

# NEW HORIZONS

## Resources for Nazarene Clergywomen

February/March 2002

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## Together for Souls

By Richard Pettit

In the beginning years of ministry, as I sat on the front pew, I was amazed at the way God was using Elaine. I was proud as I listened to her preach. Through the years, as her ministry rapidly expanded, I began to ask God, "What is my part in all of this?" As I prayed, He opened my eyes to the sacredness of the call. Just as we were made one through marriage, God was calling me to be one with my wife in the ministry. In fact, when I earnestly sought the Lord, he made very clear to me my part: "I have called you to be as Aaron was to Moses."

Joining together to surrender all to Him, including the needs and concerns of our five young children at the time, I can testify to His faithfulness in every way. What God taught Elaine in her private closet of prayer, and watching her wonderful child-like faith in action, produced a tremendous example of what God can do with a life fully given to Him. Our family has truly reaped the bountiful benefits of her obedience.

When God called Elaine to be an evangelist, she asked, "Father, what about our marriage and the children?" After attending three colleges and settling down, she had decided contentment would be found in marriage and raising a family. In fact, for the first eleven years of motherhood, she chose to be a "stay-at-home" mom. Then in January of 1987, God sanctified Elaine, and soon after called her to

preach. Our five children ranged in ages from four years old to ten. In response to her question, God said, "Elaine, did I not say that everyone who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children for me and the gospel will receive a hundred times as much in this present age...and in the



age to come, eternal life?" (Mark 10:29-30) He told her that if she would radically obey him, she would lay down godly footsteps in which the children standing on the sidelines would observe.

Under the powerful, prayed-down nudging of the Holy Spirit, they would see a clear witness of truth and holiness. Although the choice to obey would be their own, she would have fulfilled her responsibility to God and to them in the best way possible. After carrying a full slate for many years, we have found his words true, as our sons and daughters have already begun in the holiness ministry themselves.

I have discovered that by my willingness to get involved and fully support what God is doing through his servant, I am indeed sharing in the great rewards! What a transformation for a man who grew up a Southern Baptist; I now embrace the holiness doctrine whole-heartedly! For if God has called, she must answer. I must be there as her number one prayer warrior. As men, we often focus on our own ministries and careers. Prior to traveling full-time the last year-and-a-half with my wife, I worked for twenty-four years in a machine shop. God anoints and uses Elaine, but she cannot successfully

fulfill her calling if I don't stand with her. No man can live his life unto himself, for as the prophet Joel stated, multitudes of souls are hanging in the balance, and as it is written in Ezekiel 33:7, without our cooperation with the Holy Spirit, their blood will be on our hands.

God said, in both Joel 2 and Acts 2, that in the last days He would pour out his Spirit on both men and women and they would prophesy. These are the last days, and many women are being called to preach. I challenge men to not only bear their own cross, but to reach out with strong arms and help their wives carry theirs as well. God will make your union powerful and effective for Christ, for His kingdom, and for your family. By doing so, you will accomplish what Paul wrote in Ephesians 5, loving your wife as Christ loved the church and giving himself for her, presenting her holy and blameless before Him, to whom we must all give an account. For a husband and wife who agree together, having become one in marriage and ministry, will be powerful to move heaven and earth in the battle for souls, and God will be well pleased.

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Elaine Pettit is an Ordained Elder and Commissioned Evangelist in the Church of the Nazarene. Since 1989, she has carried a full slate of revivals, camp meetings, holiness crusades, Prayer Awakening events, district women's retreats, etc.

Elaine's husband of twenty-four years, Rick, now travels full-time with her. Rick and Elaine have three sons, two daughters, and a new daughter-in-law.

Elaine Pettit Ministries is a non-profit organization, and has over 1,600 Prayer Warriors nationwide.

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## Book Notes

Women as Practical Idolaters: A Review of *Singleness of Heart* by Diane LeClerc, published by The Scarecrow Press, 2001

By Rebecca Laird

In her new book *Singleness of Heart*, Diane LeClerc, Professor of Historical Theology at Northwest Nazarene University asks an underlying question, Do women sin differently than men? Her question is a serious one for the Wesleyan/Holiness preacher. How does one offer a cure if we have misdiagnosed the problem?

To explore the answer, LeClerc respectively turns to three early church giants: Jerome, Chrysostom, and Augustine. Anyone interested in the role and lives of women in ancient Christianity must get to know Jerome, for atypically of men of his Age, he counted several Roman ascetic woman as his "spiritual comrades" and regular correspondents. Jerome was a renunciant, and in his many letters, he extols the virtues of the woman who forego family commitments, refrain from excessive affection toward children, and choose instead "singleness of heart."

John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople who is best-known as the golden-tongued preacher of the fourth century, relied heavily on Olympias, the leader of a group of 250 ascetic women. Chrysostom is quoted as writing in his book *On Virginity*, "where death is, there is marriage." In his view, marriage and caring for children limited a woman's ability to serve God unreservedly. He championed detachment, self-denial, and chastity as the path to liberation from one's gender for the betterment of one's soul.

Augustine, Bishop of Hippo and a contemporary of Chrysostom, saw marriage and sexuality as part of God's design, but with the Fall, in which humanity asserted its pride or "will-to-power," Augustine saw human beings rendered incapable of self-governance or free choice; human will has become "disabled," and lust has become the focus of sexuality. For centuries, Augustine's understanding of original sin as rooted in pride and the will-to-dominate has been the standard definition.

After taking her questions to the patristic writers, LeClerc carries them to John Wesley, another church leader well-known for his complex relationships with women. Wesley wrote voluminous letters to many



women often warning them against marriage and the "dangers of domesticity", as he also saw relationship commitments as a threat to "singleness of heart."

Wesley's own late-in-life marriage was not a happy one, as his legendary preaching schedule and extraordinary correspondence left little time left for his wife. LeClerc contends that Wesley understood the impact of original sin as turning all people into "practical idolaters" (a phrase used by John Tyson) who tend to love other people more than the one who created them.

In this realm of relational sin, Christians claiming the Wesleyan/holiness tradition have a misunderstood model who shows a way to recover from the sins of emotional dependence. Phoebe Palmer, an icon of Early American Methodism, is often derided for her "altar theology," in which she encouraged thousands to devote themselves fully to God and to expect that God would consecrate the offered self even in the absence of an emotional

experience. LeClerc re-examines Palmer's advice for experiencing sanctification in the knowledge that Palmer admitted that the "primary obstacle to her spiritual growth had been 'a large house involving proportionate cares.'" Palmer's experience forced her to lay her domestic cares and responsibilities on the altar and consecrate her heart to God's claims on her. According to LeClerc, "Phoebe Palmer's view of original sin allowed her to spiritually detach herself from relational idols without dissolving the relationships themselves." She had a long marriage, raised several children, preached revivals, edited magazines, led small groups, and wrote books. Palmer provides a model of spiritual freedom: give yourself to wholly to God and get on with the business of wholehearted living for God.

So do women sin differently? Many of us do. Much of evangelicalism rewards women who inordinately love and give one's primary attention to children and spouse. So is this really bad? LeClerc points out that these attachments are not the problem, but "emotional dependancies" on these domestic relationships become sin when women hide behind them failing to claim their liberty. Rather than sinning pridefully by putting oneself first, there is an equally dangerous sin of never claiming one's life at all.

Let me know what you are reading. Send email comments or short reviews to [rlairdmc@aol.com](mailto:rlairdmc@aol.com).

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Rebecca Laird is the editor of *Sacred Journey*, an interfaith spirituality publication based in Princeton, New Jersey. An ordained minister in the Church of the Nazarene and trained spiritual director, Rebecca regularly conducts retreats on prayer and spiritual practice. She has written five books and

edited two others. She is an involved member of Wesleyan/Holiness Women Clergy and a graduate of Point Loma Nazarene University and Pacific School of Religion. She and her husband, Michael Christensen, are the parents of two daughters, Rachel and Megan.

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## What's Happening

### Where Are They Now?

By Vicki Copp

In the Fall 1999, I read *The Connection* from Nazarene Theological Seminary with great interest. The lead article was entitled, "Equally Yoked: Couples Ministering Together." It featured four graduating couples in which both husband and wife were equally educated and prepared for ministry. The author suggested that this phenomenon in the Class of 1999 might be a partial glimpse of the future of ministry in the Church of the Nazarene. Recently, while flipping through one of my files, I came upon the article again. Where are they now? I wondered. What opportunities had they experienced? What obstacles had they encountered? How was God using them with their rather unique circumstances? I decided to see what was happening.

One of the couples mentioned was Brian and Rosslyn Weigelt. They have been at the Coquille, Oregon Church of the Nazarene since August of 1999. Brian is the senior pastor and Rosslyn is a full-time associate. Rosslyn was extended a call to full-time associate when Brian was called as senior pastor. Rosslyn reports, "The church has warmly embraced us as a ministry team, although at times they are not quite sure what to do with a woman as assistant to her spouse." The practical reality of functioning in a shared role has been a

challenge. Even introductions pose a problem: Pastor's wife? Pastor? Pastor's wife who is also a pastor?

With both husband and wife in pastoral roles, balance in their personal time can be a challenge. It is a real temptation to be constantly consumed with church life. Team ministry also has some real advantages. These are readily seen in regard to family ministry and marital counseling. Rosslyn and Brian have been greatly encouraged by comments when they team preach. "People really enjoy both of us in the pulpit at the same time."

Rosslyn has been fully supported by district leadership and was one of a group of three women and two men ordained in her district last year. Dr. Knight informed them that it was the first time in his experience as General Superintendent that there were more female ordinands than male.

If, as the author of that 1999 *Connection* article suggested, the phenomenon of equally educated spouses might be a partial glimpse of the future of ministry in the Church of the Nazarene, it is a very bright future indeed.

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If you have something or someone that you think we all would benefit from knowing about, please email me at [dvcopp@aol.com](mailto:dvcopp@aol.com)

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Rev. Vicki Copp was ordained as elder and received her M.A. in Theology from Point Loma Nazarene University in 1997. She preaches and speaks at retreats, women's ministries functions, and has written for *Holiness Today*.

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# Our Nazarene Foremothers

## Woman in a New World: Olive Winchester's Life in Theology and Higher Education

By Stan Ingersol

Eugene Emerson's imagination was captured by a visit to Nazarene University in Pasadena in 1912. The taciturn Emerson, founder of an Idaho lumber company, had recently professed entire sanctification and cast his lot with the Wesleyan-holiness people. After meeting with Phineas Bresee and H. Orton Wiley on his visit to California, Emerson returned to Nampa and organized support for a new school that opened the following year. Wiley came to be its president in 1917 and devoted the next decade to improving the institution—Northwest Nazarene College—financially and academically.

Wiley's vital task was to recruit qualified faculty who blended spiritual graces with keenly honed intellect. And none met his expectations better than Olive Winchester (1880-1947), one of the best-educated Nazarenes of her day, who followed him to Nampa later that year.

In 1902 Winchester earned her bachelor's degree from Radcliffe, the women's college associated with Harvard University. Her Harvard instructor in Semitic languages regarded her as "a student of exceptional ability." After Radcliffe she broke new ground at the University of Glasgow as the first woman admitted to and graduated from the Bachelor of Divinity program.

She also opened up another door while studying in Scotland. She attended the Parkhead Pentecostal Church, the

"mother church" of the Pentecostal Church of Scotland. Her application for ordination to the ministry forced the young denomination to clarify its stand on the issue. Rev. George Sharpe, the denomination's founder, supported her case. The decision was made to permit women's ordination, and in 1912 Winchester became the first woman of any denomination to be ordained in Scotland. Among the happy outcomes of this decision were these two: Jane Sharpe, George's wife, had emerged as a lay preacher and was ordained a few years later, while their daughter, Kanema Hynd, was ordained alongside her husband, David, before the couple set out for Swaziland as medical missionaries, where they wrote their own chapter in Nazarene missions history.



Olive Winchester

Winchester's involvement in the Pentecostal Church of Scotland helped it clarify its doctrine of the ministry, and in 1915, she played a role in facilitating the merger of that denomination and the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene.

Winchester returned to America to teach religion at Eastern Nazarene College. Then she moved to Berkeley, California, to earn the S. T. M. degree (Master of Sacred Theology) from the Pacific School of Religion. She met Wiley there and soon received his invitation to join the faculty at Nampa.

Throughout her tenure at Northwest Nazarene, Winchester taught her specialties: Biblical language and literature. But she also grew interested in the whole idea of religious education in the local church, and at Northwest Nazarene she developed and taught the initial courses in religious education. She spurred further interest in that emerging

discipline by contributing frequent articles on religious education to church papers and curriculum resource manuals.

President Wiley appreciated good talent . . . and Olive. She was elected vice-president of the college in 1922 and appointed academic dean the following year, filling both administrative roles simultaneously (and teaching) until 1935, when she resigned. A history of the college's first quarter-century summarized her contribution: "She contributed very much to the development of the right attitude toward scholastic standards, and as vice-president and dean of the college had much to do with the internal organization of the institution." Her early labors were not in vain; others built upon them, and a half-century later Northwest Nazarene had emerged as one of the outstanding Christian liberal arts colleges of the northwestern United States.

Despite her busy years in Nampa, Winchester's professional development progressed. She earned the Th.D. (Doctor of Theology) degree from Drew University in 1925.

Her differences with President Russell V. DeLong precipitated her resignation in 1935. Wiley again came through, inviting her to teach theology at Pasadena College, where he had returned in 1927. She taught there until her death twelve years later.

Winchester's had earned high marks in biblical criticism at Glasgow but was conservative in her application of this knowledge within the Nazarene context. Her books included studies of Moses, the prophets, and the life of Jesus. Her *Crisis Experiences in the Greek New Testament* (1953) stood in the linguistic-exegetical tradition pioneered by Daniel Steele, a





Methodist scholar at Boston University. Steele defended the doctrine of entire sanctification by a study of the Greek aorist tense, and Winchester appropriated his agenda and attempted to develop it further, though this approach has since fallen out of favor with many Wesleyan-holiness biblical scholars.

She also wrote for a variety of church periodicals, including *The Young People's Journal* for Nazarene high school youth, where for many years she had a standing column. In it she explored topics ranging from Christian history to the relationship between theology and science. The religion and science series ran throughout 1931, and in it she expressed her opposition to biological evolution but stated her grounds for belief in cosmic and geological evolution.

She rejected the premillennialist perspective that, over her lifetime, grew in popularity within the church. Reflecting the New England tradition of Wesleyan-holiness biblical scholarship shaped by Daniel Steele, she was an a millennialist and interpreted the Book of Revelation as a coded record of events that had occurred in the New Testament era, perhaps during Nero's reign, not predictions of the future.

Winchester was not the only woman to teach religion at Nazarene colleges during her lifetime. For much briefer spans, so did Emily Ellyson, Myrtle Mangum White, and Elliot J. Sheeks. But Winchester far surpassed them in academic background and achievement, paving the way for other professional female theologians in the church, including Maude Stunneck at Trevecca; the incomparable Mildred Wynkoop, who encountered Winchester as a freshman at Northwest Nazarene College; and Diane LeClerc at Northwest Nazarene College.

Parts of this article were adapted from "Pressing the Vision: Olive Winchester and Northwest Nazarene College," *Herald of Holiness* (April 15, 1988): 11.

Stan Ingersol has been manager of the Nazarene Archives at the international

headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri, since 1985. He has a Ph.D. from Duke University and is a specialist in American religious history. He is married to the Rev. Cheryl Somers-Ingersol, a pastor in Overland Park, Kansas.

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