

A Hallmark Affirmed: Women in Ministry

GLENDORA, CA â€“ May 11, 2012 â€“ In a significant and conclusive way, the Wesleyan Holiness Consortium has made it evident that women in ministry continue as a vital part of the movement. In response to a recommendation from the Board of Directors, the Steering Committee voted unanimously to adjust the WHC bylaws to include in its composition those who are also serving as Board members of the Wesleyan Holiness Women Clergy (WHWC).

This action signals that the matter of women in ministry â€“ a hotly debated issue in the contemporary church â€“ is not an issue in the WHC. They have settled the question both in their founding and affirm their commitment by this action. This clear signal places the WHC at odds with such upstart groups as the Gospel Coalition and many of its constituencies which have historically limited ministry oversight to males only.

Further, this action allows the WHWC to relationally lodge itself within the broader spectrum of the WHC so as to affirm its central focus on holiness. It frees the WHWC to focus upon this mission without constantly needing to clarify that it is not simply promoting women in ministry.

Kevin Mannoia, Chair of the WHC worked closely with the WHWC leaders in forging this initiative. â€œThis is inherent to our Wesleyan Holiness heritage.â€• Mannoia says. â€œI am very excited that we can affirm and encourage both women and men as leaders and clergy in the church at every level. We are restoring the clarity of our calling which was blurred by the distraction of other streams of the church that have adversely influenced our pastors and leaders through restrictive exclusion of women in ministry leadership.â€•

Carla Sunberg, President of the WHWC and also a Board Member of the WHC commented: â€œWith the intrusion of fundamentalism into the holiness world, we have seen a situation develop where women have been kept out of leadership roles in the church. The secular world is far out-pacing the Christian world when it comes to purposefully bringing women to the table. The result is that many women are seeing the inconsistency and are simply leaving the church. This is a holiness issue and the concern is that we cannot simply say that we agree with this facet of the holiness message, but that we really believe it.â€•

The WHC Steering Committee with the six newly added members will be conducting its annual meeting on November 2 of this year in Indianapolis. The nature and composition of the group will be different and represent the broadest commitment to holiness in the church today as well as a significant and public declaration affirming women in ministry.

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