

# Holiness in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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Just as God is holy, God calls people to be holy. According to scripture, God graciously makes holiness possible for people through the atonement of Jesus Christ as savior. God further makes holiness possible through the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians, individually and collectively. God wants Christians to become entirely sanctified so as to reflect the likeness of Christ.

Throughout church history, Christians have promoted God's call to holiness through example, preaching, teaching, service, and other means of grace. Although every church promotes holiness in its own way, the Wesleyan, Holiness, and Charismatic movements look upon holiness as a unifying concept with which to understand both God and how God works in and through the lives of Christians.

Holiness is a holistic concept that touches upon all areas of life. God's call to holiness holds in constructive tension various biblical priorities:

- holiness as both a gift *and* a task;
- evangelism *and* discipleship;
- the sanctity of the church *and* personal piety;
- social *and* individual moral values;
- advocacy for the poor *and* advocacy for equality, justice and peace;
- social activism *and* contemplative spirituality;
- care for people *and* care for God's creation;
- sacramental observances *and* charismatic expressions of the gifts of the Spirit;
- scholarly reflection *and* effective application of theology in life and ministry.

Although Christians express their faith, hope and love in a variety of ways, holiness encapsulates the sum of who God is and of how God wants Christians to think, speak and act in the world. Thus, holiness accurately depicts the witness of God in scripture as well as how God wants to work in and through the lives of Christians in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.