Marcus W. Dean
A Wesleyan Missiological Perspective On Holiness Across Cultures

Abstract

Missiology has focused on various aspects of contextualization and the importance of salvation, but has not dealt extensively with the biblical concept of holiness. From a Wesleyan perspective this paper looks at holiness from the lens of contextualization. A biblical support of contextualization is presented. Then the cultural factors of values—the dynamics of shame, guilt, and fear are explored—and purity are examined as starting points to contextualize the holiness message. While holiness is ultimately about ethical life and relationships, the message must be built upon culturally understandable concepts.

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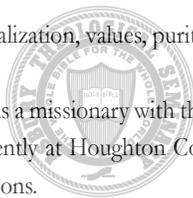
Introduction

Having a long interest in contextualization I began to ask what if anything has been written that connects missions and holiness and contextualization. This led to a problematic conclusion to my initial search. One of the first and few items I found was this statement by Timothy Tennent; "There is very little emphasis on holiness in the church today, and even less in missions literature" (2010: 80). He proposes that part of the problem is a lack of focus on the Trinity in missions, stating, "Once the church is conceptualized as the earthly reflection of the Trinity, then holiness becomes central to missions" (Tennent 2010: 81). While I do not doubt this appraisal, I believe that the problem may be broader.

The starting point to understanding my concern is connected to the focus on the basic concept of salvation. Within the western evangelical missionary tradition there has been a strong emphasis on conversion as the focus of the gospel message. This stems in part from a primary focus on the Great Commission and possibly from reactions to other theological traditions.

For example, Arthur Glasser in "Crucial Issues in Missions Tomorrow" published in 1972, refers to the debate over the meaning of salvation spurred by what was then the controversy surrounding liberation theology (33). He refers to the perception that an emphasis on "Liberation" leads towards a social gospel. The frequent reaction in evangelical missions circles was a strong emphasis on salvation as a "personal relationship to Christ by the new birth, embracing nothing less than the blessing and obligation of bearing the yoke of His kingdom. No pietistical, passive acquiescence to the evils of society!" (Glasser 1972: 52). Thus "salvation" became the standard for evangelical missions.

Perhaps as a consequence of this emphasis, as well as the consequence of doctrinal differences, I believe that missions theology has not invested enough thought into the presentation of holiness from a cultural perspective as we have learned to do with the message of salvation. Problems in the global church, such as increased rates of divorce in the US and the genocide in Rwanda, certainly indicate a greater need for holy living within the church. This apparent inadequacy of spiritual growth and maturity needs a solution. Perhaps this need results from the lack of a more culturally relevant call to a fuller spiritual life. Jacob Loewen, from his experience in Central America, asked if the cause for a lack of spiritual depth was that "the Christian experience was not linked to any fundamental drives or needs of such a society, and that therefore the new life lacked an 'indigenous source of steam' which could push for deeper development of the Christian life?" (1975: 7).
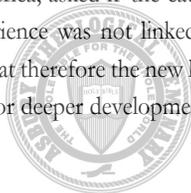
> A similar sentiment is expressed by a missionary in the Islamic context who declares that our message must include both religious and cultural issues if we are to minister the gospel effectively to Muslims. I am convinced that it is not the religious side of Islam that holds its followers in its iron grip, but rather the cultural and the community side.… It is a complete unit, a way of life, a total package that touches every part of life. (Muller 2000: 12)

Both of these writers highlight the need for a message that calls believers to a deeper life that comes from within the receiver's cultural framework. This is a long standing objective within the Wesleyan tradition. "At the core of Wesley's theological methods was his fundamental commitment to the experience of Christian conversion and the need to apply theology to the practical challenges of the Christian life and the social needs of the larger society" (Tennent 2009: 108).

My goal is to begin to explore how the message of holiness can be culturally relevant. This paper first looks at the centrality of holiness in the church, then moves to a working concept of contextualization, and then to connecting holiness to culture.

The Holiness Message

The biblical call to holiness ranges from God's call to Abraham (Genesis 17:1) to Peter's epistles (1 Pet 1:15 where the call is stated and 2 Pet 1:4 where the call is detailed as being like God). In the teachings of Jesus the message of holiness is presented in Matthew as the command to be perfect in love like God (Matt 5:43-48); and his teaching that we are both to love God and others (Matt 22:37-40). This call to holiness as central to discipleship in God's kingdom is ultimately a right relationship with God and others. Holiness is essential to understanding that God's people being sent in mission are to reflect God as holy to the nations. Being God's holy people is described as "the 'end' goal of missions by Tennent (2009: 81-82). It is this end goal that needs to be the basis for contextualizing holiness.

Furthermore, the holiness message calls to a complete life that overcomes the shallowness pointed out earlier. In this our message is truly good news. God's call to holiness is to "enter into the fellowship of Triune, self-giving love. … 'participate in the divine nature' (2 Pet 1:4 NIV)—to know the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who allows us to enter into gracious fellowship with him" (Snyder 2007: 74). Howard Snyder also states that the "biblical message of holiness is pointedly and powerfully relevant to the world in which we live… [as] …Holiness *should* mean wholeness, the integrity of heart and life" (2007: 61-62). The goal then

in Wesleyan missiology is to carry this message into other cultures in ways that it can be more readily understood.

Contextualizing Holiness

Before looking specifically at the contextualization of holiness, it is necessary to explore the concept of contextualization. Perhaps, we need first to ask the question, is contextualization "Wesleyan"? While Wesley probably failed at this in his work in Georgia, and clearly did not use the word, I remind us that, "At the core of Wesley's theological methods was his fundamental commitment to the experience of Christian conversion and the need to apply theology to the practical challenges of the Christian life and the social needs of the larger society" (Tennent 2009: 108). I believe that contextualization is Wesleyan.

So what is contextualization? A basic concept to aid the Church in understanding the term, is recognizing that God's Word speaks to all people in all places at all times. In the Old Testament we see "evidence that God continually used a contextualizing process in his progressive self-disclosure to his people" (Glasser 1989: 33). Through the Old Testament stories we see God "himself using linguistic, cultural, and religious forms already familiar to his people to reveal himself" (Ott, Strauss, and Tennent 2010: 271). The word for deity of the surrounding peoples ("El") was taken over by the Israelites (Glasser 1989: 36). God himself used the culturally familiar concept of the covenant (Glasser 1989: 40). The familiarity of these concepts was not the end, but rather a starting point from which God filled the terms "with rich, new meaning to communicate divine truth" (Ott, Strauss, and Tennent 2010: 271). The result was both comprehensible to the people and held-up biblically (Glasser 1989: 39).

In this light, contextualization is the process of expressing biblical truth that never changes, within a local human context so that the truth is understandable by the listener. This understood truth will then guide "the church in living out the Christian faith in ways that are both faithful to biblical truth and relevant to specific cultural contexts" (Ott, Strauss, and Tennent 2010: 266).

Thus, through contextualization, theology starts from within the culture rather than from outside of the culture. The receptors of the message should not have to learn new terms before they can start understanding what God is telling them. This reflects the belief that God is already at work in any culture. This is prevenient grace that "assures us that God precedes the missionary in every culture, amidst the stain of sin that also exists in every culture" (Moon 2009: 261).

The process of contextualization in this sense "focuses on categories of truth that can be 'read' from the culture and which correspond to biblical revelation"

(Gilliland 1989: 25). It is not only the message of the Bible; it is the essence of the example of Jesus Christ. Jesus coming to dwell among us reminds us that the goal of the incarnation is that "the truth of God in Christ be understood by a people through the vehicle of indigenous culture" (Gilliland 1989: 25).

The essence of contextualization is that "Not only is the gospel *linguistically* translatable, but the gospel is also *culturally* translatable" (Tennent 2009: 86). This is illustrated in a story of a Caribbean missionary who was working in a language that had no word for sanctification. In the end a phrase was used from women washing clothes "being washed by the Spirit of God and kept clean" (Nida 2008: 56). The bottom line of contextualization is that we are challenged to identify the elements of any culture that are useful for expressing the biblical message and are true to that culture (Ott, Strauss, and Tennent 2010: 270).

Connection Points for the Message of Holiness

This paper proposes that looking for connection points for contextualizing the message of holiness starts with the role of values, which influence a culture's understanding of right and wrong, and are present in all cultures. Another important connecting point that this paper will look at is the idea of purity—which influences a culture's understanding of the worthiness of being in God's presence. The idea of purity, central in many cultures, resembles the concept of ceremonial holiness that is very important in the Old Testament. Interestingly, Charles Gutenson in his argument for holiness as moral and ethical goodness lays aside the concept of ceremonial holiness as "the idea of ceremonial holiness has been lost in favor of the more typical sense of moral and ethical goodness" (2007: 96). While this may be true in the West, it may still be of central importance in other cultures. Together these concepts may provide a means to overcome the lack of a focus on holiness by providing a stronger intercultural foundation for teaching and discipling believers in holiness.

As mentioned above, holiness is ultimately about a relationship with God and ethical morality that reflects his character.   From the objectives of contextualization, I argue that those truths, particularly the ethical, may not be the best starting point. Paul Hiebert gave us the perspective of looking at the issues from the "critical realist" stance. He states that critical realists hold "to objective truth, but recognize that it is understood by humans in their contexts" (Hiebert 2008a: 21). Just as the salvation message must be understood from within the cultural context, so too must the message of holiness.

Hiebert also writes that "Cross-cultural understanding begins with recognizing that there are different ways of representing reality" (Hiebert, 2008a, p.

20). It is the same reality, but we approach it differently. Thus, we are not talking about a different holiness, but rather, talking about holiness differently.

As we think back to God's practice in the Old Testament of revealing his true character to Israel in culturally relevant ways, we are reminded that the religions surrounding Israel had gods that were not models of moral goodness as was Yahweh. Yet God started from known terms and concepts. It is for this element of contextualization that this paper looks at the aspects of values and purity as starting points, but not ending points, for contextualizing holiness. Every culture has some understanding of values. Likewise, many cultures still focus a great deal on some aspect of formal or ritualistic purity. While this is not a significant part of our western worldview, it was in the Old Testament world. I would like to refer again to Gutensen and quote him at length to show why this might be a hard point for many westerners to accept.

> The term *holiness* often refers to an external quality of a thing whereby it is designated and set apart for God's purposes. This sense of holiness is often characterized as 'ceremonial holiness.' On the other hand, holiness is sometimes used to reference an inner quality relating to the moral and ethical goodness of a thing. This latter sense finds its highest expression in God's own nature, overtly expressed when Scripture asserts that God is holy.
> Given my particular interests here, let me immediately set aside the notion of ceremonial holiness so that I can focus instead on holiness as moral and ethical goodness. This is because, first, it has been widely argued that, over time, the idea of ceremonial holiness has been lost in favor of the more typical sense of moral and ethical goodness. Second, Wesleyans concerned with the doctrine of sanctification or holiness are naturally drawn to that sense of holiness relating explicitly to our living the life that pleases God. (2007: 95-96)

What I sense is that in cultures that don't separate the moral and the ceremonial, holiness that is only presented as moral may be unintelligible.

Values

Since the goal of contextualization is to begin with what is familiar, the first connecting point for the contextualization of holiness looks at cultural values. "Values represent priorities in life and serve a motivational function in focusing people's attention and effort on goals deemed as important to the person" (Leung and Zhou 2008: 472). Every society has concepts or ideals that they value about others, and these "values guide the choice of goals of behavior and the choice of means that are value compatible" (Leung and Zhou 2008: 486). In other words,

what is important to us determines our conduct. In this sense values are "the criteria people use to select and justify actions and to evaluate people (including self) and events" (Schwartz 1992: 1). Furthermore, because each "person holds numerous values (e.g., achievement, benevolence) with varying degrees of importance. … Values are a motivational construct" (Bardi and Schwartz 2003: 1208). The reason for this is that the "natural way to pursue important values is to behave in ways that express them or promote their attainment" (Bardi and Schwartz 2003: 1208).

The question researchers ask that helps us understand the values approach to contextualizing holiness is: "how do value priorities influence ideologies, attitudes, and actions in the political, religious, environmental, and other domains?" (Schwartz 1992: 1). In this approach values: "(1) are concepts or beliefs, (2) pertain to desirable end states or behaviors, (3) transcend specific situations, (4) guide selection of evaluation of behavior and events, and (5) are ordered by relative importance" (Schwartz 1992: 4).

This leads us to the understanding that the values that a culture holds are important to understanding how the group sees right and wrong. Interestingly, at least one research study has shown that there is no solid evidence to demonstrate that values related to spirituality are universal. The study instead evidenced that "rather than a single, universal spirituality type, there may be a number of distinct types of spirituality, each consisting of a different subset of specific values" (Schwartz 1992: 38). While it is possible to recognize values, we need to learn how the priorities and combinations of values might impact the understanding of holiness within a culture.

An example that explains how values influence the perception of what is good and moral can be drawn from the practice of polygamy. It is stated that "the practice of polygamy, which is frowned on in most cultures, makes good historical sense in some African cultures where it is still practiced. Acceptance of polygamy depends on such factors as family status, economic security, and religious commitment, all of which are based on having more children, and particularly sons per family" (Thomas and Inkson 2009: 27). By recognizing that cultural values are "fundamental shared beliefs about how things should be or how one should behave" (Thomas and Inkson 2009: 31), we can understand why polygamy is seen as a good thing. We need this level of cultural understanding to begin to identify a culture's values that can be connecting points to holiness.

It has been postulated that values can be understood as being held at three levels. Those that are cultural, those that are seen cross-culturally, and those that are "supra-cultural, which grow out of the teaching of the scripture and transcend the particular values of a society" (Franklin 1979: 359). While it is this last level that we

are striving to see implemented in the teaching of holiness, contextualization begins with the cultural level values as the foundation to get to supra-cultural values. For example, all cultures have positive values that teach one to relate to one's neighbors. These can be starting points for taking people to the biblical standard that goes beyond the cultural values. The New Testament is full of instruction on not just loving our neighbors, but also our enemies. By relating the goal of contextualizing holiness to values relating to others, we can eventually see that holiness is in fact about moral and ethical goodness.

Regardless of the culture, we need concepts to guide our understanding of how the people are seeing values so that we can address holiness to their cultural constructs or frameworks. One system that relates specifically to values begins with looking to where a culture locates the origins of virtue from which it develops its moral direction. The theory posits that values are either from within each person or from without—that is the society or environment (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars 2000: 234).

We, in the US, live in an inner-directed culture. The inner-directed language of this theory is something that we are comfortable with, whereas the outer-directed language is less familiar. Looking at the source of virtue in each helps us see the differences:

> inner-directed cultures believe that "deep down" we know what is right, that we have a soul or inner core of purity and integrity, outer-directed cultures bid their members to emulate Nature—its beauty, majesty, force, seasonality, and ecology. To respond with grace to social and natural forces is the essence of virtue. For example, is mercy within us—"in our bowels", to use a somewhat archaic expression—or does it drop "like gentle dew from heaven?" Any one culture may use both metaphors, but inner- not outer-directed images typically predominate in Judeo-Christian cultures. (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars 2000: 234)

It is easy for us to see the inner-directed view as a good sociological description of biblical perspectives. When the holiness message is developed from an inner-directed culture that message can be difficult to understand from the other perspective.

This theory states that when an inner-directed culture is at its best the private conscience is controlling behavior, and social and political affairs. We could add to this list religious affairs. This is familiar territory to us and is something we use in making holiness relevant in our context.
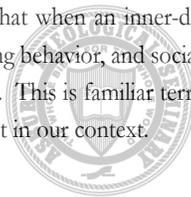
Trying to understand the outer-directed culture from this orientation to morality leads to misunderstanding. The authors hold that outer-directed culture at its best "is in touch with the living environment and, like the lyre of Orpheus, resonates with all nature" (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars 2000: 249). In referring to Japan, the authors point out fundamental differences between western concepts and the "Shinto gods, who are pantheistic deities of nature, inhabit the wind, rain, storm, river, mountains, and harvests. Worshippers are outer directed, emulating their beauty, strength, force, speed, and majesty. The Zen garden and moss garden are cultivated in imitation of natural landscapes, miniaturized and finely groomed" (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars 2000: 251). This focus on beauty, balance, or harmony is not necessarily moral and thus holiness from the moral vantage may not resonate with this perspective. Rather there is more affinity with ritualistic concepts of purity as the "gods hate dirt or pollution of any kind and therefore objects made for their habitation are beautifully finished and immaculate" (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars 2000: 251).

Another way that this shows up is in relation to how we carry out these inner and outer differences. Western culture is described as being "strongly universalist, or rule-making, in its orientation. This view expects that the rules be exported and imposed internationally. What the United States conceives internally to be true is also deemed true for others, in politics and in science" (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars 2000: 241-242). We easily fall into the same patterns with holiness.   Though we recognize holiness as morality, it is too often evidenced through rules.

There is another approach that is biblically structured that can help us see differences in cultures yet is often ignored because of cultural differences such as those just described. This approach starts with the impact of Adam and Eve's sin. Three problems come out of the Fall; yet only one tends to be predominant in any given culture. First, in Genesis 3:7 Adam and Eve knew they were naked and knew they had done wrong. This concept is familiar to us and when central yields a "*guilt-based culture*" (Muller 2000: 18). Second, in Genesis 3:8 Adam and Eve hide. This is the concept of shame which is predominant in "shame-based cultures" (Muller 2000: 18). Third, in Genesis 3:10 we read that Adam and Ever were afraid. This is evident in "fear-based cultures" (Muller 2000: 19).

Roland Muller describes the consequences of each of these results. "When man sinned, three great conditions came upon mankind. When man broke God's law, he was in a position of guilt. When man broke God's relationship, he was in a position of shame. When man broke God's trust, he was in a position of fear" (2000: 21). Each of these consequences is seen in different cultural manifestations.

The foundation of a guilt society is "belief in right versus wrong" (Muller 2000: 22). This is very similar to the description above of an inner-directed culture. In the West we have been influenced by a Roman form of government which has influenced our history, worldview, and theology. Since our view of salvation is based on legal concepts, so is our view of holiness. The problem comes when we share concepts of sin and justification to a society that has no similar judicial concept of sin and justification (Muller 2000: 33).

The foundation of a shame culture is focused on how people are seen by others within the society. This is more related to the outer-based culture described above. The individuals in the culture are much more concerned with what others are aware of than what one feels internally about their behavior. Effort is made to keep wrong behaviors hidden. Once others become aware of the inappropriate behavior the offender feels shame. The response is to seek to restore one's honor (Muller 2000: 50). Holiness in this context needs to focus on interpersonal relations as its starting point. The message of the Bible "is not just the story of God redeeming His people (a legal thought), but it is also the story of God raising mankind from a position of shame, to the ultimate position of joint-heir with Christ" (Muller 2000: 57-58).

This is easier for us to see if we recognize our culture's growing reluctance "to label anything as right or wrong" (Muller 2000: 52) as a movement towards shame. Getting caught and embarrassed is increasingly more of an issue than is one's own conscience.

Another important aspect of the shame based culture is its understanding of defilement and cleansing which are related to the embarrassment of being discovered. Since the individual is not aware of moral wrong, the violator must be restored to honor which is done through some aspect of either personal or social cleansing; social cleansing in some extreme cases being the extermination of the violator. The holiness answer is the "cleansing and the grace of God as revealed in the Bible" (Muller 2000: 59). In these cultures "Cleansing is fundamental to understanding grace. Mankind is unclean. It is not just that man is totally depraved, mankind is totally defiled" (Muller 2000: 60).

Fear based cultures are known for dealing with fear through the use of power. In these cultures "the main way of dealing with a power is to establish rules to protect the unwary from harm and procedures to appease those powers that are offended... in the form of sacrifice or dedication to the invisible powers" (Muller 2000: 44). It has been relatively easy for missionaries to present the Gospel to fear based cultures. The biblical stories clearly deal with this aspect and easily lead "people to the conclusion that the power that is available through Christ is greater

than the powers of darkness" (Muller 2000: 45). The bridge to holiness as the ultimate solution to fear becomes evident as the believer becomes aware of God's presence in Jesus Christ. We are reminded in I John 4:18 that "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love."

Purity

The aspects of defilement and cleansing seen in shame cultures lead us to the recognition that for many cultures, the concept of purity may be a stronger connector to holiness than morality or values. How can we begin to understand this connection? First, in the Old Testament sacrificial system there was a strong emphasis on cleanliness and purity that connects to holiness (Greathouse 1998: 24). These concepts are not as relevant to a morality or values based approach to holiness, thus our need to think this through.

Second, we need to see how the ideas of purity and cleanliness are different across cultures. Hiebert, in an article comparing these concepts between the US and India, discusses the differences in views of clean and dirty across the two cultures. He writes that "India's concern for purity and its disgust of pollution goes much deeper than surface dirt that can be washed off. The people are concerned about deep, inner pollution, the defilement of self… Keep in mind that India is known for its personal cleanliness and its public filth, and America for its public cleanliness and its personal filth" (Hiebert 2008b: 92).

William Greathouse also helps us see the connection between holiness and purity. He states that holiness "is a cultic term and is conceived—at least from the priestly perspective—as ritual purity. Its opposite is 'uncleaness,' and the two are antithetical" (Greathouse 1998: 18). Related to this is the connection between holiness and separation. Greathouse also states, "To be holy is to be separate; to be holy is to be clean and pure. Each of these notions has ethical as well as cultic implications" (Greathouse 1998: 14). We can in fact use these as connections to holiness in cultures without a moral or ethical concept.

As was discussed above, not all cultures react to the consequences of sin in the same manner. Likewise, our approach to holiness has to look at the broader perspectives of the Bible that deal with these differences.

In the Old Testament, Israel was surrounded by cultures that held concepts relating to purity and cleansing. In part, Israel's spiritual journey began there. In discussing why Israel had to be distinct from other nations, Christopher Wright points out the relationship for Israel between ethical holiness and ritual cleanliness in that "the lack of either or both of these would put the continuing

presence of God among his people in severe jeopardy (as Ezekiel saw clearly)" (2006: 335). For Israel, in its time and place, ritual cleanliness was important as seen in the book of Leviticus. Israel's understanding of ethical holiness started with the separation of the clean and unclean. Wright helps us see this significance.

> In Israel's ritual worldview, everything in life could be divided into two broad categories: the *holy* and the *profane* (or common). God and anything specifically dedicated to God or associated with him was holy. Everything else was just common or ordinary (the proper, neutral meaning of *profane*)… Only that which was clean could come into the presence of God. And God himself could only dwell in the presence of what was clean. (2006: 336)

This can give us insight for today about how to connect purity and holiness for cultures that do not have an ethical concept. Wright also reminds us, "while the ritual badge of Israel's separation from the nations (the clean-unclean food laws) has gone, the necessity of spiritual and moral distinctiveness of the people of God certainly has not" (Wright 2006: 337-338).

Anthropological study can also add to our understanding of cultural views of purity. By increasing our understanding of the concept of purity we can connect other culture's concepts and purity language to the biblical message. For example, the work of Mary Douglas sheds light on the purity language in the Bible. A study on the book of James from her perspective points out,

> there is a consistent contrast between two competing worldviews or systems of valuation in these passages. One worldview is "God's" (Jas 1;27; 2:5; 4:4) and the other is the worldview of the "'world" (1:27; 2:5; 3:5; 4:4 [2x]) and these two worldviews are set in opposition using purity language. In each case the implicit command is to reject the world's measure of reality and to adopt God's. The purity language does call for separation, but the separation is from specific alien values and behaviors associated with the 'world'. (Lockett 2011: 396)

Specifically Douglas states, "Holiness and impurity are at opposite poles" (1966: 7). If this is true, regardless of what a culture views as impure, we can use this as a connection to point towards the concept of holiness.

Douglas highlights an interesting aspect of Hinduism showing that there is a degree of abstract thought which is important to move from ritual to ethical holiness. She states that "Holiness and unholiness after all need not always be absolute opposites. They can be relative categories. What is clean in relation to one thing may be unclean in relation to another and vice versa" (Douglas 1966: 8-9).

She relates that in some contexts cow dung is purifying due to the sacredness of cows.

In some societies, holiness is more closely related to uncleanliness as its opposite while in others holiness is more opposed to spiritual unworthiness (Douglas 1966: 11). Douglas also ties this into the Old Testament concepts of clean and unclean meats. She states that to "be holy is to be whole, to be one; holiness is unity, integrity, perfection of the individual and of the kind. The dietary rules merely develop the metaphor of holiness on the same lines" (Douglas 1966: 54). This helps us in seeing how to build from a culture's concept of purity to holiness. Douglas' criticism helps us understand that the Evangelical movement "has left us with a tendency to suppose that any ritual is empty form, that any codifying of conduct is alien to natural movements of sympathy, and that any external religion betrays true interior religion" (1966: 61). Our challenge is not to begin with our assumptions but those of the culture with which we are sharing about holiness.

Conclusion

This paper has tried to demonstrate that the Bible presents the concept of holiness in such a way that we can begin its theological development from within any given culture. Holiness is both based on ethical morality and values and purity. It ties together God, the individual, and the society. Holiness can and must deal with culture at the worldview level. That is why we must approach holiness from the perspective of contextualization, and cultural views of values and purity are good starting points to finding God's previous work that will connect to holiness.

Further, I believe that Wesleyan Theology is ideally suited as a medium for the contextualization of holiness. In particular our emphasis that holiness is relational is essential to align the holiness message with the perspectives of a culture. For example, relational holiness builds the bridge from the three consequences of sin seen above. For guilt cultures, holiness is ethical and deals with the forgiveness needed to restore the sinner to a right relationship with God. For shame cultures, holiness restores honor and thus returns the offender into community with God and others. For fear cultures, holiness is power to deal with fears and taboos. This may also explain the predominance of pentecostal holiness in parts Africa and Latin American that are closer to being fear cultures.

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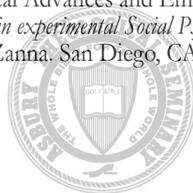
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