

WORD & DEED

VOL. XXIII No. 2

MAY 2021



A JOURNAL OF SALVATION ARMY
THEOLOGY & MINISTRY

Full Salvation—Being Saved

Mission Enabling as a Formative Spiritual Practice

Bearing the Image of God

I Am the True Vine

Jesus Calls Us

Jesús Nos Llama

From Homogeneous to Multiethnic Corps



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BOOKS

Salvation Army National Headquarters

Alexandria, VA, USA

Word & Deed Mission Statement:

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.

Salvation Army Mission Statement:

The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination.

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Contributions related to the mission of the journal are encouraged. At times there will be a general call for papers related to specific subjects. Manuscripts should be lengths as follows: academic papers (articles, literature reviews and essays)—5,000 words or fewer; sermons—3,000 words or fewer; book reviews—2,000 words or fewer. The title of the article should appear at the top of the first page of the text, and the manuscript should utilize endnotes, not footnotes. All Bible references should be from the New International Version. If another version is used throughout the manuscript, indicate the version in the first textual reference only. If multiple versions are used, please indicate the version each time it changes. Manuscripts must be submitted digitally in Microsoft Word format. The publication of all manuscripts is subject to editorial review. Authors may be required to make revisions. Once a manuscript has final approval for publication, a 100-word abstract of the paper may be used at the discretion of the editor. The deadlines for submitting final manuscripts are March 1 and September 1. A style sheet is available upon request.

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Lessons for the Journey

By the time this issue of *Word & Deed* is distributed, it is our prayer that the world is well on its way to putting the pandemic behind us. 2020 was as challenging a year as any of us have experienced, and that is no less true for the Church. However, there are lessons to be learned from that year, both for us as individuals and for the Church. The Body of Christ here on earth is learning that the truths of the Gospel stand the test of time in all ages, in all circumstances, and in pain and suffering. This is a time for those truths to be proclaimed in new ways to meet the challenges of the world in which we live.

We have decided to begin this issue with Jonathan Raymond's paper entitled "Full Salvation—Being Saved." Lessons for the journey are best learned not only from present experiences, but from the past as well. This is no less the case than the doctrinal lesson of holiness that The Salvation Army embraces as a central biblical doctrine best articulated by John Wesley. This article not only reminds the reader of that biblical and Wesleyan heritage, but also challenges the Army today to be faithful to our Wesleyan life in the way we proclaim the doctrine and in the way we instill the doctrine into the lives and ministries of our people. However, this is a timely word not only for the Army but for the larger Church as well, and there are several lessons for the Church's journey into the future.

This is followed by Helen Cameron's paper entitled "Mission Enabling as a Formative Spiritual Practice". If ever there was a time and a need for the insights developed in this paper, this is that time. Dr. Cameron, a British Salvationist, has been involved in the work developed in this paper for several years. Her insights relate

not only to Salvation Army corps (churches), but to the broader Body of Christ as well, and, as the title of the paper suggests, provides means of support for local churches to identify and move forward with their mission. In some ways, 2020 interrupted the understanding of Church as community, and the mission of the local church depends on the community of believers embracing the mission and living out the mission. This paper, based on John 13, helps us to think anew what the mission of the local church is post-2020. There are lessons for the future here.

Daniel Diakanwa's contribution to this issue of *Word & Deed* is an essay written from years of experience as a Salvation Army officer, often in large urban settings. The author reminds us of the invaluable lesson that the Church in North America (and this can be said of the Church in other parts of the world) is not a homogeneous Church, but a multi-ethnic Church, reflecting the multi-ethnic culture of the world in which the Church ministers. This was a lesson learned from the very beginning of the Church in the New Testament when the mission of the Church reached beyond its Jewish identity to the broader Gentile world. The challenge of the essay is how The Salvation Army and the broader Church is going to live out its mission in this multi-ethnic reality. Daniel suggests many lessons for the Church moving into God's future.

The reader will be interested in the three sermons that are an integral part of this issue. There is a noteworthy back story to these sermons. When the pandemic hit in March of 2020, there was the realization among the leadership of The Salvation Army internationally that life as we knew it, including the life of corporate worship, was going to have to change. And so we began to see live streaming Sunday worship services and began to have various weekly connections via Zoom.

In the USA East Territory, Commissioners William and Lorraine Bamford set up Sunday morning worship services that were live streamed via the web site entitled SAConnects, with music, Scripture readings, occasional segments for youth, and sermons. This became the Sunday morning worship service for countless people in the Eastern Territory. Often the sermons were read from manu-

scripts, and we asked for permission to use some of those sermons. From a pool of sermons we chose three for this issue, and had no idea that the three sermons chosen were all from the leadership of The Salvation Army in one division, the New Jersey Division. Major James Betts is the Divisional Commander, Major Jongwoo Kim is the Divisional Secretary, and Major Daniel Alverio is the Divisional Youth Secretary. We are grateful for their permission to use their sermons first given live stream in 2020.

Following the lessons for the journey of the Church as a multi-ethnic Church, we are especially pleased that Major Alverio's sermon is given in both English and Spanish. We have not, up to this time, published anything in Spanish in *Word & Deed*, and see this as an introduction to publishing material in the future in Spanish and perhaps other languages. We are excited about the prospects for this journal as we are learning our own lessons for the future.

This issue ends with three book reviews, which we pray will be helpful to our readers in selecting books for their own reading. There are personal lessons for our own journeys as we make decisions on what books to read.

Needless to say, we are excited about this issue of *Word & Deed*, and see this as a gift as together we move forward in mission and ministry in 2021. And we do this with the assurance that God is with His Church.

RJG
JSR

Full Salvation—Being Saved

Jonathan S. Raymond

...and the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2:47

In the origins of The Salvation Army, William and Catherine Booth were spiritually formed in personal and communal holiness by Wesleyan theology and praxis of discipleship. They were not only saved, but were continually being saved in holiness within Wesley's structure of peer discipleship (Methodist societies, class meetings, and bands). The Army grew from the seeds in the fruit of their formation as their full salvation meant being continually saved. The long-term return in local Methodist investments in the Booths grew to be the ministry and mission of the Army today. The paper raises questions of awakening to new possibilities if the Army returns to the old wells of peer discipleship and social holiness.

Full salvation is being saved. It is more than staying saved. Full salvation means continually being saved, daily living with profound love of God, self and others (Luke 10: 27), remaining in obedience (John 14:15) to the great commandment (Luke 28:16-20). Full salvation means continuing the journey in maximum faith all the way, not stopping half way, not accepting only half of all God desires, not settling for half the bread of life, instead pursuing the whole, full blessing. It is staying the course. It is more than settling for a static state of having been saved. It is being continually saved, continually perfected in holiness, continually transformed

and restored to the likeness of Christ (*Imago Dei* - Colossians 1:15). It is daily grasping the magnitude of God's love, and being filled to the measure of the fullness of God to Glory of God (Ephesians 3:14-21). Full salvation, being saved by grace, is a matter of maximum faith. Thoroughly Wesleyan, full salvation remains at the very center of our Salvationist heritage, ethos, and understanding in word and deed.

The Apostle Paul's writings provide wisdom about full salvation in continual maximum faith. To the church at Ephesus, he wrote "*...it is by grace you are saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is a gift of God...*" (Ephesians 1:21-23). To the Colossians, he wrote, "*Once you were alienated from God...But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation – IF you continue in your faith*" (Colossians 1:21-23); and "*So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built-up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thanksgiving. For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to fullness.*" (Colossians 2:6-9).

Paul's words are still poignant and true for the church today. More than encouragement, his message, as an imperative for maximum obedient faith, has conditional consequences: "*holiness in God's sight . . . if you continue in your faith*", so "*continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built-up, strengthened in the faith you were taught.*" Paul's words concern maximum, continuing faith. The great majority of people stop somewhere on the way to becoming fully saved. The Barna study confirms that sad reality.

Maximum Faith: The Barna Study¹

Archaeological discoveries confirm the biblical narrative of God's active relationship with Israel and his steadfast of love for the world. Contemporary surveys of large populations can be archaeological forms of digging deeper into the souls of the present day. Using survey research, the Barna Groups study of maximum faith recently shed light on contemporary American spiritual devel-

opment. Over a six-year period, survey researchers by telephone randomly sampled fifteen thousand people who assessed their own pitfalls, challenges, and progress in their faith development. All persons surveyed were American citizens. Not all were Christians. Each person self-assessed themselves as being at one of “ten transformational stops,” the point on a continuum where their spiritual development stopped. The stops were reported in percentages of persons in the survey who stopped at a particular point in their faith journey. The study gives a picture of the American population’s faith development not by stage, but by where development stopped, was arrested, and/or regressed.

Ten Transformational Stops

1. Unaware of Sin—1%
2. Indifferent to Sin—16%
3. Worried About Sin—39%
4. Forgiven for Sin—9%
5. Busy in Church Activities—24%
6. Holy Discontent—6%
7. Broken by God—3%
8. Surrender & Submission—1%
9. Profound Love of God—0.5%
10. Profound Love of People—0.5%

In his book, *Maximum Faith: Live Like Jesus*, George Barna lays out the background of the study highlighted above. Ten transformational stops represent a path in the journey to maximum faith and wholeness. By the survey results, humanity’s great struggle in the journey appears to be ignorance, disobedience, and/or indifference to sin. For those reasons most people appear to progress no more than half-way rather than “press on to take hold of that for which Christ took hold of them” (Philippians 3:12). They look satisfied with stasis, stops far short of God’s intended best by taking themselves out of the soul shaping hands of God. Only a relatively few go on responding to holy discontent over sin that follows justification. Of those who go on, fewer and fewer experience bro-

kenness; fewer go on to surrender and submission; and the fewest report maximum faith of profound love of God and people.

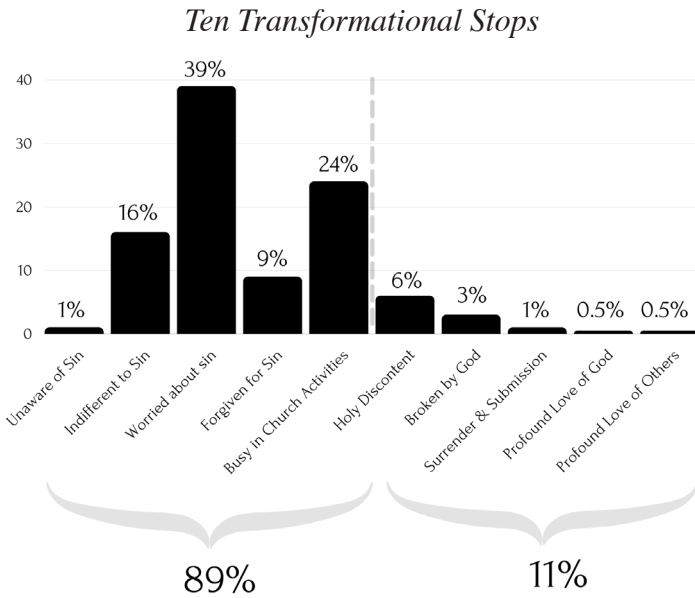
Using qualitative and quantitative methods, the Barna study sheds light on where the American public stands on issues of faith and spiritual development. The first three categories reflect the majority (56%) of the survey sample. At the time of the survey, they had stopped and never sought as much as God's justifying grace. Nine percent more of the responders sought God's forgiveness of sin, but stopped there while another 24% reported being saved from sin and engaged in church activities. The first five "stop" categories altogether represent the largest proportion of the American population surveyed (89%) having stopped halfway (stops 1-5). A much smaller percentage of survey responders (11%) may be found between stops six to ten that reflect further faith development and transformation.

Taken from a random sample of Americans, the Barna Group's study, raises questions. When looking at the schematic display below, the data presents a diverse picture of American spiritual progress (or regress), and a question about the path people take. Do people progress through ten transformative stops sequentially in a linear fashion from #1 to 10, or do people try other paths arriving at #6 and settling for #5; stopping at #6 or even #7 and reverting back to #2? Do they fall back and then keep going forward? The Barna study results show that sixty-five percent of their sample stopped short of salvation before justification by grace through faith (#5). Only nineteen percent journeyed on beyond that stop (#6-10).

Do the results support the Gospel having two parts or halves, the first up to the midpoint of justification and the church activity stop #5 (89%), and the second half those stops comprising the minority (11%) #6-10. And presently and in the future, does church in America (and also in the Global West: Europe, Canada, UK/Europe, Australia, New Zealand, etc.) have a problem? Is it declining in number, but also in the depth of church members' spiritual formation, growth, and encounters with God. If churches are growing, are they doing so without growing people? Might the church go from faith decisions to discipleship, from making

converts to growing saints and continually being saved? Are these questions relevant to the present and future vitality and ministry of The Salvation Army?

If a picture (or schemata) is worth a thousand words, so the overlay of Barna’s and Wesley’s frameworks together amplifies what may be spiritually envisioned for any population’s transformative future. It also speaks into the work of God yet seen through the mission and ministry of The Salvation Army.



*Wesley’s Via/Ordo Salutis
for Maximum Faith to Full Salvation*

Preventient 1 st half of the Gospel Gospels	Justifying *	Sanctifying 2 nd Half of the Gospel Epistles	Glorifying Grace
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The *Via Salutis* and Cascading Doctrines

What relevance does the Barna study have for The Salvation Army, its theology and practice? The study is focused on “stops” along the Christian faith journey. Barna makes no mention of following a particular theological framework. Nevertheless, his survey results are strikingly similar to Wesleyan theology (orthodoxy) and mirrors the same path and sequence found in Wesley’s *via salutis* (way of salvation) and *ordo salutis* (order in steps of full salvation in being saved).² Both the Barna study results and the Wesleyan framework have a direction and represent a similar journey. Both imply a journey from full salvation from sin (first half of the Gospel) to being saved (the second half), perfected in holiness and intimacy with God to his glory.

The Barna study results also correspond to the sequence and order of The Salvation Army’s cascading doctrines (articles of faith), cascading from one to eleven.³ The Army doctrines follow Wesley’s *Via/Ordo Salutis*, God’s prevenient grace (1-4) and justifying grace (6,7,8—initial sanctification) flowing naturally in the direction of holiness. The doctrines flow on to being saved by God’s sanctifying grace (doctrine 9), daily immersed not in a state of spiritual stasis and dissipating faith, but rather a continuing interpersonal dynamic, and increasingly intimate, personal relationship leading to a profound love for God and others (doctrine 10), continually being saved and being perfected; ideally flowing in the sequence of Wesley’s *ordo salutis*; evermore encountering God’s grace, being fully “filled to the measure of the fullness of God (Eph. 3:18-19), wholly sanctified.

	Cascading Doctrines	Via/Ordo Salutis
1	The God who reveals himself	Prevenient Grace
2, 3, 4	The God who reveals himself in Scripture	Prevenient Grace

5	Our problem: disobedience, sin and death	Disgrace
6, 7, 8	God's response to/our problem; His grace response to his response; more grace, etc.	Justifying Grace and our Initial Sanctification
9	God's continuing responses and ours: Continuing dynamic, interactive, sustained, obedient relationship with God	Sanctifying Grace
10	God's ultimate response (Entire Sanctification)	Glorifying Grace
11	Resurrection and eternal life, happiness	Glory

Our cascading doctrines tell the story of our journey in coming to know who God is, and who we are as a people with a problem of sin and disobedience. They tell of our redemption, reconciliation, being saved, and restored to new in life Christ. Our doctrines reveal the beauty of our transformation in holiness by exposures to God's sanctifying grace. Doctrine nine in particular prepares us for God's ultimate grace in doctrine ten, the gift by the Holy Spirit that entirely cleanses us of sin and makes possible by faith the reality of a pure heart. Our Wesleyan doctrines articulate the *via salutis* stream of becoming, being, and remaining saved, continuing in the fulness of holiness necessary for the Christian life.

The Gospel, Wesley, and the Booths

Barna study is grounded in the full Gospel, framed in a biblical worldview of two halves. It corresponds to Booth's passion to save the perishing, and Wesley's concern to spread holiness throughout the land. It aligns well with Wesleyan/Salvationist theological con-

victions, Methodism in the eighteenth to the nineteenth century and the Army in the nineteenth to the twentieth century and beyond.

The Army's Wesleyan heritage and inheritance are indisputably rooted in Wesleyan orthodoxy, orthopathy, and in many ways, orthopraxy. The theological and missional origins of William and Catherine Booth's ministry were influenced by the life and ministry of John Wesley (and Charles Wesley's hymns) and Methodism.⁴ They were born in the same year (1829) and became Methodists at early ages. Both were nurtured in their faiths and given spiritually social support by older Methodists. They were disciplined in the convenient grace of Methodist class meetings, prayer meetings, and local Methodist Worship,

The Army's doctrines today are a direct version of Wesleyan Methodist articles of faith carried forward into the Booth's early ministries. Several Methodist practices remain with salvationists today, for example the Army's hymnal, *The Song Book*. Its contents are arranged in three parts: one third of its songs are about "The Eternal God"—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; a second third, a response to God in worship, salvation, and holiness; and the third part, the means of grace God provides and the Salvationist's response in life and service. The origins of our doctrines, songs, worship, and service go directly back to John Wesley's structure and theology of discipleship. In very formative years of childhood, their teen age years, and early ministry, Wesley's legacy of communal Methodism was the spiritually social ecology and discipleship structure in which both William and Catherine were being saved, disciplined, and nurtured in Wesleyan ways. As a result, it is not surprising that William, in 1849 by the age of twenty, declared, "I worshiped everything that bore the name of Methodist. To me there was one God, and John was his prophet. I had devoured the story of his life..."⁵

John Wesley's Structure and Theology of Discipleship

Wesley believed that although holiness is personal, it is necessarily social. Credited with saying there is no holiness but social holiness, he actually said, "Holy solitaries" is a phrase no more

consistent than holy adulterers. The gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social; no holiness but social holiness.”⁶ He objected to Christian practices that isolated Christians from one another, “because people do not grow in love of God and love of neighbor by themselves.”⁷ For Wesley, “Holiness was social and most reliably formed through small-group, interpersonal accountability structures.”⁸ Wesley conceived of a framework of holiness that together comprised three integrated, interlocking groups: (1) class meetings, (2) bands, and (3) society gatherings.⁹ His traveling lay preachers, preaching houses (not churches), quarterly love feasts, and other gathering events were secondary and supportive of making disciples.

At the heart of the Methodist movement was Wesley’s conviction that holiness was the fundamental reality of the Christian life best nurtured through a supportive, disciplined, communal community. William and Catherine’s biographies bear that out. The genius of Wesley was the creation and maintenance of social structures that made possible personal and communal Christian formation.¹⁰ Wesley’s conviction was that those who received the gifts of justifying faith and new birth must go on to grow in holiness in the social context of small groups as small churches within the church, *ecclesiola in ecclesia*. This led him to join people together into groups to “watchover one another in love.” Wesley was an organizer.¹¹ In 1739 he organized a system of discipling-in-community that would become a movement of Methodism for the next one hundred years and beyond when it would serve as a model, an early framework for the Christian Mission, and eventually for The Salvation Army.

The Society.

In the outdoors, Wesley preached to as many as hundreds to a few thousand people at a time. Often converts to the Christian faith wanted follow-up contact with him. At the time, “societies” were popular for a diverse number of topics. This included religious societies. Wesley was familiar with the matter, belonged to societies in London, and had formed and supervised several as well. Wesley’s societies were not churches, nor denominations. They

were gatherings of Methodists and others who participated in class meetings and bands and came together for worship to God through prayer, scripture reading, singing hymns, and hearing a sermon. The purpose was to encourage one another and continue growing in holiness.¹² Methodist societies were the forerunner of Salvationists' holiness meetings.

The Class Meeting.

Membership in the societies was divided into class meetings, though Methodist societies were not so much divided into class meetings as class meetings (and bands) were aggregated into the sum total of societies. "The class meeting was the corner stone of the whole edifice."¹³ Class meetings met in the local neighborhoods where people lived. Leaders were lay pastors who guided class members in the matters at hand. Class meetings became the primary means of grace for thousands of Methodists. It served as an evangelistic and discipling function. In the Methodist movement throughout the nineteenth century, the class meeting effectively served as an "incubator" of faith in peoples' hearts within "the warm Christian atmosphere of the society." Wesley's Methodism and evangelistic revivalism of the nineteenth century was known for evangelistic preaching for conversions. It was better known for its class meetings where the majority of conversions actually took place. "It was primarily membership in the class that constituted membership in the Methodist society."¹⁴

Class meeting members naturally cared for one another, speaking and receiving truth in love. As a result, "the class meeting helped Methodists grow in their love of God and love of neighbor, one of Wesley's favorite definitions of holiness."¹⁵ They also helped "not yet new born seekers" and "recently new" Christians in their struggle with temptation and sins.

The Band.

Bands were about peer discipling, support, and accountability, Christians growing in grace and continuing the journey, being saved to the uttermost, and preparing qualified lay leaders for a

great awakening and revival. In the words of one Wesleyan scholar writing about Wesleyan bands, “Bands were (and still are) the renaissance of first century Christianity.”¹⁶ Another scholar called bands “sanctifying grace in intimate space.”¹⁷

Wesley’s society was the head (the biblical truth and theological orthodoxy), and the class meeting the bands (behavioral orthopraxy, the practice of loving one’s neighbor with exhortation, prohibitions, encouragement, and demonstration). Wesley’s band experience was the heart (the affective orthopathy of holy love, purity of heart, and desire to be in close community fellowship and mutual confession). In the shared means of grace, members helped each other remain in obedient faith, confessing sin, seeking cleansing and forgiveness, grasping the magnitude of God’s love, and being continually filled to the measure of the fullness of God to the glory God who is able to then do immeasurably more than before (Ephesians 3:14-19).

Bands were different, more disclosing and open. Bands were a higher degree of accountability, intimacy, disclosure, and commitment. Members were more established followers of Jesus seeking more “sanctifying grace in intimate space.” Band membership required greater trust and confidentiality than class meetings. The limit for members was four members to a band, male or female, but not both in the same band.

Bands met once a week for one hour and followed a simple structure and format. Each band meeting began with prayer, often using scripture like Ephesians 3:14-18. Each person in the band had fifteen minutes (or less) to answer a short list of questions or topics. The questions were simple and varied but reviewed the state of salvation and obedient faith of each participant. In more contemporary language today, the questions might be: How is your soul? What are your struggles and success? How might the Holy Spirit and Scriptures be speaking in your life? Going deeper, do you have any sins that you want to confess? Are there any secrets or hidden things you would like to share? Once a member concluded their opportunity to share, someone from the band offered a prayer for the one who shared. The opportunity for other members was to speak into the

other's life. If sin was confessed, someone was encouraged to speak a word of pardon. (i.e. "In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven"—1 John 1:9.) The meeting concluded with another prayer taken at times from scripture like Ephesians 3:20-21.¹⁸

The Bands were at the heart of Wesley's discipleship structure. Bands were the engines driving the evangelism of the Wesleyan holiness renewal movement. Wesley's theology made clear the path of full salvation from a life of sin to one of holiness. It presented Methodists with formative theological paradigms of social holiness through a structure for Christian fidelity to the Great Commandment of holy love and the Great Commission to make disciples in word, deed, and purity of heart. Bands were the key to an ever-deepening experience of God. Bands promoted peer discipleship as key source of support and accountability for brothers and sisters in Christ committed to exercising maximum faith (doctrine nine) in seeking entire sanctification (doctrine ten). Wesley's structured bands prepared mature leaders for class meetings. They provided leadership for society gatherings and empowered them by the Holy Spirit for ministry, service, and influence. The bands were at the epicenter of an expanding movement of evangelism and church renewal. They promoted relational discipleship at the heart of transformational community life characteristic of the early, primitive Christian church (Acts 2:22-27).

Wesley and the Booths

As young people, William and Catherine actively participated in class meetings. For William, Wesley was somewhat of a hero. Initially, Wesley's theology of grace, salvation, and holiness became a theological model and forerunner for the Booths and provided a praxis of personal discipling largely through their engagement in Methodist communities. In Wesley's structure, lay people disciplined lay people. Peers in bands and class meetings helped each other to sustain a dynamic, interpersonal, increasingly intimate state of being continually saved. Obedient, maximum faith (doctrine nine) was the way (Colossians 1:19-23). Band members were leaders of class meetings. They disciplined others to grow strong in faith,

moving along the *via salutis* to maturity and holiness. In short, Wesley's Methodism was evangelism by discipleship. Hundreds of thousands of people were saved from sin and helped to holiness. In God's timing, many became entirely sanctified, profoundly loving God and others. In such a context, young William and Catherine were disciplined toward holiness. In time they would respond to God's calling and used in mighty ways to do immeasurably more to the Glory of God than they would ask or imagine (Eph. 3:20-21).

Over time, however, Wesley's structure of discipling dissipated. Bands disappeared not long after Wesley's death (1791) and well before William and Catherine were born (1829). Bands were not an option by the time the Booth's were fully engaged in ministry and mission. Nevertheless, a form of Wesley's societies remained in place in Booth's preaching stations. Preaching stations would become Army corps and lay pastor would become lay officers. With the absence of bands, the influence of class meetings weakened for lack of leadership. Both were disciplined as young people in class meetings. However, as a teenager, upon moving to London and a new Methodist church, Catherine had a disturbing experience with class meetings that lead to strong discontent with the class meeting.¹⁹ Later, she wrote:

There can be no doubt that the class meeting, as originally intended by Wesley, was an excellent arrangement, but the mere asking of empty questions as to how a person is getting on, and the leaving them to answer by the platitudes usual on such occasions, is to daub them with untempered mortar, and to lead them forth in the way of hollow profession and uncertainty.

After providing a long list of more pointed questions for use in a class meeting, Catherine went on to give straight forward castigation:

Such questions pressed home with the aid of the

Holy Spirit would compel confession, repentance and reconsecration productive of real results. But, of course questions of this kind presuppose that those who ask them are themselves living up to the standard which they set before others, and this alas, is too often the case!

The Booths' ministry went forward with several (not all) of Wesley's theology and practices. Like Wesley, they were preachers. Their ministry and movement in the early years deployed lay preachers and preaching stations. Like Wesley, the Booths' ministry steered away from becoming a church or denomination. Wesley's interest was to reform the church. His passion was growing saints through a structured, communal evangelism of discipleship. The theology guided a pragmatic ministry of disciplined people along the *via salutis* that facilitated particularly the sanctifying experience articulated in doctrines nine (sanctification) and ten (entire sanctification). Discipleship was not the path taken by William and Catherine.

Rescue the Perishing

The Booths' intense, passionate calling was to rescue the perishing, those he later called "the submerged tenth."²⁰ It was not the same calling as Wesley's, to make disciples and spread personal and social holiness across the land. Initially William and Catherine were called to preach the Gospel and save as many people before Christ returned. Later the Booths' mission would expand to also focus on social salvation, "War on Two Fronts," in serving suffering humanity.²¹ The priority for the Booths' was revivalistic evangelism. Their structure at first was designed to get people quickly saved, and then quickly get converts busy getting more people saved and staying saved (doctrine nine). Like Wesley, William was a pragmatic organizer and autocrat. In 1882, a well-organized Christian Mission became a more organized and energized militant movement. By a stroke of a pen, Booth became the Army's first General. The ministry's theology and practice had long before shifted in the direction

of American revivalism with a measure of reformed thinking concerning full salvation (doctrines nine and ten).

Without bands and class meetings, the engines of the Wesley's structure of discipleship were lost to the Booth's cause. The theology behind the structure remained but supported a different goal. Wesley's goal was to reform the church. He was an Anglican priest all his life, a pastoral man of the church. The Booths were not pastors, but preachers with a great sense of urgency to see great numbers of people saved and entirely sanctified. They saw the developmental process of growing saints by communal nurture was the task of the church. The Christian Mission/Salvation Army ministry and mission was not meant to be a church. The Booths were also motivated by a postmillennial theology that held that the Army was Christianity's best hope for winning the world for Jesus in their lifetime. And that would set the stage for Christ's return.

Transatlantic American Revivalism profoundly influenced a pivot in the Booths' theology and practice of a full salvation. At an early age, Catherine was well read. She was drawn to the writings and sermons of Charles Finney, American lawyer and preacher. By the age of eighteen, she was thinking theologically with a special interest in reformed subjects (election), Calvinistic, and Methodist emphases on Christian perfection. She tried living the disciplined Methodist life and followed discussions and debates over matters of reform movements within Methodism.²² Catherine and William were particularly attracted to and influenced by the theology, preaching, and practices of American revivalists James Caughey and Phoebe Palmer, Methodist evangelists who held evangelism campaigns in England and became personal friends of the Booths. At the same time, diminishing interest in Wesley's structure for discipleship was common within Methodism. Band meetings as originally conceived had disappeared before the Booths were born (1829) and class meetings by 1884 were on the way slowly giving way to public prayer meetings and Sunday schools.

The Booths continued to follow Wesley's playbook in ways that fit their vision and calling. They considered Christian Mission not a church, but "a manifestation of the historic Church from its

inception at Pentecost.”²³ Nevertheless, nurturing disciples was impractical in the context of the urgency of their calling. William and Catherine’s theology of holiness and practice pragmatically pivoted to follow revivalists friends down another path. General Paul Rader writes,²⁴

William and Catherine Booth came out of a Wesleyan heritage...William Booth was a convinced Wesleyan, as was his more theologically astute companion in arms, the redoubtable Catherine Booth. Their commitment to Wesleyanism was forged in the fires of the mid-century awakening in which they established themselves as effective evangelists. They preached for results. The adoption of the mercy seat was an expression of the conviction that God and would meet saving faith with soul-transforming power and do it now. Under the influence of American Revivalist and erstwhile trial lawyer, Charles G. Finney, they adopted a “verdict theology” that drove their hearers toward decision.

In short, the influence of American Revivalists occasioned a shift away from the Booths’ early disciples experiences in class meetings and Wesley’s discipling framework for saving souls. Revivalism has two abutments in the Salvation bridge from sin to entire holiness: that is getting saved from the uttermost of sin and getting saved to the uttermost of holiness. Both abutments invoked revivalist preaching a “verdict theology” whereby one expressed conviction at the mercy seat that God can and would meet one’s willing faith in a moment with transforming power. The theology of holiness was such that the by the conditions of consecration and one’s personal will, initial and entire sanctification could both be claimed in two short moments as complete. For the Booths, the mercy seat was a central, sacred space, a “focal point of saving and sanctifying grace.”²⁵ Their framework was ministry in both crisis-based salvation and sanctification by preaching for initial salvation from sin

followed quickly by communal prayer meetings for entire sanctification. This was a departure from Wesley's structure of evangelism by which William and Catherine were nurtured by peers and thereby were established in full salvation being saved to the uttermost.

Ministry, Mission, and The Army's Future

The mission of the Salvation Army today is essentially the same as it was in the Army's early days. Today it reads:

The Salvation Army message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and meet human needs in his name without discrimination.

In 1996, General Paul Rader stated to the newly gathered International Spiritual Life Commission (ISLC), "It is time to take more seriously issues related to our inner life." His call was for the ISLC to examine "cultivating and sustaining the spiritual life" of salvationists, and "ensure that we are not denying our people necessary means of grace and that their participation in the life of the Army through their corps affords them every available advantage in living the Christian life."²⁶ Following its discussions, the commission added to their report twelve calls encouraging Salvationists regarding their devotional lives and communal fellowship to "strengthen the movement's inner life evidenced in increased personal and corporate holiness" (i.e. Growing in Christlikeness).²⁷

In 1999, when John Gowans was elected General following General Rader, he was asked by a journalist to define The Salvation Army. His response was, "The Salvation Army was invented to save souls, grow saints, and serve suffering humanity." Growing saints was not in the Army's mission nor is it today. The mission today remains preaching the gospel and meeting human needs. Gowan's answer followed close to one particular recommendation of the ISLC report to the General, to strengthen the movement's inner life. In 2002, General John Larson followed General Gowans as he continued interest in the ISLC recommendation for strength-

ening the Army's inner life. What followed was the decision that "each territory have a Secretary for Spiritual Development with a remit to address the Army's spirituality in local contexts." That occasioned an expanded interest globally in Brengle Holiness Institutes, and national and territorial appointments of Ambassadors of Holiness. Glory to God! How those initiatives trickled down to the local level is yet to be documented.

Might there be a place in the Army's future for an experiment in Wesley's structure for peer discipleship, "watching over one another," not a program, but a scattering of seeds of peer discipleship? What may be possible through contemporary forms of bands and class meetings, and corps serving as societies at the local level, encouraging soldiers to seek together deeper spiritual living? Is it possible for Salvationists to go deep and then deeper? Is it possible to go forward in Army ministry and mission, strengthened in the faith from the old wells of our early Wesleyan origins of personal and communal holiness? Is it possible to rediscover our forgotten Wesleyan history of small group, peer-discipling practices (orthopraxy)? Is it possible to awake to the gift God gave to John (and Charles) Wesley that helped shape the lives of William and Catherine Booth, yet a gift left behind in the founding of a mighty Army? Is it possible to embrace personal and social holiness, "watching over each other" to grow a mightier Army?

O Boundless full Salvation...

Endnotes

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Mission Enabling as a Formative Spiritual Practice

Helen Cameron

For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

Luke 22:27 NRSV

Why this topic now?

We are in an era where, for mainstream Protestant denominations in the UK, mission is the overwhelming narrative guiding discussions about local church or congregational life. This has its origins in *Missio Dei* theology which has sparked extensive writing about God's mission to the world and the part that the local church might play in it. It also relates to denominational concerns about ageing and declining membership and threats to the financial viability of many local churches. A further spur is the sense that Christianity can no longer be absorbed from everyday culture but needs to be intentionally developed in its adherents.

The desire to see local churches develop a sense of their part in God's mission and the changes for their life that flow from that has led to a cadre of agencies and individuals tasked with helping local churches change.

I have been involved in training people for this type of role

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since 2000 when I joined in tutoring on the MA in Consultancy for Ministry and Mission. This course has equipped individuals to devise and implement helpful processes that support the work of the church. My direct involvement with the course ended in 2010 but I am still secretary of the AVEC Resources Trust which oversees the legacy of George Lovell and Catherine Widdicombe, the founders of the course.

From 2007, I became involved in a process within my own denomination to develop a model of the pastoral cycle that could be used across the world to help local churches and projects plan in a faith-based way. With help from Judith Thompson, this became faith-based facilitation which is used from primary health clinics in Papua New Guinea to local churches in Africa.

In 2016, the UKI Territory of The Salvation Army created mission enabling as a role. This led me to reflect upon my past practice in order to ask about the nature of this role. This conference paper spurred me into reflecting upon the spiritual nature of the role.

What is mission enabling?

I am using mission enabling to mean the process by which an outsider accompanies a local church through a process of examining its purpose and activities and aligning them with what it discerns to be God's mission in their place at this time. This may result in a "mission plan" that the church implements and reviews.

Mission enabling and planning have met frequent accusations of managerialism. The creation of rational linear plans with outcomes seems for some to contradict the organic nature of the local church as a community and the gracious work of God which cannot be contained in human plans.

Reflecting on the process of mission enabling in dialogue with John 13:1-20

Entering the Role

Verse 1—Emphasises Jesus' self-awareness. Mission enablers need the space to reflect upon their past practice and where the task

of mission enabling fits into their vocational journey.

Verse 2—We realise that Jesus is a guest in the household where this meal is taking place. He has removed his cloak and sandals. In my experience, many people enter the role of mission enabler because they have been successful leaders of local churches. It takes time to realise that you are no longer entering local churches as the host but as the guest. Relinquishing the former role as host is important if the mission enabler is not to end up in rivalrous relationships with the leaders of the local church she has come to support.

Verse 4—Once the mission enabler's status as guest has been established, they need to undertake further symbolic work to indicate that they are there to serve the church. Jesus symbolises his servant status by taking off his outer garment and appearing as servants did, dressed only in an inner garment and so prepared for physical work. For some local churches, their resistance to the idea of mission enabling is because they fear being sold something which they do not wish to own (e.g. the denomination's mission strategy) or they fear that the church will adopt managerialist values that they have experienced in other institutions they cherish (e.g. the university). Honesty about the external sponsorship of the role is important if the practitioner is to have any authenticity as a servant of the congregation.

Preparing for the role of mission enabler seems to involve the spiritual tasks of self-examination, relinquishing past successes, and assuming the role of a servant.

Training for the Role

Verse 4—Jesus tied a towel around his waist. He knew what was to hand that he could use. In the relinquishing involved in becoming a mission enabler, it is easy to overdo it and assume that nothing in one's existing repertoire can be taken forward. To quote from the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*—having been through all the turbulence that the universe can throw at you—“it is a cool dude who knows where his towel is.” An essential part of training for this role is to look at what is to hand by way of knowledge, skill, and spiritual formation.

Verse 5—Jesus pours water into a basin so he can wash feet. There are new sources that need turning in preparation for this role. A significant transition is realising that enabling is not about transmitting one’s own model of mission but helping others to develop their model. This is a spiritual task as it requires accepting that others may have different but valid understandings of mission. This is also an epistemological challenge where the practitioner has to decide whether mission is a formula that can be replicated or an interpretative task requiring readings of the church, its context, and the Christian tradition.

Serving

Verse 5—Jesus does the unexpected thing and starts to wash the disciples’ feet as a servant would. There can be a danger to see enabling as “doing what the customer wants” or “ensuring the customer is at their ease.” Enabling, if it is to help a local church change, must also involve challenge. Challenge can most readily come from readings of the context or the tradition which the congregation finds disruptive.

Verse 6—Jesus completes the disruptive act of washing with the restorative act of drying. He doesn’t surprise the disciples and leave them to sort out their own wet feet. He restores them to where they need to be guests with clean feet able to enjoy the meal. There is a difference between inspiring and enabling. The temptation to inspire and retreat is ever present for the enabler. Staying until there is sufficient restoration for the meal to proceed requires staying in role as enabler.

Verses 6-11—A vigorous debate with Peter takes place in which Peter seeks to interpret Jesus’ act as a cleansing ritual. Jesus refutes this by insisting that the act is there to demonstrate the pattern of future relationships between the disciples and challenge the assumptions about relative importance that arise in any human group.

Leaving the Role

Verse 12—After his act of service, Jesus resumes the role of guest. It is important that mission enablers don’t create a depen-

dency in the local church or rob it of its agency. The church needs to resume its role as host and treat them as an invited guest. Jesus symbolises this by putting his outer garment back on.

Naming What is Going on

A spiritual skill in mission enabling is helping the congregation to name things that they struggle to name. This is where the mission enabler as outsider helpfully offers themselves as a scapegoat in the hopes that the congregation having named difficult things will move to taking ownership of them.

Verses 12-17—In this discussion after Jesus resumes his seat, Jesus is able to name the power relations between the disciples and call them to account for their future practices. In most human groups naming power and how it is being exercised is difficult enough without naming how it is being abused. It is the spiritual self-awareness of the mission enabler that enables them to name power because they are aware of their servant status.

Verses 18-19—Jesus names the fact that betrayal is imminent and will come from within the group of disciples. It is almost impossible to use the word betrayal, but doubt, dissent, principled objections may continue in a local church long after the majority of people are in agreement and wanting to move on. Dealing with such situations of sustained dissent is a key skill for the mission enabler. It is so tempting not to name such difficulties and move on with the majority. However, I have done pieces of church consultancy where years of weaving and unpicking are presented to you and the situation has never moved on.

Verse 20—“Whoever accepts me, accepts the one who sent me.” The mission enabler needs to be clear about who has sent them. Their mandate comes not from themselves. Naming God can be seen as a normative move—stop disagreeing, this is what God wants. Discovering how God can be named is another act of spiritual discernment for the mission enabler.

Three emerging skills of mission enabling and the case for them being seen as spiritual practices:

Hermeneutically Savvy

A mission enabler is constantly reading the context, the congregation and their use of the Christian tradition. They are self-aware of their own readings and that these may not be shared with the church. They are not afraid of offering challenging interpretations that may provoke new understandings in the congregation. They are able to hold dissident readings throughout the process and not seek to tidy them away. They approach reading and interpretation in the spirit of the servant.

Practically Reflective

A mission enabler is self-aware. They have undertaken reflective work upon their own past practice and the place of enabling in their own vocational journey. They are able to identify what experiences or actions are likely to trigger reflection in the congregations they are working with. They can deal with failure and try again so that the work that is done is that of the congregation and not an agenda they end up imposing.

Pedagogically Apt

Mission enablers are at heart, adult educators. Their primary concern is the learning and the enabling into action of the people they are working with. They are therefore able to adapt their methods, language, and approach to best serve the situation. As with the scene in John 13, every discussion between disciples is an opportunity for learning through service.

Some reflective questions

If mission enabling is to find a home in The Salvation Army then there are some questions that deserve further reflection.

- What mission enabling practices and training are you aware of?

- What reading could inform this practice?
- What practices contribute to successful mission enabling?
- What barriers block successful mission enabling?

The posture of service is familiar in the diaconal work of The Salvation Army in the world. Mission enabling assumes that this posture is equally relevant in supporting corps in their missional journey.

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Bearing the Image of God

PSALM 67

Major Jim Betts

July 5, 1987. It was 33 years ago today that I reported to basic training in the United States Army. This is the day I left for Fort McClellan, Alabama. I wasn't super nervous. I had auditioned and been accepted to be in the United States Army band. What did I have to fear? As it turns out, the bandsmen go through the same basic training as every other soldier! In the end, I had a great deal to be nervous about! Within a few hours, I found myself asking what in the world had I done?!

I was 129 pounds soaking wet and I hadn't been exposed to too much of the world. I figured I had a pretty good feel for life and what others were like, but I quickly learned that I really had no clue. Due to the blessing of growing up in a godly, Salvation Army home, I knew the Lord. I even had the privilege of a fellow recruit asking me if I could teach him how to pray on our first day. He had seen me reading my Bible and as he put it, "now was as good a time as any to learn how to talk to God!" I knew Jesus, but I knew very little about the world He had created.

Being from Ohio, I had been taught the basics of survival. Basically, anyone from Michigan or Pittsburgh was suspect, and that the United States of America was the greatest country in the history of the world. Much of my identity was wrapped up in who I was based on where I was born. I was an American, Salvationist, Buckeyes, Browns, Indians and Cavs fan, and I was proud of it!

If for any reason, you came from outside those camps, I wasn't entirely sure about you.

In almost no time at all, my limited worldview was turned on its head. As it turned out, I met some rather decent folks from places like Ann Arbor and even Western Pennsylvania! I even found myself worshipping without a brass band and God was still present!

This was also the first season in my life where I had determined to read through the entire Bible. God used this time to help me make my faith my own, not just that faith which was passed down from my parents. Right out of the gate, I was reading in Genesis about how mankind was made in God's very image. I guess I knew that with my mind, but now it was beginning to sink into my heart. Even those from outside the various tribes to which I belonged were made in his image. I was living and serving with men and women who could not have been more different from myself and I have to admit, I had a hard time wrapping my head around it all. I am not sure I always wanted to accept that they, too, were created in His image.

Passages like Psalm 67 helped me as I wrestled with my new reality. Meditate with me as I read these seven simple verses.

- 1 May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face shine on us—
- 2 so that your ways may be known on earth,
your salvation among all nations.
- 3 May the peoples praise you, God;
may all the peoples praise you.
- 4 May the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you rule the peoples with equity
and guide the nations of the earth.
- 5 May the peoples praise you, God;
may all the peoples praise you.
- 6 The land yields its harvest;
God, our God, blesses us.
- 7 May God bless us still,
so that all the ends of the earth will fear him.

This Psalm may consist only of seven verses, but the reality is that there are countless eternal truths contained in them. Beginning in verse one, we see the Psalmist opening with a request that God be gracious. He recognized His need for God's mercy, and He asks for that before He goes any further. In these days of global chaos, there is a great deal of yelling and finger pointing. We would be wise to begin our own journey at a place of reflection and repentance. We all come with our own fallenness. We will find there a God of grace and of mercy.

The rest of that verse gets back to being created in His image. The Psalmist prays, "Make your face shine on us." I've sung those words a thousand times, and yet I'm not sure I ever stopped to think about what they mean. My life should be a reflection of Him. We are created in His image, but unless our life reflects Him, others don't see that image. It's when they do see Him through us that they are drawn to Him.

We see in this passage that the Psalmist isn't declaring the existence of nations or tribes to be wrong. Just the opposite is true. God designed that mankind would need organization and governance. In reality, verse two speaks of His desire for those nations to know of His salvation. And He doesn't mean just certain, special nations. This was a Psalmist who was part of the chosen people of God and yet He was inspired to write of and celebrate God's desire to bless all nations! He desires that all nations be glad and sing for joy and that even how they rule will be just and will be a reflection of who He is. Individually we are created in His image and corporately when we allow Him to shape our community, it too will be created in His image. We know this will be true in the Kingdom to come, but His Word implores us to seek that world even here on earth.

While in 2020 the world seems to be spiraling out of control, we are called to see again, in Christ, the hope of the world. John 1 reminds us that it was through Christ that we have all been created, not just as random creations or even as grand works of art, but in the very image of God. When you are feeling rejected by the world, or unworthy in any way, may you be reminded that you are the image bearer of God Himself. Henri Nouwen reminds us that

God says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love. This is a fundamental truth of your identity whether you feel it or not."

And while the complete essence of God's identity is present in each individual person, like the essence of the ocean is present even in a single drop, it isn't until those countless drops come together that the full measure of the ocean is seen and its full power is unleashed. The same is true of mankind. Every single person who has ever lived bears the image of God and contains His full essence and yet to see the full measure of who God is, and to experience His full power to redeem this world, requires all of us. To see the full measure of God requires us to see both men and women, old and young, strong and weak, rich and poor, black and white, and every shade, language, and culture in between. To remove any one person from the picture is to remove a unique perspective of who He has revealed Himself to be!

And more than that, even how we live in community, must bear the image of our creator. It was Ron Sider who once said that,

God's grand strategy of redemption does not focus on redeeming isolated individuals; it centers on the creation of a new people, a new community, a new social order that begins to live now the way the Creator intended.

The answers to the troubles of this world are found not in the ways of this fallen world, but in the redemptive presence of the One who created all that it contains. His ways involve each of us starting with a recognition of our own fallenness and our need of a Savior. But His ways aren't limited to a personal cleansed heart. If our salvation merely saves our soul, what good is that to the rest of the world? Our restoration must lead to the restoration of the community within which He has placed each of us. We must learn to truly and actively love our brother and sister as fellow image bearers of God. It is particularly important for us to love those who are most different from ourselves because they reveal to us more of who God is.

We also must begin to understand that the way we come together in community must also bear the image of God. He is a God of love, peace, and justice. He seeks that each of us would work for the betterment of those around us. While the world seeks to tear down, we must seek to lift up. While the world seeks to cancel, we must seek to restore. While the world seeks to divide, we must seek the peace and unity that only He can provide.

On a July 4th weekend where we pause to celebrate our identity as Americans, let us not think that this national identity somehow supersedes our identity as citizens of the Kingdom of God. We can be American, and we can be excited about that and celebrate it, but when all is said and done, our identity as Kingdom-people, created by and in the image of Jesus Himself, must be our highest goal and reason for celebration. We are an Army that spans the globe. Let us do all we can to use every advantage made available to us, to pray that God would allow His face to shine on us, that others will be drawn to Him. May Jesus Christ be praised!

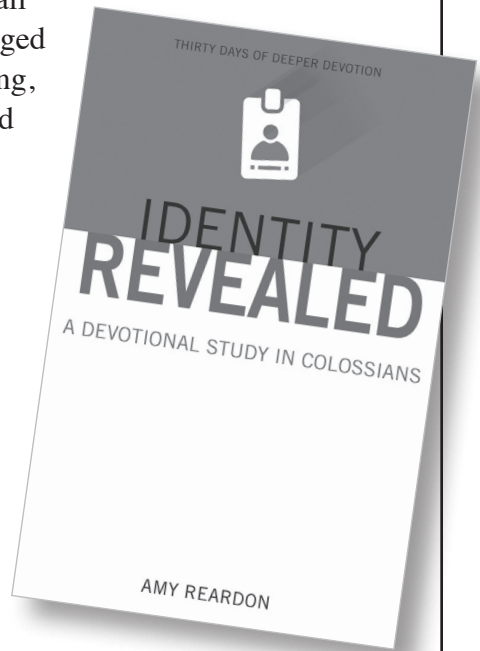
And now I invite you to receive this benediction:

The Lord said to Moses, “Tell Aaron and his sons, This is how you are to bless the Israelites. He said to them, and I say to you: *“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.”*

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I Am the True Vine

JOHN 15:1-16

Major JongWoo Kim

Every year, millions of people make New Year's resolutions, hoping to spark positive change. I'm sure you all have made New Year's resolutions. The most common resolutions are to exercise more, lose weight, get organized, learn a new skill, save more money, and spend less money, spend more time with family and friends, and read more.

But these lists are recurring themes and almost identical each year. In a recent report, more than 90% of those who set a New Year's resolution failed within a month. Many people begin a new year with great excitement and enthusiasm but sooner or later it diminishes slowly.

This is not only true of a New Year's resolution but in other areas of life as well. For example, think about marriage. After the honeymoon period is over, we realize that marriage is not only to enjoy, but to endure, to sustain, and to remain. There must be a transition from romance to commitment. I think this is key to a successful marriage.

We are still in an uncharted season and unusual year than before. People feel tiredness in social distancing in many areas including their spiritual life. Many people have begun to lose their sustainability in their spiritual life. How can we sustain our relationship with God? Our hearts should long for an intimate relationship with God. In Psalm 63:1, David prays, "O God, you are my God; earnestly I

seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.” David earnestly seeks God. His soul thirsts for God. There is desperation. There is urgency.

Do we desire God in this manner? Is there any part of David’s cry that you recognize in your heart? That’s why Jesus invites us to abide.

The Scripture reading is a part of Jesus’s last teachings to the disciples before his death. Jesus gives this teaching during the last supper with the disciples. Just before the passage in the scripture reading, Jesus predicts his betrayal by Judas Iscariot, gives the disciples a new commandment, predicts Peter’s denial three times, tells them that he is the way to the father, and promises that the Holy Spirit will be with them.

Then to make his teaching clear and concrete, he uses the metaphor of a grapevine and its fruit to teach the disciples how to live a fruitful life. In John’s Gospel, Jesus tried to explain who he was with these seven “I am” statements:

I am the Bread of Life
I am the light of the world
I am the gate
I am the good shepherd
I am the Resurrection and the Life
I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life
I am the true vine.

However, this last “I am” statement is indeed different from the others because Jesus not only said who he was, but also told his disciples who they are. He gives us our true identity and explains how we should live.

Jesus illustrates an abiding relationship with a parallel relationship of a vine and a branch. Jesus said, we are the branches attached to the vine. As the true vine, Jesus is the source of life and strength. Branches cannot survive alone but need to belong entirely to the vine, and completely depend on the vine for nourishment, support, strength, and vitality.

I still remember, from a long time ago, when my Sunday school

teacher explained who a true Christian was. She said that the word “Christian” is a combined word of “Christ” and “ian.” Think of the “ian” in this way: The “I” stands for “I”, “a” stands for “am”, and the “n” stands for “nothing”. So “ian” stands for “I am nothing.” But Christ is everything. So a Christian is a person who confesses that “Christ is everything and I am nothing.” From verse four, Jesus tells us what we are to do as branches in Him. “Abide or remain in me.” He uses this word eleven times in this chapter. Jesus has emphasized that word to us.

Abiding in Christ is not a feeling or a belief, but something we do. What does it mean for us to abide in Jesus as branches in the vine? Three things could be implied: connection, dependence, and continuance.

First of all, abiding in Jesus means having a life-giving connection to him, being united to Jesus. This is a mutual connection. Verse four says, “Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine.” If there is no connection to the vine, there is no life, no fruit in the branch.

But abiding also implies dependence, or to rely on Jesus. The branch is dependent on the vine, but the vine is not dependent on the branch. Without the vine, the branch is useless, lifeless, and powerless. We are completely dependent upon Jesus for everything. Verse five says, “apart from me you can do nothing.”

Abiding also involves continuance and remaining in Jesus. This simply means that we keep on trusting and depending, and that we never stop believing. To abide in Jesus is to persevere in Jesus and his teaching. This is what Jesus is talking about in John 8:31 and 32: “If you hold [abide]to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” Jesus said that if someone abides in him, his love, and his word, this proves that he or she is his disciple.

So to abide in Christ is a Christian’s responsibility, and when we abide in Jesus, we will experience three blessings. Firstly, abiding makes it possible to listen to God, to hear and ask to be in alignment with His heart, and our prayers will be answered. Verse 7 states, “If you remain in me, and my words remain in you, ask

whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”

Secondly, abiding in Christ leads us to bear spiritual fruit, and the fruit brings glory to the Father, and this demonstrates our discipleship. Verse 8 states, “This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.” The passage not only speaks of bearing fruit, but of bearing “more fruit” in verse two, and “much fruit” in verse eight. We will have plentiful fruit in Christ.

Furthermore, we will have full joy in Christ. Verse 11 states, “my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.” The world does offer us a certain type of joy. But the joy of the world is fleeting, temporary, and incomplete. It does not compare with the joy found in an intimate connection with Jesus. Happiness is momentary and can be due to current circumstances. However, the joy Jesus gives is a different kind of joy and is eternal. Romans 15:13 states, “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Jesus not only wants us to have joy, He wants us to have All and Full joy.

Abiding in Jesus doesn’t require advancing beyond the gospel to something else. It doesn’t demand a mystical experience. It just means keeping the words of Jesus in our hearts and minds so that they are renewing and reviving us, shaping and sanctifying us, filling and forming us. We abide in Jesus by letting his words abide in us, and by abiding in his love. And it means keeping ourselves in his infinite, enduring, sin-bearing, and life-giving love. One good example of a person abiding was Enoch in Genesis. Genesis 5:24 states that, “Enoch walked faithfully with God.” Enoch accompanied God faithfully. This would require Enoch to keep pace with God the Father.

Can you imagine keeping pace with God spiritually? It is only possible that Enoch and God had regular, frequent conversations and relationship. The interaction between Enoch and God was not religious, ritual, and routine. What they had was a genuine relationship. This is only possible when Enoch loved God and abided in him. So God loved Enoch so much and tells us what happened to

him in the second half of the verse. *“Then he was no more, because God took him away” (Gen. 5:24b)*. Enoch never had to taste the bitterness of death. This is a beautiful depiction of what abiding in Christ and being in a relationship with God looks like.

We are still in an uncharted season, but we can walk with Jesus through our deepest valleys. His invitation to his disciples, “abide in me,” still remains open for you and me. Just like Enoch, we have the privilege and honor of walking in step with our Lord.

Even though we are experiencing unknown situations, if we stay connected to the true vine, God will keep us safe, clean us, heal us, and be able to bear more and much fruit. May the Holy Spirit spark in us a want for more of Christ. May we long with holy urgency to know the depths and riches of the love of Christ, grasped through abiding in Christ.

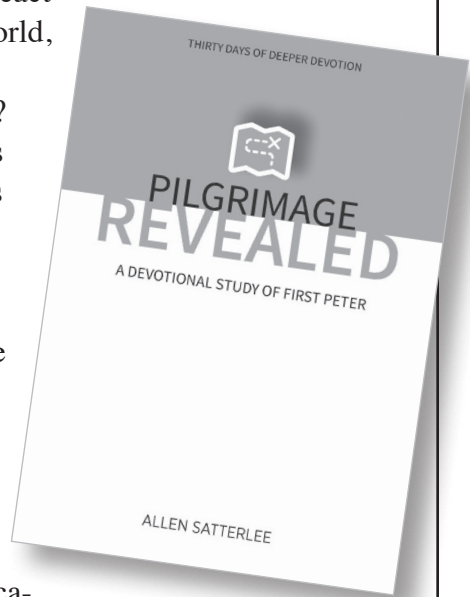
Receive the benediction from Ephesians 3:17-19:

Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the LORD’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Pilgrimage Revealed

By Allen Satterlee

How should the believer react to and behave in a hostile world, especially when things are becoming darker by the day? Peter addressed the concerns of first-generation Christians while his new life in Christ was tempered by the darkening clouds of persecution. When urging them to engage in the world in which they lived, he also reminded them that because of their relationship with Christ, their true citizenship was beyond any national identification. They were not stuck in circumstances, but pilgrims moving toward a homeland. This in-depth study of First Peter defines the Christian life amid the strife and what it means to be pilgrims moving toward a new world.



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Jesus Calls Us

MARK 1:16-20

Major Daniel Alverio

Introduction

There is something that we as Hispanics have in common and that is that oftentimes, we have had to separate ourselves from all of those things that were common to us, those things that brought comfort to us from our Homeland, wherever that may be. For me, it was Puerto Rico, and I remember as a young child having the nucleus of family—my cousins, my uncles, and even my grandparents—all lived just a few steps away from us.

I remember the culture, the food, and the fellowship that was often shared during the holiday season. No matter where we went in our community, people recognized that we were Nieves' kids. The simplicity of my childhood could be accredited to the similarity of being in a common culture! But on December 19 of 1989, this all came to an end as we got on a plane and flew to a new city, the city of Philadelphia. Language was not the same, culture had completely been turned upside down, and the things that had become customary were now only memories. I remember my cousin, Ruben, even trying to teach me the facts about American football and the Philadelphia Eagles. I also remember my first encounter with the English language outside from the lessons in elementary school in Puerto Rico. It was in an elementary school in Philadelphia where I was approached by a security guard who was asking me what I was

doing in the hallway, and I quickly learned that my broken English was just not going to be enough to get me through school.

The truth is that during these days, the song by Noel Estrada “En Mi Viejo San Juan” become a reality in my life. In particular, the first two stanzas which say:

En mi viejo San Juan
Cuantos sueños forjé
En mis noches de infancia
Mi primera ilusión
I mis cuitas de amor
Son recuerdos del alma

Una tarde me fui
hacia extraña nación (the letter a was removed)
Pues lo quiso el destino
Pero mi corazón
Se quedo frente al mar
En mi viejo San Juan

I am fully aware that for us as Hispanics, this is real. Having to leave our culture and those things that we grew up with behind in order to encounter a new place and new opportunities, perhaps to relocate with family whom we have lost contact with, is a very difficult reality that we usually can relate with. This is why I believe when we read Mark 1:16-20, we can empathize with what the new disciples were experiencing. The scripture brings us to the Sea of Galilee where Jesus is calling the first disciples to ministry. I want to suggest that we take a couple of moments and dig into this call to follow.

According to the *Teacher's Commentary*, there was no room in the early Christianity for myth or rumors. The story of Jesus was not based on “he said she said” but in fact, it was based on eyewitness accounts, and therefore we understand that these eyewitnesses were very instrumental in the spreading of the gospel. We understand that the things that Jesus said and the miracles that were performed during his time were to be the inspiration of the Church for many years to come. Therefore the burden of those who were to

share the message was something that God did not take lightly.

I would like to just deal with three things in particular. The first is that Jesus was calling them to repent and what did this repentance mean in particular to them as fishermen? The second point that I would like to discuss is the idea that Jesus was calling them to also reuse those things that they have become familiar with for the spreading of the gospel. And lastly, I just want to discuss the idea that Jesus was calling them to now retell the accounts they encounter. Let us begin by taking a look at how Jesus was calling them to repent and what this meant to these four fishermen.

I. A Call to Repent

What we learned from just a few verses prior to where we find ourselves reading was that in fact Jesus had made the call to repent very clear to those who were listening along the Sea of Galilee. We find that the calling of the four disciples as they were fishing happens just after he summarized this idea of repentance. This brings about an understanding that what Mark was in fact referring to was that the understanding of repentance means the breaking away from the old way of life. If the believer is going to in fact repent, he is to turn away from the old way of life and follow Jesus in this new way. It meant a personal commitment to a new culture, a new approach to social interaction, one which was unlike anything they all had been accustomed to.

According to Mark 1:16, we see that Mark refers to them as fishermen. It actually says that “fishing was their regular work.” You see this was their family trade. That is what they had become accustomed to. This was their first nature, what came natural to them. Perhaps they found commonality in fishing—they knew the waters, they knew the techniques, they knew the culture, just like you and I have things that are culturally normal to us. Perhaps even they are the things that we find comfort in because our parents did them and their parents did them and as a community, we find that they are normal.

The disciples were living their normal life. But Jesus was calling them out of that life; he was calling them to a life of surrender

of the normal, to a life of transformation. In verses 17 and 18, the words “come follow me” which literally would be translated as “come after me,” in fact was the technical expression that meant “go behind me as a disciple.” Unlike a Rabbi, whose pupils sought him out, Jesus took the initiative to call out his followers. Jesus was calling them to come and study and do as He would do for the time He had on this earth.

But let me be clear—Jesus was not calling them to abandon the things they had learned, in fact what we find is that often Jesus was able to use the talents and gifts from their lives as fisherman for the expanding of the gospel. Let us take a look and see how Jesus was calling the disciples to reuse those gifts and talents that they as fishermen possess.

II. The Call to Reuse our Gifts and Talents

According to the *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, the Sea of Galilee is a warm water lake about 7 miles wide, 30 miles long, and 685 feet below sea level. We’ve come to the understanding that in fact it was very important to the fishing industry of the time of Jesus Christ. We also know that it was geographically central to the ministry of Jesus Christ in particular to the Galileans.

In verse 16, we find that Jesus encounters Simon and Andrew, Simon’s brother. They were each throwing nets into the lake for fishing. I love that the *Bible Knowledge Commentary* tells us that the nets were actually 10 to 15 feet in diameter. We know that they were big nets, they were nets that were used by professional people and not people who were unaccustomed to fishing. This was their family trade. This was what they did, and they did it well. But Jesus uses their expertise for the betterment of the gospel. This call includes Jesus promise that “I will make you to become Fishers of men.” He had caught them for his Kingdom. Now he would equip them to share his task to become fishers who catch men.

One of the greatest things that we notice about Jesus is that he does not forget those things, those talents that we possess from our culture or from our more professional lives. In Matthew 17:24-27, we read,

After Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma temple tax came to Peter and asked, “Doesn’t your teacher pay the temple tax?” “Yes, he does,” he replied. When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak. “What do you think, Simon?” he asked. “From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes—from their own children or from others?” “From others,” Peter answered. “Then the children are exempt,” Jesus said to him. “But so that we may not cause offense, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours.”

This is just amazing. Jesus is using Peter’s ability to fish to provide the taxes for them. Jesus is using his gifts in order to provide for what needed to be done in order for the gospel to continually be spread.

In Luke 5:1-39, we read on one occasion while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, and he saw two boats, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon’s, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” And Simon answered, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.”

Yet another beautiful example of how Jesus is using the gifts and talents of the disciples for the ministering of the gospel for the gathering of souls who needed to hear this most important message. But the amazing things about the calling of Jesus is that it is not only to discipleship. It is evident from this particular scripture that we are also called to apostleship. Let us take a look at this idea of retelling the message that we have heard.

III. A Call to Retell

According to Vernon McGee, there are three separate and distinct calls made to the disciples. The first one which we find in John 1:35-51 is when there was more of a laid-back call—come and “hang out”—in other words very informal, very casual. We gain from the conversation that they wanted to know where he lived, perhaps very interested in knowing who he really was.

The second call is the one we find here in the first chapter of Mark verses 16 through 20. Here we find him walking along the Sea of Galilee and encountering the disciples fishing and he calls them to discipleship. They are to be fishers of men. However, when we look at Luke 5:1-11, we recognize that they again went back to fishing.

The third call we find in Mark 3, Matthew 10, and Luke 6, and it is a call to apostleship. They had gone back to fishing, and Simon Peter said to him, “depart from me for I am a sinful man.” He was not too happy with himself at this point. Simon was second guessing the idea of apostleship or the burden of apostleship. In fact, he perhaps was saying “why would you choose me? I have failed you. Go and find somebody else.” But the Lord didn’t give up on them. The Lord came to them a third time with the call to apostleship.

A disciple is a student, one who learns from a teacher. An apostle is sent to deliver those teachings to others. Apostle means messenger, he who is sent. An apostle is sent to deliver or spread those teachings to others.

It was very evident from the call to these disciples that they were to be disciples in preparation for a time in which the burden of sharing the gospel will fall on them. This time of learning, this time of walking away from the common things of life, was a preparation for the tough times that would come ahead in which persecution would overwhelm the early Church. These apostles would bring about the Church that we are today. They would carry the burden of the gospel and in fact become Fishers of men.

IV. Application

Maybe God has been speaking to you about his calling in your life. Maybe you have not been living in accordance with the idea

or the understanding of repentance, putting off the old and putting on the new, and God has been speaking to you in challenging you to let go of those things that are holding you back.

Maybe you've been going to church for a very long time and you have been interested in what God has to say, and week after week you listen to the word and maybe God is now calling you to be the voice and feet of Jesus to those around you. God doesn't call an army of just listeners. God didn't call the disciples to just hear the words of Jesus. He called them to leave their nets and follow him, to leave the comfort of home and do the things that were going to bring challenges to their lives. I urge you don't be like Simon who after having failed, gave excuses as to why he should not be the one to bring the message to the lost. Instead ask God for his strength and his wisdom, accept the call to be an apostle of Jesus Christ and bring the message to the lost in your home, in your community, at school, or wherever he may lead you.

Jesús Nos Llama

MARCOS 1:16-20

Introducción

Hay algo que muchos hispanos tenemos en común, y es que muchas veces hemos tenido que separarnos de todas esas cosas que eran comunes para nosotros, aquellas cosas que nos traían consuelo desde nuestra patria, cualquiera que sea ella. Para mí era Puerto Rico, y recuerdo de pequeño que tenía el núcleo de familia, mis primos, mis tíos e incluso mis abuelos, todos viviendo a unos pasos de nosotros.

Recuerdo la cultura, la comida y el camaradería que a menudo que compartíamos durante la temporadas de fiestas. No importa a dónde fuéramos en nuestra comunidad, la gente reconocía que éramos los niños de Nieves. La sencillez de mi infancia puede acreditarse a la similitud de estar en una cultura común. Pero el 19 de diciembre de 1989, todo esto llegó a su fin cuando nos subimos a un avión y volamos a una nueva ciudad, Filadelfia. El idioma no era el mismo, la cultura había cambiado por completo y las cosas que se habían vuelto habituales ahora eran solo recuerdos. Recuerdo que mi primo Rubén incluso trató de enseñarme sobre el fútbol americano y las Águilas de Filadelfia. También recuerdo mi primer encuentro con el idioma inglés, fuera de las lecciones en la escuela primaria en Puerto Rico. Fue en una escuela primaria en Filadelfia donde se me acercó un guardia de seguridad para preguntarme qué estaba haciendo en el pasillo. Rápidamente me di cuenta de que mi inglés roto no iba a ser suficiente para ayudarme en mi vida escolar.

La verdad es que durante estos días, la canción de Noel Estrada,

“En Mi Viejo San Juan” 1, se hizo realidad en mi vida. En particular las dos primeras estrofas que dicen:

En mi viejo San Juan
Cuántos sueños forjé
En mis noches de infancia
Mi primera ilusión
I mis cuitas de amor
Son recuerdos del alma

Una tarde me fui
Hacia extraña nación
Pues lo quiso el destino
Pero mi corazón
Se quedó frente al mar
En mi viejo San Juan

Estoy convencido de que para nosotros, como hispanos, esto es real. Dejar atrás nuestra cultura y aquellas cosas con las que crecimos para buscar un nuevo lugar y nuevas oportunidades, o quizás para reubicarnos con una familia con la que hemos perdido el contacto, es una realidad muy difícil en la cual generalmente nos podemos identificar. Por eso creo que cuando leemos el capítulo uno de Marcos, versículos 16 al 20, podemos empatizar con lo que los nuevos discípulos estaban experimentando. Esta escritura nos lleva al mar de Galilea donde Jesús está llamando a los primeros discípulos al ministerio. Los invito a que profundicen conmigo en este llamado a seguir.

Según el *Comentario Bíblico del Maestro*, en el cristianismo primitivo no había lugar para mitos o rumores ². La historia de Jesús no se basó en “él dijo que ella dijo”, sino que de hecho se basó en el relato de testigos oculares, y por lo tanto, entendemos que estos testigo oculares fueron muy instrumental en la difusión del evangelio. Entendemos que las cosas que Jesús dijo y los milagros que se realizaron durante su tiempo iban a servir de inspiración en la iglesia por muchos años. Por lo tanto, la carga

de aquellos que iban a compartir el mensaje era algo que Dios no tomó a la ligera.

En este estudio, me gustaría discutir tres cosas en particular. La primera es que Jesús los estaba llamando al arrepentimiento y el significado de este arrepentimiento en particular para ellos como pescadores. El segundo punto que me gustaría discutir, es la idea de que Jesús los estaba llamando a reutilizar aquellas cosas que eran familiares para difundir el evangelio. Y por último, quiero discutir la idea de que Jesús los estaba llamando para que recontaran sus experiencias. Comencemos por ver cómo Jesús los estaba llamando al arrepentimiento y lo que esto significaba para estos cuatro pescadores.

I. Un llamado al arrepentimiento.

Lo que aprendemos de los versículos antes de donde nos encontramos leyendo en este estudio, es que, de hecho, Jesús había hecho un llamado al arrepentimiento muy claro a aquellos que estaban escuchando alrededor del Mar de Galilea. Vemos que el llamado de los cuatro discípulos mientras estaba pescando ocurre justo después de que él resumió esta idea de arrepentimiento. Esto hace ver que de hecho a lo que Marcos se refería como la comprensión del arrepentimiento es el romper con la antigua forma de vida. Si el creyente se va a arrepentir de verdad, debe apartarse de la antigua forma de vida y seguir a Jesús de esta nueva forma. Significaba un compromiso personal a una nueva cultura, a un nuevo enfoque en sus interacciones personales, diferente a los que ellos estaban acostumbrados.

Según Marcos capítulo 1 versículo 16, vemos que Marcos se refiere a ellos como pescadores, en realidad dice que “la pesca era su trabajo regular”. Así que este era su oficio familiar, era a lo que estaban acostumbrados, lo que les resultaba natural. Quizás encontraron puntos en común en la pesca, conocían las aguas, conocían las técnicas, conocían la cultura.

Tú y yo tenemos cosas que son culturalmente normales para nosotros, cosas en las que nos sentimos cómodos porque nuestros padres las hicieron y sus padres las hicieron y, como comunidad,

descubrimos que son normales. Los discípulos también estaban viviendo su vida normal. Pero Jesús los estaba llamando a renunciar a esa vida; los estaba llamando a una vida de entrega, a una vida de transformación. En los versículos 17 y 18 las palabras “ven y sígueme” que literalmente se traducen “ven detrás de mí”, en realidad eran una expresión técnica que significaban “ve detrás de mí como discípulo”. A diferencia de un rabino, cuyo alumno lo buscaba, Jesús tomó la iniciativa de llamar a sus seguidores. Jesús los estaba llamando a venir y estudiar y hacer lo que Él haría durante el tiempo que tenía en esta tierra.

Pero permítanme aclarar que Jesús no los estaba llamando a abandonar las cosas que habían aprendido, de hecho, lo que encontramos es que Jesús muchas veces usó los talentos y dones de sus vidas como pescador para la expansión del evangelio. Veamos cómo Jesús estaba llamando a los discípulos a reutilizar esos dones y talentos que ellos poseían como pescadores.

II. El llamado a reutilizar nuestros dones y talentos

Según el *Comentario del Conocimiento Bíblico*, el mar de Galilea es un lago de agua cálida de aproximadamente siete millas de ancho, 30 millas de largo y 685 pies bajo el nivel del mar³. Sabemos que el mar de Galilea era muy importante para la industria pesquera de la época de Jesucristo. También sabemos que geográficamente era central para el ministerio de Jesucristo, en particular para los galileos.

En el versículo 16 leemos que Jesús se encuentra con Simón y Andrés, su hermano, y cada uno de ellos estaba tirando redes al lago para pescar. Me encanta que el *Comentario del Conocimiento Bíblico* nos dice que las redes tenían de 10 a 15 pies de diámetro³. Esto significa que eran grandes redes, redes usadas por pescadores profesionales, y no por personas que no estaban acostumbradas a la pesca. Este era su oficio de familia; esto era lo que hacían y lo hacían bien. Pero Jesús usa su pericia para el mejoramiento del evangelio, porque este llamado incluye la promesa de Jesús, “los haré pescadores de hombres”. Los había atrapado para su reino y ahora los equiparía para convertirse en pescadores que atrapan a hombres.

Una de las cosas más importantes que notamos en Jesús es que no olvida los talentos que poseemos ya sea en nuestra cultura o en nuestra vida profesional. En Mateo 17: 24 al 27 leemos:

“Cuando Jesús y sus discípulos llegaron a Capernaúm, los que cobraban el impuesto del templo se acercaron a Pedro y le preguntaron: ¿Su maestro no paga el impuesto del templo? Sí, lo paga —respondió Pedro. Al entrar Pedro en la casa, se adelantó Jesús a preguntarle: ¿Tú qué opinas, Simón? Los reyes de la tierra, ¿a quiénes cobran tributos e impuestos: a los suyos o a los demás? A los demás —contestó Pedro. Entonces los suyos están exentos —le dijo Jesús. Pero, para no escandalizar a esta gente, vete al lago y echa el anzuelo. Saca el primer pez que pique; ábrele la boca y encontrarás una moneda. Tómala y dásela a ellos por mi impuesto y por el tuyo”⁴.

Es asombroso ver que Jesús está usando la habilidad de Pedro como pescador para pagar los impuestos. Jesús está usando sus dones para proveer lo necesario para que el evangelio continúe difundiéndose.

En Lucas capítulo 5, versículos uno al 39, leemos que en una ocasión mientras la multitud lo apretujaba para escuchar la palabra de Dios, Jesús estaba de pie junto al lago de Genesaret y vio dos botes vacíos porque los pescadores habían ido a lavar las redes. Subiendo a una de las barcas, la de Simón, le pidió que alejara un poco de la costa. Entonces se sentó y enseñó en la gente desde el bote. Cuando terminó de hablar, le dijo a Simón: “Lleva la barca hacia aguas más profundas, y echen allí las redes para pescar”⁴. Y Simón respondió: “Maestro, hemos estado trabajando duro toda la noche y no hemos pescado nada. Pero, como tú me lo mandas, echaré las redes”⁴.

Este es otro hermoso ejemplo de cómo Jesús está usando los dones y talentos de los discípulos para ministrar el evangelio y para reunir a las almas que necesitaban escuchar este mensaje tan

importante. Pero lo asombroso del llamado de Jesús es que no es solo al discipulado. Es evidente en esta escritura en particular, que también se nos llama al apostolado. Veamos esta idea de recontar el mensaje que hemos escuchado.

III. El Llamado a Recontar el Mensaje

Según Vernon McGee, hay tres llamados separados y distintos que Jesús hace a los discípulos. El primero lo encontramos en Juan 1: 35 al 51, y llegamos a entender que es un llamado más relajado, “ven y pasa el rato”, en otras palabras, muy informal, muy casual. De esa conversación aprendemos que los futuros discípulos querían saber dónde vivía, quizás muy interesados en saber quién era realmente.

El segundo llamado es el que encontramos aquí en el primer capítulo y los versículos 16 al 20 de Marcos. Aquí Jesús está caminando por el mar de Galilea y al encontrar a los discípulos pescando, los llama al discipulado. Los llama a ser pescadores de hombres. Sin embargo, cuando nosotros leemos Lucas capítulo 5 versículos 1 al 11, descubrimos que los discípulos habían vuelto a la pesca.

El tercer llamado lo encontramos en Marcos capítulo 3, Mateo capítulo 10 y Lucas capítulo 5, y es un llamado a apostolado. Después de regresar a la pesca, Simón Pedro le dijo a Jesús, “¡Apártate de mí, Señor; soy un pecador!”⁴. Simón no estaba muy contento consigo mismo en este punto, y estaba dudando de la idea del apostolado o la carga del apostolado. Tal vez estaba pensando “¿Por qué me elegiste a mí? Te he fallado. Busca a otra persona”. Pero el Señor no se rindió con ellos, el vino a ellos por tercera vez con el llamado al apostolado.

Un discípulo es un estudiante que aprende de un maestro. Un apóstol es enviado a llevar esas enseñanzas a otros. Apóstol significa mensajero; el que es enviado. Un apóstol es enviado a entregar o difundir esas enseñanzas a otros.

Fue muy evidente por el llamado a estos discípulos que ellos iban a ser discípulos en preparación para un tiempo en el que la carga de compartir el evangelio recaería sobre ellos. Este tiempo de aprendizaje, este tiempo de alejarse de las cosas comunes de la

vida, fue una preparación para los tiempos difíciles que vendrían en los que la persecución abrumaría a la iglesia primitiva. Estos apóstoles fundarían la iglesia que somos hoy. Llevarían la carga del evangelio y de hecho se convertirían en pescadores de hombres.

IV. Conclusión

Quizás durante tu encuentro con Dios aquí, el te ha estado hablando sobre su llamado en tu vida. Tal vez no has estado viviendo de acuerdo con la idea o la comprensión del arrepentimiento que se desprende de lo viejo y se entrega a lo nuevo, y Dios te esta desafiando a dejar esas cosas que te están reteniendo.

Tal vez has estado yendo a la iglesia por mucho tiempo y te ha interesado lo que Dios tiene que decir, y semana tras semana escuchas la palabra y tal vez Dios ahora te está llamando a ser la voz y los pies de Jesús para aquellos alrededor tuyo. Dios no llama a un ejército de oyentes justos, Dios no llamó a los discípulos solo para escuchar las palabras de Jesús, los llamó a dejar sus redes y seguirlo; a dejar la comodidad del hogar y hacer cosas que eran desafíos en su vida. Les insisto a no ser como Simón, quien después de haber fallado, dio excusas de por qué no debería ser él quien lleve el mensaje a los perdidos. Sino pídale a Dios su fuerza y sabiduría, acepte el llamado a ser un apóstol de Jesucristo, y lleve el mensaje a los perdidos en tu hogar, en tu comunidad, en la escuela o donde sea que te lleve.

Notas Finales

¹ *En Mi Viejo San Juan* – Marc Anthony & Noel Estrada, (2020).

<https://sanjuanpuertorico.com/en-mi-viejo-san-juan/>

² Lawrence O. Richards, *Comentario Bíblico del Maestro*, (Editorial Patmos, 2006).

³ Bernardino Vázquez, *Ismael Ramírez*, John A. Martin, John D. Grassmick y más, *Comentario del Conocimiento Bíblico*, (Ediciones Las Américas, 2006).

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From Homogeneous to Multiethnic Corps

REACHING THE “NEW MARGINALIZED” OF OUR SOCIETY

Daniel N. Diakanwa

Introduction

Unlike other church founders, William Booth had a unique calling from God to reach out to the marginalized of his time. One of his closest advisors, Commissioner George Scott Railton, carried William Booth’s calling to America as he landed in New York City in 1880, and courageously declared “...The Salvation Army would be the only white people in whose company, whose platforms, whose operations, colored people have the same welcome as others...”¹ Moreover, Commissioner Frank Smith, then the National Commander in America, pursued William Booth’s divine mission to the marginalized as he stated in his 1885 *War Cry* article “Our colored brethren have been very much wronged, the victims trampled upon... We of The Salvation Army have a holy ambition to be among the first Christian community of America who will faithfully and wholly break down the wall of partition...”² Today, The Salvation Army is challenged to carry Booth’s mission to “new

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marginalized,” a term that I will use to refer to the immigrants.

The inexorable influx of immigrants to North America compels The Salvation Army and the Church at large to shift from mono-ethnic to multiethnic churches. Hardison pointed out that the demographic trends suggest the “mono-ethnic problem” will be accentuated with time because America is increasingly becoming ethnically diverse.

There are several statistical reports to show an increase in minority populations. Hardison also indicated that “America is on track to become a ‘majority-minority’ nation by 2043.”³ Hardy and Yarnell pointed out “by planting multi-ethnic churches and forming multicultural partnerships, God’s kingdom of people from every culture and nation will begin to emerge and impact our divided society.”⁴

Multiethnic church: A biblical perspective.

The book of Acts shares ample evidence that the early church was multiethnic. Jerusalem was a multiethnic city in which people from various nations lived and conducted business. Among some of the ethnic groups described in the Bible were the Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; people from Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and Libya; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretes and Arabs. (Acts 2:9-11) The fact that God enabled the disciples to speak in languages that foreigners residing in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost could understand is clear evidence of the presence of other nationalities in this city. Furthermore, the fact that people heard the Gospel proclaimed in their languages justifies the fact that many early church converts were non-Jews. Moreover, the missionary-minded church of Antioch comprised a multicultural staff that included Barnabas, Simeon, who was black, Lucius of Cyrene, who was Greek, Manaen, a Jew, and Saul (Acts 13:1-3). Paul’s consistent effort to reconcile the Jews and the Gentiles is a demonstration of the Gospel of unity in diversity, which transformed his own life.

Oneness in Christ is the goal that all church planters should pursue as they build churches to meet the needs of the members of our

global village. The Apostle Paul, the church planter par excellence, emphasized the “oneness in Christ principle” as he pointed out in Ephesians 2:19–22:

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone. In him, the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him, you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Christ’s will and prayer for God’s people is that they may be united in Him, as He is united in the Father.

One may conclude that the New Testament congregation remained largely multiethnic in its composition, despite some incidents of discrimination between the Jews, the Samaritans, and the Gentiles. Though there were other incidents of discrimination within the early church, God used two of Jesus’ influential and well-respected disciples, Peter in Acts 10, and Paul in Gal. 2:11-21, to rebuke discrimination and encourage unity within the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 9:20-22 & 12:12-13; Eph. 2:19 & 2:22-23). There is more situational and biblical evidence that God reprimanded discrimination (Number 12; Luke 9:51-56, Gal. 2:11-12) and that His multiethnic/racial people worshipped together through the multicultural leadership of the apostles, and under the Lordship of Christ.

Two predominant church models in the United States of America

1. Homogeneous church

In his groundbreaking book *The Bridges of God*, Donald McGavran described many of the fundamental principles of the Church Growth Movement, the most controversial of which was the homo-

geneous unit principle. In his classic statement, McGavran stated, “Men like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers.”⁵ McGavran’s homogeneous unit principle led to several debates and research relative to multiethnic church integration. Whether or not McGavran encouraged the segregation of believers into racial and ethnic groups, his influential church planting theory seems to have reinforced homogeneous, ethnic, and multi-congregational churches to proliferate in North America.

A homogeneous church is typically comprised of members of the same nation, ethnicity, or racial group. Although homogeneous churches can survive for a while in segregated communities, they will slowly begin to vanish as these communities become increasingly multiethnic. This trend is already affecting several urban churches in North America. It is also affecting first-generation ethnic churches as their second generation starts joining the English-speaking churches of their new country. It should be noted that there is nothing wrong with building a homogeneous church within a homogeneous community. For instance, there are African American, Korean, Hispanic, or Anglo churches/corps in certain areas that simply reflect their homogeneous communities. Moreover, there is nothing wrong with starting a monoethnic church/corps as a means of reaching out to a certain ethnic group, and for the ultimate purpose of building a local Body of Christ, which will embrace all ethnic and racial groups interested in becoming members. However, it is not Christlike to build a local corps for the sole purpose of reaching out to a certain ethnic or racial group.

In Acts 1:8, Jesus not only promised the baptism of the Holy Spirit to His disciples, but He also gave them a global vision to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Thanks to global migration, the inhabitants of the world are within our reach and can worship in our corps. Therefore, building a church/corps with the sole purpose of reaching people of one’s ethnic group is a violation of God’s most important commission in His global plan of salvation.

2. *Multiethnic church*

Jacob Dunlow stated that several distinguished scholars, including DeYoung, Emerson, Yancey, and Chai, have defined a multiethnic church as “a diverse church in which one ethnic or racial group needs to make up no more than 80% of the congregation. For a church to be multiethnic, at least 20% of the church members must be of a different ethnic group than the rest.” Morales shared four characteristics of a multiethnic church including counteracting segregation, cultivating an identity of inclusion, implementing a multilingual platform, and creating a multiethnic and culturally intelligent Leadership Team. ⁶

Many Evangelicals in North America tend to use the term “multiethnic church” rather than “multicultural church” most likely because of the cultural inclusiveness connotation of this term. For instance, “the American Council of Christian Churches at its 77th annual convention, October 23-25, 2018, resolved to denounce the philosophy of multiculturalism while maintaining a biblical position against racism.” ⁷ The contemporary meaning of multiculturalism includes not only individuals from various ethnic and cultural groups but also members of social or sub-culture groups who hold particular views. The term “subculture” implies diverse community groups that have developed new and distinct norms and values that govern their small groups within a multicultural society. Rosado defined multiculturalism

as a system of beliefs and behaviors that recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organization or society, acknowledges and values their socio-cultural differences, and encourages and enables their continued contribution within an inclusive cultural context which empowers all within the organization or society.⁸

Hence, for this study, the term multiethnic rather than multicultural will be utilized.

A historical perspective on Greater New York ethnic corps

The rapid influx of immigrants to New York City is changing the demographics of New York City corps. From the 60s to the late 90s, most Greater New York Division corps were populated by Salvationists of Caribbean descent. However, the predominantly Caribbean New York city corps, including Harlem Temple, Bedford, Bushwick, Brownsville, and Jamaica Corps, are increasingly becoming multiethnic due to generational change. The first- and second-generation Salvationists of Caribbean descent are aging and dying while their third generation is relocating for employment and educational pursuit. Today, Salvationists of Hispanic descent, who represent a new wave of immigrants in the Greater New York Division, are joining The Salvation Army at a faster rate. Historically, the campaign to reach out to Hispanic and other immigrants' groups started in the Western Territory under the leadership of the then Commissioner Paul Rader around 1990. Several Hispanic corps were built under the leadership of Salvationists of Hispanic descent, as well as ministers from other evangelical denominations who joined The Salvation Army as envoys. The Eastern Territory followed suit by hiring a consultant of Hispanic descent in 1992, as well as opening the Hispanic track at the College for Officer Training. This effort brought many Salvationists of Hispanic descent to officership and resulted in the fast growth of Hispanic corps in the Eastern Territory. Due to language barriers, Hispanics from various countries and ethnicities are joining Hispanic speaking multiethnic corps like the Queens Temple corps.

As I see it, there are two main reasons for the fast Hispanic growth within The Salvation Army. 1. *The Hispanic solidarity.* Most immigrants tend to develop solidarity to support each other in a foreign country. They help newcomers who have no jobs with shelter, food, and other necessities. When they see a job opportunity, they encourage their relatives and friends to apply for the job. It should be noted that most Hispanics come from collectivistic cultures. According to Hofstede, collectivism stands for "a society in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong,

cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty." Americans are mostly individualistic. "Individualism" stands for a society in which the ties between individuals are loose: Everyone is expected to look after her/his immediate family only.⁹ Because of their solidarity, Hispanics tend to invite their people to the corps, and to recruit them to officership more than Americans do. 2. *The creation of a Hispanic track at the College for Officer Training*. Hispanic candidates who could not speak or write English were able to attend CFOT and study in their language. Although they could not serve in English speaking corps, they are appointed to develop new Hispanic corps, which explains why Hispanic corps are growing within the Eastern Territory. 3. *The first-generation immigrants' work ethics*. First-generation Hispanics, like most new immigrants, are hard-working individuals. To maintain their jobs and provide for their families, they work hard to be productive and to gain the commendation of their boss. They are willing to do jobs that most Americans, including their American-born children, disregard.

Five predominant corps models in the USA

My travel around the United States and Canada as former Multicultural Bureau Director for the USA Eastern Territory, and my research, indicate that there are five major corps models within The Salvation Army, including the race-based homogeneous corps, the ethnic corps, language-based ethnic corps, multiethnic corps, and multi-congregational corps.

1. Race-Based Homogeneous Corps

Race-based homogeneous corps are generally a product of ethnocentrism. The majority of the race-based homogeneous corps that I visited in the United States and Canada tend to be ethnocentric. Boris Bizumic indicated that ethnocentrism is a nearly universal syndrome of discriminatory attitudes and behaviors. The attitudes include seeing one's group (the in-group) as virtuous and superior, one's standards of value as universal, and out-groups as contemptible and inferior.¹⁰ This type of corps is comprised of

members of the same race or predominantly of the same race. They tend to be biased toward other racial and ethnic groups.

Although members of city race-based homogeneous corps may open their doors to people of other races, who are willing to integrate within their corps culture, those who reside in rural and suburban areas tend to be resistant to other racial and ethnic groups. Some members prefer to move to another community or corps as soon as people from other races and ethnicities start moving into their community and attending their corps. Other race-based corps members may tolerate an insignificant number of people from other ethnic/racial groups within the congregation as long as they are willing to maintain the status quo of their corps. When a new racial or ethnic group starts increasing in attendance, some race-based homogeneous corps members become intolerant or uncomfortable. To solve this issue, many corps officers developed a separate ethnic ministry or corps to accommodate a fast-growing ethnic group, as in the case of several Hispanic corps. Some Divisional Commanders resolved this issue by allowing a fast-growing ethnic group to occupy the corps building and purchased another building for the traditional corps members in another neighborhood. Major Gwendolyn Jones, who was attending the Latino Hollywood corps as a soldier, indicated that “due to the rapid influx of Latinos in the Hollywood neighborhood and corps, it was decided that White Hollywood members move to Pasadena, and the Spanish congregation stay in Hollywood... Both Corps grew to 200 or more.”¹¹ My research indicates that a progressive inclusion of ethnic members into a homogeneous church tends to keep members together, while a rapid influx of ethnic members brings discontentment and division. The situation of the Hollywood corps led to a necessary and strategic decision that prevented unintentional cultural clash between the Anglos and the Hispanics.

2. *Ethnic Corps*

Ethnic corps are generally a product of ethnocentrism and language barriers. An ethnic corps is a congregation in which the majority of the members tend to be group-oriented and cultural-

ly resistant, and which provides culturally focused worship and preaching. By culturally resistant individuals, I refer to ethnocentric individuals who cling to their cultural/ethnic norms and values, resist to learn the language and culture of their new country, and prefer to reside in their ethnic communities. Furthermore, ethnic members, mostly leaders, tend to protect their cultural norms and values rather than promote unity in diversity. Bryan Kim and Jose M. Abreu described acculturation as the process of adapting to the norms of the dominant group (i.e., American) and enculturation as the process of retaining the norms of the indigenous group (e.g., Asian-American).¹² Most people who attend ethnic corps are enculturated rather than acculturated.

An ethnic corps may comprise members of the same ethnic group such as Haitians, Koreans, Nigerians, Dominicans, and so forth. Like the race-based corps, members of ethnic corps may accept people from other ethnic groups, as long as they speak their language and are willing to adapt to their style of worship. The ethnic corps' expression of worship varies according to each ethnic group. Anglos may be more reserved and quieter in their worship expression, Hispanics and Caribbeans may be more vibrant and expressive in their worship expression, while African-Americans would more likely be attracted to a typical Black Baptist church worship expression, which engages them in worship.

My interviews with some Korean, Caribbean, Haitian, and Hispanic pastors reveal that most of their second-generation teenagers are losing interest in their ethnic churches. Some abandon Christianity altogether because they feel that their parents have virtually coerced them to stick to their ethnic churches while others ended up joining English-speaking churches. There were instances in which the second and third-generation members of an ethnic church formed an English-speaking congregation. For instance, the San Francisco Chinatown Corps was developed into a bi-congregational corps, under the leadership of Lt. Colonel Check Yee. In 1991, Lts. Ronald & Keilah Toy were appointed to the English-speaking congregation and the "Asian American Ministry" was birthed from the San Francisco Chinatown Corps. The ministry was officially recog-

nized as a corps in 1994 and moved to its location in 2002. In 2015, the name was officially changed to the SOMA “South of Market” Corps to welcome all nationalities that identified with the multicultural worship and culture of the congregation.¹³

It should be noted that ethnic churches are surviving thanks to transfer growth resulting from the inexorable influx of first-generation immigrants rather than through biological or conversion growth. Perhaps 80% of ethnic church members and their families were Christians in their countries or had some association with a church. For instance, most members of the New York Westbury ethnic corps were Salvationists back in Haiti. Today, New York traditional Caribbean ethnic corps are turning into multicultural corps because the flow of Caribbean Salvationists to the United States has diminished.

3. Language-Based Ethnic Corps

A language-based ethnic corps can be homogeneous, like a Korean or a Haitian corps. However, most Hispanic Corps are multiethnic because they gather people from various ethnicities speaking the same language. Most Hispanic corps in North America are products of language and cultural barriers. Although some members of these corps may express ethnocentric views, and integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups as Hofstede indicated, they are bound by their common language and cultural similarities. These corps provide culturally responsive worship and preaching.

4. Multiethnic Corps

I would redefine a “multiethnic church/corps” as a congregation in which the majority of the members tend to be open-minded, and culturally responsive, and which provides culturally responsive worship and preaching. Drakeford indicated that cultural responsiveness is “the ability to learn from and relate respectfully with people of your own culture as well as those from other cultures”¹⁴ While traditional corps use the band, songsters, and traditional church hymnals for worship, a multiethnic corps integrates different cultural music into their worship, as well as culturally inte-

grated styles of preaching. Expressive sermon deliveries that use biblical stories and culturally responsive illustrations tend to meet the spiritual needs of multiethnic congregants.

The Compton corps, in the Western Territory, is an example of a multiethnic corps. According to Major Gwendolyn Jones, who served together with her husband at the Compton corps two different times, and now serves the third time in post-retirement service, this corps has 75% Latino, 20% Black, and 5 % South Pacific. She pointed out that, “We call our Corps a bi-language Corps and do everything in two languages, English and Spanish, but we also have a third language group that is Samoan.”¹⁵

In the Southern Territory, the Houston International Corps is, perhaps, the best model of multiethnic corps within The Salvation Army in the United States. In the Eastern Territory, Harlem Temple Corps, Hempstead Corps and many others are considered multiethnic corps. I attended Hempstead corps for two months and found that this corps gathered Anglos, Hispanics from different nationalities, Caribbeans, African-Americans, Nigerians, Haitians, and Indians. From 2018 to 2020, the corps was under the leadership of a Black officer married to an Anglo officer; now the corps is under the leadership of a Korean couple. While the members of most multiethnic churches and corps that I visited were not in one accord, there was a sense of unity among the members of Hempstead Corps. To be a genuine multiethnic corps, the members need to develop “meaningful relationship” that enables them to worship and fellowship in one accord. I use the term “meaningful relationship” to connote a relationship that not only accepts and accommodates someone from another ethnic group but also recognizes, embraces, appreciates, and respects that person, treating him or her as an equal. Meaningful relationships occur when corps members treat each other like family members. In other words, members share each other’s burdens, joy, hardship, and so forth. “Meaningful relationship” does not imply the lack of personality or cultural conflicts, however; it implies a relationship that promotes genuine reconciliation between various ethnic groups.

5. Multi-Congregational Corps

While multiethnic corps keep God's diverse people under one roof for worship, multi-congregational corps separate them according to their ethnic groups. Various congregations operate under the commanding officer, who is the pastor of the traditional corps, and the overseer of all the ethnic congregations planted under his or her initiative. Multi-congregational corps can be effective when all ethnic officers/Envoys can meet for prayer, fellowship, and business meetings. Moreover, the members can strengthen multiethnic relationships by holding combined worship and social events at least once a month. Keeping these congregations together is challenging because (1) a fast-growing ethnic ministry may separate from the traditional corps. (2) This ethnic ministry may take over the traditional corps and force members of other ethnicities to move to other corps. Multicultural conflicts between members of various ethnic ministries can be expected. Conflicts may arise from inconsistency in the scheduling of activities and facilities usage, cultural differences, ethnocentric attitudes, racial bigotry, and so forth.

A major concern among Eastern Territory soldiers who are leaving their corps due to the rapid influx of Hispanic members is that the English-speaking members feel neglected. For instance, the Bronx Tremont Corps attempted to develop a multi-congregational corps (English-Spanish congregation). However, this effort failed because the traditional English-speaking members who felt neglected moved to other corps. Although the four USA Territories attempted to develop multi-congregational corps with two or more ethnic ministries, this effort failed.

In my interviews with corps officers and soldiers, I have identified three main reasons why the multi-congregational corps model never worked. (1) The commanding officer's lack of cultural and language competencies. (2) The lack of corps leadership consistency due to changes in appointments. (3) The Divisional Commander's lack of cultural competencies, interest, and support for ethnic ministries. Since the Army has not been successful in developing multi-congregational corps, the Army needs to concentrate its efforts on developing multiethnic and language-based multiethnic corps.

Conclusion: Reaching out to the “New Marginalized”

Hardy and Yarnell’s study concurs with Fowler that more churches need to become multiethnic, not necessarily for the sake of diversity but because they are commissioned to introduce Christ to their communities. Fowler also pointed out that since more churches are operating in an ethnically diverse mission field, they need a vision with an explicit focus on reaching out to the diverse people in the field.¹⁶

Today, the immigrants represent “the new marginalized.” The Nigerians, Koreans, Asians, Jamaicans, Hispanics, and people from other nations can be found in our backyards. They are riding on the same trains and buses that we take to work, schools, and supermarkets. They are working side by side with us in our companies and sending their children to our public schools. Hence, The Salvation Army corps that are ministering in multiethnic communities need to reflect their communities, while those that are ministering within homogeneous communities need to prepare to welcome culturally diverse people who are slowly but surely moving into their communities. To cling to traditional corps models will divert the Army from Booth’s special calling to reach the “marginalized”; to allow multiethnic/racial integration in our corps will fulfill the Salvationists’ unique calling within the universal Body of Christ.

Catherine Booth, a visionary co-founder of The Salvation Army, stated,

We have such a rooted dislike to have anything rooted up, disturbed, or knocked down. It is as much the work of God, however, to ‘root out, and to pull down, and to destroy,’ as ‘to build and to plant;’ and God’s real ambassadors frequently have to do as much of one as of the other.¹⁷

Perhaps, it is time for The Salvation Army as “a movement” to root up, disturb, or knock down homogeneous corps in a society that is rapidly becoming multicultural and yearning for racial/ethnic reconciliation. The Salvation Army needs to encourage the

development of multiethnic corps, as well as language-based multiethnic corps to fulfill Booth's divine calling.

As The Salvation Army endeavors to embrace "The New Marginalized" into its corps fellowship, the Army must continue to reflect Booth's unique calling to the despised, the distressed, and the disinherited of our modern society. Moreover, while the Army culture needs to be contextualized within the post-modern milieu, it must unswervingly keep its doctrines and theology. It is interesting to note that while The Salvation Army worship expression is contextualized throughout the continent of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbeans, its religious culture (symbols, uniform, music, terminology, soldier's enrollment ...) as well as its doctrines and theology remain intact. However, in the West, the Army seems to be moving away from its *raison d'être* while increasingly embracing other churches' theologies, teachings, and culture.

Due to the lack of "Salvationism" training, many first-generation officers are straying from The Salvation Army theology and holiness preaching while embracing any theology and teachings from their favorite authors or TV preachers. This observation was obvious in various corps officers' online sermons during COVID-19. Today, some ethnic corps' worship and preaching do not reflect The Salvation Army ethos, more likely because of (1) the *laissez-faire* leadership of some divisional commanders whose main focus lies on administration, and are not fully aware of what is being preached and taught in these corps; (2) the lack of "Salvationism" core training which seems to have been evaded since Booth's training schools have been converted into training colleges. (The two-years' essential training in "Salvationism" has been reduced to one year, and the second year has been filled with academic work.)

In preparation for the inexorable influx of immigrants to our country and communities, cadets and officers must be trained in multicultural ministries. The training will entail developing a curriculum in multicultural ministries within The Salvation Army context that will prepare future officers and those in the field to minister effectively within our rapidly growing multicultural society. To save money, the course could be taught online for all United

States training colleges. Moreover, The Salvation Army leaders need to schedule workshops on multiethnic ministries that will also reflect our internationalism, an aspect that we tend to neglect in the Western officers' training and soldiers' preparation. The awareness of our internationalism will develop a global mindset among officers and soldiers as well as open their hearts to embrace "the new marginalized" following Booth's divine calling.

Endnotes

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Book Review

Walter Brueggemann, *Virus as a Summons to Faith: Biblical Reflections in a Time of Loss, Grief, and Uncertainty*. Eugene, OR: CASCADE Books, 2020.

Reviewed by Mark Braye

During times of crisis, the people of God turn towards the Bible and their faith in the Triune God for wisdom. Among the best guides for such study is Walter Brueggemann, Professor of Old Testament Emeritus at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. Brueggemann is a giant of theological thought and Biblical scholarship, especially the Old Testament, and the author of a myriad of books. His latest volume is *Virus as a Summons to Faith: Biblical Reflections in a Time of Loss, Grief, and Uncertainty*.

Virus as a Summons to Faith is a collection of seven sermon/essay-like writings. The chapters are Scripturally and theologically rich, and, like all of Brueggemann's texts, exceptionally written. Three of the chapters in the book have been previously published. "The 'Turn' From Self to God," a reflection on Psalm 77, is from *The Journal For Preachers* from 1983. "The Matrix Of Groan," looking at and thinking about Isaiah 42:14-15, was revised for *Virus as a Summons to Faith* and is from *The Journal For Preachers* from 2001. The book opens with "Reaping The Whirlwind." In this entry, Brueggemann reflects on texts from Leviticus, Exodus, and Job; it was first published in the *Journal Of Preachers* in March 2020. In this first entry, the author writes about the things we want during these uncertain times. We want, he says,

science that can be effectively administered through responsible political channels. We want experts who can be trusted and who will provide relief from both threat and anxiety. And we want political administrators who have the courage and honesty to make effective antidotes available to us without deception or denial (Pg. 14).

And, this is important, Brueggemann says our “biblical faith is not in any way inimical to such science” (Pg. 14) as stated above.

“Until The Dancing Begins” is a reflection on Jeremiah; “Praying Amid The Virus” focuses on 1 Kings 8:23-53; and “God’s New Thing” is an essay looking at Isaiah 43:18-19.

“Pestilence... Mercy? Who Knew?” is my favorite chapter in the book and looks at a story in 2 Samuel 24:1-25. It’s a story that features pestilence. At first this sounds extremely dark and depressing in light of our current reality. Brueggemann assures us, however, writing,

I do not think for one moment that there is any ready transfer from this narrative to our real-life crisis with the virus. The Bible does not often easily ‘apply.’ The Bible does, however, invite an open imagination that hopes for the best outcomes of serious scientific research (Pg. 25).

Concluding these thoughts Brueggemann writes, “we may dare imagine with David that the final word is not pestilence; it is mercy” (Pg. 26).

Each chapter has an accompanying prayer which connects wonderfully with the preceding Biblical and theological thoughts. Perhaps the boldest and most daring prayer in the volume ends in this way: “So hear, heal, save, restore! Be the God you have promised to be. Amen” (Pg. 45).

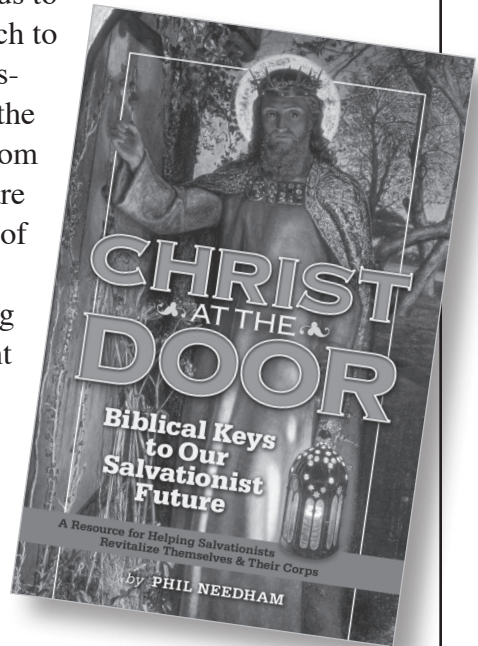
The past several months of navigating the COVID-19 pandemic have been stressful and anxiety-producing. Like Brueggemann’s

book title suggests, however, we can allow the coronavirus to summon us to faith; to move us towards our Triune God and the wisdom, peace, grace, and love we find in God's Holy Scriptures.

Christ at the Door

By Phil Needham

In *Christ at the Door*, Commissioner Needham attacks the status quo, encouraging us to radically change our approach to ministry and service. His passion for seeking and saving the lost calls us back to our bottom line: making converts who are sanctified, radical followers of Jesus Christ. This book is a must read for anyone looking to increase their commitment to their charge as a Salvationist.



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Book Review

N. T. Wright, *God and the Pandemic: A Christian Response on the Coronavirus and its Aftermath*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020.

Reviewed by Mark Braye

Early during the COVID-19 pandemic, *Time Magazine* asked N. T. Wright to write an article reflecting on the coronavirus, detailing a Christian response to the virus, and considering the many implications of the pandemic. The article was the genesis and starting point for his latest book, *God And The Pandemic: A Christian Response on the Coronavirus and Its Aftermath*.

N. T. Wright is a research professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland and a senior research fellow at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford. He is the author of many books, over eighty, and served as Bishop of Durham in England from 2003 through 2010. For years, anything Wright has written is required reading and this latest text is no different.

In the short but very thoughtful volume, Wright reflects on the Bible, Christian theology, Church history, and particularly prayer and lament as he explores and answers these questions pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic: What should be the Christian response? How should we think about God? How do we live in the present? What can we learn about ourselves? How do we recover?

Wright is not interested in the partisan or geopolitical blame game; and he does not believe in the unhealthy and unhelpful over-spiritualizing of the pandemic. He writes about present day proph-

ets who are willing to give us the answers for our current problem.

“These range from the cause-and-effect pragmatists (it’s all because governments didn’t prepare properly for the pandemic) to the strikingly detached moralizers (it’s all because the world needs to repent of sexual sin) to valid but separate concerns (it’s reminding us about the ecological crisis). We sometimes have the impression that the coronavirus is providing people with a megaphone with which to say, more loudly, what they were wanting to say anyway” (Pg. 7).

He also writes: “Whenever anyone tells you that coronavirus means that God is calling people—perhaps you!—to repent, tell them to read Job. The whole point is that *that is not the point*” (Pg. 12). And to those who would be trying to read the tea leaves of the coronavirus as a sign of the End Times, which inevitably happens with crises among some believers, Wright highlights the fact they are claiming to know more than Christ Jesus does (see Mark 13:32).

The most important vocation for the Church in this season of uncertainty, for Wright, is our calling to prayer. “The thing above all which the Church should be doing at the present time is *praying*” (Pg. 44). And the vital initial Christian response to the coronavirus pandemic is lament (Pg.52). We, the Church, are called to pray with and for others, and to weep for and with others.

God And The Pandemic is well written and accessible. At the same time, it is deeply thoughtful and theological. It is a wonderfully timely read in this frustrating season as we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic.

Book Review

John Larsson, *Thirteen Astonishing Years That Shaped The Salvation Army: 1878-1890*. London: Salvation Books, 2019.

Reviewed by Roger J. Green

Readers of John Larsson's books have come to expect clarity in both the writing style and the major themes of the author, and this book is no exception. The very nature of the subject is captivating, and the author leads us through the rather amazing growth of The Salvation Army from the time of transition of The Salvation Army from The Christian Mission through to the year 1890 when the Darkest England Scheme was launched. This is a brief work of only 160 pages, but the author has decided to divide the material up into thirty-six chapters, each chapter composed of about four pages. The reader easily gets caught up in both the excitement and the adventure of forming and shaping an Army for God, and the unfolding of the story compels the reader to move from chapter to chapter to see what happens next. Photos and illustrations throughout the book enhance the text.

For readers who are familiar with this period of Army history, many of the names and events will be familiar. For example William and Catherine Booth, Bramwell Booth, and George Scott Railton play a central role. However, if we strive for accuracy in history, the story has to be told not only from above, from the leadership of the movement, but from below—from the myriad of soldiers and officers with whom readers may not be familiar. Telling history only from above gives a false sense of the narrative, as

though the leaders did all the work and had all the brilliant ideas. But telling history from below gives a full sense of the story and reminds the readers that God works with all kinds of people for the sake of His Kingdom, and that the leadership knows intuitively that they are servants of the people whom they lead, therefore humbly learning from all the people around them. The author, thankfully, tells history from both perspectives and thereby gives us the whole story. And so we learn not only about the Booths and Railton and Brengle, but also about the Agar sisters and Jack Stoker and Rebecca Jarrett and their influence in the shaping of the Army and the popular appeal to the Army's mission.

The same can be said of the events. Major events such as the International Congress of 1886 may be familiar, but less so the events that led to the Darkest England Scheme or the Army's emphasis on Self-Denial. As well, thanks to officers and soldiers and friends of the Army, The Salvation Army began circling the globe at this time, and there are accounts to be understood of the opening of the Army's work outside of Britain. The growth of The Salvation Army just in Britain was remarkable by anyone's account, and the author reminds us that,

in Britain alone a new corps had opened every three days in the years 1878-1886...the 29 stations of 1878 had become more than 1,000 corps, and...the 31 evangelists had become 2,260 officers (p. 107).

This book can certainly be helpful to those who know Army history as a reminder of this period in Army history that is so crucial. However, I envision this book being especially useful in two other ways. First, this could be an invaluable text for soldiers' preparation classes. Many people are attracted to the Army but are not cognizant of the history of the Army. This book can be a start in understanding the church they wish to join. Second, for the many who serve the Army in the community—for advisory board members, for volunteers, or for the thousands employed by the Army—this book could help them to understand the Army that they are helping in so many ways. At the conclusion of the book are sources

mentioned for each chapter that will provide readers with books and articles that will help them to know the Army even better.

Thirteen Astonishing Years that Shaped The Salvation Army is a gift to all who desire to know more about the Army and how we began.



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Lt. Colonel Tim Foley has been a follower of Jesus Christ since 1978. Commissioned as a Salvation Army officer in 1982, he currently serves as the National Secretary for Program & Editor-in-Chief at National Headquarters in Alexandria, VA. He holds a master's in theology and a doctorate in spiritual formation for ministry leaders.



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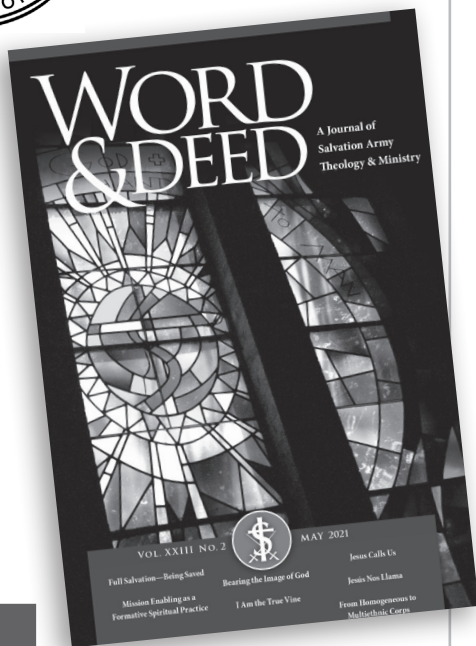
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