

# Word & deed

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A JOURNAL OF SALVATION ARMY  
THEOLOGY & MINISTRY

*Our Holiness Heritage: Birthed in Unity*

*Remembering the Gospel*

*Reflections on Psalm 40*

*A Long Obedience: Late Thoughts of Peter on the Preaching of  
Life*

*A Practical Method for the Modern-Day Missions*

*Follow the Messiah: John 1:35-51*



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#### 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.

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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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#### Editorial Policy:

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—1,250 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 January 1 and June 1. A style sheet is available upon request. All manuscripts should be sent to the journal co-editors: [rjgreen105@gmail.com](mailto:rjgreen105@gmail.com) or [jonraymond1969@gmail.com](mailto:jonraymond1969@gmail.com).

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## Practical Praxis in Ministry and Mission

This issue brings closure to celebrating twenty-five years of publishing *Word & Deed*, The Salvation Army's scholarly journal of theology and ministry. We thank a diversity of authors who submitted their writings for review and publication. For twenty-five years, they have been largely Salvationists, but also others of Wesleyan thought and praxis. The diversity of scholarship and reflection were women and men from the USA, Canada, and abroad from Europe, Australia, Africa, Latin America, and East Asia. Initially the readership was American, but grew to be international. We are grateful to the Army's national leadership from the very beginning. The journal benefited by it throughout the years to the present day. Their continual wisdom and support sustained the work of the journal and made possible its national and international readership. Glory to God!

In this issue, we celebrate the origins of The Salvation Army in one particular characteristic, a special gene in the Army chromosome in its genetic profile. It is particularly evident in our early days in the lives of William and Catherine Booth, yet sustained by the Army ever since its beginnings. Going back to its Christian Mission days, that single characteristic is the Army's pragmatism of its Wesleyan theology and practice. The writings of several Army authors give testimony to its origins and pragmatic history. For the past twenty-five years we have pursued the journal's mission by striving to record the pragmatic impulses and contemporary expressions of the Army's early Wesleyan foundations. This issue's focus is on the Army's practical traditions in theology, ministry, and mission, as

well as those of the broader Wesleyan family as noted by three pieces written by authors who are not Salvationists.

Carla Sunberg's lead article, "Our Holiness Heritage," is a bold start. She begins with a direct quote from A.W. Tozer, "A scared world needs a fearless church," but she adds, "A fearless church is one who knows what it believes" and then acts accordingly. Her paper is a strong message to the leaders of the Wesleyan Holiness Connection, a consortium of Wesleyan denominations and organizations to which The Salvation Army has belonged since its inception. In her address she encourages us to be fearless in actively pursuing with others two primary Wesleyan goals: unity in both Christian holiness and world evangelism.

The second paper is Timothy Tennent's brief, bold address to pastors. In "Remembering the Gospel," Tennent addresses a major cultural crisis we are all experiencing, that of "the increasingly evident, dominant cultural voices no longer embracing a Christian worldview." He discusses "three culturally impossible things" in the ancient world that the early Church was facing, and that the Church faces in our present contemporary world. As a response to the crisis, Tennent boldly proclaims that the way forward is the way the apostle Paul proclaimed in his day.

Norman Voisey's "Reflections on Psalm 40" is a brief sermon presented with passion and energy, conviction, petition, and faith in God's mercy and grace. With a word to the unbeliever, Voisey encourages the listener's response and concludes with the testimony of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, and a prayer from Richard Foster.

The apostle Peter had late thoughts on his life of preaching. Lyell M. Rader unpacks selected passages of 1 Peter 2-5 in "A Long Obedience: Late Thoughts of Peter on the Preaching of Life." Rader, a seasoned sage, wrote a paper with an introduction and four themes derived from Peter's first epistle: Keeping the fire, Honoring the other, Redeeming the pain, and Tending the flock. The author says of the apostle Peter, "He was old when he wrote from Rome. Peter is portrayed at the end by the artist Caravaggio not as the lordly figure of papal lore, but as a common, angular man of the wharfs and the sea, knotted, furrowed and worldly wise."

In The Salvation Army Songbook (hymnal), one can find a spirited song and chorus. The words to the chorus are "Follow, follow, I will follow Jesus. Anywhere, everywhere, I will follow on" (repeat). In his brief yet provocative paper, "Follow the Messiah," Christopher Scott crafts a practical message of encouragement to follow Christ. He expands on the "follow me" passage in John 1:35-51 where John The Baptist's disciples, John and Andrew, begin to follow Jesus and pick up Peter, then Philip and Nathanael along the way. Scott lays out three ways the serious follower may follow Christ. He provides four examples through three disciples and the story of Amanda Smith, whose whole life followed Jesus. Anywhere and everywhere, she still followed on.

In a provocative paper entitled, "A Practical Method for the Modern-Day Missions," John Morrow introduces readers to the powerful missiology of the Holy Spirit through the culture of the Spirit within the culture of humanity. God is at work through the Spirit. He is busy creating sacred spaces and holy moments and engaging practical ways that "mark everyday people with holy fingerprints" of evidence of the Spirit. He works within human culture through which the visible fruits of the Spirit influence the human culture and demonstrate the "existing work of the Spirit to prepare the way for making Christ known."

Letters of commendations from Editorial Board members follow this editorial, and concluding this issue are Book Notes comprising samples from those board members of books that have influenced their life and ministry. We are pleased that Dr. David Rightmire, Professor Emeritus of Theology at Asbury University, has joined our team as the Book Review Editor.

This twenty-fifth issue of *Word & Deed* captures a brief sample of the Army's practical praxis around the world today. It too is a testimony of the Army as a participating force for holiness in unity with other Wesleyan churches and organizations. The journal strives in its purpose "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." We continue to "provide a means to understand topics central to the mission of

The Salvation Army, integrating the Army's ministry in response to Christ's command to love God and our neighbor." Glory to God!

JSR  
RJG

## Letters of Commendation

### **Dr. Donald E. Burke**

For the past twenty-five years *Word & Deed* has stimulated, preserved, and disseminated scholarship related to the mission and ministry of The Salvation Army. The journal has been a conduit through which various lectures and presentations from assorted contexts have been made available to a wider audience. I have seen its impact in the classroom as I have had occasion to refer students to a number of articles that would not have been available apart from publication in *Word & Deed*. The journal has helped to shape the "Salvationist mind" and has encouraged us to think more deeply about what we do, who we are, and why we are called to this ministry. Congratulations to the editors who have given selflessly to sustain this endeavor.

### **Lt. Colonel Dan Jennings**

Congratulations on twenty-five years of publication of *Word & Deed*. This remains one of the most important and thoughtful publications that gives serious thought to doctrinal and theological issues. I appreciate that it approaches its themes from a Wesleyan perspective. It has become for me a remarkably valuable resource in challenging my thoughts on important topics.

I pray that this publication will continue to inspire those who read it to think deeply and consider topics that are at the center of Wesleyan/Salvationist doctrine. I am also grateful for the gifted writers and thinkers who have made contributions to *Word & Deed* over the twenty-five years of its publication. There is little doubt that

their work has helped to shape my formation as a writer and leader.

I am looking forward to the voices who will contribute to *Word & Deed* in the coming years. May God bless this special ministry.

### Major Amy Reardon

Dear Readers,

As we celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Word & Deed*, it is my privilege to share with you why I find this journal so important to me and to the Army.

The Salvation Army is not an autonomous being. It is the sum of its people, especially as the Holy Spirit animates them to teach and to minister in our world. If the people comprise the entity, then the written ideas of the people express the “soul” of the entity. *Word & Deed* plays a role in revealing what we are in this present age, because it is a place where the people of the Army present their thoughts and discoveries. It is a place for us to examine who we are and how we are developing.

There is variance of thought in the Army, but *Word & Deed* is one of the strong ropes that keeps us tethered to the non-negotiable tenets of our Christian faith while giving us enough length to both explore and self-evaluate. It allows us to consider new things and refine understanding, but it has never veered from what we Salvationists know to be holy and immutable.

Officers, soldiers, and friends have brought their best written efforts to *Word & Deed*. Those of a reflective bent have found solace in it, for it is a great comfort to come across others who wish to think deeply. I am continually surprised and delighted by the variety of topics found in the journal. Some inspire, some challenge, some offer critique, some simply enlighten. Drs. Green and Raymond have solicited and secured an array of voices representing different ages, ethnicities, gender, etc. We can applaud that breadth of perspective.

I will always remember giving a young man his first issue of *Word & Deed* a few years ago. This active soldier was a music instructor, but he had a keen interest in theology. It was such a joy to have a suitable resource for his thirsty mind, and to have it be the product of our own church. That may be my favorite thing about *Word &*

*Deed*: it is used by God to speak to scholar and layman alike. I celebrate this resource, this gift.

### Reverend Diane Ury

For twenty-five years, *Word & Deed* has provided Salvationists with a journal in which we can express things we are learning. The editors have been open to receive written accounts of our academic inquiries, our sermons, and our deep thoughts about service, life, family, death, and culture. I’ve appreciated its diversity in the authors published therein, and the diversity of genre contained even within just one volume at a time. For those of us who want to share in print what we’re learning, that is a gift.

For those of us who read it, that is rich. Deep learning is not intrinsically tied to the presence of footnotes. Essays and sermons are of equal value in communicating truth. Book recommendations and reviews whet our appetites in worthy directions.

The Salvation Army contributes to world-reaching scholarship through *Word & Deed* because it populates many university and seminary library shelves. It’s important for all of us, officers and soldiers, to realize that who we are as the Army is a critical contribution to the universal Church. People are eager to understand what we know, think, and believe that so powerfully affects what we do.

This journal has been a vital source of challenge and encouragement for Christian thinkers for a quarter of a century. Congratulations. May its unique offering continue to bless people around the world through its faithfulness to Jesus Christ.

### Dr. Bill Ury

What a privilege it is to express my deep gratitude for offering twenty-five years of faithful stewardship of this remarkable journal, *Word & Deed*. It arose out of social holiness. Dr. Green and Dr. Raymond, your fraternal relationship in Christ has produced a theological grounding through which The Salvation Army has been enriched. You have shown us what kind of fruit can come from perfect love which flows into persons of your caliber and training, but which has been at its heart an overflowing offering of love to others.



In that, you have continually imaged the life of God.

It took incredible vision to produce *Word & Deed*. The unseen, unheralded amount of your lives given in time, effort, and commitment which this periodical has required is breathtaking. Very few if any of us could have done what you have accomplished with such focused finesse over this quarter of a century. The Spirit enabled you to see beyond each edition. You knew the importance of this kind of engagement in sustaining a scholarly dialogue on the theological bases of the Army for its expression in the world.

Countless people have benefited from your self-giving love. Over the years, I have been taught, challenged, encouraged, and transformed by the truths found in those pages which you poured over in loving, rigorous editorial prowess. It was your commitment to serious biblical and theological engagement that offered us a place for profound insight. In this significant portion of your many ministries, you have made actual your commitment to growing saints. You have offered holiness of mind and heart, Spirit-baptized reason, and Spirit-clad armor for the battle to which we are called.

As Christians and as Salvationists, you never lost sight of the need to apply truth to life. I have personally witnessed your encouragement of other believers, soldiers, officers, and employees of the Army to submit articles, sermons, and book reviews. All the while, you kept us grounded in our Salvationist dogma while concomitantly offering diverse approaches and opinions. That breadth of knowledge demanded unusual bravery and perspicacity.

I am awed by your loving friendship, your cleanness of heart, your passionate love for truth, your scintillating scholarship, your selfless fidelity to this work, your humble labor of love, your vision of the fullness of salvation, and your ardor for the triune God. Even in this work you have shown us the myriad ways possible to be disciples as you make disciples.

Thomas Oden reflecting on the task of doing theology wrote, “Theology is a joyful intellectual task because the source of its task is the source of profoundest joy. At the moment at which one feels one’s theological endeavors becoming tedious and heavy, one has forgotten that the center of the effort is the joy of God’s presence—

the ground of true happiness, the end of human despair.”

Every word you have edited over these years has pointed to the joyful presence of the Holy One. You have offered the gospel of Jesus Christ in a winsome, stimulating manner. Words have formed actions which have glorified the One True God. Those of us who know you know that your wisdom is drawn from the riches of His grace. You are able to see, and to keep the rest of us pointed toward Who He is and what He longs to do in us and through us.

This prayer is by an unknown believer which encapsulates your answering the call to allow written words based on the Word written to honor the Incarnate Word and to inspire service out of perfect love:

O teach me, Lord, that I may teach  
The precious things Thou dost impart  
And wing my words, that they may reach  
The hidden depths of many a heart.  
O fill me with Thy fullness, Lord,  
Until my very heart o’erflow  
In kindling thought and glowing word  
Thy love to tell, Thy praise to show.

May He shower you with the assurance of His pleasure in this one task of the many which you minister. And may there be many more years of bringing “knowledge and vital piety together” in this journal of your making and which evidences the true blessing of the Lord.

### Major Robert Watson

Dear Roger and Jonathan,

I join with many others around the world in gratitude for your birthing and steadfast expansion of the *Word & Deed* conversation over these past twenty-five years! The journal has served as a spacious and hospitable place for savoring Salvationist roots and stories, encouraging thoughtful and discerning activism, developing interaction around ecclesiology, and finding our voice in the worldwide Body of Christ. It has also provided fresh theological reflection on holiness and mission among the poor and many peoples, and

creative exploration of sometimes uncomfortable questions. Circles of research and of significant dialogue from various symposia have been widened. And a culture of growing saints has been nurtured. We honor and appreciate you!

## Our Holiness Heritage

### BIRTHED IN UNITY

*Carla D. Sunberg*

A. W. Tozer said, “A scared world needs a fearless church.”<sup>1</sup>

Tozer expounded upon this phrase as he wrote to believers around the time of WWII:

“A fear-stricken church cannot help a scared world. We who are in the secret place of safety must begin to talk and act like it. We, above all who dwell upon the earth, should be calm, hopeful, buoyant, and cheerful. We’ll never convince the scared world that there is peace at the Cross if we continue to exhibit the same fears as those who make no profession of Christianity.”<sup>2</sup>

Yes, a scared world needs a fearless church, but I would also like to suggest that “a fearless church is one who knows what it believes.”

We have gathered together for this meeting of the Wesleyan Holiness Connection to consider who we are, and where we are going. What does the message of holiness look like for the future?

Today, we are gathering at the Global Ministry Center of the Church of the Nazarene. This church, and those who are represented by the members of the steering committee, were birthed out of the “holiness movement” of the nineteenth century. This movement

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*Carla Sunberg is the forty-first general superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene, and is a noted international speaker, author, and administrator. This sermon was given at the 2022 annual meeting of the Wesleyan Holiness Connection, and is used with permission and printed as it was originally preached.*



spread like wildfire across this land, fueled by the preaching of John Wesley and his followers who believed that Christians were living with a “diseased condition of the soul.” According to church historian Timothy Smith, Wesley “was less concerned with the diagnosis of the affliction, however, than with proclaiming the divine remedy: an experience of entire sanctification, which, by comparison with one’s conversion, was ‘a second blessing, properly so-called.’ Beyond forgiveness lay inward healing; after justification, a purifying of the heart.”<sup>3</sup>

In 1858 a holiness revival broke out in America that touched the hearts and lives of many people, sparking a deep conviction that slavery must be abolished and that intemperance, or drunkenness, must be addressed. At that time, nearly one third of the country found themselves in a drunken stupor on an almost daily basis. The United States was deeply divided, while the holiness movement was raising up a people, who, through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, were to be united.

There were several Scripture passages that captured the heart and soul of the holiness movement. One of the themes from that era was, “Holiness unto the Lord.” This theme comes from the key passage for the holiness movement of the nineteenth century and is found in First Thessalonians 4:7, “For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness” (KJV). In the NIV it reads, “For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.”

The Apostle Paul was writing to the church in Thessalonica. This was a church filled with people whom he had come to love dearly. At the same time, he knew they needed to continue to grow spiritually. The Roman world, with all of its temptations to impurity, crushed in upon them. Paul believed the way to press against the world was to live “in holiness.” The people were to put on the holiness of Christ, because, as it says in verse three, the will of God is your sanctification ... or, it is God’s will that you be sanctified. The entire premise of this passage is that we are called unto holiness, or to live a holy life.

This holy life has decidedly moral overtones. This is in direct contrast with a world that is most certainly not concerned with holi-

ness or holy living. Nowhere in Greco-Roman literature do we find a charge to holy living for the people of society. That’s what makes this call from Paul so radical. It sets up a countercultural way of life for those who are called to be holy as God is holy.

What motivates us to holy living? Fear of judgement should not be the driving factor in our lives. Nor are we to believe that we are called to live in a condition of uncleanness or impurity. Paul specifically addresses this when he says that we are not called to be impure—but to live a holy life! Making excuses for our behavior has almost become an artform in today’s society. Paul would say that this is absolutely unacceptable. There is no room for excuses in the life of a Christian. We are not called to simply accept our circumstances and say that there is no better state in which to live, but we are called to “live a holy life.” This is a life that is only made possible through the activity of the Spirit who himself makes us holy.

Therefore, this is a call to participate in the life of our holy God, and to ignore the instruction to disregard the working of the Holy Spirit.

The purpose of the Christian life is to become like Christ, and this is the result of sanctification. It is not the work of humans, but the work of the Holy Spirit within each and every one of us. Therefore, we are not called to be impure people, but to be God’s holy people. In rejecting this message, we are not despising the messenger, but instead, we are turning our backs on God, who has called us all to be pure and sanctified through the Holy Spirit whom He has provided for us.

It was this passage and others that drove the listeners in those early holiness revivals and camp meetings to thirst for an in-filling of the Holy Spirit which transformed their relationship with God and with others. The result was a moral change in relation to their brothers and sisters of color, crusades against intemperance, a revival of the Sabbath, ministry to women caught in sex trafficking, providing orphanages for children, and a recognition that the church had been neglecting the poor.

In this time, we have been given an opportunity to participate in a fresh movement of God’s Holy Spirit as we again embrace the call to holiness! In a world as divided as ours, working to recover from a two-year global pandemic and filled with social, political,

and economic unrest, we need to embrace our holiness heritage and reimagine the ways in which a united church can meet the needs of a divided world.

The Church of the Nazarene, in whose headquarters we are meeting today, was birthed in the holiness movement. In 1908, in a small town north of Dallas, holiness groups representing three distinct American regions overcame regional prejudices and married their fortunes. Phineas Bresee, a “Yankee,” had been a staunch abolitionist. During the Civil War, he draped his pulpit with the American flag. (This had nothing to do with nationalism, but everything to do with abolition. The American flag was draped, as opposed to the Confederate flag.) C. B. Jernigan, a Mississippi native, was the son of a Confederate officer. They brought different groups together to form the Church of the Nazarene.<sup>4</sup>

Jernigan was a leader in the Southern group. The year before they officially merged to become the Church of the Nazarene, the Texas Holiness Association issued the following statement:

“With humiliation we confess that we and our fathers, of the white race, of this country, have not done near as much as we might have done toward the well-being and advancement of the colored race and are willing to take our part of the blame for the unneighborly and unbrotherly feeling which has sprung up and seems to be growing every day.”

They went on to say that they must take the initiative in “correcting the wrong and effecting a reconciliation, and if we have the spirit of Christ, to accomplish this, we will be willing even to yield up some of our rights and preferences, to suffer wrong rather than do wrong.” They admonished white employers to supply Christian literature to African American workers and ... to worship with them. Evangelists should take opportunities to preach to both whites and African Americans and to attend their worship services ... White preachers should speak out both publicly and privately about crimes committed against African Americans and advocate speedy trials

whenever they are accused.

At the same time, holiness people should denounce mob violence.

Floyd Cunningham, writing in *Our Watchword and Song*, said “for the time and place, at the height of ‘Jim Crow’ segregation in the American South, the affirmations of the Holiness Association of Texas were remarkably enlightened and bold.”<sup>5,6</sup>

That, folks, is holiness!

Stan Ingersoll, long-time archivist of the Church of the Nazarene shared,

“Those who gathered to negotiate the merger of northern and southern churches knew they were breaking new ground in American Christianity, and that their common experience of Christian holiness was chipping away at the walls of prejudice. At the heart of the Christian message is a word of reconciliation: first between sinners and Divine Love; and second, reconciliation among the members of the human family estranged from one another. ... Christian holiness heals hearts and unites people otherwise driven apart by sin, politics, and conflict.”

And that, folks, is holiness!

Ingersoll continues,

For more than a century, holiness churches have pursued two primary goals: unity in Christian holiness and world evangelization. We have proclaimed God’s grace, calling sinners to repentance and believers to a deeper, sanctified life. This 21st century presents new and complex challenges, but if we know and embrace our own narrative, we will not be rudderless. For as Shakespeare wrote, “What’s past is prologue.”<sup>7</sup>

And that brings us to the complexity of our current day. What’s in

the past has been the prologue to move us into a new future. The early holiness folks, including people like Lelia Morris, who wrote the song, “Called Unto Holiness,” believed that the holiness message was the answer for what ailed the world. This woman, who began to go blind later in life, wrote more than 1,000 songs and regularly attended camp meetings in Seebring and Mount Vernon, Ohio.

“For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life!” That passage in First Thessalonians became a part of the “watchword and song” for the holiness movement.

We have been handed a beautiful legacy from a people who united around the message of holiness. Not only did they embrace a message, but they prayed for the Holy Spirit to fill them again and again and again, so that their daily lives were transformed. They expressed a love for God and a love for others that was witnessed by the world. They reached across the social divides of their day and reflected holy love. They embraced God’s call upon women to preach the gospel and refused to concede on that point. They firmly believed that God could provide for divine healing but could also work through the miracles of modern medicine. They believed that people of every race could join hands as brothers and sisters and be united through the power of the Holy Spirit. The world, and even the church, was dividing over these issues more than one hundred years ago—and just maybe, things haven’t really changed all that much.

Phineas F. Bresee said, “Christ [is] in us, with the Holy Spirit anointing to work in and through us. This message, is the great need of the hour for the task before us. It is our business primarily to get heaven opened and the divine glory down in mighty supernatural power. We must have people on fire with the Holy Spirit and make and keep centers of holy fire wherever we go.”

Stan Ingersol was quoting Shakespeare when she said, “What’s past is prologue.” The question for us is “What will we do with that prologue?” How will we write the next chapter?

Maybe we need to go back to the past when Bresee said we need to make and keep centers of holy fire. Bresee believed in preaching about holiness at every opportunity. The altar was used for everyone—for every need—and frequently.

If we are going to be a people of holy fire—a people united by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit—we are going to need to return time and again to our knees, crying out for God’s divine glory. We are embarking on a new era today, with a new leader for the Wesleyan Holiness Connection. The work that’s been done has brought us to where we are, but now it’s time to write the next chapter and the only way the next chapter will be written is through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. And I believe that’s the chapter our world so desperately needs.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Tozer, A. W. *This World: Playground or Battleground?* Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Smith, Timothy L. *Called Unto Holiness, Volume 1* (p. 8). Beacon Hill Press. Kindle Edition.

<sup>4</sup> Stan Ingersoll, “Born in Hope, Born Onward in Love” paper presented at Pilot Point, TX in October 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Floyd Cunningham. *Our Watchword and Song: The Centennial History of the Church of the Nazarene*. Beacon Hill Press. Kindle Edition.

<sup>6</sup> *Holiness Association of Texas Year Book 1906-07* (N.p., n.d.), in the “Merging Religious Bodies” microfilm. This evidence seems contrary to the idea that Southern Holiness groups stressed purity and individual rather than social ethics. See also statement from A. M. Hills, who had left Peniel for England but who considered racism “one of the saddest evidences of the depravity of the race.” In A. M. Hills, *The Cleansing Baptism* (Manchester: Star Hall, [1908]), 9-10. Contrast Leonard Sweet, “A Nation Born Again: The Union Prayer Meeting Revival and Cultural Relativism,” in *In the Great Tradition: Essays on Pluralism, Voluntarism, and Revivalism*, eds. Joseph D. Bon and Paul R. Deckar (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1982), 207-8.

<sup>7</sup> “What’s past is prologue” is a quote from William Shakespeare’s play *The Tempest*. The phrase stands for the idea that history sets the context for the present.

# Remembering the Gospel

*Timothy Tennent*

We are all experiencing a major cultural crisis in which it is becoming increasingly evident that the dominant cultural voices no longer embrace a Christian worldview. In the ancient world, there were three things that were “culturally impossible” when the Church was in its infancy. First, it was “impossible” to imagine that the world was created “out of nothing.” The ancient world believed in the eternality of matter and could not imagine that God created the world *ex nihilo*. They could not imagine anything beyond the material world we see with our senses. Second, it was impossible to believe that a wicked person could be justified and made whole. The ancient world believed that a person’s moral character was fixed and could not be changed. Finally, the ancient world did not believe anyone could rise from the dead. The gospel directly challenged these cultural assumptions through the proclamation of the gospel. The gospel declares that God created the world “out of nothing,” thus establishing God’s supremacy and Lordship over the entire created world. Even the gods of ancient times were “created” or were some kind of ephemeral demiurge which could not be known. The gospel declares that God is personal and that He created a good world with divine purposes and a historical trajectory which leads, in the end, to the triumph of righteousness. Hebrews 11:3 declares that “by faith we understand that the world was formed at God’s command so that

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*Timothy Tennent is the president of Asbury Theological Seminary. This sermon was published in the Asbury Seminary Alumni Link, August 2022, and is used with permission.*

what is seen was not made out of what is visible.” We also declare, to the world’s astonishment, that everyone will someday “stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Cor. 5:10). The gospel also declares that the “categories” of the wicked and righteous have collapsed such that “none are righteous, not even one” (Romans 3:10). Jesus Christ is the only truly Righteous One. The Jewish nation originally saw the world as divided between the “righteous” (Israel) and the “wicked” (all the other nations). Gradually, they saw that only a “remnant” of Israel was righteous. In the end, they realized that we all need redemption. Jesus Christ came as the One True Israelite and He alone embodies righteousness. We are all in the category of the “wicked” and the entire world is in need of the redemption which comes through Jesus Christ. Finally, the core gospel message is that we can all “be justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:24).

In our own time, our culture has lost its Christian moorings and these same three cultural impossibilities reign. Our contemporary world has lost its faith in the living God who “created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1; Isaiah 42:5; Acts 4:24, Hebrews 1:10). The culture embraces some version of materialism which has no proper place for God as the living God who created us with divine purposes. History in the contemporary world has no divine trajectory, no final judgement, no reconciliation of the nations, etc. History, in the modern view, is shaped by political and social forces alone. Second, our contemporary world has no vision for reconciliation. Historical figures are vilified. Races are in a perpetual power conflict and cannot be reconciled to one another. There is no place for forgiveness and reconciliation, only perpetual conflict, division, and hatred. Finally, the contemporary sees Jesus as just another ethical teacher, not as one who triumphed over the grave. But it is deeper than that. The world has no vision that our bodies are sacred icons of God and will someday be raised from the dead. Instead, our bodies (in the contemporary view) can be subjected to the autonomous will. We can declare that we are “male” or “female” or neither. We can dispose of an unborn child in our womb. We can vilify the immigrant at our border as a collective “evil.”

It is vital that every pastor understand that this is the time to boldly proclaim the gospel. This is not the time to find countless ways to accommodate the culture in hopes that people will embrace an increasingly domesticated gospel moved so far from the actual glories of the New Testament that it has become “another gospel.” Paul would say to our generation of Christians the same thing he said to the early Galatian Christians: “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another one but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:6-8). So, brother and sisters, stand unwavering in the power and glory of the Christian gospel. Proclaim it boldly. As the culture continues to descend into darkness, let us remember the admonition of the Apostle Paul that we be found in the righteousness of Christ “in a crooked and perverted generation among whom you shine like stars in the world, by holding firm to the word of life” (Phil. 2:15, 16).



# *Brengle for Today*

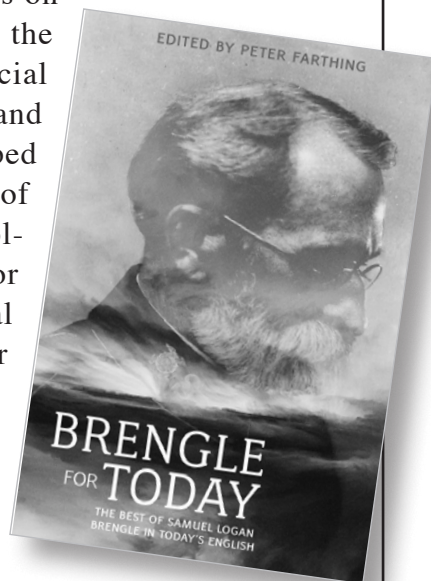
Edited by Peter Farthing

Commissioner Samuel Logan Brengle was The Salvation Army's most influential teacher of holiness and an author of several books on the subject. While serving as the International Spiritual Special Ambassador, he often taught and preached on what he described as the "second blessing" of personal holiness. In this collection of wisdoms, the author re-presents Brengle's original teachings in plain language for the modern reader.

Peter Farthing wrote and co-produced the award-winning documentary *Our People* and the book *1865: The Year that Made The Salvation Army*. He has developed courses for corps and small groups, including courses on holiness and Salvation Army theology. He currently resides in Sydney, Australia.

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## Reflections on Psalm 40

*Norman Voisey*

"But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you;  
may those who long for your saving help always say,  
'The LORD is great!'" – (Psalm 40:16, NIV)

Psalm 40 gives us the power to dream, or more likely the urging to pray. But let us follow the thought of the dream. If we are truly following the Lord, we cannot be without a dream. It may be to save a poor sinner, give birth to a congregation, or revive a nation built upon the Word of God. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had a famous dream of brotherhood, a confrontation with evil through the power of love. But there are other dreams we have which were experienced by the psalmist. There remains to this day those who dream of being lifted "out of the slimy pit." Life has them in chains which they cannot break alone. They are mired in a filthy situation that needs cleansing. We live in a day of addictions and we better approach it with a dream to undo heavy burdens.

What are we doing for those who have "troubles without number," and know only that their sins have overtaken them, that they see no way out—those whose spirit has failed them? We bring our dream of seeing them come to Jesus and rejoicing. I have seen them dancing in the aisles. But I must see it happening again. We must see the raising of their hands above their heads and shouting, "The Lord

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*Norman Voisey is a retired Lt. colonel in The Salvation Army presently residing in Jefferson, Georgia.*

be exalted!” to the pleasure of the psalmist and the dreamer.

We cannot just do church. By that I mean ritual has an important place, but it must be joined with the dream of great happenings there. We must not rest on the dusty laurels of our denomination. We must see sinners at our mercy seat.

Without Him we can do nothing. Lord, we need to pray. We need to envision a total assault on the enemy who seeks the soul’s destruction. We need to go no further than Jesus for an example of how to pray. It seems the world turns on His prayer, “Father, not my will, but yours be done.” May we pray that through His emptying of self the vision of the “whole world redeeming” will come to pass. We can speed its coming if we pray. For you in a comfortable pew, Jesus asks you to come and die. Are you praying for your enemies as Jesus did from the cross? To pray for your enemies is to give victory over yourself. Find a closet, keep holy time, and “storm the forts of darkness and bring them down.” Bring your large petitions and wait on the Lord who hears your prayer.

To the unbeliever, hear this testimony from St. Bernard of Clairvaux:

I confess, then, though I say it in my foolishness, that the Word visited me, and even very often. But although He very frequently entered into my soul, I have never at any time been sensible of the precise moment of His coming. I have felt that he was present. ... You will ask, then, how, since the ways of His access are thus incapable of being traced, I could know that He was present? But he is living and full of energy, and as soon as He has entered into me He has quickened my sleeping soul, has aroused and softened and goaded my heart, which was in a state of torpor, and hard as a stone. He has begun to pluck up and destroy, to plant and to build, to water the dry places, to illuminate the gloomy spots, to throw open those which strengthen its crooked paths and make its rough places smooth, so that my soul might were

shut close, to inflame with warmth those which were cold, as also to bless the Lord, and all that is within me praise His holy Name (*Life and Works*, ed. J. Mabillon [London 1896] 4.457).

Read a psalm and pray this prayer from Richard Foster:

Surround me with the light of Christ;  
Cover me with the blood of Christ;  
Seal me with the cross of Christ,  
This I ask in the name of Christ. Amen.



# *Sensational Grace*

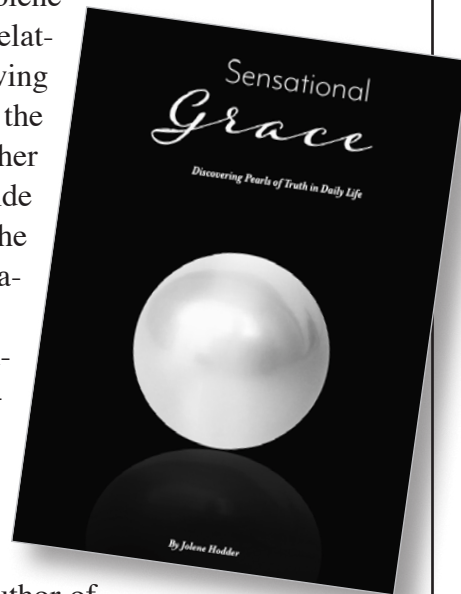
By Commissioner Jolene K. Hodder

In these days where the weight of the world feels heavy, the issues are complicated, and there are few simple answers, Commissioner Jolene Hodder shares everyday, relatable life experiences, drawing out deeper spiritual truths in the process. Follow along as her modern-day parables provide refreshing reminders about the gift of God's unmerited favor—His grace.

Commissioner Jolene Hodder is a Salvation Army officer with a passion for leading others to Christ and then equipping, motivating, and preparing them for effective ministry. Jolene is the author of two published books, *A Bend in the Road* and *Walking in White*. She currently ministers as the USA National Secretary for Program in Alexandria, Virginia.

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# A Long Obedience

## LATE THOUGHTS OF PETER ON THE PREACHING OF LIFE

*Lyell Rader*

### **Introduction**

Peter was old when he wrote from Rome. He is portrayed at the end by the Renaissance artist Caravaggio not as the lordly figure of papal lore, but as a common, angular man of the wharfs and the sea, knotted and furrowed and worldly wise.

The poet Denis Levertov speaks of the “unconscious light in faces I believe are holy.” Was there that too in Peter?

They know themselves nothing different/ from anyone else. This great unknowing/ is part of their holiness. They are always trying/ to share out joy as if it were cake or water,/ something ordinary, not rare at all (*This Great Unknowing: Last Poems*, 1999:49).

Peter was a fisherman right through, of a stock of fisher folk. Archaeologists have uncovered his house in Bethsaida, fishing gear in the yard. Parochial to be sure, he was nonetheless literate, entrepreneurial, and bright. He easily rose by native gifts to prominence in

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*Lyell M. Rader retired from Salvation Army officership as a lt. colonel, and was Promoted to Glory more than five years ago. We are publishing this lecture as it was originally given. There is no bibliography attached.*

any group. His magnetism filled a room or a boat. His exuberance brightens the gospels and dominates the Acts through Chapter 8. The whirling narrative slows eight times to listen to him preach. Then he disappears from the story, as his large, restless heart drove him on journeys through western Turkey, 127,000 square miles, to preach. He reappears with this letter, perhaps twenty-five years later, in Rome awaiting martyrdom.

As all preachers do, Peter preached from experience and he preached, in the first instance, to himself. Here we have a sermon Peter sent to be read by Christians of Jewish heritage in Turkey, strangers in a lonely Diaspora where trouble was brewing. They were gathered in tiny, motley house churches no larger than a modest corps. Their need for courage, for workaday holiness, for mutual deference and care, for witness, for endurance was on Peter's mind. We may be sure that in every sentence he questioned first his own heart, as we must do.

It is thus that he speaks to us, preachers all, about our gospeling lives. We come together under Peter's gaze, to reflect, to recalibrate, to re-celebrate the calling that is ours.

## Keeping the Fire

### 1 Peter 1:1-2:10

In 1914, Sir Ernest Shackleton set out with a crew of thirty to cross Antarctica. Before they could even reach the continent their ship was immobilized in ice and destroyed. For eighteen months the men endured indescribably brutal conditions while they awaited rescue. Ultimately, Shackleton in a small, open boat with two companions, voyaged 1,700 miles to South Georgia Island for help. Reaching land, they then crossed frozen mountains to their destination. When he brought all of his men home safely, he was acclaimed as one of the century's greats. He wrote of his ordeal:

In memories we were rich. We had pierced the veneer of outside things. We had suffered, starved, and triumphed, groveled down yet grasped at glory, grown

bigger in the bigness of the whole. We had seen God in his splendors, heard the text that nature renders. We had reached the naked soul of man (cited in Gordon MacDonald, *Mid Course Correction*, 2000:228).

So Peter.

### Part One: A Great Mercy

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood: May grace and peace be yours in abundance (1 Pe 1:1-2, NRSV).

*Petros apostolos.* No worldly rank, no resume, no honors but this: on a sleepy shore, dimly in the past, there was One who beckoned him to come (Mk 1:16-17) and who, in so short a space, commissioned him to go (Mk 14:16). In memories rich, Peter.

He writes to the marginal, so like the residents of our ARC centers, and bestows an astonishing dignity: chosen ... sanctified ... sprinkled with Jesus' blood. When the letter is read, his hearers will understand the sprinkling by which lepers were cleansed (Lv 14:1-7), by which priests were set apart (Ex 29:20-22; Lv 8:30), by which Israel made a covenant with God (Ex 24:1-8). And in this act there is a sanctification. Their feet are set, perhaps by fits and starts, upon a holy way. That will become Peter's anchor theme.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of

God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable is tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed (1 Pe 1:3-7).

A great mercy, a new birth, a living hope. What God has done, says Peter, is imperishable (unravaged by any invading army), undefiled (unmixed with contaminants), unfading over time. There is a work of gold in them. Their suffering will only enhance its sheen. And to that end, God stands guard.

We cannot but feel the stirring of Peter's old heart.

God guard me from those thoughts men think/ In the mind alone; (wrote the old poet Yeats)/ He that sings a lasting song/ Thinks in a marrow-bone;/ From all that makes a wise old man/ That can be praised of all;/ O what am I that I should not seem/ For the song's sake a fool?/ I pray—for the word is out/ And prayer comes round again—/ That I may seem, though I die old./ A foolish, passionate man (www.poemhunter.com).

### ***Part Two: A Sterner Cleansing***

Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed. Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance. Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; for it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy” (1:13-16).

Holiness is Peter's preoccupation. Out of 105 verses in the epis-

tle, sixty refer to doctrine, sixty-five to conduct. The Message has it: “So roll up your sleeves, put your mind in gear, be totally ready to receive the gift that's coming when Jesus arrives. Don't lazily slip back into those old grooves of evil ... As obedient children, let yourselves be pulled into a way of life shaped by God's life, a life energetic and blazing with holiness (1 Pe 1:13-15).

Along the way, Peter learned to keep the fire burning. It is not natural. We all understand the pathos of Brindley Boon's searching song, written at age fifty-four after years of headquarters appointments.

Have I lost the sense of mission/ That inspired my early zeal,/ When the fire of thy commission/ Did my dedication seal?/ Let me hear thy tender pleading,/ Let me see thy beckoning hand/ Let me feel thee gently leading/ As I bow to thy command. ...

Lord, release that latent passion/ Which in me has dormant lain;/ Recreate a deep compassion/ That will care and care again./ Needy souls are still my mission./ Sinners yet demand my love;/ This must be my life's ambition./ This alone my heart shall move (*Salvation Army Song Book*, 1987:463).

Historian Pamela Walker, author of *Pulling Down the Devil's Kingdom*, commented not long ago: “I took a look at a Salvation Army web page and couldn't find anything on holiness theology. I thought that was amazing because you can't understand The Salvation Army without understanding holiness theology” (In Peter Farthing, *Officer*, September-October, 2009:19).

Peter Farthing in a recent *Officer* article describes a front-page illustration in an 1893 *War Cry* of Salvationists kneeling in a New York street, meeting as an unseen cathedral encircles them. He quotes Diane Winston: “The way the Army visualized it was as if there were an invisible cathedral tenting out over the street where people were praying, very much sacralising the space that the Army folks were

praying in. That was part and parcel of the Army's holiness theology which believed that everything could be sacralised" (In Farthing, 20).

Peter continues:

If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish.... Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. You have been born anew. Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation (1 Pe 1:17-19, 22-23; 2:1-2).

"You know that you were ransomed"—a poignant thought to Peter's first hearers whose forebears were taken captive and transported as workers to these regions some 150 years before. They knew what it was to be slaves, and some, perhaps, what it was to be bought out of slavery. In Peter's metaphor, slavery stands for that "dead-end, empty-headed life you grew up in" (Message). And the ransom paid? The lamb without defect (Is 53:7).

There is a grace already received—"you have been born anew ... purified"—and a grace yet to be grasped—"Rid yourselves ... of all malice ... all guile, insincerity, envy and all slander." It is a baptismal metaphor: Literally, "strip yourself," as once they did, physically, at water's edge, laying aside the clothing of the former life, entering into the waters of death and resurrection, and donning the white garment of the new life.

The sins are relational. The corps officer, administrator, finds them in every congregation—alas, sometimes in our own hearts. We are indebted to General Albert Orsborn for his transparent commentary on his song, "Savior, if my feet have faltered," written at age thirty-seven when he was already divisional commander in South London. When he learned that his division was to be subdivided, he became, by his own account, resentful and rebellious. He protested against the proposal and in the act lost his sense of the Spirit's pleasure. One day, running for a bus, he fell, injuring his knee. Convalescing at Highbury Nursing Home he heard officers in another room singing during their prayers, "Nothing from his altar I would keep./ To his cross of suffering I would leap." "As I yielded and quietly joined in the song," the General recalled, "the tautness of my will relaxed, and I began to be pliant and submissive to the Holy Spirit. ... I wept." And so a long song was born, first used at officers' meetings at West Croydon:

Savior, if my feet have faltered/ On the pathway of  
the cross,/ If my purposes have altered,/ Or my gold  
be mixed with dross,/ O forbid me not thy service,/   
Keep me yet in thy employ./ Pass me through a sterner  
cleansing/ If I may but give thee joy! (*Salvation  
Army Song Book*, 1987:522).

It is said that, some years later, a young officer questioned the General about his choice of language in the song. Would not a "deeper cleansing" have been the preferable phrase. "A deeper cleansing may have worked for you, Lieutenant," responded the General, "but what I needed was a sterner cleansing." Such was Peter's point. It is the holiness you and I preach from our pulpits.

Born anew we are, indwelt by the Holy Spirit in a moment of grace. But there are sterner cleansings along the holiness road. "... That you may grow into salvation." The *Message* catches Peter's sense:

You've had a taste of God. Now, like infants at the  
breast, drink deep of God's pure kindness. Then

you'll grow up mature and whole in God.

### ***Part Three: A Spiritual House***

Come to him, a Living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like Living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light (1 Pe 2:4-5, 9).

There were days, no doubt, when Peter would recall with rueful amusement that Jesus had nicknamed him "the Rock" (Jn 1:42; Mt 16:18) and on the same occasion, called him a "stumbling block." One thinks of the ambivalence of Dietrich Bonhoeffer awaiting execution in a Nazi prison. He wrote,

Am I really what others tell me?/ Or am I only what I myself know of me?/ Troubled, homesick, ill, like a bird in a cage,/ gasping for breath, as though one strangled me,/ hungering for colors, for flowers, for songs of birds,/ thirsting for kind words, for human company, quivering with anger at despotism and petty insults,/ anxiously waiting for great events,/ helplessly worrying about friends far away,/ empty and tired of praying, of thinking, of working,/ exhausted and ready to bid farewell to it all./ Who am I? This or the other? Lonely questions mock me./ Who I really am, you know me, I am thine, O God! (*Voices in the Night: Prison Poems of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 1999:45-46).

As Nero's noose tightens and Peter will soon be consigned to the Mamertine (still there by the grounds of the emperor's circus), he is thinking of home, the spiritual household to which he and his hearers belong. And he uses the metaphor of living stones with the telling line, "... Let yourselves be built into a spiritual house."

When I recall the cinderblock corps of my youth, a conversation comes to my mind from missionary years. I was seated in a little concert hall in Colombo next to the venerable Colonel Burton Pedlar, Territorial Commander in Pakistan. Our conversation had gone to the subject of difficulties in ministry, obstacles, disappointments, reverses, so familiar in ARC ministry. "We build," he said at one point, with a certain weariness and an unselfconscious wisdom, "we build with the bricks we have." Yet after all, it is not in our hands to build, but God's.

### **Honoring the Other**

#### ***1 Peter 2:11-3:12***

Charles Houston, who died this year, was a medical doctor and mountain climber who led expeditions across the most treacherous of mountainscapes. On his last venture, just short of the targeted peak, he discovered one of his band of five had developed life-threatening blood clots. They prepared immediately to return to base camp but encountered savage storms. Their progress across razor edge mountains and ice fields was hampered by the care of their ill comrade. It was uncertain if any would survive. One night he disappeared, taken perhaps by a silent avalanche or, more likely, Houston concluded, by his decision to sacrifice himself for the safety of the others. The harrowing descent proceeded, each man cinched to a single rope, each dependent upon the skill, the will, the strength of the other. Upon their return home, Houston wrote a book celebrating what he called "the fellowship of the rope."



### ***Part One: Accepting Authority***

Peter in his epistle now comes to a second major theme: a reasonable deference to authority: in the case of citizens (2:13); of household (2:18); of wives (3:1).

Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul. Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge. For the Lord's sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme, or of governors... (1 Pe 2:11-16).

Slaves, accept the authority of your masters with all deference, not only those who are kind and gentle but also those who are harsh. ... If you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you would follow in his steps. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls (1 Pe 2:18, 20b-21, 24-25).

Wives, in the same way, accept the authority of your husband, so that even if some of them do not obey the word, they may be won over without a word by their wives' conduct, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Husbands, in the same way, show consideration for your wives in your life together, paying honor to the woman ... since they too are also heirs of the gracious gift of life—so that

nothing may hinder your prayers (1 Pe 3:1-2, 7).

Peter's setting is crucial to our understanding. There was, first the mounting threat under Nero. It is thought that Peter was writing shortly after the fire of Rome, AD 64, rumored to have been at the instigation of Nero, but blamed upon Christians. It is reported that in the aftermath, the mad emperor rolled Christians in pitch and set them aflame in his gardens to illuminate his night revels. It was at that very place that Peter would spend his last days.

The mobs of the Roman cities knew what had happened in Rome. There were always these slanderous stories against the Christians. There were times when the mob loved blood and reveled in a lynching. From now on the Christians were to live under threat (Barclay, 178).

In August, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom added India to its list of countries (Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Egypt, Indonesia, Laos, Russia, Somalia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Venezuela) it is most closely watching. The commission said the Indian government fails to punish those who commit violence against religious minorities. Particular reference was made to events in Orissa: 3,000 Christians missing, 77 burned or hacked to death, 4,000 homes destroyed, 70,000 homeless. Lalji Nayak is an example. Ordered at knife-point to renounce his faith, he was then axed to death. "Even though he was bleeding, he refused to abandon his faith," a witness said (*Voice of the Martyrs Special Update*, December, 2008:1; *Christianity Today*, October, 2009:8).

Christian slaves owned by pagan masters, and Christian women married to pagan men were particularly vulnerable. While they could not join in pagan exercises and practices, they could accept authority in their situation. In the end, influence of impeccable conduct (fine, lovely, 2:12) would win the day. It always does. The Jesus of the foot-rag and bowl, Peter remembers biting, is the model (Jn 13:3-4).

### ***Part Two: Bestowing Dignity***

As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil. Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor (1 Pe 2:11-17).

Peter's summation is applicable always and everywhere. The *Message* renders this: "Exercise your freedom by serving God, not by breaking the rules. Treat everyone you meet with dignity. Love your spiritual family. Revere God. Respect the government."

The admonition to honor everyone is all the more remarkable in light of the status of slaves in Peter's society. "There can be no friendship nor justice toward inanimate things; Indeed, not even towards a horse or an ox, nor yet towards a slave as a slave," wrote Aristotle. "... Master and slave have nothing in common; a slave is a living tool..." (Barclay, 250). The dignity of persons was a groundbreaking concept, illustrated by the early Christian record of the aristocrat Perpetua and the slave Felicitas going to their martyrdom, hand in hand.

As St. Paul put it, "Honor one another above yourselves" (Ro 12:10, NIV). Peter himself is the exemplar. He remembers the shameful dispute that erupted in the Upper Room, "as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest" and Jesus' response: "... The greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves" (Lk 22:24-27). We may suspect that it was the work of a moment by which the choleric, self-assured, pre-eminent Peter of the gospels became the quiet, avuncular elder of this epistle. However it occurred, the transformation is startling. Observe, for example, the humility by which he acknowledges the aid of Silvanus (Silas), in writing the epistle (5:12). F. W. Beare wrote:

The epistle is quite obviously the work of a man of letters, skilled in all the devices of rhetoric, and able to draw on an extensive, and even learned vocabulary. He is a stylist of no ordinary capacity, and he

writes some of the best Greek in the whole New Testament, far smoother and more literary than that of the highly-trained Paul (Barclay, 169).

Peter handed over the headship of the church to James, brother of Jesus, as an itinerant evangelist to the boondocks. Although they had their sharp disagreements (Ga 2:11), St. Paul seems to have been an awkward saint, Peter made peace and worked out a comity whereby he would evangelize among the Jews and Paul among the Gentiles. The scholar Ben Witherington suggests that the places named in Peter's greeting (1:1), identifying the route of his letter, may represent the advice of Paul, who knew the roads well, as to how best Peter might reach his target audiences. Peter's manner could easily have been one of command, but his preference is touchingly that of soft-suasion and example.

### ***Part Three: Holding Community***

Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing (1 Pe 3:8-9).

Now the summary: Be one in seeking consensus (Jn 17:20-23) tuning-in to the feelings, experiences, suffering of others (Jn 12:1-8), extending family love (Jn 13:34-35), making a habit of mercy (Lk 10:29-37), taking the lover seat (Lk 14:7-11), returning blessing for evil (Mt 6:12, 14-15).

Several years ago, Robert Kegan of the Harvard School of Education was invited to speak at an Episcopal conference on the subject "Will our children have faith?" An observant Jew, he began,

I have long admired the relentlessly non-fairy-tale nature of Christianity which at its graphical elemen-



tal core, Jesus on the cross, refused to let us hide from the troubling question that suffering provokes.

He recalled that at the beginning of his practice as a psychiatrist he would encounter people for the first time, find himself sometimes aghast at the awful things that had happened to them and think to himself: “You are in such great pain. It’s so awful. You should really go talk to a psychotherapist.” And then he would remember that they were and that he was. Then a second thought would come: “Well, but what do you think I can do about it?” He said it was by a sort of miracle that he came to understand what he could offer: the power of attending (from the Latin *tendere*, to hold).

Kegan said he often asks parents to keep a log even for a few days of the nature of their response to their children. Most people are astounded by how much of their conversation is essentially managerial, instructive: “Do this now.” Restrictive: “Don’t do that.” Interrogative: “Have you done this?” Cautionary: “Be careful not to.”

It’s too rare to be in the company of another person about whom I feel not just that the person is friendly, on my side, intends my good, but understands what my experience feels like to me, walks with me for a few moments in my journey and its depths. ...

The main point I’m trying to make is that if you want your faith to have children, you must think, “How can I provide for them the special experience of being well-attended to that is so extraordinarily nourishing, and is in too short a supply?” The idea of the church as a holding environment, understanding the sacred in the act of attending ([www.episcopalchurch.org/48931\\_4601](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/48931_4601)).

We end with a Japanese story by the prominent writer Akitagawa Lyunosuke. It is set in the world of Shakyamuni Buddha and represents a counterpoint to the evangel of Peter.

It begins with the Buddha strolling at the edge of a lotus pond in Paradise. He sees far below in Hell a bandit and murderer named Kandata. Because in his miserable life Kandata performed one good deed in sparing a spider from death, the Buddha has compassion on him, and lowers a single strand of spider’s thread to him as he swims and sinks in a pool of blood and glistening needles.

Kandata grasps the thread and begins to climb, hundreds of thousands of miles, between Hell and Paradise. He is making good progress when, casually glancing over his shoulder, he discovers that other sinners are climbing as well. Why, the strand will break, he thinks. With all of this weight, he will tumble down again. So he shouts, “Hey, you sinners! This spider thread is mine. Whose permission did you have to get up here? Get down. Get down!” Alas, his commotion causes the thread to snap. Down, down, he falls.

The author concludes:

Shakyamuni Buddha was watching everything from the edge of the lotus pond in Paradise. Seeing Kandata sink into the pond of blood, he was very sad and resumed his walk (In C.S. Song, *Theology from the Womb of Asia*, 1986:134).

## Redeeming the Pain

### *1 Peter 3:13-4:19*

When Kensico Cemetery had grown hard and gray in late winter, I stood in a light rain with a cluster of family, at a tiny grave site. Upon the burial stand was a coffin hardly larger than a shoebox with the remains of our niece’s stillborn child. The hymn, the prayers, the committal, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. The mother was silent and shrunken with grief. We shivered together in the wind and the pathos. “Though thunders roll and darkened be the sky” - Lawley’s words came to me - “I’ll trust in thee!/ Though joys may fade and prospects droop and die/ I’ll trust in thee!” (*Salvation Army Song Book*, 1987:761).

I have to look in cracks and crevices (writes Rod Jellima)./ Don't tell me how God's mercy/ Is as wide as the ocean, as deep as the sea./ I already believe it, but that infinite prospect/ gets farther away the more we mouth it./ I thank you for lamenting his absences - from marriages going mad, from the deaths of your son and mine, from the inescapable terrors of history: Treblinka, Viet Nam, September Eleven. It's hard to celebrate/ his invisible Presence in the sacrament/ while seeing his visible absence from the world.

This must be why mystics and poets record/ the slender incursions of splintered light/ echoes, fragments, odd words and phrases/ like flashes through darkened hallways./ These stabs remind me that the proud/ and portly old church is really only/ that cut green slip grafted into a tiny nick/ that merciful God himself slit into the stem/ of his chosen Judah. The thin and tenuous/ thread we hang by, so astonishing/ is the metaphor I need at the shoreline/ of all those immeasurable oceans of love (*Weavings*, 25:1:31).

In *A Grief Observed*, C.S. Lewis voiced his continuing agonies at the death of his wife, Joy Davidman:

Tonight all the hells of young grief have opened again; the mad words, the bitter resentment, the fluttering in the stomach, the nightmare unreality, the wallow-in tears. For in grief nothing "stays put." One keeps on emerging from a phase, but it always recurs. Round and round. Everything repeats. Am I going in circles, or dare I hope I am on a spiral? But if a spiral, am I going up or down it?

How often - will it be for always? - how often will the vast emptiness astonish me like a complete novelty and make me say, "I never realized my loss till this

moment?" The same leg is cut off time after time. The first plunge of the knife into the flesh is felt again and again (1961:56-57).

Pain has not changed from Peter's time. There is a lot of pain in an ARC. At least one in six have a mental disorder (Dr. Nancy Snyderman, MSNBC, October 21, 2009). Physical injuries, disabilities, illnesses are rife. But in our ministries as in Peter's it is the emotional pain that is most pervasive. What does the preacher do?

### ***Part One: Manifold Trials***

Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil (1 Pe 3:13-17; see 1:6).

There is no illusion here of the sort Neil Postman describes:

Today we must look to the city of Las Vegas, Nevada, as a metaphor of our national character and aspiration, its symbol a 30-foot-high cardboard picture of a slot machine and a chorus girl. For Las Vegas is a city entirely devoted to the idea of entertainment, and as such proclaims the spirit of a culture in which all public discourse increasingly takes the form of entertainment. Our politics, our religion, news, athletics, education, and commerce have been trans-

formed into congenial adjuncts of show business, largely without protest or even much popular notice (cited in Chris Hedges, *Empire of Illusion*, 2009:65).

The preacher Peter attends to the manifold (many-colored) trials of his people. The believers were trapped. Peter understood the maligning and abuse, the threat, the depression, the shame. Their pagan neighbors disdained them because it was believed that their impiety could bring, by the vengeance of the gods, earthquake, famine, disease, flood or war. Believing wives and slaves in pagan households were especially scorned. Their faith was held to be a “depraved, excessive superstition” (Pliny the Younger to Emperor Trajan in Ben Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, 2007:197).

C.S. Lewis, in his mourning for his wife, confessed:

If I had really cared, as I thought I did, about the sorrows of the world, I should not have been so overwhelmed when my own sorrow came. It has been an imaginary faith playing with innocuous counters labeled “Illness,” “Pain,” “Death,” and “Loneliness.” I thought I trusted the rope until it mattered to me whether it would bear me. Now it matters, and I find I didn’t (37).

But Peter fully walked in the sandals of his people; he was a sufferer too. He would understand the peculiar pressures and pains that attend the ministry. As Charles Spurgeon put it:

It is not necessary by quotations from the biographies of eminent ministers to prove that seasons of fearful prostration have fallen to the lot of most, if not all of them. The life of Luther might suffice to give a thousand instances, and he was by no means of the weaker sort. His great spirit was often in the seventh heaven and exultation, and as frequently on

the borders of despair. His very death-bed was not free from tempests, and he sobbed himself into his last sleep like a great wearied child. Instead of multiplying cases, let us dwell upon the reasons why these things are permitted; why it is that the children of light sometimes walk in the thick darkness; why the heralds of the daybreak find themselves at times in tenfold night (*Lectures to my Students*, 1954:154).

Among the reasons: “... They are men [and women]. ... Our work, when earnestly undertaken, lays us open to attacks in the direction of depression. ... Our position in the church will also conduce to this...” (154-158).

A survey of ministers who had left the local pastorate in Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian and Assemblies of God denominations revealed that the top motivating factors in all denominations were: “I felt drained by demands.” “I felt lonely and isolated.” “I did not feel supported by denominational officials.” “I felt bored and constrained” (*Christian Century*, December 13, 2005:33).

Peter writes, “Do not be distressed [stirred up, shaken, thrown into confusion]” (3:13). What then?

### ***Part Two: Manifold Grace***

For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. ... Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same intention (for whoever has suffered in the flesh has finished with sin), so as to live for the rest of your earthly life no longer by human desires but by the will of God (1 Pe 3:18; 4:1-2).

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though

something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you. Let those suffering in accordance with God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator, while continuing to do good (1 Pe 4:12-13,19).

Next to the bombed hulk of the old Coventry Cathedral, stands the new. You enter through radiant crystalline doors and walk down a nave dappled by a thousand hues of sunlight, drawn, transfixed, by a tapestry above the high altar, an extravagance of color, perhaps thirty feet in height, depicting the ascendant Christ. It is ancient tapestry that Peter seems to have in mind as he depicts the dark, grim hues of trial exchanged for the vibrant colors of grace.

To [suffering] you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed (2:21-24; see texts above).

William Stuntz used to feel guilty for being so lucky. He was healthy, secure, married to the only woman he had ever loved, the father of three. Then nine years ago, on a family vacation, stopping to repair a punctured tire, he injured his back. Ever since—in spite of operations, injections, physical therapy, psychotherapy and thousands of pills—he has been in chronic pain. Shortly after the accident, he accepted a professorship at Harvard Law School. In the transition, the family began to unravel. A child suffered a life-threat-

ening disease. The marriage fell apart. In February, 2008, a tumor was discovered; then surgery, chemotherapy and a prognosis of death within two years.

He gave a parting word to a Christian magazine, entitled, "Three Gifts for Hard Times." The first gift:

... God usually doesn't remove life's curses. Instead, he redeems them. That is our God's trademark. Down to go up, life from death, beauty from ugliness: the pattern is everywhere. That familiar pattern is also a great gift to those who suffer disease and loss—the loss may remain, but good will come from it, and the good will be larger than the suffering it redeems.

The second gift:

Jesus' life and death ... change the character of suffering, give it dignity and weight and even, sometimes, a measure of beauty. ... His suffering made the enterprise of living with pain and illness larger and better than it had been before.

The third gift:

Our God remembers even his most forgettable children. ... [He holds us] close to his heart (*Christianity Today*, August, 2009:44).

### ***Part Three: Manifold Gifts***

The end of all things is near; therefore be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers. Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to

one another without complaining. Like stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen (1 Pe 4:7-11).

We read nothing of Peter's wife. Has she died? Any children would be long grown and flown. There was nothing to hold Peter to Bethsaida. For decades he had been on the move with no continuing home, his only emotional support the fragile fellowships of Christians along the way. With a clarity which only comes from a long obedience, Peter saw that we must breast the storms together. There is a manifold grace expressed among us in grace—gifts of speaking and serving and withal, loving.

Paul's Corinthian letters had been in circulation for at least ten years. It would seem that his understanding of the body, its parts analogous to the gifts of the church, stands behind Peter's words. Paul had written: "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable ..." (1 Co 12:21-22).

There was One who held the weak to his heart, Peter remembered—the sinner (Jn 7:53-8:11), the poor (Mk 2:13; 3:9, 20, 32, etc.), the Gentile (Mk 7:24-30), the woman (Lk 13:10-17), the child (Mk 9:33-37), the disabled (Lk 14:15-24), the broken-hearted (Mk 5:22-43). Love, Peter knows, covers a multitude of disparagements.

Pain is rife in an ARC center—and weakness. There is a sub-text here: whose are the gifts of speaking and service? Jürgen Moltmann writes of St. Paul what could be applied to Peter as well:

Accounts of the charismatic movement often sound like American success stories. But "the religion of

success" makes no religious sense in the pains, the failures and the disablements of life.... Paul expects that the congregations will include the strong and the weak, wise people and foolish ones, the handicapped and the non-handicapped. No one is useless and of no value. Nobody can be dispensed with. So the weak, the foolish and the people with disabilities also have their special charisma in the community of Christ's people.

In the pains, slights and disablements, and in "the sufferings of the Spirit," God's *suffering power* is revealed. So there is no good diaconal, or charitable, service given by the non-handicapped to the handicapped unless they have previously perceived and accepted the diaconal ministry of the handicapped to the non-handicapped. Congregations without any disabled members are disabled and disabling congregations (*The Spirit of Life*, 1992:192-193).

Not long after Peter wrote his letter, King Mirian of Georg was converted through the witness of a slave girl named Nina, from the Georgian colony of Cappadocia. Eventually, the whole country officially adopted the faith around 330. At the Sioni Cathedral in Tbilisi one can see a cross made from a vine which, it is said, was brought to Georgia by Nina. It represents the conviction of Peter that in the cross is unleashed a grace which reverses the curse of sin and death with all its attendant pain. A peculiarity of this cross is that the arms point downward at a 45-degree angle, a reminder that Christ was brought to the Georgians by a humble slave girl. Manifold grace for, and from, the weak.

## Tending the Flock

### 1 Peter 5:1-14

The year before The Salvation Army was born, Joseph de Veuster,



a young Belgian, entered the priesthood in Hawaii. Colonization had brought to the islands diseases previously unknown: influenza, syphilis, leprosy. And it was the last scourge that caused the king to set apart the island of Molokai for its sufferers. Alas, the place became a charnel house of cruel neglect. Joseph (now known as Father Damien) was drawn to its misery. He settled on the island, at the age of 33, with no expectation of ever leaving. He built homes, grew food, nursed wounds, made coffins, led a preaching life.

The proximity was his undoing. One evening, soaking his feet in a pot of hot water, he found that he could not feel the heat. At the worship service, shortly afterward, he began his homily, “We lepers. . . .” He died at forty-nine on the island. When Americans are thinking of taxes on April 15, Hawaiians are remembering Father Damien.

Peter’s words here are thick with memory too of the one who “did not cling to his prerogatives ... but stripped himself of all privilege ... humbled himself by living a life of utter obedience, even to the extent of dying” (Phil 2:6-8, JBP).

### ***Part One: The Crook***

Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it—not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away. In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders (1 Pe 5:1-5a).

The language is endearing. Peter stands on level ground as an elder among elders. He seems to invent a word of comradeship—co-elder—which appears nowhere else in the New Testament. “Shepherd the flock of God,” he says, “which is allotted to you.”

Every line that follows is a reliving of the halcyon years with Jesus, now three decades past: the sufferings (Lk 22:61-62), the glory (Lk 9:32), the shepherding (Lk 15:4-7; Jn 10:1-18; 21:15-17); the serving (Mk 10:35-45).

Of all the insidious influences that would assail the church in generations immediately following that of Peter, the menace most nearly disastrous, wrote the great historian Kenneth Scott Latourette, was “that presented by the kind of power on which the Roman Empire was founded ... in complete contradiction to that seen in the cross.”

From the beginning, pride of place and the desire for control were chronic temptations. Even before Christianity was accorded toleration by the state [313 AD] and while it was still subject to chronic or intermittent persecutions, not a few of its bishops were accused of striving for prestige and were entering into intrigues and exerting the kind of power which was akin to that of the dignitaries of the state. Some of the bishops were surrounded by pomp and maintained households and a manner of life which rivaled those of civil officials. Indeed, it is a question whether any visible institution, especially if it becomes large, can avoid falling victim in part to the trends in the direction of the power which crucified Jesus (*A History of Christianity*, 1953:262).

### ***Part Two: The Apron***

And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. Discipline yourselves, keep alert. like a roaring lion your adversary the devil

prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering (1 Pe 5:5-9).

“Clothe yourselves with humility,” Peter says, and the very word “clothe” in the Greek, depicts the slave’s apron which Jesus used on a bittersweet Passover night to wash the feet of his feckless few (Jn 12:1-14). “Cast all your anxiety on [God], because he cares for you.” The paraphrase of J. B. Phillips is especially poignant because he so often felt helpless against his constitutional depression: “You can throw the whole weight of your anxieties upon him, for you are his personal concern.”

“Discipline yourselves. Keep *awake*.” Peter would remember how the word was used in the shadows of Gethsemane: “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Mk 14:37-38).

“Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around.... Resist him...” Had not Jesus said, “Simon, Simon, listen!”? “Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.” Strangely, the verse “Like a roaring lion. ...” (5:8) became the most cited of all verses in 1 Peter in later literature. It became the main scriptural reading for the close of the day.

Peter does not, simplistically, attribute our trials to the devil. Yet he is aware that we live in a force field. Our human foibles, vulnerabilities, failings interact with natural law and supernatural agencies in ways the Bible is reticent to explain.

The story of William Carey, the father of modern missions, is instructive. In 1800, he held his first baptismal service at the sacred Ganges after seven years’ effort in India. At the time, his wife Dorothy, who had gone to India against her will, was deemed “wholly deranged.” John Thomas, Carey’s partner who had delayed the mission due to his credit problems had also gone mad. A missionary observer gives this account of the baptism: “When Carey led Krish-

na [his first convert] and his own son Felix down into the water of baptism, the ravings of Thomas in the schoolhouse on the one side, and of Mrs. Carey on the other, mingled with the strains of the Bengali hymn of praise” (Ruth Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irion Joya*, 2004:122). Carey set about his work, organizing schools, establishing a large printing enterprise, translating the whole Bible into Bengali, Sanskrit and Marathi, helping in other whole Bible translation and translating the New Testament and portions into many more languages and dialects. Meanwhile, he was pummeled by events: the death of two wives and a son, destruction by fire of manuscripts representing years of toil, mental illness of co-workers, squabbling among missionaries, and a final straw, false allegations of adultery. The secret of endurance and an unequaled legacy of 41 years in India’s force field? Said Carey: “I can plod.”

### ***Part Three: The Cross***

And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen and establish you. To him be the power forever and ever. Amen. ... Through Silvanus, whom I consider a faithful brother, I have written this short letter to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it. ... Peace to all of you who are in Christ (1 Pe 5:10-12,14).

Peter ends at the cross where he began. It is the emblem, the assurance, that God will restore (Jn 21:15-17). He uses a word denoting the mending of nets (Mk 1:19), the supplying of what is missing, the repairing of what is awry. The grace received in our pain, says Peter, will support, strengthen, and establish us.

Stuff happens. Sometimes it is our own stuff.

The Quaker educator Parker Palmer points out that the word *humus*, decayed vegetable matter that feeds the roots of plants, comes from the same root as *humility*.



It helps me understand that the humiliating events of life, the events that leave “mud on my face” or that “make my name mud” may create the fertile soil in which something new can grow (*Let Your Life Speak*, 2000:103).

We cannot forget that Peter was what Gordon MacDonald calls a “broken-world person.” He had a collapse which brought the most scalding regret. MacDonald would know. The renowned pastor of Grace Chapel, Lexington, MA, president of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship wrote in *Rebuilding Your Broken World*:

I will always call myself a broken-world person because many years ago, I betrayed the covenants of my marriage. There was a moment when I brought deep sorrow to my wife, to my children, and to friends and others who had trusted me for years.

In an epilogue to a new edition, he recalls the “dark days” of rebuilding.

There is a large part of me that has always wanted to put those days completely behind me. They were much too painful, too humiliating for words. Many people, who have never tasted strangulating failure, do not understand the inner battle of the broken world person. There is this tension between wanting to forget, and yet knowing that the past is part of a strange “credential” of grace. ... Our publisher ... once said to Gail, “Your pain is a stewardship to be used as a pathway for others to find grace.”

Then he turns to the present, bearing witness to God’s restoration:

Today Gail and I divide our lives into two parts: pre-1987 and post-1987. We both know that the post-

1987 period of our lives has been radically different from the earlier period. We know things, treasure things, prioritize things totally differently today. We are very different people—not simply because we are much older but because we see a lot of life through grace-oriented eyes.

Our marriage relationship is different. Today I love Gail more than I could ever have imagined. Occasionally I revisit those dark days and realize that more than a few couples, facing our situation, would most likely have separated and gone their own ways. Or they could have frozen what relationship there was in anger and vindictiveness. Those were never options—thank God—for us. From the very beginning, there was only one agenda: find out what went wrong, make it right, and build on the grace.

Our view of the Christian life is different. We know how easy it is to lose what God has given. We know how volatile and destructive sin can be. We know how important it is to maintain a rigorous spiritual life. We also know the importance of “community”. ...

Our view of the Christian ministry has changed. We know that then are countless men and women living in the public eye of Christian work who are struggling with aches of the heart, with temptations, with secrets that are erosive if not catastrophic. We know that there are large elements of the Christian movement - unfortunately - who have no idea how to practice restorative grace and therefore, by negligence or spite, allow restorable “failures” to drop off the edge and disappear. ...

A final word to broken-world people themselves.

There is a *tomorrow* (1990/2003:xvii, 245-247).

And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen and establish you. To him be the power forever and ever. Amen (1 Pe 5:10-11).

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Lt. Colonel Tim Foley has been a follower of Jesus Christ since 1978. He was commissioned as a Salvation Army officer in 1982. He currently serves as the Divisional Leader for Officer Development in the Northwest Division of the Western Territory. He holds a master's degree in theology and a doctorate degree in spiritual formation for ministry leaders.



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# A Practical Method for the Modern-Day Missions

*John Morrow*

As I navigated through the busy parking lot of the grocery store, I witnessed cars zooming past me and others came to a stop rather abruptly to allow pedestrians to safely navigate through the flow of traffic, and I suddenly came to the realization that I could have planned better. It was near the busy holiday season, and shopping was at its height. Grabbing the one item I needed, I weaved my way around crowds of people to the checkout line only to discover there was someone in front of me with a cart full of groceries. She looked at me and said, “You can go in front of me since you only have one item.” Her offer was the most pleasant encounter I had yet to experience that morning at the store. On one of the busiest shopping days of the year, I graciously accepted her offer and proceeded in front of her. However, I must admit, I wanted to say, “That’s okay, I am patient.” After all, patience is a mark of the spiritual fruit of love. However, she was also displaying selflessness and consideration of others. This too was Christ-like. This exchange was a classic example of the appearance of two Spirit-filled and Christ-like Christians acting kindly towards one another. However, not one mention of Christ or church was uttered during this brief exchange. It was kind, heartwarming, and refreshing for such a busy and stressful atmosphere. Was this of the Spirit? It seems to contradict all we have

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been told regarding a sinful world without Jesus.

Such experiences are common. Kindness infiltrating unexpected spaces does happen within a world dubbed to be “sinful.” This experience leads me to ponder the humanistic ability to exhibit and practice acts of kindness. Was she a Christian? Was she filled with the Spirit and thus able to exemplify Christ-like unselfishness and patience? I don’t have the answers to these questions. What if people who display random acts of love, patience, kindness, goodness, and unselfishness have no confessional and repentant faith towards Christ? Apart from nominal and confessional faith in Christ, should we deny the possibility of humanity to exhibit Christ-like fruit of the Spirit towards one another?

I want to invite you on a path of processing such questions through a lens of understanding the possibility that God’s influence is on places and people yet to confessionally receive Christ, and I will provide a practical method for missionaries (whether locally planted or abroad) to bring into focus the possibility that there can be recognizable fingerprints of Christ-like influence through the Spirit. I ask my theologian friends to patiently bear with me as I am in no way contradicting the idea of original sin, which refers to the idea that humanity is born into an “inherited” sinful nature from Adam such that we cannot help but sin.<sup>1</sup> Also, I hear the following throbbing question: “What about Psalm 53:1, ‘... there is no one who does good’?”<sup>2</sup> Or, “What about Romans 3:23 conveying ‘all’ are sinners?”<sup>3</sup> These objections are welcomed at the table for discussion, yet we will continue to explore the possibility of recognizing the Spirit at work in spaces still in need of Christ.

I believe that there is evidence within humankind’s existence and interpersonal relationships that point to a fingerprint of God’s spiritual influence, and this fingerprint is on a trajectory towards intersecting with the revelation of Christ in this space. Some might call this “prevenient grace,” meaning the process by which the Holy Spirit is working on people’s hearts to “bring them to salvation through faith in Christ.”<sup>4</sup> Prevenient grace is traditionally taught and understood as conviction of sin. To take it a step further, I wish to exhort other believers in Christ to explore how to connect acts of human kindness, along with Christ-like characteristics, to the origi-

nal mark and fingerprint of God when it is visible and recognizable within humanity.

### On the Culture of Humanity

It is a continuous journey to discover how people are shaped, motivated, and conditioned by the world around them. Throughout the world, survival plays an essential role in one’s worldview. Human beings tend to conduct themselves in such a way that enhances their own survival, and this will lead to the development of diverse cultures and religious perspectives reflecting how people understand and interpret their known world.

While studying various cultures can be interesting, it is also a bit troubling. It’s not easy to be exposed to religious beliefs and practices that do not harmonize with our own traditional Christian views. In response to this tension, it is helpful and worthwhile to explore how culture intersects with God’s overall mission for humanity. By studying how the Holy Spirit moves in relationship with God’s overall will, agenda, and methodology, there seems to be a culture of the Spirit that transcends my own limited frame of reference for both traditional Christianity and methodologies pertaining to evangelism, and this culture of the Holy Spirit has played an influence on recognizable fruit displayed within humanity.

Prior to continuing further with this study, it’s worth mentioning that there can be, but not always, a distinction between the culture of the Spirit and “belonging” to the Spirit, as proposed by Michael Green. The culture of the Spirit can overlap and move in both spaces, which I refer to as inner and outer circles. The Holy Spirit culture can be known through those who do belong to the Spirit (inner circle), but also, the Spirit can be present and working among those who have yet to belong to the Spirit (outer circle).

### The Marks of the Holy Spirit

In his book, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Green conveys five ways to articulate how one belongs to the Spirit, according to the New Testament. These aspects include:

1. Adopted and Sealed.
2. Earnest.
3. First-Fruits.
4. Assurance.
5. Christian Community.

By the Spirit, we are “adopted” and “sealed”<sup>5</sup> in Christ as we await our future hope. Another term he uses is “earnest.”<sup>6</sup> In other words, living in the present while earnestly waiting for a future hope is a mark of those who belong to the Spirit. Also, the concept “first-fruits,” is used as the Holy Spirit has brought forth God’s first-fruits of the harvest.<sup>7</sup> The last word is “assurance,” which signifies we are already “assured” of God and still waiting for that which is to come.<sup>8</sup> Finally, the Spirit unites a Christian community in fellowship and the Spirit equips the community of disciples for mission.<sup>9</sup> These marks are essential for understanding how God’s people belong to God within the culture of the Spirit. This is an inner circle. They are consciously aware of the Spirit’s presence and are aware that they belong to Christ.

I want to suggest that there is an outer circle, and this expresses the idea of influence more than belonging; the culture of the Spirit that can overflow and extend beyond those who belong to the Spirit. As generosity begets generosity, the Spirit’s influence is contagious. The culture of the Spirit can impact the lives of those who have yet to receive the Christ as Savior. Where the Spirit of God is present and working, an image of the Christ is also being formed. Missionaries are entrusted with a responsibility to make Christ known in various contexts where perhaps the Spirit has already preceded their message. While time would not permit a thorough explanation of the role of atonement and justification in this process, which would move from influence to belonging, it is sufficient to explore how the Spirit is manifested through humankind in various times and places. Therefore, culture does not always have to conflict with the culture and movement of the Spirit.

For the Church, at least the churches reflecting my known context, there is quite a bit of discussion regarding culture as it pertains to that which is right and wrong. Disagreement varies pertaining to

Christianity’s role in either opposing culture or adapting to it, that is, without compromising the essential truths of the Christian faith. It is quite possible that in such arguments the tension reflects specific church forms and traditions rather than the movements of the Spirit. As an alternative, the Spirit can work within a culture, through a culture, and the Spirit can contend against a culture. However, we need to become familiar with the culture of the Spirit to exercise discernment in these areas.

### On Defining Culture

In its simplest form, culture is understood as learned behaviors and shared customs reflecting a certain group, and it consists of how humans think, interpret their known world, and interact with their surrounding environment.<sup>10</sup> Various biological species, including humans, have found it necessary to adapt to various environments to survive.<sup>11</sup> For human beings, we adapt culturally to survive. Humanity might look different in various contexts because we rely on different aspects of creation to survive. Humans have physical survival needs, and spiritual needs of longing and transcendence of something beyond. According to Ecclesiastes 3:11, it is “eternity” in the heart.<sup>12</sup> However, there is one Spirit at work uniting humanity to its basic spiritual needs. To a certain degree, I believe various cultures can share a common thread that exemplifies the marks of a culture of the Spirit, and that is the need to belong and be loved. One aspect of the Spirit at work is when there is a recognized need for our soul to be satisfied with something greater than what the world has to offer.

### Culture and the Longing of the Soul for Spirituality

Without elaborating in detail on the topic of determining one’s eternal destination, it’s worth exploring that the Spirit carries out God’s agenda through “prevenient grace,” as this reflects God’s love toward humanity. According to Pinnock, this is how we understand the Spirit to be at work throughout the world. As the Spirit works on the conscience to draw people to God, and as the Spirit goes before the work of the missionary, it prepares those hearing the gospel to respond to the Christ.<sup>13</sup> The Spirit works to “attract” unbelievers to Jesus.<sup>14</sup> For that reason, people recognize something special when

they acknowledge Christ as the fulfillment of the culture of the Spirit. I believe something must be present and at work for them to have a frame of reference for the Christ.

Comblin conveys that mission is effective when “missionaries [are] focusing more on a practice than a formal message.”<sup>15</sup> Therefore, the culture of the Spirit must be in practice to be recognizable, and this enables people to identify the Christ. A culture of the Spirit demonstrates humanity’s awareness to its own need for people to interact with one another in a way that is loving and good. This is something that Christ perfectly demonstrates and fulfills.

### **On Connecting Christ with Spirituality within Culture**

Prior to crossing into the stage of belonging to the Spirit, it seems the Spirit is working not only to “prove the world to be in sin,” as it states in John 16:8,<sup>16</sup> but the Spirit also works to make known a presence that can ultimately point to the image of Christ. There is a shared understanding of the Spirit, and we find this presented in Scripture. In its most basic form, Paul unpacks that the fruit of the Spirit is love, as the Bible conveys in Galatians 5:22,<sup>17</sup> and this is the secret ingredient pointing to the revelation of God’s nature. John confirms that God is love in 1 John 4:16,<sup>18</sup> and Paul conveys in 1 Corinthians 13:1 that nothing can be effective, and dare I add, anointed by the Spirit without “love.”<sup>19</sup> When love, as a culture of the Spirit, is present, even prior to confessional and nominal Christianity, I would suggest that this has originated with the Spirit working and preparing the soil of the hearts for the arrival of the Christ. The Christ is the greatest demonstration and fulfillment of love. It is important to not uproot culture when it might be obvious that the Spirit is at work, both in and through a culture, to prepare the hearts for the Word of God. The culture of the Spirit recognizes a spiritual need, a desire to be loved, and a need to interact justly towards one another. I’m not suggesting theologically that justification has been imputed, yet the soil has been prepared for the missionary through the culture of the Spirit at work.

### **The Church against Culture?**

It is quite helpful to compare the culture of the Spirit to the agen-

da of God within the culture of churches. While churches are often confined to specific times and contexts, the agenda of God is not confined. In my Western cultural context, one aspect that is worth exploring is the question of Christianity and culture. I think many Christians are divided regarding this issue. In many ways, the lines between secular culture and the sacred are either becoming more obscure or there is passionate and intense dialogue within Western Christianity pertaining to where to draw the line between Christianity and culture. It seems that what is taking place here is not a change in the culture of the Spirit. Rather, we should ask the following question: What is required for Christianity to adapt to cultural changes?

In his book *Secular Steeples*, Conrad Ostwalt explores this very topic. He engages the conversation of the secularization of the Church and the process of making the culture sacred. He states, “Religion therefore, should be considered a cultural form that is directed toward the sacred and that exists in dialectical relationship with other cultural forms that sometimes explore religious content.”<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, Oden discusses a “process” for dubbing “all of life [as] sacred” and for discovering the interaction between the “kingdom and culture.”<sup>21</sup> Often, religion and culture overlap and culture is used to express religion just as easily as religion expresses culture. Therefore, on a broader level, it’s more important to be fluid and to discover the culture of the Spirit within various religious and cultural expressions rather than distinguish between the two. The culture of the Spirit might be an overlapping element at work.

In the discussion of the tension between Jesus Christ, the Church, and culture, it seems that the centralizing ingredient appears to be the Spirit. Whereas, the culture of the Church might evolve and change, and whereas the cultural lens for how we interpret Scripture (though we shouldn’t interpret Scripture this way) might change, we must guard the anointed identity of Christ according to Luke 3:21-22<sup>22</sup> while we recognize the culture of the Spirit at work. As a result, we will better understand and embrace how God works to love and draw people. Through the culture of the Spirit, God’s heart is always poured out for the world and for humanity and places.



### On the Fruit of the Spirit of Christ within Cultures

While churches exist in specific cultural contexts, the heart of God is not restricted to any particular or specific context. Paredes states, “As there are cosmic and universal expressions of the gospel and the people of God, there is also a concrete, localized expression of it.”<sup>23</sup> There is the local expression of churches, existing within time and space, and then there is the universal culture of the Spirit, living out the heart and agenda of God, throughout all times and places. Through this, God maintains a methodology—through the culture of the Spirit—to express love and right behavior toward humankind.

One such product of the culture of the Spirit, and how it intersects with God’s mission for humanity, is understood through what is known as “contextualized theology.” Bradley Holt in his book, *Thirsty for God*, engages the discussion of how Christianity is moving from a primarily European Christianity to a global Christianity.<sup>24</sup> With this discussion, there is also tension associated with the great diversity of the Christian tradition. For example, Holt argues that there exist four criteria to keep us rooted, grounded, and interculturally united. They include the following: 1. Scripture. 2. A central role of Jesus. 3. Value of faith, hope, and love. 4. Challenging the idols of the culture.<sup>25</sup>

Holt also adds,

The focus of Christian spirituality must be Trinitarian. A strong emphasis on the creator needs to supplement our clear and central devotion to Jesus Christ as our incarnate redeemer, servant, healer and friend ... [there needs to be a] ... strong emphasis not only for the use of the spiritual gifts of many kinds but also for the sense of the presence of a powerful and loving God.<sup>26</sup>

I would argue that such a reflection is also a culture of the Spirit. If the name of Jesus is yet to be heard, and there is in existence faith, hope and love, these themes can rightly be identified as a context where the Spirit is moving and tilling the soil of the hearts. When themes reflecting the nature of the Christ exist, the Spirit is working

to formulate an image of the Christ so that the name of Jesus, reflecting the character of God, can be recognized. This makes the process much easier for missionaries to introduce Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. After all, the image of the Christ reflects the nature of God, which becomes manifested and known by the fruit of the Spirit.

### Integrating Christ and The Culture of the Spirit

It seems that this is the premise by which any given missionary can introduce the Christ. If there is a disconnect between the Church and worldviews of various cultures, then the missionary has the responsibility to become familiar with the present culture and to consider where the Spirit might be at work to make Christ known. This is a process of helping the people connect Christ’s character of that which is loving, righteous and just, within the existing cultural context.

Due to the work of the Spirit in connection to the Christ, I believe this is possible. As the Spirit is at work, it is also important to make known that the Spirit works through the Word, the spoken message concerning Jesus Christ.<sup>27</sup> However, it is important to not enforce a contextualized frame of reference of Christ, but rather, one needs to cooperate with the work of the Spirit, in each culture. One such example is reflected in the writings of Vincent Donovan, who was a missionary in East Africa.

In his book, *Christianity Rediscovered*, Donovan speaks about his journey as a missionary to the Maasai people in Tanzania. He conveys how most tribes in East Africa essentially follow one god, yet they believe their “god” is restricted to their own tribe and that their “god” will only bless and protect their own people. Likewise, Donovan also speaks about the parallel to how nations call on God to bless their effort, even at the expense of others.<sup>28</sup> This is interesting because it is important to consider how a missionary is going to engage such a worldview diplomatically and tactfully. First and foremost, the worldview must be understood.

In his article, Paredes conveys that there is a necessary “integrity” that must exist within mission, and this integrity is tasked with understanding that culture is the “vehicle” that God uses to engage humankind and God also uses culture to carry out God’s mission in the world.<sup>29</sup> This method is important because, through culture,



humans understand both themselves and how they worship God. Paredes also states, “We can see in culture the evidence of God’s love and presence.”<sup>30</sup> Therefore, in missionary work, we must honor culture and recognize the present work of the Spirit.

Therefore, as Donovan dialogues with the Maasai people and engages in discussion with them around their worldview, his missional approach changes. He conveys that he is going to come alongside of them in a quest to discover the great God. Donovan agrees with the Maasai people that they both have yet to find God, but they will search together.<sup>31</sup> This approach is marked by humility. Does he really believe he hasn’t found God? While we can’t be certain, it is apparent he is careful to not mitigate the existing views prior to his arrival. It is more desirable for a missionary to humbly admit a need for something spiritual and to journey with the people to find the great God while following the marks and trail of the Spirit. Donovan conveys to the Maasai people,

No, we have not found the High God. ... My tribe has not known Him. ... For us too, he is the unknown God ... but we are searching for him. ... I have come a long long distance to invite you to search for him with us. ... Let us search for him together. ... Maybe together we will find him.<sup>32</sup>

In response to this, going back to the concept of prevenient grace, this seems to be in alignment with how we understand the Spirit to be at work. There is a draw from the Spirit and a process of discovering the Christ. Following and discovering Christ can be a journey. Donovan found this approach necessary, as he had been encountering great challenges with trying to transplant both the Church and his understanding of traditional forms of Christianity and mission into a preexisting culture and worldview. He agreed to go with the people on a journey.

In his own testimony, in reference to the dialogue he was exchanging with the people, Donovan also states,

We necessarily had come into conflict, not with them, but with the Church that sent us. ... There were several things wrong with the neat form our Church and its theologians had set up for us. ... We were sent out to preach not Christianity, but the Church...<sup>33</sup>

One of the items that Donovan discovers in this process is that “salvation is not a magic formula ... [instituted by] ... sacraments and church membership.”<sup>34</sup> He conveys that salvation comes as a “result of the love of God and grace and holiness ... goodness and holiness are the beginning of salvation, and they do not reside exclusively in Europe and America.”<sup>35</sup> I would argue that Donovan is unpacking what he has discovered as a culture of the Spirit, and this manifestation of the Spirit seemed to be present and at work prior to his arrival. The culture of the Spirit has enabled him to bring the message of the gospel in a way that fits into the existing work of the Spirit. While we can substantiate the evidence for the presence of the Spirit at work, we can only scratch the surface of the discussion centered around atonement and conversion.

Donovan conveys something that would generate ongoing discussion. He says, “I have seen too many good and holy pagans in Africa ... the Masai are no more a lost people than the Christians of Africa or of Europe and America are.”<sup>36</sup> The evidence put forth by Donovan conveys that the signs of God’s love are “manifested in their lives.” He believes “salvation is as possible for them as it is for us.”<sup>37</sup> This is quite a shocking statement.

### **Does Holy Spirit Culture Challenge the Doctrine of Soteriology?**

Regarding soteriology, there is opportunity for further discussion, and time would not permit such a discussion. However, I can confidently assert that regarding this specific story, we can affirm that the Spirit is not necessarily against this culture, but rather, evidently the Spirit has found a way to work through aspects of the known-existing culture within a people group.

The challenging conclusions formed by Donovan reshaped his

thinking and approach toward missional evangelism, and this challenges the traditional evangelistic model. I would argue that he encountered a culture under the influence of the Spirit in which he was able to recognize the work prior to his arrival. He was able to bring Christ into their world.

The story of Vincent Donovan is just one example of how God's mission is intersecting with culture, and it's quite a process of discovery to determine where and how the Church is to respond to such a challenge. There is a reformation of the concept of how Jesus can be discovered and known within culture. Patrick Oden composed an article reflecting the conversation and dialogue between the Emerging Church and Jürgen Moltmann.

In his article, he discusses a reformation for how we are to understand Jesus. The conversation is centered around values, and it asserts the importance of emphasizing the "incarnational model" for the Church embedded within the "life, teaching and values" of Jesus.<sup>38</sup> While the cross and justification are and will always be essential truths for the Christian faith, the incarnational model of Jesus balances this with attractive witness enabling and preparing the hearts to receive the message of the cross. I believe the common and recognizable links in this process are love, longing, and living justly. Is it possible that a culture yet to hear the good news of Christ has within their own values love and longing for something spiritual transcending their own existence? What if they have embedded within their cultural laws expectations to ensure they act justly towards one another? If so, can we tear them down for having this outside of confessional and nominal Christianity? No, but we can acknowledge that prior to our arrival, and prior to the arrival of the seed of God's Word, the Spirit may have been present and at work. Let's not tear down this work. Rather, let us uphold it and recognize it when discernible.

## Summary

In summary, the culture of the Spirit is marked by a sense of longing for something spiritual, a need for love, and a desire for right behavior in one's known world and culture. These aspects are the

manifestations and evidence revealing that God is at work through the Spirit. This work carries out God's will, agenda, and methodology for connecting Christ to humankind. God loves humanity, and within its various and diverse contexts, the Spirit can work in and through aspects of culture to connect Christ with humanity.

It's beautiful when humanity, in all its various forms, exemplifies love and values of faith and justice in various contexts. In this way, it's easy to pinpoint the evidence of the Spirit, and for a people yet to hear the message of Christ, the evangelist has the responsibility to recognize the space where the Spirit has preceded his/her arrival so that he/she can connect Christ to the aspects of the culture of the Spirit at work. It can be argued that God is opposed to certain aspects of culture that do not reflect the ideal image of God's love, justice, and righteousness. Yet may we have our eyes open to recognize when and where the Spirit is moving through other cultures as we introduce people to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The next opportunity we might have to connect the influence of the Holy Spirit to culture, in any given moment, is when random acts of kindness are done in the checkout line of the grocery store. The name of "Christ" or "God," or even "selflessness," may not be uttered, yet it is clearly a visible fruit of the Spirit at work to demonstrate that the Spirit works in culture to influence such acts.

The Spirit can move and work within the line of a busy grocery store. Had I not already been a Christian, I would say this woman in the checkout line would have been a great witness to me, as she was set apart from the other shoppers. She exhibited an unusual kindness and witness demonstrated as spiritual fruit. She could have shared the gospel with me following this act and it would have been persuasive. Praise be to God for influencing cultural spaces and for marking people with the fingerprints of the Spirit's influence. In this way, the missionary utilizes the existing work of the Spirit to prepare the way for making Christ known.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>30</sup> Paredes, 235.
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- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 36.
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- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 36.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 36.
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# Renewals

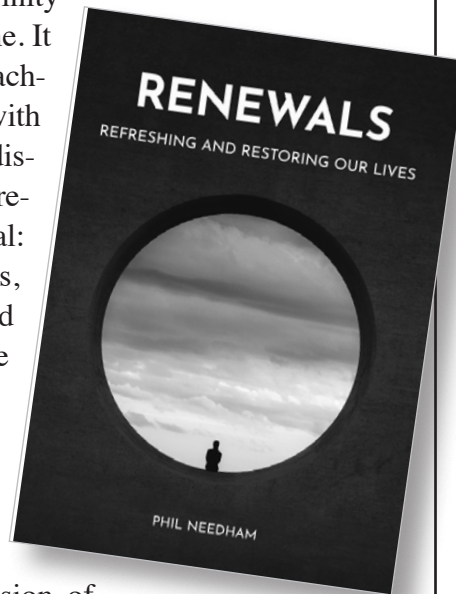
By Phil Needham

*Renewals* launches the second half of the Christian Year that some churches call Trinity and others call Common Time. It explores how the Trinity teaches us to relate to all those with whom we have a close or distant relationship. All our relationships are covenantal: our personal relationships, our church relationships, and our relationships with the world. They call for constant renewal.

Phil Needham and his wife Keitha are retired Salvation Army officers living in Atlanta. They share a vision of The Salvation Army as a missional people of God who are called by Christ to follow Him into the world, be His credible disciples, and share His compassion with the excluded. Phil is the author of *Christ at the Door* and *Easter People*. *Renewals* is the fourth in his series of books of meditations based on the Christian Year.

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# Follow the Messiah

JOHN 1:35-51

Christopher L. Scott

## INTRODUCTION

Christians should be expert followers. And as expert followers we follow a person: Jesus Christ. Yet most people in our culture are not interested in following someone else. Everyone wants to be a leader.

A Google search of the word “leadership” brought 5,220,000,000 results, while a search of “followership” yielded only 2,330,000 results. This means there are 2,000 times more results for “leadership” than “followership.” I also did a search of books on Amazon.com. There were more than 60,000 books for sale related to “leadership” and only 291 books for sale about “followership.”

But this shouldn’t surprise us. In the age of social media we don’t ask, “How many people do you follow?” No, we ask on Twitter and Instagram, “How many followers do you have?” Or on Facebook, “How many likes do you have?” We are focused on who is following us, not on who we are following or how we are becoming more like that person.

But Scripture says we are supposed to follow Jesus Christ. And we see examples of people following Jesus Christ in the first chapter of the Gospel of John.

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## TO FOLLOW CHRIST MEANS WE ABANDON OUR CURRENT LIFE

### *The Example of Andrew and John*

Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. (John 1:35-37, NASB)<sup>1</sup>

In John 1, John the Baptist is in the desert baptizing people and preparing them for the Messiah’s arrival. Andrew and John get baptized, then stay with John the Baptist as his disciples. The word for “disciple” (v. 35) means “learner.”<sup>2</sup> This tells us they attached themselves to a particular teacher, in this case, John the Baptist. They probably wanted to learn more about the promised Messiah of the Scriptures and help John the Baptist with his ministry. But when these two disciples hear John the Baptist say, “Behold, the Lamb of God” (v. 36), they leave John the Baptist and follow Jesus the Son of God. John the Baptist was supposed to prepare people for Jesus’ arrival and when Jesus shows up, these two men—Andrew and John—follow Jesus.

### *The Example of Philip*

The next day He [Jesus] purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, “Follow Me.” Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. (John 1:43-44, NASB)

When Jesus decided to head north to the region of Galilee, He had someone on His mind: Philip. We aren’t sure why He decided to pursue Philip. It could have been because Philip was a fishing companion of the brothers, Andrew and Peter. While the text doesn’t tell us why, we do learn that sometimes *we* search for God, but sometimes He

searches for *us*. Here Jesus searches for Philip and finds him and tells him, “Follow me” (v. 43). And Philip begins to follow Jesus.

This is important because we learn that Andrew, John, and Simon Peter (whom I have not previously mentioned) were fishermen. They were from the town of Bethsaida, a small town on the northeast corner of the Sea of Galilee. Bethsaida means “house or place of fishing.”<sup>3</sup> As fisherman they had daily obligations to catch fish. It was a cost for them to follow Jesus. To follow Jesus instead of fishing meant they sacrificed money.

### *The Changes and Sacrifices We Might Need to Make*

Seeing the change Andrew, Peter, and Philip made shows us that sometimes we need to abandon things when we follow Christ. Some things we drop immediately and move in a different direction. Other things we have to slowly shed along the way as we follow Christ.

And as people who follow Christ, that first step is to abandon certain things in our lives that don’t match the path He wants us to follow. It might be what we watch (Do we watch R-rated movies or porn?), how we use our money (Do we spend every penny we make and not give to God?), how we talk (Do we gossip and use foul language?), or how we spend our time (Do we neglect our family for the sake of hobbies?).

But these often aren’t a “switch” that we just flip off. Usually, we slowly shed and work these things from our lives over a period of time. The longer we follow Jesus the more these things fall away from us. As we read the Bible, pray to God, and enjoy fellowship with other believers, these things start to shed from our lives.

## TO FOLLOW CHRIST MEANS WE WALK ALONG HIS PATH

### *The Literal Example from Andrew and John*

Let’s return back to Andrew and John. Jesus shows up and they abandon John the Baptist to follow Jesus.

The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. And Jesus turned and saw them following, and



said to them, “What do you seek?” They said to Him, “Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?” He said to them, “Come, and you will see.” So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. (John 1:37-39, NASB)

When Jesus turns back and asks John and Andrew, “What do you seek?” (v. 38), this vividly pictures the sudden act of Jesus hearing steps behind him.<sup>4</sup> What Jesus means is “What purpose have you?”<sup>5</sup> Or, “What are you looking for?” And they reply, “Rabbi (which means Teacher), where are you staying?” (v. 38).<sup>6</sup> They are essentially saying, “We need some time to talk about this. It isn’t something we can stand here on the road to discuss.”

But notice Jesus’ reply, “Come, and you will see” (v. 39). Jesus invites them into a relationship. He offers His time. He’s not too busy for them. He’s not impatient. It’s almost as if He says, “if you come—and I want you to—you will see.” The text says “they stayed with him that day” (v. 39). The Greek phrase is *παρὰ* which means “by his side” or “beside him.” They were literally close to Him.

### ***The Figurative Example for Us Based on Jesus’s Life***

*To follow Christ means we do the same things He did.* To follow Christ means we walk the same road that Jesus walked. This means we love people from all walks of life like He did (tax collectors, priests, Samaritans). It means helping people heal from their sicknesses and ailments (both physical and emotional by bringing them meals, helping them get to and from the doctor, spending time with them during their grief). It means we disciple people like He did (intentionally spending time with specific people, helping them learn Scripture, and helping them navigate life). It means we might suffer at the hands of non-Christians like He did (persecution at our job or being ostracized by our family because of our faith in Jesus Christ).

*To follow Christ means we stick with Him.* In vv. 38-39 the Apostle John uses one of the Greek words I had to memorize in seminary, μένω, which means “I remain, live, abide, persist, wait for.”<sup>8</sup> John

uses the same word later in his Gospel when Jesus says, “abide or remain in me.” This reminds us that to follow Christ means we remain with Him. We live with Him. We abide in Him. In the good times and in the bad. Even though we cannot follow Him *literally* like Andrew and John do here, we are supposed to stick with Him *figuratively*.

*To follow Christ means He’s Lord, no one else.* Now don’t misunderstand. If you have a job during the day where you are supposed to be a “manager” or “supervisor,” don’t go to work saying, “I’m now here to follow you.” We are only supposed to follow one person, and that’s Jesus Christ. Even though you might be in a church where there is a pastor that is hired to “lead” the church, you and the pastor follow Christ together. There’s only one senior pastor of the church, and that’s Jesus Christ.

## **TO FOLLOW CHRIST MEANS WE INVITE OTHERS TO WALK WITH US**

### ***Andrew Invites Peter to Follow Jesus***

After Andrew and John follow Jesus and spend time with Him, Andrew quickly goes out to tell others about Jesus.

One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which translated means Christ). He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter). (John 1:40-42, NASB)

Andrew goes to his brother, Simon (Peter), and tells him that he’s found Jesus. This gives us a reminder of how our witness about who Jesus is often changes over time.

When we first become Christians we have a *passion* to share the gospel because of life changed by Christ. But over time as we ma-



ture and grow as Christians, we might not have as much *passion*, but we have a *position* of life lived for Christ. That position gives us authority to share our faith with others. Both are effective, but different. God can use our story to reach different people at different times. Here we see Peter's passion.

It is important we share our faith because people are asking questions about God. Here we read that Andrew found his brother, Peter, and said, "We have found the Messiah (which translated means Christ)" (v. 41). Apparently, people were looking for the savior, Jesus Christ, to come. They were asking questions: Is it he? Is that he? Maybe that man? When is he going to come? What will he look like? How will we know him when we see him?

People in our world are asking questions too: How was the world created? Why does the world appear to be getting worse? Why would my husband abandon me and my kids? How can this drug addiction control me so powerfully and how can I overcome it? How do I deal with this terrible boss? What do I do as I see my health getting worse and worse?

### ***Philip Invites Nathanael to Follow Jesus***

Like Andrew, Philip, goes to find someone new and tells him about Jesus.

Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." (John 1:45-46, NASB)

Notice here how it's one-on-one. God doesn't call us all to be amazing evangelists like Billy Graham or like Greg Laurie. Those evangelists reach a lot of people, but sometimes going to one person at a time and working with that person is just as effective.

### ***We Need to Go to People and Invite Them to Follow Jesus***

We cannot be as direct as Andrew and Philip were. We can't bring Jesus with us and say, "Look at this person." Jesus is in heaven now. We have to be more subtle, especially in our culture.

*Sometimes we bring people to Jesus.* We do that in a few different ways such as inviting people to a church service on Sunday, asking them to go to our Bible study that we are part of during the week, giving them an invitation to attend special services like Christmas Eve.

*Sometimes we bring Jesus to people.* It's getting harder to have people join us at church for events, so sometimes we need to bring Jesus to them. At our church we have donated school supplies to the school across the street to show our care for students in our community. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 we delivered more than 250 encouraging cards to the hospital staff, thanking them for their service and letting them know we were praying for them. We host a "Harvest Party" in the afternoon of Halloween as a way to provide a safe place for people to bring their kids in a contained area before it gets dark and cold. Those are just a few of the different ways we can "bring Jesus to people" that might not come to a church service.

### **CONCLUSION**

Amanda Smith had a common name but an uncommon story. She was born in 1837 into slavery to Christian parents in Maryland. Her father worked hard and purchased his freedom. Her mother's mistress's dying wish was that Amanda and her mother be freed from slavery. Eventually their family moved to Pennsylvania where she grew up.

She married, but her husband died in the Civil War and her two children both died (one as an infant and the other died in her 20s). In the book, *Ambassadors for Christ*, Ken Gill writes about this time in her life:

Strong-willed and full of pride, Amanda tried to dictate the terms of her conversion to the Lord. However, one evening in 1856 she was drawn to a Baptist revival meeting by the beautiful singing. Before the meeting ended, Amanda joined the crowd at the altar

pleading with God to have mercy on her. Days of incessant prayer were followed by fasting and Bible study. Amanda was caught in a struggle between God and the devil. Finally she surrendered to the Spirit of God and received the assurance that she was a new person in Christ.<sup>9</sup>

Amanda's second marriage was to a minister whose passion for ministry dwindled as he got older, while hers got stronger. She had three children with her second husband, all which died in infancy. Ken Gill again describes this point in her life:

One Sunday in September 1868 the Lord led Amanda to attend Green Street Church, Philadelphia ... She was seeking a spiritual confirmation from God ... Even then she felt Satan taunting her that she was not good enough to receive a special blessing from God. The Lord touched her in a special way that morning, and she came away convinced that the Lord had taken control of her life for good. Amanda threw herself into evangelistic work. It became second nature for her to share the gospel with people she met in her daily life. She rarely left home without a handful of tracts to give away, and there were many reports of people saved through her ministry.<sup>10</sup>

Amanda's call from God to share the gospel with others caused her to travel around the United States to speak at churches, conferences, and tent meetings. It eventually led to her going to England, India, and Africa.

Throughout her ministry Amanda was discriminated against because of her race. When traveling in America she sometimes could not find adequate housing because of her race. In London many people would stare at her as they had never seen a black person before. Even her own denomination, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, refused to ordain her, didn't want her to share the gospel,

and didn't invite her to their denominational meetings.

After years of ministry in England, India, and Africa (which were hard on her health), she returned in 1890 to America. She still preached at church services and camp meetings. She eventually moved to Chicago and began helping black orphans there. In 1899 she opened the Amanda Smith Orphans Home. It was the first orphanage for black children in the state of Illinois.

I share that story of Amanda Smith because I want us to know that we can do this. We can abandon our current life, we can follow Jesus' footsteps, and we can invite others to follow Him too. We are disciples that follow our savior Jesus Christ.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Scripture taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, Copyright The Lockman Foundation 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995. Used by permission.

<sup>2</sup> William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich (BDAG). *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 609.

<sup>3</sup> *Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1966), 166.

<sup>4</sup> Robertson, A.T. *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Rabbi is the Aramaic title for “teacher.” John had a habit of explaining Aramaic words (John 1:38, 41, 42, 4:25; 9:7). This serves as a good reminder to us that when we talk to others about Jesus, we need to use words they can understand. We almost need to interpret the Bible for them. For someone that doesn’t know the Bible and doesn’t know Jesus, we can’t just say, “Romans 3:23 says...” We need to say, “A guy named Paul wrote a letter to believers in the city of Rome and he said...” God’s Word is for everyone. John works hard to make it accessible to everyone and we should do the same.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 490.

<sup>8</sup> BDAG, 631.

<sup>9</sup> Ken Gill, “From Slave to Evangelist: Amanda Smith,” in *Ambassadors for Christ*, ed. by John Woodbridge (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1994) 60.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

# Easter People

By Phil Needham

*Easter People* continues the story of Jesus, guiding readers through meditations representing the transformative event of Jesus' resurrection (Easter Sunday) and what it meant for the church and the world. Each daily reflection spans the season of Eastertide, continuing the story of a resurrected Jesus through Pentecost week.

Phil Needham and his wife Keitha are retired officers living in the Atlanta area. They share a vision of The Salvation Army as a missional people of God who are called by Christ to follow Him into the world, be His credible disciples, and share His compassion with the excluded. Phil is also the author of *Community in Mission*, *He Who Laughed First: Delighting in a Holy God*, *When God Becomes Small*, and *Following Rabbi Jesus: The Christian's Forgotten Calling*. *Easter People* is the third in the series of books of meditations based on the Christian Year.

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## Book Notes

As part of the celebration of twenty-five years of publication of *Word & Deed* we have asked the Editorial Board members to share with us the titles of two of three books (other than the Bible) that have influenced their lives. The Book Notes for this issue of *Word & Deed* list those books by author in alphabetical order, with a brief description as to why those books were so important to the members of the Editorial Board. We have used Book Notes during the life of the journal to alert our readers of books worth buying and reading, but without the reviews that we write under the title of Book Reviews. We are delighted that David Rightmire has joined us as the Book Review Editor, and for this issue of *Word & Deed* Dr. Rightmire begins his work by editing this list of books as they have come to us. In future issues he will have the responsibility of overseeing more detailed Book Reviews for the journal and occasionally bringing other books to the attention of our readers through Book Notes.

What follows are the Book Notes for this issue of *Word & Deed*:

Augustine, Saint. *Confessions*. Translated by Henry Chadwick. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

This spiritual classic (written in 397 A.D.) is a masterpiece of introspective autobiography, expressed in the form of a long prayer to God. It is a personal story that illustrates a theological thesis: the soul's restlessness until it returns home to its Maker. The *Confessions* reveal Augustine's deepest longings and awareness of God's providential leading that eventually lead to his conversion and service to the Church as both a pastor and theologian. This inspirational account of Augustine's quest to know and love God has challenged Christians

through the centuries to reflect on their own spiritual journeys.

Baillie, John. *A Diary of Readings*. New York: Charles Scribners', 1955.

This companion volume to *A Diary of Private Prayer* by the same author, is an anthology of classic Christian texts, providing selections drawn from orthodox Christian thought through the ages. Each of the one-page primary source citations serve as a basis for reflection and a source of sustenance for every day of the year. I have read and reread this work several times, always with great benefit and spiritual inspiration.

Boa, Kenneth and John Alan Turner. *The 52 Greatest Stories of the Bible: A Weekly Devotional*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016.

I literally couldn't wait to read each day's devotional and share what I learned with others. These stories are told in a fun and refreshing way and the authors have a creative approach to get you to the point of Scripture and application. It also provides great additional material for sermons, Bible Studies, and other speaking engagements.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Works*, Vol. 4. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.

This is a book to which I keep returning as Bonhoeffer calls the reader to discipleship. I was reared in the holiness tradition of the Army, and this book helps me to understand the call to discipleship and thereby to holiness for the believer and the Church.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1954.

I have read and re-read this book. It is short and rich, coming out of Bonhoeffer's underground seminary experience in Nazi Germany. It is still the best writing I've read on Christian community, which he defines as a "spiritual" reality "through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ." I have found his profound reflections on fellowship so powerful for intercultural relationships in the Church, and this book could address our culture's polarizations and empty notions of unity in timely ways.

Brueggemann, Walter. *The Prophetic Imagination*. 40th Anniversary Edition. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2018.

First published in 1978, this book continues to be a popular guide to the Old Testament prophets. It has shaped my own interpretation of the prophets as advocates of deep change in society, a change that is grounded in the Word of the Lord as spoken through God's prophets.

Chambers, Oswald. *My Utmost for His Highest*. Grand Rapids: Our Daily Bread Publishing, 2011.

I cannot remember a time when the insights of this perceptive saint did not permeate my life. From my earliest days till now his remarkable way of capturing the fullness of salvation and communicating it in startling ways continually helps me to re-orient myself to the beauty of holiness.

Coleman, Robert E. *The Master Plan of Evangelism, 2nd ed.* Grand Rapids: Fleming Revell, 2010.

It was in a small group with Dr. Coleman that a truly biblical understanding of all Christian ministry began to shape my desire to obey Jesus in actual ministry. He offered the step-by-step method of Jesus in making disciple-makers. Everything the Lord has called me to since those days has been grounded in the desire to follow Jesus' primary desire.

Donovan, Vincent J. *Christianity Rediscovered (25th Anniversary Edition)*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005.

Decades ago, Father Donovan was sent by the Catholic Church to the Masai people in East Africa to teach them the gospel. He found that the gospel as he knew it and was prepared to teach it was tightly intertwined with North American culture and presuppositions. Eternal, universal truths needed to be extracted and taught in ways that made sense to the Masai. Donovan came to realize that "God enables a people, any people, to reach salvation through their culture and tribal, racial customs and traditions" (p. 23). I was delighted to read his experiences. This book, which I've returned to repeatedly, reminds the reader that God is not limited to how we define Him, and He is not fonder of one group of people than another. Salva-



tion is for all. (I also recommend exploring similar themes from in Richard Twiss' *Rescuing the Gospel from the Cowboys: A Native American Expression of the Jesus Way*, Intervarsity Press, 2015.)

Guckenberger, Beth. *Throw the First Punch: Defeating the Enemy Hell-Bent on Your Destruction*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2022.

From the moment I met Beth, I knew I had to read her book. She is a great storyteller and a gifted writer. I not only understand spiritual warfare better but now know how to go on the offensive against Satan's personal attacks. Two of my favorite chapters are "Satan wants to mess with my body. God intervenes," and "Satan wants me to build my own kingdom. God is the chief architect." This is a book I will read again and again.

Haase, Albert. *Coming Home to Your True Self*. Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2008.

A good friend gave me a copy of this book a few years ago. What a gift! A Franciscan priest, Haase, like other Catholic mothers and fathers I've come to treasure, guides us as an insider into the transformative journey of letting go of empty attachments, putting on the true self, becoming attentive and prayerful and discerning, and finding a spiritual director. His "seven enduring principles of spiritual growth" are formative for every serious disciple of Jesus.

Hall, Clarence W. *Samuel Logan Brengle: Portrait of a Prophet*. New York: Salvation Army, 1933.

I would have never dreamed when I was assigned this book in an Old Testament Survey class that I would find my whole future molded by the theology and experience of Brengle. It was reading this book which helped me to see what perfect love filling the human heart by the Spirit could look like. It was a vision that continues to form me.

Heschel, Abraham Joshua. *The Sabbath*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2005.

This book is an eye opening resource for thinking about the Sabbath from a different tradition. It has had the most impact on my

understanding, my practice, and my teaching on the Sabbath.

Kinlaw, Dennis F. *Let's Start With Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2005.

No thinker has impacted my life more than Kinlaw, arguably one of the finest philosophical theologians of the last fifty years. In this book, this Old Testament scholar masterfully unpacks the Trinitarian bases for understanding the nature of personhood, sin, and salvation. Jesus Christ is the center of all meaning, and of what it means to be a human person. We've always been told, "Jesus is the answer." In this book we learn what the question was, and why Jesus is the One who defines Christianity and reality.

Kinlaw, Dennis F. *The Mind of Christ*. Nappanee, IN: Francis Asbury Press, 2010.

I am asked often to explain the biblical foundations for entire sanctification. In his inimitable style and insight, Kinlaw offers a paradigm for the Baptism of the Spirit that rises above internecine theological arguments, and he points to the promise of Jesus and the provision of the Spirit that all believers can have His mind.

Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*. Revised Edition. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2009.

This work is based upon a collection of BBC radio talks Lewis gave during World War II. These talks, and subsequently the book, were meant to give a defense of Christian doctrines and beliefs in a clear and logical way. *Mere Christianity* has become a classic of modern Christian literature, proving helpful in providing reasoned arguments for the Christian faith, particularly in an age of skepticism. I benefited greatly from reading this work in the early days of my Christian walk, and have returned to its pages periodically over the years.

Lodahl, Michael. *The Story of God: A Narrative Theology*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2008.

This is one of the most important books that trace the doctrine of God's people through the early covenants, Christology, and ecclesiology. It does this in a helpful and concise way. It has become a go-



to reference for me in understanding how the Church related to God.

McNeal, Reggie. *Kingdom Come: Why We Must Give Up Our Obsession with Fixing the Church—and What We should Do Instead*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015.

Reggie explains that modern-day Christians seem to want to fit the Kingdom into the Church. And while the Church is part of God's plan to grow the Kingdom, the problem arises when attendance and the success of church programs is primarily what we're measuring. This book is a tool for how to rethink church in light of equipping Kingdom agents. It is a straightforward and easy read, but it did get me fired up for the true work of the Kingdom.

Morris, Thomas V. *Making Sense of It All: Pascal and the Meaning of Life*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992.

One of the most brilliant apologists for the Christian faith was Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), whose compendium of "thoughts" was published posthumously as *Pensées*. In *Making Sense of It All*, philosopher Tom Morris weaves together these "thoughts," relating the same to topics such as the folly of indifference, the danger of diversion, the meaning of life, the hidden God, the human enigma, and the relation of faith and the heart. This work is remarkably readable and answers some of the most daunting contemporary challenges to the Christian faith, but with candor and humor.

Noll, Mark A. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.

This book, which has gone through several editions, draws out the need for Evangelical Christians to be skilled thinkers, recognizing that the renewal of our minds is a fundamental component of the full salvation that is available to us through Jesus Christ.

Peterson, Eugene. *Reversed Thunder: The Revelation of John and the Praying Imagination*. New York: HarperOne, 1988.

When I was a young girl growing up in Christian schools in the seventies and eighties, I was steeped in dispensationalism and the view the Book of Revelation made so popular by writers such as

Hal Lindsey. I respect those who fervently taught Revelation as a script for the future; they were motivated by love of Scripture and souls. However, when I stumbled across Peterson's book, I learned for the first time that there may be another way to understand Revelation. "If the Revelation is written by a theologian who is also a poet, we must not read it as if it were an almanac in order to find out when things are going to occur, or a chronicle of what has occurred," writes Peterson (p. 5). It is not an easy read (nothing like *The Message*!). It changed my understanding of Revelation, and it opened my eyes to the world of hermeneutics.

Roseveare, Helen. *Living Holiness*. Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1987.

I'd heard about Dr. Roseveare for a decade—how while a missionary doctor in the Congo she'd been captured and tortured by rebel soldiers, but later returned to these people out of love. Then while I was living in my own "tortured jungle" of striving to have holy behavior by trying harder, someone gave me this book. Two things struck me: 1) Helen's intimate love with Jesus; and, 2) Her transparent honesty about her Christian life before she was entirely sanctified, and her constant dependence upon Jesus after she was. I would not have told my best friend those indicting truths about myself. She was willing to publish them! That was a holiness I was interested in knowing more about. Her approach to holiness is real and filled with love.

Seamands, David A. *Healing for Damaged Emotions*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2015.

I brought a lot of baggage into the sphere of holiness of heart and life that the Spirit clarified for me as an experience subsequent to justification. Seamands, who was my pastor for over eight years, helped me to see how beautifully freeing sanctifying grace is. He helped me to work through my perfectionism and legalism.

Sittser, Jerry L. *A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows Through Loss*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998.

A profound personal tragedy prompted Jerry Sittser to journey

through his loss to discover the way in which God's grace works even through deep grief. I often have recommended this book to people I know who have experienced great loss.

Snyder, Howard. *The Problem of Wineskins: Church Structure in a Technological Age*. 40th Anniversary Edition. Franklin, TN: Seedbed Publishing, 2017.

The author's earlier classic, prescient writing, *The Problem of Wineskins*, foresaw in 1975 issues and struggles the Church was to face in the decades ahead in a post-Christendom environment. In this updated, new edition, Snyder provides a message even more needed than before. Snyder provides a breath of fresh air and a rebirth opportunity, a new faithfulness in mission and ministry for the Church in the twenty-first century.

Taylor, David W. *Like a Mighty Army? The Salvation Army, the Church and the Churches*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014.

This provocative work charts and analyzes the Army, its convictions and practices, in three large phases. Taylor, a Salvationist, reviews the Army's history to assess its "theological character and coherency" in three identifiable ecclesial stages and strands. He first looks at the Army largely as a lay-based Christian Mission in East London (1865-1878), then as a quasi-military, missional Army (1878-1948), and finally as a contemporary church/denomination with unique humanitarian and organizational identity (1948-present). Taylor's work is an interplay of historical and theological reflection and inquiry into practicalities facing the contemporary Salvation Army regarding its identity and mission. He does this in the second half of the book by means of "a dialogue of The Salvation Army with Karl Barth," particularly focusing on Barth's ecclesiology, which Taylor characterizes as "fully integrated within his anthropology, and his evangelical theology." He engages it to assess the Army's nature, marks, and mission as a Christian community. Reading Taylor's book is not for anyone with "settled views," yet reading it will occasion a significant degree of reflection.

Traina, Robert A. *Methodical Bible Study*. Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing, 1980.

Not a day of my life has been the same since I was privileged to sit under Dr. Traina's guidance through the Book of Mark using the inductive method. It opened for me a way of seeing the inerrant truth of the Word of God that has informed every aspect of my life and ministry.

Watson, Kevin M. *Perfect Love: Recovering Entire Sanctification—The Lost Power of the Methodist Movement*. Franklin, TN: Seedbed, 2021.

This is a wake-up call, especially for people in the Methodist movement, including The Salvation Army. It builds on two earlier books by Watson to reclaim John Wesley's long-forgotten small group experiences: class meetings and bands. All three books were highlighted together in *Word & Deed* in the journal's issue in May 2022. Together the three books comprise the structure, processes, and goal of John Wesley's practice of Christian discipleship.

Wesley, John. *Wesley's 52 Standard Sermons*. Salem, OH: Schmull Publishers, n.d.

It was a college assignment to outline many of these sermons which altered the course of my life. I began here to see the rich biblical and theological foundation of the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition. I found here an expression of the full gospel that has fed into understanding what Jesus offers to every believer, my experience of sanctifying grace and my vocation.

Wilson, Marvin R. *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2021.

This book was written by a friend and colleague of mine with whom I taught for decades. I keep returning to this book as it helps me to understand the rich Hebrew heritage of Christianity, illuminates the New Testament, and makes the case for the relationship between Christians and Jews.

Wirzba, Norman. *Living the Sabbath: Discovering the Rhythms of Rest and Delight*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006.

I have read many books that have changed the way I think, but no book (other than the Bible) has so radically altered the way I live as this one has. It is a thorough, revelatory examination of Sabbath. This book not only encourages a weekly Sabbath day of rest and worship, but also teaches what it means to live a Sabbath lifestyle. This book shook my life. It taught me to celebrate, to delight in small moments, to develop a deeper appreciation for everyday things such as the food we consume, and to truly rest. It has trained me to see the mini-Sabbath moments all week that lead up to weekly Sabbath celebration. None of this is done with rigidity or from a faux-Judaic stance; it is very New Testament minded. Having first read this book seventeen years ago, I have never looked back at the way I used to live. It altered my family and me forever.

Wright, N. T. *Surprised by Hope*. New York: HarperOne, 2008.

We all stand in the debt of N. T. Wright for his careful scholarship that explains and clarifies the Scriptures. I have read several of Wright's books, and this one is representative of the basic themes that cause me to claim it as one of the most important books in my life. As the subtitle so well states, this book is a rethinking of heaven, the resurrection, and the mission of the Church.

Wright, N. T. and Michael F. Bird. *The New Testament in Its World*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2019.

This is a massive resource that I consult continually to enrich my personal reading and my teaching and preaching of New Testament Scripture. I go here not for commentary on texts but for historical, sociocultural, literary and theological context, for a panoply of illustrations and ancient sources and insightful tables, and for key themes and the big picture. Their section on the resurrection of the Son of God is especially important for filling in gaps in Salvationist theology on such a central Christological message.



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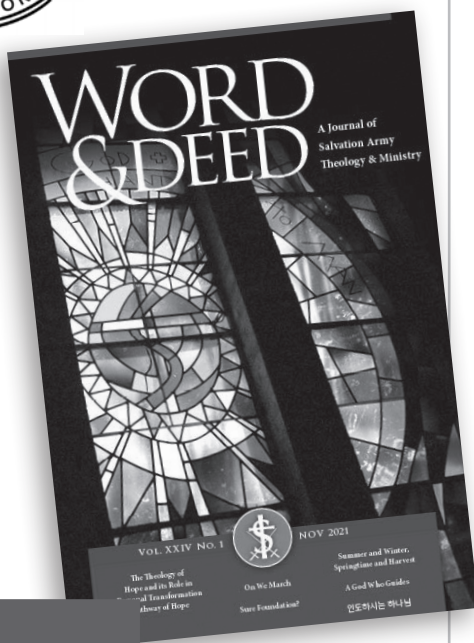
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# CALL FOR PAPERS



**T**he editors of *Word & Deed* are pleased to invite articles, essays, sermons, and book reviews for publication in the November 2024 issue of the journal.

The purpose of *Word & Deed* is to encourage and distribute the thinking of Salvationists and other Christian writers on topics broadly related to the theology and ministry of The Salvation Army. The journal helps explain ideas central to the mission of The Salvation Army, exploring the Army's theology and ministry in response to Christ's command to love God and our neighbor.



**Submission Deadline: Jan 1<sup>st</sup> • 2024**

*Requests for style sheets/other correspondence can be addressed to:*

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*Book Reviews should be sent to David Rightmire:*

david.rightmire@asbury.edu

**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 – 1,250 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. A 100-word abstract of the paper may be used at the discretion of the editors.



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