

Notes: A resolution on this subject was referred for further study by the 2013 General Assembly to the Board of General Superintendents (BGS), and a study committee was appointed by the BGS. Any further amendments (beyond what has been recommended in this resolution from the BGS) would be required by *Manual* paragraph 27 to again be referred to the BGS for review by *another* study committee of theologians and ordained ministers.

ARTICLE OF FAITH X – CHRISTIAN HOLINESS AND ENTIRE  
SANCTIFICATION  
Board of General Superintendents  
*Manual* 10, 10.1

RESOLVED that *Manual* paragraphs 10 and 10.1 be amended as follows:

X. Christian Holiness and Entire Sanctification

10. [We believe that sanctification is the work of God which transforms believers into the likeness of Christ. It is wrought by God’s grace through the Holy Spirit in initial sanctification, or regeneration (simultaneous with justification), entire sanctification, and the continued perfecting work of the Holy Spirit culminating in glorification. In glorification we are fully conformed to the image of the Son.

We believe that entire sanctification is that act of God, subsequent to regeneration, by which believers are made free from original sin, or depravity, and brought into a state of entire devotement to God, and the holy obedience of love made perfect.

It is wrought by the baptism with or infilling of the Holy Spirit, and comprehends in one experience the cleansing of the heart from sin and the abiding, indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, empowering the believer for life and service.

Entire sanctification is provided by the blood of Jesus, is wrought instantaneously by grace through faith, preceded by entire consecration; and to this work and state of grace the Holy Spirit bears witness.

This experience is also known by various terms representing its different phases, such as “Christian perfection,” “perfect love,” “heart purity,” “the baptism with or infilling of the Holy Spirit,” “the fullness of the blessing,” and “Christian holiness.”

10.1. We believe that there is a marked distinction between a pure heart and a mature character. The former is obtained in an instant, the result of entire sanctification; the latter is the result of growth in grace.

We believe that the grace of entire sanctification includes the divine impulse to grow in grace as a Christlike disciple. However, this impulse must be consciously nurtured, and careful attention given to the requisites and processes of spiritual development and improvement in Christlikeness of character and personality. Without such purposeful endeavor, one's witness may be impaired and the grace itself frustrated and ultimately lost.

Participating in the means of grace, especially the fellowship, disciplines, and sacraments of the Church, believers grow in grace and in wholehearted love to God and neighbor.]

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2 We believe that the sanctification of the believer is that transformation into  
3 the likeness of Christ which begins with regeneration. Being incorporated into the  
4 body of Christ, trusting in His Atonement, and becoming children of God the  
5 Father in the fellowship of the Spirit, new believers take up the cross, learn to deny  
6 themselves, die daily with Christ, and live in faithful obedience to the great  
7 commandments in the power of the Spirit.

8 Participating in the means of grace, especially the fellowship, disciplines,  
9 and sacraments of the Church, the believer grows in grace and in the love of God  
10 and neighbor, but yet through this becomes increasingly conscious of a deep need  
11 for inward purifying from the persistent and multi-faceted sinfulness of pride, self-  
12 centeredness and idolatry.

13 We believe that by such growth in the grace and knowledge of our Lord  
14 and Savior Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit brings the believer to the point of full  
15 consecration and entire sanctification, when through faith in Christ who died for  
16 our full salvation, the Holy Spirit fills the believer with wholehearted love to God  
17 and neighbor, so purifying the heart. Filled with the Spirit of the Risen Lord, who  
18 baptized the apostolic Church with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in  
19 fulfillment of the promises of the new covenant, believers are empowered even in  
20 their weakness to witness to Him in a life of victory. While awaiting the  
21 redemption of the body, believers still confess shortcomings, trespasses, and faults,  
22 but press on to ever more mature and holy character in the image of God.

23 (Jeremiah 31:31–34; Ezekiel 36:25–27; Malachi 3:2–3; Matthew 3:11–12;  
24 Luke 3:16–17; John 7:37–39; 14:15–23; 17:6–20; Acts 1:5; 2:1–4; 15:8–9;  
25 Romans 6:11–13, 19; 8:1–4, 8–14; 12:1–2; 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1; Galatians 2:20;  
26 5:16–25; Ephesians 3:14–21; 5:17–18, 25–27; Philippians 3:10–15; Colossians  
27 3:1–17; 1 Thessalonians 5:23–24; Hebrews 4:9–11; 10:10–17; 12:1–2; 13:12; 1  
28 John 1:7, 9)

29 [ (“Christian perfection,” “perfect love”: Deuteronomy 30:6; Matthew  
30 5:43–48; 22:37–40; Romans 12:9–21; 13:8–10; 1 Corinthians 13; Philippians  
31 3:10–15; Hebrews 6:1; 1 John 4:17–18

32 “Heart purity”: Matthew 5:8; Acts 15:8–9; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:3

33 “Baptism with the Holy Spirit”: Jeremiah 31:31–34; Ezekiel 36:25–27;  
34 Malachi 3:2–3; Matthew 3:11–12; Luke 3:16–17; Acts 1:5; 2:1–4; 15:8–9

35 “Fullness of the blessing”: Romans 15:29

36 “Christian holiness”: Matthew 5:1–7:29; John 15:1–11; Romans 12:1–  
37 15:3; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 4:17–5:20; Philippians 1:9–11; 3:12–15;  
38 Colossians 2:20–3:17; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:7–8; 5:23; 2 Timothy 2:19–22;  
39 Hebrews 10:19–25; 12:14; 13:20–21; 1 Peter 1:15–16; 2 Peter 1:1–11; 3:18; Jude  
40 20–21)]

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43 REASONS:

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45 FOR THE PROPOSAL\*:

- 46 1. With many amendments over the years, the Article of Faith in its current  
47 form does not flow smoothly. A more readable and coherent Article of  
48  
49 Faith will assist us in understanding, teaching, and preaching the essential  
50 truth of the doctrine of sanctification.  
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- 1 2. The proposed Article of Faith relies heavily on careful exegesis of  
2 Scripture and utilizes biblical language wherever possible to communicate  
3 the doctrine.  
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5 \*The full transcript of the biblical, theological, and historical rationale for the  
6 proposed wording for Article of Faith X may be found in Didache, the online  
7 educational journal sponsored by the Church of the Nazarene.  
8 [http://didache.nazarene.org/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=doc\\_view&gid=812&Itemid=51](http://didache.nazarene.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=812&Itemid=51)  
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12 FOR THE PROPOSED WORDING:  
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- 14 3. “We believe”  
15 Every Article of Faith begins with these words.  
16  
17 4. “that the sanctification”  
18 The subject of the new Article of Faith as a whole is sanctification as a  
19 whole. Entire sanctification is better explained within that context.  
20  
21 5. “of the believer”  
22 Today we want to say much about corporate sanctification, and this re-  
23 draft will try to put sanctification in the context of ecclesiology. However,  
24 although we must try to get away from *individualism*, we are not free to  
25 reject the evangelical and pietistic emphasis on *personal* salvation and  
26 sanctification (“for me”) rooted in Paul (Galatians 2:20), and affirmed by  
27 significant figures in Christian history including Charles and John Wesley  
28 (“that Thou, my God shouldst die *for me*”). (Italics added here for  
29 emphasis.) The terminology of “believer” which appears in the present  
30 Article of Faith X is therefore kept.  
31  
32 6. “is that transformation”  
33 This is a word picked up by present-day Wesleyan theologians to counter  
34 the idea that salvation only means forgiveness (justification), but less of a  
35 “real” change (sanctification). But the word is also biblical  
36 (*metamorphousthe*, Romans 12:2).  
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38 7. “into the likeness of Christ”  
39 Christlikeness, the goal of the Christian (1 John 3:2), is one of Wesley’s  
40 major ways of explaining Christian Perfection (Wesley, John. *A Plain*  
41 *Account of Christian Perfection*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1966, 27:  
42 “In another view, it is all the mind which was in Christ, enabling us to  
43 walk as Christ walked.”).  
44  
45 8. “which begins with regeneration”  
46 Obviously, this asserts what Wesleyan theologians call “initial  
47 sanctification.” Exegetical grounds for this could be multiplied. “With”  
48 rather than “at” since this is not so much a statement of the “when” as a  
49 statement that one dimension of regeneration is initial sanctification.  
50  
51 9. “being incorporated into the body of Christ”

- 1 Here the corporate or ecclesiological context missing from the present  
2 wording is asserted.  
3
- 4 10. “trusting in His Atonement”  
5 This connects sanctification as a whole to the doctrine of the Atonement  
6 and asserts that even initial sanctification is not our achievement but is  
7 through faith in the work of Christ. This terminology is probably  
8 preferable today to the phrase later in the present Article of Faith,  
9 “provided by the blood of Jesus.”  
10
- 11 11. “and becoming children of God the Father”  
12 Reflecting both Johannine and Pauline doctrine (John 1:13; Romans 8:15  
13 and following; Galatians 4:6) that we are drawn into the family of God.  
14
- 15 12. “in the fellowship of the Spirit”  
16 The word “fellowship” is deliberately introduced here to echo both 1  
17 Corinthians 13:14 and 1 John 1:3. Both references, along with the  
18 references in the previous clauses to the Son and the Father, make it clear  
19 that the doctrine of sanctification is firmly rooted in a fully relational  
20 doctrine of the Holy Trinity.  
21
- 22 13. “new believers take up the cross”  
23 This phrase reflects the Markan view of the life of holiness as the life of  
24 discipleship (Mark 8:34).  
25
- 26 14. “and learn to die daily with Christ”  
27 This phrase is Pauline phraseology (1 Corinthians 15:31) echoing Mark  
28 8:34. This also reflects the long tradition in Christian theology of  
29 understanding sanctification and the spiritual journey of the Christian as  
30 both *mortificatio* and *vivificatio*, dying with Christ to sin that we might be  
31 raised with Him to righteousness (Romans 6:5-11).  
32
- 33 15. “living in faithful obedience to the great commandments”  
34 This emphasizes John Wesley’s doctrine that outward obedience and  
35 victory over sin begins at regeneration, not at entire sanctification (as a  
36 kind of Keswickian doctrine might suggest). John Wesley used the phrase  
37 “zealous obedience” in his description of how the Christian is to move  
38 towards entire sanctification (Wesley, John. *A Plain Account of Christian*  
39 *Perfection*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1966, 19, quoting “Thoughts  
40 on Christian Perfection”, 1759), however we have preferred “faithful” and  
41 chosen to highlight specifically the great commandments.  
42
- 43 16. “in the power of the Spirit”  
44 Once again the pneumatological connection is made, this time specifically  
45 using the Lukan language of *dynamis* (“power”).  
46
- 47 17. “participating in the means of grace, especially the fellowship, disciplines,  
48 and sacraments of the Church”  
49 This phrase is obviously an attempt to incorporate the corporate,  
50 ecclesiological dimension and to put personal growth in grace within that  
51 context, particularly Wesley’s emphasis on the means of grace.

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18. “the believer grows in grace”  
Using biblical language (2 Peter 3:18) to express what John Wesley called “the gradual work of sanctification” (Sermon 43, “The Scripture Way of Salvation”, 1765, Outler, Albert C., ed. *The Works of John Wesley, Volume 2: Sermons II 34-70*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985, 160f.) in preference to the impersonal and unbiblical language of “process.”
  19. “and in the love of God and neighbor”  
This is the first use of the word “love”, but since it is “growth” in love, then clearly love has been there from the beginning.
  20. “but yet”  
This phrase indicates a tension in the believer between “the already” and the “not yet.”
  21. “through this becomes increasingly conscious”  
This draws on John Wesley’s doctrine of “The Repentance of Believers” as expressed in this passage from Sermon 21, “The Sermon on the Mount - Discourse 1,” 1739?, (Outler, Albert C., ed. *The Works of John Wesley, Volume 1: Sermons I 1-33*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984, 482f.): “The conviction we feel of inbred sin is deeper and deeper every day. The more we grow in grace, the more do we see the desperate wickedness of our heart. The more we advance in the knowledge and love of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ...the more do we discern of our alienation from God, of the enmity that is our carnal mind, and the necessity of our being entirely renewed in righteousness and true holiness.”
  22. “of a deep need for inward purifying”  
Despite contemporary criticism of the idea of “inner space” and “the Cartesian self,” we must affirm the biblical concept of the inward thoughts of the “heart” or “mind” as part of the concept of “purity of heart.”
  23. “from the persistent and multi-faceted sinfulness”  
The phrase is chosen to express the idea of a *condition* which continues in the Christian even after regeneration—a view which is common to all Christian traditions, though emphasized more in the Augustinian west.
  24. “of pride, self-centeredness and idolatry”  
Rather than using the Augustinian phrase “original sin” it is preferable to use two biblical words (pride, idolatry), and one with a strong basis in Scripture and the literature of Christian spirituality across all Christian traditions. The particular aspect of original sin which is in mind is therefore specified, and other aspects (heredity, original guilt, fallenness, etc.) are set aside here. This sharpens the definition of the doctrine and rules out the idea that we believe that entire sanctification abolishes original sin in all its aspects (and therefore in Adamic or sinless perfection).
  25. “We believe”

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This phrase is repeated here since this next distinct paragraph is on *entire* sanctification.

26. “that by such growth in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”

The word *such* refers to the previous paragraph making it clear that it refers to what John Wesley called “gradual” sanctification, but the biblical phrase, “growth in grace” is preferred and the whole phrase from 2 Peter 3:18 is included.

27. “the Holy Spirit brings the believer to the point”

The phraseology is carefully chosen to bring out the interconnection between gradual and entire sanctification: the word *point* is safeguarding the Wesleyan understanding of entire sanctification as instantaneous, but avoiding psychological language (“crisis”) which seems to many to imply that this is *necessarily* a moment of great spiritual drama and emotion. The Holy Spirit is identified as the agent of sanctification.

28. “of entire sanctification”

John Wesley’s phrase, drawn from 1 Thessalonians 5:23, is crucial to this Article of Faith.

29. “when through faith”

The role of faith in sanctification must be stressed in order to scotch the idea that this is a human achievement.

30. “in Christ”

This makes clear the Christocentric nature of entire sanctification.

31. “who died for our full salvation”

This is a kind of commentary on the earlier phrase “trusting in His Atonement,” making clear that trusting that we are saved and sanctified through His atoning work is actually a *personal* trust in *Him*: it also emphasizes that not only forgiveness of acts of sin, but *full* salvation/sanctification is made possible by the atonement. This is phrased deliberately in such a way to be persuasive. Christians of any tradition will find this difficult to deny without casting doubt on the depth and power of the Atonement.

32. “the Holy Spirit fills the believer”

In the construction of the whole sentence the Christological and pneumatological aspects are brought into the closest connection. There is obviously too a reference here to the Lukan language of being “filled with the Spirit.”

33. “with wholehearted love for God and neighbor”

The Lukan language of being “filled with the Spirit” is deliberately conflated with the language of the two greatest commandments

(Deuteronomy and the Synoptics), which John Wesley put at the heart of his doctrine of Christian perfection. The word “wholehearted” is selected

- 1 as a common word which best conveys John Wesley's concept of "unity of  
2 intention," "unity of affection."  
3
- 4 34. "Purifying the heart  
5 This is clearly a biblical phrase which is not only on the lips of Jesus in  
6 Matthew 5:8, but is also well-based in the teaching of the Wisdom  
7 literature about *inner* purity of motivation. The repetition of the word  
8 "purifying" makes it clear that the believer's heart is purified from the  
9 "sinfulness" to which we have just referred.  
10
- 11 35. "filled with the Spirit of the Risen Lord"  
12 The Lukan language of being "filled with the Spirit" is now given its full  
13 Pauline meaning that it is the same Spirit who raised Christ from the dead  
14 who now fills us.  
15
- 16 36. "who baptized the apostolic Church with the Holy Spirit on the day of  
17 Pentecost"  
18 Using the language which refers specifically in the Gospels and Acts to the  
19 historic day of Pentecost, this phrase emphasizes that all the benefits of the  
20 Atonement became available when the Risen Lord sent His Spirit on the  
21 gathered apostolic Church, and that that particularly included the being  
22 filled with the Holy Spirit.  
23
- 24 37. "in fulfillment of the promises of the new covenant"  
25 This phrase, with its references to Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36-37, and the  
26 interpretation of those texts in the New Testament, implies that now that  
27 "the Comforter has come," the Pentecostal baptism of the apostolic Church  
28 with the Holy Spirit means that believers today within this one, holy,  
29 catholic, and apostolic Church, may experience all His blessings under this  
30 new covenant, particularly the blessing of a clean heart.  
31
- 32 38. "believers are empowered even in their weakness to witness to Him in a  
33 life of victory"  
34 The Lukan and language of "power" was emphasized in the Nineteenth-  
35 century holiness movement and (along with "victory") carries great  
36 meaning in the Church around the world today. But to rule out worldly and  
37 sensationalist ideas of power, it is defined as Christ-centered and therefore  
38 paradoxically, (as Paul reminds us), the power of those crucified with  
39 Christ, who are strong only in their weakness.  
40
- 41 39. "while awaiting the redemption of the body"  
42 This puts the doctrine in the eschatological context of the already/not yet  
43 and gives that biblical perspective as the basis for what John Wesley called  
44 the "imperfections of the perfect." It is fully in accord with his emphasis in  
45 Sermon 129, "Heavenly Treasure in Earthen Vessels," 1790, (Outler,  
46 Albert C., ed. *The Works of John Wesley, Volume 4: Sermons IV 115-151*.  
47 Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987, 165f.), that "false judgments...and  
48 wrong inferences...and from these innumerable mistakes...mistakes in  
49 judgment...mistakes in practice...wrong words or action...wrong  
50 tempers....error in ten thousand shapes" necessarily arise from life in the  
51 still fallen body and especially from the "disordered brain." This biblical

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language is preferable to confusing scholastic distinctions between “the carnal nature” and “human nature,” but it is the same point.

- 40. “believers still confess shortcomings, trespasses, and faults”  
There is a reference here obviously to the Lord’s Prayer and the place of continuing confession in the life of the holiest Christian is asserted without falling into the trap of condoning a “sinning religion.”
- 41. “but press on”  
This reflects Paul’s language in Philippians 3:14.
- 42. “to ever more mature and holy character”  
This is language with a strong basis in Scripture and the tradition of Christian spirituality and which is currently being emphasized in Christian ethics.
- 43. “in the image of God”  
The language of the *imago* was important to John Wesley to express the goal: it connects his doctrine of Christian perfection once again with the doctrine of God.