

Johan Tredoux

"It was my privilege to know Mildred Bangs Wynkoop personally. Johan Tredoux has done much more than just describe her theology; he has opened the windows of her life to allow the reader to know the preacher, mentor, and missionary as well as the theologian. For those of us who lived and taught our way through the paradigm shift during the 1970s and 1980s of the Holiness Movement, Mildred is *primus inter pares* as the theologian who cut a fresh path toward a viable future for Wesleyan-Holiness theology. Her *Theology of Love* remains a standard required reading if one wishes to understand the movement, and Tredoux's book provides unparalleled insight into the movement's leading woman theologian."

W. Stephen Gunter, PhD Associate Dean for Methodist Studies Duke Divinity School

"Dr. Johan Tredoux has done the Holiness Movement a great service in this study. Mildred Bangs Wynkoop is not only a bridge between the founding theological fathers of the movement (having studied with H. Orton Wiley) and its contemporary adherents, but more importantly, she has opened doors for the Wesleyan message to survive into the twenty-first century. Tredoux builds a fuller picture of her life and development for those of us who only know her seminal work in A Theology of Love."

H. Ray Dunning, PhD Professor Emeritus of Theology Trevecca Nazarene University

"As a faculty colleague of Mildred Wynkoop at Nazarene Theological Seminary from 1976 to 1980, I am pleased to see Johan Tredoux's explication of her understanding of John Wesley's most practical doctrine of Christian holiness. In the process of detailing the growth of her biblical, theological, and philosophical thinking within the larger context of twentieth-century theological thinking, Tredoux also identifies the correlation (or lack thereof) between contemporary holiness theology and John Wesley's eighteenth-century articulation of the gospel."

Morris A. Weigelt

Professor Emeritus of New Testament and Spiritual Formation Nazarene Theological Seminary

"I will always count it a blessing that I was able to study under Mildred Bangs Wynkoop at Nazarene Theological Seminary during the closing years of her career. Through her teaching and the witness of her life, Wynkoop played a crucial role in grounding me in the Wesleyan tradition and pointing me toward an authentic and winsome understanding of its central conviction—that God desires, and through grace enables, us to live in holiness of heart and life. This book, written by the son of one of my NTS classmates, is itself an authentic and winsome exposition of Wynkoop's life, teaching, and impact on the Church of the Nazarene, the larger Wesleyan family, and beyond. Highly recommended!"

Randy L. Maddox, PhD William Kellon Quick Professor of Wesleyan and Methodist Studies Duke Divinity School "Heiko Oberman claimed that the function of a historian was to be a 'last advocate' for the dead. Johan Tredoux expertly accomplishes this task in his recent work on Mildred Bangs Wynkoop. Remarkably, he allows this scholar–a theologian, a woman–to speak in her own, authentic voice. Wynkoop was someone who desired to interpret Scripture for her hearers in a language they could understand–hence, *A Theology of Love*. She was not well understood by some of her readers. Tredoux enables contemporary readers to reread, relisten, and reinterpret to better see, hear, and understand the Wynkoop voice. For this, he is to be commended. He deserves our respect and our attention."

David P. Whitelaw Emeritus Professor of Theology Point Loma Nazarene University

"In a time when the doctrine of sanctification was sounding like a logical construct with Scripture scaffolding, my young heart needed more. As a student at Trevecca Nazarene College, I sat in classrooms under the teaching of Mildred Wynkoop and later worked as her grading assistant. Her teaching, writing, and life inspired a generation of young pastors to embrace a doctrine as experience. Holiness went from stale to central. I am grateful to Johan Tredoux for reminding us of a theology of love that fits the human experience today."

Dan Boone President Trevecca Nazarene University

"This masterful work on Mildred Bangs Wynkoop is a must-read for those who desire a clearer biblical, authentic, and Wesleyan understanding of God's love in the context of relationships. The impact can be extremely timely in these days of our seeking to better grasp the theology of love."

Nina G. Gunter General Superintendent Emerita Church of the Nazarene

"Reading this book is like dipping your toe into the refreshing streams of authenticity. For those who have ever hoped for a faith beyond appearances and a theology capable of engaging the world in transformative ways, you will find Mildred Wynkoop a kindred spirit and Johan Tredoux highly capable of introducing you to her. Once the introduction is made, you'll find Wynkoop's thought–revolutionary in its day–to be a wonderful challenge to continue exploring the Christian life in terms of God's dynamic love, a reality that has been and remains revolutionary."

Timothy R. Gaines, PhD Assistant Professor of Religion Millard Reed School of Theology and Christian Ministry Trevecca Nazarene University

"Dr. Tredoux does an excellent job of examining Dr. Wynkoop's theology within her twentieth-century context and finding clear alignment with Wesley. He places her understanding of holiness within a Christocentric model that leads us to a hopeful optimism in living the sanctified life. Dr. Tredoux states that 'the key teleological anchor point for Wynkoop is Christlikeness.

This is the controlling principle of her doctrine of sanctification.' Dr. Wynkoop's work was transformational for many young theologians in the twentieth century, and this new work by Tredoux expands our understanding but also leaves us with handles by which to preach holiness in the contemporary context."

Rev. Carla Sunberg, PhD President, Professor of Historical Theology Nazarene Theological Seminary

"It is a privilege to commend this volume to all interested readers. Dr. Tredoux has been a good friend over the course of twenty-five years and on two continents. Our association has taught me that he is a clear and careful theologian and a gifted pastor and preacher. Those qualities served him well as he wrote this monograph analysing the theological contributions of the late Dr. Mildred Wynkoop. Those familiar with her thinking through personal acquaintance will share my enthusiasm for this thorough analysis and exposition of her contributions to Wesleyan theological understanding. My own appreciation for Dr. Tredoux's work is founded upon personal experience as a beginning instructor in the department of religion and philosophy at Trevecca Nazarene College during Dr. Wynkoop's last four years on that faculty. We engaged in discussions that arose out of questions I posed to her, and from her voluntary comments to me out of her teaching, research, and writing during those years. I was never a formal student of hers, but she was my teacher nonetheless. It is an honor to recommend this volume to those already familiar with her work and also to those who would like a rich introduction to this great theologian."

Hal A. Cauthron, PhD Professor of New Testament Language and Literature Southern Nazarene University

"In this important work, Johan Tredoux has taken measure of the life and continuing legacy of the great Nazarene theologian Mildred Bangs Wynkoop. Tredoux demonstrates that Wynkoop was first of all a careful and committed biblical scholar who sought to discover and communicate scriptural truth. Certainly she did so as a participant in the Wesleyan theological tradition, but it was her overriding desire to be faithful to a biblical vision of God, creation, humanity, sin, and salvation that comes to the fore in this study. Tredoux shows, too, that Wynkoop's sustained engagement with Scripture led her to insights consistent with early, classic, Christian thinkers, especially Irenaeus. Tredoux has done us a profound favor in commending this saintly thinker for our ongoing theological conversations as Wesleyans."

Michael Lodahl, PhD Professor of Theology and World Religions Point Loma Nazarene University

"My first encounter with Mildred Bangs Wynkoop was in the reading of *A Theology of Love* as an undergraduate student. It was a bright light to my developing understanding of our doctrine of holiness, and it resonated deeply with how my lay parents guided me into the knowledge and experience of sanctifying grace. I had no idea at the time that Dr. Wynkoop's work was controversial in the Church of the Nazarene. I received it gratefully as an honest and hopeful articulation of our beloved doctrine. In this volume, Dr. Tredoux offers a great service to us, taking us behind *A Theology of Love* to know the development of Wynkoop's own theology.

This text places Wynkoop's work in its necessary historical context. Among the critical understandings that Tredoux reveals is not only Wynkoop's commitment to Scripture but also her clarity on the nature of biblical authority as the foundation of her work. This clarity helped to keep the doctrine of holiness as preached in the Church of the Nazarene from becoming truncated by parochial narrowness. This clarity also gave her freedom to see something deeper than a quantitative understanding of two works of grace but, rather, holiness as dynamic, relational maturation in the likeness of Jesus toward the goal of reflecting the image of God. I urge pastors to study this text and thereby to grow in our knowledge, understanding, and articulation of holiness and particularly of the doctrine of entire sanctification. I am grateful to Pastor Tredoux for the gift of this scholarship."

Jeren Rowell
District Superintendent
Kansas City District, Church of the Nazarene

MILDRED BANGS WYNKOOP

Her Life and Thought

Johan Tredoux



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DEDICATION



I am dedicating this book to my parents, Rev. Gideon and Jeanette Tredoux, whose enduring hearts for relational holiness have engaged a lifelong quest. My parents were pioneers for the work of the Church of the Nazarene in South Africa as well as pioneers in the establishment of the Nazarene Theological School in Lilongwe, Malawi.

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FOREWORD



Theology does not stand still. That may be a worrying thought for some who are committed to "the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude v. 3, DBT). If our theology is true, how can it change? Are we not simply to believe what the apostles and prophets wrote in the inspired Scriptures? And, for Nazarenes and others in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition, did not the great Nazarene theologian Dr. H. Orton Wiley formulate our theology? And are we not all committed to the same theology, particularly in our understanding of Christian holiness? It may have been assumptions such as these that lay behind some of the opposition encountered by Dr. Mildred Bangs Wynkoop.

One must have the greatest sympathy for deeply loyal and committed preachers and laypeople in the Holiness Movement in the 1970s. To begin with, there was the discovery in the mid-twentieth century that there were differences between Wesley's understanding of Christian sanctification and that of the nineteenth-century Holiness Movement, which produced an immediate question: which version of our tradition should we go with? But Dr. Wynkoop took it further. It was not just a matter of who—whether John Wesley or Phoebe Palmer—got it right: Wynkoop took her bearings from biblical theology. Her thorough study of the text of Scripture led her to recast many of the ways we had articulated our doctrine. It is quite understandable that her assertions were somewhat unnerving. Was she then a heretic, as some alleged? Or did our treasured formulations of doctrine have to be recast in the light of Holy Scripture? Had we been using ways of thinking and preaching that were actually shaped by our culture? Did we have to reshape the way we articulated our doctrine?

Although this was perhaps not always understood, behind the great debate of the 1970s, which echoed round the halls of learning in Nazarene colleges and at Nazarene Theological Seminary, those were really the underlying questions: Is Christian theology static? Or do we have to think of Christian theology as something that has developed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and continues to develop through the centuries? And do we all have to state our doctrine exactly the same way? Or is it possible that there can be varieties of expression within the one church and within the one theological tradition?

In the nineteenth century, John Henry Newman wrote his seminal work, *The Development of Christian Doctrine*. That was a century in which people gained a new understanding of history, and one of the aspects of that development was the new understanding that, over the centuries, Christian doctrine had *developed*. The full doctrine of the Holy Trinity—that God was three persons in one being—was not fully articulated until the fourth century. The doctrine of Christ as one person in two natures—divine and human—was not fully articulated until the fifth century. The doctrine of the atonement developed with Anselm, justification with Luther, and (we would want to add) sanctification with Wesley. And we today continue to explore all of these doctrines further.

Newman's point was that development did not mean departing from the faith into theological liberalism (or whatever we want to call it). It did not mean replacing the gospel with some modern, **metaphysical** system or ideology, and it does not mean replacing a Christ-centred faith with one centred on some philosophical notion of love. Not at all: we remain true to the faith of the New Testament and the creeds. We believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We believe that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. We believe that the Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier. Rather, authentic development could and should mean a deeper understanding of "the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude v. 3, DBT) as the church is led deeper into the truth of God by God the Holy Spirit. And such development is impossible without faithful and rigorous theological *thinking*.

Mildred Bangs Wynkoop taught the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition afresh the importance of biblically based, theological *thinking*. One danger for the church is that we lose hold of Christ and drift from the gospel. But the other danger is that we will fall into an arid **scholasticism** that merely repeats the cultural stereotypes and categories of our subculture until

they become clichés. Theology needs to be challenged again and again by wrestling with the Word of God in Holy Scripture so that our cultural assumptions are challenged. That is how the hermeneutical circle operates, making us come again and again to the text of Scripture so that "the church, having been reformed, must always be being reformed." *Ecclesia reformata semper reformanda*. Only in this way can a tradition be a living tradition and not a dead antique heading for the museum.

Of course, the implication of continual reformation is that Dr. Wynkoop did not write the last word. The development of our theological thinking continues: culture constantly throws up new questions as the modernity still in vogue in the 1970s fades into a new phase, perhaps misleadingly dubbed "postmodernity." Biblical studies have moved beyond the methodology of word studies and captivity to the historical-critical method and have developed a welcome concern with hermeneutics. Theology has developed a new concern to recapture its Trinitarian shape and to set personal experience within the corporate experience of the people of God in the "one holy, catholic, and apostolic church." But the work of Mildred Bangs Wynkoop remains a signpost for those of us in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition. That does not necessarily mean she was always right and her opponents always wrong. But it does mean that it is important for us that each new generation becomes familiar with her thought.

No better guide can be found than Johan Tredoux. His father, Gideon Tredoux, was one of Dr. Wynkoop's students at Nazarene Theological Seminary in the 1970s, and he himself has immersed himself in her writings for years. This immersion finally led him to complete a doctoral thesis at the prestigious University of Manchester, and it is the fruit of this long and thorough study that is now presented in this book. Dr. Tredoux sets Mildred Bangs Wynkoop in her context, beginning with her family's involvement with Dr. Phineas Bresee and her own studies under Dr. H. Orton Wiley in the early days of the Church of the Nazarene. Out of her deep spiritual dissatisfaction with superficial, stereotypical presentations of the way of holiness, she, as a mature woman, undertook academic study in Bible and theology and the study of John Wesley in order to thrash out how to articulate the doctrine in a way that truly brought practical piety and learning together.

Dr. Tredoux's book will be of immeasurable help to those of us who are heirs of the Wesleyan-Holiness Movement to understand the thinking and the passion of this remarkable woman. But more than that, it will help

us today in the task of articulating the message of Christian holiness in a way that is biblically based and culturally relevant. This is a book every preacher and thinking layperson in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition needs to read.

Thomas A. Noble Research Professor of Theology, Nazarene Theological Seminary Senior Research Fellow in Theology, Nazarene Theological College in Manchester

PRFFACE



My father's friendship with Mildred Bangs Wynkoop began in 1975, when he sold everything he owned to make it possible to move from the Republic of South Africa to study at the Nazarene Theological Seminary (NTS) in Kansas City, Missouri, from 1975 until 1977. At that time, Mildred Bangs Wynkoop was the theologian-in-residence at NTS. Crossing paths with Wynkoop's teaching became a pivotal moment in the history of the Tredoux family. Wynkoop not only impacted my father but also impacted my own life.

My father introduced me to Wynkoop in 1980, during the Nazarene General Assembly, which was held in Kansas City that year. I remember meeting Mildred for the first time. I recall a gracious and humble lady who was very present in the moment. Had I known at that time that I would spend six years researching her life and writings, I would have asked her lots of questions.

Having grown up as Afrikaans-speaking citizens in apartheid-era South Africa, a theology of love was not something that would have been a reality in our lives. However, the choice to walk away from prejudice opened up a whole new world to my father, including the opportunity to study under Wynkoop. Under Wynkoop, my father's theological world was opened to the thoughts of John Wesley and to Wynkoop's relational and christological understanding of Christian sanctification. Seeing the impact that Wynkoop made on my family, I became very curious about her life and theology. My curiosity eventually led me to make her lifetime work the focus of my doctoral research at the University of Manchester (UK) under the supervision of Dr. Tom Noble. Part of this research involved spending one day a week for a whole year going through boxes and

boxes of her lifetime work that was never published. I especially want to recognize Stan Ingersol, the archivist at the Nazarene Resource Center, for putting together the Wynkoop Collection that made it possible to do this research.

If you met this humble lady, you wouldn't know that Dr. Mildred Bangs Wynkoop was an influential and controversial theologian in the Wesleyan-Holiness Movement of the late twentieth century. In fact, it is through the clarity and urgency with which she set forth her position, particularly in *A Theology of Love*, that Wynkoop became a key figure in effecting a major paradigm shift in the Holiness Movement—to a relational way of thinking about sin and holiness. This relational reading of John Wesley and the American Holiness Movement's theology of Christian holiness raised significant theological debate in the last decades of the twentieth century.

This work breaks new ground in attempting a comprehensive understanding of Wynkoop's passion for a more biblical way of thinking about the Christian life and, particularly, Christian holiness. The research also examines the extent to which Wynkoop's version of Wesleyan-Holiness theology was an authentic interpretation of John Wesley's doctrine of sanctification.

Wynkoop thought that a "credibility gap" existed between the doctrines held in the Wesleyan-Holiness Movement and the way these doctrines were lived out in real life. Through her doctoral work in biblical interpretation and her master's work in theological anthropology, she concluded that the problems causing the credibility gap were present at a presuppositional level and that the solutions would have to be addressed at that level as well. Wesley's emphasis on the living Word and his spiritual reading of Scripture helped Wynkoop to realize that an existential and Christocentric reading of Scripture is the primary way to overcome the credibility gap.

The role of the "moral" also became a major hermeneutical principle used by Wynkoop to address the credibility gap. As a key interpretive principle, the "moral" became a way through which she was able to assess whether sanctification proceeded along the lines of moral integrity and moral responsibility. Through her critical study of the *imago Dei*, Wynkoop made a distinction between "image" and "likeness." Building on this distinction, Wynkoop postulates that human potential, freedom, development, and growth are embedded in her biblical understanding of "likeness," which

to her is a disposition that remained after the fall. The outcome was that Wynkoop followed the Eastern tradition in its Christocentric reading of creation. This research further affirms that the divine-human interaction, as postulated in her existential theology, is not anchored in the metaphysical world of **Boston personalism** or relationalism but, rather, in the Hebraic, biblical understanding of corporate personality.

Wynkoop's studies and theological reflection led her to see Wesley's understanding of sanctification as dynamic, christological, relational, teleological, and socially oriented. Together with Wesley, Wynkoop concludes that holiness is not a withdrawal from society in a posture of indifference, isolationism, or exclusivity. It is, rather, love locked into the true centre, who is Jesus Christ, being lived out in the existential realities of everyday life. Holiness is faith expressing itself in love that bears witness to the enabling grace of Christ and fulfils the royal law to love our neighbours as ourselves.

This work thus explores the sources and development of Wynkoop's theology of sanctification. It will not be possible in the space available to develop a wider evaluation of her thought against the broader theological currents of her time or to assess her influence.

A NOTE TO THE READER

To assist the reader, a glossary of terms is included at the end of the book. Each term's first appearance in the text—including the foreword and preface—is highlighted in bold.

I MILDRED BANGS: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

• • •

Mildred Bungs was born on September 9, 1905, in Seattle, Washington, as the first child of Carl and Mary Bangs, emigrants from Norway and Switzerland who became naturalized American citizens.

Her mother, Mary (née Dupertuis), was born in Canton de Vaux, Switzerland. As a six-year-old girl, and one of a family of twelve siblings, she endured tremendous hardship as her father tried to make a living farming on an incredibly steep section of a Swiss mountain. In the spring of 1889, he gathered his family and immigrated to the "grand new world" of North America.

Mildred's father was Carl Oliver Bang, a Norwegian, born in Norway in a drunkard's home (not an unusual situation, then). Carl's mother died soon after his birth, and Carl was shunted from one place to another. Always serious and seeking meaning, he ended up attending the Society of Friends (Quakers). Influenced by the Quaker missionaries, he felt a strong reluctance to enter the military service. To avoid signing up with the army, he signed up with his uncle, a sea captain, on a freighter going to the West Coast of the United States. For reasons unknown, Carl decided to jump ship in Pensacola, Florida. This decision saved his life because the ship went out to sea and sank, and all on board drowned. No one of the family back in Norway knew that he had *not* been in the disaster. He changed his name from Bang to Bangs—never to return to his fatherland. He worked his way on other ships around South America (pre-canal) to San Francisco and then worked on lumber ships going from Washington to California and back. Lonely, hungry, and drinking too much, he finally found a haven in Seattle.

It was only a matter of time before the lively Dupertuis family and the lonely Norwegian met and established a friendship.

It all started when he was on the docks, thinking of signing up on another lumber ship going to Alaska, and he met Mary, who was playing in a Salvation Army band. With Mary as an incentive, he began attending services at the Salvation Army Mission, and there one night he was converted and became a Christian. Carl Bangs and Mary Dupertuis eventually developed a relationship and were married in December 1904. To this union, five girls and one boy (in that order) were added. Mildred was the first child, followed by Bernice, Thelma, Florence, Olive, and Carl. 2

Nazarene Roots

Mildred Bangs's biography is rooted deeply in Nazarene soil. Her first memories were of the Seattle Salvation Army Mission, the singing and the drama and the beautiful, uniformed soldiers. Given the location of the Salvation Army, Carl Bangs decided to find a safer place for his young family because the streets were dark and the night people rough. This is where the Seattle First Church of the Nazarene came into play. Carl Oliver Bangs found the Nazarene meetings to be more of a family church than the Salvation Army, and they had already connected with P. F. Bresee's Los Angeles church on their honeymoon. When Bresee came to Seattle the following year and organized a class of Nazarenes there, Carl Bangs was one of the three officers appointed. The Bangses thus became pioneers for the Nazarene work in Seattle.³

Religious influences constantly surrounded Mildred as she grew up in the Seattle First Church of the Nazarene. One of her earliest memories was hearing Dr. Bresee preach. She remembered, "He stood before us like a Moses!" H. D. Brown, the first Nazarene district superintendent appointed by Bresee, lived in Seattle and was a friend of the Bangs family. Mildred's early exposure to missionaries speaking in the pulpit, eating at their home, and then leaving for the distant, pagan world from the Seattle

^{1.} Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, "This Is Mildred Bangs Wynkoop" (article, undated), file 1427-3, Wynkoop Collection, Nazarene Archives, Lenexa, Kansas, 1 (hereafter cited as WC).

^{2.} Wynkoop, "Birth and Marriage" (article, undated), file 1427-4, WC, 1.

^{3.} Carl Bangs, Phineas F. Bresee: His Life in Methodism, the Holiness Movement, and the Church of the Nazarene (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1995), 249–50.

^{4.} Wynkoop, "This Is Mildred," file 1427-3, WC, 1.

^{5.} Ibid.

port gave her a missionary mind-set that would eventually have a profound influence on the way she did theology. She wrote, "I felt called to every country I heard about and contracted to go at the altar, regularly." She would eventually (fifty years later) leave from the same city to go to Japan as a missionary teacher.

Early Years

Mildred remembers her parents' devotion to Christ to be so genuine that not the slightest hint ever came to any of the six children that they had even remotely considered any other way of life. She said of her father: "He taught us how to look past the false front of ideas and to ask probing questions of easy answers. He loved his Bible and talked to us about it. He wanted us to learn to read and understand for ourselves. He taught us to read the classics."

The Nazarene services became a very exciting part of Mildred's young life. As a family the Bangses drove to church in a buggy, pulled by Billy, their milk-wagon horse. She remembered the services being so exciting that she wouldn't miss a single one, especially Wednesday night prayer meeting. Her shy personality surfaced already at this very young age as she came home one night too excited not to awaken her parents: "Mama, Papa," she said, "the people testified about their problems today. They didn't shout—they cried." This was the first hint she had that it was all right to have problems without having to shout it aloud for everyone to hear.

One of the great ironies of this scholar's life was her traumatic experience of going to school for the first time. At age six, her first grade experience was so terrifying to her that her mother brought her home and homeschooled Mildred for two years. She carried this scar with her for the rest of her life, frequently explaining her lifelong reluctance to meet with unfamiliar people as a reflection of her first school experience.¹¹

^{6.} Ibid., 2.

^{7.} Ibid.

^{8.} Ibid.

^{9.} Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid

^{11.} Wynkoop, "School (1911-13)" (article, undated), file 1427-3, WC, 1.

College Years

From very early on, Mildred was influenced by her father's desire for his children to be exposed to the classic literature of Europe and early American writings.¹² She remembered getting lost in that treasury of literature on the long streetcar ride from home to grammar school.¹³ Later studies in college, university, and seminary sank roots in fertile soil already prepared at a very young age. She reminisced, "I was born a very restless creature, ambitious, impatient, searching. I often scolded God, 'Why don't you talk to me. I don't like you all the time trying to make me guess what you want. You could talk—do it!'"¹⁴

She wanted to go to college, yet there was no money. She wrote: "I talked to God again. 'You are rich,' I said. 'Send me the money to go to school. You wouldn't miss it.'"¹⁵ Unknown to her at that time, her father took on a second mortgage to make it possible for her to go to college. ¹⁶ In 1926 she entered Northwest Nazarene College in Nampa, Idaho. Her most important contact (other than several nice boys) was with its president, H. Orton Wiley.

She joined a collegiate singing quartet that travelled on the weekends and promoted the college from church to church.¹⁷ She remembered how, on one trip to Seattle (they hardly had any money), Dr. Wiley just stopped the car along the road and disappeared down to the river. It wasn't long before he reappeared with a trout in his hand. That was their breakfast that morning.¹⁸ His relationship with the quartet deepened over the year. And when Wiley announced in 1928 that he was leaving Nampa to return to Pasadena College, Mildred Bangs and at least one other student in the quartet followed him there.¹⁹

Once in college, several nice boys were in her sights, but the one who captured her heart was Ralph Wynkoop. On December 27, 1928, Mildred and Ralph were married at Central Church of the Nazarene (now Aurora Church of the Nazarene) in Seattle, Washington. She graduated twice from

^{12.} Wynkoop, "Satisfactions and Regrets" (article, undated), file 1561-32, WC, 1.

¹³ Ibid

^{14.} Wynkoop, "Mid-Course Corrections" (article, undated), file 1427-2, WC, 1.

^{15.} Ibid.

^{16.} Wynkoop, "Birth and Marriage," file 1427-4, WC, 1.

^{17.} Stan Ingersol, "The Woman behind the Words" (article, undated), WC, 3.

^{18.} Wynkoop, "Notes on My Life" (article, undated), file 1427, WC, 1.

^{19.} Ingersol, "The Woman," file 1561-32, WC, 3.

Pasadena College—in 1931, with a bachelor of arts degree, and in 1933, with a bachelor of theology degree. In 1934, she was ordained as an elder by Dr. John Goodwin in the Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene.²⁰ Her decision to attend seminary came many years later, in the late 1940s.

The Influence of H. Orton Wiley

Stacked away in Wynkoop's 1940 edition of H. Orton Wiley's *Christian Theology* are extensive "write-ins" in the margins and notes of comments she took, both as a student and as a teacher. One of the notes simply says: "In a sense I am a Wileyite, not in a blind guru type of dedication, but as a goad to fresh, released, in-depth, biblical dependence that nourished a searching mind." She met Wiley when she was fifteen years old and became one of his students at about eighteen or nineteen. His impact on Wynkoop can be seen in the way he took her outside of her small world, theologically, and helped her see that she was part of the church universal, linked with the cloud of witnesses from Christ and the early Catholic Church, through the Reformation and, closer to home, through the Wesleyan movement.

Wynkoop went through Wiley's three-volume *Christian Theology* with him, first as class notes when it was in duplicate form and helping him to run it off in the print room, and then she taught from it five times in five years in a seminary on the West Coast.²² Wynkoop's classroom experience with Dr. Wiley, along with other students, was one of being thrown into the deep sea of church history and the development of church doctrine.²³ Wynkoop could relate very well to the conversation she overheard between her brother, Carl Bangs, and Wiley.

Carl said, "When I began to study theology under you, I was so sure of everything. Now, [after one year,] I'm not sure of anything."

Dr. Wiley laughed and answered, "Think things over and rest good over the summer, you'll come out all right."²⁴ And so they did.

Wiley's biblical, christological, and Wesleyan presentation of the doctrine of holiness, related as it was to the church, began to challenge

^{20.} Wynkoop, "Birth and Marriage," file 1427-4, WC, 1.

^{21.} Wynkoop (handwritten note, February 13, 1991), file 2228-6, WC.

^{22.} Wynkoop, "The Foundations of: A Theology of Love" (monograph, 1975), undated, file 2227-11, WC, 3.

^{23.} Ibid.

^{24.} Ibid.

Wynkoop and finally erode some theories that had slipped in from other theological streams. When she first entered the field of theology, she inherited Wiley's theological agenda. According to Stan Ingersol, Wiley was recognized as the leading exponent of Arminian theology within American evangelical Protestantism, and was so identified by Carl F. H. Henry, the founding editor of *Christianity Today*.²⁵

It is, then, not a surprise that Wynkoop and her brother, Carl, joined Wiley in the defense of Arminianism. Carl became the leading scholar on Arminius with his publication of *Arminius: A Study in the Dutch Reformation*. Wynkoop's book *Foundations of Wesleyan-Arminian Theology* also shows the deep influence of Wiley on her work as she recognized the Calvinist inroads into the thinking of Nazarene pastors and laity. Wiley opened Wynkoop's eyes to her own denominational, segregationist prejudice. She said, "Born as we were in a very narrow, provincial concept of gospel and church, Wiley with his tremendous grasp of what the gospel and church really were, led us step by step into the high country of vision and understanding and mission. I have much to thank Wiley for; I am indelibly marked by his inspired and inspiring ministry."²⁷

Lifetime Work

Mildred Bangs Wynkoop spent most of the 1930s and 1940s travelling with her husband as evangelists and as pastors of small Nazarene churches. Her simple impulse at the age of forty-four to study Greek and Hebrew opened up a whole new academic world to her. She decided to go back to college and earned a master of divinity degree at the Western Evangelical Seminary (now George Fox Evangelical Seminary) in 1952, a master of science degree at the University of Oregon in 1953, and culminating in 1955 with a doctorate of theology from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Wynkoop started her teaching career at Western Evangelical Theological Seminary in Portland, Oregon, teaching theology from 1955 to 1960. She then spent a year teaching in Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Japan with the Oriental Mission Society. In 1961 she was instrumental in redeveloping theological education for the Church of the Nazarene in

^{25.} Ingersol, "The Woman," file 1561-32, WC, 4.

^{26.} Ingersol, "The Woman," file 1561-32, WC, 5.

^{27.} Wynkoop, "Foundations," file 2227-11, WC, 3.

Japan. She became the dean of the Nazarene Junior College from 1961 until 1963 and became the first woman president of the Japan Nazarene Seminary from 1963 until 1966. Upon her return to the United States, Wynkoop became the professor of missions and theology at Trevecca Nazarene College (now University) in Nashville, Tennessee, from 1966 to 1976. She was president of the Wesleyan Theological Society in 1973 and closed her career as theologian-in-residence at Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri, from 1976 until 1980.²⁸

It is fair to say that the classroom was the most prominent symbol and existential reality of her life. She wrote:

A classroom presents to me a peculiar romantic psychological reaction. A silent empty room, chairs, a blackboard and chalk and chalk dust. Empty, cold, echoes, ghosts, dreams, shadows, and silence, little shudders of fear. That has been my world for over two thirds of my life. And then the jangling bell, and a thundering horde of feet crowding in, crackling chairs, a babble of voices, and suddenly, the cold emptiness is gone and Shakespeare comes alive, and the utter wonder of art, of vivid imagination, of philosophical ideas, of startlingly vivid scenes from histories past. Where did the drab room go? It is full of light, and excitement. The windows are opened into eternity. Who needs a carpet or soft chairs and background music to tie us to the earth? We go out beyond the earth into the stratosphere of transcendent existence—magic, miracle. And then jangling bells break in and the psychedelic trip ends, and the cold, drab room is left behind. This miracle occurs day after day, year after year, a miracle that I would not exchange for anything in the world. A world I love.²⁹

Wynkoop's published monographs are John Wesley, Christian Revolutionary (Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1970); Foundations of Wesleyan-Arminian Theology and A Theology of Love (both Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1972); The Occult and the Supernatural (Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1976); and The Trevecca Story: 75 Years of Christian Service (Nashville: Trevecca Press, 1976).

Mildred Bangs Wynkoop died on May 21, 1997, in Lenexa, Kansas.

^{28.} Wynkoop, "Biography" (article, undated), file 1427, WC, 1.

^{29.} Wynkoop, "Appreciation Dinner at NTS" (article, undated), file 1426-5, WC, 1.