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A JOURNAL OF SALVATION ARMY
THEOLOGY & MINISTRY

Scripture as Communication

Reaching Generation Z

Toward a Salvationist Biblical Hermeneutic

An Inquiry into the Evangelistic Preaching of William Booth



Salvation Army National Headquarters
Alexandria, VA, USA

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The purpose of the journal is to encourage and disseminate the thinking of Salvationists and other Christian colleagues on matters broadly related to the theology and ministry of The Salvation Army. The journal provides a means to understand topics central to the mission of The Salvation Army, integrating the Army’s theology and ministry in response to Christ’s command to love God and our neighbor.

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Scripture as Communication

Jonathan S. Raymond and Roger J. Green

The title of this editorial is taken from an excellent book by Jeannine K. Brown entitled *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics: Scripture as Communication*. Hermeneutics deals with interpreting the biblical texts. Everyone interprets the Bible, even the person who does not believe the Bible to be the authoritative Word of God and either sees the Bible as merely another book or ignores the Bible altogether. However, in recognizing the authority of the Scriptures, the committed Christian interprets the Bible and is always seeking proper ways to do so. And as it turns out, the three articles of this issue of the journal all deal with matters of biblical interpretation.

The lead article by Lt. Colonel Allen Satterlee is entitled “Reaching Generation Z.” This article thoroughly explains the cultural context in which the Gospel is presented, and it is a reminder that the Gospel is for the whosoever—for all people in all cultures throughout history and throughout the world. Generation Z demonstrates characteristics and attitudes that may differ from those held by Christians in the 1st century, but 21st-century Christians are in continuity with the people who first read the Scriptures in the 1st century. How, therefore, do we interpret the Bible with Generation Z in mind? The author of the article provides helpful means to this end, so that Generation Z will be “infused with the gospel.”

Many of our readers will know that Lt. Colonel Satterlee is retiring on July 1st. We want to take time to express to him our great appreciation for his work as Editor-in-Chief and National Literary Secretary, but more specifically, for his engagement with Word & Deed since his first day in office. He has been a great supporter of this project, and we would not be where we are today were it not for the leadership and constant encouragement of our friend and colleague. We offer him our most sincere thanks and wish him and his wife, Esther, every blessing in their retirement.

The second article is written by Donald Burke, who is another supporter of *Word*

& *Deed* and a member of this journal's editorial board. Don gets right to the heart of biblical interpretation in *The Salvation Army* with his article entitled "Toward a Salvationist Biblical Hermeneutic." The study of hermeneutics can be rather difficult at times, and Don Burke gives the reader an excellent historical summary of biblical hermeneutics in the first section of his paper. He then moves to his appraisal of a Salvationist biblical hermeneutic with advice for a way forward for *The Salvation Army*. Nothing is more important both biblically and theologically for *The Salvation Army* and the broader Church than this subject, and the author approaches hermeneutics with two strengths—he is both a Salvationist and a biblical scholar. We stand in Don's debt for leading the way in this discussion.

The third article is written by Ryan Wade, a new contributor to this journal who has the advantage of being outside of *The Salvation Army* and therefore writes with an objectivity about Army history and ministry of which we are in constant need. This paper was presented along with other papers, including Don Burke's paper, at *The Salvation Army Scholars and Friends Session of the American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature* meetings held in 2018, in Denver, Colorado. The paper is a reminder that *The Salvation Army* is being discovered by the broader Christian and scholarly worlds. It is also critical to the theme of this editorial. "An Inquiry into the Evangelistic Preaching of William Booth" is timely, because it reminds us that all preaching involves hermeneutics, as preaching is an attempt to be faithful to the intentions of the authors of the biblical texts while simultaneously engaging and seeking responses from an audience.

This article acknowledges that many serious historical analyses of the 19th century do not mention William Booth or *The Salvation Army*, and therefore ignore Booth's preaching. Ryan Wade's paper corrects these failures with an engaging look at Booth's preaching. This enables us to develop a full picture of William Booth, because even today, many people—even historians—view Booth incorrectly as only a social reformer. They forget that, in his day, Booth was also recognized as a preacher and revivalist.

Because hermeneutics is inextricably connected to theology, the book reviews and the book notes at the end of this issue of the journal also deal with matters of interpretation. This is inescapable.

And so, we hope that you, our readers, will be helped by the content of all that is written while. We further hope that, at the same time, you will think consciously about your own principles of interpretation as you preach, teach, study and live out your everyday lives to the glory of God.

Reaching Generation Z

Allen Satterlee

INTRODUCTION

Generation Z represents that cohort born between 1997 and 2012 (some say 1995-2010). With 65 million in the United States alone, it is the largest cohort eclipsing Millennials, Gen X, Boomers and Builders. It is distinguished from other generations by several features.

The young people of Gen Z are hyperconnected, with no memory of a world without handheld mobile devices, social media, and frequent reports of terrorist attacks or school shootings. The young people of Gen Z are characterized by a strong sense of egalitarianism for gender, sexual preference and race. Their use of electronic media has led to a decline in reading, short attention spans and impatience for anything that does not provide immediate results. It is the most security-conscious generation in recorded history, and they are distrustful of institutions and political processes. This also plays out in their delayed development and avoidance of typical youth risk-taking behaviors, such as sexual experimentation and use of alcohol and drugs.

From a religious perspective, Generation Z in the West represents the largest number of youth raised without any religious influence at all—their parents having never brought them or even exposed them to church or other religious institutions. This has resulted in the largest number of young people claiming to be atheists or agnostics in the time that those records have been kept.

Evangelizing and discipling Gen Z will present a significant challenge to The
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Salvation Army as well as other evangelical endeavors. In this paper, we will look further at the characteristics of Gen Z as well as suggestions of approaches that might help us to meet Gen Z at their points of need and accessibility.

It is important to note in all that follows that what is said characterizes most of those in Gen Z, but individuals frequently vary from others in their generations. In addition, while most of what is presented represents the majority view, there are often significant minorities that hold widely different views. Furthermore, the oldest of Gen Z are only now reaching the age of graduating from college. Views expressed now will likely undergo significant change as the cohort ages and matures. Meanwhile, those who are the youngest members of the cohort have not and cannot be effectively researched because of their age. World events as well as unforeseen developments in technology could affect the younger members differently than those who have been researched heretofore.

A helpful way to grasp some of the outstanding characteristics of Generation Z is through the examination of a couple of paradoxes commonly found.

HYPER-CONNECTED VS. SOCIALLY AWKWARD

It is common to see a group of Gen Z teens sitting together yet not talking, because they are texting on their smartphones. It is little wonder. The Gen Z youth typically has five screens in his home: television, desktop, laptop, tablet and smartphone.¹ Even lower-income teens are connected by smartphones, as the average teen checks his device more than 80 times a day.² Furthermore, on average a high school senior spends two-and-a-quarter hours a day texting, two hours on the internet, one-and-a-half hours a day on electronic gaming and a half hour a day video chatting, totaling over six hours a day online.³ While 30% are on Facebook, they use it more to communicate with grandparents and other adults than with their peers. To communicate with peers, by far the favored means are Instagram and Snapchat.⁴

The connectivity has come at a price. Because of their connectivity, they have less opportunity to read in silence. In addition, the almost unlimited access to the internet, often unsupervised, has led to exposure to hardcore pornography at much earlier ages than previously seen. The skewed portrayal of sexual relations has led the youth to accept those depictions as normal human sexuality. This has further resulted in unrealistic views of healthy love and sexuality.⁵ This may also explain a change in attitude toward sexual roles. In the United Kingdom,

nearly half the teens polled do not think of themselves as exclusively heterosexual, with many refusing to be identified as either heterosexual or homosexual.⁶

Vivek Pandit, a Generation Z author, bemoans a further deficit that has resulted from connectivity, particularly fostered by social media. “Opinions about each other [are] developed within minutes instead of days or weeks. And when these opinions are posted on various social media platforms, they characterize our personalities more harshly than what we would expect after face-to-face interaction. More alarming was the fact that the perceptions posted on social media would now heavily bias any subsequent face-to-face encounters we had with each other.”⁷

While social media has literally opened the world to anyone who is connected to the internet, it is a mixed bag for those of Generation Z. The opportunity to interact with peers and others across the globe provides them with unparalleled access to other cultures and countries, along with real-time interactions that can provide enriching experiences and better understanding.

The downside of social media is heightened because of the vulnerability that is part of adolescence. Physiologically, the judgment center of the brain is one of the last areas of the brain to develop fully, which partially explains the risk-taking, harshness and lack of perspective that teens often experience. These inherent limitations can be exploited through social media.

Quite often, the way a teen portrays herself on social media is not a true representation of who she is. Because of the egocentricity she possesses in that stage of life, it seldom occurs to her that others’ representations of themselves may also be inaccurate. At an age when teens are constantly comparing themselves to their peers, the reality of an individual’s life can look less attractive than the life of a peer with whom he or she is interacting. Research has shown that those who use Facebook more often have mental health issues and lower life satisfaction. The risk is greatest for young teens. Those who visit social networking sites every day are more likely to agree with the statement, “I often feel lonely.”⁸

Cyberbullying creates some of these feelings of unhappiness. Two thirds of teens who were cyberbullied displayed at least one suicide factor. Research has further proven that, while teen murders have dipped markedly, teen suicides have risen dramatically. There has been a rise in teen suicide of 47% between 2007 and 2015.⁹

Dr. Janet Twenge notes the paradox of this generation: “... an optimism and self-confidence online ... covers a deep vulnerability, even depression, in real

life. Girls have borne the brunt of the rise in depressive symptoms. College students are now more likely to say they feel overwhelming anxiety and that they have felt so depressed they could not function.”¹⁰

The reliance on social media has resulted in a reduction in healthy face-to-face interaction. Part of the reason we see teens texting someone else when they are in the company of others is that it requires less exertion to text than to talk directly with another person. It should be noted that such stunted social skills are not unique to teens.

It is now more common for parents to allow even infants to have long exposure to tablets and smartphones. As a result, infants are talking less, including talking to themselves which is essential to a child’s mental and emotional development.¹¹

The underdevelopment of social skills leads to awkwardness later. It can be seen in having hundreds of friends and followers on social media but few, if any, actual flesh-and-blood friends. Dating arrangements, courting and breakups for Generation Z are more likely to be handled by texts than face-to-face. When Gen Zers have to have contact with prospective employers, their interviews may be disastrous because of their limited social and communication skills.

To summarize this point, Generation Z is highly sophisticated in electronic use and communication but tends to fall behind when it comes to personal relationships.

INDIVIDUALISM VS. SECURITY

Because the internet has had such a profound impact on the learning and communication of Gen Z, they have been exposed to a wide variety of influences and means of expression. This has led to a strong sense of individualism. Whereas Millennials favored self-absorbed stars like Justin Bieber, Gen Z more readily identifies with the fiercely independent heroic figure of Katniss Everdeen of the *Hunger Games* trilogy.¹²

For marketers, they present a challenge. Noted for their short attention span, Gen Zers are already seeing 10-15-second commercials geared to them. They are not impressed with major brands or with trendy fashions, a fact that has caused youth clothing retailers such as Abercrombie & Fitch to struggle. They are shying away from fast food chains that have catered to youth in favor of major restaurant chains that have targeted adult crowds. For example, they

would rather eat at Olive Garden than McDonald's. Companies that can show they are environmentally conscious and/or have a positive global impact will likely garner their attention. They are far more likely to shop online than in a store, seeking styles that represent who they are rather than what is considered fashionable. Usefulness trumps trendiness which befuddles advertisers used to selling the "in" image.¹³

They present a challenge for the leaders in political parties as well. They are pessimistic about how their votes will make any difference, but when they do express political opinions, it makes it hard to pinpoint where they stand. For example, they believe in the equality of all people, and a surprising number of them favor protectionism—in particular a border wall on the Mexican border. While they are largely in favor of liberal positions such as rights for LGBTQ individuals, they also favor conservative positions such as the right to own guns. Presently, they are skewing toward conservatism but are not far to the right. To the consternation of the political establishment, they have tended to favor Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders, not so much for their political stances as for their outspokenness and independence from the party systems.

The majority favor pro-choice for others while being pro-life in their personal decision making. They are fiscally conservative while feeling that the government should equalize conditions for the poor. They want to earn money to stand out rather than fit in. They are delaying marriage and family, opting instead to guarantee their financial security.¹⁴

Contrasting their independence is their absolute fixation on issues related to security. Raised in a time when random violence is a daily event, they are aware that they could easily be victims themselves. They grew up in an era when children were in seatbelts and child seats, groups of parents guarded them at bus stops, and they were signed in and out by people having to show identification augmented by hours spent in school with active-shooter drills and self-defense lessons. While these are all good measures, the unintended consequence is a general feeling that the world is a dangerous place, punishing those who venture too far from home. Evidence is seen in the cautious behaviors exhibited by Gen Zers, such as delayed engagement in sexual activity, decreased use of drugs and alcohol, or procrastination in obtaining a driver's license. Dangerous exceptions include their approval and use of marijuana, because they see it as harmless, as well as the use of e-cigarettes for the same reason.

Their desire for security is expressed in numerous ways. One survey showed

that a large majority of Gen Z young adults agree with the statement, “I wish I could return to the security of childhood.”¹⁵ They don’t rebel against parental protection but in fact welcome it. A large number even prefer to have their parents come along on dates. In short, they are choosing to grow up more slowly.

A further phenomenon is the tendency to interact only with those who hold similar beliefs. In particular, Facebook actively seeks to match our profiles to others who have similar backgrounds or expressed views. It also includes advertising that is in line with our viewpoints. As a result of this splintering, we tend to find those who reinforce what we believe or who are most like us, rather than expanding our knowledge or assisting in understanding others. If social media has been the primary contact with others in the world, what happens when we encounter those who differ with us?

Twenge notes, “[They have] the idea that one should be safe ... from people who disagree with you. The term ‘safe space’ has broadened to include protecting anyone from any viewpoint that might offend them ... Protecting students from being distressed is considered more important than having a discussion of potentially uncomfortable ideas.”¹⁶

Although there is much more that can be said about Generation Z, because of the need for brevity, we turn now to an important subject.

REACHING GENERATION Z FOR CHRIST

Before considering how to reach Generation Z, we need to look at the religious landscape. As mentioned in the introduction, this is the most unchurched and religiously illiterate generation to be seen since the founding of the United States. Dr. James Emery White notes, “Generation Z is arguably the first generation in the West (certainly in the United States) that will have been raised in a post-Christian context. The largest single religious category in *The Harvard Crimson*’s ‘by the numbers’ survey of the class of 2019 was ‘agnostic’ (21.3%).”¹⁷ White goes on to describe the dilemma faced by those with no religious faith: “They are leaderless. How do I break free from pornography? How do I be a husband/wife? How do I parent? How do I pray? How do I...? They have endless amounts of information but little wisdom, and virtually no mentors.”¹⁸

It is important for us to note that what were previously common cultural references based in the Bible are a mystery to a generation that has been called the

“nones.” Noah and the Ark, Adam and Eve, David and Goliath, and Jesus walking on water are all cryptic references that often go over their heads.

If that is so, how might we best minister to Generation Z?

Strongly encourage those who already claim Christ. It is important that we do not allow those of Generation Z who claim a relationship with Christ to continue on autopilot. We need to be actively engaged with the youth, seeking their spiritual standing and welfare. As will be discussed later, the return to the class meeting is one proven strategy to accomplish this goal. When such groups are not available, seeking to mentor a member of Gen Z could also prove beneficial. And given this generation’s close relationship with parents, the role of a godly parent cannot be overstated. We need to be more than pals to the youth in our families. We need to be examples of consistent godliness that models Christian behavior as well as Christian thought.

Teach and model personal evangelism for Generation Z Christians. The tendency of Gen Z is to be content with the notion of finding one’s own lifestyle and living in it without comment or interference from others. Common lines of reasoning might be, “Is my neighbor cheating on his wife? Not something I would do, but that’s his choice.” The idea that every lifestyle and life choice is valid as long as it is consistent with that person’s autonomy is a disincentive to evangelism. There needs to be a healthy grasp of the wretchedness of sin, the fulfillment that living a holy life offers above all other life choices and the need to keep another person’s eternal destiny in view. Helping Gen Z Christians to see their obligation to bring their peers to Christ is of utmost importance. It is important as well to model evangelistic concern and action by those who are more mature in their faith and not opt out for the passive and insipid blather of “lifestyle evangelism.”

Small groups, especially the Wesleyan class meeting, provide a point of entry for the non-believer as well as a place of grounding for believers. Dr. Jonathan Raymond speaks of the wisdom of the class meeting in his book, *Social Holiness*:

Today social psychologists call Wesley’s class meetings and bands by another name, small behavior settings. In those meetings every

member has an opportunity to be heard, share, listen and grow within the support and affirmation of others. Wesley's class meetings and bands were healthy, growth-promoting innovations and interventions. They were small enough (ten to twelve persons in class meetings and smaller in bands) to be interactive and dynamic for everyone.¹⁹

As Raymond recognizes, the psychological benefit includes helping Gen Zers to overcome their social awkwardness by being involved in face-to-face interaction in a caring and nurturing setting.

A further definition comes from the pen of Dr. Kevin M. Watson in his book, *The Class Meeting*:

These groups were not Bible studies. Rather than being focused on ideas about Christianity, the early Methodist class meeting was focused on helping people to come to know Jesus Christ and learn how to give every part of their lives to loving and serving Christ ... people would gather together, someone open the meeting in prayer, the group will often sing a song or two, and then the class leader will start by answering the question, "How does your soul prosper?"²⁰

What may be especially attractive to unbelievers in Generation Z is that, according to Watson, it is "... a valuable point of entry for people who are not Christians or for people who are nominal Christians ... The advantage of the class meeting is that people do not have to attend church in order to attend a class meeting."²¹

There are rules for the class meeting, of course. But it has the potential to be more transformative if done correctly than a Bible study or other interest group.

Apologetics must be at the forefront of any engagement with Generation Z. Because for many there is no religious frame of reference, to simply say, "The Bible says so ..." is not an effective way to appeal to people who have likely never seen the inside of a Bible, let alone read it.

To be able to explain dispassionately the soundness of belief in God, the problem of sin, the need for a Savior and the unique place of Jesus Christ as the one

who provides the means of salvation will be essential to reach the heads and then the hearts. Dr. James Emery White counsels, “Major in explanation. Everything must be explained, from music to messages, symbols to ritual, because so little is understood ... Whatever it is we are seeking to convey, much less explain, will need to be communicated in shorter bursts of ‘snackable content.’”²²

In other countries where secularism has particularly taken hold, the Church has responded by having courses that invite people to explore and understand the Christian faith. The most notable of these is the Alpha course founded by Charles Marnham in 1990 in England. Many Salvation Army corps have used the Alpha course to good effect, but there are serious issues we have with some of the doctrinal content, especially its strong insistence upon certain charismatic practices that are inconsistent with our understanding of the gospel. An alternative that seems to be gaining a footing is Christianity Explored, developed by Rico Tice and Barry Cooper in 2003. With some of the same elements as the Alpha course, it does not insist on accepting charismatic practices as does the Alpha course. Both were founded within the Anglican Church tradition in England. As such, we would differ on some of their interpretations of Scripture that are counter to the Wesleyan tradition. Unfortunately, these are the only choices, because no one from the Wesleyan camp has anything different to offer. Certainly, both can be adapted to our use, albeit the Christianity Explored course seems to be the best alternative.

The importance to this discussion is that we have to be prepared to explain the Christian faith. We need to do so intelligently, patiently, compassionately and with a conscience void of offense.

“...We have to be prepared to explain the Christian faith. We need to do so intelligently, patiently, compassionately and with a conscience void of offense.”

Peer Magazine—Now, a commercial. In January 2019, The Salvation Army National Headquarters launched *Peer* magazine, the first publication of any kind specifically aimed at reaching Generation Z. It combines elements of popular culture (movie and video game reviews, thrift store shopping tips) with apologetics, church history and devotional content aimed at this co-

hort. More importantly, for the first time, social media and the website are in the lead, with the print publication supporting these outreaches. It offers free magazine subscriptions to anyone who asks. In addition, bulk subscriptions are being offered free of charge to Christian colleges and universities across the USA. Once we finish reaching out to them, we plan on contacting secular universities to ask that they take a bulk subscription to hopefully be made available to college students at student centers. We are in uncharted waters, but it is an attempt to engage with Generation Z when only advertisers are currently targeting their content to them.

CONCLUSION

Generation Z is still very much evolving. What we know now is considerably fluid. The youngest members of Generation Z are only six years old at the time of this writing. World events, unforeseen developments, changes in technology and a hundred other forces will influence and shape the emerging generation. What we long for is a spiritual awakening that sees a free and revitalizing movement of the Holy Spirit. Should that happen, with Generation Z's connectiveness and sophistication, it could result in a civilization-changing impact.

It is incumbent on those in The Salvation Army as well as the rest of the evangelical world to not be placed in a position of reacting to what is happening but to be well informed and prepared to meet the challenges that are rising and will arise. Shaking our heads and longing for the good old days will only mean we will lose the battle before we even begin.

Generation Z holds great promise and potential. Let's be excited about what can happen if this great force is infused with the gospel!

Endnotes

- 1 Vision Critical, *The Everything Guide to Generation Z* (Vancouver: Vision Critical, 2018), 10.
- 2 Jean M. Twenge, *iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood* (New York: Atria Books, 2017), 2.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 47.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 54.
- 5 James Emery White, *Meet Generation Z* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2017), 54, 58.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 47.
- 7 Vivek Pandit, *We are Generation Z* (Dallas: Brown Books, 2015), 11.
- 8 Jean M. Twenge, *iGen*, 78-79.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 85, 87.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 102-103.
- 11 Vivek Pandit, *We are Generation Z*, 14.
- 12 Vision Critical, *The Everything Guide to Generation Z*, 7.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 16-21, 34.
- 14 Jean M. Twenge, *iGen*, 201-206.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 42.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 154, 156.
- 17 James Emery White, *Meet Generation Z*, 49.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 65.
- 19 Jonathan S. Raymond, *Social Holiness* (Anderson, IN: Aldersgate Press; and Alexandria, VA: Crest Books, 2018), 74.
- 20 Kevin M. Watson, *The Class Meeting* (Wilmore, KY: Seedbed, 2013), 26.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 63, 64.
- 22 James Emery White, *Meet Generation Z*, 110, 116.

Toward a Salvationist Biblical Hermeneutic¹

Donald E. Burke

At a critical point in his play *The Merchant of Venice*, one of William Shakespeare's characters says, "The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose."² Succinctly, Shakespeare identified a challenge that confronts the Church, including The Salvation Army, as we seek to navigate faithfully the perilous waters of interpreting the Bible. We may indeed confess that the Bible has a unique role as the Scriptures of the Church, but that affirmation simply confronts us with the challenge of learning how we are to interpret the Bible faithfully. To state the question bluntly: *How can we interpret the Bible in ways that permit us to receive it as the Word of God rather than distorting it and thereby handing it over to serve the devil's purposes?*

The goal of this paper is to identify some principles of interpretation that will guide Salvationists as we read and interpret the Bible as the Sacred Scriptures given to the Church by God as the primary means of guidance on matters of Christian faith and practice. To accomplish this, this paper considers briefly some implications of the rise and practice of biblical scholarship since the Enlightenment and its impact on the interpretation of the Bible as Christian Scripture. Next, the paper discusses briefly some recent attempts to recover the Bible for the Church. Finally, the paper suggests some guidelines for the interpretation of the Bible as Scripture in The Salvation Army.

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A. Background: The Tradition of Biblical Interpretation

Biblical interpretation for the past several centuries has been shaped by the efforts of Enlightenment scholars to free the Bible from the shackles of the dogma of the medieval Church. The pursuit of detached, objective and autonomous interpretation of the biblical texts and the grounding of that interpretation in the historical context of the presumed authors and their intentions has dominated biblical scholarship for more than two centuries.³ The historical-critical method, with its quest to reconstruct the history *of* the biblical texts as well as the history *in* the biblical texts has deconstructed the unity of the Bible into a series of tradents, editors and sources that are set against one another and that compete for a hearing.

This scholarly inheritance is evident in much current academic study of the Bible that searches for objective, historically oriented interpretations of the Bible and excludes any clear references to divine revelation. The academic study of the Bible is dominated by a scholarly model which views references to God or theological concerns as beyond the scope of the biblical scholar; talk about God or about how the biblical text might shape Christian faith and practice is viewed as a secondary enterprise, perhaps even an embarrassment to the academic study of the Bible. This approach postulates a fixed gulf between the historically conditioned meaning of the biblical texts at the time of their writing and the reading of the Bible as Sacred Scripture in the context of the Church. This distinction between the so-called descriptive task of the biblical scholar (that is, outlining what the text *meant*) and the so-called normative task of the biblical theologian (that is, outlining what the text *means*) was given classic expression by Krister Stendahl.⁴ Thus, while the historical-critical method has produced a great deal of valuable information about the historically conditioned nature of the biblical record, its employment also has produced a great divorce between the study of the biblical texts as historical documents on the one hand and their interpretation and application as the Sacred Scriptures of the Christian Church on the other.

Efforts to overcome this separation of the Bible from the Church are not new. From the beginning of the Enlightenment there have been those who have rejected the entire project of the historical-critical method or, at a minimum, its most controversial findings. An early line of defense clung to long-held traditions associated with the “authorship” of portions of the Bible and drew battle lines

around such issues as the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, the scientific and historical interpretations of the Genesis creation narratives, the presumed historical basis of the Book of Jonah and the quest for the historical Jesus. The efforts of conservative scholars to ground the authority of the Bible for the Church in history and science ultimately failed as the body of accumulating evidence grew. Ironically, in their efforts to save the Bible from critical scholars, the defenders of the Bible often adopted the premises of the historical-critical method, thereby unintentionally reinforcing the separation of the Bible from the Church. In effect, they were playing the game on the home field of the historical-critical method according to its rules and could not find a way to win. What conservative scholars failed to recognize was that the danger they perceived did not arise because critical scholars were better players, but rather, because the game itself was rigged. The assumptions and methods of the historical-critical method did not seek to make the Bible accessible as the Scriptures of the Church. Their goal was the reconstruction of history rather than the building up of the Church. Thus, even many of those who sought to save the Bible for the Church ended up with diminishing returns for the reception of the Bible as the Sacred Scriptures addressed to the Church.

By the time that World War I drew to its conclusion, it was becoming increasingly apparent that the Bible as it was being interpreted no longer spoke to the Church in ways that helped the Church live faithfully. As a young pastor, Karl Barth found that his theological and intellectual heritage of interpreting the Bible left him with very little to say to his congregants in the face of the crushing realities of world conflict. Thus, beginning with the publication of his commentary on Romans in 1918 and its substantial revision in 1921, Barth launched an effort to restore the Bible to the Church.⁵ He set out not to beat the historical-critical method at its own game, but rather to redefine the game itself. For Barth, the Bible is first and foremost the Scriptures of the Church, and therefore, it must be interpreted within that context. The historical-critical method is indispensable for the pursuit of the meaning of the text in its original context; but, the fruit of its scholarly endeavors is only prolegomenon to the real task of interpreting the Scriptures for the

“What conservative scholars failed to recognize was that the danger they perceived did not arise because critical scholars were better players, but rather, because the game itself was rigged.”

Church.⁶ Thus, while not indifferent to the historical-critical method, Barth moved past it to hear the Scriptures as the Word of God.

The relationship between the historical-critical method and the reception of the Bible as Scripture for the Church continued to be explored and debated. For example, in the mid-twentieth century, the largely American so-called “biblical theology movement” sought to reconcile the historical-critical interpretation of the Bible with the Church’s use of the Bible as Sacred Scripture. The attempted rapprochement between the study of the Bible as a historical artifact and its reception as the Scriptures of the Church attracted many. But by 1970, Brevard Childs, influenced in significant ways by Barth, diagnosed the superficiality of this reconciliation and called for a new way of reading the Bible as Sacred Scripture.⁷ Childs fostered an entire movement toward taking the canon and the development of biblical literature as a canonical process seriously as the work of the believing community of which the present Church is the heir. He did not reject the historical-critical method outright, but he did argue that the results of the work of critical scholarship are not sufficient for the Church’s reception of the Bible as Sacred Scripture. It is not the writings of the various authors, editors and tradents in their variously reconstructed historical contexts that are authoritative for the Church, but rather the Scriptures in their canonical form. According to Childs, the Scriptures as a whole witness to the same God who has been and continues to be at work in the world. While certainly controversial and by no means endorsed universally, the project undertaken by Childs was successful in its attempt to articulate the challenges associated with the use of the Bible as interpreted through the lens of modern scholarship in the life of the Church. The issue of the relationship between the historically focused academic study of the Bible and the function of the biblical texts as the Scriptures of the Church was now exposed.

Additional attempts to read the Bible within an ecclesial context have followed. Two will be mentioned here. First, there has been a growing stream of interpretations of the Bible utilizing what is called a “missional hermeneutic.”⁸ A missional reading of the Bible interprets the Bible as a unitary narrative of God’s mission to deliver all of creation from the effects of sin and to bring about the full recreation of the heavens and the earth. The Old Testament and the New Testament are read as a unified narrative which relates the mission of God and forms the Church into a community which both participates in the mission of God and is the locus of that mission.⁹

Second, a major effort has been expended to recover and advance the theological interpretation of the Bible. The extensive publications which advocate for such a theological interpretation cover a range of methods.¹⁰ One approach interprets the Bible through the tradition of Christian interpretation through the centuries, but with special emphasis on the first four centuries of the Church.¹¹ More recently, the interpretive tradition has been expanded to include Reformation interpretations of the Bible.¹² From this perspective, our twenty-first century interpretation of the Bible should take into account the ways in which our ancestors in the faith have received the testimony of Scripture.

Another major stream of theological interpretation has made an intentional effort to reunite the interpretation of the Bible as Christian Scripture with the systematic theology of the Church.¹³ The fragmentation of theology into a number of subdisciplines that operate independently of one another must be overcome to bring the Bible back to the center of the life of the Church. The intentional effort to read the Bible as the Scriptures of the Church is central to this endeavor.

These efforts to overcome the divide between academic biblical scholarship and the interpretation of the Bible as the Sacred Scriptures of the Church have produced results of varying quality, but they all point to the fundamental challenges of our Christian responsibility to hear and interpret God's Word through the written text of the Bible. The questions we must ask are: *What can The Salvation Army learn from these interpretive traditions? How do we, as Salvationists, read the Bible as Sacred Scripture?* It is to these questions that we now turn our attention.

B. Presuppositions of a Salvationist Biblical Hermeneutic

As a Salvationist, I am left wondering whether our Salvationist identity (both Christian and Wesleyan) might help to guide us toward reading the Bible not simply as an ancient library of religious texts, but more importantly as the Sacred Scriptures of The Salvation Army and of the Church universal. Is it possible to identify starting points from which to approach and interpret the Scriptures?¹⁴

Three preliminary observations shape this attempt to sketch the contours of a Salvationist biblical hermeneutic. First, The Salvation Army stands within the universal Christian Church.¹⁵ Our historically uneasy identification with the institutional Church may have been important in our early decades as we devel-

oped our own institutional identity. However, our resistance to identification as a “church” and with the “Church” has lessened. As we process the implications of this change, we should utilize the resources of the larger Church to assist our interpretation of the Scriptures. More intentionally than ever before, we should be able to draw upon the interpretive traditions of the Church to assist us with our own efforts to interpret the Scriptures.

Second, critical to any Salvationist hermeneutic is our Wesleyan heritage. It is clear that the Booths were influenced profoundly by Wesleyan theology.¹⁶ John and Charles Wesley, as filtered through their Wesleyan descendants of the nineteenth century, were recognized by the Booths as their primary theological mentors. Specific to the purpose of this paper, we are fortunate that significant work has been completed to recover John Wesley’s biblical hermeneutic and to identify its manifestation in the Wesleyan tradition.¹⁷ As a result, a Salvationist hermeneutic will be influenced by a Wesleyan hermeneutic and the practice especially of John Wesley.

Third, having said this, we are left to ask whether there is any particular aspect of our Salvationist heritage that might inform a Salvationist hermeneutic. As this paper proceeds, it will become clear that I think there is at least one specific aspect of our Salvationist inheritance that is critical to our reading and listening to Scripture. Even in this instance, however, we are nuancing what the Church has already understood; but perhaps we are able to articulate this emphasis with a clearer focus.

C. Contours of a Salvationist Biblical Hermeneutic

What are the contours of a Salvationist biblical hermeneutic? Drawing upon the preceding discussion and our Salvationist heritage, this paper now suggests several affirmations that should guide Salvationist interpretation of the Bible.

To begin, the wording of the first doctrine of The Salvation Army¹⁸ suggests the first three broad principles of interpretation.

1. The One Bible

The first principle is that the whole Bible—Old Testament and New Testament together—comprise our Christian Scriptures. We do not privilege one

testament over the other; we reject any latent Marcionism that would relegate the Old Testament to the status of “second-class Scripture.”¹⁹ We do not accept the false contrasts between the Old Testament as “law” and the New Testament as “grace,” suggesting an inferiority of the Old Testament or its supersession by the New Testament. In our interpretation of Scripture we read the two testaments together, hearing the witness of each to the one God who is revealed in Jesus Christ and who continues to be present among us through the Holy Spirit.

Admittedly, the two-testament canon presents challenges to the Church as it seeks to articulate the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament. These are not new.²⁰ However, one helpful recent approach to maintaining the close relationship between the two testaments has been the use of a missional hermeneutic that interprets the two testaments as being focused on the one mission of God to save the world. In the unfolding of this mission, the story would be incomplete and perhaps even unintelligible without both testaments.

Further, our affirmation of the inspiration of the entire canon of Scripture leads us to reject any “canon within the canon” that would value some biblical writings more than others. Thus, for example, we do not privilege “Pauline” texts with their teaching of “justification by faith” over the Gospel of Matthew or the Letter of James or the Johannine literature. We take the hard road of maintaining the wholeness of the Christian canon rather than succumbing to the temptation to shorten the canon to a few favorite books, writers or texts. This leads naturally to the second point.

2. Hearing the Full Voice of Scripture

The goal of scriptural interpretation should be to hear “the full voice of Scripture.” Historical-critical biblical scholarship has been successful in drawing our attention to the many individual voices that speak in the Bible. We are able to hear these voices more clearly than ever before. We have learned from historical-critical study that the Bible includes many voices that sometimes may appear to be in tension with one another or even contradictory. Rather than seeking to silence these disparate voices through neglect or deliberate decision, it seems to me that the preferred response is to listen attentively to their distinctive individual contributions to the canon and also to listen to these texts within the full canon of Scripture. The apparent contradictions that are identified by bib-

lical scholars often present alternative perspectives, each of which expresses truth in part. We come closer to the truth when we are able to listen to all the voices of Scripture.

An analogy that I have found helpful is particularly relevant here. In a brass band there is a range of individual instruments that play many different musical parts. Some of these instruments carry the melody much of the time, others provide the harmony, and still others provide depth to the sound of the band. In rehearsals it may be common for the bandmaster to have individual sections of the band rehearse their parts. In these situations it often is difficult to hear or even imagine what the melody is. It may be difficult to imagine the contribution that a relatively minor part plays within the entire composition when it is heard apart from the rest of the band. But in a performance, when the entire band begins to play, with the melody, the harmony and the various relatively “minor” parts that provide texture to the music, we hear the full voice of the band and the composition. Few of us would wish to listen to a selection in which only the melody is played; even fewer of us would want to listen to a selection in which the only part we hear is that played by the second trombones! We would recognize that this produces an impoverished experience and that we are not, in fact, hearing the band selection in its fullness at all.

Similarly, not all parts of Scripture play the same role within the biblical canon. Some carry the Gospel melody much of the time; others rarely hint at that melody, yet they contribute to the overall experience—or teaching—of Scripture. It is when the Scriptures are taken together, as a whole, that we are able to hear the “full voice of Scripture.” This is what we seek as we read and listen to the testimony of the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures. In our interpretation of the Scriptures we should ensure that this full voice of Scripture is taken into account.

This effort to interpret texts within the context of the full voice of Scripture provides a measure of protection against the danger of proof-texting, or as Shakespeare would say it, allowing the devil to cite Scripture for his purposes.

3. Divine Rule of Christian Faith and Practice

Third, we need to attend carefully to the claim that our first doctrine makes about the scope of the authority of the Bible as Scripture. It is described as the

“divine rule of Christian faith and practice.” The Scriptures are authoritative for the Church with regard to matters of faith and practice. As the text in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 asserts, “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work” (NRSV). The expansion of claims for the authority of the Bible beyond matters of Christian faith and practice (for example, into matters of history and science) is not consistent with our doctrine and is not consistent with our Wesleyan heritage. Wesley himself understood the purpose of the Scriptures to be centered upon right doctrine and right living. Our first doctrine takes this approach to the function of Scripture.

From these first three principles of interpretation that arise from our first doctrine, I want to move on to several further affirmations that should guide our listening to Scripture.

4. Inspired by God and Written by Humans

Salvationist interpretation of the Bible should be shaped by the conviction that the human authors of the individual writings were guided and directed by God, and that nevertheless, they remained fully embodied human beings. The Scriptures were inspired by God and at the same time were the product of human beings. How are we to understand this assertion?

An analogy between the nature of the Bible as both the Word of God and the word of humans and the Chalcedonian Christological doctrine may be helpful here. As The Salvation Army’s fourth doctrine states, “We believe that in the person of Jesus Christ the Divine and human natures are united, so that he is truly and properly God and truly and properly man.” To help us understand the nature of Scripture, I would paraphrase this doctrine as follows: We believe that in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament the divine and human natures are united so that they are truly and properly Divine (that is, inspired by God) and truly and properly human (that is, written by human beings).

This suggests that in the Bible the divine and human natures are united so closely that they cannot be divided without doing irreparable damage to the Scriptures as a whole and to our ability to receive the Bible as Sacred Scripture. Amplifying the divine inspiration of the Scriptures to such an extent that

the full humanity of the Bible as the product of human authors is compromised endangers our reading of Scripture; similarly amplifying the full humanity of the Bible as the product of historically embedded humans to the diminishment of its divine inspiration endangers our reception of the Bible as the Scriptures of the Church. For the proper interpretation of the Bible it is imperative that we acknowledge both the fullness of the inspiration of the Bible by God and the fullness of its origin as the product of human authors. These two assertions must be held together, because we believe that in the Scriptures the Word of God has been incarnated in the words of human beings.

Two principles of interpretation arise from this observation. First, reading the Scriptures as fully human mandates that we use all of the tools of scholarship available to us to understand and interpret the biblical texts as products of human authors. The divine Word is incarnated in the world of human affairs, and therefore, it is incumbent upon us to study the linguistic, historical, cultural, sociological, political and economic contexts of the Bible. The historical-critical method broadly defined, with all of its strengths and limitations, is warranted by the human nature of the biblical texts and supports our reading of the biblical texts as the product of human authors.

But second, at the same time it must be recognized that this thorough and unrelenting historical-critical interpretation does not constitute the fullness of a Christian interpretation of the Bible as Scripture, because it cannot, by its very nature, take into account the divine nature of Scripture. It is imperative that as we employ the full range of methods for uncovering the full humanity of the biblical texts, we also receive the texts as the Divine Word of God. Reading the Bible prayerfully, inviting the Holy Spirit to guide the process, reading the Bible through the tradition of its Christian interpreters, and using the methods of theological interpretation generally, all contribute to the interpretation of the Bible as fully divine. Ultimately, as Christian interpreters, we submit ourselves to the witness of these texts to the One who inspired them and who continues to inspire them. Neglecting or compromising the two natures of Scripture leads to the truncation and distortion of the witness of the Bible as Sacred Scripture.

An additional implication of the confession that the Scriptures are “divine” is that they are always correcting us; that is, no individual interpretation is beyond correction by the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures. Humility before the Word of God is a key attribute of any interpreter of the Scriptures; such humility must include openness to correction.

Finally, the inspiration of the Scriptures by God is not only an event in the past as though the divine inspiration of the Bible took place only at the time of its writing. Rather, we affirm that the Holy Spirit continues to inspire the Scriptures. As we seek the guidance of the Spirit, our reading of Scripture is brought to life, and the Holy Spirit speaks once again to us.

5. *Reading the Scriptures “in Conference”*

One of the key insights of John Wesley regarding the interpretation of Scripture was that such interpretation was best undertaken “in conference”—that is, in the company of and in dialogue with other Christians. Wesley believed that in open and thorough dialogue with others in an intentional Christian community, the Holy Spirit has great scope to guide our interpretation in the right direction and to correct aberrant interpretations. Solitary interpretation of the Bible is subject to idiosyncratic results.

As Salvationists, we are not skilled at reading and interpreting Scripture “in conference”—that is, with other Salvationists and Christians. We do not often come together with a focus on the dynamic interactions around Scripture that would cultivate common interpretations and identity. This represents a significant loss for the Army for at least two reasons. First, our failure to interpret Scripture in conference prevents the cultivation of a broadly-based, scripturally-grounded identity, mission and perspective. Thus, while positional statements are developed and published through hierarchical and administrative processes, they rarely are known widely among Salvationists and do not carry the judgment of many Salvationists. In other words, to paraphrase the final verse of the book of Judges, “...everyone does what is right in their own eyes” (Judges 21:25). Second, and perhaps more importantly, in a time when biblical literacy is in rapid decline, our failure to read the Scriptures “in conference” deprives us of an invaluable opportunity to ground Salvationists in Scripture through reading it together. Often, the result is not only that we do not understand what we believe, but we also do not know why we believe it.

6. *Salvation as the Focus of Scripture*

John Wesley maintained a single-minded focus in his use and interpretation of the Scriptures. For Wesley, the hermeneutical key to the Bible was the *ordo*

salutis (“order of salvation”). That is, the Scriptures describe the human condition of being under the power and guilt of sin, the effort of God to provide the means through which human beings might be saved from their sinful condition, and the invitation to Christian holiness which is the vocation of all people. In its broadest strokes, Wesley’s interpretation of Scripture was guided by this biblical account of God’s unrelenting determination to save humanity and the world.²¹ Our Wesleyan heritage teaches us that the salvation to which God invites us is a “full salvation” that includes not only the forgiveness of our sins, but also the reformation of our character and the transformation of our dispositions to conform to the image and likeness of Christ. For Wesley, this spans the full horizon of salvation, including prevenient grace, justification, new birth, Christian perfection (entire sanctification and holiness) and final salvation. According to Wesley, this scriptural way of salvation is the interpretive key to reading the Bible.

7. *Salvation for Both Worlds*

Salvationist interpretation of the Scriptures will draw upon the insight of William Booth that God calls us to a vocation of bringing “salvation for both worlds.”²² That is, we interpret salvation to embrace not only the full salvation of individuals but also the salvation of this world.²³ Our interpretation of Scripture must take seriously the divine call to holiness *and* the divine call to transform the earthly conditions in which humans live to resemble more closely the biblical vision of the faithful human community which is characterized by *shalom* (human flourishing).²⁴ Our organizational history has taught us that neither can be neglected without losing our identity and truncating our mission; neither focus can be neglected in our interpretation of Scripture without losing the vital dynamic of the Word of God entrusted to the Church.

Too often, the Church has been divided into two camps: one comprised of those who read the Scriptures through a lens which sees only the concerns of a narrow piety that interprets holiness in individualistic terms, and a second comprised of those who read Scripture attuned predominantly to the social implications of the Gospel. In our weakest moments and manifestations, as Salvationists we have separated into these two camps: either “holiness” as individualized salvation has been interpreted as the real mission of the Army, or our social ministries have been viewed as the primary mission God has given us.²⁵

Biblically, one can marshal evidence to support either of these perspectives. The brilliance of Booth's call to "salvation for both worlds" is that it captures more faithfully the full voice of Scripture than is possible when we attend primarily only to one voice or the other.

As a result of this orientation of the Army and its mission, Salvationist interpretation of the Scriptures should be undertaken within the framework of this enlarged understanding of salvation. We will read the Scriptures against the backdrop of the scriptural narrative of the determination and efforts to bring about the salvation of all humanity and to restore the heavens and the earth to their creational purposes. We will understand that as the Christian Scriptures the Bible speaks of these coherent divine purposes.

Alongside this, Salvationist interpretation of the Bible also will be alert to the human distortion of social relationships, God's call and endeavors to restore the creation and human relationships, and the social, political, economic and interpersonal implications of God's love for the world. Salvationists will be attentive to issues of justice, social arrangements and conditions that will facilitate the growth of *shalom*; Salvationists also will be attentive to matters of forgiveness, personal transformation and holiness. Our reading of Scripture will avoid both a one-sided emphasis on an otherworldly, individualistic salvation and an equally one-sided focus on the social conditions of this world. We will approach the Scriptures with an understanding that the focus of the Bible is on "salvation for both worlds."

This is important, not only because it is grounded in our Salvationist heritage, but more importantly because the indivisible union of the religious and social dimensions of Christian faith is foundational to the biblical narrative itself. Thus, we find that God acted to deliver the Hebrew slaves from the oppressive social and economic policies of Pharaoh as well as to free them to serve the Lord their God. We acknowledge that the covenant between God and Israel, as instituted in the Sinai narrative of Exodus and then in the book of Deuteronomy, structures the Ten Commandments in such a way that the relationship between God and Israel which is the focus in the first commandment is joined together with concerns about the quality of life in Israel in the commandments that fol-

“Salvationist interpretation of the Scriptures will draw upon the insight of William Booth that God calls us to a vocation of bringing ‘salvation for both worlds.’”

low (Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:6-21). Further, we find that prophets such as Amos argued that there is a fundamental relationship between the worship of the Lord and the quality of Israel's life as a community. Without justice and righteousness, the worship of Israel becomes abhorrent to God (Amos 5:21-24). For Israel, theology and social ethics are joined together; when they are divorced, as they were in the time of the eighth-century prophets, Israel's entire vocation as the covenant people of the Lord is in jeopardy. Turning to the New Testament, as Salvationists we attend to Matthew's focus on the importance of holy living within the community of the Church (Matthew 5-7). But we also hear Luke's focus on Jesus' mission to those who are marginalized (Luke 4:16-21). The Salvationist's interpretation of Scripture through the lens of "salvation for both worlds" acknowledges this indissoluble union within the full canon of Scripture.²⁶ Finally, we acknowledge that the culmination of the entire biblical canon is the creation of a new Heaven and a new Earth (Revelation 21); as Salvationists we receive the vision of John as a call to live leaning forward toward the horizon of the new creation and the kingdom of God.

8. Love for God and Love for Our Neighbor as a Guide for Interpretation

One final guide for the interpretation of Scripture by Salvationists is grounded in the great commandment of Jesus that is summarized as all-encompassing love for God and thoroughgoing love for our neighbor (Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-31; Luke 10:25-28), echoing commandments found in Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18. As a summary of Christian faith and action, this double command to love for God and love for our neighbor has had a long history in Christianity, including in the teachings of John Wesley. As such, it provides us with a measuring rod for our interpretation of the Scriptures.

As a guide for Christian faith and practice, the purpose of Scripture is to stir Christians toward greater love for God and greater love for our neighbors. If this is true, then our interpretation and application of Scripture in all of its parts should cultivate in us greater love for God and greater love for our neighbors. This can function as a standard to evaluate the extent to which our interpretation of any passage of Scripture conforms to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. If any particular interpretation of Scripture does not nurture greater love for God and greater love for our neighbors—and especially if upon reflection we find

that it might rather stir up hostility toward God or our neighbors—we must step back to reconsider whether we are, in fact, hearing the Word of God or hearing words reflecting our own prejudices.

D. Conclusion

Reading the Bible as Sacred Scripture is one of our primary mandates as Salvationists if we in fact believe that it is “the only Divine rule of Christian faith and practice.” Without this rule, we cut ourselves off from the primary means by which the Holy Spirit instructs, guides and directs us. However, if Shakespeare was correct, the devil also reads the Bible and knows it well. Our challenge is to work together to identify those practices and disciplines that will help us to attend most carefully to the Scriptures as the Holy Spirit continues to inspire them.

Endnotes

- 1 An earlier version of this paper was presented at a meeting of “Salvationist Scholars and Friends” during the Annual Meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature in Denver, CO, on November 17, 2018.
- 2 William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, 1.3.96
- 3 There are many accounts of the history of biblical scholarship. For a recent survey of the history of biblical interpretation, see Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson, eds., *A History of Biblical Interpretation, Volume 3: The Enlightenment through the Nineteenth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017).
- 4 Krister Stendahl, “Biblical Theology, Contemporary,” in *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), I, 418-32.
- 5 Barth continued to revise this commentary. The English translation of the 6th edition was published initially in 1933. Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 6th ed., trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968).
- 6 This is made clear especially in the preface to the second edition of Barth’s commentary, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2-15.
- 7 Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970). Childs subsequently developed his perspective in a number of substantial publications including *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (Old Testament Library) (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974); *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979); *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1992).
- 8 A brief history and introduction to a missional hermeneutic is found in Michael W. Goheen, “A History and Introduction to a Missional Reading of the Bible,” in *Reading the Bible Missionally*, ed. Michael W. Goheen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 3-27. From the growing library of “missional interpretations” of the Bible, see Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003); Michael W. Goheen, *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011); Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006); Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God’s People: A Biblical Theology of the Church’s Mission* (Biblical Theology for Life) (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010); Dean Flemming, *Recovering the Full Mission of God: A Biblical Perspective on Being, Doing and Telling* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013); *Why Mission?* (Reframing New Testament Theology) (Nashville: Abingdon, 2015).
- 9 Much of this work is to be commended for seeking to overcome the fragmentation of the Bible into disparate sources and the consequent emphasis upon the diversity of perspectives preserved in the Bible. Yet, a missional interpretation runs the risk of leveling the biblical landscape by forcing it to conform to a single scheme. Imposing upon the biblical canon a narrative uniformity can leave little room for the diversity of material that we have in the canon, especially the wisdom writings of the Old Testament. How do they actually fit within the larger missional framework?

- 10 Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "What Is Theological Interpretation of the Bible?," in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 19-25; A. K. M. Adam et al., *Reading Scripture with the Church: Toward a Hermeneutic for Theological Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006); Daniel J. Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008); Stephen E. Fowl, *Theological Interpretation of Scripture*, Cascade Companions (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009); R. W. L. Moberly, "What Is Theological Interpretation of Scripture?," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 3, no. 2 (2009): 161-78; Darren Sarisky, "What Is Theological Interpretation?: The Example of Robert W. Jenson," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 12, no. 2 (2010): 201-16; Craig G. Bartholomew and Heath A. Thomas, eds., *A Manifesto for Theological Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016).
- 11 Spearheaded by Thomas Oden, this trend has been embodied in multi-volume projects such as the *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* published by InterVarsity Press and *The Church's Bible* published by Eerdmans.
- 12 See the multi-volume *Reformation Commentary on Scripture* published by InterVarsity Press.
- 13 For example, see Joel B. Green and Max Turner, eds., *Between Two Horizons: Spanning New Testament Studies and Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000). This particular volume of essays prepared the way for the *Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary* series and the *Two Horizons New Testament Commentary* series, both published by Eerdmans. Similarly, the *Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible*, published by Baker Academic, seeks to bridge the gap between the study of the Bible and the theology of the Church.
- 14 A recent attempt to articulate a Salvationist understanding of the place of the Scriptures in the Christian life is found in Ray Harris, *Convictions Matter: The Function of Salvation Army Doctrines* (Toronto: The Salvation Army Canada and Bermuda, 2014), 1-18.
- 15 For recent official statements reflecting an understanding of the Army's place within the universal Christian Church, see *The Salvation Army in the Body of Christ: An Ecclesiological Statement* (London: Salvation Books, 2008); *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine*, (London: Salvation Books, 2010), 247-75.
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- 17 George A. Turner, "John Wesley as an Interpreter of Scripture," in *Inspiration and Interpretation*, ed. John F. Walvoord (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 156-78; Robin Scroggs, "John Wesley as Biblical Scholar," *Journal of Bible and Religion* 28, no. 4 (1960): 415-22; James T. Clemons, "John Wesley—Biblical Literalist?," *Religion in Life* 46 (1977): 332-42; Wilbur H. Mullen, "John Wesley's Method of Biblical Interpretation," *Religion in Life* 47, no. 1 (1978): 99-108; Mack B. Stokes, *The Bible in the Wesleyan Heritage* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979); R. Larry Shelton, "John Wesley's Approach to Scripture in Historical Perspective," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 16, no. 1 (1981): 23-50; Wayne McCown, "Toward a Wesleyan Hermeneutic," in *Interpreting God's Word for Today: An Inquiry into Hermeneutics from a Biblical Theological Perspective*, Wayne McCown and James E. Massey, eds. (Anderson, IN: Warner, 1982), 1-30; Duncan S. Ferguson, "John Wesley on Scripture: The Hermeneutics of Pietism," *Methodist History* 22, no. 4 (1984): 234-45; Wilber T. Dayton, "The Bible in the Wesleyan Tradition," *Asbury Seminarian* 40, no. 1 (1985): 22-38; Frank Baker, "John Wesley, Biblical Commentator," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 71 (1989): 110-20; Ted A. Campbell, "The 'Wesleyan Quadrilateral': The Story of a Modern Methodist Myth," in *Doctrine and Theology in the United Methodist Church*, ed. Thomas A. Langford (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1991), 154-61; Troy W. Martin, "John Wesley's Exegetical Orientation: East or West?," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 26, no. 1 (1991): 104-38; Scott J. Jones, *John Wesley's Conception and Use of Scripture* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1995); "The Rule of Scripture," in *Wesley and the Quadrilateral: Renewing the Conversation*, ed. Stephen W. Gunter (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 39-61; Robert W. Wall, "Toward a Wesleyan Hermeneutics of Scripture," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 30, no. 2 (1995): 5-67; "Wesley as Biblical Interpreter," in *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley*, Randy L. Maddox and Jason E. Vickers, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 113-28; "Reading Scripture, the Literal Sense, and the Analogy of Faith," in *Wesley, Wesleyans, and Reading Bible as Scripture*, Joel B. Green and David F. Watson, eds. (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2012), 33-46; Joerg Rieger, "The Means of Grace, John Wesley, and the Theological Dilemma of the Church Today," *Quarterly Review* 17, no. 4 (1997): 377-93; William J. Abraham, "Keeping up with Jones on John Wesley's Conception and Use of Scripture," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 33, no. 1 (1998): 5-13; Joel B. Green, "Reading the Bible as Wesleyans," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 33, no. 2 (1998): 116-29; Joel B. Green, *Reading Scripture as Wesleyans* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010); "Wesley as Interpreter of Scripture and the Emergence of 'History' in Biblical Interpretation," in *Wesley, Wesleyans, and Reading Bible as Scripture*, Joel B. Green and David F. Watson, eds. (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2012), 47-62; Joel B. Green and David F. Watson, eds., *Wesley, Wesleyans and Reading Bible as Scripture* (Waco: Baylor

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- 18 "We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and that they only constitute the divine rule of Christian faith and practice." *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine*, xv.
- 19 Donald E. Burke, "Second-Class Scripture?," *Salvationist*, no. 52 (August 2010): 20-21.
- 20 From among the extensive writings on this topic, two older collections of essays that explore various options for understanding the relationship between the testaments are Claus Westermann, ed., *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1960); Bernhard W. Anderson, ed., *The Old Testament and Christian Faith* (London: SCM Press, 1963).
- 21 The oft-quoted words of Wesley are indicative of this focus: "I want to know one thing, the way to heaven—how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself had condescended to teach the way: for this very end he came from heaven. He has written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price give me the Book of God! I have it. Here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *homo unius libri* [a person of one book]. Here then I am, far from the busy ways of others. I sit down alone: only God is here. In his presence I open, I read his Book—for this end, to find the way to heaven." See John Wesley, "The Preface," in *The Works of John Wesley, Vol. 1*, ed. Albert Cook Outler (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), 105-06.

- 22 William Booth, "Salvation for Both Worlds," in *Boundless Salvation: The Shorter Writings of William Booth*, Andrew M. Eason and Roger J. Green, eds. (New York: Peter Lang, 2012), 51-59.
- 23 This emphasis is not the exclusive property of The Salvation Army. It has been a strong part of the Wesleyan-Methodist tradition from the days of Wesley. On this point see for example, Leon O. Hynson, *To Reform the Nation: Theological Foundations of Wesley's Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1984); Theodore W. Jennings, "Wesley's Preferential Option for the Poor," *Quarterly Review* 9, no. 3 (1989): 10-29; Theodore W. Jennings, *Good News to the Poor: John Wesley's Evangelical Economics* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990); Theodore W. Jennings, "Good News to the Poor in the Wesleyan Heritage," in *Theology and Evangelism in the Wesleyan Heritage* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 139-56; Donald W. Dayton, "Presidential Address: The Wesleyan Option for the Poor," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 26, no. 1 (1991): 7-22; M. Douglas Meeks, ed., *The Portion of the Poor: Good News to the Poor in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995); Kenneth J. Collins, "The Soteriological Orientation of John Wesley's Ministry to the Poor," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 36, no. 2 (2001): 7-36; Randy L. Maddox, "'Visit the Poor': Wesley's Precedent for Wholistic Mission," *Transformation* 18, no. 1 (2001): 37-50; George H. Freeman, "Wesley and the Poor: Theory and Practice from Then until Now," *Word & Deed* 8, no. 1 (2005): 55-68.
- 24 See Donald E. Burke, "Shalom: The Biblical Vision in a Broken World," *Word & Deed* 15, no. 2 (2013): 47-63. See also Walter Brueggemann, *Peace*, 2nd ed., (Understanding Biblical Themes Series) (St. Louis: Chalice, 2001); Perry B. Yoder, *Shalom: The Bible's Word for Salvation, Justice, and Peace* (Newton, KS: Faith and Life, 1987).
- 25 It could be argued that the fact that our doctrines are focused on individual salvation and make no claims concerning salvation for this world sustains this schizoid identity.
- 26 This focus on salvation for both worlds is not unique to the Army. However, I think that Salvationists are uniquely placed to take this critical aspect of our heritage and to demonstrate how it is a key contributor to the way in which the Bible can speak to the Church as the Sacred Scriptures.

An Inquiry into the Evangelistic Preaching of William Booth

Ryan Wade

The role of evangelistic preaching is paramount in the salvation of the lost. The Apostle Paul emphasized the necessity of evangelistic preaching in Romans 10:13-14¹: “For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear *without someone preaching?*” (emphasis mine). Craig Loscalzo asserted, “All preachers should seriously consider the role evangelistic preaching has in their ministry.”² C.H. Dodd noted in his work, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*, “Much of our preaching in Church at the present day would not have been recognized by the early Christians as *kerygma*³ [The present preaching is] more or less informal discussion of various aspects of Christian life and thought, addressed to a congregation already established in the faith.” Dodd further remarked of apostolic preaching in the New Testament, “It would not be too much to say that wherever ‘preaching’ is spoken of, it always carries with it the implication of ‘good tidings’ proclaimed.”⁴ Therefore, apostolic preaching was evangelistic by nature and centered on the proclamation of the gospel. James Thompson spoke of the role of engaging the listener in evangelistic preaching, “Evangelistic preaching moves from declaration of the Christian story to the summons to the listeners. Preachers declare the good news of Christ in the hope of effecting change in the audience.”⁵ Therefore, the goal of evangelistic preaching is inherently linked to the response of the hearer.

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Throughout Christian history, God has used certain evangelistic preachers in their generation to reach multitudes with the gospel. Frank Grenville Beardsley affirmed in the preface to his book *Heralds of Salvation*, “No class of men have done more for the upbuilding of the church and the extension of the Kingdom of God in the world than the men who have devoted their energies to the task of winning souls to Christ.”⁶ William Booth was one of those men whose passion for preaching the gospel affected numerous people across the world. Booth’s desire to see others experience the same life-changing conversion he experienced led him to devote his life and ministry to preaching the gospel and helping the poor. As a result of this devotion, Booth preached an estimated 10,000 sermons to over 15 million people.⁷

While William Booth is remembered by some as “an English preacher”⁸ or a “Methodist revivalist”⁹ from his early days, he is often thought of as a social reformer because of his work in founding The Salvation Army. This movement started by Booth has been described as “one of the most successful religious revivals of modern times.”¹⁰ Booth believed it was his “destiny to carry the gospel to those untouched by existing religious efforts.”¹¹ Beardsley, who actually heard Booth preach twice, praised The Salvation Army as “the most powerful religious organization ever developed within modern times during the lifetime of a single individual.”¹² The widespread ministry of William Booth was a consequence of his evangelistic preaching. However, Edward McKinley lamented, “William Booth has received surprisingly little attention from serious scholarship.”¹³ This lack of scholarship is particularly noticeable in the area of Booth’s evangelistic preaching.

The State of Research

William Booth is mentioned in some books focused on great evangelists or revivalists. In his book on notable preachers such as Jonathan Edwards, Charles Grandison Finney and Dwight Moody, Frank Grenville Beardsley devoted a chapter to William Booth. He remarked, “The message of The Salvation Army has been directed particularly to the outcasts of society, the drunkard and the harlot, the most hopeless cases of fallen humanity, in the belief that the Gospel of Christ can save and uplift the lowest of the low.”¹⁴ In a book on notable revivalists such as John Wesley, George Whitefield and Billy Graham titled, *God’s Generals: The Revivalists*, Roberts Liardon included a chapter on William and Catherine Booth.¹⁵ Liardon’s treatment of the notable couple is mainly biographical and highlights the

social accomplishments of the Booths. Paulus Scharpff, in his *History of Evangelism*, recognized Booth as an influential evangelist and noted his philosophy “that every converted person should be a soldier of Jesus Christ and every witness, an evangelist.”¹⁶ However, not all histories of revival include Booth’s contribution. For example, Wesley Duewel did not mention William Booth in *Revival Fire*, his chronological treatment on spiritual revival. The only mention of The Salvation Army in this work is that some of the officers ignited a revival in Trivandrum, India, with a three-day ministry in the area.¹⁷ In his book *Evangelism: A Concise History*, John Mark Terry does not list Booth as a notable influence in his chapter on nineteenth-century revivalism. Terry does mention Rodney “Gypsy” Smith as a prominent evangelist “who began his ministry with William Booth’s Salvation Army.”¹⁸ Interestingly, Terry classified Dwight Moody as “the greatest revivalist of the 1800s”¹⁹ who preached with “simplicity”²⁰ but who also “never generated much enthusiasm among the lower class in England or the United States.”²¹ While Booth is recognized as an evangelist and founder of The Salvation Army in some revival histories, his preaching receives minimal attention in these works.

Among reviewed religious and preaching histories, Booth received almost no acknowledgment. In his work *Religion in the Victorian Era*, L.E. Elliott-Binns questioned the motive and methods of Booth’s Salvation Army.²² F.R. Webber, in *A History of Preaching in Britain and America*, referenced the evangelists Dwight Moody and Billy Graham, but he did not reference Booth or The Salvation Army. Webber even mentioned the “well-known” British revivalist, Rodney “Gypsy” Smith.²³ The featuring of Smith and not Booth in this work is peculiar considering Smith was converted under the preaching of Booth and served as an evangelist in The Salvation Army for a number of years. Edwin Charles Dargan, in his notable *A History of Preaching*, did not mention Booth. In the more recent extensive work *The Oxford Handbook of The British Sermon 1689-1901*, Keith A. Francis did not mention William Booth but rather chose to comment on the preaching of Catherine in a discussion of women preachers: “It is impossible to construct a history of religion in Victorian Britain without some reference to The Salvation Army, and it is equally impossible to talk about the origins of The Salvation Army movement without reference to the leadership, which included the preaching, of Catherine Booth.”²⁴ Unfortunately, William Booth’s preaching is not a focus of a number of scholars surveying the preaching of the nineteenth century. This underemphasis seems unexpected considering the impact of Booth’s itinerant preaching around the world and his mobilization of hundreds of preachers in The Salvation Army

during his lifetime. Therefore, the need exists for specific research into Booth's preaching to understand better what made his preaching so effective.

No readily available work specifically focused on the content and style of Booth's evangelistic preaching. Fortunately, Booth did share insights about his view of preaching in his writings. Booth warned his officers, "Don't make sermons, whether you call them by that name or any other. By sermon I mean a speech about some passage of Scripture, or some occurrence in New and Old Testament history, with an application to your audience at the close, or in the middle, or not at all, the whole of which has no direct or immediate application to the present salvation and sanctification, and inspiration with a red-hot religion, of the people who are before you."²⁵ While Booth provided clarity to his officers

“Therefore, the need exists for specific research into Booth’s preaching to understand better what made his preaching so effective.”

on preaching, the author can find no evidence that Booth intentionally published his evangelistic sermons. However, The Salvation Army did publish Booth's addresses to his officers. In 1907, a book titled *The Seven Spirits: Or What I Teach My Officers* was published and was described in the preface as "addresses by General Booth" which are "a reproduction of the written notes from which The General spoke" at the International Congress of the Army in 1904.²⁶ In 1921, The Salvation Army published *The Founder's Messages to Soldiers During Years 1907-8*. This work contains over thirty addresses written by Booth to "be read by our people at some convenient weekly gathering."²⁷ Booth used

addresses to encourage the officers or to explain to the public the workings of The Salvation Army. Booth's primary goal in giving an address was not the salvation of the hearer but to offer "practical guidance towards a rule of holy living . . . [and] deep insight into the needs of ordinary people [who] wish to serve God and bless their fellows."²⁸ Therefore, a distinction is made between Booth's *addresses* meant to encourage soldiers and his *evangelistic sermons* directed to the public.

Historians of The Salvation Army have published works on the written and spoken messages of Booth. Cyril Barnes served as a Salvation Army officer from 1933 until 1948, at which time he transferred to the Literary Department at the International Headquarters of the organization in London. Barnes published a compilation of the writings of Booth titled, *The Founder Speaks Again: A Selection of the Writings of William Booth*.²⁹ This work included Booth's writing on topics

such as open-air preaching and speaking for Christ. The contemporary scholars Andrew Eason and Roger Green edited a work of Booth's rare writings titled, *Boundless Salvation: The Shorter Writings on William Booth*.³⁰ The only available work aimed solely on the preaching of Booth is a compilation by Charles Talmadge titled, *How to Preach*.³¹ The first section of this work included Booth's articles on how to preach. The second section of this work was titled, "Excerpts from Sermons of William Booth." However, this section contained only excerpts from Barnes' work *The Founder Speaks Again*, which Talmadge acknowledged is "a book of William Booth's writings" (emphasis mine).³² Therefore, no published work by The Salvation Army is readily available that provides evangelistic sermons of Booth.

The reason for the lack of focus on the evangelistic preaching of William Booth by scholars may be attributed to the lack of published sermons. The lack of available sermon manuscripts is peculiar considering the amount of sermons preached by Booth. Also intriguing by comparison is the availability of published sermons by Booth's wife, Catherine, some of which are evangelistic. Booth's son, Bramwell, provided insight into the evangelist's view of his own preaching: "One of the greatest talkers of his age, my father was yet the most diffident about his own powers. Many a time in great auditoriums he has said to me just before rising to speak, 'Pray for me; I feel like sinking through the floor.' He has again and again declared himself utterly unequal to the occasion and the opportunity."³³ Was Booth reluctant to publish his evangelistic sermons, because he saw his preaching occasions as more of a work of God in the moment than his own preaching prowess? Or was Booth reluctant to publish his sermons to the public, simply because he repeated the same sermons throughout his itinerant ministry? Regardless of the reason why little is known about the actual evangelistic preaching of Booth, the need exists to understand more about the philosophy and practice of the evangelistic preaching of the man who reached so many people with the message of salvation.

The Evangelistic Preaching Philosophy of William Booth

Booth was noted as having affirmed the preeminent place of preaching in the success of his ministry in a public address about The Salvation Army: "[The Army's] rapid advancement was a proof that God approved of that departure from the ordinary methods of preaching. Preaching had become too much of a science and wanted more force and meaning infused into it."³⁴ Booth's comments on his

departure from the conventional preaching of his day further warrant study of the evangelistic preaching of a man who was so effective at reaching those external to the influence of the traditional Church in his day.

Once Booth experienced preaching as a youth, he developed a zeal for preaching that did not waver during his life. Early in his ministry, Booth spent eighteen months seeking and saving souls along a thirty-mile circuit in Lincolnshire. The itinerant nature of the job and opportunity to preach salvation regularly was a good fit for Booth. However, Booth left this position for the Methodist New Connexion in early 1854. Booth accepted an assistant pastor position to allow himself free time for revival meetings. In only a few months, Booth saw over 1,700 converts. According to author Richard Collier, “The Connexion leaders saw him as going too far, too fast: his methods were lusty American rather than Victorian English.”³⁵ The churches were filled when Booth preached and “night after night scores of convicted souls sought and found the Lord.”³⁶ Although Booth was very successful in his revival meetings, the denomination ordered him to take a pastoral position in 1857 and stop his evangelistic work. Booth was assigned a declining congregation of 130 members meeting in a chapel that seated 1,200. Soon, the church was filled to capacity with over 2,000 people. Booth, along with Catherine, sensed a call to full-time evangelistic work and petitioned the denomination in view of this. However, the conference only wanted to allow Booth to be in charge of a circuit and to conduct revival meetings when invited. Booth knew that being in charge of a circuit did not leave much time for evangelistic work. Therefore, William and Catherine rejected the offer and decided to leave the denomination. Subsequently, a minister converted under Booth’s preaching invited him to come and preach at his church in Cornwall. This began a revival throughout the surrounding cities and countryside that resulted in 7,000 recorded conversions.³⁷ Eventually, the New Connexion ordered all churches closed to Booth. The Booths soon moved to London, where William would find his life’s work. Booth realized he was not called to pastor among the saved but to preach for the souls of men and women. Booth’s method of preaching resulted in conversions throughout his ministry. But what did Booth believe about preaching?

Booth defined preaching as “that kind of talking which is calculated to make men understand and seek salvation—nay, which will help them to find it and spread it abroad.”³⁸ Booth warned his officers, “Don’t make sermons, whether you call them by that name or any other. By sermon I mean a speech about some passage of Scripture, or some occurrence in New and Old Testament his-

tory, with an application to your audience at the close, or in the middle, or not at all, the whole of which has no direct or immediate application to the present salvation and sanctification, and inspiration with a red-hot religion, of the people who are before you.”³⁹ By reference to not making “sermons,” Booth was warning against “sermon formalizing” that placed the emphasis on knowledge rather than obedience to God.⁴⁰ He further cautioned against “anything like a speech” that repeated memorized words and did not result from espousing the preacher’s own ideas.⁴¹ Additionally, Booth warned of “making addresses” that consisted of alternative texts, books, others’ thoughts and anecdotes.⁴² Therefore, Booth’s view of preaching can be summarized as the act of using personal ideas and simple language to move people to salvation, sanctification⁴³ or inspiration to take the message to others.

Booth had several notable influences on his preaching. The first influence on Booth was his personal experience with difficult circumstances in life. Booth grew up in a home that was not religious and watched his father’s vain pursuit of wealth and neglect of his family. Booth’s apprenticeship as a pawnbroker was a result of his father’s failure, but the job brought him into direct contact with people struggling in life. Not only did Booth long for a better life, but he desired for those in need around him to have better lives. When Booth began preaching in poor parts of town after his conversion, he felt the need to bring the respondents to an established church, so they could get right with God. However, his initial attempt at this revealed to Booth that the church members generally did not want the tattered attenders in their church. The success of Booth’s preaching in the open-air and the unwillingness of churches to accommodate the unchurched solidified in Booth’s mind that the preacher must reach the lost where they are and not try to compel them to come into a church to be saved.

Another influence on Booth was that of revivalism. Booth’s first exposure to a revivalist preacher was the lay preacher Isaac Marsden whose preaching helped contribute to his conversion. Marsden’s revival meetings were described as containing “a fervid sermon, strong appeals, a rousing prayer meeting, many penitents and shouts of praise to God.”⁴⁴ Shortly after Booth’s conversion, an American Methodist revivalist named James Caughey visited Nottingham, and the city experienced revival with over 700 being added to the Methodist churches.⁴⁵ Catherine was very fond of Charles Grandison Finney and encouraged William to read his writings, especially *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*. As Booth began to see himself as a revivalist, he employed techniques he observed or read about,

including the practice that Finney utilized of coming to the communion rail or mercy seat for salvation.⁴⁶ Phoebe Palmer, another American revivalist, had an influence on Booth through her writings. Against an extended salvation process that was advocated by some during Booth's day, Palmer advocated for a "quick salvation" that followed a prescribed method and always "produced the desired result."⁴⁷ Revivalism had a significant impact on Booth and helped provide him with the confidence and the means to become an effective preacher similar to the trans-Atlantic revivalists of his day.

Another factor that influenced Booth's preaching philosophy was his theology. By the time Booth was twenty years old, he had become an enthusiast of John Wesley. Roger Green points out that Booth "considered himself to be the theological heir of John Wesley, especially in his understanding of the doctrine of sanctification by grace."⁴⁸ Furthermore, Booth "considered himself to be the organizational heir of John Wesley."⁴⁹ Practically, this notion likely influenced Booth to look immediately to enlist converts as recruits. Booth would often remind himself of Wesley's success and was not timid to give orders and demand strict obedience of his followers. Booth considered his theology to be very simple: "We believe in heaven and hell, and we desire that what we teach should commend itself to the heart rather than to the intellect. . . . [The] most important [thing] is that each one should know that his sins are forgiven."⁵⁰ These major influences on Booth contributed to his zeal to surpass the status quo of the preaching of his day. Booth placed the conversion of lost people as his target. This concept allowed Booth to vary preaching techniques to see as many people as possible saved, despite any opposition he encountered.

A review of the writings of Booth on how to preach yielded five sermon characteristics. The first characteristic is that the sermon must evidence that the preacher has a personal realization of the subject matter. Booth declared that the preacher "must know in his own soul the things he proclaims to others are what he declares them to be" in order to persuade others to adhere to the message.⁵¹ The next characteristic is that the sermon must have a correct aim. The preacher must begin by selecting an appropriate subject matter that is concerned with the salvation, sanctification or inspiration of the hearer. Furthermore, the aim of the preacher must be to bring God glory in the message and not advance his own reputation. Another characteristic is that the sermon must evidence earnestness on the part of the preacher. "By earnestness I mean that the soul of the officer should be on fire and his whole energy engrossed with the importance of this topic."⁵² The sermon should produce

feelings in the hearer and conviction of the lost. Booth noted that earnestness in the sermon will cause people to listen even when the hearer disagrees, the preacher's knowledge or education is imperfect, or when the preacher's voice and manner are unattractive.⁵³ A fourth characteristic is that the language of the sermon must be simple. The preacher should speak as naturally as he would in everyday conversation. The sermon should include warm and friendly language but not unnecessary humor. The fifth sermon characteristic is that the idea of the sermon should be prepared beforehand. Booth struggled early in his ministry about whether he should prepare beforehand but came to the realization it was the best method for him. Booth noted of James Caughey, "The most effective preacher by far that I came across in my youth . . . prepared most carefully, although in no way allowing himself to be in bondage to what he had gathered beforehand."⁵⁴

Booth placed a great deal of emphasis on selecting the right topic for preaching. He directed preachers to analyze a subject according to the following questions:⁵⁵

1. What does the subject mean?
2. Why is it necessary to act on the subject matter?
3. How is the hearer to act on the subject matter?
4. When is the hearer to act on the subject matter?

Five sermon elements were extracted from Booth's writings on preaching. The first element was explanation. He warned against "the common error of talking over people's heads."⁵⁶ The next element was illustration. Booth encouraged preachers to "illustrate freely" using simple illustrations.⁵⁷ The third sermon element was that of argumentation. Booth directed preachers to look for arguments in the Bible, in experience, in this world or in the next. The fourth sermon element is that of application. Booth was adamant in his writings to preachers about continual sermon application:

[The preacher] should apply everything as he goes along to the hearts and consciences of his hearers. He must drive home the truth, or it will be useless. He must be continually saying, "YOU ARE THE PEOPLE WHOM THIS CONCERNS," or they will put it from them and not feel that it means them. He should do this all the way through. He cannot afford, like the ordinary sermonizer, to make a long exposition and then to have little exposition at the close. He must go for the heart at every turn.⁵⁸

The final sermon element was that of appeal. The preacher must appeal for immediate action from the hearer concerning the subject matter.

The Evangelistic Preaching Practice of William Booth

Booth made an impression on congregations whenever he preached. “Booth had a striking appearance: Tall, with a slight stoop, thin, exceeding pale, with a shock of raven-black hair, and eyes so piercing that they attracted and held any person he addressed.”⁵⁹ In later years, Booth’s prophet-like appearance further accented his powerful preaching. An analysis of Booth’s evangelistic preaching was performed using a rubric developed from the aforementioned sermon characteristics, sermon progression and sermon elements.

The researcher performed an investigation for the availability of evangelistic sermon data in the writings of Booth, published works on Booth and periodicals such as the *Christian Mission Magazine* and the *War Cry* and *Officer Gazette* of The Salvation Army. This review produced a minimal number of quotes or excerpts from Booth’s sermons. In a book on the travels of Booth to the United States, R.G. Moyles noted that Booth’s preaching occasions to the public were often covered in newspaper articles.⁶⁰ Therefore, the researcher examined newspaper archives for preaching occasions of Booth and found a number of articles germane to Booth’s preaching to the public. An inquiry to the International Heritage Centre⁶¹ in London, England, yielded unpublished manuscript notes for one evangelistic sermon located in the personal papers of Booth and published manuscript notes from Booth’s last Sunday evening sermon.⁶² These two sermons provided the most complete evangelistic sermon data found by the researcher.

The data acquisition process revealed that the bulk of available evangelistic sermon data for Booth was contained in the aforementioned newspaper articles detailing the evangelist’s sermon occasions to the public. While none of the available newspaper articles contained the publication of a full evangelistic sermon manuscript, a number of the articles contained sufficient sermon excerpts and details for analysis. The newspaper articles selected for analysis all indicated that the audience consisted of the general public, and the sermon resulted in conversions. While Salvation Army officers were often reported as being in attendance, the analyzed sermons by Booth were evangelistic in nature. During his tours in America, Booth often preached evangelistic sermons in the morning and evening, and he offered more of an address during the midday that encouraged the work of The Salvation Army.

A survey of the sermon data as a whole revealed that Booth did employ in his preaching the five sermon characteristics he advocated for in his writings. Since only two full evangelistic sermon manuscripts were available, the sermon data was viewed more collectively than individually. While not every sermon characteristic was present in the sermon data for every preaching occasion, the fact that Booth did implore each characteristic in a number of sermon occasions indicated that he likely made a practice of regularly using the sermon characteristics he advocated for in his writings. Booth used a correct aim in his sermons according to his prescribed standard for preaching. Booth's sermons typically focused directly on salvation. One reviewed sermon directly focused on sanctification in being a conqueror for Christ, but this sermon also resulted in reported conversions.⁶³ The analysis additionally revealed the earnestness of Booth in his preaching. One article noted that Booth "pleaded earnest for sinners to come forward."⁶⁴ Furthermore, the language of Booth was simple in each sermon. One article described his sermon as "simple, straightforward, [and] effective."⁶⁵

Interestingly, the data for one sermon occasion mentioned that Booth prefaced his sermon by saying that he didn't know what he was going to talk about.⁶⁶ This statement does not adhere to Booth's admonishment to prepare beforehand. Additionally, Harold Begbie's biography of Booth mentioned the desk where Booth "wrote sermons"⁶⁷ as well as a letter of Booth stating that he had written over forty "sermonettes."⁶⁸ Since Booth traveled extensively and kept a rigorous schedule that involved preaching up to three times a day, Booth likely repeated some of his sermons. The data collection revealed that Booth repeated at least one of his sermons in differing towns.⁶⁹ Therefore, Booth's comments on not preparing beforehand may indicate that he had not decided beforehand which of his sermons, or subject matters, he would preach.

The five sermon elements advocated for by Booth were found among the analyzed sermons. The element of explanation was found least in the analyzed sermon data. The explanations present in the data did not include exegesis of the biblical passage in context, but rather plain speaking about the subject matter of the selected verse or passage. The analyzed sermons indicated that Booth favored the elements of illustration and argumentation more than the other elements.⁷⁰ All the analyzed sermons included simple illustrations. For example, in Booth's unpub-

“Booth was not timid in mentioning hell and the judgment that awaits those who disobey God.”

lished notes for a sermon on eternity, the evangelist used the following illustration: “Go and count the snowflakes in the land of the North Pole—go and count the drops of water in the rolling ocean, go and count the atoms in the atmosphere, and then add them all together, and their united number will fall infinitely short of the number of the years of Eternity.”⁷¹ Booth often used multiple illustrations in succession to connect his subject matter with the audience.

A manual on how to preach evangelistic sermons published by the Billy Graham Center included the statement, “You cannot preach an evangelistic sermon without letting people know about the deadly results of their sin, since God’s Word is so definite about this.”⁷² Booth came to understand early in his preaching that people must be awakened to their need to be saved as can be seen in a letter to Catherine before their marriage: “Last night I preached a sermon on Christ weeping over sinners, and only one came forward, although several confessed to much holy feeling and influence. When I preached about the harvest and the wicked being turned away, numbers came. We must have that kind of truth which will move sinners.”⁷³ Booth was not timid in mentioning hell and the judgment that awaits those who disobey God. In a biography published to familiarize people in the United States with the evangelist, Frederick Booth-Tucker noted, “And it is when charging down upon the hosts of Hell and thundering forth his denunciations of sin that the General may be seen at his best.”⁷⁴ One newspaper article indicated that Booth’s sermon included illustrations that were “bristling with the pictured torments of hell, [and] full of anecdotes emphasizing the danger of delay.”⁷⁵ One referenced illustration “was so graphically told by the aged general it made people feel creepy with fear.”⁷⁶ Booth-Tucker further remarked, “To some it may appear as if the stern denunciations of the preacher were better suited to more primitive times, but the very contrast between it and the ordinary easygoing theology of the day makes it more possible to study and compare their respective results.”⁷⁷

Booth’s use of argumentation was noted as follows in one article: “He makes telling points in his arguments and tries to bring his reasoning right home to his audience.”⁷⁸ Booth’s use of direct language in his arguments showed he placed correcting the errors of the audience over offending them: “But you say, I am a lady. Well the Lord sends ladies to hell. Yes, and gentlemen, too, and your damnation will be deeper and darker, because you will realize that you ought to have known better.”⁷⁹ In Booth’s final sermon, the evangelists gave eight different courses of action, taking the time to argue why seven would lead to destruction and only one would lead to life.⁸⁰ The element of application was mixed throughout the

sermons. Booth would use short sentences generally at the end of illustrations or arguments such as, “You’ve got poison in you, get it out.”⁸¹ All the analyzed sermon data included appeals for the hearer to act on the message. One article for one of Booth’s sermons described the occasion as “a fearfully powerful appeal to sinners . . . he urged sinners to come to the penitent form and kneel.”⁸²

Larry Moyer noted of the conclusion of evangelistic sermons, “A conclusion of a message has to appeal for action. God does not want everyone there merely to hear what has been said. He wants them to *act* on it.”⁸³ Booth used argumentation to expel the errors set against the truth he was proclaiming and to move the audience to make a decision. He viewed his audience as those in need of acting on the proclaimed truth to come into a right relationship with God. While Booth’s sermons included strong appeals, his efforts did not end with his appeal at the end of the sermon. After Booth finished preaching a sermon, “the work of securing converts was commenced.”⁸⁴ According to the articles for Booth’s tours in the United States, someone in Booth’s staff would typically begin to call people to come forward for salvation, while the band played, and the audience sang or watched with expectation. One invitation even lasted an hour. In one invitation, Booth even left the stage while the invitation continued. While Booth’s appeals were strong, the sermon data indicated that Booth was careful to make sure his audience understood the decision they were making. In one sermon during the appeal, he remarked, “I don’t want anybody to do anything tonight who doesn’t know what he is doing.”⁸⁵ The evangelist was confident in the success of his invitation methods, as he noted on one occasion, “Thirty-nine I am sure were born into the kingdom. Thirty-nine came right up on to this platform and went away, as did all were here, greatly different from the condition in which they came.”⁸⁶

Contributions to Preaching

The preaching of William Booth resulted in the conversion of a large number of people during his ministry. Perhaps Booth’s greatest contribution to preaching was his mobilization of soldiers to preach the gospel across many nations. These brave men and women set out with little training and a great expectation to see the world saved by the same gospel that had saved them. A second contribution of Booth to the field of preaching was his use of revivalism. Booth use of revival methods in his services allowed him to reach the unchurched, because he met them where they were. From his early days, Booth recognized that the unchurched were

not going to come to church and hear the gospel. Therefore, he took the gospel to them. He preached wherever he could draw a crowd, whether that was in the open-air or rented halls. Booth preached for a decision. He used the sermon elements like illustration, argumentation and application throughout his sermons to move people to either accept his proposition and receive the blessings of God or reject it and remain under God's wrath. Booth made strong appeals to come forward at the end of the sermon for salvation. Booth used assistants to call out for people to be saved and utilized lengthy invitations. The evangelist took advantage of available mediums to garner people's interest so he could preach to them. When Booth saw the impact that testimonies of converted sinners had on an audience, he began to make use of testimonies. He used bands to draw crowds. According to Roger J. Green, "Booth was excited about the invention of the motor car, because he saw the potential for its use in spreading the gospel. Booth became the Methodist circuit rider brought up to date."⁸⁷

A further contribution of Booth to preaching was his simplicity, which helped his evangelistic preaching to be powerful and direct. He used simple language and vivid illustrations. Booth-Tucker noted, "Yet it is doubtful whether, considering the continuous public speaking undertaken, there is a preacher of any notoriety who bestows more pains, not in mere verbiage, but in thinking out his subject, and in suiting it to the need and comprehension of his audience."⁸⁸ In speaking of evangelistic preaching, Steve Gaines stated, "To be successful, we must learn the culture, customs and 'language' of those we are trying to reach."⁸⁹ Since Booth was not formally educated and had a limited vocabulary, he was adamant about using simple everyday language to preach to people in a way they could understand. Booth was able to reach the lower class, because he understood how to relate to them and garner their attention.

Still another contribution of Booth to preaching was his earnestness, or passion. Booth never lost the zeal from his conversion. Booth desperately wanted everyone to experience the salvation he had experienced. "Simply put, he could not, would not, allow a moment to pass without trying, in some way or other to 'save souls.'"⁹⁰ While the evangelist's sermons were not systematic as those who had been formally educated, Booth's preaching was nonetheless a demonstration of the power of the gospel. R.G. Moyles captured well the interest of audiences in Booth's preaching:

Such sermons, when transcribed, seem disjointed and vapid, but when we recall, as the reports point out, the depth of feeling invested in every word,

the modulation of that raspy voice, the intent look in his eye, and the tall figure swaying to the rhythm of his words, we can understand why, for an hour or more, people (in a pre-television era) were held spellbound in their seats and would be subsequently inspired to action.⁹¹

Booth's passion for souls did not wane, even as he grew in popularity for his social advocacy. Considering Booth's itinerant travels in later years, Booth-Tucker noted, "Each campaign is planned with the expectation of such results. Souls must be saved, backsliders must be restored, professing Christians must be stirred up to action, soldiers must be enrolled or the campaign would be regarded as a miserable failure, however vast might be the crowds or deep the interest."⁹² Additionally, Booth was not reluctant to speak on the effects of disobedience to God in such a way that the audience could perceive the consequences of their disobedience.

In their book, *Evangelistic Preaching*, Charles Gresham and Keith Keeran noted that evangelistic preaching of the future "will be dynamic when characterized by simplicity and spirituality—the kind of spirituality exhibited by a godly life anointed by the Holy Spirit."⁹³ William Booth categorized that dynamic evangelistic preacher more than a century before that description was written, and he deserves study alongside other prominent historic evangelists by those desiring to reach people outside the influence of the Church with the preaching of the gospel. In his final Sunday evening message, Booth urged the audience, "Kneel down at the mercy seat, accept this blessed Jesus as your Saviour, and submit to His authority. Wash every stain away in His Blood, enthrone Him in your heart as your King, and fight for Him all the rest of your days."⁹⁴ May the contemplation on Booth's preaching be a timely example and encouragement to all heralds of the gospel.

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BOOK REVIEW by Zach Bell

Boundaries for Your Soul

By Alison Cook and Kimberly Miller
Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2018. 235 pp.

As Salvationists, we are called to serve the last, the lost and the least, which many times means working with people who have experienced trauma or who are currently in crisis. In serving those to whom we are called, we welcome the burden of helping to shoulder a wide range of complicated emotions. Truth be told, we all have our own issues to deal with as Salvationists, and we from time to time experience our own overwhelming emotions. *Boundaries for Your Soul* is a helpful resource for equipping Salvationists, soldiers and officers alike to care better for those we serve and to care better also for our own needs. The book is also a resource for all Christians who desire to follow Jesus' command to love God and neighbor.

Dr. Alison Cook, co-author of *Boundaries for Your Soul*, and her family are active in The Salvation Army's Cambridge, Massachusetts Corps (church), where they attend services and are involved in several ministries. In this book, Cook and her co-author, Kimberly Miller, have gathered the wisdom from their twenty-five combined years of advanced education, biblical studies and clinical practice to set forth an approach to emotions that combines an evidence-based approach to psychology with biblical wisdom.

The book is divided into three sections which build upon each other. The first section offers a nice introduction that looks at the various parts of the soul and the role of the Holy Spirit at the center. Within these first three chapters, the reader finds the concept of taking a "You-Turn" which involves taking charge of leading yourself rather than blaming others. These chapters set up the second section of the book ("The Five Steps of Taking a You-Turn") which spell out how to do the work of caring for the various parts of your soul in need. The last

section of the book (“Working with Challenging Emotions”) closes with some great insights that help us to deal with specific emotions that we all experience, such as anger, fear, anxiety, sadness, envy, desire, guilt and shame. These emotions could potentially be paralyzing and harmful, but this book helps the reader to address them in a healthy way.

All three sections have real-life stories that relate to our own situations. They also provide great insights on each of the topics within the chapters. The sections include quizzes and life-application questions, which are so useful, as they allow you to apply what has been learned.

I personally found “The Five Steps of Taking a You-Turn” to be very relatable to our work in ministry. Those five steps are as follows: 1) FOCUS “on the part of your soul that’s bothering you;” 2) BEFRIEND “the parts of your

soul that you’ve dismissed as troublesome;” 3) INVITE

“Jesus to be near a struggling part of your soul;” 4)

UNBURDEN “the hurting parts of your soul;” and 5)

INTEGRATE “those parts into your internal family,”

so that parts of you that were at odds can take on new

roles. These steps reminded me of our call to focus on

the needs and souls of those to whom we minister. We

are called to befriend (or as our officer covenant states:

“... to love the unlovable and to befriend those who

have no friends ...”) those in our care, and to help

them invite Jesus into their lives and allow Him to

help them in every way. As The Salvation Army, we try to lighten the burdens of those we serve—both physically through our tangible social services and spiritually through our times of corporate worship. We truly hope to welcome all whom we serve into our family, which is what makes us so much stronger.

These “Five Steps” are what we emphasize in our ministry activities on a daily basis but not normally for ourselves. I love our Salvation Army and who we are and what we do, but we can at times be so focused on everyone else that we lose sight of the needs within our own souls. I challenge you to pick this book up and read it for yourself. As we focus more on bringing God’s care to our own souls, may our ministry to others be strengthened and go deeper!

Samuel Logan Brengle wrote in *Heart Talks on Holiness* that “Spiritual development comes through the revelation of Jesus Christ in the heart, and the holy soul is in a condition to receive such revelations constantly, and since the

“We truly hope to welcome all whom we serve into our family, which is what makes us so much stronger.”

finite can never exhaust the infinite, these revelations will continue forever and prove an increasing and never-ending source of development.” May we all continue to seek the revelations of Jesus in our hearts and allow our souls to receive these revelations both in the good and in the overwhelming thoughts we experience. And may we constantly share what we have learned with those to whom we minister.

BOOK REVIEW *by Donald E. Burke*

Why Mission? Reframing New Testament Theology

By Dean Flemming

Nashville: Abingdon, 2015. 174 pp.

“Mission” is one of the buzzwords we hear a great deal in The Salvation Army at the present time. “Integrated mission,” a variation upon the larger concept of mission, has grown in popularity as we have sought to overcome the long-standing tensions between the “evangelistic/spiritual mission” and the “social mission” of the Army. At least since William Booth established the Social Reform Wing as an administrative entity within The Salvation Army, we have been plagued by this bifurcation of our mission. As the complexity and professionalization of our social service ministries have grown, so has the disconnect between them and our spiritual mission. Further, as our organizational needs have increased and we have relied upon publicly-raised funds to supply those needs, we have been prone to downplay our spiritual mission in order to make our financial appeals palatable to an increasingly secular public. It is in the context of this ongoing missional debate that I chose to read this new book by Dean Flemming.

Flemming’s book is an example of a growing body of literature which seeks to read the Bible with a missional hermeneutic. In his introductory chapter, Flemming argues that a missional reading of the New Testament is guided by two fundamental questions: 1) How do the New Testament writings witness to God’s mission? and 2) How do the New Testament writings prepare and call Christian communities to participate in that mission? Flemming poses these two questions to six different NT writings: Matthew, Luke-Acts, John, Philipians, 1 Peter and Revelation. The result is an erudite study of the New Testament’s

witness to the mission of God (Latin: *missio Dei*).

One of the preliminary tasks for Flemming is to outline briefly what he understands the mission of God to be. “Put simply, the God who created all things is on a mission to redeem and reclaim a rebellious and sinful world—to set right a world that has gone wrong and ultimately to restore all of creation” (xix). The vocation of Israel in the Old Testament, the sending of Jesus the Son of God into the world by God the Father, and the life of the Church under the direction of the Holy Spirit all are inspired by this mission of God.

Turning to the heart of the book, Flemming begins with Matthew’s Gospel. Matthew consistently links the story of Jesus with the mission of God in and through Israel. Thus, the mission of Jesus is a further development of the mission of Israel to be a blessing to all the nations of the earth (Genesis 12:1-3). The focus of Jesus’ ministry is, in the first instance, the creation of a new and restored Israel. This is accomplished through Jesus’ teaching, His proclamation of the good news of the Kingdom, His acts of healing and restoration, and His confrontation with evil. While many in the Israel of his day reject this mission of Jesus, the Twelve Apostles are formed into the initial community which will carry this mission forward. With the rejection of Jesus by His own people, the way is opened for the extension of His mission (and the mission of God) to all peoples. The Great Commission with which Matthew’s Gospel concludes (Matthew 28:18-20) should be “read backwards” in the light of what precedes it earlier in Matthew; and the Gospel of Matthew should be read through the lens of the Great Commission. This helps us to understand that it is a *community* (that is, the Church), rather than discrete individuals, which is commissioned to carry on the mission of God.

Chapter 2, in which Flemming discusses Luke-Acts as a unified work, demonstrates the shape of the mission of Jesus and how that mission continued in the Church. Quite correctly, Flemming focuses his discussion of the mission of Jesus on Luke 4:18-21. According to the author, this programmatic statement shows that Jesus’ mission is neither exclusively political and socioeconomic nor exclusively spiritual. What we see in Luke is an “integrated, all encompassing” mission. As Flemming characterizes it, “Jesus’s kingdom mission, then, is about restoration at every level—spiritual, physical, psychological, social, and economic.” (p. 29) Turning to Acts, Flemming argues that Luke’s second volume recounts how the mission of Jesus continues through the Church which is guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit. The life of the Church in Acts embodies

the compassion, justice, healing, forgiveness and restoration that began in the ministry of Jesus himself. As a result of his review of Luke-Acts, Flemming argues that the mission of God in these writings is *all-encompassing*, touching every dimension of human existence; *boundary-crossing* in that the Holy Spirit pushes the Church to shatter barriers between people (for example, the barrier between Jews and Gentiles); and, most importantly, *Spirit-inspired* and *Spirit-empowered*. “Continuing Jesus’s mission involves engaging in ministries that seek transformation at every level: offering forgiveness to sinners, caring for the sick and impoverished, embracing the excluded, and confronting both the power of the evil one and evil power structures that oppose God’s reign.” (p. 50)

Flemming’s third chapter focuses on the Gospel of John. In John, the mission of God is embodied in the incarnate Word. As he writes about the miraculous deeds of Jesus, John claims that they reveal God’s glory in the Son and lead people to put their faith in Jesus. According to John, it is divine love which both motivates and characterizes the mission of Jesus. “For John, mission is cruciform. The cross symbolizes that God accomplishes his purpose for the world through seeking, self-sacrificing love. Jesus’s death on the cross is the embodiment of God’s tenacious love.” (p. 58) In addition, according to John, the Spirit gives life, both reveals and witnesses to Jesus, and convicts the world of sin. As a consequence, the mission of God that continues in the community of those who believe is anchored in the life and character of the living God. The mission of this community is shaped most profoundly by its *relationship* to Jesus rather than by words or deeds. In this way, followers both experience and give away God’s peace. As Flemming describes it, “The church is missional when, and only when, it truly is the church, a church whose oneness and uncommon love visibly demonstrates the embracing love of God to a watching world. The church’s mutual love, above else, showcases the reality and the character of God’s mission in Jesus.” (p. 68)

Turning to the apostle Paul, Flemming focuses on Philippians. Read missionally, the center of Philippians is 2:6-11, the magnificent hymn which speaks of the movement of Jesus from the glory of God to the humility of His embrace of humanity, through the obedience of the crucifixion and, finally, His exaltation. In Paul’s theology, the mission of God is cruciform; it is shaped profoundly by the story of Christ’s incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and exaltation. The key point for Paul is that the Philippians, as a community of Christians, are caught up in this story. As Flemming articulates it, “... Paul’s formation of a

cross-shaped community enables the Philippians to *be* the visible manifestation of God's reconciling purpose for the world." (p. 86) As the Church, the Philippians are called upon to be a united, holy and loving community. They also are to both live out and proclaim the gospel story. There can be no separation between verbal proclamation and loving deeds. Finally, the Church is called to engage the culture critically. The Church should celebrate what is beautiful, but at the same time it must not embrace the wider social values uncritically.

With his discussion of 1 Peter, the author places strong emphasis on the audience as a community which is no longer at home in its own culture. Not only figuratively, but also physically and socially, they are under siege and subjected to persecution. To encourage them, Peter reminds the Church that they are part

“The Church should celebrate what is beautiful, but at the same time it must not embrace the wider social values uncritically.”

of the larger story of God's mission through the Israelites—a people into which the Gentile Christians have been incorporated. They have experienced redemption in the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus, and their own suffering has been cast in the light of the suffering of Jesus. According to Flemming (pp. 106-107), 1 Peter sees the Church as a missional community with the following characteristics: they are *exiles* and *strangers* who engage in mission from the margins of their social world; they are a *holy people* who live out the character of a holy God; they are an *engaged people* who, while they are radically different, remain fully

engaged in the life of the larger community; they are a *suffering people* who follow in the path of their suffering savior; they are a *magnetic people* whose very existence as a Christian community draws others—even their opponents—to them; and they are a *witnessing people* who declare the good news, explaining their hope in Christ to others.

With the chapter on Revelation, Flemming draws the main part of his argument to a conclusion. In the book of Revelation, the biblical story reaches its climax as the movement from creation (in Genesis) to new creation is completed with the formation of a new Heaven and a new Earth. The universal mission of God is consummated not only by this new creation but also by the redemption through the slaughtered Lamb which is offered to all nations and all peoples. Interpreted missionally, Revelation not only describes the scope of God's mission as it reaches its culmination but also encourages the formation of the Christian

community as it awaits that culmination. As a missional community, the Church inevitably must distance itself from Babylon's ways of thinking and living. The intense conflict between the Church and Babylon that is portrayed in Revelation is an ongoing struggle which is countered by the Church's unrivaled worship of the sovereign God and unreserved devotion to the Lamb. Revelation provides the Church with an alternative vision to that which is put forward so forcefully by the Roman Empire. This vision draws the Christian community out of Babylon and toward the universal reign of Christ. In between, the Church is to bear faithful witness to the truth of God, obey God's commands and worship God. Once again, according to Flemming, one of the primary missional purposes of this final book of the canon is the formation of a Christian community that is fully engaged in the *missio Dei*.

In an epilogue, Flemming provides a convenient summary of the previous six chapters. In the process, he identifies the key points each New Testament writing contributes to our understanding of the mission of God. He then draws out a series of implications that he thinks arise from the review of the New Testament writings.

Throughout his survey of these six New Testament writings, Flemming emphasizes how the mission of God is grounded in the Christian community. The formation of that community for mission is one of the primary concerns of these writings.

Salvationist reflection on mission seems to this writer too often to be haphazard and informed only by a small selection of biblical texts which are referenced only to support our particular viewpoints and prejudices. A careful study of Flemming's book would provide a reliable foundation for future reflection upon The Salvation Army's place in the larger mission of God. Using this book to guide a Bible study focused on the reading of these selected New Testament writings would benefit all. The individual chapters of the book would gain impact when coupled with thorough readings of all books of the New Testament. The series of affirmations with which Flemming concludes his epilogue would prompt vigorous conversations.

BOOK REVIEW by *R. David Rightmire*

Like a Mighty Army? The Salvation Army, the Church, and the Churches

By **David W. Taylor**

Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014. 308 pp.

In *Like a Mighty Army?*, David Taylor identifies three intertwined ecclesial strands in the course of the historical development of The Salvation Army: Mission, Army and Church. He contends that these three strands have become “unhelpfully tangled” in the movement’s developing ecclesiological self-understanding, creating tension in its current ecclesial convictions.

The work quite easily falls into two parts. The first deals with what the author maintains are the three phases of the Army’s ecclesiological development, corresponding roughly to three ecclesial strands: its origins as the Christian Mission in the East End of London, 1865-1878 (Mission); its establishment as The Salvation Army, 1878-1948 (Army); and its contemporary self-identification as an international denomination of the Church, 1948-present (Church). The second part of the book is comprised of an evaluation of the ecclesiology of Karl Barth, whom Taylor proposes as a dialogue partner for the Army, with the purpose of encouraging deeper theological reflection and ecumenical discussion.

In the historical analysis of the Army’s ecclesiology, the author correctly traces the movement’s origins to the effect of transatlantic revivalism, and he finds the roots for the Army’s ecclesial “mission” stand in the “aggressive Christianity” and pragmatic methods (“new measures”) of American holiness evangelists during the British holiness revival. Of particular note is Taylor’s treatment of the influence of James Caughey, Charles Finney and Phoebe Palmer on William and Catherine Booth (co-founders of The Salvation Army). The author main-

tains that the holiness evangelism inherited and espoused by the Booths had a direct effect on Salvationist ecclesiology, especially in its emphasis on individual salvation and its “subjective focus on the conditions that the individual must fulfill” (14) in the experience of justification and sanctification. Although the focus of the Booths was on the priority of mission, understood in relation to their postmillennial eschatology, they put “relatively little emphasis upon the shape of ‘full salvation’ in the community life of the Church” (53). This, of course, can partly be explained by the fact that they understood their ministry in missional, rather than denominational, terms.

The author maintains that the Christian Mission “took a significant step forward in its ecclesial identity” when it renamed itself “The Salvation Army.” The decision to adopt this military metaphor is viewed as a “logical progression given the aggressive nature of holiness revivalism.” Taylor views the adoption of this military metaphor as pragmatically designed to further the mission, with little theological reflection given by the Army on the suitability of this term in expressing the “nature and visible form of God’s Church” (55). Combined with William Booth’s autocratic leadership style and desire for independence from all ecclesial control (including the ill-fated attempt by the Church of England to incorporate the Army as a quasi-religious order), the adoption of the military metaphor resulted in a polity that was autocratic and hierarchical, with an “army” of highly disciplined and regulated members (soldiers), under the command of “quasi-clergy” (officers).

Taylor sees a connection between the nature and identity of this “army” and Booth’s decision to abandon sacramental practice (1882), although he never explicitly “connects the dots” in this regard. The author does suggest, however, four factors that led the Founder to dispense with baptism and the Lord’s Supper: (1) sacraments are not means of grace and therefore not necessary for either justification or entire sanctification; (2) their use was pragmatically ineffective in the mission of holiness revivalism; (3) they were “not constitutive” for *koinonia* within God’s Church; and (4) their establishment on the basis of Christ’s command lacks biblical support. Taylor interprets the abandonment of sacramental practice as a loss of “the signs and symbols of an objective theological focus on God’s work of grace in God’s community” (83), with a resulting emphasis on the subjective expression of divine action in sacramental living.

The author views the third ecclesial strand (Church) as the direct result of the Army’s developing ecclesiological identity catalyzed by its involvement in the

ecumenical movement. He maintains that there is a fundamental incompatibility in the combination of this strand with the Army's historical "mission" and "army" strands. The author evaluates the Army's historical relationship with the World Council of Churches, and in particular, its response to the Faith and Order Paper, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982). He claims that Salvationists were prompted to reflect on the nature, form and mission of the Church, while paradoxically defending their non-sacramental practice. Taylor engages in a lengthy assessment of the most developed treatment of Salvation Army ecclesiology, *Community in Mission* (1987), by Philip Needham. Although appreciating this contribution to the Army's ecclesiological self-understanding, and its call for official re-evaluation, Taylor maintains that Needham's work fails to explore the theological concept of church as *koinonia*.

The second part of the *Like a Mighty Army?* may take the reader by surprise, as it focuses on the ecclesiology of Karl Barth, who the author believes is "a helpful dialogue partner for Salvationists intent on addressing difficulties that stem from their individualistic and subjective roots." Taylor maintains that the Army's ecclesiological reflection would benefit from Barth's emphases on the objectivity of God's grace in the *via salutis* and his understanding of "the Church's essential communal nature" (265). The author claims that Barth's "Christological ecclesiology" provides Salvationists with the means for untangling the Army's "tangled cord of mission, army and church" (153).

Taylor, over the course of six chapters, identifies key concepts from the writings of Barth and then attempts to show their relevance for Salvationist ecclesiological understanding. These include Barth's distinctive doctrine of election and its outworking in the dynamic event of reconciliation, and the origin and nature of the Church as the result of a "dialectic of indestructible divine action and destructible human action" (186). In particular, the author maintains that Barth's doctrine of election helps to underscore the gracious initiative of God in the work of salvation, helping rebalance what he views as an overemphasis on human agency in Army soteriology. Taylor unpacks Barth's understanding of the four classical "marks of the Church" (one, holy, catholic, apostolic), but adds a fifth—the Church's missionary calling. The author highlights how Barth's

“Like a Mighty Army? is a well-researched and clearly written work, with an extensive bibliography and helpful index.”

interpretation of these marks could serve as a corrective lens for Salvation Army ecclesiological re-evaluation. Although many of Taylor's suggested improvements show promise, when dealing with Barth's understanding of the Church's holiness, it is not clear that the recommended correction to Army pneumatology (involving a focus on "prevenient sanctification") adequately represents the classical Wesleyan theological conjunction of free and cooperant grace.

Like a Mighty Army? is a well-researched and clearly written work, with an extensive bibliography and helpful index. As a lifelong Salvationist with thirty years of experience as an officer (ordained minister), Taylor does not speak as an outsider or an armchair theologian, but as one who has a vested interest in the future ministry of the Salvation Army. Thus, he concludes his work with suggested reforms for the Army's consideration. Taylor calls for a recognition of the limits and liabilities of the "army" metaphor, and for the adoption of the "primary metaphors of the Church as the pilgrim people of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit" (268). He believes that these metaphors are more helpful in fostering an understanding of *koinonia*, which the author views as the "essential characteristic" of the life that God shares with his people. As a result, the Army's ecclesiological self-understanding needs to value the "organic body" over the institutionalized "organization." This will emphasize the diversity of God's gifts over "a uniform style of Christian discipleship," and place a greater emphasis on the local congregation and "the integral relationship of community and mission" (268), with church discipline that is modeled on the "living law of Christ" rather than on human authority expressed through a "legalism of rules, regulations and lifestyle choices" (269). Finally, the author calls for the reinstatement of baptism and the Lord's Supper, viewing these practices as helping promote *koinonia*, and in no way undermining the Army's understanding of the Christian life as a living sacrament.

Book Notes

Roger J. Green

Because N. T. Wright is such a compelling leader and prolific writer in the area of biblical and theological studies today, I concentrated in the last issue of *Word & Deed* on four of his texts that would be of interest to anyone wanting to begin reading Wright. I hope that my suggestions were helpful as a place to begin.

I am following up with some further suggestions for reading N. T. Wright. The first is a readable and brief account of the Lord's Prayer entitled *The Lord & His Prayer* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996). Placing this prayer in its immediate context, Wright provides insights that are invaluable for both intellectual maturity and devotional nurturing. This is an excellent text for Bible studies and small group discussions in the Church.

My second suggestion demands a closer reading and will be helpful in getting at Wright's fully developed view of the biblical doctrine of justification. The book is entitled *Justification* with an interesting subtitle—*God's Plan & Paul's Vision* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009). Wright is absolutely clear at the outset of this text that:

John Piper, and the tradition that he represents, have said that salvation is accomplished by the sovereign grace of God, operating through the death of Jesus Christ in our place and on our behalf, and appropriated through faith alone. There is not one syllable of that summary that I would complain about. But there is something missing—or rather, *someone* missing. Where is the Holy Spirit? (p. 10).

That line should capture the attention of all Wesleyans. Wright goes on to elaborate a comprehensive, biblical vision of justification, relying on the texts of the Bi-

ble in which the theme is so central. Like anything else in life that has lasting worth and value, reading this text takes good hard work. But the rewards are invaluable.

And speaking of hard work, we now turn to the challenge of reading N. T. Wright. His most comprehensive work is entitled *Christian Origins and the Question of God* and is comprised of the following five volumes:

- *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992)
- *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996)
- *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003)
- *Paul and the Faithfulness of God, Parts I & II* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013)
- *Paul and the Faithfulness of God, Parts III & IV* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013)

These volumes are vital sources for the study of the Scriptures within the cultural, political, theological and religious context of their writings. The grand story of Father, Son and Holy Spirit and God's relationship with His creation unfolds in these volumes. My suggestion in approaching these volumes is not to be overwhelmed by them. I have two recommendations. First, commit yourself to reading a chapter a week or a chapter every two weeks. There is no rush here. Take time to enjoy the richness of this work. Second, remember that if you do not read all of these volumes, the material in them will be invaluable as you read and study the Bible for personal devotions, group Bible studies or preaching. Use these volumes as a kind of Bible dictionary. Look up the pertinent material that will shed light on what you are preaching or teaching or trying to understand for your own personal life.

I pray that the suggestions that I have given for reading N. T. Wright in the last issue of *Word & Deed* and in this issue will be both challenging and helpful. If the Jewish proverb is correct that "Study is the highest form of worship," then may you be blessed as you study these works and thereby worship God.



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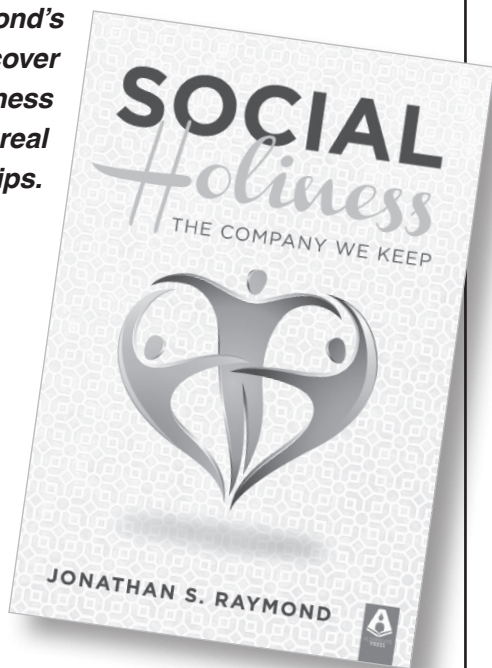
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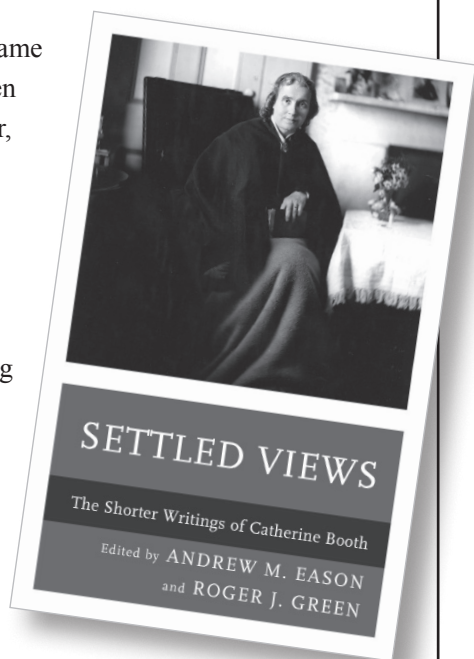
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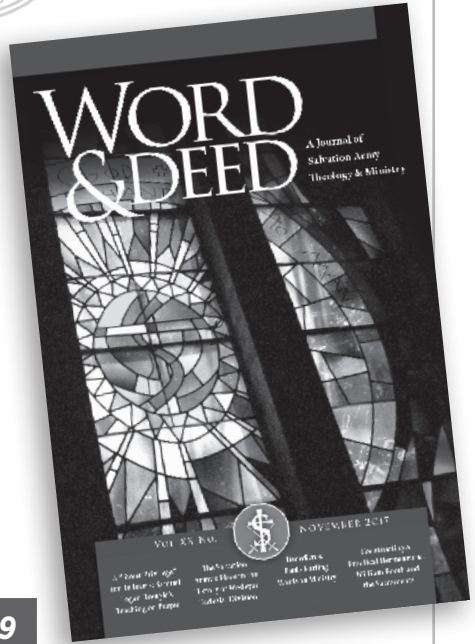
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