutions should be developed to effect that redistribution for the purpose of creating equity of condition.¹⁶⁵

Despite the fact that the Third Great Awakening and modern egalitarianism were able to raise living standards and provide more equitable housing and make food largely available for those who are impoverished, inequality is painfully present across America and the world. In response to this persisting inequality, Fogel points to the rise of the Fourth Great Awakening. Though the Third Great Awakening and the Social Gospel offered a much needed check to power structures and addressed limitations that had been overlooked by the Second Great Awakening’s emphasis on equity of opportunity, it also resulted in other inequalities. In the new postmodern concerns of the Fourth Great Awakening, there has been a recognition that self-realization, deeper meaning in life, access to modern medicine, education for spiritual values, stable retirement, and time for family activities are not equally distributed. The rise of more spiritual and intangible equity of opportunity should receive attention within the vocation of holiness that is grounded in scriptural holiness.

Fogel’s proposal to address the complexity of inequality requires the transference of spiritual resources instead of merely transferring wealth from rich to poor. He identifies fifteen spiritual resources that are mainly transferred from one to another in early life.¹⁶⁶ This mixture of resources includes a sense of purpose, a vision of opportunity, an ethic of benevolence, discipline, and commitment to and participation

¹⁶⁵ Fogel, The Fourth Great Awakening, 84.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 205-6.
within community.\textsuperscript{167} The vocation of holiness can address these issues that are emerging in this new phase of societal spiritual revival. Before I address a vision of Scriptural holiness that offers a foundation for thinking about and addressing these newly acknowledged and recognized inequalities, the next chapter suggest that generational commitments and institutionalization undermined the original theological utopian edge that Donald Dayton argues is necessary “for a theology to support major social change.”\textsuperscript{168} He points to Finney’s emphasis on redemption as essential for maintaining the trajectory of societal transformation. There is a formation link implicit in a shift away from the emphasis on redemption towards engagement qua engagement with societal concerns. In the generations that followed the earliest leadership of the holiness movement, attention turned to institutionalization and defending particular distinctive doctrines. Instead of emphasizing the church’s role of witness to God’s redemptive work of salvation and sanctification, the holiness movement turned to the state to mediate its concern for moral influence. That turn entailed a loss of formational focus and meant that the holiness movement was no longer offering an alternative vision of political community, but rather, participating with the state through the means granted and secured by the state itself.

\textsuperscript{167} Ibid.

III.

CONTEXTUAL CHALLENGES: LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS, FORMATION, AND RELATION TO NATIONAL TEMPERANCE REFORM

1. Transitions

This chapter will describe ways that the holiness movement exhibited a limited imagination in their embrace of the practices and power of the state as an institution to carry out the church’s understanding of holiness with respect to temperance. This analysis leads to the fourth chapter and its consideration of scriptural holiness in Leviticus where holiness is reasserted instead of abandoned in response to a social crisis that calls the priestly vision of morality into question. With a robust scriptural holiness, the holiness movement can once again serve as an example of political theology that grounds political action and reflection within the doctrine of holiness and provide a theological utopian edge that resists the status quo of nation-state based political action.

The societal shifts from the Second to Third Great Awakenings influenced the context in which holiness groups institutionalized and new leadership emerged. The broader trend within American culture pushed the holiness movement to the margins. There were also internal organizational dynamics that contributed to the prioritization of private morality and personal conversion. As the movement aged, the holiness advocates turned to more formal structures to keep their message alive and on target. The formation and institutionalization of churches outside of the older ecclesial structures were influenced by the American culture in which they existed and it would
be naïve to assume that the new institutions and church structures merely adjusted movement polity.

The structures that emerged for the holiness movement aided its growth, but also influenced the direction of the subsequent generations of the movement. The means of late nineteenth-century growth likely contributed to a less synthetic approach to social issues and facilitated a more individualistic turn by the holiness movement in the twentieth century. The movement grew in large part on the perduring influence of Second Great Awakening revivalism, but an important shift took place. After the Civil War, revivals changed. They became more transient and the national zeitgeist of church attendance created tension for many of the holiness folk who would later found institutions and denominations.

After the Civil War, the National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness became the unquestioned leader of the holiness movement through the end of the nineteenth century.¹ These suburban camp meetings were numerically successful and provided important places of connection for holiness adherents. The period of their success was also a time of church growth for other groups. Those who attended the camp meetings were often frustrated by the newly tepid environment of their churches once popularized membership changed the protestant landscape after the Civil War. These irregular camp meetings created tensions for those who were fully committed to

the holiness movement in contrast with the masses of new members who were “received into the Christian fellowship without a sense of Christian commitment and without concern for the basics of Christian life, much less a higher Christian life.” Many who embraced and relished the suburban camp meetings “did not feel fully at home in their home churches” because “urban congregations moving toward more liturgical patterns of worship” rarely embraced their own ardent holiness promotion. The camp meetings also provided opportunities for people from various ecclesial backgrounds to worship together. The intermingling of Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians diminished denominational identity and emphasized the individual’s commitment to the doctrine of holiness. What was ecumenically fruitful also lowered the formative practices that offered protection from the broader cultural individualistic turn.

As John S. Inskip and other leaders of the holiness movement focused heavily on roaming evangelistic campaigns, they abandoned the longer duration revivals that spurred on local rooted ministries in the era of Finney and Palmer. These shifts from a

\[ \text{Ibid., 85.} \]

\[ \text{Ibid., 95. Dieter also comments that historian Charles Jones noted that the urban holiness revival after the Civil War was strongest among those people who were migrating to cities from more rural contexts.} \]

\[ \text{We often overlook details of some of the earlier revivals. Charles Finney is a famous revival preacher, but his revival in Rochester lasted six months and he later went on to establish a training school with a strong social stance at Oberlin. In the second generation of many movements, one aspect of the early synthesis often takes precedence as the next generation of leadership applies the vision to a new or changed context. In the case of the American holiness movement, the second generation took the prioritization of winning souls that had been coupled with social action and turned away from some of the more long-term social mission work that was happening at} \]
rooted to roaming approach were not uniform chronologically, but many of the groups that comprise the holiness movement experienced shifts from early rooted syntheses of personal conversion and robust social mission activity to approaches to growth and ministry that aligned with more individualistic conversion. Less rooted formation practices left newly converted Christians vulnerable to the various formative influences present once the traveling revival lit off for its next stop.

As it was redefining sin, wrestling with lost optimism about an earthly experience of the kingdom of God, and embracing the newer form of premillennial eschatology, the holiness movement turned away from the urban mission and revival model that had driven social reform in the nineteenth century. Many of the key leaders from the first generation of the holiness movement responded to invitations from across the country and world to spread their message more broadly. In her last decades of leadership, even Phoebe Palmer turned her attention to a traveling speaking ministry various times (but generally in the early part of the groups’ history respectively) in the various groups that comprised the holiness movement. The first generation of United Methodist holiness advocates lived and worked in the middle of the nineteenth century while the Church of God and Church of the Nazarene did not exist until the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries respectively. In many aspects, the shifts experienced by the holiness movement happened along a similar pattern but in different decades, likely as a result of their different starting point. The early phases of most religious groups experience some isolation from broader cultural trends that only later come to exert influence as the insular groups begin wrestling with outside issues and people.
instead of the ongoing weekly meeting for the promotion of holiness that she had long hosted in New York City.⁵

When Timothy Smith described the synthesis of holiness revival and social action leading up to the Civil War, the holiness movement was in its infancy and being guided by strong, charismatic, and creative leaders who held together a dynamic conversionist revivalism with centrifugal social reform activity. That early generational moment also repeated itself in some of the various groups that comprised the holiness movement. For example, the Church of God (Anderson) had a strong synthesis of holiness evangelism and economic social reform in their early communal home systems while their early theology of the unity and equality of all believers enabled radical social stances with respect to gender and racial equality. Other holiness groups emerged as frustrated ministers clashed with the expectations or controls of their established church hierarchies.

The Church of the Nazarene, Christian and Missionary Alliance, and Free Methodist Church were all birthed in reaction to resistance to mission work to the poor in inner cities.⁶ Therefore, many holiness movement institutions began with significant

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⁶ Donald Dayton points to the issue of poverty alleviation at the heart of decisions by Phineas Bresee (Church of the Nazarene), A. B. Simpson (Christian and Missionary Alliance), and B. T. Roberts (Free Methodist Church) to start new church structures outside of their respective traditions. Donald Dayton and Douglas Strong, Rediscovering an Evangelical Heritage: A Tradition and Trajectory of Integrating Piety and Justice (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2014), 155-158.
commitments to social concerns related to poverty. And yet, these holiness movement churches also ended up falling on the private side of a division within Protestantism that followed the Civil War. Martin Marty notes that Josiah Strong recognized this division as early as 1913 when he wrote, “there are two types of Christianity” for which the “difference is one of spirit, aim, point of view, comprehensiveness. The one is individualistic; the other is social.” Marty himself devotes a full chapter to describe this division and most would accept the categorization of the holiness movement within what Marty titles, “Private Protestantism.”

The holiness groups are among those who sided with personal conversion and individualistic notions of sin as opposed to the mainline denominations and the social gospel movement that emphasized social reform and corporate and structural sin. The holiness movement experienced the profound influence that Marty argues this split had on the social reform activities of all the Protestant churches. He states,

nothing did more to complicate the mission and ministry of all Protestants than the new internal divisions which came to light around the turn of the new century, to remain through subsequent decades. This is hard on historians


8 There are always exceptions that complicate such a narrow splitting of ecclesial traditions into two camps. As I have shown, there are significant ways in which Wesleyan holiness groups are different from Fundamentalists and Evangelicals; however, by and large the shape and ethos of the holiness movement fits within this side of the division in the Protestant landscape.

because there isn’t a firm date nor discrete event that can be pointed to. There is also no fairly well defined “great awakening or movement like the Social Gospel.” But to speak of the development of a two-party system in Protestantism is to refer to processes, ideas, covert and subvert actions, expressions that grow out of unwitting, unconscious, and surprisingly revelatory signals. Only over a long period of time did men like Josiah Strong find it possible to chronicle the phenomena. Even though the development raises problems for churches, it cannot be avoided, for without an understanding of the division, later Protestantism in America is incomprehensible.10

Though Marty acknowledges the influence of the split on church groups, he stops short of explaining why respective groups landed where they did. I argued in chapter two that the importance of personal responsibility and theological questions about the Social Gospel and the Third Great Awakening influenced the holiness movement’s recession from social activity. I think that these same forces led to their commitment to personal and private conversion. If the Social Gospel was associated with political reform activity and was perceived as neglecting personal responsibility, then the holiness movement could naturally understand itself as needing to emphasize the latter and avoid any perception that they were also being “distracted” by the former.

But questions remain. Is a rejection of the Social Gospel really sufficient to explain why the holiness movement let go of the social concerns that had initially been a powerful commitment that animated its leaders? What happened to allow groups with roots in the socially-involved and active revivalism of Phoebe Palmer and Charles Finney—that were started and led by men like A. B. Simpson, Phineas Bresee, and B. T. Roberts who were dedicated to ministering to impoverished and immigrant working

class people in the inner cities—to become classified with “Private Protestantism” and its accentuation of individual salvation? And, why did they opt to emphasize personal morality to the neglect of the present social order instead of maintaining the synthesis that was present before the Civil War and in instances of each group’s founding generation? Part of this shift can be attributed to the sociological process of institutionalization. The move towards organization into church bodies after the Civil War contributed to the shift away from the holiness movement’s synthesis of the antebellum period by encouraging the groups to define themselves more clearly than the complex amalgamation that was a loosely identified movement aligned around a general commitment to holiness and sanctification.

In the changing context that Fogel helps explain, the groups that were more closely aligned with second great awakening commitments felt defensive of their status and clung to their theological particularities over and against the Social Gospel. Holiness people did not need to defend caring for the poor, but they did have to defend their commitment to the doctrine of entire sanctification. When one aspect of a rich and complex tradition dominates the theological energy of a group, the complex tradition can easily neglect those other aspects of belief and practice.

2. Generational Shifts in Priorities and Commitments

Across the holiness movement, as respective groups organized and newer generations came into leadership positions, the dynamic synthesis of evangelism and social action shifted towards a theological emphasis on the doctrine of sanctification and
a pragmatic prioritization of evangelism. Different groups experienced these shifts in different decades, but they happened first in the wing of the Wesleyan Methodists and Methodist Church that aligned themselves with the holiness cause. Donald Dayton highlights the social concern of many of these movements’ founding leaders, and yet, the groups eventually gravitated towards the primary concern of personal evangelism.

Formation is once again an important dynamic. The holiness movement evinces a rising acceptance of the legitimacy of the state as the institution or political community that had authority over social issues. Even the way in which holiness groups addressed social problems and concerns shifted towards private morality. The Nazarene church was supportive of labor movements before World War I, but drifted away from the cause after. When they did actually address social causes in the decades after World War I, pronouncements “were buried in committee reports dealing with church members’ standards of personal behavior.” Therefore, even their formal statements about social concerns were addressed within the context of personal moral behavior. In other words, instead of making claims on behalf of the church regarding political and social arrangements and distributions of power, the Church of the Nazarene began making official stances for how individuals should behave in response to those other groups and entities that were making moral claims about social issues.

For example, the Church of God (Anderson) was birthed in 1880 and functioned more like the holiness movement activities of the 1850s for its first few decades. The same kinds of generational shifts experienced in the 1860s and 70s by Wesleyan Methodists who were initially part of the Methodist church would not influence the Church of God until the 1920s.

The holiness movement opened the door for more influence and formation from the state and society with respect to how to think about and address social issues that the movement understood as expressions of sin. The slide from social action to personal morality can be seen in the way holiness movement churches related to the American temperance and prohibition movements and the way that it engaged the issue of alcohol use.

3. Case Study: Abolition Energy Aimed at Temperance and Prohibition:

Despite the general rejection of social action that was pursued in the name of the Social Gospel, the holiness movement did participate in the social/political cause of temperance and prohibition. While much has been written about the temperance movement, there has not been a sustained treatment of the ways in which the holiness movement churches participated in the broader temperance movements. Furthermore, within holiness denominational histories, their participation in the broader American

temperance/prohibition movements has not received significant scholarly attention regarding the theological rationale for temperance involvement. For example, did they see temperance as a social or personal moral problem? I will consider the temperance movement with specific attention to theological reasons that led the Wesleyan holiness tradition to advocate temperance and abstinence from alcohol and the political and social aspects of the holiness movement’s participation in the fight for prohibition.

The temperance movement was a form of continued abolitionist social concern that drew from that movement’s energy after the Civil War. Prior to the Civil War, early holiness folk had been significant contributors to the social and political reform agenda of the nineteenth-century abolition movement.\textsuperscript{14} By the turn of the century and especially as the Civil Rights movement came to prominence in the 1960s, the holiness churches (excepting perhaps predominantly African-American congregations)\textsuperscript{15} were no longer channeling social reform energy towards the struggle for racial equality. Donald Dayton notes that historians have questioned where the abolitionist energy was re-

\textsuperscript{14} For a broad look at the involvement of holiness and perfectionist Christians in the work of Abolitionism see, Douglas M. Strong, \textit{Perfectionist Politics: Abolitionism and the Religious Tensions of American Democracy} (Syracuse University Press: Syracuse, New York, 1999). His treatment focuses on the burned over district of upstate New York and the ways that revivalism and evangelical perfectionism fueled abolitionist political action (including glimpses into the influence on the theology that undergirded the Liberty Party).

\textsuperscript{15} Even within the African American holiness churches, the primary social issue that they addressed was gender equality. Many women who experienced a call to preach left mainline congregations for holiness and Pentecostal church traditions. See, Andrew Billingsley, \textit{Mighty Like a River: The Black Church and Social Reform} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 139. The chapter, “Often Seen, Seldom Called: The Legacy of Jerena Lee,” is instructive in the importance of holiness churches and others for the enfranchisement of female ministers (pp. 132-143).
aimed after the Civil War and proposes that the major avenue was the “purity crusade” against prostitution. This attempt to abolish the practice of prostitution was often called the abolition of the “white slave trade.” Along with this purity crusade was the attempt to restructure society through temperance and prohibition that also sought abolition of alcohol beverages. Therefore, in the post-bellum context, the social concerns of evangelical Christianity and revivalist groups like the holiness movement in particular took up the purity and temperance causes as social issues that had potential to improve society as a whole.

Dayton notes that modern sympathy has seen the abolition of slavery as a necessary success. At the same time, modern history has portrayed prohibition as a petty rural morality that attempted to impose a private moral concern through legislative power. However, both abolition and prohibition had in mind a total

16 Dayton and Strong, Rediscovering, 152.

17 Interestingly, showing that many things come full circle: the anti-human trafficking movement is the largest single social reform activity and collaboration by the various Wesleyan holiness churches at the time that I am writing this dissertation. Some of the legal backing and legislative precedence that is used by various para-church organizations in working to alleviate human trafficking in the United States comes from early-twentieth-century “White Slave Trade” laws. For more information see, The Wesleyan Holiness Consortium Freedom Network’s website: http://www.holinessandunity.org/index.php/affinity-groups/freedom-network (accessed 6/16/15). It is also telling that the holiness heritage for social action waned sharply over time as the “Declaration for Freedom” cites a tradition and foundation from the Exodus, through Jesus’ ministry, including John Wesley, and offers as a final concrete example in those who fought for emancipation of slaves and child labor (see the document at http://holinessandunity.wikispaces.com/file/view/Declaration+for+Freedom.pdf/480446278/Declaration%20for%20Freedom.pdf, accessed 6/16/15).

18 Dayton and Strong, Rediscovering, 152.
transforming and restructuring of society. In that sense, the temperance movement can and should be understood as an attempt to restructure the social environment that was enabling sinful action instead of seeking societal change through individuals enacting personal abstinence. Though it is often viewed as an evangelical and rural grasping for control over the American value system, the temperance movement also received support from the social gospel movement because of the ways that the social gospel movement recognized the societal damage brought about by historically high levels of alcohol consumption in the nineteenth century. Prior to the formation of the Anti-Saloon league in 1896, the temperance cause had been approached by leaders who grouped it with many other social reforms.

3.1. The Alcoholic Republic

Why was temperance such a universally embraced Christian cause across the nineteenth century and into the twentieth? In the words of W. J. Rorabaugh, America in the nineteenth century was an Alcoholic Republic. Americans drank more liquor per capita than ever before or since.

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19 Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic*, is the classic study on the rise of society drinking rates in the United States during the first half of the nineteenth century as well as an analysis of how and why drinking rates became so much higher and eventually problematic in the United States in the nineteenth century. As his preface states, “I began to suspect that the temperance movement had been launched in the 1820s as a response to a period of exceptionally hearty drinking. The truth was startling: Americans between 1790 and 1830 drank more alcoholic beverages per capita than ever before or since” (ix). See also, Schmidt, *Souls or Social Order*, 198.

capita in the first third of the nineteenth century than at any other time in its history.\textsuperscript{21} At the high point of consumption in the late 1820s, the average American male drank nearly a half pint of distilled spirits per day.\textsuperscript{22} Even as the national consumption levels began to fall in the 1840s, the urban situation remained bleak. There was one saloon per fifty people over the age of fifteen in New York City.\textsuperscript{23} Alcohol combined with other aspects of the urban crisis to lower life expectancy in the cities at twice the rate of an already bleak twenty-five percent drop in the North between 1790 and 1850.\textsuperscript{24} The American population was urbanizing and “all the available evidence suggests that Americans who lived in cities and towns drank more than their rural neighbors.”\textsuperscript{25} Distilling advances, geographical economic issues, and technological changes created a surplus of grain in the Midwest that caused more grain to be distilled and liquor became more abundant and less expensive than in previous periods of time in America.

Geographical economic factors led to the increased access to hard liquors. In the Ohio Valley, grain was so plentiful that farmers struggled to dispose of surplus grain. Means of transportation limited the profitable land transportation of grain to twenty miles and the factors of supply and demand in the New Orleans market resulted in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} Rorabaugh, \textit{Alcoholic Republic}, 7.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 11.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Fogel, \textit{Fourth Great Awakening}, 58.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 58-59.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Rorabaugh, \textit{Alcoholic Republic}, 129.
\end{itemize}
meager profits (if any at all) on grain shipped down the Mississippi River. Two separate geographical grain markets emerged; the market for the east could barely sustain sufficient food for the population while the market west of the Appalachian Mountains was marked by overproduction. The result was that in the west, grain was distilled (thus making it more feasibly transported over long distances) and sold as liquor in the east where grain scarcity limited large scale distilling. The economic laws of supply and demand enabled alcohol to become increasingly affordable and simultaneous demographic trends also coalesced to result in increased alcohol consumption.

As consumption rose, the problems that often coincided with alcohol use were magnified and the temperance cause found ample reasons to curb American consumption. The costs of the societal patterns of alcohol consumption were registering with people across the spectrum of concern. Protestant clergy, urban and rural middle-classes, Northeastern elites, and industrialists all brought their own reasons to address the problems of alcohol. As drinking increased in the early-nineteenth century, Rorabaugh paints a grim picture of the effects of increased alcohol consumption. He concludes,

As consumption of alcohol rose, many saw that it harmed society. The solitary drinker was detached from society and its constraints; he was likely to become antisocial, to fight, steal, or otherwise indulge in malicious mischief, to be sexually promiscuous or beat his wife, or to squander on liquor money needed to feed his hungry children. Such behavior rent the social fabric. Society even suffered from the escapist drinker, whose anomie was conducive to isolation,

26 Ibid., 78
alienation, and self-destruction. Liquor, therefore, was widely perceived to provide neither happiness for the individual nor stability for the individual nor stability for society.\textsuperscript{27}

In response to these concerns there have been at least five waves of temperance activity in American history.\textsuperscript{28} The holiness movement approached temperance differently over time. Initially, the movement gradually embraced temperance related political activity to pursue legislative prohibition—a move that seems to indicate a social reform mindset. Yet, over time, the tenor of the involvement transitioned away from societal reformation to the personal morality and personal dangers of alcohol. Jack Blocker and Joseph Gusfield describe a continuum from pure suasion to aggressive coercion in the approach of temperance movements over time.\textsuperscript{29} The holiness movement was no exception. Gusfield argues for a simple transformation from persuasion to coercion; while Blocker sees cycles of reform that fluidly change from suasion to coercion and back to suasion again.

Jean Miller Schmidt notes that both liberal and conservative Christians embraced the cause of prohibition in years of national prohibition. She notes that a shift took place within conservative evangelists from Moody’s preference to focus on saving souls instead of spending energy on legislative prohibition to Billy Sunday who worked to

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 189-90.

\textsuperscript{28} Blocker categorizes the temperance movement into five movements that each shifted from initial suasion towards coercion. See, Blocker, \textit{American Temperance Movements}.

mobilize Christians to the political cause.\textsuperscript{30} A similar shift can be seen within the Church of God. The first two editors of the movement periodical, \textit{The Gospel Trumpet}, argued for primary energy to be devoted to spiritual and kingdom causes, of which national government was not. They wrote pieces that argued for not condemning those who voted in elections for the purpose of helping prohibition, but warned from viewing and working as if worldly matters were ultimate matters.\textsuperscript{31} F. G. Smith, was the third editor and he went so far as to advocate an Anti-Saloon League poster being displayed in every Sunday School classroom.\textsuperscript{32} Smith also included more articles on prohibition than the two previous editors combined. In addition to including more articles, the stance on the issues shifted away from spiritual emphasis to a nearly unwavering support for the Anti-Saloon League and its tactics during Smith’s tenure as editor.

And yet, despite the growing political participation in the prohibition movement by holiness groups, the reality persists that over time, the temperance social cause was translated into and articulated as a personal morality concern by holiness groups. For example, Timothy Smith notes that prohibition was reinterpreted by the Church of the Nazarene between 1918 when prohibition was a national social reform problem and 1932 when prohibition was addressed by seeking personal commitments to total

\textsuperscript{30} Schmidt, \textit{Souls or Social Order}, 198.


abstinence.\textsuperscript{33} The cause of temperance avails itself to individualistic framing in a way that abolition of slavery could not since those who are harmed by the social problem of alcohol could willingly “free” themselves in a manner that slaves could not. The purity crusade and temperance were thus more easily shifted into a personal morality space and came to be identified with holiness groups and other conservative protestants that have been classified on the side of personal conversion and morality instead of reforming the social order.\textsuperscript{34}

This raises the question of why and how did a campaign that began with the purpose to reform society as an outgrowth of “a special Christian responsibility to the poor and oppressed of this world”\textsuperscript{35} slide into an individualistic morality concern? I will address this by first offering some of the theological reasons that holiness churches were committed to temperance and prohibition. Then I will analyze the way in which the holiness movement did engage the issue politically. And finally, I will show that a

\textsuperscript{33} Unfortunately, there has not been to date a comprehensive historical study of exactly how and when the shift occurred within the particular holiness groups regarding the political approach and rhetoric around temperance/prohibition. Certainly, such a study could be done by analyzing sermons and articles within the holiness movement, but such a project is beyond the scope of my current project. Suffice it to say that there is enough indication in Timothy Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform Dayton and Strong, Rediscovering, John W. V. Smith, The Quest for Holiness and Unity (Anderson, Ind.: Warner Press, 1980), and Merle D. Strege, I Saw the Church (Anderson, Ind.: Warner Press, 2002), to argue that as the Church of God, Church of the Nazarene, and Free Methodist Church matured, their concerns shifted away from focused social regeneration rhetoric and strategy to a more personal morality tone regarding alcohol (all the while lambasting alcohol for the ills it brings society).

\textsuperscript{34} See Schmidt, Souls or Social Order; and Moberg, The Great Reversal; and idem. Wholistic Christianity (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Press, 1985).

\textsuperscript{35} Dayton and Strong, Rediscovering, 153.
growing place of acceptance and social status coincided with a more generally accepting view of the American government as a tool for addressing social concerns. There was also a more general shift by people in the holiness movement to embrace governmental authority with respect to law.\textsuperscript{36}

The temperance cause was already at work as the holiness movement was in its infancy\textsuperscript{37} and as such, temperance has always been an aspect of the holiness movement’s understanding of holiness. Preachers delivered sermons against the evils of the liquor traffic and encouraged abstinence commitments at the altars. Holiness periodicals disseminated tales of families in poverty because husbands spent their paychecks at the local saloon. And the holiness movement’s most commonly used English translation of the Bible, the King James Version, included “temperance” among the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:23.

After the Civil War and Emancipation of the slaves, there was a new surplus of social energy that was directed against alcohol consumption. As Mark Noll observed, “The various temperance and prohibition movements may now appear somewhat

\textsuperscript{36} This shift to embrace and accept governmental authority and its decisions regarding social moral issues goes beyond the embrace of temperance laws. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter, I have presented research at the Wesleyan Theological Society to the effect that the Church of God abandoned its early pacifist interpretation of Scripture and doctrinal stance after World War I as the group embraced the American national identity and deferred to the government a level of authority that had previously not been granted. Unpublished paper “When the Empire Calls: A Peace Church [?] and War,” Wesleyan Theological Society Annual Meeting: March 2011, presented at Southern Methodist University.

\textsuperscript{37} Blocker dates the first temperance movement to 1784 in Philadelphia (See Blocker, American Temperance, Chapter One, “The First Temperance Movement,” 1-29).
quixotic, but they were the direct successors of antebellum movements like the fight against slavery. Just as Protestants had labored to win freedom for the slaves, so after the Civil War many of them exerted great efforts to free the nation from slavery to alcohol.”

38 Holiness people who had been concerned with abolition applied similar logic to the cause of alcohol. The holiness movement, As Melvin Dieter has explained, approached social problems from their commitment to perfectionism. He states,

> It is possible, therefore, to see some of the early efforts to orient the holiness revival after 1880 in this light; as a perfectionist revival with perfectionist answers to the problems of both individuals and society, its revivalism and perfectionism strongly molded the nature of both the problems, which the movement encountered in its search for order, and the answers which the movement gave to those problems.  

39 However, there was an enormous theological rationale that contributed to the fixation on alcohol use by holiness groups. Sanctification was dependent upon surrender of the will to the Holy Spirit and allowing God to guide the believer into truth and holiness. The shift in understanding regarding sin that I addressed earlier, highlights the growing importance of people recognizing God’s will and then overcoming their own


39 Dieter, *Holiness Revival*, 200. The perfectionist impulse as described here by Dieter was the way that the holiness movement followed through on perfectionist logic in the era after 1880. As Doug Strong has noted, perfectionist approaches to politics produced both the holiness movement and the social gospel movement (*Perfectionist Politics*, 166). Therefore, the perfectionist logic was being directed at social problems by the holiness movement at the end of the nineteenth century just as it was in the social gospel movement. This is where Fogel’s insights regarding the difference between commitments to equity of opportunity and equity of condition are helpful in understanding how two groups with similar perfectionist logic and similar initial engagement with issues could develop in such markedly different ways.
inclinations to sin. In this context, substances like alcohol that alter one’s common sense perceptions and limit the ability to control volitional activity are especially dangerous.

3.2. Philosophical and Theological Rationale for Total Abstinence from Alcohol

The full abstinence position of the holiness movement appears legalistic to many twenty-first century interpreters. Many have not recognized the influence that philosophical Common Sense Realism had on American Methodism in the nineteenth century. Because holiness groups most often grew out of the Wesleyan Methodist Christians of the nineteenth century, Common Sense Realism also informed the way that holiness churches thought about alcohol’s affect on religious experience and intuition.

Jennifer Woodruff Tait demonstrates and analyzes the dominant place that Common Sense Realism held in the theological mindset of Methodism in the Victorian Era (ca. 1837–1901). Her study shows that Common Sense Realism drove the Methodists to adopt unfermented grape juice in Holy Communion. She argues, “grape juice became holy—because consuming it, unlike consuming alcohol, allowed the human mind accurately to perceive external reality and base moral acts on those accurate physical perceptions.”40 The holiness churches also adopted grape juice for communion.41 As

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40 Jennifer Woodruff Tait, The Poisoned Chalice: Eucharistic Grape Juice and Common Sense Realism in Victorian Methodism (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 2011), 2. Part of the theological rationale for evangelical Christians in the nineteenth century (and well into the twentieth) to argue for grape juice in communion and also to see the bible as speaking against drinking alcohol in moderation is tied to the prevalence of the two-wine theory. As Tait notes, “only one article in the Methodist Quarterly Review from 1849 to 1929 advocated a one-wine theory of biblical interpretation” (15).
Woodruff Tait argues, “the place of grape juice near the heart of evangelical religion owes its symbolic power to a philosophical worldview linking the physical and the moral by means of accurate sense perception.”42 The holiness movement stands squarely within this philosophical worldview at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Within that worldview, the holiness churches engaged the temperance movement and the cause of prohibition for similar reasons that the Methodist church adopted grape juice in its communion practice—because pure and holy people could then keep their “thoughts, emotions, and finances in order”43 and as society was free from the harmful effects of the intoxication of alcohol, it too would be transformed and all its members would be able to get their lives in order.

The logic of Common Sense Realism informed other holiness taboos since any types of stimulants (caffeine, alcohol, amusements, bad books, theater, etc) opened the

The two wine theory argues that the word wine in the biblical text sometimes refers to unfermented grapes and at other places referred to fermented grape juice. Those places where drunkenness is cast negatively relate to the fermented wine, but in particular Jesus’ miracle at Cana is viewed as the wine he made being unfermented. For more on the two-wine theory see, “The Two-Wine Theory,” *Southern Methodist Review*, vol. 39, (November-December 1894), 280.

41 Tait, *Poisoned Chalice*, 136: “Holiness denominations founded in the twentieth century adopted the practice without comment.” She also cites the Nazarene Manual of 1908 as stating, “the Holy Scriptures and human experience alike condemn the use, as a beverage, of intoxicating drinks.” She adds, “Most holiness denominations that left episcopal Methodism during the nineteenth century adopted the practice [of unfermented communion wine] with relatively little debate, along with advocating other progressive social causes such as abolition, and focusing on personal lifestyle issues as expressions of holiness” (14).

42 Ibid., 3-4.

43 Ibid., 125.
release of the imagination to indiscretions and “above all, the lack of contact with reality.” Because of the concern for proper relation and perception of God’s divine will for all of society, holiness undergirded the participation with the temperance movement. Even within the Church of God—where political involvement was eschewed because of a strong doctrine of separation of church and state and Anabaptist influence on several of the first two generations of leaders—the cause of temperance was framed as an appropriate case to vote one’s conscience on this issue of righteousness; the only reason a Christian saint should vote is to address a particular evil that has a theological purpose for the saints to want it addressed. Within those evangelicals who were influenced by Wesleyan Methodism in the late Victorian era (including the holiness movement), “Common-sense realism served as an implicit basis for the temperance lifestyle, defining holiness as accurate sense perception and striving on a scientific foundation to preserve clarity of sense perception in all physical activities so as to ensure the correct performance of moral duties.” In other words, the temperance cause was an important personal holiness issue.

And yet, the issue of alcohol was much bigger than merely personal holiness behavior. It was understood as a marker and link to an entire system of life that was both injurious to the person and society. Woodruff Tait describes the way alcohol was viewed as an intoxicant associated with many social vices. Alcohol was linked to,

44 Ibid., 54.


excess, indulgence, poison, sensuality, poetry, excitement, darkness, dirt, overflowing cups and bowls, fiction, theater, immigrants, servants, laborers, the leisured upper classes, instinct, passion, and jeweled chalices. The temperate and holy life, on the other hand, was associated with images of purity, progress, cleanliness, clearness, water, facts, science, neatness, respectability, punctuality, a wise use of resources, business, the Sabbath, middle-class people, order, sobriety, gentility, and American citizenship. These two sets of images illustrate dueling paradigms. Alcohol was not chosen as an isolated act, but entered human life in conjunction with other life-destroying activities, all of which clouded or numbed the ability to perceive moral truths in the physical environment.47

As a signifier for an entire life-style that was viewed as life-destroying, alcohol use and abstinence also played a role in identity demarcation for holiness folk. Furthermore, with the most common biblical translation (King James Version) including “temperance” as one of the fruits of the Spirit, there was biblical foundation readily available for preacher and layperson alike to see alcohol as a crucial moral issue. In an era of their lifecycle where groups were formalizing structure and expanding their influence across the country, identity markers were significant and directly tied to their understandings of holiness. For example, the Church of God, like many other holiness groups were concerned with the marks of sanctification in daily lives.48 This entailed a list of taboos that were signs of “worldliness” and outward indications that sanctification had not taken root in the believer. Among these were articles of clothing, use of tobacco and caffeine and alcoholic beverages.49 As Woodruff Tait’s research shows, alcohol was

47 Ibid., 15.

48 Strege, *I Saw the Church*, 44.

49 Ibid. Strege notes that this was not unique to the Church of God, but common for pietistic groups and others related to the holiness movement. These groups forbid
dangerous with respect to sin in a way that external adornment was not. External adornment indicated a lack of sanctification, but alcohol had the power to also lead to a reduced power of the will over sinful temptation.

Joseph Gusfield has argued that alcohol use or non-use “has been one of the significant consumption habits distinguishing one subculture from another.”50 As a significant subculture marker, abstinence of alcohol was more than just a personal moral issue, but was understood as constitutive of the early-twentieth-century holiness movement’s group identity. And yet, the holiness movement drive to support prohibition was also susceptible to losing its purpose since it was so integrally related to their subculture identity and the theological concern that alcohol inhibited control over the human will, thus endangering the loss of sanctification. Furthermore, the prohibition movement itself sought to isolate the prohibition issue from the broader social vision that had initially animated temperance reformers. As the alcohol question was separated from the other social problems that needed to be addressed, it was then framed as an isolated moral concern that no longer required theological framing and could now be appropriated by a political special interest group through pressure politics.

The holiness movement remained political on the issue of alcohol, but it was an indirect form of political action. The movement embraced the rising role of the state to enforce morality. In doing so, the holiness movement effectively mediated its moral alcohol and tobacco, drugs like caffeine, amusements like movies and the theater, and “superfluous or prideful” clothing.

50 Gusfield, Symbolic Crusade, 3.
concern regarding alcohol through the power of the state and the special interest political groups that worked for prohibition. The holiness people were far from being the ones driving the political movement to legally enact prohibition at the time of national prohibition through the eighteenth amendment and the Volstead Act. As opposed to the more comprehensive social reconstruction approach to prohibition and temperance taken by the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the Anti-Saloon League (ASL) functioned as a single-issue lobbying group. The ASL learned from the shortcoming of the Prohibition Party that people who supported prohibition often voted for other parties and candidates because of their reservation about other socially reformatory (often viewed as “disruptive”) positions of the Prohibition Party and its candidates. The strategy of the ASL was to regain the evangelical churches that had been nervous about radicalism and upsetting other social and cultural issues beyond prohibition. It adopted the motto: “the Church in Action Against the Saloon,” and incorporated three times as many clergy into the league leadership than had been utilized by the Prohibition Party. The ASL was also pragmatic, in the sense that they

51 The mediation through the state served to sever the issue of alcohol from its theological and philosophical reasoning in terms of sanctification. In adopting the posture of participants in political lobbying, the role of teetotalism entrenched itself as a common important identity marker for holiness groups.


53 Ibid., 102. See also, Clark, *Deliver Us from Evil*, 94.

54 Blocker, *American Temperance*, 102-103. Three-fifths of the anti-saloon league leaders were clergy as compared to one-fifth of Prohibition party leadership. Blocker does not mention any holiness groups as the source of these clergy, but my research into
worked with any ally (progressives in California and Colorado and conservatives in Virginia) always keeping the prohibition issue as the only priority. In this way, the ASL was intentionally an issue based group that pushed legislation and supported those who supported them and opposed those who opposed their legislation irrespective of political parties and did not strive to become a third party as the Prohibition Party had done. The league would also focus their attention on power instead of building a majority. They leveraged the rural weighting of congressional seats in the years leading up to prohibition and took advantage of the shift in western states from miners to farmers who were more likely to support the prohibition cause. At the time of adoption, the constitutional amendment probably did not hold majority support, but the balance of state power and influence of the less densely populated southern and western states, combined with the power-leveraged targeting by the Anti-Saloon League enabled its passage and once passed, constitutional status granted the prohibition cause great power and prestige.

The league was not merely opportunist, but seized and pushed a growing wave to empower the state to enforce the moral needs of society. As Blocker notes, “the prohibitionist argument portrayed social conflict and disorder as products of personal the Gospel Trumpet archives demonstrates that holiness churches were among those that were rallied into action against the saloon.

55 Ibid., 103.
56 Ibid., 105.
57 Ibid., 107-112.
58 Ibid., 119.
and social vices, removable by a stiff dose of state-enforced morality.”\textsuperscript{59} Once the state understood its role as enforcing morality, Christian churches of various theological traditions and commitments began to see the state as a viable means to address their own ecclesial moral commitments. For example, the Social Gospel sought after state enactment of its concerns over child-labor and other poverty issues. Likewise, the holiness movement that had been committed to temperance for decades also turned to the state to enact its own vision of temperance as total abstinence from alcohol.

Once the movement for prohibition had incorporated the power of the state to enforce a particular morality, the need for persuasion was no longer needed to reform society. Within this framework, it seems predictable that the tone and language of holiness bodies would turn their consideration of alcohol in the framing of the issue as one of personal and private morality that Common Sense Realism required in order for human willing to adhere to the Spirit’s power over sin. The action by the Church of the Nazarene to move statements regarding alcohol and other social issues into the section of meetings relating to personal behavior was also the natural result of a context where the state had been empowered to enforce morality. In the Church of God, the tone of \textit{Gospel Trumpet} articles also shifted from explaining the importance of the virtue of temperance as a fruit of the Spirit to arguments regarding the importance of

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 117.
Americanizing foreign-born immigrants so that they could understand and support the prohibition laws.\textsuperscript{60}

At the same time that the empowerment of the government to enforce morality aided the shift in emphasis from social to personal morality with respect to prohibition, the logic of state power to address social problems worked to undermine the prohibition cause. Prohibitionists had emphasized governmental responsibility to cure social problems.\textsuperscript{61} As the Great Depression came in 1929, this logic ironically undermined prohibition as liquor business was now seen as a viable source of work and tax revenue for the government who was responsible to cure the new social problem of unemployment and widespread poverty.

The prohibition era demonstrates the opportunities and challenges of addressing social problems through governmental action. The gains only last as long as the social issue remains large enough to engender support and enforcement. As future social problems arise, the logic of governmental solutions for societal problems necessarily shifts resources and sentiment to the next issue. If social morality is approached through governmental avenues, morality becomes linked to the current situation and the particular judgments of the electorate. There are certainly positive aspects of governmental authority, reach, and resources when it comes to addressing social problems; however, morality has not been something in Scripture that was best


\textsuperscript{61} Blocker, \textit{American Temperance}, 125.
determined by the actions of the masses, but rather by the interpretation of the Scriptures, application by prophets, and worship practices.\textsuperscript{62}

The issue of temperance appeared to be their only social reconstructive mission for the holiness churches that were undergoing institutional development, experiencing theological pressure from within and without (sin, eschatology, the Social Gospel, biblical criticism, and evolution), and growing into more middle-class congregations.\textsuperscript{63} Schmidt has noted, “the drive to end the liquor traffic had the support of both liberal and conservative Protestants” but “the chief difference between liberals and conservatives, however, was that the latter tended to substitute prohibition for all other social reforms, while the former did not allow their interest in controlling the liquor traffic to divert their attention from necessary reforms in the economic system.”\textsuperscript{64} In the end, the holiness groups fell into line with other conservative protestant groups that prioritized souls over the social order in the twentieth century. Martin Marty also concludes that the defense of the Volstead Act,\textsuperscript{65} the fundamentalist-modernist debate,

\textsuperscript{62} I have in mind here the important ways that Old Testament prophets critique the actions of their contemporaries by drawing on the historical witness of God through earlier Torah and prophets, the important place for scriptural interpretation and application by Jesus, the gospel writers, and Paul in the New Testament, and the understanding of priestly worship as a social reaction that will be addressed in more detail in chapter four.

\textsuperscript{63} Strege, \textit{I Saw the Church}, 292-314.

\textsuperscript{64} Schmidt, \textit{Souls or Social Order}, 198-9.

\textsuperscript{65} Holiness leadership encouraged pastors and lay leaders to support enforcement of the Volstead Act. They also suggested cooperation with entities that
and the evolutionist-anti-evolutionist battle, diverted energy away from other social concerns.\textsuperscript{66} Marty concludes that instead of social Christianity actually gaining a substantial role in American religious life, there was a stronger identification with revivalist individualism than with any kind of deep social involvement; protestant religion remained a largely private matter.\textsuperscript{67}

While I think that Marty’s conclusion is accurate as a general conclusion regarding American Protestantism in the twentieth century, it is still a general statement that overlooks the particularities of the holiness tradition where there was a stream of holiness theology that sustained a vibrant synthesis of social Christianity while maintaining its commitment to personal conversion and scriptural holiness. The scope and aim of my argument has not been to articulate the exact cause for which the holiness churches have been judged to only engage the social issue of alcohol (in place of all other social concerns) in the twentieth century. Instead, my focus has been to show internal theological shifts that combined with the cultural changes facing religion in America at the turn of the century (as addressed through Fogel’s analysis) that point to a complex period of time in which significant forces led the holiness movement away from its early synthesis of scriptural holiness that overcame compartmentalized discipleship and bifurcation of the personal and social aspects of being God’s people.

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were campaigning against its repeal. Examples include, W. B. McCreary, "What About Prohibition?" and F. C. Blore, “Shall Prohibition Be Defeated?”
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\textsuperscript{66} Marty, \textit{Righeous Empire}, 228.

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 228-229.
4. Limited Theological Imagination

The story of the holiness movement in the twentieth century is understandable. Theological reflection on sanctification, sin, and eschatology and their important organizational endeavors were necessary for the movement to continue speaking the message of scriptural holiness. And yet, the transition that I have narrated for the holiness movement in the first half of the twentieth century evinces a limited imagination and vision for the church. Despite the important nuance and explanation of the forces that led to the change, the end result still aligns with Donald Dayton’s observation in *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage*: The evangelical and holiness movements buried their nineteenth-century socially active piety by the 1950s and ‘60s.68

In the end, these influences undermined “the combination of ardent faith and social action”69 that were the proud legacy of the nineteenth-century holiness movement. Douglas Strong shows the importance of reclaiming the holiness tradition when he identifies weaknesses in liberalism. He states, “in a different way than with conservatism, liberalism is insufficient for an integrated faith” because it “minimizes the need for personal conversion and concentrates almost uncritically on human progress, while a more evangelical theology trusts in divine action to bring in God’s new


69 Ibid., 203. This is the framing of the nineteenth-century evangelical trajectory identified by Douglas Strong in his conclusion to the second edition of Donald Dayton’s *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* that I drew from in the first chapter.
creation.” The effect of this emphasis on progress led to abdication of the theological framing for contemporary challenges facing society. Strong adds, “liberal views of progress focus on what happens through the power of this world,” and “due to their stress on progress, liberals also downplay the inheritance and pervasiveness of sin.”

While Strong turns back to the way that holiness movement and evangelicals “retained a biblical view of human sin,” as this chapter has shown, the scope to which “sin” referred within the holiness movement has undergone serious constriction.

Even in critiquing the constricted scope of sin within holiness theology, it offers more in terms of addressing sin than most alternatives. For example there really is no place for concepts of sin within the secular social action of American progressivism. What the theological vocation of holiness offers, is the scriptural view that social systems and individuals are both degraded by the power of sin. Therefore theologically, the liberal view of progress that diminishes the role of sin in the brokenness of the world, and even more so, within the secular progressivism that is purportedly neutral in the American political landscape are incapable of addressing a central component of the social problems that they attempt to alleviate. Thus, given the demise of the synthesis of conversion and social action within the holiness movement and the neglect of the liberal


71 Ibid. Strong emphasizes the roots of this absent doctrine of sin within one of the key influential thinkers of the holiness movement, Charles Finney. Finney serves as a good example of why the present situation requires more than just returning to a “glorious past,” but more importantly turning to scripture to contextualize the doctrine of holiness as it informs the answers necessary for contemporary questions of political arrangements and theological faithfulness.
protestant attention to the category of sin, the protestant tradition finds itself in need of re-imagination in order to address questions that political theology has shown are crucial for the present.

William Cavanaugh has articulated the concept of theopolitical imagination that serves as a helpful way of understanding the challenges and opportunities of conceiving of discipleship outside the powerful formations that modern Western societies exert on Christians. The holiness movement turned to the nation state to enforce its morality through the Volstead Act instead of the nineteenth-century temperance movements’ persuasive social action that was part of a broader social vision for reforming society. As the state became responsible for the social concerns of citizens, the church cooperated to limit its role within society to personal instead of social concerns.

The change in location of Nazarene statements on social issues is indicative of the changed nature of their understanding of the church’s authority to speak about social problems (or even more importantly, social sins). The Nazarenes are representative of the broader holiness movement. Holiness people transitioned to speaking about private morality at the same time that articles were appearing in holiness journals encouraging people to support the laws of the land and track the states that adopted the prohibition amendment with adoption charts provided by the Anti-Saloon League.72 The actions of the holiness movement point to a shift towards the modern bifurcation of life into particular spheres. Religious moral issues become private beliefs that can only matter for

society at large if enough individuals have adopted these concerns to utilize the
resources and power of the state to enforce them. But even in the public enactment of
these religious concerns, the moral issue itself is accepted as a private concern that
happens to have a broad enough adoption to become the standard for the nation.

William Cavanaugh states a natural result of this privatization, “Once religion is
driven inward, it becomes relatively easy, and appears inevitable, that it should also be
driven out of public life.” In this paradigm, the state functions as a sovereign authority
over public life. The state makes judgments about what is true, good, and beautiful. The
state is granted authority to determine what is just in criminal punishment and when
violence is legitimate or not. The state then categorizes violence as either just action by
those that states recognize, criminal activity by those it accepts but deems to be against
its laws, or terrorist actions by illegitimate entities with power. What if the church
viewed the nation-state like a company that provides public goods and services?
Churches necessarily conceive of their mission and task as one that fills a more
comprehensive and necessarily public and social space when they view the national

73 William T. Cavanaugh, “God is Not Religious,” in God Is Not--: Religious, Nice,
“One of Us,” an American, a Capitalist, ed. D. Brent Laytham (Grand Rapids, Mich: Brazos
Press, 2004), 103.

74 William T. Cavanaugh, Migrations of the Holy: God, State, and the Political
Meaning of the Church (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 42.
governments of the locations where they live and worship as something less than an
almighty sovereign on public issues and keepers of the common good.75

Cavanaugh points to the language used by the early church to describe its
community as an *ekklesia* instead of a *collegium* or *koinon*. *Ekklesia* connotes a
comprehensive community or assembly that bears God’s presence in history instead of
merely representing a community that is gathered around a common set of interests. We
might compare this today with the way that someone might point to special interest
groups like PETA, the NRA, and the USGA as groups that one joins in support of a
particular cause. The church must be of a higher order of association that is not
contingent upon our personal preferences, but seeks to be God’s gathered people whose
mission is to bear the image of our creator and be an anticipation of the heavenly
kingdom on earth.76

One of the powerful aspects of the holiness movement has been the way that it
has articulated a praxis whereby everyday activities matter as constitutive aspects of
discipleship. The taboo practices may be viewed with scorn and may even have become
poorly understood legalistic identity markers, but the holiness movement takes
seriously that the way people live in their everyday lives has holy significance that is
more than just spiritual. The vocation of holiness when rightly approached from the lens

75 Consider the case that I made in chapter one that argues that the vocation of
holiness is crucial for the church to avoid being subordinated to status as merely one
special interest group among others which vie for a hearing by the ultimate authority
that matters—the state itself.

of scriptural holiness, holds together a comprehensive view of the world whereby the
divine-human and human-human relationships both matter. Loving God and loving
neighbor cannot be separated because every Christian has agency as a person who is
both filled by the Holy Spirit’s power over sin and directed towards a life that reflects
God’s own holiness.

In order to illustrate the important aspect of ecclesial agency, Cavanaugh cites
political scientist, Michael Budde’s experience of being hired to consult on a strategy to
address poverty by a state-level association of bishops. The bishops wanted to lobby
the state legislature to address issues of poverty, and flatly rejected Budde’s suggestion
that they instead use the money to take the laity on retreats to introduce them to the
issues and possibilities of addressing poverty themselves. Instead of viewing the issue as
something for which the church might have its own agency to address, the bishops fired
him and spent their money lobbying. Lobbying the sovereign power is one example of
accepting the framing of life and the marginalization of the body of Christ. Since the
church in this way of thinking has only derivative authority, it must appeal to the state
to serve as the savior—further securing the state’s own narrative of soteriology.

4.1. Scriptural Holiness and Theopolitical Imagination

According to Fogel, the influence of the Third Great Awakening on social
concern has come to an end. While it accomplished much in terms of equity of condition

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77 Ibid., 44.
when measured by life expectancy and standards of living, regular reminders remain
that despite gains made by the Social Gospel and political processes that leveraged
governmental power to accomplish certain goals—social problems remain. In the new
postmodern concerns of the Fourth Great Awakening, there has been a recognition that
self-realization, deeper meaning in life, access to modern medicine, education for
spiritual values, stable retirement, and time for family activities are not equally
distributed.78 In 2015 in the United States alone, a racially motivated shooting in South
Carolina, the continued wave of awareness of police shootings, the Supreme Court
ruling legalizing same-sex marriage, and increasing awareness of human trafficking
within the United States illustrate that race, sexuality and marriage, labor, and
governmental authority over violence are not issues that have been resolved. These are
the types of issues that continue to present themselves for theology and the church to
understand and address. They are also issues that are commonly addressed by political
theologians, but holiness should be part of the way that these issues are discussed.

The Fourth Great Awakening is pushing towards the classical question of
philosophy and in one sense, theology: what is the good life?79 In this environment, the
holiness movement and holiness theology address this question by saying—the good life
is the life that is lived in surrender to the Holy Spirit’s guidance to live “with the grain of

78 Fogel, *The Fourth Great Awakening*, 2. He frames these disparities as problematic
for self-realization: “the most intractable maldistributions in rich countries such as the
United States are in the realm of spiritual or immaterial assets. These are the critical
assets in the struggle for self-realization.”

79 Ibid., 235.
the universe” that was created by God. When we stray outside of holiness, we are not living the good life. It may feel good, look good, sound good, but is based on a perversion of the good life. Answering questions of the good life and self-actualization is inherently political. In the next chapter, I will demonstrate through scriptural holiness in Leviticus that political theology should take account of the political fruitfulness offered when God’s people commit to maintaining a commitment to a worship community that strives to “be holy as I the LORD am holy.” In pursuing that vocation, individuals are not isolated from social systems and problems, but rather hold together vertical relation to God and horizontal relation to neighbors. In other words, pursuing holiness addresses social problems through the lens of scriptural holiness and so too should holiness theology.

Scriptural holiness aids theological reflection of these issues by carving out political space to address these issues theologically. For example, holiness can frame human agency as best situated within intermediate associations instead of capitulating to the state’s claim as the sole entity responsible for enforcing the morality of majorities or oligarchies. Theology provides different interpretations of current events and provides a way forward in the face of societal challenges. One of the ways that I will demonstrate the important role that holiness should play in these discussions is by turning to the book of Leviticus and the way that the priests responded to a valid prophetic critique of temple worship practice and offered a response that held together worship and ethics.
Scriptural holiness grounds theological reflection on these contemporary issues for Christians and society within a framework that can enable the church to maintain formation, mission, and worship as the proper locus and agency that addresses the challenges before us. Then, the church can be more than just a special interest group, or one voice among many, vying for the state to listen and enact its policies.

4.2. Returning to Scriptural Holiness

There are signs that the holiness movement is experiencing a renaissance of socially relevant piety. The Wesleyan Holiness Consortium has worked together on the issue of addressing human trafficking in the United States and abroad. These holiness movement churches are aligning against a social evil that they are describing as sin and addressing through more than just lobbying campaigns. One example of this is TraffickLight, where congregations are being introduced to the realities that lead people into modern day slavery (education) and offer concrete ways that they can become involved directly in grassroots activities like adjusting their economic activities and getting to know the women who work in strip clubs in their localities. They also work directly with an Indian orphanage, a prostitution transition program in Berlin, and a grass roots mission to people living on the street in Atlanta, one of the epicenters of human trafficking in the United States. The campaign is ecclessiocentric instead of channeling money to a lobbying arm. And yet, for this renewed sense of a social mission

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that is inherent to the holiness message of the movement to sustain its practice of holding together piety, formation, and social reform, the way that holiness, formation, and mission are understood matters. The holiness movement will need to maintain scriptural holiness if it is to avoid the demise of social concern that it experienced in the twentieth century or a demise in personal conversion and personal accountability for sin like it perceived in the Social Gospel of the early-twentieth century.

The final chapter addresses a moment in the biblical witness that provides scriptural grounding for holiness and a doctrinal foundation for the vocation of holiness. This vocation provides a fruitful avenue into political theology and can creatively address current and future theological questions. The Holiness school in Leviticus answers the prophetic social critique through a creative response that demonstrates scriptural holiness that takes sin, relation to God, and relation to neighbor as foundations for the faithful life of discipleship as a member of God’s people.
IV.

LEVITICUS AND SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS

1. Introduction

I have presented two theses. First, holiness can add to what political theology is already doing in terms of addressing questions of social and political issues. Second, the holiness movement can benefit from the insights of the Cavanaugh and Hauerwas stream of political theological thought. A proper doctrine of scriptural holiness is essential to provide the foundation for a political theology that resists the split between personal piety/conversion and social engagement/reform. Scriptural holiness entails both personal formation into the likeness of God’s holiness and the outward mission that aligns with God’s holy action in creation through Israel. This fusion of formation and mission is found clearly expressed in Leviticus. Moreover, the formative power of framing life around holiness in Leviticus lends itself as a vocational model that can guide contemporary holiness theology in confronting the alternative formation of the state that political theology has noted.

Many conceptions of holiness emphasize either right relationship to God (often characterized by pietistic and devotional practices) or right relationship to neighbor and environment (often characterized by social justice and environmental advocacy). These tendencies are often emphasized to the major neglect of the other approach. Within these two streams of holiness thought and practice, the political dimensions are either relegated to a private quest for purity or a public display of outward action that also
enables “good works” to be used as justification to overlook the importance of virtues that are classified as “private” in the modern era. The last chapter also showed that the holiness movement itself capitulated to the pressures of modern politics in the way it accepted the posture and status of a lobbying group in its participation with the Anti-Saloon League to emphasize federal legislative control of the moral issue of alcohol use.

The bifurcation of holiness into either interior virtue or outward mission is problematic if the political implications of a doctrine of holiness are to avoid becoming instrumentalized by nation-states according to the ground-rules of political activity in secular democracy. A creative solution is required for theology to escape the partitioning of life into mutually self-justifying spheres. While scriptural holiness cannot be isolated to an interpretation of one biblical book, the presentation of holiness in Leviticus is essential to the vision of scriptural holiness that I understand as enabling the vocation of politically relevant holiness.

Leviticus presents a conception of holiness that overcomes the bifurcation between private piety and public social justice. More specifically, the theological

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1 Johann Baptist Metz, *A Passion for God*, translated by J. Matthew Ashley (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), 143. Here Metz raises the problematic self-justification in modernity in which we find ourselves stumped with respect to recourse in politics when a competing ideology comes to power through the sphere’s determined procedures. He raises the example of how “a free democracy [can] protect itself from a political fundamentalism that comes to power in a procedurally correct fashion.” He proposes anamnestic reason as a resource to orient political discourse and get out of the self-fulfilling and self-justifying tendencies of modern life spheres (e.g., liberal politics or capitalist economics). Most modern systems and ideologies make sense if considered within their own framing and presuppositions. The challenge remains for theology to avoid the marginalization of only being able to speak or apply its conclusions within the modern category of “religion.”
creativity of Leviticus 17–26 addresses a time of crisis for Israel in which there was a bifurcation between priestly and prophetic conceptions of holiness that presented conflicting understandings of God and what it required to maintain Israel’s chosen identity as God’s people. I begin with an introduction to key compositional issues that influence my reading of Leviticus. These compositional issues serve to identify a shift within Leviticus; evidence suggests that this shift was an intentional correction to both earlier priestly material and the resulting prophetic critique. Analysis of both the structure of the book and several key texts will demonstrate that Lev 17–26 presents a theological fusion with respect to holiness that offers a response to the two myopic conceptions of holiness. I will then consider several ways in which the New Testament contains passages that continue this fusion. In terms of my broader argument, I am especially drawn to the commitment to construct a political community that is centered on properly relating to God and neighbor that is made possible by the broad communal formation through practices of holiness.

2. Theological Creativity in Levitical H Material

Christian theology often overlooks, dismisses, or ignores the book of Leviticus. When Leviticus is referenced, it is often limited to the call to imitate God’s holiness in Lev 19:2 or the phrase, “love your neighbor as yourself” (19:18). Other parts of Leviticus are ignored, perhaps because many of the laws and commands are confusing or appear
trivial to contemporary ears. Still, the book’s contribution with respect to God’s holiness and the implication of that holiness on the life and practice of God’s people cannot be dismissed. Leviticus contributes to the understanding of God in the Pentateuch and when compared with the legislation from neighboring cultures, presents powerful innovation over social and legal issues. These innovations begin to correct some of the confusing and troubling aspects of ancient cultures and are picked up in other writings within the Prophets and Writings and then again by Jesus and other writers in the New Testament.

Leviticus is ultimately concerned with ensconcing God’s character and purposes for Israel into rituals that can perdure and form the people into an *imitatio Dei*. Some

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2 I suspect that a general misunderstanding of the relation of the Old Testament to the New Testament is a significant reason for the confusion.

3 E.g., Consider the contrast in Jesus’ response to the woman caught in adultery in John 8:1-11 and the response prescribed in Lev 20:10 of death to both adulterer and adulteress. Yet, one chapter earlier in John’s telling, Jesus participates in the Levitical festival of Booths and is noted for having “such learning,” all while both pointing to the law of Moses but also challenging the way it has been followed and enforced (John 7:1-24).

4 This is the primary way in which Jacob Milgrom frames the purposes of the laws in Leviticus. See, *Leviticus: A Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 1, 180. As will become clear throughout this chapter, I am no enemy of historical critical study of Leviticus. In one sense, historical critical research is the *sine qua non* of this chapter and the conclusions that I draw about the theological creativity present in Leviticus derive heavily from the historical critical work of Israel Knohl and Jacob Milgrom. I do not think, however, that historical concerns should trump theological concerns when seeking to discern and describe proper interpretation of Leviticus as Scripture. Two brief introductions to the type of hermeneutical priority that I find crucial to understanding the concept of holiness, the vocation of holiness, and the political implications of that vocation are Stephen E. Fowl, *Theological Interpretation of Scripture*, Cascade Companions (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books, 2009), and Lewis Ayres and
scholars find historical concerns to be the keys to interpreting these rituals. I will grant
the hermeneutical priority to the theological concern of understanding the concept of
holiness and its relation to current challenges facing holiness theology. In order to do so,
the historical critical work will serve as evidence that Israel was facing a challenge to its
understanding of faithful worship and life. Acknowledging that the relationship
between historical concerns and theological ones cannot be limited to any precise
formula, this chapter will be my attempt to present a theological reading of the Levitical
texts that balances theological and historical questions and then point to the resultant
conclusions that this reading suggests. I will demonstrate that Leviticus 17–26 articulates
the political dimensions of sanctification and holiness such that the totality of Israel’s life
must reflect their understanding of God and present God’s holiness to the nations. By
pursuing God’s call to holiness in these ways, Israel can sustain right relationship with
God and neighbor instead of the polarizing approach of earlier priestly ritual or the
prophetic critique against those rituals.

2.1. Introduction into Levitical H and P Material and Its Theological Significance

Leviticus is part of the “Priestly Writings” and contains the largest portion of
material associated with a source, school, or section of similarly oriented material that
has been given various names: Holiness Code (HC), Holiness Legislation (HL), Holiness

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Stephen E. Fowl, “(Mis)reading the Face of God : The Interpretation of the Bible in the

5 Fowl notes the open-ended nature of the aim to prioritize theological concerns in
Theological Interpretation of Scripture, 23.
School (HS), Holiness source (H), and Holiness Redactor (Hr). This chapter will draw on recent scholarship on H material that situates Lev 17–26 as the major piece of an attempt to correct the myopic concerns of earlier priestly writings that ultimately failed to form Israel into a people who understand that proper relationship with God and neighbor are inherently linked together. This correction in Lev 17–26 holds together the disparate emphases of both priestly and prophetic traditions. It incorporates the priestly importance of formation through worship to the revision in response to the prophets concerning which laws are pleasing to God.

In terms of scriptural holiness, I am drawn to the way that earlier understandings of holiness were not discarded after the prophetic critique, but rather, the wellspring of holiness was recast to take account of the challenge. Because my concern is the theological creativity and response to the problem of compartmentalizing religion into either right relationship to God or right relationship to neighbor, I will use the terms H (Holiness) and H material instead of aligning with one source critical theory. I prefer this terminology because it emphasizes the presence of material that has led to

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Each of these terms is used widely but preferred by some interpreters over other names. E.g. Baruch J. Schwartz prefers HL because he thinks HC connotes a pre-existing collected source that was then added to P. Israel Knohl prefers HS, and Jacob Milgrom uses H and Hr. For a comprehensive review of the identification and various scholarly shifts in consensus regarding the Holiness code/material (first identified as a unit by K. H. Graf in 1866 and given the name Heiligkeitsgesetz by August Klostermann in 1893), see Henry T. C. Sun, "An Investigation into the Compositional Integrity of the so-Called Holiness Code (Leviticus 17-26)" (doctoral dissertation, Claremont Graduate University, 1990), 1-44. For an introduction that takes more recent scholarship into account, see “Excursus I: A Brief Survey of Scholarship on the So-Called ‘Holiness Code’” in Christophe Nihan, From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch: A Study in the Composition of the Book of Leviticus (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 4-11.
general scholarly consensus that there are two significant but different sections in Leviticus. The dominant characteristic and unifying theme of H material is the call for the Israelites to be holy. The title H material also acknowledges that the theological importance of the following argument is not directly dependent on any one source critical theory or scholar. Scholars have identified H material in contrast with the other “Priestly Writings,” or P, though as with the H designation some scholars modify P to indicate variations of the source. Baruch Schwartz offers a helpful definition of “Priestly Writings,”

The term as used today is simply a way of referring to those biblical texts, be they brief or lengthy, found mostly in the Pentateuch, that display certain characteristics – primarily linguistic ones, i.e., distinctive vocabulary and style, but also distinctive concepts, terms of reference and historical assumptions – that have somehow been determined to have been written by priests; not just any priests, but priests of the Temple priesthood in Jerusalem.7

When referring to these Priestly Writings, some scholars will note instances of P redaction and use the notation of Pr. Israel Knohl prefers PT (Priestly Torah) as a variant notation for P in order to differentiate his understanding of Torah composition by schools that worked over a period of time. Thus Knohl distinguishes his view from those who view composition as taking place at the hands of editors who pieced together

sources. Knohl and Jacob Milgrom have written most extensively regarding the characteristics and theological differences present within P and H. Their work will provide the primary critical analysis that serves to distinguish the innovation that is present in H material in comparison with other themes and schools within the Pentateuch.

This chapter will present the theological interpretation of the book of Leviticus with respect to the concept of holiness. Scriptural holiness must then incorporate the politics that are inherent in Leviticus if it is to serve as the foundation for a politically engaged vocation of holiness. There are a variety of hypotheses and theories regarding

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8 Knohl, “The Priestly Torah Versus the Holiness School: Sabbath and the Festivals,” Hebrew Union College Annual 58, (January 1, 1987) 66. Here, Knohl contrasts H and P while stating his preference for different terminology to indicate the work of schools instead of sources, “This school, which I will call the ‘Holiness School’ (HS), was indeed responsible for the recension and final edition of the P stratum, which I prefer to call the ‘Priestly Torah’ (PT).” When directly responding to or summarizing Knohl’s work, I will use the terms PT and HS at times; however, for consistency, the preferred designation for the Priestly Writings will be P.


10 There are certainly considerable debates concerning the origins and presence of the H portions of the Torah, and these debates are not insignificant for my project. Yet, they are of secondary concern to the theological interpretation and application of the H material that I propose in this chapter.
dating, source, and editorial layers of the H material in Leviticus. The identification of H material that I will use to demonstrate a creative response to the shortcomings of P’s concept of holiness is widely accepted by scholars of Leviticus. Even those who are hesitant to affirm a literary H “source,” acknowledge significant linguistic and stylistic differences in Lev 17–26 that establish these chapters as a related set of laws and narratives that articulate a particular theme or understanding of what it means for Israel to be called to be God’s holy people.


12 As with most issues in critical biblical scholarship, the influence of particular scholars’ hermeneutics of divine authorship and inspiration leads several scholars to argue against an H source. One representative critic of source critical studies is Nobuyoshi Kiuchi, who argues for Mosaic authorship. However, his logic presents a narrow view of divine inspiration and even Mosaic authorial influence. He states, “When due account is taken of [the high existential demands the Lord places on the Israelites and priests], such as the need to destroy the human egocentric nature..., an admission that priests of any group in Israel’s history could not have written Leviticus seems inevitable. The demands made of such people are just too high! Leviticus has its origin in God” (Kiuchi, Leviticus (Nottingham, Eng.: Apollos, 2007), 18). While, I am sympathetic to skepticism about firm dating and identification of strata within Leviticus, I remain unconvinced by Kiuchi’s argument. I do not find that his hermeneutics with respect to human participation in the authorship of Scripture represents an understanding of divine inspiration that is able to convincingly account for certain stylistic, historical, repetitious, and vocabulary differences between Lev 1-16 and 17-26. Other scholars who think source criticism has gone too far and spoken with too much certainty about diachronic theories stop short of Kiuchi’s dismissal of H material. E.g., Leigh M. Trevaskis argues for a consistent understanding of holiness in Lev 1-16 and 17-26; yet, even he acknowledges, “The distinction scholars make between P and H also derives from well-documented differences in vocabulary, idiom and style” (Holiness, Ethics and Ritual in Leviticus, Hebrew Bible Monographs (Sheffield, Eng.: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011), 9-10). Another example of a scholar who does not fully embrace a firm diachronic hypothesis about a Holiness School, but acknowledges some level of H-type material, is Ekhart Otto who states, “It makes more sense to identify HR with the redaction of the Pentateuch instead of inventing a Holiness school, which has no place in the literary history of the Pentateuch beyond D and P” (“Holiness Code in Diachrony
Within the H chapters in Leviticus, holiness is God’s presence made material within the land and people—an expansion on the way that other OT material uses the word “holy” and its derivatives.\textsuperscript{13} H has a particular meaning for holiness that is different from the ways that sources identified as Jahwist or P utilize terms deriving and Synchrony“ in *Strata of the Priestly Writings*, 144). His primary shift is approaching the text synchronically instead of attending to potential diachronic reconstructions and hypotheses. For Otto, “the narrative of the synchronically-read Pentateuch and its legal hermeneutics should be the starting point for any interpretation of the Holiness Code in Leviticus 17-26. It demonstrates that H and D have different addressees and functions in this narrative.... The authors of the redaction of the Pentateuch...were of the opinion that not the land but the Torah was YHWH’s decisive gift to His people, so that they supplemented the Sinai pericope with Leviticus 17-26, which was to be transmitted orally by the Aaronide priests, who were at that time at the end of the fifth or early fourth century BCE ‘disguised’ Zadokites” (149). “The legal hermeneutics of the Pentateuch do not give the slightest hint that H was part of the priestly source or that there was an HR redaction between this source and the redaction of the Pentateuch, but they deliver constructive hints that H was part of a coherent concept of the redaction of the Pentateuch” (150). Furthermore, Jacob Milgrom identifies his methodology as redaction criticism that is primarily concerned with synchronic and not diachronic analysis. He adds, “Stylistic, grammatical, and terminological anomalies by themselves, and even in concert, do not warrant the assumption of more than one source. These variations must be supplemented by jarring and irreconcilable inconsistencies and contradictions before the hypothesis of multiple strata is considered” (*Leviticus 1-16 Anchor Bible*, 2-3). Because of the breadth of scholarly recognition, the insights from H material are relevant for our attempt to conceive of the political dimensions of the doctrine of sanctification and should not be dismissed on ideological grounds or hermeneutical critique of source criticism. The source critical insights are used primarily for their power to frame the theme of holiness within Lev 17-26 as a creative response to a theological problem. Even if one denies the redaction processes that are emphasized by Knohl and Milgrom, the theological theme of sanctification as virtue and mission can be seen in this unit within Leviticus.

\textsuperscript{13} Anthony D. Baker also utilizes the difference in materiality in H as a contrast with J and P. In his work on Christian Perfection, he recognizes that God’s relation to Israel is different in a context that invokes imitation (Lev 19:2, “Be holy, as I the LORD your God, am holy.”). Baker argues that P does not understand YHWH as desiring imitation and H incorporates aspects of YHWH’s relation within both the Primeval History of J and the Exodus/Sinai traditions of P. See *Diagonal Advance: Perfection in Christian Theology*, Veritas Series (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade, 2011), 71-99.
from the root, שָׁדַי (holy). H uses שָׁדַי terms in “peculiar” ways in comparison with the rest of the Old Testament.14 Instead of presenting regulations for cultic purity, H addresses ethical concerns and explicitly uses God’s holiness as a key motivation: “you shall be holy, for I, the LORD your God, am holy.”

In the P material, holiness and words from the root שדַי are static categories that are distinguished from things that are profane. The holiness is contagious, and thus, it must be maintained and protected. H takes the characteristic holiness of the temple and priests in P and extends it to all the people and the land. The extension of purpose is applied broadly and repetitiously, as evidenced by H’s use of שדַי and שדַי rooted words more than twice as often in Lev 17-26 than P does in Lev 1-16. H effectively extends the contagiousness of the holiness to the witness of Israel vis-à-vis their neighbors.

The H material in Leviticus offers an explicit theological position15 and creative correction that demonstrates the necessary way forward if sanctification informed by scriptural holiness is to be understood as a political vocation for God’s people. Just as aspects of the modern West rend the relationship to neighbor from the relationship to God, there is evidence within Leviticus that a strain of priestly practice separated morality from cultic observance.16 Israel Knohl identifies the different treatment for

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15 As I will discuss below, this position is also likely to be a creative moment of theological response to a contemporary challenge facing Israel’s priestly leaders.

16 Knohl makes this argument explicitly in reference to a Priestly source (PT) in which after the revelation of God’s divine name (YHWH), the priests and cultic activity
ethical and cultic legislation as a significant difference between the Priestly Torah (PT) and Holiness School (HS) and states, “PT perceives a total separation between the ethical realm and the cultic. In its opinion, the ethical imperative is the basis for the existence of the universe and of human society. Moral law is essentially universal, and the world operates according to it during the primeval and patriarchal ages.” The implications of this are significant for the people of Israel because within the emphasis of P, holiness becomes a cultic and ritualistic concern and does not inhere with social justice. H offers a corrective shift to the P approach to legislation, and the theological meaning behind this shift provides an instructive example for overcoming contemporary challenges facing holiness theology.

Knohl and Milgrom agree on the dating of P as preexilic for linguistic style, idiom, and terminologic reasons. As Milgrom concludes, “thus the diachronic study of Priestly terminology, the comparison between P and D, and the variety of data culled from realia, institutions, literary forms, and historical allusions lead inexorably to one

within the Temple are solely concerned with ritual and not morality. This morality was still present, and God’s moral law still mattered for all people. The particular task and scope of the priestly work, however, was related to cultic concerns. Israel Knohl, “Priestly Torah Versus the Holiness School: Ideological Aspects,” 52.

17 Knohl, Sanctuary of Silence, 226.

18 Israel Knohl, “The Priestly Torah Versus the Holiness School: Ideological Aspects,” 52. See also Milgrom, Leviticus 1-16, 21-26. Here, Milgrom generally accepts Knohl’s thesis, but pushes back specifically in regards to the claim that there is no moral concern for P. For Milgrom, the Day of Atonement rituals in P do assume an ethical locus of concern.
conclusion: the Priestly texts are preexilic.”\textsuperscript{19} Milgrom also follows Knohl’s sequence of H coming later than P and likely during the eighth century BCE.\textsuperscript{20} Knohl offers the specific context for H as a school rising in influence during the leadership of Ahaz and Hezekiah (mid-eighth century BCE).\textsuperscript{21}

The vision of life and conception of holiness presented in the H material answers the same social crisis that initiated classical prophecy.\textsuperscript{22} The prophets reacted against the cultic legislation that failed to properly ensure social justice. Whereas the H material addresses these social concerns, the prophetic response too overtly dismissed the role of the cult and priesthood.\textsuperscript{23} Therefore, both the H material and prophets offer alternatives to the cultic legislation found in P that too narrowly focused on the vertical dimension of worship to the neglect of a social and religious crisis that emerged over time.\textsuperscript{24} Thus, Lev 17–26 should be understood as the primary unit of material that illustrates the creative theological response to the threat facing the worship practices of the cult. And yet, in the

\textsuperscript{19} Milgrom, Leviticus 1-16, 12. See also Knohl, “The Priestly Torah Versus the Holiness School: Ideological Aspects,” 57. Knohl puts PT “between the erection of Solomon’s temple and the reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah.”

\textsuperscript{20} Milgrom, Leviticus 1-16, 13.

\textsuperscript{21} Knohl, “The Priestly Torah Versus the Holiness School: Ideological Aspects,” 56.


\textsuperscript{23} Knohl, Sanctuary of Silence, 199-224.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 214-216.
face of prophetic backlash against the priestly cult, the response of Lev 17–26 is not merely a reassertion or even reapplication of the validity of the cultic practices. Instead, Knohl states, “The new Priestly school [HS] did not limit its activity to combining existing ideas and creating new theoretical constructs; it developed practical solutions to the contemporary crises as part of its theological cultic framework.”

The holiness movement’s understanding of scriptural holiness faces a similar contemporary challenge of relevance in the face of contemporary public issues and political problems. In light of the fall away from politically relevant conceptions of holiness (because of the constricted understanding of sin, the influence of premillennialism, and the retreat from public discourse in rejection of the Third Great Awakening), the example of the theological response in this section of Leviticus is especially instructive.

We turn to the specifics of the creative insight in the H material having in mind the move towards a privatized understanding of holiness and the disconnect it has created with the lived experience that has inspired the revival of social justice concerns within holiness theology. Whether read as the work of a school or a unit within scripture (or both), Lev 17–26 (and other H material) presents faithfulness to God as a comprehensive task for all of Israel. In doing so, H holds together the seemingly

25 Ibid., 216.

26 E.g., human trafficking mentioned in chapter three.

27 E.g., the motivational clause added to the dietary laws (Lev 11:44-45) that locates these laws as actions that are part of Israel’s actions being aligned with the pursuit of holiness because God is holy. This has been identified as related to the H material or source because of the characteristic linguistic and vocabulary style of chapters 17-26.
contradictory emphases heralded by prophetic texts and Lev 1–16. The H material presents an appropriation, critique, and correction to the prophetic declaration that God does not desire offerings and sacrifice but wants clean hearts and care for widows and orphans.28 At the same time, it corrects the priestly literature that details the elaborate sacrificial rituals necessary to cure the uncleanness of particular actions.29 The H material offers theological innovation by fusing the cultic and moral realms.30 This fusion is instructive as theological creativity and will reappear on the lips of Jesus when he is asked about the greatest commandments in Mark 12:28–35. In this passage, he articulates the necessity of both right relation to God and to neighbor.

2.2. “Priestly Writings”: Right Relationship to God through Cultic Worship

In order to understand the shift of emphasis by the H material in Lev 17–26, we must first identify the predominant themes and emphases of the P material that includes the majority of Lev 1–16.31 Though various scholars have produced different

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28 E.g., Isa 1:11-17; Hos 6:6; Amos 5:22; Jer 6:20, 7:22, 14:12; and Psa 40:6.

29 See, Lev 1-16 as illustrative of priestly codification of laws and rituals relating to the various cultic means for maintaining the purity of the Temple, priests, and Israel.

30 Knohl, Sanctuary of Silence, 176.

31 One passage in Lev 1-16 that has been identified as non-P or H is the motivational clause in Lev 11:43-45 that many scholars see as an editorial addition to the food laws of Lev 11: 1-42. The prevalence of acceptance of this view is clear from Trevaskis devoting an entire chapter of his dissertation to critique the view that 11:43-45 introduces a new understanding of holiness that is not already present in Lev 11. He states, “I am not trying to argue that Lev 11.43-45 was original to P. Chapter 1 acknowledged stylistic and linguistic features, in addition to its use of holiness
stratifications and classifications of texts, I will work from the identification of Lev 1–16 as P material with a few exceptions where literary style, ideology, and vocabulary indicate passages are more closely related to the H material (e.g., Knohl offers several verses in Lev 1–16 that he determines to be related to the HS: 1:1; 3:17; 6:10-11; 7:19b, 22-36; 9:16; 10:6-11; 11:43-45; 14:34; 15:31; 16:29-34).\(^{32}\)

The predominant emphasis within the P material with respect to holiness is that holiness is static and primarily concerned with right relationship to God through the rituals that keep the priests and sacred objects holy. At times, the holiness and purity of objects influences the wider population of Israel in cases including the food laws of Lev 11, but the primary emphasis focuses on the actions and rituals of the priests. Even in chapter 11, the emphasis is upon the ritual cleanness of the animal and its effect on the one who touches a carcass or eats an unclean animal. These distinctions between clean and unclean animals do not receive explicit ethical application until the H attributed motivational clause in 11:44-45.

There is a stark shift in P material between the divine concern over ethics under the name Elohim in Genesis and the concern after the revelation of the divine name terminology, which distinguish it from its literary context.” See, Trevaskis, *Holiness, Ethics and Ritual in Leviticus*, 49. See also, Milgrom, *Leviticus: A Continental Commentary*, 213. “The call to holiness is found only in [Lev] chapters 19-22… and in two other H passages ([Lev] 11:44-45; Num 15:40) at the beginning or the end of units.”

\(^{32}\) *Sanctuary of Silence*, 105. This chart also references the arguments he makes for these distinctions in other parts of his book.
YHWH to Moses.\textsuperscript{33} Israel Knohl describes the distinction between the names of God that is maintained in PT, “we find a clear-cut distinction among the names of God employed: the name אֱלֹהִים is never juxtaposed to the name of Yahweh in PT.”\textsuperscript{34} Knohl argues that PT understands there to be two periods of divine revelation that are identifiable by the different names God uses for self identification.\textsuperscript{35} God shifts from anthropomorphic presence to non-human presence including consuming fire and cloud.\textsuperscript{36} With the shift in God’s revelation, there is also a shift in God’s demands and the relationship of God with humanity. As is shown in Genesis, God is intimately involved with many of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs. This relation changes with the revelation of the name of YHWH, especially in the ten plagues narrative when a shift occurs, and “God’s main purpose…is to make his name known in the midst of the land.”\textsuperscript{37} After this, God’s presence is revealed at Sinai and Moses receives the commandments.

Knohl contrasts H to P by noting that for P, “the commandments are not at all designed to establish social order, righteousness or justice; they all relate exclusively to the ritual-cultic sphere.”\textsuperscript{38} Even in a situation that addresses social injustice, the case of

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\textsuperscript{33} I will leave the divine name spelled out as “Yahweh” in quotations; however, I prefer the tetragrammaton (YHWH) and will use it in paraphrases and my own writing.

\textsuperscript{34} Knohl, \textit{Sanctuary of Silence}, 124.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 125.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 129.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 138.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 138-39.
the law of guilt offerings in Lev 5:20-26, a cultic reason must exist for the case to come before the priests. This case must be addressed by the priests because of the false oath sworn before God and not because the priests need to redress social injustice. To be certain, P sees social order, righteousness, and justice as important, but these are not of particular concern of cultic rituals. This early priestly framing would fit with the bifurcation between “religious” and “secular” concerns of modernity. The H shift away from this limited scope for worship regulations is a theological turn that holiness theology needs to incorporate into its scriptural holiness.

P offers a set of cultic rituals that is uniquely focused on maintaining the purity of the sanctuary. P is less concerned with morality and justice than H or the other neighboring cultures. Knohl states, “especially striking is the absence [in Israel’s cult] of any sacrifice or other ritual device for assuring victory in times of war, and PT’s exception to ceremonies symbolizing expectation of a bountiful harvest. The punishment for the violation of the commandment is described as a necessary consequence of sin, rather than the act of a personal God who punishes those who transgress his will.” In Genesis, God was concerned to provide for human needs and secure the order of creation, but in the period of Moses, God’s commands are disconnected from any sense of reward. Instead, commands are purely “unilateral demand[s] imposed on Israel.”

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39 Ibid., 139.

40 Ibid., 140.

41 Ibid., 144.
Knohl explains this shift in understanding of God’s relation to creation and humanity (through Israel),

The revelation of the name of Yahweh results in a Copernican revolution. Moses and, following him, Israel learn to recognize the essence of divine nature, which is unrelated to creation, or to humanity and its needs. This dimension cannot be fully comprehended by humans and surpasses the limits of morality and reason, since morality and its laws are only meaningful in relation to human society and human understanding. The aspect of divine essence that surpasses reason and morality—the ‘numinous’ element—is represented in PT by the name of Yahweh.\(^\text{42}\)

The implication of this “Copernican revolution” is that the prior sphere—the universal realm of creation—is concerned with morality and this persists only as the concern of civil authority. Whereas the Genesis revelation of God’s name is for all humankind, “the revelation of the name of Yahweh to Moses and its faith content are the sole possession of Israel.”\(^\text{43}\) With P’s internal focus, the concept of holiness is changed, too. When God’s revelation becomes exclusively concerned with the cultic sphere and the sanctuary, holiness also becomes exclusively about things in relation to the sanctuary.

Holiness is imparted to objects and people through ceremonies, not through moral action, righteousness, or justice. Ceremonies and procedures are put in place so that the priests can serve in the sacred area where God’s presence appears; maintaining this presence of God is the primary focus of the cult.\(^\text{44}\) The emphasis on maintaining the sanctuary’s holiness can be seen in the concentration of the laws in Lev 1–16 on “the

\(^{42}\) Ibid., 146.

\(^{43}\) Ibid., 147.

\(^{44}\) Ibid., 152.
interior space of the desert Tabernacle” which serves as an “expression of [the priests’]
total lack of concern with basic human needs or social legislation.” And yet, this
presentation of the priestly concerns does not necessarily mean they were unconcerned
with the well-being of Israel’s non-priestly classes. On the contrary, this concentration of
maintaining the holiness of the sanctuary was for the purpose of maintaining God’s
presence with Israel. This concentration certainly led to isolation and separation, but
seems tied to a particular understanding of God’s intention to be the personal God of
Israel for whom YHWH actively enabled their Exodus from Pharaoh. Insuring God’s
presence was the priests’ vocation in P. The ethics that derives from P’s laws is an
implicit ethic for life.

Among scholars of P and H, Knohl presents the most exclusive portrait of P’s
understanding of the purpose of the cult. He claims, “The legal system promulgated in
Moses’ time does not include a single command whose exclusive concern is the
maintenance of morality and social justice.” Even in those places where morality
appears to be addressed through legislation, Knohl rebuts, “In the view of the Priestly
Torah, [transgressions of commandments about human relations and moral
transgressions] are not part of the cultic system, and thus the priests do not deal with

45 Ibid, 156.

46 Ibid., 226. At the conclusion of Sanctuary of Silence, Knohl includes his response
to Milgrom who adopted much of Knohl’s argument concerning the dating of P and H,
but rejected Knohl’s claim that P has no ethical concern. Part of Knohl’s argument
against Milgrom includes the idea that “the Bible perceives adultery to be not so much
an ethical evil as an affront to God” while pointing to David’s words in Ps 51:6
regarding the Bathsheba affair, “Against You alone have I sinned, and done what is evil
in Your sight.” (Sanctuary, 228).
them. The rectification of moral misconduct is effected by the return of stolen property to its owner, and not by the offering of a sacrifice or the sending out of a scapegoat.”

Morality and the cult operate separately, and holiness only relates to the latter for P.

Others recognize the difference in moral concern between P and H, yet identify implicit or general moral elements within the P material. Where Knohl does not see any ethical concern on the part of P, Milgrom does see an ethical component to the legislative material in P. For example, Milgrom describes the dietary laws as “rungs on the ladder of holiness, leading to a life of pure thought and deed, characteristic of the nature of God.” These dietary laws serve as a habituating set of daily practices “that remind humans that life is sacred,” which is the foundation for “a way of life fully informed by other ethical virtues.” Milgrom continues, “Whereas every person bears the responsibility for differentiating between good and evil, Israel, in addition, is responsible for differentiating between impure and pure.” Especially in the food laws, we see the mirroring of God’s activity on the part of humanity for, “Creation was the product of God making distinctions (Gen 1:4, 6, 7, 14, 18). This divine function is to be continued by Israel: the priests to teach it (Lev 10:10-11) and the people to practice it.”

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47 Ibid., 229.


49 Ibid.

50 Ibid., 115.

51 Ibid., 121.
Milgrom agrees with a shift from ritual to morality in the H chapters; however, he also acknowledges an ethical component to the rituals in P.\textsuperscript{52} Leigh M. Trevaskis goes a step further than Milgrom, claiming P and H have the same concept of holiness. He sets out “to assess the widely held assumption that an ethical dimension to holiness did not exist before a prophetic critique of the priestly cultic tradition.”\textsuperscript{53} He notes the consensus that “P’s holiness is described as a \textit{cultic} concept because it is produced by rituals rather than ethical behavior.”\textsuperscript{54} Against this consensus, Trevaskis argues that ethics is present in the traditionally assigned P material, and the shift most commonly noted in H to ethics from ritual is actually a shift of making an implicit ethics more explicit. I find his argument somewhat compelling in as much as he points out that H makes an implicit holiness from P explicit; however, his argument does not seem to fully undermine Knohl, Milgrom, or Mary Douglas (his three major dialogue partners).

Knohl and Milgrom identify shifts between the moral concerns of H and P. Furthermore, Trevaskis actually serves to support the claim that the H material is doing

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 108, 175. In his discussion of Lev 11, Milgrom identifies the dietary laws as part of an ethical habitation to teach Israel that life is sacred. Yet, he also describes a shift in the emphases between P and H in the opening lines of his chapter on the Holiness Source (H), “With chapter 17, the verbal and ideological scenery of Leviticus changes. We have entered the domain of H…ritual impurity becomes moral impurity; and the domain of the sacred expands…the result of these two ideological changes is a decided emphasis on ethical behavior and the granting of civil equality to the resident alien” (175).

\textsuperscript{53} Trevaskis, \textit{Holiness, Ethics and Ritual in Leviticus}, vii.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 1.
something new by changing the priestly emphasis to more directly include the actions
and lives of the laity outside the sanctuary. These three historical-critical scholars see
different levels to the shift between P and H, yet all three also serve to elucidate the
variety of ways in which something new and different is happening in Lev 17–26 when
it is looked at in comparison with Lev 1–16. The concerns of the priests and the focus of
the laws change.

The concern of the laws and the calling on the people of Israel changes in Lev 17–
26. This is true whether it was because the universal morality of God’s revelation in
Genesis 1-11 was being neglected, a general ethic of life was not being effective, or
because an implicit morality needed to be made explicit. Maintaining the purity and
holiness of the sancta and sanctuary is no longer sufficient. Within Lev 17–26, the call to
holiness extends beyond the sanctuary to include all the land and beyond the priests to
include all the people. The legislation found in Lev 17–26 also incorporates concern for
social relationships and economic justice—issues that are more characteristically
prophetic than priestly concerns.

Of these three scholars, Knohl argues most strongly for a particular time and
setting of the activity of H’s shift from P’s emphasis on cultic ritual to the broader ethical
and moral concept of holiness present in Lev 17–26. He identifies the prophetic critique
as a powerful impetus for the Holiness School. The origin of the Holiness material was
a response to the following developments: the incursion of idolatrous practices
into Israel, especially the worship of Molech and soothsaying and conjuring of
familiar spirits; the development of social polarization leading to the uprooting
of farmers from their lands and their enslavement to the rich; and the
detachment of morality from the cult...Finally, the curses at the conclusion of the Holiness Code reflect the impact of forced mass exile on the people.\textsuperscript{55}

Knohl offers a range of dates in which these concerns were all present (743-701 BCE).\textsuperscript{56} He supplies thorough evidence for his dating suggestion for H, and his work was the turning point in the field of biblical studies with respect to the ordering of P and H to the point that Jacob Milgrom describes Knohl’s dissertation on the dating of H after P as “brilliantly argued and his major findings are both persuasive and decisive.”\textsuperscript{57} And yet, when approached from a theological hermeneutic, the most important aspect of his argument is the way that H material answers so many of the prophets’ concerns, especially within the prophecy of Isaiah.\textsuperscript{58} Isaiah proclaims the call to holiness so that God’s presence will fill all the earth (Isa 6:3), which is similar to the expansion of God’s presence beyond the Sanctuary in Lev 22:31–32 where God is “in their midst.” Isaiah also describes the people as sanctifying God’s name or profaning God’s name (Isa 29:23)

\textsuperscript{55} Knohl, \textit{Sanctuary of Silence}, 205. To these he adds more specifics. Among the pertinent evidence he uses to posit a diachronic location for the HS writing to sometime between 743 and 701 B.C.E., Knohl depends on several pieces of evidence. These include: Molech worship and soothsaying were present during the reign of Ahaz and Manasseh (206); Hezekiah and Josiah sought to centralize the cult (206); king Hezekiah’s reforms correspond to the laws of HS (207); and “It would seem, thus, that the religious, social, and political conditions under the reign of Ahaz and Hezekiah in Judea most closely correspond to the picture that emerges from the Holiness Code. It would seem that the change in Priestly circles that led to the rise of HS took place at this time” (209). In later sections Knohl compares HS with Isaiah (212-14), Priestly reaction to prophetic critique (214-216), and practical and ideological solutions offered to problems of the 8th century BCE (216-218).

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 209.

\textsuperscript{57} Milgrom, \textit{Leviticus 1–16 Anchor Bible}, 13.

\textsuperscript{58} Knohl, \textit{Sanctuary of Silence}, 213.
just as Lev 20:3 presents H’s view that by sinning, Israel profanes God’s name. But Knohl points out that the most significant parallel is the nature and characteristic of holiness in Isaiah and HS. Both “infuse the concept of holiness with moral content.” Here we see the significance for the holiness movement and political theology. Scriptural holiness fuses together the concept of holiness as rooted in God’s holiness (identity and “being”) with moral content (ethics or practical “doing”). The similarities between Isaiah and H end with Isaiah’s dismissal of offerings and Sabbaths. In terms of formation, offerings and Sabbaths were worship practices that marked time, land, and economic stewardship. The prophetic rejection of these worship practices undermines the crucial aspect of formation that is at the heart of a people adhering to their purpose and mission. Political theology and holiness theology should attend to H’s ability to both address the social concerns highlighted by Isaiah and maintain formative worship practices.

Just as the prophets were responding to the social and religious crises of their days, H material clearly answers many of the same problems, yet without dismissing the role of the priesthood and the cultic and religious practices and festivals. Whether one finds Knohl’s eighth century BCE context for the H material compelling or not, the H material clearly includes answers to moral, ethical, and justice concerns that were facing Israel. We will turn to examples of these newly conceived approaches to holiness after


60 Knohl, Sanctuary of Silence, 213.
describing the way in which H offers a fusion of cultic and ethical (priestly and prophetic) concerns.

3. H Material as Theological Fusion and Critique

The H material has distinct vocabulary and theological emphases that not only distinguishes it from other Pentateuchal material, but also fuses a priestly locus of cultic practices with the recognition that God is also concerned with justice and social well-being. H has several linguistic characteristics. Jacob Milgrom uses certain language choices to determine H from P. He identifies “H’s quintessential idioms: ‘אני ה’ אלהיכם’ (I YHWH your God’; cf. Lev 20:8; 21:8, 15, 23, 22:6, 32) the plural construct שבטה (cf. Lev 16:31; 23:3, 32; 25:4, 5), and YHWH’s direct address to Israel (Exod 31:13, 15; 35:2, 3 LXX).”61 Additionally, the H material takes on a hortatory style and adds a motivational clause to the dietary laws.62 These stylistic differences help to identify Lev 17–26 as a unit and enable the recognition of H redaction in other places within the Torah; however, it is the fusion of priestly concern for ritual worship and the inclusion of commands to enact justice and morality as part of holiness that I want to identify and then explicate as a foundation for scriptural holiness for


political theology and the holiness movement’s commitment to be God’s holy people in mission.

Israel Knohl identified the Holiness School as a response from within the Priestly tradition to the prophetic critique of Isaiah, and he is not the only one who sees H as a response to the prophetic themes and dismissals of the priestly functions and rituals. Eckhart Otto claims, “The order of H, ‘you shall be holy, for I, YHWH, your God am holy,’ is directed against Josh 24,19: ‘you cannot serve YHWH; for He is a holy God; He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions or your sins.’” There is also a clear tension between H and the prophetic and Davidic understandings of God’s desires. For example, Psalm 40:6-7 “Sacrifice and offering you do not desire, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required. Then I said, ‘Here I am; in the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.” However, H includes Sabbath observance and acceptable sacrifice in Lev 19:3-8. Later in Lev 19, concern for the poor, resident alien, and elderly are the subject of God’s commands to be holy (19: 10; 33-34; 32). While these are concerns within the social vision of Exodus, it is also a prophetic concern in Isaiah, where the neglect of these groups is part of the condemnation of Judah’s judicial

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What if YHWH’s will is that God’s people would participate in the communal worship that rightly considers God’s broader concerns for the ethical actions of all people towards their neighbors? H presents faithful observance of God’s commands as the pursuit of holiness, and God’s will includes both priestly rituals and the concern for the wellbeing of marginalized groups of people.

Knohl’s analysis of the different eras of divine revelation is helpful in identifying the way in which the H material offers a creative fusion of morality and ritual, bringing God’s concern for the wellbeing of people into the fold of rituals. The H material offers a profound change in shifting moral concerns into the cultic system—making morality religious and demonstrating the existence of separate realms for which the boundaries must be crossed as one’s right relation to God now also entails right relation to neighbor, land, and creation. The inclusion of individual well-being and the intimate concern for the land and animals as representative of creation is a common theme in the prophetic literature. For example, the injustice of land acquisition in the monarchic period elicited prophetic protest in Isa 5. In this sense, H offers a corrective to both the severance of morality as civil from sacrality as cultic in P and the prophetic neglect of cultic worship

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65 See Lev 19:10 as an example of how the reaping of harvests and gathering of vineyards is directly tied to provision for the poor and alien. I will address the implications of right relation to God and neighbor in Lev 19 in the next section of this chapter.

66 Pleins, Social Visions, 256. See also, Knohl. Sanctuary of Silence, 229-230.
in its sole emphasis on morality and social justice. Holiness gains a more comprehensive scope that extends far beyond humanity as the H material holds together these prophetic concerns with the worship practices and ritual observances of sacrifices, sabbaths, and festivals, all now part of the call to holiness in imitation of God’s holiness. The demand to cross previously held boundaries between cultic and moral realms instructs scriptural holiness to also transgress the boundaries of public and private, religious and secular that are drawn in liberal democratic states. Thus, Christian practices relating to environmental and dietary issues are not merely social or merely personal issues, but held together within scriptural holiness.

3.1. Textual Examples

Having introduced the H material, its characteristic emphases, and the shifts that take place with respect to how God relates to Israel in H as opposed to P, we turn now to analyze some of the texts in the H material that display this important fusion. We first consider Leviticus chapter 19, a unit that has been described as upping the ante of the Ten Commandments by Richard Boyce.\(^{67}\) Leviticus 19 demonstrates the creative enmeshing of ritual and morality that is characteristic of H material. The second aspect of our exegetical work will be considering the use and impact of H’s motivational clauses. And finally, I will discuss the Jubilee and Sabbath laws and their expansion of the meaning and scope of holiness in Lev 25.

3.2. Leviticus 19—A New Decalogue

When Jesus is asked in Mark 12:28, “Which commandment is the greatest of them all?” he answers with a quotation from Lev 19. In the Common Lectionary, Leviticus receives limited inclusion; however, the two Levitical selections come from chapter 19 and conclude with the same verse, “But you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord” (19:18). This chapter presents a thorough picture of the H material’s understanding of holiness. Knohl describes its importance for understanding H, “Out of the religious and social crisis of the period of Ahaz and Hezekiah, and as a reaction to the prophetic critique of cultic institutions, a new Priestly concept of holiness emerges… the fullest exposition of that concept is in Leviticus 19, the central chapter of the Holiness Code.” As part of her analysis of a “ring structure” in the book of Leviticus, chapters 19 and 26 serve as the ends of the axis emphasizing right relation between neighbors (19) and right relation with God (26) for Mary Douglas as well. Leviticus 19 opens with the command for the people of Israel to be holy (19:2) and concludes with the command to keep the statutes and observe them because “I am the

68 Ibid., 72.

69 Knohl, Sanctuary of Silence, 229.

70 The ring structure for Leviticus was first identified in Mary Douglas, “Poetic Structure in Leviticus,” 239-56 in Pomegranates and Golden Bells: A Festschrift in Honor of Jacob Milgrom, Ed. D. P. Wright et al. (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1995). Milgrom affirms Douglas’s ring construction in his article “He in Leviticus and Elsewhere in the Torah,” in which he commends it for identifying chapter 19 as the central turning point that is flanked by chiastic chapters of equivalent content (28).
Lord” (19:37). These demonstrate the changed direct address by God that Knohl and others have noted, and between these boundaries, the substance of the legislation that Moses conveys to the people draws all of life, sacred and secular, under the auspices of holiness and faithfulness to the vocation of being God’s people.

Mary Douglas’s literary analysis of a ring structure in Leviticus helps visualize the centrality of Lev 19 for the book as well as its pivotal role in balancing the various vertical and horizontal dimensions of holiness as presented in the rest of Leviticus. In Lev 1-18, things and persons are marked as holy, they are defiled, means of atonement is presented, new regulations for maintenance are offered and finally Lev 19 presents the way in which there is equity between the people. From Lev 20-25, the issues are treated in reverse until the emphasis in Lev 26-27 of equity between God and humanity and the reminder that redeemed things belong to God (See Figure 1 next page).
Leviticus in a Ring

Figure 1: Leviticus in a Ring: Milgrom, “Hₐ in Leviticus,” 27.

Leviticus 19 serves as the book’s presentation of the summation of God’s laws that enable people to live in right relation to each other. The chapter touches all aspects of life, and the purpose of its commands is to lead Israel to become holy.⁷¹ Each of these

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commandments is cast as part of God’s holiness. For instance, repeatedly the rationale
given as the source of these commandments includes the refrain, “because I, the L ORD
your God, am holy.” One clear example of the way in which these commandments are
drawn into the concept of God’s holiness can be seen in the fourteen instances of the
refrain, “I am the Lord” or “I am the Lord your God.” Milgrom describes these
commands as the rungs that construct the ladder of God’s holiness. As Israel observes
these commandments they climb towards the holiness that God is and has desired for
them. Thus, Israel is to treat the resident alien as a citizen and love them as themselves
because that is how God treated them when they were resident aliens in Egypt (19:33–
34). As God’s people climb the ladder of holiness by observing these commandments,
sanctification results.

Leviticus 19 proclaims that holiness is within the grasp of all Israelites. Milgrom
identifies eighteen units in Lev 19, which “comprise ethical as well as ritual
commandments” through which “we are given a glimpse of the revolutionary step taken
by H: H proclaims that holiness, hitherto limited by P to the sacred sphere (the
sanctuary) and its officiants (the priests), is now within the reach of every Israelite
provided that he or she heeds cultic prohibitions and fulfills the ethical requirements

of the commands in Lev 19, even Kiuchi who rejects the categorization of H and P
material, notes the variety of relationships now considered and links this chapter to the
motivational clause in Lev 11:44-45, viewing ch. 19 as “the sequel” that “deals with
human conduct in relation to holiness” (Leviticus, 345).

Milgrom, Leviticus: A Continental Commentary, 178. Milgrom’s metaphor of the
ladder implies ascent, but the emphasis is better understood in terms of growth towards
God than some of the implications that ascent per se carries.
specified in [chapter 19].” Among these units the first two are clear echoes of the
Decalogue. The Sabbath is to be sanctified, parents are to be honored, and worship of
other gods or images of Israel’s God are forbidden. As the chapter unfolds, commands
appear that further illustrate the connection between God’s holiness and these
commands. Milgrom notes that the commands about horticultural holiness (vv. 9–10)
are tied directly to imitatio Dei, in which by setting aside part of the harvest,
“symbolically, YHWH has assigned some of his due to the poor.” When verses 9–10 are
juxtaposed with verses 5–8, the fusion emerges. The right relationship to God is
maintained through offering the well-being sacrifice in an acceptable manner and eating
it in proper ways because failure to do so profanes what is holy to YHWH. And the next
unit immediately addresses right relationship to neighbors by connecting care of the
poor and alien through harvest practices to the motivational refrain: “I am the LORD
your God.”

Nobuyoshi Kiuchi proposes a chapter structure in which verses 3–18 focus on the
relationship with God and neighbor while verses 19–32 focus on the addressee. He also

73 Ibid., 213.
74 See, Lev 19:3b; Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15.
75 See, Lev 19:3a; Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16.
76 See, Lev 19:4; Exod 20:3-6; Deut 5:7-10. Milgrom notes these echoes in Leviticus: A Continental Commentary, 213.
77 Ibid.
78 Kiuchi, Leviticus, 346. While this structure is helpful in illustrating the variegated purposes of the commands in Lev 19, there are many commands that Kiuchi
sees this chapter as offering “a further elucidation of the Decalogue with special reference to holiness.” The elucidation offered of the Decalogue has further implications for the conception of holiness and most significantly, the scope of whose actions are most important for presenting God’s holiness. A fundamental shift happens in Lev 19 and the other H material in which God’s holiness is presented to the world not exclusively through the priest’s maintenance of God’s presence in the sanctuary, but also by the people who walk the road or climb the ladder of holiness. This fundamental shift is the vocation of holiness.

The extension of holiness activity beyond the Temple and priesthood is central to the scriptural holiness that emerges in Lev 17-26. Holiness theology has historically emphasized this extension of holiness action to all believers through its commitment to sanctification, entire consecration, and the belief that the Holy Spirit gifts and calls persons in order to sustain the body of Christ in its mission as God’s holy people. This commitment to holiness on the part of all Christians confronts the professionalization of modern society and enables a particular form of political community that transgresses modern boundaries of class, ethnicity, and gender.

interprets as exclusively internal concerns despite possible readings that would see these commands as also concerned with the outward witness presented to the other nations.

79 Ibid., 347.

80 Ibid.

An additional challenge from Lev 19 to modern notions of law observance can easily be missed in English translation. The NRSV translates 19:16 as, “You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not profit by the blood of your neighbor: I am the LORD.” The variant offered for this verse in the NRSV notes that “profit by the blood” can also mean, “stand against the blood.” Neither of these translations holds a clear meaning in English. Jacob Milgrom notes that this verse relates to standing idle while someone else is being drowned, mauled, attacked or in some other danger. The profiting comes from not risking one’s life to help that neighbor in need.82 Milgrom draws the contrast between this law and contemporary law by citing Joseph Telushkin’s example, “contemporary American law is rights-, rather than obligation-, oriented. For example, if you could easily save a child who is drowning, but instead stand by and watch it drown, you have violated no American law. Under biblical law, however, you have committed a serious crime.”83 Once again, this is a place where my understanding of scriptural holiness fits within the Cavanaugh and Hauerwas stream of political theology in its eschewal of the primacy of rights as a means to justice. The biblical injunction here is to practice love of neighbor through obedience or obligation rather than the right of the neighbor. The result may seem the same—the person in need receives help—but the importance of the fusion of formation

82 Ibid., 230. He cites the Sipra Qedosim 4:8; Tg. Ps-J. (Targum Pseudo-Jonathan); and b. Sanh. 73a. (Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin) For further detail regarding Milgrom’s interpretation of Lev 19:16 relating to standing idle in the face of injustice, see Leviticus 17-22 Anchor Bible, 1642-45.

and mission that comes with a vocation of holiness approaches neighbors through the emphasis on obedience and love that is related to identity as one of God’s people whose life must be formed and lived in a particular way rather than upon respecting others’ rights that are grounded in some other externality.

The difference between rights and obligations is especially significant for those Christians who have tended towards an understanding of holiness that is primarily concerned with personal piety. If commands like the one concerning standing idle in the face of others’ needs and danger are part of right relationship to God, then many of the conceptions of sanctification present within holiness theology must correct a tendency to diminish the importance of infirmity or “sins improperly so called.” Furthermore, the formation of individual and corporate consciousness will need to expand to engage those who are in danger whom individuals and groups could help.84

Another example of the variety of ways that a single command holds together both personal practices and actions that carry political and public implications can be seen by considering the breadth of interpretations of Lev 19:27. For example, Kiuchi determines that the law in 19:27 concerning letting hair grow “signifies one’s indifference to one’s outward look; hence the need to be concerned with inner

84 In my conclusion, I will point towards some of the practical implications of this command and the way in which theology and Christian theological ethics will need to expand the scope of conceptions of holiness into actively considering the needs of neighbors and what is interpreted to be “profiting from a neighbor’s blood.” These questions are not often considered under the rubric of holiness theology but are common issues within political theology.
Kiuchi helps to identify a strong inner faithfulness rationale for these commands. However, though this is a possible reading, it undermines the public implication of identity maintenance and marking that hair could indicate association as one of God’s people. Another possibility that Kiuchi’s emphasis on the inner spirituality with respect to the hair commands in 19:27 fails to recognize is the connection Milgrom draws between practices of shaving hair and leaving it in tombs during idolatrous rites for the dead that is addressed at more length in Lev 21:1-5. In light of the idolatrous practice of leaving hair in tombs, Lev 19:27 can be understood as another example of a concern that was originally a specific rule for the priesthood that is extended to all of Israel in a less extreme form here in Lev 19:27.

Boyce also recognizes the growing movement to extend the vocation of holiness in Lev 19 when he comments on verse 27,

Do you see the pattern? Do you begin to feel how holiness spreads its tent out? Look at a people’s food and faces, their worship and their wizards. Watch what they do, and just as important, what they don’t do—every day, in little things and large. If you pay attention, and if you compare their lives to others, you may catch a glimpse of the God who has a claim on them.

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85 Kiuchi, Leviticus, 358.

86 Ibid. He expressly dismisses Milgrom’s argument.


88 There is no express command against any bald spot for the men of Israel as is present in Lev 21:5 for the priests, but total baldness is not allowed by the command not to cut the hair on the temples or beards in Lev 19:27.

89 Boyce, Leviticus and Numbers, 74-75.
The movement beyond the Decalogue to grooming habits and harvest practices is more than simply legalistically detailing every minutia of life, rather it serves to draw more of life and all people into the particular calling to be God’s holy people.

The final commands in Lev 19:33-36 incorporate economic practices into holiness and can be read to put them in contrast with the corrupt, exploiting economic practices of Egypt. Leviticus 19 already addressed the wages of laborers (19:13) and the necessity to leave gleaning for the poor and alien (19:9-10), and here express commands are given regarding treating the alien as a citizen and loving the alien as oneself, both of which naturally fit the motivational clause, “for you were aliens in the land of Egypt” (v. 34). Then, however, the economic practices of weights, measures, and quantities are addressed, equally within the motivational claim God has on Israel in contrast to their life in Egypt (v. 36b). Thus, Lev 19 opens with God speaking a message to Israel through Moses that is a call to an imitative holiness, beginning with echoes of the Decalogue and finally expanding out to personal grooming habits, treatment of aliens, and economic practices as constitutive of Israel representing God’s holiness in contrast with their experience in Egypt (a way of life that was exploitive and not holy).

These exegetical concerns in Lev 19 highlight the particularity of God’s people whose lives serve as an *imitatio Dei* when Israel lives out its formative worship practices. They become a particular political community that is marked primarily by their holiness of life in relation to their holy God. In as much as they do represent a distinct political vision, Israel in Leviticus is instructive for both political theology and the holiness movement in particular.
3.3. Leviticus 11:43-45—Dietary Laws as Ladder of Holiness

The motive clauses throughout H indicate the theological meaning of the rituals that precede them. Though I have already pointed out that the motivational clause at the end of the dietary laws is H material, the significance of this H material goes beyond recognition of redaction in this book. Thus, in Lev 11, the food laws are framed as theologically significant because the unclean animals have been declared and marked as unfit for sacrifice to God. In one sense, the motive clauses that close Lev 11 establish dietary practice whereby Israel can only eat food that is appropriate for God.

Leviticus 20:24-26 also connects making distinctions between clean and unclean animals to God’s holiness and purpose of setting Israel apart from the other peoples. Here again, the rationale for Israel’s separation is grounded in the created order that God has established, therefore, bringing what was a universal pre-Sinaitic concern in P into the theological rationale in an H passage. Milgrom states that Lev 20:24-25 “fuses two major theological planks in H’s program—separation and holiness—and anchors their foundation in the basic themes of creation and life.”

Israel is separated as the culmination of the creation process. The repeated rationale given for the commands in H frame the various aspects of the legislation as part and parcel of Israel’s *imitatio Dei*, through which the other nations will encounter God’s holiness and ultimately join Israel in this vocation of holiness.

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91 Ibid.
Another example where theological rationale serves to demonstrate a nuance of H that pushes an extension of holiness to all of Israel (Lev 20:26) without undermining the role of the priests can be found in Lev 21:1—22:16. These verses include five refrains of the rationale that requirements for purity derive from the LORD as sanctifying agent (21:8, 15, 23; 22: 9, 16). The priests must sustain the holiness they have been given by God. This section also frames the aspiration and responsibility for holiness in characteristic H fashion upon both priests and laity. Leviticus 21:24 reiterates that the rules for priests are framed as also being spoken to the people of Israel (as in Lev 16:29–34a). In light of the ring structure that has been noted by Douglas and Milgrom, the proximity of the laity’s rationale in Lev 20:26 to the priests being addressed throughout Lev 21 evinces purposeful framing. Both priests and laity must aspire to holiness—either maintaining the holiness given the priests or attaining the holiness God desires for the laity. The concept of holiness expands and fuses the work of priests and layity within God’s activity to enable Israel’s mission to imitate God to its neighbors.

3.4. Leviticus 25—Expansion of Content and Context of Holiness

Another way that Leviticus expands the concept of scriptural holiness to account for the realm of infirmity (that I noted was given larger purchase in twentieth-century holiness theology) has to do with its incorporation of all of creation into God’s holiness.

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92 Ibid., 182, 264.

93 Ibid., 267.

94 Ibid., 264
The H material does not stop with expanding the pursuit of holiness to the laity. Israel’s holiness is also tied to economic justice and the land. Leviticus 25 presents the land as YHWH’s and the Year of Jubilee was a means through which God would secure economic justice and maintain the land possession within the assigned tenant clans (Num 26). Beginning with Lev 25:1, the Jubilee and entire chapter are linked to the Decalogue (and thus, Lev 19) through mention of Sinai. Moses is told to speak to the people that “the land shall observe a sabbath” (Lev 25:2). Not only do the priests and Israel observe God’s holy ordinances, but also the land itself observes God’s sabbatical order.

As with any change in the concept of holiness, the expansion of the realm of God’s holiness to include the land affects more than agricultural practices. Notice that the land’s participation in God’s holiness both explains and necessitates the treatment of aliens under similar rules to citizens because if the strangers are among the land then they need to have a character that fits within the holiness of God too. The concern for the land and aliens resonates with common emphasis in contemporary political theology. However, the inclusion of these concerns in Lev 25 does not abandon cultic


96 Knohl, *Sanctuary of Silence*, 186.

97 See William T. Cavanaugh, Jeffrey W. Bailey, and Craig Hovey, eds., *An Eerdmans Reader in Contemporary Political Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2012). This reader includes essays that address each of these issues: e.g., One essay points to the provision for the poor in Leviticus as a stimulus for twenty-first century theology to think about appropriate social legislation (Richard Baukham, “Reading the
language and framing. For example, the Jubilee is declared as a sabbath and tied to the Day of Atonement (25:9).

The land’s sabbaths and Year of Jubilee are prescribed as economic realities that mitigate economic exploitation (25:13–17). As in the example of Michael Budde recommending to his bishops that they can address an economic concern through forming their parish leaders, H constructs a way for Israel to address the economic exploitation at the heart of the prophetic critique through formative practices.

Leviticus 25 proposes the Jubilee to prevent the gap between land-rich and the debtor-poor from growing—a problem that “Israel’s prophets can only condemn, but which Israel’s priests attempt to rectify in law and practice.”\(^9\) Furthermore, Lev 25 also addresses what has come to be described theologically as usury as part of the attempt to prevent a large economic gap within Israel. No one is permitted to profit financially from lending money to a fellow Israelite. Furthermore, the economic concerns expand to include other social issues. Slavery is rejected as a means of overcoming impoverishing dependence in Lev 25:39. Means of redemption are present throughout Lev 25. This redemption should be understood as an opportunity for *imitatio Dei*, since YHWH claims the role of redeemer of Israel from slavery to Egypt to servanthood to God in vv.

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\(^9\) Milgrom, *Leviticus: A Continental Commentary*, 302. The prophetic condemnation is strikingly similar to the contemporary practice of lobbying activities through media campaigns. These campaigns are not in and of themselves problematic, but if they become the sole means of addressing political issues, then church bodies neglect the moral formation that is part of being the body of Christ.
38 and 42. Israel’s freedom means servanthood to YHWH and no one else. This includes limiting the ways that humans often ended up indebted and bonded to other humans. YHWH’s position as sole master for Israel extended to the slave and bound laborer. These relationships were also incorporated into the jubilee cycle of re-establishing Israel’s freedom that YHWH secured in the exodus from Egypt.

The tattoo prohibition in Lev 19:28 is also linked to the Israelite slavery legislation in Lev 25. The limit of tattoos supports the prohibition against Israelite slaves in 25:46. In the Year of Jubilee, hired and bound laborers could receive a fresh start that would be impossible if they had been marked by tattoo as a slave or bound laborer. Here again, H advances a social issue since, “the other pentateuchal law codes, which accede to the institution of slavery, allow a permanent slave to be marked (i.e., tattooed; Exod 21:6 [JE]; Deut 15:17 [D]), a practice attested in Babylonia and in Elephantine.” Therefore H material legislatively eliminates the practice of enslaving Israelites, even though modern readers may not think this goes far enough, and the prophetic

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99 See also Rom 6:22, “But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life.”


103 This criticism is certainly appropriate; however, modern readers should be slow to immediately dismiss such a radical advance in comparison with Israel’s neighbors considering that even in the present “enlightened” society in 2001 the CIA estimated that 50,000 people were trafficked as sex, domestic, garment, and agricultural slaves in the United States (Milgrom, *Leviticus: A Continental Commentary*, 306).
criticism against excessive slavery suggests this abolition was not thoroughly
practiced.\textsuperscript{104} Israel evinces glimpses of antislavery idealism,\textsuperscript{105} if not complete in practice,
and was ahead of its time with respect to the slavery practices of its neighbors.

4. Overcoming Polarization and Compartmentalization

Compartmentalization of life in modernity and the acquiescence of the church to
state moral enforcement in lieu of its own pursuit of moral formation has been a latent
issue in my description of the shifting social reform activity of the holiness movement. I
have suggested that William Cavanaugh is a helpful political theologian who can aid the
holiness movement in returning to politically relevant forms of holiness that avoid its
pandering to issue politics and the secondary status of the church as a special interest
group. The tendency in modernity has been for theology to retreat to its own sphere in
order to maintain its locus of authority.

The H material was responding to a similar challenge to the one facing holiness
theology today—holding together right relation to God and neighbor. While the
prophets railed against the proclamation of peace when the needs of people were not
honestly assessed (e.g., Jer 6:14) and P’s conception of ritual holiness neglected the
morality and well-being of Israel, the H material frames the concept of holiness as an all-
encompassing pursuit of \textit{imitatio Dei}. This pursuit took place through worship rituals,
the societal ordering and morality of the people, and the relationship between Israel and

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 304.

\textsuperscript{105} E.g., Lev 25; Joel 2:29; and Job 31:15.
the land YHWH had provided them. All of life is modeled on the identity of God—lived in response to the covenant—and primarily oriented towards becoming holy, the primary aspect of YHWH’s identity.\textsuperscript{106} Israel is made holy by God and called to be and practice what they are.

The comparison between P and H helped to identify the re-emergence in Lev 17-26 of God’s universal concern for the orders of creation that for P were relegated to the civil sphere following God’s revelation at Sinai. In H, the call to holiness was placed again as part and parcel of God’s creative ordering and universal concern for all of life and creation. Ephraim Radner offers an incisive description of the Christian theological implications of holiness in Leviticus,

The details of Leviticus, taken within the sacrificial movement of Christ, demand that we draw into a direct relationship of responsibility with God the range of elements upon which our love, ordered to God, is to be exercised. These necessarily include prayer, disease, sexual relations, moral usage of money, animals, crops and plantings, the poor, civic life, and accountability. Thus Leviticus provides the theological underpinnings—along with some other texts, but in a uniquely focused way—for understanding the material world of creation in which and through which and for which our Christian lives are to be led: the environment, labor, the use of the human body, property, and so on. It does so by naming these things, but also by placing them particularistically in a relationship to the incorporating love of God—in the character of giving/offering rather than of taking; in the character of cherishing for the sake of God alone rather than for our own sake or for the end of their own denial. That all these things are bound up with the sacrificial acts of the people of God before God means simply that they cannot be rendered subordinate to other ethical matters. They are unavoidable matters of faith.\textsuperscript{107}


\textsuperscript{107} Ephraim Radner, \textit{Leviticus}, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press, 2008), 295.
The various aspects of life that are considered under the pursuit of holiness explicitly reject any categorization into public/private distinctions or personal piety/social justice. Perhaps, the neglect of theological interpretation of Leviticus begins with its misleading title persisting from the title, *Levitikon*, in the Septuagint and Vulgate. The Hebrew title of the book is *Vayikra* (and he called, i.e. “The LORD called”) articulates what will follow in the instructions throughout the book, which is much more than instructions for the Levites.108 Israel is called to a holy form of life. This life itself presents a theological response to the problem of separating justice and piety. The result of heeding these commands is moral and political formation to become holy and present God’s holiness to the nations. Scriptural holiness recognizes that God’s calling is more than ethical instruction; it requires formation that entails proper action.

4.1. The Prophetic and Priestly Fusion Against Compartmentalization

The H material presents a fusion of two different visions of right worship. Likewise, holiness theology needs to overcome disparate visions of faithfulness by fusing the tendencies of justice and piety. A proper fusion goes beyond acknowledging that the goals of each tendency are valid and important. The H material goes beyond affirming that the rituals of P must be applied more widely. Coming from within the priestly perspective, H constructs a fusion of all aspects of Israel’s life in which the entire land of Israel is described as a holy place, and enjoyment of the produce of the fields in the possessions of this world, which are God’s property,

108 Ibid., 29.
is, comparable to partaking from the table of the most high, like the priests’ consumption of the offerings of God. HS does not, however, dispute the special status of the priests; alongside the call to consecration of the entire community and the emphasis on the indwelling of God’s presence among Israel, the superior level of the priests – Aaron and his sons – is acknowledged.\textsuperscript{109}

H material does not present the Israelites’ holiness as derivative of the sanctuary’s holiness. The holiness of Israel is not a second level or step that happens after the sanctuary has been appropriately maintained. Real change to the concept of holiness occurs. Likewise, the H material does not add ritual to the prophetic concerns, but it ensconces the concern for the poor into agricultural, dietary, and grooming practices that are themselves rituals and acts of worship.

William Cavanaugh challenges the way in which Christians often accept the framing of political power and discourse by limiting political involvement to participation in special interest groups.\textsuperscript{110} The political implications of the call to holiness require more than political action and understanding being “based” on Christian principles as if an individual arrives at neutral political decisions to which he or she applies a calculus of faith values and principles. Holiness conceived in this way requires theological assessment of the various political options and systems, rejecting an either-or approach. In opposition to the framing of modern political power that serves to minimize the political to voting, the vocation of holiness entails a holistic formation of private and public lives that become light to “the nations.” For H, distinction of life from

\textsuperscript{109} Knohl, \textit{Sanctuary of Silence}, 190.

the neighboring nations was required for the *imitatio Dei* that God desired. Within H’s ladder of holiness, "we find prohibitions against the customs of the nations and their cult, directly related to the general commands calling for the sanctification incumbent upon Israel: and Leviticus 19, the prohibitions against turning titles, divination, soothsaying, and inquiring of ghosts or familiar spirits are all enumerated under the category of ‘you shall be holy.’"¹¹¹ The H material served to provide Israel with a comprehensive set of worship practices and laws that formed its people into God’s holiness. The approach was to ensconce God’s holiness in these formative laws and practices so that they could rectify the brokenness that prophets were condemning. These laws and practices formed Israel into a witness to the nations by their particularity as God’s people. Just as it was for Israel, the vocation of holiness for contemporary Christians will entail confrontation and separation *from* the political vision and normativity of the nations in order to be a life of mission to present God’s holiness *for* the nations.

### 4.2. The H Fusion in the New Testament

The innovation within the H material that overcomes the rending of religious rituals from justice can be seen in the New Testament as well. For example, Jesus’ proclamation of liberty to the captives in Luke 4:18–21 presents him as “raising the sound of the Jubilee trumpet once more” by which Jesus joined a long line of prophets who called God’s people back to a holy practice that had been dismissed as

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¹¹¹ Knohl, *Sanctuary of Silence*, 181.
“impractical.” Just as the H material drew from its priestly background to respond to social and religious problems facing Israel, the New Testament presents Jesus and Paul as both drawing on the Law and Prophets but also fusing those traditions with new applications and interpretations of what it means to follow God in lives of holiness.

Jesus responds to the scribe in Mark 12:28-34 with this two-fold understanding of right relationship to God and neighbor by quoting Deut 6:4 and Lev 19:18. The scribe responds by restating that Jesus is right about the priority of recognizing that God is one and is to be loved with all heart, understanding, and strength and loving one’s neighbor as oneself. He then adds that “this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” Thus the scribe pushes the rituals and sacrifices to a secondary status. Jesus’ response confirms that the scribe’s explication is “not far from the kingdom of God.” Three verses later, Mark includes another event in which Jesus responds to communal worship rituals. In Mark 12:38-40 Jesus teaches against scribes who take places of honor and relish in the greetings of respect they receive while “they devour widows’ houses” and say their prayers for the sake of appearances. Then in Mark 12:41-44, Jesus highlights the giving of a poor widow and places her in contrast with those who give out of abundance. Does this mean that prayers and monetary offerings are not important either?

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112 Boyce, *Leviticus and Numbers*, 103.
Jesus harshly criticizes the religious establishment, but repeatedly presents his mission as fulfillment of the law and not abolition.113 In this instance, the scribe’s claim about Deut 6:4 and Lev 19:18 being more important than sacrifices combined with Jesus’ rebuke of religious leaders who devour widows situates Jesus’ position here within the fusion of the H passages from Leviticus. Certainly, these passages have been read within the context of the prophetic critique of ritual and sacrifices. Yet, when Jesus is asked for the answer to the most important commandment, he recites a verse from Lev 19, the center of the Torah which also presents H’s explication of the commandments in which relationship to God and neighbor are held together and entail both right ritual worship and right ethical living. Jesus is more critical of the religious leadership for devouring widows and basking in the prestige of their positions than he is of the rituals of prayer and monetary offerings. The critique rests on wrong intention and the failure to fulfill the purposes of the law.

Jesus’ ministry resonates with the fusion in Lev 17–26 in Matthew as well. Matthew 5–7 is an interesting parallel section to Lev 17–26 in that it takes up the laws of the tradition and makes them apply more broadly. Note that the refrain, “You have heard that it was said...But I say to you” serves to apply particular legislative judgments more broadly (e.g., murderers and persons who are angry with a brother or sister are now liable to judgment in Matt 5:21-22). Leviticus 19:5-8 takes the instructions about the well-being offering from Lev 7:16-18 and provides a motivational explanation that

113 Matt 5:17. “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.”
expands the importance of the legislation, shifting the emphasis from the priestly execution of the offering to the offerer.\textsuperscript{114} The H passage (19:5-8) includes the rationale that eating the meat of the sacrifice will desecrate YHWH’s name. Here again, H has expanded the importance of a cultic ritual beyond the priests. Eating of meat by laypersons is made into a sacred rite since “the meat of the well-being offering is the only sacred food that the layperson is allowed to eat.”\textsuperscript{115} Just as the well-being offering gains an extended importance and context, Jesus also extends the importance and context of laws in Matt 5–7.\textsuperscript{116}

In addition to this parallel, Jesus as the Messiah is both prophet and priest. In the Old Testament, the offices of priest, king, and prophet received anointing.\textsuperscript{117} Though the Messiah became more closely aligned with the office of kingship, in the Psalms, the Messiah is expected to be “a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.”\textsuperscript{118} The Messiah was expected to combine both kingly and priestly power, just as David and Solomon served as kings while also mediating between God and the people of Israel

\textsuperscript{114} Milgrom, \textit{Leviticus: A Continental Commentary}, 223.

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 222-23.

\textsuperscript{116} Furthermore, the festivals also remain important in Jesus’ life and in the life of the church in the New testament. E.g., the last supper takes place on the night of the Passover in Luke 22 and the church gathered together for Pentecost after Jesus’ crucifixion and ascension (Acts 2).


\textsuperscript{118} Fernando Ocáriz Braña, Lucas F Mateo Seco, and José Antonio Riestra, eds. \textit{The Mystery of Jesus Christ: A Christology and Soteriology Textbook} (Portland, Ore.: Four Courts Press, 2004), 40.
through blessings and offering sacrifices. However, Jesus was also associated with the 
prophet Elijah in the Transfiguration and through his association with the prophetic 
ministry of John the Baptist. The book of Hebrews also describes Jesus as the fulfillment 
of the priestly office. Jesus the Messiah is presented as holding together both kingship 
and temple “by the identification of the Messiah with the eschatological temple—a 
temple ‘not made with hands’” in Mark 14:58 and Rev 21:22. Therefore, Jesus can be 
seen as fitting within the prophetic and priestly fusion that we identified in Leviticus.

5. Conclusion

Leviticus contains two major sections that demonstrate the presence of 
contrasting emphases within the worshiping community. The concept of holiness in the 
H material presents a fruitful example of theological response to a similar challenge that 
is facing holiness theology in the twenty-first century. This view of holiness frames all of 
life as part of the worship and the primary mission of presenting God’s holiness to the 
neighboring nations. Leviticus 17–26 offers one layer to rightly understanding the 
vocation of holiness.

Scriptural holiness that is guided by the political vision of holiness in Leviticus 
requires those who seek holiness to extend their individual and personal conversion into 
their relation to people and places. This “levitical” understanding of scriptural holiness

119 Ibid., 40. Mark 14:58 “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is 
made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.’” and 
Rev 21:22 “I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and 
the Lamb.”
also resists the problems that political theology (and Cavanaugh in particular) raise against forms of holiness that ignore the formative influence of the state and the market when the church accepts its subsumed status as a special interest group. I showed in chapters two and three that the inclusion of social action with personal conversion eroded over time for the holiness movement. Furthermore, even as the holiness movement did remain politically active, I showed ways that its participation in the prohibition movement capitulated to special interest lobbying practices that abandoned the moral issue of alcohol use as an issue of Christian formation.

The concept of holiness shifted when the H material emphasized the call to holiness as a crucial aspect of God’s relation to Israel (people and land). The holiness movement can once again serve as a major influence in social action by emphasizing the call to holiness as a crucial aspect of God’s relation to all of God’s people and all of creation. In order to do so, however, the holiness movement must approach the theological vocation to holiness within its original commitment to scriptural holiness that takes seriously the creative fusion of individual, community, personal, and public practices of holiness that I have highlighted in the H material in Leviticus. I suspect that there will always be calls to reform Christian theology and practice akin to the prophetic critique of cultic practices that is recorded in the Hebrew Bible. These critiques should not be feared, but they should be carefully engaged in order to guide the church to faithful doctrine and practice in ever-changing contexts. The doctrine of holiness can guide the necessary theological response through attention to political theology and the holiness movement’s emphasis on sanctification in such a way that formation and
mission enrich each other instead of bifurcating theology from ethics or doctrine from practice.
CONCLUSION: EXTENDING THE HOLINESS OF GOD INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

1. A Positive Construction of Holiness

Holiness is not about rights. The focus of holiness cannot be learning what one is prohibited from doing or even given liberty to do. It must rather consist in formation of a person and a collection of people, the church, who then live in light of their formation with a creativity of response that can thus address the various contexts in which they find themselves. The example from Leviticus ordered all of Israel’s life around the practices and social structure that made the people and land fit for the holy God and enabled Israel to be a bastion of God’s holiness that could be observed by “the nations.”

A serious challenge facing theology today, and a vocational holiness in particular, is that holiness is too often conceived as a negative state—a lack of wrong actions, a policing of impurity, and the absence of evil instead of the positive state of being formed into God’s likeness (or people capable of living faithfully as God’s holy people in the midst of impurity, evil, and sinful malformations). Church of God theologian Ken Jones argues for a positive articulation of holiness. He states, “holiness is positive, and sin is the lack of it. This is quite different from the usual way of thinking of sin as positive and

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1 Samuel Wells, *Improvisation: The Drama of Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press, 2004) offers an treatment of Christian ethics that argues for practices of formation that prepare Christians to be people who are capable of living faithfully in the midst of situations and contexts that they may be able to somewhat anticipate, but certainly cannot control or determine.
holiness as the negative. If holiness is only the lack of sin, then holiness may seem very
difficult, if not impossible.” ²

When the holiness movement lives up to its purpose to be committed to holiness
and conceives of holiness within a positive framing, the holiness movement will be a
powerful witness to the truth that,

in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses
against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are
ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat
you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin
who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.³

This task is not exclusive to the holiness movement. The holiness movement can serve as
an example, but the argument I have made in this dissertation extends to Christians far
beyond the boundaries of the holiness movement. My emphasis on formation is the key
to allowing the holiness movement to speak and influence the broader Christian
community towards a vocation of holiness.

Christianity requires formation in properly understanding salvation as God’s gift
to all of God’s creation. In contrast, William Cavanaugh has argued, “the modern state is
built upon a soteriology of rescue from violence.”⁴ Therefore the state seeks to form its
citizens in the way of enacting salvation from violence by properly sanctioned violence.
It also draws firm distinctions between those who are “its” citizens and those who are

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² Kenneth E. Jones, *The Commitment to Holiness* (Anderson, Ind: Warner Press,
1985), 76-77.

³ 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.

⁴ William T. Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination: Discovering the Liturgy as a
Political Act in an Age of Global Consumerism* (New York: T & T Clark, 2002), 2.
outside. The vocation of holiness offers a different formation. It draws its understanding of salvation as deriving from God who acted on humanity’s and creation’s behalf in Christ. The vocation of holiness sees no distinction on citizens that is based on physical location. The only distinction is whether persons have accepted the identity in Christ that God offers to all. In order to pursue the vocation of holiness, the people of God must resist formation that attempts to undermine the primacy of Christian identity and its determinative role in determining truth, goodness, and faithful action.

2. Holiness as Formation for Political Community in Christ

The introduction pointed to Chad Pecknold’s description of Christianity and politics as a helpful way of understanding the need for political theology and the possibility that the holiness movement’s commitment to holiness can aid a proper theological vision of political community. Pecknold’s final chapter begins with this passage,

While diverse bonds of neighborly love between human beings have existed over time, only in Christ can the human family be made truly whole. And we would argue here that it is only in the church catholic that Christian unity can be made visible. However, modern Christians have accepted a settlement that weakens

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5 I find Douglas Campbell’s description of this soteriological moment as pneumatological participation in Christ’s martyrological eschatology (PPME) to be consonant with a Wesleyan understanding of Christological holiness that emphasizes the importance of identity in Christ that comes through God’s pneumatological action and the Christian’s acceptance that is made possible in Wesleyan terms through “preventing grace.” See, Campbell, *The Quest for Paul’s Gospel* (London/New York: T & T Clark International, 2005). For more on preventing grace in Wesleyan soteriology see, Randy Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994).
authentic witness to the unity of Christ’s body. The settlement has been a political settlement brokered by the early modern nation-state, but accepted by people whose intellect, imagination, memory, and conscience had been reformed and sometimes deformed throughout the various reform movements over time. …Many Christians implicitly believe that there can be no argument about the visible bonds of Christian unity because they have also implicitly accepted the political settlement that guaranteed any visible unity between diverse Christians would now be provided by liberal political orders.⁶

The vocation of holiness depends upon the primary identity and formation of people who understand that God in Christ makes possible the unity of Christians—not liberal political orders. Furthermore, holiness as the identity (God’s holy people) and calling (on mission) of the united body of Christ serves as a formative identity through which all other associations and identities are understood and evaluated. The scope of this project did not allow for a comprehensive treatment with Pauline soteriology, but I think fruitful symbiosis would result with a careful study of participatory soteriology in Paul that considers the way that being “in Christ” aligns with the identity as God’s holy people. For Paul, the confession “Jesus is Lord” has primary influence over Christian life, including making that confession within a community and space in which Jesus’ lordship is determinative of daily life.⁷

In order for the church to reform the way that it thinks about political community in the direction of a stronger primary identity in Christ, it must cease

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looking to the state as provider and protector of the goods that are properly understood as the church’s to pursue.

The order of priority has often been misplaced through the way the church in America conceives of formation. As with the case that William Cavanaugh cites regarding Michael Budde’s example of bishops preference to lobby government instead of forming the layity, too often the church accepts the power that is granted to it by government. The church plays into the state’s narrative of soteriology when it looks to the government as the enforcer and implementer of Christian understanding of holiness (most commonly conceived as morality or ethics). The church has much more agency and holiness can drive the church’s witness and help overcome the marginalization of the church as a secondary allegiance to the primary relationship of person to her or his state sovereign.

The vocation of holiness helps to remind the church that it has its own role and locus of power to seek the goods that God has given it to pursue. It does this by seeking after God’s holiness and ordering life around the way that scripture narrates the importance of both vertical and horizontal relations. For example, in Luke 10:25-42, Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan that emphasizes a broad meaning for the command to love one’s neighbor, thus emphasizing right horizontal relations among humanity. And then Luke shifts to Jesus’ encounter with Mary and Martha where the

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8 See page 199.
emphasis is upon not doing so much action that distracts from the one thing that is necessary—attending to Christ who is given and present to us.

Scriptural holiness aids the church to faithfully inhabit the political space and time that holds together love of neighbor and love of God. By reading and being formed by these scriptures with respect to holiness, Christians can once again pursue scriptural holiness (spreading) across the land in order to provide formation and practices of thinking and acting in response to the tragedies of our time. In other words, scriptural holiness prepares the body of Christ to respond to the changing contexts and sinful social structures and arrangements of power that emerge. Thus, scriptural holiness is the foundation for the two theses that have guided this work: Holiness can enhance political theology and political theology aids the holiness movement and holiness theology to better approach their commitment to being God’s holy people.

3. The Relation of Holiness and Political Theology

I have argued for the importance of holiness to political theology and political theology for pursuing holiness, especially in the American context for the holiness movement. The connecting point for both of these claims is the importance of formation. On the one hand, holiness provides a rooted Christian doctrine from which to evaluate the contemporary context. When conceived as likeness to God and worship practices that necessarily lead to lived witness to God, as it is in Leviticus, holiness functions as a foundation for formative practices that resist the alternative formation by the existing webs of influence in which people live. For the context of Christianity in the United
States, that means that holiness is a doctrine that helps to resist formation into “good” citizens when citizenship is understood as primary allegiance to an entity that draws boundaries of inclusion and exclusion based on nation-state principles of sovereignty. The doctrine of holiness also draws boundaries, but they are drawn with a completely different frame of reference—is this person, land, law, or practice in right relation to God or not?

Political theology has many examples of particular Christian approaches to resist the malformation of the state, but holiness remains a neglected approach that also has the virtue of broad compatibility among ecclesial traditions because of its foundation within scripture itself. As political theologians continue to offer accounts of particular Christian doctrines in order to question arrangements of political power, holiness offers a fruitful way forward. For example, I could contribute an entry to the *Blackwell Companion to Political Theology* that begins with my work on Leviticus and shows how the priests turn to worship practices and laws concerning holiness. They create a society that is habituated into its understanding of God without dismissing its historical understanding of what God requires.

The vision of the world in the legislation of the priests in the second half of Leviticus is far more distinctively Israelite than the prophetic critique. The prophetic critique to abandon worship practices and commit to caring for the poor, widow, and orphan was a powerful correction of other cultural economic and social practices, but it also seemed content to scrap the habits that had been forming Israel to that point. The prophets rightly critiqued Israel’s neglect of vulnerable persons, but effectively offered a
new law instead of offering a corrective through formation. This approach is not far removed from the temptation for contemporary Christians to ally themselves to a political vision that they admit is the lessor of two evils because they want to address a particular issue that has been neglected by their given society. The ends may be right, as was the critique by eighth-century BCE prophets, but what about the importance of formation to resist the additional ways that particular political vision forms its followers in trajectories and purposes that are not based in Christian ways of knowing?

Scriptural holiness that takes Leviticus seriously serves as a model for political theology of returning to a central aspect of being God’s people—formation into people who are called to be holy as God is holy—while also addressing the recognition that new issues will often require a reassessment of the faithfulness of community understanding and practices. In Lev 17-26, that meant extending the physical notion of holiness beyond the temple to include the land where more people lived and made their lives (laity and resident aliens). Thus, practices of daily interaction with the land became formative practices that reminded Israelites both of God’s concern for the land and animals, but also for their particular role as stewards in the land and hosts to aliens. The dietary laws in Lev 11 were given the additional motive clause, which helped to remind Israel that the daily practice of eating is part of being God’s people. The laws limited the relationship of persons to violence in limiting the animals to be killed and the places where that killing could take place. I would then endeavor to apply the example of scriptural holiness in Leviticus to a contemporary political question. Any contribution of holiness to political theology will need to attend to the everyday practice of eating.
recognizing God’s claim and purpose for the land, God’s instruction on relating to personal and community neighbors, and practices that form theopolitical imagination regarding race, war, and sexuality. Whatever the situation, the vocation of holiness determines the way that the question or challenge is understood and approached. Holiness can prevent political theology from adopting secular ways of valuing rights of persons irrespective of the contexts and relationships that make those rights intelligible.

On the other hand, the next reader in holiness theology needs to incorporate the fact that political theology offers a crucial corrective to holiness theology. It reminds the holiness movement in particular that no one pursues holiness in a vacuum. There are formative influences present in all cultures. In its pursuit of holiness and the sense of purpose that the holiness movement self-identifies, it must take seriously the ways that being God’s holy people on mission to the world accepts an implicit theological vision when it turns to the state to enact its understanding of holiness.

The movement of Christians that set out to return the church to its purpose of being holy in the world can learn from the many examples of political theology that diagnose the ways that “the world” is thinking about power and forming people to understand from what they need to be saved, and those rights that they need to have guaranteed. As the holiness movement seeks to remain faithful to its understanding of God’s holiness, political theology can re-invigorate the way in which the holiness movement has seen its primary goal as helping people to encounter Christ’s salvation and the Holy Spirit’s empowerment to live into the particular calling that each Christian is given by God. Political theology reminds the holiness movement of the importance of
this mission by showing how many alternative soteriologies compete for people’s allegiance and the ways that modern societies form their citizens’ theopolitical vision.

Here again, the example of scriptural holiness in Leviticus is instructive in the way that it offers the holiness movement a biblical example of holiness where personal and social action are fused together. People could not merely be right with God or right with each other, but had to live into the formation of the laws that sought to maintain people’s righteousness through rightly ordered relationships both vertically and horizontally. Too often the holiness movement has tended towards the priority of right relation to God and hoped that those individuals who were right with God would help the world get right with each other. Political theology’s insights into the power structures and alternative visions of soteriology by states reminds holiness theology that getting people right with God is insufficient without a powerful formation of its own in practices that enact God’s vision of a restored creation.

Finally, I understand my two theses as working together to enable Christians and the church to see God more truthfully by attending to the necessary formation and foundation that scriptural holiness offers. When political theologians take holiness seriously, they will be drawn back to God’s own demands on God’s people to be imitators of Jesus. When holiness theology takes political theology seriously, it will better understand what it is up against as it tries to engage social issues through the lens of holiness once more. For both of these theological traditions, I intended to return again to the theological source of God’s revelation in scripture as correction and instruction on the attempt to form people into a holy political community.
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