

WORD & DEED

VOL. XXVII NO. 2



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A JOURNAL OF SALVATION ARMY
THEOLOGY & MINISTRY

We Believe

*From Creation to Regeneration: Neglected Steps in The Scripture
Way of Salvation*

*Genesis 3 Hermeneutic: Redeeming the Worldview of Women for
God's Mission*

God, Do You Have This? A Sermon on Habakkuk 1:12-2:1

Out Of Strange Strife Thy Peace Is Strangely Wrought

Theological Drift—A New Reality within The Salvation Army?



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

Salvation Army Mission Statement:

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

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We Believe

When Salvationists affirm our doctrines, each affirmation begins with the words, “We believe.” In this sense, the community of faith known as The Salvation Army is committing itself fully and without reservation to both the truth and the trustworthiness of those doctrines because they are rooted in both the Word of God written and the Word of God enfleshed in the person of Jesus Christ. The statement, “We believe,” is not only one of intellectual assent (although it clearly includes that), but also one of commitment of our whole person to the doctrines that follow. We are taking everything we know about ourselves, both individually and collectively, and committing that to everything we know about God. Such commitment is always a great act of faith.

For purposes of foundational “faith and practice,” the first doctrine is one of commitment to the Scriptures. In this light, we are delighted to give as a gift to our *Word & Deed* readers a full range of articles based on the Scriptures, beginning with Royal Senter’s article entitled, “From Creation to Redemption: Neglected Steps in the Scripture Way of Salvation.” We not only believe in the Scriptures, but like our Founders William and Catherine Booth, we are committed to the Wesleyan interpretation of those Scriptures. The author of this article begins with Original Sin in the Scriptures and mentions Wesley as foundational to the path of understanding the fullness of God’s plan of salvation. This is both critical and challenging. Perhaps it has been a long time since many of our readers have heard a sermon on Original Sin in a Salvation Army meeting.

The second article follows naturally from the first and continues

Senter's theological interpretation. This article is entitled, "Genesis 3 Hermeneutic: Redeeming the Worldview of Women for God's Mission." Here again we are pleased to use the word "believe" as a sign of full commitment to the vision of both women and men in ministry for the sake of the gospel. To make ourselves absolutely clear, in The Salvation Army we believe in women in ministry because of the Scriptures and not in spite of the Scriptures. This article highlights doctrinally why it is so essential to be faithful to the Scriptures on this matter, and like the first article, well utilizes what has become known as the Wesleyan quadrilateral for an understanding of this doctrine.

This is followed by a sermon by Christopher Scott, a friend of the journal. We are pleased to publish his sermons, and in this one, he focuses on Habakkuk and brings the message home to the believer with critical lessons from Habakkuk 1:12-2:1.

We continue with a series from our friend and brother in Christ, Lyell Rader. In "Out of Strange Strife Thy Peace is Strangely Wrought: Studies in Second Corinthians" we read a compelling exposition of passages from 2 Corinthians. If ever the declaration, "We believe," is exemplified, it is in this article. The Scriptures come alive. And the purpose of the study is summarized in one sentence—"In these studies we explore paradoxical themes of triumph, perfection, and power as they intersect with our experience in leadership today, to the end that we may fully envision and embody a cruciform Army."

With these biblical and theological affirmations in place, we take a look at the Army in the final article entitled, "Theological Drift—A New Reality Within The Salvation Army." I have often used these words when in conversation with other people about various matters: "A friend tells you what you want to know, but a good friend tells you what you need to know." This article is written by a good friend of The Salvation Army and indeed a Salvation Army officer herself, Captain Erin Wikle. She deals with an issue within the international Salvation Army that simply must be addressed if we are going to remain faithful to the words, "We believe," and all the wisdom we possess in affirming those words. Often in the history of the Church, what has fractured the Body of Christ has not been an

onslaught of heresy, but a slow, unchallenged theological drift that leaves believers wondering how we got here! We need the compelling message of this article not only as a means of maintaining our theological integrity, but also as a source of strength when we as a community of believers state, “We believe.”

We also look forward to completing this issue with the work of David Rightmire as he submits his choices for book reviews.

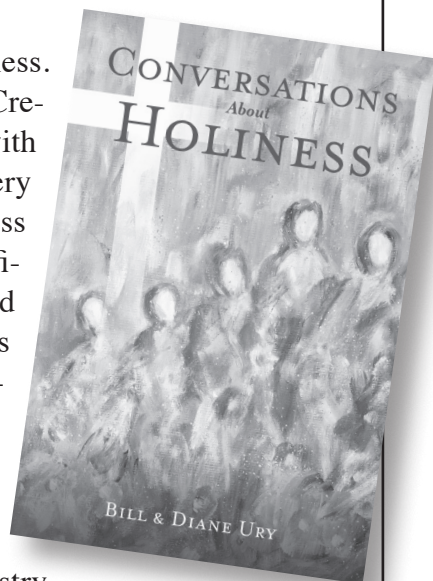
We trust that the careful reading of this issue of *Word & Deed* will strengthen the resolve of our readers to understand the fullness of the affirmation—We Believe.

JSR
RJG

Conversations About Holiness

Bill & Diane Ury

Every person is created for holiness. We are designed by our loving Creator for intimate belonging with Him. This is the hunger of every human heart. But what is holiness anyway? And what is sanctification? How does holiness hold a place of relevance in God's Church for this cultural moment? Should we even continue to use such an archaic word that seems out of touch with present Christians? Envoys Bill and Diane Ury spend their ministry responding to questions like these about holiness. Within this book, they share their hearts' passions for the Triune God of Holy Love, who longs to share His life with every person on earth.



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From Creation to Regeneration

NEGLECTED STEPS IN THE SCRIPTURE WAY OF SALVATION

Royal Senter

Introduction

Genesis 6:5 says, “The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time” (NIV).

These words serve as a scathing indictment of the human race and of human nature. They might easily be dismissed as indicative only of a specific time and place, rather than of all people throughout history, or even dismissed as an unhistorical, religious statement justifying the development of the Jewish faith that was about to unfold. On the other hand, a review of human history or the reading of a daily newspaper shows that human beings are regularly violent, treacherous, thieving, haughty, and self-serving. Even grand philanthropic deeds are often self-serving at their core. Human behavior is arguably the best proof that the words of Genesis apply to the people of every time and every place.

The distinctives of Wesleyan theology are largely focused on what John Wesley called “The Scripture Way of Salvation,” which describes the work of God in humanity from creation, through

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its fall into sin, and on to its ultimate restoration. Space prevents a thorough exploration of all aspects of this “Way of Salvation,” but several of them merit particulate attention to bring a more complete understanding of the Wesleyan foundations of Salvation Army doctrine. These aspects are essential, yet their significance is often under-articulated in its official publications and modern preaching. These include the full understanding of what it means to be created in the image of God, the reality and nature of original sin and total depravity, and the need for regeneration. As these are essential to a complete understanding of John Wesley’s Methodism, and therefore of the doctrines of The Salvation Army, this paper will examine these four doctrines and explore the relevant similarities and differences between Wesley and The Salvation Army.

The Image of God

To understand the nature of total depravity and the need for regeneration, it is necessary to first understand that human beings are created in the image of God. The Hebrew word *de’mut* essentially means “likeness” or “something that is similar.” In 2 Kings 16:10, we read, “King Ahaz sent to Uriah the priest a model [*de’mut*] of the altar, and its pattern, exact in all its details” (ESV). The word “image,” therefore, suggests something intended to be an exact representation or a reflection of the original so that when one sees the image, one knows what the original is like, though it lacks its essential substance. So it was with Adam and Eve in their newly created state. They were modeled after God and reflected His likeness, albeit in non-physical ways.

Wesley understood God’s image in three dimensions: the Natural Image, the Political Image, and the Moral Image. These should not be understood as three separate and distinct “images” but as different dimensions of the one *imago Dei*. To be created in God’s *natural image* means that a human being is “a spiritual being, endued with understanding, freedom of will and various affections.”¹ It also shows that humans were created to share God’s immortality. To be created in God’s *political image* highlights humanity’s relationship with the rest of creation, serving as co-regent with God, having been

given the task of ruling over, filling, and subduing the earth.

Most important to Wesley was the *moral image*. In this regard, people were created with the same moral and righteous nature as God, full of love and justice. “God is spotless purity; and so man was in the beginning pure from every sinful blot.”² Kenneth Collins expounds three reasons for why this image is singled out.³ First, it is what differentiates people from lower animals in that they alone of all created beings can relate to and worship God. Second, it is the context for the very possibility of sin. It is expressive of a relationship with God that can be distorted or perverted. It is the ability to know right and wrong and to choose one or the other. Third, it is inseparably related to the moral law, which is an “‘incorruptible picture of the high and holy one that [inhabits] eternity,’ but that is also expressive of the original, pristine nature in which humanity was created.” The contrast between the intention of God and the reality expressed in Genesis 6:5 is striking and must be understood if one is to appreciate God’s dealings with humanity and “The Scripture Way of Salvation” that Wesley described. It is equally important when confronting the popular idea that people are fundamentally good, that sin is inconsequential because it is popularly accepted that people are not perfect, and that much of what is called sinful behavior is considered to be natural. Sin may be natural, but it is not in God’s design.

The Salvation Army’s fifth doctrine says, “We believe that our first parents were created in a state of innocency ...” While this may leave considerable scope for interpretation, the idea of innocence is difficult to conceive apart from the moral law, and creation in the moral image of God. For William Booth, it meant that Adam and Eve shared the life of God. He considered spiritual life “a life more important and bringing more glory to God than any of the other forms that [he had] noticed.”⁴ Though Booth was speaking more about the life to be received in salvation, it is, nonetheless, the same life that was shared in the beginning. Though the doctrine mentions humanity’s created state, the Booths were more inclined to operate from an assumption of human sinfulness and spiritual death than from the status from which they had fallen.

The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine states that “we are made in God’s image.”⁵ The short section on this subject provides little elaboration, limiting its exposition to the human capacity to enter into relationships with God and other people; human personality as a mirror of God’s free, personal spirit; and the gift of creativity and the ability to appreciate beauty.

An earlier edition of the *Handbook of Doctrine* made the following points⁶, which more fully reflect Wesley’s three-fold understanding of the image of God:

1. Man was created like God, the Great *Spirit*, in his possessing a soul or *spirit* with intelligence, moral powers, and a capacity for spiritual fellowship.
2. Man was created pure and holy.
3. Man was placed, as God’s representative, in dominion over the creatures.
4. Man was created for immortality

These points demonstrate a closer connection to Wesley’s understanding of the image of God as the first and fourth reflect the *natural image*, the third reflects the *political image*, and the second the *moral image*.

Original Sin

Though humanity was created in the perfect image of God, the disobedience of Adam and Eve—known as The Fall—negatively changed everything. The impact of their sin extended beyond themselves and shattered the *imago Dei* in all humanity. The Apostle Paul wrote, “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned ...” (Romans 5:12 NIV). How is it possible that all people sinned because of the sin of one man?

The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* defines original sin⁷ as, “The hereditary sin incurred at conception by every human being as a result of the original sinful choice of the first man, ADAM.” It describes it as “a condition of GUILT, weakness, or debility found in human beings historically (or in which they are personally situated), prior

to their own free option for good or evil.” It describes it as a state of being rather than a human act, recognizing that people maintain a capacity to do good, “that historical man, affected by Adam’s sin, is not so corrupted as to be without a radical power for choosing good.”

Wesley, on the other hand, maintained that all works done prior to justification were tainted with sin and that human beings, in their fallen state, lacked the power to do anything pleasing and acceptable to God, even if those same acts may be good and respectable by human standards.⁸ This agrees with the words of Isaiah 64:6, “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags” (NIV).

Romans 14:23 further elaborates on this idea, “Everything that does not come from faith is sin” (NIV). Here, Paul suggests that all human action that is not the result of true faith in God has other motivations not oriented towards or out of love for God.

The doctrine of original sin is essential to Wesley’s doctrine. He insisted that anyone who would deny it “are but heathens still.”⁹ He goes on, “If, therefore, we take away this foundation, that man is by nature foolish and sinful, fallen short of the glorious image of God, the Christian system falls at once.”¹⁰ He argued that denial of the doctrine would lead people to deny the need for a Savior and for regeneration, saying, “If we are not diseased, we do not want a Cure. If we are not sick, why should we seek for a Medicine to heal our Sickness?”¹¹ The doctrine was developed by Augustine of Hippo and stands as a bulwark against the Pelagian heresy which taught that people had the power in themselves to live righteous lives, which rendered the atonement non-essential.

For Wesley, original sin marks a fundamental change in human nature. Rather than being reflective of the image of God, it is more reflective of the image of the devil, in pride, malice, and other dispositions.¹² First, people are born without a knowledge of God so instead, they worship themselves. Second, this atheism leads to pride and self-absorption. Third, these lead to self-will. While these mirror satanic evil, they demonstrate that the essence of original sin is a reorientation of human nature away from God towards self.

The *Handbook of Doctrine* says, “although originally an intrusion, sin is inborn. Our tendency is to sin. In that sense, we are ‘born to sin’ (Psalm 51).”¹³ The Army’s understanding of original sin is well stated in two web articles. James Pedlar wrote in *Salvationist Magazine Online*, “In terms of the human will, the Fall means that we do freely choose what we want, but because of our depravity, what we want is idolatry and rebellion from God.”¹⁴ The New Zealand Salvation Army’s website says, “We are sinful in nature, so even attempts at righteousness are tainted with sin. Human freedom to respond to God and to make moral choices is therefore impaired.”¹⁵

Orton Wiley defines original sin this way,

... [O]riginal sin, or depravity, is the corruption of the nature of all the offsprings of Adam, by reason of which everyone is very far gone from original righteousness or the pure state of our first parents at the time of their creation, is averse to God, is without spiritual life, and is inclined to evil, and that continually ...¹⁶

Does this suggest that original sin necessarily results in original guilt? Are Adam’s descendants declared guilty because of Adam’s sin? Wesley suggested as much when he said, “God does not look upon infants as innocent, but as involved in the guilt of Adam’s sin; otherwise death, the punishment denounced against that sin, could not be inflicted upon them.”¹⁷ This, however, stands contrary to the Law of Moses, which says, “Parents are not to be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their parents; each will die for their own sin” (Deuteronomy 24:16 NIV). This author suggests that infants do not share in the guilt of Adam because sin, in its more narrow and culpable sense, must be a willful violation of a known law.¹⁸ Rather, infants are the clearest illustration of the true nature of sin by their total orientation to self, without regard for others. People do not inherit Adam’s guilt, but guilt is inevitable if Pedlar is correct in stating that humanity’s desire is for idolatry and rebellion against God.

General Frederick Coutts wrote, “When the Christian faith speaks of men as sinners, it is not so much sitting in judgment on them as realistically accepting them for what they are. What is called the doctrine of original sin is this recognition of man’s imperfections.”¹⁹

This seems to suggest that while sin is ever-present and inevitable in human life, guilt is not the result of Adam's sin but our own.

Total Depravity

If original sin speaks to the origin and inevitability of human sinfulness, total depravity speaks to its impact on human nature and life. In understanding total depravity, it is necessary to distinguish between *intensive total depravity* and *extensive total depravity*.

Intensive total depravity maintains that human nature is completely devoid of righteousness and awareness of God. Left on their own, human beings will in all respects pursue their own sinful desires, with no inclination toward any kind of good. In an article on total depravity, the Heidelberg Seminary states that people are not as bad as they could be because God actively restrains the manifestation of evil in their lives. Sin, it says, "is not *totally intensive*, but is held in check by God."²⁰ In other words, left unchecked by the external restriction of God, human sin would know no end of depravity.

Charles Carter writes that because Wesley admitted that the *imago Dei* remains (at least in part) in fallen humanity, he did not believe in intensive total depravity.²¹ Yet, William Ragsdale Cannon asserts that Wesley "insisted that man is by nature *totally* destitute of righteousness."²² This suggests an intensive understanding of total depravity. Human nature is intensively depraved, but God mitigates that natural tendency through prevenient grace, which is the irresistible work of the Holy Spirit on all people, providing some measure of divine light. Collins quotes Umphrey Lee, "In this world ... man exists as a natural man plus the prevenient grace²³ of God."²⁴

Carter maintains that Wesley regarded humanity as extensively totally depraved. This recognizes that there remains in human nature some capacity to do good or at least to restrain its most evil inclinations. It does, however, maintain that every aspect of human nature is touched and corrupted by sin. This would be consistent with the belief that there remains some vestige of the *imago Dei*. To Wesley, this is in a corrupted version of the natural and the political images, whereas the moral image is destroyed, which would mean that no restriction on evil is inherent to human nature. It is the actions

of God alone, imparting some positive traits, that restrains the excesses of corrupt human nature. An examination of human behavior does leave this question up for debate. Human beings have exhibited both the most heinous evil and unexpected goodness. The question remains as to which is learned behavior and which best exemplifies human nature in its most basic and fallen state. Perhaps this question is best answered by the Bible verse quoted at the beginning of this paper, which says, “that *every* inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil *all the time*” (Genesis 6:5, italics mine).

The *Handbook of Doctrine* upholds the idea of extensive total depravity by saying, “It is not concerned with the depth of sin but rather about the breadth of the influence of sin in human life. No area of human nature remains unaffected.”²⁵

The question then arises as to whether depravity is a matter of deprivation, lack of original righteousness, or depravation, the presence of an active sinful power.

Jacob Arminius saw original sin primarily as deprivation rather than depravation. Actual sins committed by individuals are the result of the deprivation that issues from original sin.²⁶ Adam and Eve’s sin *deprived* their posterity of the gift of the Holy Spirit, and, therefore, the moral image of God.

Ray Harris offers an interesting Salvation Army perspective when he writes, “We do not sin because we are human, we sin because we are less than human.”²⁷ This acknowledges the extensive brokenness of human nature. Frederick Coutts comments, “When the Christian faith speaks of men as sinners, it is not so much sitting in judgment on them as realistically accepting them for what they are.”²⁸ Human beings are not everything that God intended at creation. This is in line with a *deprivation* rather than a *depravation* understanding.

Wesley, on the other hand, “considers the corruption of our nature in terms of ‘a want of original righteousness’ and also in terms of a ‘natural propensity to sin,’ indicating that depravity, so understood, is not simply a privation, a lack of goodness, but also an active power that predisposes the tempers of our hearts toward sin and disobedience.”²⁹

Wesley seems to agree with Paul’s description of the influence of

sin in Romans 7, where he describes it as an active force at work in his life. In verses 8 and 11, Paul describes sin as “seizing the opportunity” and as something that deceived him. Recounting his struggles with sin, he describes sin as “living in me” and as opposing his desire to do right. He appears to acknowledge deprivation when he says, “For I know that good itself does not dwell in me ...” (v 18), but suggests that it has been substantially replaced by an opposing force that he calls sin. It is this real and substantial force that results in such a great struggle for most Christians to live a righteous life. Perhaps one thing that most convincingly reveals the nature of sin and depravity is the phrase, “The power of sin.”

Samuel Logan Brengle provides an early Salvation Army understanding that seems to follow Wesley when he writes about the presence of sin in the human heart. He says, “He will find a big, dark something in him that wants to get mad when things are against him; something that will not be patient; something that is touchy and sensitive ...”³⁰ The key point in Brengle’s words is that he saw sin as a “something,” not a lack of something. For him, this something—which he called, in reference to Paul’s words in Ephesians 4:22, “the Old Man”—was something that needed to be put off or put to death.

As will be seen in the next section, God’s intent in the “Way of Salvation” is to break the power of sin in people’s lives, which occurs at the point of justification and regeneration. Something can only have power if it has its own substantial existence. If depravity were merely a lack of original righteousness, then the problem of sin would be the lack of the power of righteousness and not the presence of the power of sin. Humanity would not need to be set free from sin but empowered with righteousness. A proper understanding of total depravity sees it as both extensive, in that it touches every aspect of human nature and life, and intensive, in that people are incapable of righteousness without supernatural intervention or prevenient grace.

Regeneration

If human beings are not everything God intended in creation, what is to become of them? The Christian faith is built upon the belief that God has acted in human history to undo the effect and consequence

of original sin and total depravity and to restore in them the complete image of God. Wesley described the stages of God's work as "The Scripture Way of Salvation." The Salvation Army outlines this "Way of Salvation" in its sixth, seventh, and eighth doctrines, which cover the atonement through Jesus' death, repentance, faith, justification, and regeneration. Modern evangelical Christianity has fully adopted the first four doctrines, as demonstrated by the following three examples of what has been called "The Sinner's Prayer"³¹

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow You as my Lord and Savior. In Your Name. Amen. – Billy Graham

Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be. – Cru (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ)

Dear Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner. I believe You died for my sins. Right now, I turn from my sins and open the door of my heart and life. I confess You as my personal Lord and Savior. Thank You for saving me. Amen. – Greg Laurie Salvation Prayer

What is arguably absent is the need for a clear articulation of regeneration.

Ray Harris writes, "Salvation ... is primarily concerned with life. And this life is expressed in the Bible with many images and concepts. It is new birth, eternal life, new creation, participation in the divine nature, a branch grafted into the vine. Here it is expressed as 'regeneration by the Holy Spirit.'"³² *The Handbook of Doctrine* describes this as an "inward revolution."³³

For Wesley, regeneration is the other side of the coin to justification. Justification can be described as what God does for us in forgiving our sins and restoring the relationship that sin has severed. This is accomplished through Jesus' atoning death on the cross. Regeneration is what God does in us as a result of justification. It is inner transformation worked by the Holy Spirit such that we are restored, at least in part, to the image of God. The two are inseparable. "In the moment we are justified by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Jesus we are also 'born of the Spirit.'"³⁵ Justification without regeneration is impossible for, as Wesley wrote, "If all your past sins were now forgiven, you would immediately sin again; that is, unless your heart were cleansed; unless it were created anew."

Catherine Booth expounded the same idea that the two are inseparable:

What a misunderstanding of the gospel scheme there is at this point! How people separate what God does for us outwardly through the sacrifice of His Son from what He does for us inwardly by the operation of the Holy Spirit! And, therefore, there is a notion abroad of a sort of make-believe religion, as though God would count us righteous and deal with us as if we were righteous, while He leaves us unrighteous. We tried ... to show that God would, in the first instance, JUSTIFY us unrighteous people, but that, at the same time, He would put His Holy Spirit within us, and "RENEW us in the spirit of our minds"—in short, transform us from sinners into saints.³⁶

What does God do to transform the life of the newly justified person? What is accomplished when he "puts His Holy Spirit within us"? How one answers this question will largely depend upon how total depravity is understood. If it is *deprivation*, then the Spirit makes up what was lacking, essentially filling an empty vessel that is devoid of the moral image of God. However, if it is *depravation*, it is something more.

The Bible uses many images to describe regeneration, but it repeatedly says that to experience this new life, something first needs

to be removed.³⁷ The idea of depravation suggests that fallen human nature is not an empty vessel but one filled with corruption that must first be removed before it can be filled with the outpoured Holy Spirit. Paul declares that before a person can experience new life, he must first die. “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20 NIV).

In Romans 6:6-7, Paul is even more explicit, “For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.”

Wesley saw regeneration as an instantaneous and decisive event, where the old sinful self dies and is immediately replaced with a new self, remade in the image of God. While the change may not be entirely and immediately evident on the outside, it is complete and instantaneous on the inside.³⁸ By way of comparison, evidence suggests that a brain tumor can cause changes in a person’s personality.³⁹ Part of the solution for increased aggression or other negative personality traits must involve the removal of the tumor, followed by a period of recovery. In the same way, human nature cannot be righteous if sin remains.

It must be acknowledged that descriptions of Christian doctrine always struggle for completeness. The idea that in regeneration a person puts off the old self to put on the new self suggests that sin is completely removed. Wesley did believe that regeneration and willful sin were mutually exclusive, but he also recognized that those who had been truly born again did, on occasion, commit willful sin; it was not, however, a state that could continue. Wesley always feared the idea that sin would continue even in the regenerate believer because it would lead to a form of antinomianism, where such sin was effectively accepted and excused. Wesley distinguished between the guilt, power, and being of sin. Justification removed the guilt; regeneration canceled the power of sin, making it possible—even necessary—for the believer to be free from outward sin, where sin is understood as a willful violation of a known law of

God. Because the *being* of sin is not yet removed, it can continue to influence the believer's thoughts, words, and actions. "It is precisely the lack of awareness (as we think we are simply doing good), the lack of conscious intent, that keeps this inbred sin that cleaves to our words and actions from being a willful violation of a known law of God and, therefore, from issuing in actual sin, properly speaking."⁴⁰

From a Salvation Army perspective, the effect of regeneration on the "old self" may be seen slightly differently. The *Handbook of Doctrine* says, "Regeneration is God's work in us, the gift of the indwelling Spirit and the beginning of a life of holiness. It is our call to the Christlike life and involves our moral renewal. ... Regeneration means that we *die to our old life* and come alive to Christ [*italics mine*]."⁴¹ This definition does not state that the old self is put to death, nor is it even "put off." It allows the possibility that it remains, yet is overpowered, by the new indwelling of the Holy Spirit. If this is the meaning, it sounds like an extension of the restraining power of prevenient grace, rather than a radical, inner transformation. Perhaps this is not the intention, but the need for that fundamental change in human nature must be articulated with clarity.

Conclusion

Wesley's "Scripture Way of Salvation" lays out the need for and the essentials of God's work for the salvation of humanity. Several of The Salvation Army's doctrines echo Wesley's work and theology and are the foundation of its mission and message. Not every step along this "Way of Salvation" has received equal attention in modern preaching—this short paper certainly did not have the space to review the extent of the neglect of some doctrines—but it is time that the entire message be recaptured if our ministry is to be effective.

Catherine Booth said,

While having some general notions of their obligation to serve God and be Christians, numbers [of people] seem to have no definite idea of the experience or characteristics of genuine Christianity. They desire to be good, and often try to be so, but they know not how. They have never learned the

fundamental doctrines of the gospel, and do not understand that any such great change—as the Savior here insists on—is necessary in order for them to become Christians.⁴²

Misunderstanding what it means to be made in the image of God leads to misunderstanding what human beings are meant to be compared to what we are; as Ray Harris insightfully noted, we are less than human, at least less human than what God designed in the beginning. Neglecting or misunderstanding original sin and total depravity leads to the dangerous belief that human beings are fundamentally good and understates our need for a savior. Christianity subtly runs the risk of becoming either Pelagian or universalist. Finally, neglecting or misunderstanding the doctrine of regeneration leads to omitting the need for a total and radical transformation of life to accompany justification. “Easy believism,” in which it is only necessary to say the sinner’s prayer, becomes the approach to evangelism and conversion. One must wonder how many people have said the prayer but are never seen again amongst the body of Christ because it was not accompanied by the genuine rebirth that complements true justification. Contemporary Salvation Army officers must recapture the true “full gospel” that preaches the entire “Scripture Way of Salvation” if they wish to see souls saved and lives changed. Otherwise, the most they will be able to hope for is religious people who know nothing of recapturing the image of God, the power of Christ, and the life eternal.

Endnotes

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- ² Carter, Thompson, and Wilson, 1:205.
- ³ Kenneth J. Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 24-25.
- ⁴ William Booth, *The Seven Spirits: Or, What I Teach My Officers* (Atlanta, Ga.: Salvation Army Supplies and Purchasing Dept., 1985), 11.
- ⁵ *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine*. (London: Salvation Books, 2010), 110.
- ⁶ *Handbook of Salvation Army Doctrine* (St. Albans: The Campfield Press, 1923), 48.
- ⁷ Catholic University of America., *New Catholic Encyclopedia*., 2nd edition., vol. 10 (Detroit: Thomson/Gale, 2003), 664, <https://archive.org/details/new-catholicencyc10thom/page/n7/mode/2up?view=theater>.
- ⁸ Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology*, 87.
- ⁹ Kenneth J. Collins and Jason E. Vickers, *The Sermons of John Wesley: A Collection for the Christian Journey* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013), 18, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=857391>.
- ¹⁰ John Wesley, *The Doctrine of Original Sin: According to Scripture, Reason, and Experience* (Bristol: E. Farley, 1757), vi, <https://ia802900.us.archive.org/27/items/doctrineoforigin00wesl/doctrineoforigin00wesl.pdf>.
- ¹¹ Wesley, vi.
- ¹² Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology*, 30.
- ¹³ *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine*., 113.
- ¹⁴ James Pedlar, "Original Sin," *Salvationist Magazine Online*, January 18, 2012, <https://salvationist.ca/articles/2012/01/original-sin/>. 15 "Sin" (The Salvation Army New Zealand, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa Territory, July 28, 2011), <https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/sin>.
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- ¹⁷ Carter, Thompson, and Wilson, *A Contemporary Wesleyan Theology: Biblical, Systematic, and Practical*, 1:266-67.
- ¹⁸ Wesley himself said, "Nothing is sin strictly speaking, but a voluntary transgression of a known law of God."
- ¹⁹ John D. Waldron and Salvation Army, *The Salvationist and the Atonement : A Compilation of Articles by Various Salvation Army Officers* (Ontario: Triumph Press, 1982), 19.
- ²⁰ Heidelberg Seminary, "The Doctrine of Total Depravity (2): Sin," February 4, 2019, <https://heidelbergseminary.org/2019/02/the-doctrine-of-total-depravity-2-sin/#>.

²¹ Carter, Thompson, and Wilson, *A Contemporary Wesleyan Theology: Biblical, Systematic, and Practical*, 1:269.

²² William Ragsdale Cannon, *The Theology of John Wesley: With Special Reference to the Doctrine of Justification* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1946), 200, https://archive.org/details/theologyofjohnwe0000cann_z0j1.

²³ It is impossible to overstate the importance of the doctrine of prevenient grace when discussing Wesley's understanding of how God deals with sinful humanity, but the subject is beyond the scope of this paper.

²⁴ Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology*, 39.

²⁵ *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine.*, 114.

²⁶ Carter, Thompson, and Wilson, *A Contemporary Wesleyan Theology: Biblical, Systematic, and Practical*, 1:262.

²⁷ Ray Harris 1940-, *Convictions Matter: The Function of Salvation Army Doctrines* (Toronto, ON: The Salvation Army, Canada and Bermuda Territory, 2014), 74.

²⁸ Waldron and Salvation Army, *The Salvationist and the Atonement: A Compilation of Articles by Various Salvation Army Officers*, 19.

²⁹ Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology*, 38.

³⁰ Samuel Logan Brengle, *Heart Talks on Holiness* (Atlanta, Ga.: Salvation Army Supplies and Purchasing Dept., 1981), 2.

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³³ *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine.*, 147.

³⁴ Collins and Vickers, *The Sermons of John Wesley: A Collection for the Christian Journey*, 157.

³⁵ Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology*, 105.

³⁶ Catherine Mumford Booth, *Life and Death* (Atlanta: The Salvation Army Supplies, 1986), 129.

³⁷ See 1 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 4:22, and James 1:21.

³⁸ Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology*, 115.

³⁹ "Brain Tumor Personality Changes," Moffitt, accessed April 9, 2024, <https://www.moffitt.org/cancers/brain-tumor/symptoms/mood-changes/>.

⁴⁰ Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology*, 121.

⁴¹ *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine.*, 148.

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Genesis 3 Hermeneutic

REDEEMING THE WORLDVIEW OF WOMEN FOR GOD'S MISSION

Jaclyn Holloway

“Then he said to the woman, ‘I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy, and in pain you will give birth. And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you.’ And to the man he said, ‘Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed because of you. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains. By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made. For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return.’ Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live” (Genesis 3:16-20 NLT).

Missional Issue: Broken Structure Between Men and Women

The topic of this paper is to examine how the consequence of the Fall was a broken social-power structure between men and women that left humanity in need of redemptive mission. God created men and women to be equal partners, and the Fall created a hierarchy in which men have power over women. Throughout Scripture,

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we see God giving women roles in His mission as He redeems the social-power structure to be equal again. Genesis 3 shows us the consequences of the Fall, and Jesus shows us the redemption of that trauma in the New Testament when He utilizes women as leaders in His mission. The stories of the women in the Bible, if viewed through a lens of redemption, show how God used them for His mission in an ideal way, not the world's way. This paper will also examine how The Salvation Army can participate in the redemptive work of healing the broken power structure between the sexes.

Though we do not have time to examine the whole Bible here, we endeavor to see how Genesis 3 is the point of brokenness that God redeems throughout Scripture. As Beth Allison Bar says, "The first human sin built the first human power hierarchy."¹ Unfortunately, there is a long history of misinterpreting Genesis 1-3 in favor of male empowerment and female subjugation. Many call this the patriarchy, like historian Judith Bennett who "explains patriarchy as having three main meanings in English: 1. Male ecclesiastical leaders, such as the patriarch (archbishop of Constantinople) in Greek Orthodoxy; 2. Legal power of male household heads (fathers/husbands); and 3. A society that promotes male authority and female submission."² It is this third definition that has been utilized to continually promote the brokenness of God's vision for equality among the sexes.

Genesis 1:27³ tells us, "So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (NLT). In this first glimpse at male and female, we see an equal level of power between the sexes. "Without establishing relative rank or worth of the genders, the spinner of this creation tale indicates that humankind is found in two varieties, the male and the female, and this humanity is ... a reflection of the Deity ... The male aspect and the female aspect implicitly are part of the first human and a reflection of the Creator."⁴ There is no power imbalance between male and female at the creation of the world. Both male and female are necessary to fully "reflect God's image" and "God's nature."⁵

The woman described in Genesis 2 is given a position of importance as Adam's partner, equal to him as one of his flesh. Mimi Haddad claims the title "strong rescuer" for the woman as she saves

Adam from a lonely existence.⁶ The closeness of the bond between Adam and his, as of yet, unnamed female partner is a positive feature of creation and celebrates that the two are a part of a whole. The Hebrew word in Genesis 2:18, which is usually translated as “helper” in English, is *êzer*. In English, “helper” often connotes subordination or inferiority. *Êzer*, however, is never used elsewhere in the Bible to denote a subordinate, only someone who is superior or equal. The word *êzer* is most often used to describe God Himself, whom we would never equate with inferiority.⁷ In this case, Adam needs aid, and an equal helper meets that need for companionship.

The male-dominated hierarchy would not be established until after the Fall described in Genesis 3. Unfortunately, women are often blamed for the Fall, but a reading of Genesis 3:16-20 shows both man and woman being punished for the *joint* decision to disobey God. Genesis 3:16 outlines the consequence for the woman: “Then he [God] said to the woman, ‘I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy, and in pain you will give birth. And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you’” (NLT). Genesis 3:16 illustrates the struggle between men and women for power or control not evident in the original idea of humanity. Both partners faced “status-establishing punishments” that subjected them to social roles that “reflect the author’s male-oriented worldview, but no weighty accusation of ‘original sin’ brought about by woman is found in the text.”⁸ Those theological worldviews would be added later by male authors. The interpretation of Genesis 3:16 as a reason for the subjugation of women has been a source of trauma and abuse throughout much of modern history. Alice Matthews writes, “It is in Genesis 3:16 ... where we first see hierarchy in human relationships ... Hierarchy was not God’s will for the first pair, but it was imposed when they chose to disregard his command and eat the forbidden fruit. This was the moment of the birth of patriarchy.”⁹

This is the sociohistorical trauma that women have had to endure for centuries. The oneness that should have resulted from creation between man, woman, and God was turned into “gender roles, systems of impunity, dominance, power, and an absence of empathy—qualities of abusive systems. In such a world, men and women both navigate the perils of patriarchy.”¹⁰ The specific context of women in ministry has been marred by centuries of women faced with a worldview that keeps them submissive to men. The resulting trauma has led women to believe that they have no place partici-

pating in the *missio Dei*. Barr brings us to a place of questioning the patriarchy that has imprisoned so many women when she writes:

Instead of being a point of pride for Christians, shouldn't the historical continuity of a practice that has caused women to fare much worse than men for thousands of years cause concern? Shouldn't Christians, who are called to be different from the world, treat women differently? What if patriarchy isn't divinely ordained but is a result of human sin? What if instead of being divinely created, patriarchy slithered into creation only after the fall? What if the reason that the fruit of patriarchy is so corrupt, even within the Christian church, is because patriarchy has always been a corrupted system? Instead of assuming that patriarchy is instituted by God, we must ask whether patriarchy is a product of sinful human hands.¹¹

As we examine Genesis 3 in a new light, we must shed the weight of patriarchy that would have us continue to keep men and women from working together in equality for the mission of God. If we believe that both men and women are image-bearers of God as it states in Genesis 1:27 and in Salvation Army statements, then it is only together that we can fully see the *missio Dei* fulfilled on earth.

A Mission to be Redeemed from Inequality

Charles Van Engen suggests, in his tapestry model of hermeneutics, that “we cannot have mission without the Bible, nor can we understand the Bible apart from God’s mission ... Yet the *missio Dei* happens in specific places and time in our contexts. Its content, validity, and meaning are derived from Scripture, yet its action, significance, and transforming power happen in our midst.”¹² To look at the Bible and attempt interpretation, we must recognize that the *missio Dei* will be expressed through specific, common human experiences or contexts. These contexts may change throughout time, but the themes or motifs will echo through the centuries. The theme of women’s inequality is seen throughout both history and Scrip-

ture, even as God aims to redeem that power imbalance through the women in the Bible. As Van Engen says, “Approaching the Bible as a tapestry calls us to take seriously the uniqueness of each biblical context in terms of its history, sociology, anthropology, and grammatical peculiarities.”¹³ As we look specifically at Genesis 3, we see how the text and context are woven together.

At the center of the model, then, is a redemption for women in God’s mission and the tools for discovering this redemption are the Wesleyan Quadrilateral of Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason. Overall, we look at the *missio Dei* and how we are called to take part in it. Michael Goheen writes, “A missional hermeneutic begins with the triune God and his mission to restore the world and a people from all nations. God’s mission is disclosed in a historical narrative in which he chooses and covenants with a people to be part of what he is doing.”¹⁴ As we examine the text and context, we see how God’s mission to redeem and restore women’s equality will affect their work in His mission. In the case of women in mission, the context and tradition of the modern interpreter has greatly influenced the meaning taken from the texts. The interactions between men and women have been highly damaged by readings of Genesis 3 that place men over women. The interpretive methods used in the study of women in mission are important to show the deep wounds created by past interpretations and the trauma of inequality.

Social histories help us consider how someone has been affected by various activities in their lives. For women, these social histories are highly affected by how men view their roles in the world and in the Church more specifically. There is no culture on earth that has perfectly portrayed the ideal vision of men and women equally working together. In this case, Genesis 3 tells us the beginning of Eve’s social history: she was a partner in the first sin. She had to pay the consequences of that sin along with Adam. The rest of humanity followed suit.

Sociohistorical trauma is felt by every woman who finds herself underpaid, overlooked, forced to submit, faced with sexual harassment, or left out of ministry. We cannot ignore that even the women of the Bible faced huge social challenges and cultural stigmas as they pursued God’s mission. Boaz Johnson wrote *The Marys of the*

Bible: The Original #MeToo Movement about the biblical culture that was rife with sexual misconduct toward women. In his description of Eve he writes:

The creation of Eve is a crucial #MeToo principle. She is the mother of all life. She is created in the image of God, just as much as the man. Most of all, she is not merely a “helper or helper suitable for him,” but rather she is an *Ezer Kanegdo*, a godlike leader. This creation text sets the stage for what I consider to be the most important #MeToo principle: it calls for a reset of all images of the woman, through history, and both in the East and the West. If only human beings would take this creation principle seriously, there would be no abuse of women.¹⁵

The social trauma of Eve and every other woman of the Bible is still felt today as women struggle to overcome the abuse of the world. When we read Scripture, we bring our sociohistorical trauma to the words themselves. We cannot help but see how the women in Scripture face huge obstacles, trauma, abuse, and inequality like we do today. Even though the ideal situation is equality, we are a long way from that being our reality.

Human existence was altered when Adam and Eve chose to partake of the fruit from the tree that God said was off limits. The relationship between men and women became hierarchical. The relationship between men and the earth was strained since it took harder toil to create food. The relationship between God and women was affected as they struggled to see their place in His mission. Modern women must also face an altered relationship with God based upon the hurt that often comes when churches hold on to models of inequality.

Sociohistorical healing can only happen as we allow Scripture to affect our lives. Hermeneutics is not a flat reading of Scripture, but requires that we read, interpret, and practice the interpretation of the text. The story of Scripture shows us God’s work to restore creation, and we have a role in that mission: “Mission is more than simple activity: it is an identity that comes from the role that God’s cove-

nant people are called to play in the biblical story. Mission, then, is not merely a set of outreach activities: it defines the very being of God's people."¹⁶ Sociohistorical healing begins with our identity being changed in God. Then, we commit to bringing that same healing to our neighbors, communities, cities, and nations. This concept is identified in The Salvation Army mission statement: "[The Salvation Army's] mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination."¹⁷

Women who desire to be in ministry need to be able to read Scripture and see how God is redeeming the worldviews that would keep them in subjugation. Men need to be able to read Scripture and see how God values women and seeks to utilize them in His ministry. We all need to be able to read Scripture and put it into practice. We cannot deny that "as interpreters, we find ourselves in a specific historical, social, and cultural context, and we struggle to find meaning within that context."¹⁸ In a tapestry model, we use our specific contexts to examine a common theme in history. We must see how God's mission includes women considering our specific backgrounds and determining what is the truth.

Missional Application: Hermeneutics of Genesis 3

As Wesleyans in The Salvation Army, we can utilize the Wesleyan Quadrilateral to examine Genesis 3 through the lens of redemption of women in God's mission. As Scripture may not be clear all the time, we will turn toward our full quadrilateral for discernment: "We turn to tradition, reason, and experience to clarify our understanding ... helping us grasp God's word with greater clarity."¹⁹ The four parts of the quadrilateral work together to create a picture that points toward the major purpose of this lens: God's redeeming work that leads women out of the trauma of inequality to work in His mission.

The Salvation Army has a long history of women in ministry, beginning with the Founders, Catherine and William Booth, in 1865. Colonel Philip W. Davisson writes about Catherine Booth as a strong defender of women's right to serve in ministry. She wrote extensively about biblical foundations for women to preach and teach as the Spirit directed. Colonel Davisson writes:

... She [Catherine] maintained that any difference between the sexes in their ability to love God or serve God faithfully was nonexistent, or God would have provided some other means of salvation or spiritual relationship. Here again, she appeals to the notion of restoration, believing that, as originally created and redemptively re-created, female is the equal of male.²⁰

This firm belief in the equality of men and women in the eyes of God has led The Salvation Army to implement women in ministry, leading the charge around the world. The Salvation Army throughout its history has put their theology into practice—women have been popular preachers, teachers, missionaries, and leaders in every country where the Army has worked. Considering this history, we should teach hermeneutics within this doctrinal setting to see redemption and restoration in God's desire for women to be in mission. We see the redemption of Genesis 3:16 occur whenever we see God including women in the *missio Dei* (which is often).

Scripture

In the Wesleyan tradition, Scripture is the foundation for what we believe and is the authority for how we understand the other parts of interpretation. As we look at our text in Genesis 3:16-20, we begin with a reading of the Scripture. Before reading commentaries, opinions, books, etc., it is integral to read the text and search what is written. This is sometimes difficult since we bring our biases to the text, but we must read the words of Scripture and not assume we know what has been written.

A reading of Genesis 3:16-20 might produce a new understanding of what is often called “the curse” of women. In fact, there are only two things cursed in this section of Scripture: the serpent and the ground.²¹ Instead, we read that women will have an “increase of pains in childbearing” and the husband will “rule over” the women (NIV). Likewise, we see no curse for men except that the earth would be cursed to be more difficult to work. No longer would men

and women be able to eat from a plentiful garden. They would have to work for their food. In these verses we see a judgment being made upon Adam and Eve because of their joint sin.

How has sin affected the world considering these verses? With just a cursory reading we see that women no longer have equality with men. This is not something affecting just women, however, as there is a loss for men when they wield all the power without their designed equals. We are reminded that God did not design this situation. “Genesis 3:16-17 is best understood as a description of the new order of things, of how life will be lived as the result of the Fall, rather than how it should be lived ... These are not God’s decisions on how things must be, such that violation of them would be sin.”²² Though we can read this Scripture passage to mean that men should rule over women, an examination of the New Testament shows how Jesus chose to view women as equals capable of participation in His mission.

Tradition

When Scripture has been read and analyzed, we can then open commentaries and other texts to discern what traditional readings of the text might say. Our version of tradition is threefold: Christian orthodoxy (creeds, classical statements of Christian faith), evangelical Protestantism, and Wesleyan-Arminian tradition (a particular bias in doctrinal differences).²³ For a reading of Genesis 3:16-20, we should carefully select sources of tradition considering how many societies throughout history have been patriarchal. This affects readings of the texts, as we have already discussed. Considering the next two sections, experience and reason, we will also see that many traditional views of Genesis 3:16-20 do not match what occurs throughout the rest of Scripture and the real-world calling of women to ministry. As Van Engen reminds us, “When we place church tradition or missional command between the Bible and our mission context, we reduce the impact that Scripture can have in transforming the way we understand, exercise, and evaluate our missional action.”²⁴

As we pursue a study of tradition, then, we will be encouraged to look at sources from numerous backgrounds. Our own denominational stance on women in ministry leads us to examine how we

came to our doctrines. Colonel Davisson believes that forerunners to Catherine Booth like Margaret Fell and Phoebe Palmer set the stage for our doctrinal belief that “women are created as equal inheritors of God’s image, and the subsequent subjugation of women is a sinful consequence of the Fall.”²⁵

There are many modern Christians who would follow the idea of complementarianism instead of equality between the sexes. The argument for complementarianism is said to be biblical because “God had given men headship and to deny this was to directly contradict the Bible.”²⁶ Men and women were said to be equal in value and dignity but had different roles within the home, workplace, and church. In recent years, we have seen women raised in this tradition reject these ideas. Beth Moore, for example, spoke out in 2016, saying, “I came face to face with one of the most demoralizing realizations of my adult life: Scripture was not the reason for the colossal disregard and disrespect of women among many of these men. It was only the excuse. Sin was the reason.”²⁷

Instead of leaning toward these models of interaction between men and women, Salvationists should look for sources of egalitarian tradition. We want to avoid the kinds of traditions that Barr describes: “When the church denies women the ability to preach, lead, teach, and sometimes even work outside the home, the Church is continuing a long historical tradition of subordinating women.”²⁸ In the end, we want to read traditional texts that support the same conclusion we made when reading the Scripture: that God created women in His image, as equals to men, and the punishment for sin was an imbalance of power between the sexes.

Experience

Mary Lederleitner interviewed dozens of women in ministry for her book, *Women in God’s Mission*. In the conclusion of her study, she writes:

I don’t know why God was not more consistent and explicit in Scripture regarding women. I know some people see a black-and-white reality there, but I believe an honest exam-

ination shows that Jesus was regularly upending religious and cultural ideas about women ... Women don't know why God often asks us to do things that go against what other people, especially some men, think we should be doing. But because of this reality, we are stuck in the middle having to decide whether to follow a male leader's strong opinions regarding gender roles in mission or to honor the calling and beckoning of our Lord.²⁹

Most of the women in Lederleitner's book experienced that God's call to ministry outweighed the opinions of men and the tradition of the church. Though we must be cautious to not let experience outweigh Scripture, tradition, or reason, it is a helpful guide to counterweigh the other parts of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral: "Wesleyans believe there is an experiential dimension in human knowing. What Scripture teaches, tradition affirms, and reason supports, must be experienced in Christian community and lives ... Christian truth leads to a living orthodoxy."³⁰

Women have been called into ministry from the very beginning of the Bible. Eve was called to bring life and culture into the world.³¹ Miriam was a strong leader beside her brothers in the Exodus narrative. Deborah was a prophet over a nation during war. Abigail defied her husband to aid God's chosen, King David. Esther was a queen who saved her people from an enemy. Matthew honors the four women listed in Jesus' family line, who were seen as faithful enough to bring forth the Savior: Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary. Jesus' resurrection was first shared by women who proclaimed the message to the other disciples. Phoebe was a great teacher in the new church. The experiences of women have been recorded throughout time as they have become martyrs, were listed as saints, and worked tirelessly to build the Church. Can we deny that these women were called by God? Would we say that they had gotten their calling wrong because of their sex? We should utilize these stories to weigh against traditions that would say women have no place in church leadership or mission.

Reason

Genesis 3:16-20 must be seen in a narrative whole. This is the last side of the quadrilateral: using reason to weigh one text against another. We cannot isolate Genesis 3 because “in reading the Hebrew Scriptures as a narrative whole ... one may receive the message that the genders were meant to be equal at the beginning.”³² Likewise, if we examine the New Testament, we see that “Jesus gave his disciples, both male and female, spiritual governance, just as God gave Adam and Eve shared governance in the first garden in Eden (Gen. 1:26-28).”³³ If we only read Genesis 3:16, we see that women are given a heavy load because of sin. The consequences led to a broken system. However, the redemption seen throughout Scripture helps us see the judgement of Eve as just the beginning of sin and not the way we should keep a broken system.

Reason “empowers us to make sense of the scriptural text and historical tradition. It arbitrates between contrary arguments and competing interpretations of Scripture ... It protects from careless and harmful teaching. Like John Wesley, we think reason ‘is a fundamental principle’ and ‘that to renounce reason is to renounce’ Christianity.”³⁴ Salvationists should challenge themselves to read the more controversial passages of the Bible and consider the whole narrative, not isolated blurbs. Reason informs us that women were invited to preach and prophesy alongside men in Acts 2:18, and to deny women that right is to disregard God’s calling. Reason informs us that Paul declares the Church to be a place free from hierarchy in Galatians 3:28, “There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus” (NLT). Reason informs us that women are created equal and should have equal opportunities to minister in church. This is the redeeming work of Jesus Christ in humanity; all people are called to be witness to the truth of salvation.

A Salvationist’s Call to Redemptive Mission

Has The Salvation Army done enough to support women in ministry by redeeming the cultural roles of women from subjugation to equality? Has this denomination been missional against the sin of patriarchy? In many ways, the answer is a resounding, “Yes!” However, we have proof from the last few decades to tell us that we still have not fully redeemed our egalitarian structure from patriarchal inequal-

ity. I would argue that we have always had equality in some levels of The Salvation Army, but not all. Especially when we look upon our history of international leadership, the view is overwhelmingly male.

Commissioner Kay Rader wrote in 1999 that one of the emphasized priorities of the new millennium was empowerment of women. General Rader “pointed out the underutilized resource available to us in capable women, especially lay Salvationists and married women officers, many of whom have been effectively deactivated, particularly after being appointed to headquarters. Others ... have been afforded only limited opportunities for self-improvement and not a few have been limited by the biases of their own husbands or leaders.”³⁵ Women limited by their own husbands and leaders is the legacy of The Salvation Army? Women have always been appointed as local leaders, whether married or single. However, it is the upper levels of leadership that often lack married women officers. In Colonel Janet Munn’s 2011 study, *Theory and Practice of Gender Equality in The Salvation Army*, she begins her examination of the Army with statistics concerning gender dynamics. The Salvation Army had more female officers (53%) than male officers (47%) as of 2011, however, only 9% of the officers in “high responsibility” appointments were female. Even more striking is the fact that only 1.73% of those female officers were married. In total, only nine married women held appointments such as territorial commander, chief secretary, training principal, or divisional commander in 2011.³⁶

These statistics stand in stark contrast to our early years and the stated equality we had in our ranks. The 1895 *Orders and Regulations for Staff Officers of The Salvation Army* states:

One of the leading principles upon which the Army is based is the right of women to have the right to an equal share with men in the work of publishing salvation to the world ... She may hold any position of authority or power in the Army from that of a Local Officer to that of the General. Let it therefore be understood that women are eligible for the highest commands—indeed no woman is to be kept back from any position of power or influence merely on account of her sex ... Women must be treated as equal with men in

all the intellectual and social relationships of life.³⁷

In our earliest years, this was our dedication to female equality. In an age and in countries where women were not equal in the eyes of the law, let alone in the church, The Salvation Army rooted themselves in equality of the sexes.

More recent Salvation Army initiatives seek to redeem the patriarchal misstep of unequal representation of women in all parts of the Army. In 2016, General André Cox invited Salvationists to join him in the Accountability Movement, writing, “We should want to be accountable for our actions and attitudes as we participate in God’s mission to transform the world. We must be keen to learn from our successes, but also our failures.”³⁸ Some territories throughout the Army world have taken steps to rectify the unequal promotion of women in their leadership structure. Major Christina Tyson notes in her article, “Mobilising Women in Leadership Part One—Gender Equality,” that Pakistan has worked to include married and single women in upper levels of leadership since 2007. Between 2014 and 2017, Pakistan had the first married female divisional commander, territorial youth secretary, and secretary for personnel. Many territories, including those in the United States, cannot claim such inclusion in their leadership. Major Tyson believes that we have not yet accomplished our initial vision of women being held equal to men.³⁹

I believe that we have taken on the practice of patriarchal inequality that the world holds instead of standing firmly in our belief that women are equal and should hold equal positions of leadership in our church structure. As a movement begun to be counter-cultural, we must embrace the notion that “subjecting women to unequal treatment and opportunity is an evil to be challenged, not a relevancy to be followed.”⁴⁰ We have fed into the lie that Genesis 3:16 is describing the world as God intended instead of how sin affected God’s vision of equality. The Salvation Army has slowly moved from a powerhouse center for female empowerment and has become a place where women can hold only mid-level leadership unless relegated to the role of Women’s Ministry (a role reserved in many places for the wife of the highest leader). While many women do not see the appointment of Women’s Ministry Secretary/Presi-

dent as an unequal appointment, some women do feel as if such an appointment limits their leadership potential. The Salvation Army writes with an equality of purpose for all while we need to establish an equal opportunity for those within our ranks.⁴¹

When will we see the equality of the Army displayed in all that we do? Colonel Munn suggests that our theological understanding of power needs to be adjusted so that we see how “power in Christian community assumes the transformation of all social relationships, most particularly relationships between males and females.”⁴² One form of the ongoing subjugation of women in The Salvation Army is the expectation that female officers will work “background” positions without recognition because women in ministry are cultivated to see self-recognition as pride. While no role is inherently more integral to the working of the Army, we do tend to value certain appointments for public leadership more than others. “There is increasing recognition that the church has historically expected women to be self-sacrificing,” which has proven to be even more evident with the practices surrounding appointments for married women.⁴³ In keeping female officers from garnering the necessary skills to be in leadership roles, often because the women are married or have young children, The Salvation Army is unintentionally supporting a patriarchal system that suggests women are more suited to pastoral or supportive roles. What are the solutions to our glaring problem?

- Teaching good theology and hermeneutics so that officers can teach, preach, and practice equality.
- Promoting women based on their gifting and calling, not their marital status or gender.
- Challenging cultural practices that subjugate women like we learned to do in the earliest years of the Army.
- Making changes quickly, before more women—both single and married—leave the work to lead in other ministries.

The Bible says women are equal to do the work of the mission of God and our practices worldwide should reflect that belief. The work of redemption calls for living change at every level of our church.

Summary

Redemption from the consequences of sin in the world requires all parts of the Church to work toward equality between women and men. Study of Genesis 1-3 reveals that women were created in the image of God alongside men, but the introduction of sin into the world established a patriarchy that subjugated women. The work of redeeming women for the work of God happened throughout the whole Bible as God called women to His ministry in various ways. Utilizing the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, we can examine Genesis 3:16-20 to see how the patriarchy was a consequence of the Fall, not how God created the world to be. Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason all point to God valuing women and including them in His ministry with equality to men.

The Salvation Army was established with the ideals of equality between the sexes in all levels of officership. Though we have the correct language in our policies and procedures, The Salvation Army does not have equality at every level. Redemption looks like women serving equally with men in all roles within the church—including The Salvation Army's highest levels of command.

Endnotes

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God, Do You Have This?¹

A SERMON ON HABAKKUK 1:12-2:1

Christopher L. Scott

The book of Habakkuk is a “theodicy,” which is an “attempt to defend God’s omnipotence and goodness in the face of the problem of evil in the world.”² It tells the story of a man asking God about the evil he sees occurring in his country and in the neighboring nations. It also reveals the struggles that Habakkuk has with what he sees and what he believes God should be doing.

Many of us probably have the same questions that Habakkuk was asking. Questions such as: God, do you know what’s going on? God, when will you intervene? God, why don’t you do something? God, if you are good, why do you allow evil, pain, and suffering?

In this book, we don’t get all of those answers at once. Just as each of the four Gospels in the New Testament gives us a portrait of Jesus from different sides and with different emphases, the book of Habakkuk answers our questions in a series of steps that build upon each other. Each step gets us closer to understanding who God is and why He chooses to do what He does in the way He does.

The first chapter of Habakkuk’s book focuses on Habakkuk’s problems. Habakkuk 1:1 serves as an introduction, and then we read about Habakkuk’s first question in Habakkuk 1:2-4, which we can summarize this way: How long will evil continue, and when will you stop it? In these three verses, he questions the inconsistency of God’s actions and God’s character.³

Next, in Habakkuk 1:5-11, we read God’s first answer to Habakkuk, which can be summarized in this way: *I’m going to stop it, I*

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know what's going on, and you'll be surprised how. God tells Habakkuk that He will use ungodly people (Babylon) and ungodly forces to purify His people.

But God's first answer raises a new problem for Habakkuk and that's what we'll examine together. Habakkuk's second question of God in 1:12-2:1 questions the inconsistency of God's character by asking why God would use the more serious sinners (Babylonians) to punish the less serious sinners (Judah).⁴ Habakkuk is perplexed that the eternal and holy God would send a nation more wicked than Judah to punish Judah, but he waits for an answer. Let's look at these three sections and an application for each together.

Declaration about God—Habakkuk 1:12-13

In Hebrew there are specific types of questions that expect a positive reply⁵ and Habakkuk's question is one of those. "Are You not from everlasting, O LORD, my God, my Holy One? We will not die. You, O LORD, have appointed them to judge; and You, O Rock, have established them to correct. Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, and You cannot look on wickedness with favor. Why do You look with favor on those who deal treacherously? Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up those more righteous than they?" (Habakkuk 1:12-13 NASB).⁶ While these appear as questions, they are actually declarations in the form of questions.⁷ These are rhetorical questions that expect the answer, "Yes of course."⁸ With this in mind, let's note a few key words from Habakkuk 1:12-13.

The name of God deserves our attention. "LORD" is used two times in Habakkuk 1:12. It's in all capital letters in our English translation, which tells us it's a translation of *YHWH*⁹ or transliterated as *Yahweh*. Some believe it comes from the verb "to be" in Hebrew.¹⁰ *Yahweh* was the covenant name of God (Exodus 3:14). The use of this name for God by Habakkuk indicated God's covenant faithfulness and would evoke confidence in the original hearers.

The titles for God deserve our attention. Habakkuk calls God "Holy One" (v. 12b). This title describes how God transcends the affairs of people and nations. He will not allow sin to go unpunished. Habakkuk also calls God "Rock" (v. 12e). This title views God as a place where

someone can go and be safe from danger. It pictures God as a place of safety and protection for His people. It evokes feelings of permanence and stability.

The attributes of God deserve our attention. Habakkuk describes God as “everlasting” (v. 12a). This was a reminder of the Lord’s saving history in Israel. Next Habakkuk describes God’s “eyes” (13a). This is an “anthropomorphism,” the attribution of human features to God. Here it describes God’s omnipotence in how He sees everything going on in the world. God *sees* evil, but he does not *condone* evil or *tolerate* evil.

The activities of God deserve our attention. We read that God has “established them to correct” (v. 12e). God is going to use the Babylonians to punish, but they will not overstep God’s sovereign will. (This was the message of God to Habakkuk in 1:5-11.)

Lastly, the attitude of Habakkuk deserves our attention. Habakkuk almost seems relieved to know God is active, but God had not responded the way Habakkuk wanted. This is important to note: Habakkuk does not question God’s punishment of Judah, but Habakkuk *does* question how God will use an evil nation to punish Judah. Habakkuk 1:11-12 reminds us of an important reality in the Christian life, which is this: we have confidence in the eternal God.

For Habakkuk, *things* are not looking good, but Habakkuk still believes *God* is good. Things have been bad for three hundred years in Israel and Judah, and they are not getting better. Yet Habakkuk still has confidence in the eternal God as seen in Habakkuk’s addresses to God as “Lord,” “Holy One,” “Rock,” and “Everlasting.” Pastor John MacArthur writes, “Although the prophet could not fully comprehend the sovereign workings of his righteous God, he expressed his complete faith and trust.”¹¹ While the devastation of divine judgement was terrible, Habakkuk drew hope and consolation from God’s holiness and faithfulness.

Reading about God’s potential judgment requires a reflection on God’s promises to Israel. Scripture written before the book of Habakkuk said God would remain faithful to the patriarchs based on His covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17:2-8; 26:3-5; 28:13-15). Scripture also revealed that God would remain faithful to Israel, as they were

the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exodus 3:3-15; Deuteronomy 7:6; 14:1-2; 26:16-18). Furthermore, God would remain faithful to the house of David; God told David that he would always have a descendant on the throne (2 Samuel 7:12-29).¹²

While there were promises given to Israel then, God also gives promises to believers living *today*: promises that we will always be tied to God because of His love (Romans 8:38-39) and promises that we are adopted as sons and daughters (Galatians 3:26-27). These promises give us confidence in the eternal God.

Where I live in Washington we sometimes experience snow and icy conditions in parking lots. One important element of walking on ice is to look for parts of a parking lot or sidewalk that do not have ice. When walking, you look for the solid parts and step there. You avoid the slippery spots and walk on the solid parts. In a similar way, we rest and focus on the elements of God we know for sure. We don't know everything about God, but we stick with what we do know. Pastor J. Vernon McGee once said, "My friend, do not be disturbed if you are not thinking as God thinks. You are not God. Unfortunately many folk try to take His place."¹³ What a blessing it is to have the benefit of confidence looking back at these things. But Habakkuk does not have that benefit. So let's continue as he shares his concerns with God.

Description of the Babylonians—Habakkuk 1:14-17

Helplessness of Humanity (vv. 14-15)

Habakkuk tells us about the helplessness of humanity by using the analogy of fishing. "Why have You made men like the fish of the sea, like creeping things without a ruler over them?" (Habakkuk 1:1). Fish have no leader and they're easy to catch. They represent human society to the Babylonians. In other words, Judah is as helpless as fish and they are going to be easy to catch without a leader.

Habakkuk tells us about the catch of the sea for the Babylonians, "The Chaldeans bring all of them up with a hook, drag them away with their net, and gather them together in their fishing net. Therefore they rejoice and are glad" (Habakkuk 1:15). This is what the Babylonians do. The "Chaldeans" were a tribe within the Assyrian Empire

that rose up and overtook the Assyrian Empire. Nabopolassar rose up into power in 625 B.C. and Nebuchadnezzar inherited the powerful kingdom in 605 B.C. The Chaldeans were the original tribe name of the nation known as the Babylonians.

The Babylonians had a tradition of driving a hook through the lower lip of their captives, stringing them together, and then walking them together in a single-file line as their captives.¹⁴ Brutality was seen when they captured King Zedekiah, killed his sons in front of him, then gouged out his eyes (2 Kings 25:7).

Haughtiness of Babylonians (vv. 16-17)

The haughtiness of the Babylonians is seen in how they believe in themselves: “Therefore they offer a sacrifice to their net and burn incense to their fishing net; because through these things their catch is large, and their food is plentiful” (Habakkuk 1:16). The Babylonians attributed their success to their own military might, worshipped what brought them success, loved their livelihood, enjoyed their luxury, and lived by the plunder of the people that they conquered. Those helpless fish they gathered up indiscriminately and caught in their net were their life.

The haughtiness of the Babylonians is also seen in how they battle anyone they want: “Will they therefore empty their net and continually slay nations without sparing?” (Habakkuk 1:17). They fill the net, empty it, then fill it again. As we read about the arrogance and self reliance of the Babylonians, it reminds us as Christians about an important principle we follow. We have confidence that we achieve nothing without God.

The pride of the Babylonians we read here matches what we read earlier in this chapter, “Then they will sweep through like the wind and pass on. But they will be held guilty, they whose strength is their god” (Habakkuk 1:11). The Babylonians believed everything they achieved was because of their might. Their strength was their god. They believed that what they achieved was because of their effort. As a result, there was no acknowledgement of a god in Heaven that was allowing them to do what they were doing. And that’s why God eventually brings them down.

That same attitude can creep into our lives as believers if we're not careful. We might start to depend on our connections, creativity, experience, education, family, or innovativeness. We as Christians must remind ourselves that God is provider and sustainer of everything that we achieve and have. Everything we have is God's blessing to us.

All of our success is God's provision for us. A parent might hear from a teacher that her kids are doing excellent in school. Give God the credit! Someone working in food service might receive grateful compliments from the people she is serving. Praise God for the honor of doing the work! A car mechanic might receive good reviews online for his work. Let the glory go to God!

I started working at the church I now serve in July of 2021 during COVID-19, when a lot of people were not attending church in person. Within two years of me pastoring that church attendance had doubled in size. For me, I had no other choice than to attribute the growth to God's timing of when He had me start and the fact that people were once again attending church in person.

It's important to praise God when things go well because it's our human nature to attribute our success to our work instead of to God's. The Swiss reformer John Calvin once wrote that it was "necessary that God should empty us by his special grace, that we may not be filled with this satanic pride, which is innate, and which cannot by any means be shaken off by us, until the Lord regenerates us by his Spirit."¹⁵ Thus we remind ourselves that we have confidence in the fact that we achieve nothing without God.

In this section of Habakkuk's response to God we are seeing Habakkuk's experience. We have read about Habakkuk's declaration that taught us to have confidence in the eternal God. We have read about Habakkuk's description that taught us we achieve nothing without God. Last, we see Habakkuk waiting for a reply.

Determination to Wait—Habakkuk 2:1

Cities in seventh-century B.C. often were built with stone towers on top of the city walls so a watchman could easily see approaching visitors. That's the imagery that Habakkuk employs here¹⁶ when he says, "I will stand on my guard post and station myself on the ram-

part; and I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me, and how I may reply when I am reproved” (Habakkuk 2:1). While the verse designations in our Bible were not originally placed there by the writers, I’d like to point out three characteristics of Habakkuk 2:1.

The first is that he’s standing (v. 1a). It’s easy when experiencing struggles to get discouraged and sink down into confusion and hopelessness. Instead, Habakkuk stands up, has his head high, his eyes open, and he’s looking out. The second is that he’s watching (v. 1b). Habakkuk compares himself to a watchman that keeps his eyes open for approaching messengers or danger. The third is that he’s waiting (v. 1c). Habakkuk braces himself for a rebuke, “when I am reproved.” Habakkuk waits patiently for divine revelation.

Old Testament scholar O. Palmer Robertson writes that Habakkuk “will not attempt to reconcile in his own mind the apparent contradiction between the election of Israel by God as the object of his special love and the devastation of Israel at the hands of the rapacious Chaldeans as ordered by the Lord himself. He will not resort to the sources of human wisdom. Instead, he will watch for an answer that can come from the Lord.”¹⁷

Habakkuk expects to get a reply. Sometimes only God can answer. The last lesson we learn from this passage is this: we have confidence that God will reply.

When God replies He might correct us or comfort us, but we should have confidence that He *will* reply to us. And we need a place to go to wait for His reply, just as Habakkuk did.

As this relates to us, we need a place to get above the mess we are in and get away from the distractions we face. It might be some quiet time in the morning with coffee, a Bible, and a journal. It might be late at night after everyone is sleeping when you can quietly pray. Maybe you sneak away in the middle of the day and go sit in your car on your lunch break while at work.

When we encounter tough times, we usually respond in two ways. Sometimes we *leave God*. When we leave God, we withdraw from Sunday worship, stop attending a weekly Bible study, quit giving, or discontinue serving. Sometimes we *lean into God*. When we lean into God, we rigorously study His Word more, seek counsel from godly

friends or family, and spend more time in fellowship with the church.

I want to encourage you to *lean into God*. He knows what you're going through, He knows what you're feeling, and He knows what to do. You can be confident that He will reply. These types of situations require a certain level of human responsibility. If God speaks, we must be ready to listen. And when we lean into God, it shows Him that we are ready to listen and that we are ready for His *correction* or His *comfort*.

Reading Habakkuk's reply in these verses gives us confidence in the eternal God, confidence that we achieve nothing without God, and confidence God will reply.

Conclusion

I hope that reading through the book of Habakkuk leads us to admire Habakkuk the man. We find Habakkuk here waiting for God's reply. He wants to honor God, to see God's people change their lifestyles, and he wants to make Judah a place holy and honorable before God. Yet he has to wait for God's reply.

This is tough because we don't like to wait. We're taught that waiting is bad. We've been trained to believe that waiting is an enemy. We have ATMs that give us instant cash, same-day deliveries from Amazon, meals made in minutes, as well as movies, books, and music that appear instantly on our TVs, tablets, and phones when we want them. Author Jen Wilkin states, "But being able to wait is distinctly Christian. In fact, it's a mark of Christian maturity."¹⁸ We as Christians can wait and be confident.

Sometimes the answers come immediately, but most of the time God reveals those answers much later—sometimes months or years pass. Then we finally get an answer from God for why He's done what He's done, for why He caused us to endure what we went through, and for why He allowed people to do or say certain things. While we wait, we can have confidence in the eternal God, we can have confidence that we achieve nothing without God, and we can have confidence that God will reply.

Endnotes

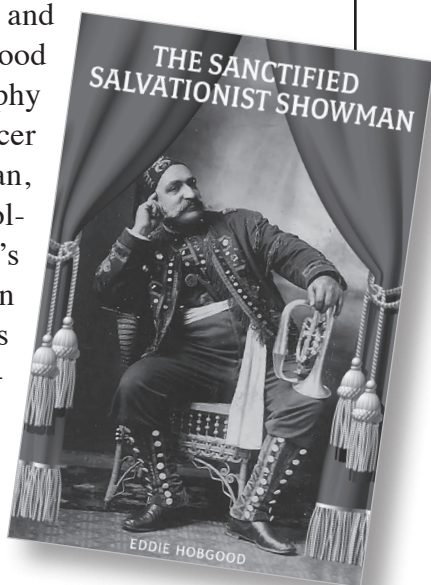
- ¹Originally prepared and delivered at Lakeview Missionary Church on April 30, 2023, third in a series “Reverent Wrestlings” from Habakkuk.
- ²Page Brooks and D. A. Neal, “Theodicy,” ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. 2016. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.
- ³Christopher L. Scott, “Wondering and Waiting: Habakkuk 1:1-4” in *Word & Deed*, vol XXVI Number 2 May 2024, p. 93-101.
- ⁴Habakkuk has good reason to be puzzled. In 722 B.C. the Assyrian army arrived in Israel in the north and wiped out Israel. As a result, the nation had been removed from the ancient near-eastern landscape. Habakkuk naturally wondered, “Might that be the same fate of Judah?” Habakkuk likely asks this question in 607 B.C.
- ⁵Habakkuk 1:12 begins with the interrogative particle, halo.
- ⁶Scripture taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, Copyright The Lockman Foundation 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995. Used by permission.
- ⁷J. Ronald Blue explains, “In Hebrew, the form of the question—O LORD, are You not from everlasting?—requires an affirmative reply. It is as much a declaration as an interrogation” (J. Ronald Blue, “Habakkuk,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 [Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985], 1511).
- ⁸*The NET Bible Full Notes Edition* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2019), 1752.
- ⁹According to one lexicon, it occurs 6,823 times in the Old Testament (Brown, Francis, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs. *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).
- ¹⁰Other forms based on the Hebrew are “God” from *Elohim* and “Lord” from *Adonai*.
- ¹¹*MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1996), 1289.
- ¹²Richard Patterson, *Habakkuk*, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, vol. 10 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2008), p. 412.
- ¹³J Vernon McGee, *Nahum and Habakkuk*, Thru the Bible Commentary Series, vol. 30 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1991), p. 80.
- ¹⁴Numerous commentaries cite this. O. Palmer Robertson, *The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 163 and Thomas Constable, Notes on Habakkuk, 2023 edition, p. 23. Accessed May 27, 2024, <https://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/habakkuk.pdf>. Both Constable and Robertson cite the W. Rudolph, Micha-Nahum-Habakuk-Zephania (sic), KAT 13/3, second edition (Güterloh: Gerd Mohn, 1975), 211. Also see the “Stele of victory from Susa,” which depicts enemies caught in a net from 2371-2316 B.C. (*Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*, [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019], 1551).
- ¹⁵John Calvin and John Owen. *Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), p. 52.
- ¹⁶Other prophets used a similar image of a watchtower to explain their attitude of expectation (Isaiah 21:8; Jeremiah 6:17; Ezekiel 3:17; 33:2, 33).
- ¹⁷Robertson, Habakkuk, p. 165.
- ¹⁸Jen Wilkin, “Waiting on the Word,” Christianity Today, April 2022, p. 30.

The Sanctified Salvationist Showman

By Eddie Hobgood

In this fascinating, convicting and inspiring account, Eddie Hobgood shares the extraordinary biography of the illustrious Salvationist officer and icon, Nishan der Garabedian, also known as Joe the Turk. Follow along through the tales of Joe's unique ministry and 52 arrests on behalf of The Salvation Army's right to march, praise and evangelize across the United States.

Eddie Hobgood is a first-generation Salvationist who came to The Salvation Army through its open-air ministry. Together, he and his wife Kathy were commissioned as Salvation Army officers in 1983 and have served in various appointments across several cities in North Carolina, as well as in Atlanta, Georgia and London, England. Hobgood now serves as a senior consultant with Arthur Alley Associated and enjoys the privilege of helping nonprofit organizations develop mission and strategic plans.



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Out Of Strange Strife Thy Peace Is Strangely Wrought

STUDIES IN SECOND CORINTHIANS

Lyell M. Rader

INTRODUCTION

“My prayers, my God, flow from what I am not;/ I think thy answers make me what I am. I like weary waves thought follows upon thought,/ But the still depth beneath is all thine own,/ And there thou mov’st in paths to us unknown,/ Out of strange strife thy peace is strangely wrought;/ If the lion in us pray—thou answerest the lamb” (MacDonald, 1994:57).

Behold, the haggard, human Paul, his letter to Corinth disarming proof that he is so much like us. And yet, not entirely.

Paul’s mads were madder and his blues bluer, his pride prouder and his humbleness humbler, his strengths stronger and his weaknesses weaker than almost anybody else’s you’d be apt to think of, and the splash he made when he fell for Christ is audible still. It is little wonder that from the start he was a genius at making enemies (Buechner, 1993:82-83).

God’s way with Paul is God’s way with us, out of strange strife

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 essay as it was originally given.

strangely working peace. We have in this heartbreakingly human apostle, a soul-brother, we who own our weakness, our frequent bewilderment, our beholdenness to culture, our fractiousness in the yoke, our humanity.

In these studies, we explore paradoxical themes of triumph, perfection, and power as they intersect with our experience in leadership today, to the end that we may more fully envision and embody a cruciform Army.

STRANGE TRIUMPH

*“Sometimes his happy people march with banners
floating high,/ Though often in secluded ways/ They
fight that self may die” (Baird, 1986:705).*

Part 1: The Apostle

*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,
and Timothy our brother, to the church of God that
is in Corinth, including all the saints throughout
Achaia ... (2 Corinthians 1:1).*

The fugitive Renaissance artist Caravaggio, exquisite gifts untamed and largely wasted, was drawn—by what cords?—to the zealot Paul, the fury, the icy certainty, the violence of the pre-Christian ideologue, hell-bent, in a moment intercepted, blinded, dismounted, undone. In two canvases he depicted the turning point. In one, Paul is young, beardless, fully clothed, stunned, and splayed by a bolt of light, reflecting off the flank of his skewbald horse. In the second, Paul is older, balding, bearded, naked above the waist, but prostrate in a frenzied scene, his hands drawn to his face as though to guard against a second blow. Above and to the right, Christ, supported by an angel, extends His hand, as though in invitation to adventure, to affliction, and grace beyond belief.

Paul, apostle (1:21; 2:17; 4:5; 5:20; 10:18; 13:10). The salutation comes as well from protegee Timothy, “the brother.” Paul was not

a unilateralist. He knew—as do we—the immense harm that good people can do when they feel they have a private line to the Eternal. Paul's teams kept him sane, if not tame.

Yes, without cheer of sister or of daughter,/ Yes,
without stay of father or of son./ Lone on the land
and homeless on the water/ Pass I in patience till the
work be done.

Yet not in solitude if Christ arrear me/ Waketh Him
workers for the great employ,/ Oh not in solitude, if
souls that hear me/ Catch from my joyance the sur-
prise of joy (Myers, 1916:13-14).

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The typical Greek salutation was “Greetings!” (*charia*). Paul begins with “Grace!” (*charis*) and ends with “Peace!” It is the sum of his message: grace, the kindness and help of God extended to us as free as air, and peace, the symphony of relationships in which persons flourish to the glory of God.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who
consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to
console those who are in any affliction with the consolation
with which we ourselves are consoled. ...*

A dark view of God has befallen our time, the God of terror, of ruthless, arbitrary rage, the God of curses and plagues, of tsunamis and genocide. That is not what comes to Paul's mind. In the cadence of his childhood prayers, he remembers mercies (*pater ton oiktirmon*), and encouragements (*theos pases parakleseos*, eleven times in verses 3-7 alone).

We do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, of the affliction we experienced in Asia; for we were so utterly, unbearably crushed that we despaired of life itself ... (2 Corinthians 1:1-4,8).

God is never so near as in our affliction (*thlipsis*, the circumstance which crushes as a weight upon the chest). It is a grim window on the inner life of Paul.

Away despair; my gracious Lord doth hear./ Though winds and wave assault my keel./ He doth preserve it: he doth steer./ Ev'n when the boat seems most to reel./ Storms are the triumph of his art:/ Well may he close his eyes, but not his heart (George Herbert (1593-1633), 1981:276).

Part 2: The Captive

“But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession ...” (2 Corinthians 2:14).

Paul understands the triumph of God. *El Shaddai*, the Sufficient One, will not be foiled. He triumphs “every hour.” “Deep in unfathomable mines/ Of never-failing skills/ He treasures up his bright designs/ And works his sovereign will” (Cowper, SA Song Book, 1986:29). The ubiquitous cult of emperor worship is a fraud. Its temples and shrines dotting Corinth are an illusion. And the proof is the resurrected Jesus, whose Spirit is the guarantee (*arrabon*) of a coming consummation (1:22).

Paul pictures that triumph as a Roman procession to the Capitoline Hill. But here is the paradox: he himself is being led to death, stripped and manacled, among the captives.

I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ’s sake ...” (1 Corinthians 4:910).

Strange triumph. Paul has been in missionary ministry for only six years. To show for his efforts—a little gaggle of congregations, smaller than a division, subject to the seductions of their own carnality and of rival cliques and the enveloping pagan culture. Beyond that the scars and ailments of the most creative physical abuse—five lashings, three rod thrashings, a stoning, three shipwrecks, multiple imprisonments, not to mention unrelenting travel, an artisan's toil, and a pastor's grief (11:23-29).

As it happened, the tables turned in the fourth century. What had been a scattered, persecuted community was elevated to the status of imperial church, a mixed blessing indeed. In our time, the tables (in the global North) are turning once more.

... The worldly form and vocation of the Christian movement is being fundamentally altered. Once again, as during its first three centuries, the Christian community is being required to live outside the protective walls of power and privilege. Once again, the church finds itself being pushed to the sociological periphery, where its message and mission must authenticate themselves quite apart from any external props and pressures, rewards and punishments (Hall in Van Gelder, 1999:69; see also Mead, 1991).

This transition is marked by grave declines; Tom Sine points out that although there is growing hunger for spirituality, church attendance in continental Europe is in free fall as it rapidly becomes a post-Christian culture. All old-line denominations in all the western countries are graying and declining. Pockets of growth among evangelical and Pentecostal churches doesn't alter that pattern. Church attendance in Britain fell from 10.2% in 1980 to just below 7% in 2003. In America, it is 24% and falling. Most alarmingly, the missing generation in the church in Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and America are the under 35s. The "Buster" generation is the first in America which isn't starting life with some kind of clear Christian heritage (Sine, *Evangelical Review a/Theology* (2003),

27:4:361-362).

Not only in their places of work, but in their wider social contacts, [Christians] are again and again brought to the realization of their solitude. They cannot assume that their most rudimentary beliefs are shared by those around them (Hall, 1996:265).

And the loneliest place of all for the Christian may be the church.

For one hears, in that context, some reminiscence of the very things that have made one Christian: the Scriptures are read, prayers are said in the name of the crucified one, the sacraments are observed, symbols of the faith are found in every nook and cranny. Yet the depths and heights that these things have produced in one seem, in that setting, to engender nothing out of the ordinary: nothing that excites the mind, nothing that moves the spirit, nothing to challenge the bourgeois lifestyle that is reinforced by every television commercial and situation comedy (Hall, 1996:265-268).

PART 3: The Incenser

“But thanks be to God who ... through us spreads in every place the fragrance that comes from knowing him. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? For we are not peddlers of God’s word like so many; but in Christ we speak as persons of sincerity, as persons sent from God and standing in his presence” (2 Corinthians 2:14-17).

The whole enterprise of evangelism hangs upon an aroma, says Paul—as elusive and alluring as that. He pictures the priests, striding quietly in the hubbub, their censers swaying in mesmerizing rhythm, incense rising, spreading, permeating marchers and throng alike, imperceptibly, irresistibly. Like the frankincense of a Magus (Matthew 2:11), the ointment of an outcast (Luke 7:38), the burial spices of a friend (Luke 24:1).

Anne Lamott tells of her encounter with the aroma of Christ.

Mine was a patchwork God, sewn together from bits of rag and ribbon. ... I believed that I would die soon, from a fall or an overdose. I knew there was an after-life but felt that the odds of my living long enough to get into heaven were almost nil. They couldn't possibly take you in the shape I was in. I could no longer imagine how God could love me.

Then she went to see a new pastor in the area, “profoundly tenderhearted,” attentive, safe, who eased her way to God. “He was about the first Christian I ever met,” she later wrote, “whom I could stand to be in the same room with” (Lamott, 1999:43).

Paul holds no truck with the swelling pomp and wealth and hubris of triumphalist Rome. The only triumph he knows is that of the cross. We have not always followed his counsel. An imperious triumphalism, introduced by Constantine, has lingered in the church.

Listen to two voices: that of Japanese Christian Kosuke Koyama and European theologian Jurgen Moltmann. Koyama associates triumphalism with the “crusading mind.”

One-way traffic Christianity is an ugly monster. This monster lives by self-assertion, not by self-denial. Ugly? Yes. One-way-traffic human relationship is ugly. I understand that “to be human” means to live in two way traffic and “to be divine” means to give up one’s right-of-way for the sake of the other in this two-way traffic. The crusade concept is a product of

Christianity, not of Christ. ... It raises its head like a cobra in modern Christianity. ...

Evangelism has not made any significant headway in Asia for the last four hundred years because Christians crusaded against Asians. When did Christianity become a cheap military campaign? Who made it so? I submit that a good one hundred million American dollars, a hundred years of crusading will not make Asia Christian. ... Christian faith does not and cannot be spread by crusading. It will spread without money, without bishops, without theologians, without plannings, if people see a crucified mind, not a crusading mind, in Christians. ...

It is, first of all, we who need repentance. We are far more arrogant than people on the streets. We are bigoted. We are prestige minded. We are money minded. ... We are self-righteous. We are uglier than we think (Koyama, 1979:53-54).

Moltmann takes up the same theme:

The crisis of the church in present-day society is ... the crisis of its own existence as the church of the crucified Christ. ... The Christian church and Christian theology become relevant to the problems of the modern world only when they reveal the "hard core" of their identity in the crucified Christ and through it are called into question, together with the society in which they live (cited in Hall, 19996:x).

The crucified mind, Paul believes, is one of unmixed purity (*eil-ikrineias*), opposed to the huckstering (*kapeleuontes*) which waters down faith and sells it cheap (2:16b-17). He ends the paragraph in three rich chords: "We speak *from* God." Is he recalling his encounter

on a Damascus trunk-road with the great Interferer who remapped his life? “We speak *before* God.” Does he remember nights shivering in pitch dungeons, disconsolate, alone, when he was aware, suddenly, of Another? “We speak *in* Christ.” Is this the tonic chord, the place where the music comes to rest: the transforming friendship with his lowly Lord which has made the dangers, the privations, the humiliations, worth it?

Yea thro’ life, death, thro’ sorrow and thro’ sinning/
He shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed (Myers,
1916:69).

STRANGE PERFECTION

*“There is only one sadness, the sadness of not being
a saint” (Leon Bloy cited in Nicholl, 1987:28).*

Saints are people the light shines through, said the little boy. At King’s College Chapel, Cambridge, you see it is true, in twenty-six great windows, ascending to the ninety-foot vault above. The place swims in saints, immersed in the hues of sixteenth century glaziers. Above, in five panels, saints of the Old Covenant, and in five panels below, scenes of the New. Sometimes the medieval glass is cut across confusingly by lead bars and it is difficult to interpret the complex imagery. So, it always is with saints. The windows were removed during the war years, so fragile they were. That, too, is true of saints. But cleaned, refitted, restored, not a fragment lost. Five hundred years. Saints are durable.

Saints have a strange perfection, lead and all. It is a preoccupation of Paul. “... We are the temple [*naos*, a sanctuary] of the living God; as God said, ‘I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people’. ... Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and of spirit, making holiness perfect [*epitelountes hagiosunen*] in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 6:16b; 7:1), that is, to fulfill the purpose [*telos*] for which you were called. And again,

“This is what we pray for, that you may become perfect [*katartisin*, restored, relating to the setting of a broken bone]” (2 Corinthians 13:9). “We pray hard that it will all come together in your lives” (Message).

Part 1: The Self

“... We have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies ...” (2 Corinthians 4:7-10).

It is not a flattering image. Clay pots are rough and fragile. After reading the Gospel of Luke, a post-Valley girl on the West Coast said to Brennan Manning, “Wow! Like, Jesus has this totally intense thing for ragamuffins” (Manning, 2000:51). Paul had no illusions. Hear this record of his inner life: distressed, anguished, broken to tears (2:4), perplexed, persecuted, struck down (4:7-10), stung by disputes, fearful, downcast (7:5-6), pressured, anxious, sapped by the weakness of others, indignant when they are made to stumble (11:28).

What is there to boast about (1 Corinthians 4:7)? “Boasting” in Greek is *kaukaomai*, meaning to profess or protest loudly, to take pride or joy in. William Arndt and Wilbur Gingrich, surveying the whole corpus of early Christian literature, found only thirty-seven occurrences, thirty-five of them in the writings of Paul. This is in spite of good reason for self-doubt.

Paul has come down in the world. Sir William Ramsay believed that Paul’s Roman citizenship could be taken as proof that his family was one of distinction and some wealth, perhaps tracing their origins back to the Seleucid kings. “For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things” (Philippians 3:8). Paul said this, according

to Ramsay, with reference to a family row which cost Paul his patrimony. “Did I commit a sin by humbling [*tapeinon*, making low] myself so that you might be exalted ...?” (11:7). The one speaking is introduced in Scripture as a jihadist (Acts 8:1; 9:1; 22:4, etc.). But now, selfconsciously, he follows the pattern of Jesus, who “though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor [*ffptocheuo*, extreme, beggarly poverty] so that ... you might become rich” (8:9).

Secondly, Paul has insisted on manual labor. “We grow weary from the work of our hands” (1 Corinthians 4:12; 2 Corinthians 11:7-11; 12:14-18).

... Far from being at the periphery of his life, tent-making was actually central to it. More than any of us has supposed, Paul was Paul the tent maker. His trade occupied much of his time—from the years of his apprenticeship through the years of his life as a missionary for Christ, from before daylight through most of the day. Consequently, his trade in large measure determined his daily experiences and his social status. His life was very much that of the workshop, of artisan-friends like Aquila, Barnabas, and perhaps Jason; of leather knives, and awls; of wearying toil; of being bent over a workbench like a slave and working side by side with slaves; of thereby being perceived by others and by himself as slavish and humiliated; of suffering the artisan’s lack of status and so being reviled and abused (R.F. Hock in Witherington, 1998:546).

Thirdly, he has adopted simplicity of style (1:12; 2:17; 4:12; 10:10; 11:6) at odds with that of his usurpers in Corinth whom Ben Witherington identifies as sophists.

It is difficult to assess whether [Paul’s opponents] were merely exacerbating tendencies that already existed in Corinth toward pride, preening, factious-

ness, a critical view of Paul, and a fascination with Sophistic rhetoric and spiritual gifts and experiences or added something new to the mix. ...

The fundamental problem is the Corinthians' image of Christian leadership. At least some of them had created in their minds an image largely shaped by the values of their culture, of a leader who had honor, power, spiritual gifts, rhetorical skills, and good references and who would accept patronage. They look, that is, for a Sophist, or at least for a rhetorically adept philosophical teacher (Witherington, 1995:345, 348).

The ancient Epictetus speaks of being visited by a student of rhetoric from Corinth who to splendid effect had set his coiffure, spangled himself with jewelry and plucked the hair from his body (Witherington, 1995:349). If pretty performance was the test, Paul was not their man. He carries about, here and there, both the death and life of Jesus (4:10).

In a striking assertion of his self, Paul takes on his "super-apostle" critics (10:12; 11:4-6, 13-15; 12:11) to prove himself more than their equal (11:12). He answers their falsehoods (11:13) with truth (12:6), although it is a sweaty, unpleasant business (11:16-17, 21, 23; 12:1, 11).

He boasts of integrity (1:12), knowledge (11:6), authority (10:13), independence of patronage (11:9-10), pedigree (11:21-22), sacrifice (11:23-29), visions and revelations (12:1-7), signs of portent, signs of wonder, signs of power (12:12). But withal, he boasts in the Lord (*en kurio*, 10:17), whose power tabernacles upon his weakness (*episkenose*, 12:9).

What do we make of it? Paul has a solid sense of self. For him the hallowed life is not the hollowed life. Humility, said the anonymous fourteenth-century monk in *Cloud of Unknowing*, is a true knowledge of oneself as one is. Scott Peck tells of traveling to Dallas some years ago to address a scientific congress. As he picked up his key at the reception desk, he was accosted by a young man who said,

“You’re Dr. Peck, aren’t you? My roommate wanted to come to this conference but was unable to. But he told me that if I happened to see you, I should tell you that God forgives you.”

In his room, Peck began thinking about the bizarre statement.

I realized that there was a part of me that still felt as if I were fifteen years old, covered with pimples, utterly unlovely and inadequate and certainly no one that any scientific congress would find worth listening to. But that part of me was not a manifestation of genuine humility. It was unhealthy and unrealistic. It was in need of healing. It needed to be given up, to be forgiven and cleansed.

He concluded,

There is nothing that holds us back more from mental health, more from health as a society and more from God than the sense that we all have of our unimportance, our unloveliness and undesirability (Peck, 1993:97-98).

We in the holiness movement need to put that in our pipe and smoke it.

PART 2: The Herd

Because Paul has a grounded self, he is able to critique the status expectations of “human standards” (5:16; 10:2,3,4,12,18; 11:18; 1 Corinthians 1:20-25, 26-30; 2:11-13; 3:3,18-23; 4:1-5), belonging to what missionary E. Stanley Jones called, infelicitously, the herd. We may be sure it was not without a struggle. Was he decisively delivered, in a moment, on his back in the Damascus road, from such carnal anxieties? If our own experience is a guide, it would appear not.

Our word status comes from the Latin word *statum*, or standing. Alain de Botton defines “status anxiety” in his new book of that

name as “a worry, so pernicious as to be capable of ruining extended stretches of our lives, that we are in danger of failing to conform to the ideals of success laid down by our society and that we may as a result be stripped of dignity and respect; a worry that we are currently occupying too modest a rung or are about to fall to a lower one” (de Botton, 2004:viii). It stems, he says, from the second of the two great love stories of adult life: the quest for romantic love and the quest for love from the world.

At twenty five, Samuel Logan Brengle, a student at Boston University School of Theology, had what has become for Salvationists a paradigmatic experience of the Holy Spirit. “When He gloriously sanctified me,” he later wrote, “my knowledge and keen perception of truth were greatly enlarged and quickened, and my preaching became far more searching and effective” (Rightmire, 2003:11). But status was hardly a non-issue. In the dark little cellar of the Leamington Training Depot, two years later, as he bent over half a carload of cadet boots to clean, he said, “The devil came to me and reminded me that a few years before, I had graduated from a university, that I had spent a couple of years in a leading theological school, had been pastor of a metropolitan church, had just left evangelistic work in which I saw hundreds seeking the Savior, and that now I was only blacking boots for a lot of ignorant lads. My old enemy is the devil! (Rightmire, 2003:19).

By the age of twenty-nine he was in Boston, his fourth appointment. There he wrestled with his pride, his biographer says, about being perceived as a failure in the eyes of former colleagues. The stigma was real.

Two of my teachers in the School of Theology refused to speak to me. ... One of my dear friends who had been like a father to me, Rev. William McDonald, editor of *Christian Witness*, an eminent Methodist and author of books, spoke rather sneeringly of my uniform when he met me. One of the professors of De Pauw University came one thousand miles to Boston to plead with me to come back, saying there was noth-

ing for me in the Army (Rightmire, 2003:22).

It was a period of soul distress. “I confess there were times when I wrestled in an agony of prayer to make sure that I had not missed God’s guidance and misread His call. Many of the Army people themselves looked upon me with some suspicion and it was years before the doors swung open to world-wide service and immeasurable opportunity” (Rightmire, 2003:22).

Nor was that the end of it. Still to come, the workman’s brick, the depression of Lily, the health emergencies of the children. And yet, grace.

“What we are is utterly plain to God ...” Paul writes. “... Our knowledge of men can no longer be based on their outward lives. If a man is in Christ he becomes a new person altogether—the past is finished and gone, everything has become fresh and new” (4:11,16-17, JBP). (There is a special pathos in citing this from the paraphrase of J.B. Phillips, inasmuch as he suffered so deeply from depression).

“I want to caution you against the influence of the praise of men,” William Booth wrote to Bramwell, in a sealed letter to be opened after the Founder’s death. He concludes:

I am not able to write more at this moment or I would gladly urge upon you the importance of prudence ... the maintenance of first principles, specially holiness ... the avoidance of controversy and strife watching against the foe of all earnest religion, respectability ... (St. John Ervine, 1935:11,1095).

PART 3: The Holy

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:17-18).

The story is told of St. Francis of Assisi, passing through a field in light-drenched Umbria. A peasant ran to him, asking if he were Brother Francis. When he acknowledged he was, the peasant said: “Try to be as good as you are said to be by all men, for many put their trust in you; therefore I admonish you, never to be other than you are expected to be” (cited in Nicholl, 1987:53).

Paul is captivated by theme. The word glory (*doxa*) occurs nineteen times in chapters 1-8. It is taken over from the Septuagint where it translates the Hebrew, *kabhd*, originally meaning weight, substance, wealth, honor, reputation (Psalm 49:16f.; Isaiah 66:11f.) and the visible brightness of the divine presence, the *shekhinah*.

The glory of God, evident everywhere, is made explicit in Jesus Christ. Attentive to him, we are by degrees, says Paul, being changed (*metamorphoumetha*) into the same image (*eikona*) from glory to glory by the Spirit (4:4-6; cf. Corinthians 1:15; Hebrews 1:1-4; Jonah 1:18; Philipians 2:6).

The Quaker Rufus Jones writes:

[God] is a Being who can pour His life and energy into human souls, even as the sun can flood the world with light and resident forces, or as the sea can send its refreshing tides into all the bays and inlets of the coast, or as the atmosphere can pour its life-giving supplies into the fountains of the blood in the meeting place of the lungs; or, better still, as the mother fuses her spirit into the spirit of her responsive child, and lays her mind on him until he believes in her belief.

It will be impossible for some of us ever to lose our faith in, our certainty of, this vital presence which overarches our inner lives as surely as the sky does our outer lives. The more we know of the great unveiling of God in Christ, the more we see that He is a Being who can be thus revealed in a personal life that is parallel in will

with Him and perfectly responsive in heart and mind to the spiritual presence (in Abbott, 1997:227).

It is a life work.

Frederica Mathewes-Green as a college student was contemptuous and hostile toward Christianity. She patched together a Frankenstein god in her own image as she says, and it would never be taller than five-foot-one. Shortly after her wedding in the woods, in sandals, unbleached muslin and floral crown, she and her husband went on a three-month, threadbare honeymoon in Europe. It was 1974. In Dublin they wandered into a church where Frederica paused in front of a white marble statue of Jesus. In a moment, she discovered she was on her knees, listening to an interior voice, intimate, authoritative, filling her. It said, "I am your life. You think that your life is your name, your personality, your history. But that is not your life. I am your life. I am the foundation of everything else. ..." She stood up shaken. It was like sitting in your living room, she said, and having the roof blown off.

... I found that Jesus was realer than anything I'd ever encountered, the touchstone of reality. It left me with a great hunger for more, so that my whole life is leaning toward him, questing for him, striving to break down the walls inside that shelter me from his gaze (Mathewes-Green, 1999:5).

Paul would understand.

STRANGE POWER

"... Ministry can indeed be a witness to the living truth that the wound, which causes us to suffer now, will be revealed to us later as the place where God intimated his new creation" (Nouwen, The Wounded Healer, 1972:96).

Part 1: Baffled

“To keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, but he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.’ So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12:7b-10).

“... So I wouldn’t get a big head [huperairomai, exalt myself] I was given the gift of a handicap to keep me in constant touch with my limitations. [God] told me, ‘My grace is enough. ...’ (Message).

Robert Capon writes that the Reformation was a time when men discovered in the dusty basement of the late Middle Ages, a whole cellar-full of 1,500-year-old, 200-proof grace. Grace, he says, has to be drunk straight: “no water, no ice, and certainly no ginger ale; neither goodness, nor badness, nor the flowers that bloom in the spring of superspirituality could be allowed to enter into the case” (cited in Manning, 2000:22-23). That is the way that Paul drank it, and he was straight-up sober.

The Corinthians, on the other hand, were drunk with power. “Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Quite apart from us you have become kings! ... We are weak but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. I appeal to you ... be imitators of me” (1 Corinthians 4:8, 10, 16). Fractious and worldly they may be, but they were not behind in any spiritual gift (1:7), especially the flamboyantly powerful ones.

Downtown Corinth of Paul’s day was a Disney World of the im-

perial imagination: grand avenues of structures devoted to hubristic power and its religion of redemptive violence. Paul would have none of it. He was acutely aware of human weakness (10:10:11:21, 29, 30; 12:5, 9-10; 13:3-4). “How has it come about,” asked Jacques Ellul in *The Subversion of Christianity*, “that the development of Christianity and the church has given birth to a society, a civilization, a culture that are completely opposite to what we read in the Bible, to what is indisputably the text of the law, the prophets, Jesus and Paul?” (cited in Dawn, 2001:83).

Philip Yancey sometimes asks as he travels overseas, “When I say the words United States, what comes to mind?” Invariably he gets the response: wealth and power and decadence. He cites Gordon Cosby’s term, “monastic cycle,” denoting the tendency of a movement of discipline and devotion to become successful, affluent, worldly and effete. The Benedictines, for example, a hardy, ardent renewal movement of the sixth century became by the twelfth an institution bereft of spirituality, its abbots absorbing half of the order’s revenues to sustain their lifestyles. Jesuits and Franciscans suffered a similar fate, the three to be restored by new revival movements.

But said John Wesley:

I do not see how it is possible, in the nature of things, for any revival of religion to continue long. For religion must necessarily produce both industry and frugality, and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches (cited in Yancey, *Christianity Today*, September 2004:104).

Perhaps, this is what the dour Kafka had in mind when he wrote his parable of the Green Dragon:

The door opened and what entered the room, fat and succulent, its sides voluptuously swelling, footless, pushing itself along on its entire underside, was the

green dragon. Formal salutation. I asked him to come right in. He regretted that he could not do that, as he was too long. This meant that the door had to remain open, which was rather awkward. He smiled, half in embarrassment, half cunningly and began: "Drawn hither by your longing, I come pushing myself along from afar off, and underneath am now scraped quite sore. But I am glad to do it. Gladly do I come, gladly do I offer myself to you" (Kafka, 1935:151).

Self-exaltation (*huperairomai*) has its organizational dimension as well. Andrew Murray, the great South African holiness teacher, understood this as he traveled the world a century ago:

What a solemn, precious lesson! It is not to sin only that the cleansing of the Husbandman refers [John 15:1-3]. It is to our own religious activity, as it is developed in the very act of bearing fruit. In working for God our natural gifts of wisdom, or eloquence, or influence, or zeal are ever in danger of being ... trusted in.

After each season of work, Murray counseled, God must bring us again to a sense of our weakness so we may receive afresh "the power of the life-giving sap of the Holy Spirit" (cited in Dawn, 2001:159).

Part 2: To Fight Better

"Indeed, we live as human beings, but we do not wage war according to human standards; for the weapons of our warfare are not merely human, but they have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ" (10:3-5).

Paul spent a lot of time around soldiers—perforce. Seven of his letters were written from prison. Military metaphors sprang naturally to mind, but remarkably he balanced these with softer images: apostle (1:1), brother (1:1; 8:1; 13:11), ambassador (5:20), “friend of the bridegroom” (11:1), parent (12:14). His armory is entirely that of peace. With nothing hurtful (10:8; 12:19), nothing haughty or manipulative (11:20-21), he appeals to Corinth with the humility-courtesy (*prautesis*), the gentleness-kindness (*epieikeias*) of Christ (10:1).

One wonders if we are losing those qualities in Evangelicalism today. As witness this piece for the *International Herald Tribune*, November 25, 2004. The author makes reference to a best-selling fiction series for adults which depicts a grisly return of our Lord, to wreak the carnage of 50,000 South Asia tsunamis: “Jesus merely raised one hand a few inches and ... they tumbled in[to Hell], howling and screeching.” The journalist observes, “If Saudi Arabians wrote an Islamic version of this series, we Americans would furiously demand that sensible Muslims repudiate such hatemongering. We should hold ourselves to the same standard” (Kristoff, *International Herald Tribune*, November 25, 2004:9). With such last-things rhetoric, we begin our conversation with our neighbor by breaking his nose.

For we knew only too well:/ Even hatred of squalor/
Makes the brow grow stern./ Even anger against in-
justice/ Makes the voice grow harsh. Alas, we/ Who
wished to lay the foundations of kindness/Could not
ourselves be kind (Bertolt Brecht in Wink, 1992:194).

Behold, Paul. It is with his strange armory of “purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit and genuine love, truthful speech and the power of God” (6:6-7) that he confronts his opponents (11:13-15), to bring down (*kaithairesin*) strongholds, dismantle sophistries (*logismos*), level every proud impediment that rises against the knowledge of God and so win allegiance to Christ (10:4-5).

kingdom cometh not by force/ But by the gentle
power/ Of righteousness and truth and grace./ He tri-
umphs every hour. ...

The good fight is the fight of faith./ Heaven's victo-
ries are won/ By men unarmed, saved with the mind/
That was in Christ, the Son./ As morning overwhelms
the night./ So truth shall sin o'erthrow./ And love at
last shall vanquish hate/ As sunshine melts the snow
(Baird, 1986:705).

Note Paul's strategic (*strateias*, 10:4) stance.

First, he resists co-optation. The Roman empire was a society based on patronage. It resembled a mass of little pyramids of influence, each headed by a major family—or one great pyramid headed by an autocrat—from which flowed offices, cash, benefits, goods and services. This exercise of largesse downwards was the main instrument by which the status of the powerful was asserted.

What underlay that complicated weave of visits, reports, and letters was a fundamental clash between two visions of moral community and, even more important of two fundamental theologies on which those discordant visions were based. At Corinth, Paul and his vision encountered more forcefully than ever before the full normalcy of high-powered Roman patronage backed, of course, by Roman imperial theology (Crossan and Reed, 2004:333).

To Paul the church represented an egalitarian negation of privilege between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female (Galatians 3:28; 1 Corinthians 12:13), modeled after the self bestowal of Jesus (Philippians 2:6-11). John Dominic Crossan suggests that Paul may have walked right into the problem of patronage on his first visit, and perhaps caused some of it himself. He baptized only a few at Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:14-16): Crispus, Gaius, and the

household of Stephanas. Crispus was the official of the synagogue (Acts 18:8). Gaius is identified as the “host to me and to the whole church” (Romans 16:23). The household of Stephanas appear to be prominent benefactors who “devoted themselves to the service of the saints” (Romans 16:23). Perhaps, they were seen to be (or saw themselves to be) his patrons. In any event, the leisure, education and affluence of high-born, well-connected Christians would place them easily in a position of leverage and leadership. But Paul would not be beholden. He immediately refuses patronal support from the Corinthians (11:7-11), while accepting communal support from the Philippians (See Crossan and Reed, 2004:330f.). His resistance of co-optation is misrepresented by his opponents (11:1-14; 12:11-18), but Paul stays the course.

Secondly, he rejects coercion. He will not employ under-hand-ness: “We have renounced the shameful things that one hides (*krupte*, dark, hidden place, a cellar); we refuse to practice cunning (*panourgia*, literally, readiness to do anything) ...” (4:2). He will not resort to high-handedness: “For you put up with it when someone makes slaves of you, or preys upon you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or gives you a slap in the face. To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that!” (11:20-21).

Rather he adopts what Philip Jackson calls a transformative approach to teaching (as contrasted with the mimetic mode, Jackson, 1986:115f.). His methods are personal modeling (6:3-10), soft-sua-sion (affection, 6:13; 7:2-3; 11:11; 12:14-15; logic, 9:6-15; advice, 8:10; entreaty, 5:20), and narrative (8:9; 10:1; 3:1-18; 12:1-10).

It is in this spirit that Tom Sine, a sociologist of evangelical commitment, writes,

What do the Gospels have to say to Christians who have bought into the claims of the political left and religious right that the primary way we work for social transformation is through taking power and taking over? What does the gospel have to say about adversarial politics, defeating one’s enemies, and total warfare?

... The followers of Jesus should certainly seek to be leaven in all arenas of life, including the political. But the genius of God's New Order doesn't come primarily through political action and certainly not through adversarial politics, name-calling, and total warfare. God's New Order comes through the creation of an incarnational community of servants who, like Jesus, seek to change our world through telling stories, washing feet, caring for others, loving our enemies, and, if called on to do so, through laying down our lives (Sine, 1995:180, 182).

This is the ingenuous Paul. He is in his 50s, old age for the time; shortly the long incarcerations will begin. He might have said with May Sarton,

Now I become myself. It's taken/ Time, many years
and places;/ I have been dissolved and shaken/ Worn
other people's faces ... (cited in Pahner, 2004:90-91).

The letter could have been a tirade against his detractors. Rather it is a document of reconciliation in a divided, but well-meaning congregation. We don't know what direct contact Paul had with the sophist interlopers. It would have been in character, especially at this time of life, to be as good as his theology toward them. As the Croatian theologian Miroslav Volf put it: "We who have been embraced by the outstretched arms of the crucified God open our arms even for the enemies—to make space in ourselves and invite them in ..." (Volf, 1996:131).

"... We live," Paul says, "as human beings ..." (10:3)—Paul, Timothy, the turbulent Corinthians, the detractors, all humans. In the culture wars today, we often miss that point. Parker Palmer tells of dialogue groups in which people who are at each other's throats over issues like abortion or the death penalty come together for a facilitated weekend retreat. It is agreed that no one will announce, explain, or defend her position on the issue before them. They are sim-

ply invited to tell personal stories about the experiences that brought them to whatever position they hold, while others listen openly. It is at the level of our common humanity that we come to understand the terrible loyalty we owe one another (Palmer, 2004:124).

John Woolman, a tailor in colonial New Jersey, lived among Quaker farmers and businesspeople whose affluence depended upon slave labor. He received a revelation that the practice was evil. For twenty years, he quietly traveled among the colonies, visiting Quaker families, speaking in meeting houses opposing the normalcy of the slaveholding culture, sometimes with the simplest gestures. He would fast rather than eat a meal prepared or served by a slave. If he inadvertently benefited from a slave's labor, he would insist on paying him or her. Beset by danger, privation, and much resistance, "I went," he wrote in his classic journal, "gently on."

By the time of his death at fifty-two, the Quakers of colonial America had virtually cleared their society of slavery, the first religious community to do so.

Paul's last words,"... The communion of the Holy Spirit embrace all of you" (13:13).

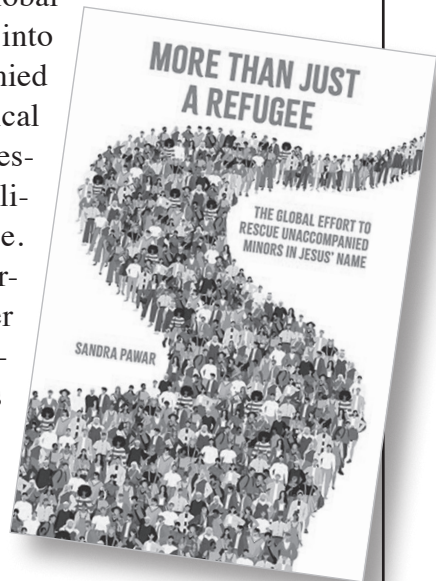
Ay, for this Paul, a scorn and a despising,/ Weak as you know him and the wretch you see,—/ Even in these eyes shall ye behold Him rising,/ Strength in infirmities and Christ in me (Myers, 1916:53).

More Than Just A Refugee

By Sandra Pawar

In this sobering account of global injustice, Sandra Pawar delves into the urgent reality of unaccompanied minors, emphasizing their critical need for secure housing, accessible education, financial stability, and psychological assistance. Through narratives, data, interviews, and investigations, her book sheds light on their immediate requirements and proposes one sustainable solution based in Scripture.

Sandra Pawar is a passionate and dedicated Salvation Army corps officer with more than twenty years of experience in serving and empowering others. Throughout her tenure with The Salvation Army in the UK, Australia, and the United States, she has directly engaged with refugees from Syria, Iran, Sierra Leone, Pakistan, Ethiopia, and Afghanistan. *More Than Just A Refugee* is her first book.



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Theological Drift—A New Reality within The Salvation Army?

Erin L. Wikle

Introduction: Under Pressure

In the age of deconstruction and post-pandemic life, post-Christian America is experiencing dissatisfaction accepting simple faith in Jesus. Some seek a faith less limited and tethered to a biblical heritage and history that collides with the pervasive and convincing values of secular Western culture.

It stands to reason that while we (followers of Jesus) should not be divorced from culture, perhaps we should not be wed to her, either. Recall to mind Jesus' wisdom when He said we are to be in the world, not of it (John 17:16). Consider then how culture has not only had her way with the world, but is demanding (though not for the first time) the devotion of the *Church*. Culture is deceptive, persuasive, fickle, and feigns satisfaction. She is ever boasting: "to thine own self be true."¹ Estranged from True Reality, which anchors right thinking, right living, and righteousness itself, she has captivated our gaze.

We are under pressure. We are a polarized nation holding fast to its freedoms. We are a divided people bearing the scars of every hill we have insisted on dying upon. Racial tension is in some ways at an all-time high. Equity and individuality are at the forefront of the new American dream, as is transcending the limits of human design. Never before have we had access to so much information. Twenty-four-hour news cycles and platforms espousing opinion

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and self-canonized truth wreak havoc on the human psyche, having become systems of widespread indoctrination entirely unto themselves—because if it is written, it must be “true.” Meanwhile, everyone has become a best-selling author.

In view of this, what course of action does Scripture advise regarding the teaching of truth?

“Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths” (2 Timothy 4:2-4 NIV).

If the time referred to in this passage is not now, it is simply a matter of when. Written near the time of his death, the words of Paul remain a critical warning today where “the self—not God or Scripture—is the new locus of authority in Western culture.”²

When under significant pressure, the human body enters a stress response of fight or flight. How will we respond to such pressure threatening the very core of our thinking, believing, and operating as a people of God who have been given all authority in Heaven and on earth to do just as Jesus’ disciples did?

Thesis

This paper explores the critical dangers of theological drift to our movement, with novel doctrine and culturally motivated reinterpretations threatening the authentic witness and mission of Jesus as expressed by The Salvation Army. This is examined through how theological drift relates to our foundation, our beliefs, and our practice.

The Threat of Theological Drift

The term “drift” implies gradual movement from a starting point.

Our starting point is the life of Christ Himself, revealed through Scripture, which is infallible. Recall the road to Emmaus, how both travelers were kept from recognizing Jesus until He reminded them what Scripture and the prophets said about who He was and disclosed Himself as Immanuel, the Word made flesh. “Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him ...” (Luke 24:31 NIV). Remember how their hearts burned within them when they were helped in their unbelief by Jesus himself. So, too, the problem of post-Christian America does not exceed the solution of a post-resurrection Jesus. There is no truth that is not connected to the narrative of God’s self-revealing and saving action through the person of Jesus Christ. How we view and interact with the world must be entirely encompassed by the gospel.³ More than a perspective or lens by which we interpret the world, Jesus invites us to receive His Kingdom where He has more than taken up residence, He is *Lord*. By His authority, He invites us to citizenship that requires both obedience to and emulation of the Risen King Himself.⁴

Drift occurs over time. Most may not realize they have arrived at a new idea, belief, or different theological destination altogether because the nature of “drift” is derived from its subtlety. One hardly knows he has wandered before realizing he is lost. Imagine where those on the road to Emmaus may have wound up had Jesus not appeared before them. Remember how Cleopas explained that he had *hoped* Jesus was the one (Luke 24:21 NIV). This is no criticism against thinking deeply about how we arrive at belief, nor is this an indictment on deconstruction itself. Deconstruction is not the problem; rebuilding on anything but a firm foundation is. Blind faith is also not the answer. Rather, the answer is faithfulness to the person of Jesus as revealed through Scripture and history. This must remain our foundation: “We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and that they only constitute the Divine rule of Christian faith and practice.”⁵

Orthodoxy: A Totalizing Gospel

Fifty days after the resurrection, Pentecost occurred, and the early Church was formed and catalyzed following the events our entire

faith hinges upon. The early Church centered itself on devotion to “the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common” (Acts 2:42-44 NIV). Yet, this early faith community would soon experience its first fracture when Ananias and Sapphira, swayed by a simple lie sewn into the fabric of their thinking, would claim that they didn’t have everything they needed. They took what God was not giving them, lied about it, and received death as their reward. When others soon heard about it, a people first compelled by God’s love became gripped with fear (Acts 3:5-11). The letters written over the course of Peter, Paul, and John’s lives and ministries remind us of what seemed a constant calling back to truth and full trust in Jesus, from the beginning. For centuries, this has been the plight of the Church.

Though it rapidly advanced across nations, extending to both Jews and Gentiles moving beyond cultural boundaries, the gospel of Jesus was met with contention and contempt by those who could not accept truth in its totality. Those who rejected the gospel completely were less a threat to the Church than those who rejected it in part. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, wrote about those *who knew God* but did not glorify Him, saying, “They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator” (Romans 1:25 NIV). To the church in Colossae and Laodicea he warns, “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy” (Colossians 2:8 NIV). To the church in Corinth he pleads to all believers, “Agree with one another in what you say ... [Let] there be no divisions among you ... [Be] perfectly united in mind and thought” (1 Corinthians 1:10 NIV). To the church in Ephesus he reminds, “You are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household” (Ephesians 2:19 NIV). And so, church history would include stories of schisms, both great and small, and the rise of denominational distinctives, setting faith groups distinctly apart from each other, where they could not otherwise agree.

And what of this rising reality within The Salvation Army? Of

greatest concern is growing disagreement over matters of social justice, human sexuality and expressive individualism, transhumanism, and acceptance of the Bible as complete and all-encompassing—each indicating a lack of unity in mind and thought. What we believe must be centered on the gospel and the truth of Scripture properly interpreted. Interpretations themselves may seem fruitless, but each perspective is not relative. We must put in the work to determine the most likely intent of the biblical authors and thus arrive at the meaning and truth God has for our lives. Those outspoken about certain theological distinctives (on many sides) have experienced cancel culture run amuck. We aim for healthy dialogue to affirm the truth of God but lack strategy for what happens when we honestly disagree with each other and cannot reconcile perspectives.

What happens when there is disagreement about what the Word says? Will acceptance of novel interpretations become the only reasonable way to avoid division, altogether? More likely and more dangerous would be that we look away, ignoring the tell-tale signs of theological drift, uniting instead over what we are most famous for: doing good. The issues of our beliefs, doctrines, and scriptural interpretations must be dealt with. Dr. Stephen Blakemore, philosophical theologian, warns, “failure to deal with the Church’s *nature* and focus on the Church’s *mission* can lead to a kind of cultural ‘Babylonian captivity.’ Focus on the ‘how’ questions without serious consideration of the identity of the Church can lead to a preoccupation with what the situation of the world is ‘demanding’ of the Church.”⁶

It is not that Jesus has called us away from fulfilling His mission on this earth. It is simply that we must not allow our *doing* to precede our *being*. It is not either/or, but both/and. What we think, believe, and know to be true about the gospel of Jesus Christ is vital. It can never be an after-thought. What we think informs what we believe. What we believe informs our ability to rightfully engage in mission. With the confession of Christ on our lips, it is *how* mission bears out through our apostolic witness to the world that matters.

The gospel of Jesus, upon which our entire movement came to be, is totalizing, touching every corner and crevice of our thinking and doing, finding no closet door closed or attic space unswept.⁷ It

is not a gospel of convenience, but rather a gospel of inconvenience and unconventionality, given the narrow gate Jesus calls us to live within and the widening path the world says it prefers.

Brian Zahnd, author and expert in the age of deconstruction, writes: “We all have a theological house—some of it we inherit and some of it we construct ourselves. Our theological house is not Jesus, but the space that Jesus inhabits in our thought and speech. Our theological house can be helpful and enhancing, worthy of our King, or it can be inadequate, possibly injurious, and unworthy of our King.”⁸

What will those whose human needs we are positioned to meet come to know about Jesus? Will we adopt a message loosely based on the Bible for the sake of making it more palatable? Or will we pick apart Scripture to better suit the moment, allowing secular culture to dictate what is needed?

Needham writes of the challenge of keeping the Salvationist movement truly alive, calling our attention to the “either/or” prioritization issues of our institution: evangelism *or* discipleship, social outreach *or* spiritual witness,⁹ as though our work in these unique spheres is not of one garment, each thread tightly woven together in both faith and practice. It is here that our orthodoxy must intersect with our orthopraxy.

Orthopraxy: Love God, Love Others

“Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’” (Matthew 22:36-39).

In other words, love God and love others. Poignant at best, this seems somewhat an ill-defined, oversimplification of mission. What is it to truly know and practice *love* as it was designed, embodied, and intended by God Himself?

Let us begin here: *God is love*. His essence is Father, Spirit, and Son, each person deferring to the other. He was before the foundations of the earth. And He will always be. Jesus, the very image of the invisible God, whose life was poured out in an act of decisive revelation, displays to humankind a Creator who “truly is love, [whose] divine power is not a ruling fist, but an open bleeding hand.”¹⁰

John writes, “Beloved let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows [γινώσκω/ ginōskō] God” (1 John 4:7 NIV).¹¹ The call to action emanates from our first being loved. It is not that God *gave us love*, but He Himself is love, and has given us Himself. John continues in verse 11, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us.” *Love is perfected in us.*

We love because we know capital “L” Love, not love as the world defines, describes, or demands it. Jesus commands we first love God entirely—with heart, soul, and mind—nothing withheld. Second, He commands we love our neighbor. Let love be actualized through our *doing*: feed the hungry, clothe the naked, serve the needy, sit with the lonely, welcome the estranged. But what more? Blakemore contends, “Calling people to repent is an act of love as much as meeting needs. The last is easier, but fallen culture confuses and corrupts us, and confronting people’s lifestyles and worldviews regarding gender, race, sexuality, greed, rage, and meaning, is to offer holy love’s healing, recreating gift.”¹²

If love is perfected in us, does it not point right back to Jesus who is Holy Love, Himself? Identity-obsessed Western culture says love affirms and agrees. In Jesus’ economy and in His Kingdom, it’s different. Love doesn’t give itself over to the whims of culture for the sake of agreement; it stands for truth and leads with grace. Author and speaker John Mark Comer writes this about Jesus: “You do see [Him] say hard things on a regular basis—uncomfortable things, unpopular things, the kind of things that eventually got him killed. But most of the time, his tone was tender and wise. [...] Jesus disagreed with people constantly, in love.”¹³

Acceptance and affirmation are headlining this cultural moment. Human nature has become something individuals or societies have come to invent for themselves.¹⁴ The creation story in Genesis highlights humanity as the crown of God’s creation, the culminating result of His Divine work, saving the very best for last. Creating us male and female, designed in His perfect image, but otherwise *incomplete*, Holy Love breathed His being into our bones (Genesis

1:27). Yet, contradicting this biblical narrative is the notion that “the world exists as raw material to be manipulated by our own power to its own purposes, requiring humanity to bear the burden of discovering meaning and purpose entirely on its own, according to its own terms.”¹⁵ We were created; we are not being created, or recreated for that matter. It is inarguable: if we did not make ourselves, we cannot define ourselves.¹⁶ Yet, with cultural ideas of love so tightly bound to affirmation and acceptance, no questions asked, we have condemned our brothers and sisters—our *neighbors*—to some sort of “hell on earth” where Jesus has no right to access the whole of who they are. This wrong ideology will only ever result in the resurrected Jesus being anything but King to those who have yet to accept Him. We must come back to a fuller understanding of what it means that *God is love*.

Conclusion: Strengthen What Remains

Where we do not agree, what might result? Dr. Andy Miller, a professor of historical theology, suggests, “We are essentially a part of two different Armies.”¹⁷ We must first acknowledge that “functionally and theologically,” separation has already occurred within our movement.¹⁸ Though inherently united in Christ, The Salvation Army suffers from fundamental disagreement over what is truth and what is True Reality. Competing scriptural interpretations span the spectrum of faith in Jesus, resulting in the real challenge to reconcile differences. James warns, “Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like” (James 1:23-24 NIV). We now face a crisis of identity, our one Army suffering the ill-effects of not knowing what it believes, though it remains unchanged within our doctrine. As Commissioner Needham urges in his seminal work, *Christ at the Door*, we must decide who we are. He warns of “the creeping intrusion and unconscious adoption of the values of the surrounding culture,” which seeks to threaten the Church and water down the ethics of Jesus.¹⁹ On either side of the camp, Jesus did not give us His resurrection power that we might pervert it for our purpos-

es (Romans 8:11 NIV). We must do the hard work of prayerfully and graciously engaging in hard conversations with those we do not share everything in common.

As Salvationists, we must continue to affirm that Scripture in its totality is inspired by God and contains His saving revelation, [thus] its authority “overshadows all other authority.”²⁰ Nothing should persuade us otherwise—not personal opinion, not social pressure, not secular rhetoric, not theological drift. “[Scripture’s] authority supersedes all other claims, and its teaching authenticates all other spiritual truth.”²¹ Subverting the authority of Scripture threatens to dismantle the grounds by which we can reliably know our Triune God, understand the essence of humanity, and interpret His best for our lives. If we cannot stand firmly on what the word of God says, we cannot stand at all. We must “strengthen what remains” for the sake of the Church, for the sake of the lost, for the sake of The Salvation Army (Revelation 3:2 NIV).

There is work yet to be done. We each have a holy obligation to put our hand to the proverbial plough of reading and interpreting Scripture from a singular, biblical worldview, faithfully imparting its meaning to those we witness to—*this* is love made manifest among God’s people. The authentic witness of The Salvation Army depends on its remaining anchored to True Reality, which informs right thinking and practice. Where we have unanswered questions and unresolved concerns, we must engage in the hard conversations and have faith to take Jesus at His word.

Endnotes

¹ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*. 1603. Edited by Barbara Mowat and Paul Wershtine, New York, Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2012.

² John Mark Comer, *Live No Lies: Recognize and Resist the Three Enemies That Sabotage Your Peace*, First ed. 2021. Colorado Springs: WaterBrook. Pg. 117.

³ G. Stephen Blakemore, “The Story of God’s Self-Revelation: Divine Action, Historical Narrative, Human Response, Explanatory Power.” Ideological Threats to the Church at Wesley Biblical Seminary, January 24, 2022.

⁴ Phil Needham, *Community in Mission: A Salvationist Ecclesiology*. 1987. London: International Headquarters of the Salvation Army. Pg. 109.

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⁶ G. Stephen Blakemore, “Holy Love and the Church,” in *Holy Love: Essays in Honor of Dr. M. William Ury*. 2022. Ed. Diane Ury. Atlanta: The Salvation Army USA Southern Territory. Pg. 61-62.

⁷ Blakemore, Stephen. “The Story”

⁸ Brian Zahnd, *When Everything’s on Fire: Faith Forged from the Ashes*. 2021. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP. Pg. 46.

⁹ Phil Needham, *Christ at the Door: Biblical Keys to Our Salvationist Future: A Resource for Helping Salvationists Revitalize Themselves & Their Corps*. 2018. Alexandria, Virginia: Crest Books. Pg. 12-13.

¹⁰ Michael E. Lodahl, *The Story of God: Wesleyan Theology and Biblical Narrative*. 1994. Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press. Pg. 60.

¹¹ γινώσκω/ginóskō: to know through personal experience; used to convey “knowing” as though through sexual intimacy.

¹² G. Stephen Blakemore, “Holy Love and the Church,” in *Holy Love: Essays in Honor of Dr. M. William Ury*. 2022. Ed. Diane Ury. Atlanta: The Salvation Army USA Southern Territory. Pg. 68.

¹³ John Mark Comer, *Live No Lies: Recognize and Resist the Three Enemies That Sabotage Your Peace*, First ed. 2021. Colorado Springs: WaterBrook. Pg. 57.

¹⁴ Carl R. Trueman and Rod Dreher, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia Expressive Individualism and the Road to Sexual Revolution*. 2020. Wheaton: Crossway. Pg. 41.

¹⁵ Ibid, pg. 39-41.

¹⁶ G. Stephen Blakemore, “Systematic Theology: Eschatological Perspective in All Our Soteriology.” Ideological Threats to the Church at Wesley Biblical Seminary, January 2, 2022.

¹⁷ Andy Miller. “Conservative vs. Progressive Visions for the Salvation Army Part 2 with Willis Howell.” *YouTube*, 16 May 2023, www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHTIrGq0Ync. Accessed 22 Jan. 2025. Timestamp, 1:05:55.

¹⁸ Ibid. Timestamp, 1:08:08.

¹⁹ Phil Needham, *Christ at the Door: Biblical Keys to Our Salvationist Future: A Resource for Helping Salvationists Revitalize Themselves & Their Corps*. 2018. Alexandria, Virginia: Crest Books. Pg.104.

²⁰ *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine*. 2010. London: Salvation Books.
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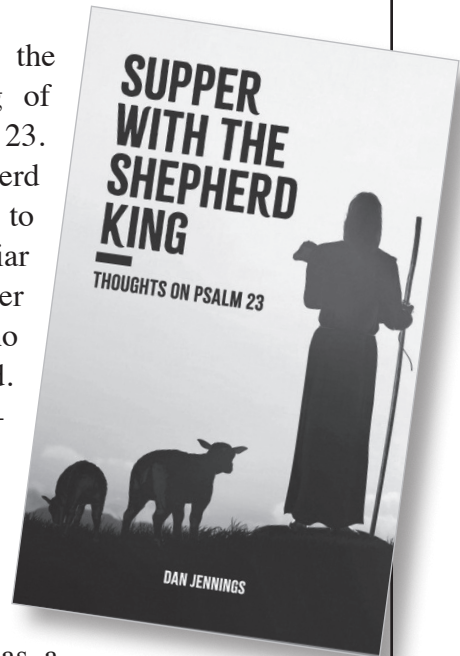
²¹ Ibid, pg. 8.

Supper with the Shepherd King

By Dan Jennings

Through the creativity of the Word, God reveals something of Himself to mankind in Psalm 23. He cares for creation as a shepherd cares for sheep. This book helps to peel back the layers of the familiar words of this psalm and discover timeless truths about a God who loves those whom He has created. Readers will also gain an appreciation for the metaphors employed by King David.

Lt. Colonel Dan Jennings is the Secretary for Personnel in the USA Central Territory of The Salvation Army and has a Master of Arts in Theological Studies from the Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri. Jennings has a desire to unearth and discover the never-ending truths found in the Bible and finds tremendous fulfillment in leading, teaching, and developing others. *Supper with the Shepherd King* is his first book.



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Book Review

Craig L. Blomberg. *Jesus the Purifier: John's Gospel and the Fourth Quest for the Historical Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023. 415 pages.

Reviewed by Isaiah Allen, Assistant Professor of Religion,
Booth University College, Winnipeg, MB, Canada.

If Jesus is truly and properly human, then reliable historical knowledge of His life should ground Christian faith. In *Jesus the Purifier*, Craig Blomberg (Denver Seminary Professor Emeritus of New Testament) reinforces such critical knowledge. First, he describes and evaluates generations of scholarly effort (a.k.a. “quests”) to portray Jesus historically, also assessing how scholars approach John’s Gospel (chapters 1-5). Second, he examines John, peering beneath Johannine themes and styles to discern a bedrock of historical information (chapters 6-10). His investigation yields Jesus’ evolving relationship with ritual purity as an undercurrent in the Fourth Gospel.

Compared to the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), John’s presentation of Jesus stands out. Due to features such as the “I am” statements (e.g., John 6:35; 10:11; 14:6), a divergent timeline, and an emphatic theology, scholars have typically been wary about using John’s Gospel as a source for information and insight about the historical Jesus. Blomberg’s interest in each scholar’s treatment of the Gospel of John distinguishes this study from others, but he provides sufficient background to the quests that readers may

appreciate his argument even without prior exposure to scholarship on the historical Jesus.

Blomberg decries the bifurcation between historical Jesus studies and Johannine studies (xvii–xxi; cf. 177). Johannine scholars have increasingly appreciated John’s historical value, yet Jesus scholars typically defer to the Synoptics. With other scholars, Blomberg wishes to rekindle interest in John for history (65, 133, 185–188). Previous scholarship has normalized labels like the “original quest,” “new quest,” and “third quest.” Some now label the effort to incorporate John as the “fourth quest for the historical Jesus” (x).

Chapter 1 overviews historical Jesus studies from the eighteenth to early-twentieth centuries. While he covers the usual details, a few features distinguish Blomberg’s presentation from others of its kind: he addresses how scholars’ social contexts influenced their ideas, notes how John’s Gospel fared in their hands, highlights lesser-known contributors, and articulates “Additions and Corrections” (9–19).

Chapter 2 discusses what is known as the “new quest” (mid-twentieth century). Again, Blomberg describes key contributors plus some neglected figures. He explains some flaws with criteria of authenticity used in historical Jesus studies, especially when used inversely, to deny historicity. Although he does not often argue for them, he retains space for conservative solutions to problems of historical investigation (e.g., that John’s and the Synoptics’ portrayals of Jesus’ demonstration in the temple represent two events; 198).

Chapter 3 surveys what is often called the “third quest” (late-twentieth to early-twenty-first centuries), in which scholars generally understand that any valid portrait of Jesus must place him within his first-century Palestinian Jewish milieu. Blomberg primarily evaluates previous scholars’ integration of the Fourth Gospel into their investigations, so his critiques of other aspects of their scholarship are more concise.

Chapter 4 describes approaches that, in Blomberg’s view, constitute “a step back in time” (chapter subtitle). Blomberg shows less restraint in criticizing the Jesus Seminar (108–111), referring to it as a “throwback quest” (121, 132, 133, 375). Many scholars share his

antipathy, but he is unique in detailing the seminar's approach to and results regarding John. They ignored contemporary "third quest" developments and forty years of Johannine scholarship (132-133).

Chapter 5 asks what remains for Jesus scholarship. The third quest has accomplished much but mostly restricted itself to the Synoptic Gospels (176). Blomberg surveys recent studies from various methodological and ideological angles. He displays his conservative and Reformed point of view when he labels Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's work as an "advocacy perspective" (142), which seems dismissive. Blomberg does, however, demonstrate willingness to critique himself and recognizes that objectivity is elusive (143, 193-200).

Chapter 6 enumerates critical considerations for deriving historical data from John, including which criteria are most suited to the task. Blomberg lists and critiques fourteen reasons why scholars treat John as a "junior partner" (211) in historical Jesus studies (211-217)—e.g., the Synoptic triple tradition reinforces the impression that John renders a minority report even though the comparison is fundamentally between one Gospel (Mark) and another (John).

Chapter 7 begins Blomberg's quest in John 1-4. He argues that Jesus' relationship to ritual purity in John is authentic because it appears throughout but is neither the dominant theme nor one of John's distinctive theological or rhetorical themes. Blomberg perceives undercurrents of ritual purity in John's and Jesus' ministries of baptism (John 1, 4), stone jars at the wedding at Cana (John 2), and other encounters. Closely linked with John the Baptist, Jesus' ministry built on Jewish concepts and customs of ritual purification.

Chapter 8 explores John 5-11. Jesus seems to set up alternative models of purity through actions like healing at the Bethesda pool (John 5), serving a meal in the wilderness without hand washing (John 6), and referencing a source of living water during Sukkoth (John 7), among others. With John the Baptist largely absent, Jesus offers alternative means of purification, bypassing and superseding normal rituals.

Chapter 9 focuses on John's narration of Jesus' final days (John 12-21). Blomberg perceives Jesus subverting customary expectations regarding purity in the foot washing (John 13), pruning (i.e.,

cleansing) the vine (John 15), his self-sanctification (John 17), Peter's immersion (John 21), and elsewhere. John's final chapters transition from conventional concerns with ritual purity to an emphasis on the Spirit.

Chapter 10 compares Blomberg's analysis with Synoptic data. Blomberg asserts, "The Fourth Gospel is more chronological overall than the synoptics are" (333; cf. 378). The upshot is that claims about Jesus' ministry derived from John may exhibit a more sequential development than those derived from the more thematically arranged Synoptics. Previous quests typically concluded that Jesus maintained a static ambivalence to the strictures of ritual purity, but the portrait Blomberg draws from John represents a nuanced development over time.

The Conclusion suggests implications for the academy—new challenges and further lines of inquiry, and the church—continuing Jesus' purifying ministry in practical ways, not as prudes but as exemplars and facilitators of abundant life; not through coercion and shame but through love and forgiveness. Blomberg encourages continued historical Jesus research, especially in the "fourth quest" vein (382).

Blomberg writes clearly and engages in rich critical dialogue with numerous thinkers. Biblical interpreters will appreciate frequent exegetical insights. The book exhibits almost no typographical errors. The Author Index is thorough, but the book has no bibliography, so locating sources is cumbersome. There is no subject index, but there is an index of Scripture and ancient sources.

To be competent theologians and interpreters of the Bible, Salvationists (especially officers) need to be familiar with current research on the historical Jesus. Although Blomberg comes from a Reformed theological perspective, such does not influence his argument as much as his general commitment to a faithful reading of Scripture. Blomberg is also correct about the neglect of John in historical Jesus studies, to which this book offers an important corrective and one that coincides with the Army's doctrinal conviction regarding the role of the whole canon in shaping belief and practice. For these reasons, this book would be valuable for interested Salvationists.

Book Review

Jennings, Dan. *Supper with the Shepherd King: Thoughts on Psalm 23*. Alexandria, VA: Crest Books, 2023. 152 pages.

Reviewed by Daniel Duncan, Christian Education Director, The Salvation Army Kentucky-Tennessee Division, Louisville, KY.

In *Supper with the Shepherd King*, Dan Jennings provides refreshing insight into one of the most familiar passages of Scripture. He confronts the inherent dangers of familiarity in two ways. First, the author refuses to succumb to the temptation to gloss over the text. Second, he pulls Psalm 23 free from a history of application dominated by the “graveside” (2). Jennings is thus free to hear David’s psalm and to be guided by the Spirit in his observations and interpretations of the text. Moreover, he invites every reader of his book to explore the psalm with “fresh eyes” (3) open to seeing the revelation of God’s character.

God’s character and His impulse toward restoring humanity are the subjects of Jennings’ observations in this book. He states that the psalm speaks to the reader in both theological and ecclesiological ways (11). The metaphor of the shepherd is a profound image for this communication. Yet this image is not without its risks. Throughout the book, readers are encouraged to lay presuppositions aside to understand the various ways in which the metaphor works (26). When it comes to applying his work to the church, Jennings is sensitive to the way God’s blessings inform and influence church leader-

ship. He ably links God's provision with the empowerment He gives to local shepherds to care for His sheep (42). This is explicated in the author's thoughts on anointing. By consulting related texts from 1 Samuel 16 and Psalm 133, he equates anointing with the inauguration of *missio dei* (129).

Ever present in *Supper with the Shepherd King* is an assertion of God's providential character; it is an inextricable part of God's nature (29). God's provision is universally and eternally satisfying (62) and is expressed within the psalm by the four blessings of Sabbath, peace, restoration, and presence (67). Jennings discusses the blessing of Sabbath in the context of verse two. Because of the "causative" *rvts*, he argues that Sabbath rest may be forced upon us by a loving God (69-70). While it is not always the case that a *hiphil* verb carries a causative sense, the author rightly derives meaning from the context of the passage. His conclusion significantly challenges western culture and its obsession with busyness. Moreover, by providing a few reflective questions, Jennings gently and thoughtfully challenges his readers to adopt a Sabbath practice (72). By virtue of his role in the Army, the author implicitly invites further dialogue on the vital function of Sabbath in the life of a Salvation Army officer. His integration of challenge and reflection surely highlights the tension between Sabbath observance and the requirements of officership.

Jennings describes the peace of God with two complementary words: "calm" and "cleansing" (74-77). The Lord has the power to calm the trouble in our lives and, in the stillness of that moment, cleanse us. The author later describes the peace of God in terms of "comfort." The utility of the shepherd metaphor in this regard is exemplified in his chapter on the rod and staff. Reflecting his understanding of the cultural background of the text, Jennings identifies the rod as a tool of discipline, protection, and examination, motivated by love (108). Most significant is his recognition of the semantic range of the term translated as "rod." This enables him to link the image of God as Shepherd with that of God as King. He supports this linkage with reference to the life of David (109).

God's blessing of restoration is intricately woven into Jennings'

observations on the psalm. Not one chapter of this book is free from some implicit or explicit claim regarding God's impulse towards restoration. A careful reading reveals the subtle way in which Jennings links God's overwhelming provision, illustrated in the image of the feast table (v 5), with the act of restoration. It is the invitation to the host's table, into the presence of God, that signals the act of restoration (113). While one might expect more to be said regarding this important point, the author chooses to emphasize the idea of God's hospitality. His ecclesiological concern and pragmatism are evidenced by the conviction that this verse convicts the church to practice gracious hospitality (117).

In the final chapter of *Supper with the Shepherd King*, Jennings remarks on the blessing of restoration by reflecting on the last clause of verse six. He asks an important interpretive question about David's choice of words. Unfortunately, the author does not provide even a cursory look at the semantic field for the verb translated as "dwell" (*shwv*), but rather remains involved in a discussion on the "four variations" of the verb and what they might reveal about David's understanding (146-48). He gives each of these variations equal influence over his interpretation. In this he might go a little too far in prioritizing semantic range over contextual meaning. Despite this imbalance, Jennings' sensitivity to the setting of David's life helps to flesh out the outcome of restoration: God's everlasting presence (149).

The blessing of the Lord's presence is emphasized in the author's reflections on verse 4. He again displays sensitivity to the language and literary conventions of the psalm by analyzing the rhetorical force of *tsalmawet* (88-89). Frequently translated as "shadow of death," the word profoundly depicts the deep darkness in which David finds himself. Jennings returns to his vocation as shepherd to remind the reader that there is hope in the impermanence of the valley of deep shadow (90). Moreover, God leads us through it. However, here the author's experience as pastor meets his perspective as an Army officer when he argues that there is "mission in the hard places" (94). The darkest valley is not a place for the Shepherd King, or his shepherds, to avoid. In fact, there may be mission and purpose

in walking through the darkest valley. Jennings aptly summarizes the benefits of God's presence when he argues that it serves as the foundation for a sense of protection, the medium by which we experience peace, and the promise of permanence (98-100). Ultimately, *Supper with the Shepherd King* is written to inspire the reader to embrace the protection, peace, and permanence of God's presence (148). In this, the author is largely successful.

Supper with the Shepherd King provides a challenge for its readers to "gain an appreciation" for this familiar psalm outside of confinement to funerals (151). The strength of this work lies in the imperative to break free from the dullness some may feel due to over-familiarity with Scripture. Under the guidance of the Spirit, it is this renewed reception of God's Word which revitalizes the faith community. Jennings has answered this call with a book simple in language and devotional in tone. Anecdotes from his own ministry clarify his points and ingratiate him to the reader. The heart of this work, however, is ultimately found in his "pauses" for reflection. These are helpful, pragmatic steps in applying biblical concepts, and they create the conditions for looking at the psalm with fresh eyes.

Book Review

McCall, Thomas H., Caleb T. Friedeman, and Matt T. Friedeman. *The Doctrine of Good Works: Reclaiming a Neglected Protestant Teaching*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2023. 192 pages.

Reviewed by Rob DeGeorge, Adjunct Professor of Historical Theology, Wesley Biblical Seminary, Ridgeland, MS.

The Doctrine of Good Works: Reclaiming a Neglected Protestant Teaching poses a critical question: “What if the good news of Christianity really includes good works within it? What if loving God ... the ‘works of piety’ ... loving one’s neighbor as oneself ... [and] the ‘works of mercy’ ... [were] as essential to the good news ...?” (xv-xvi). The authors argue that Christianity faces a *credibility crisis*, not due to unconvincing truths, but because Christians fail to live out their beliefs, making the faith “at best irrelevant and at worst a sinister threat” (xi, xii). From the pulpit to the seminary classroom, they suggest contemporary evangelicals too often communicate salvation is “strictly about what happens after [believers] are dead ... [while] good works are seen not only as unnecessary, but even as dangerous (xii, xiii).” Consequently, the authors call for a “positive doctrine of good works” aligning with Protestant Reformation theology that emphasizes linking salvation to the call to love God and neighbor through acts of piety and mercy (xvi).

Chapter 1 explores the doctrine of good works during the Prot-

estant Reformation, focusing on Lutheran and Reformed Protestant scholastic views and historical confessional statements. The authors establish *good works* as “[t]he works of regenerate and justified [believers]” done through the “gracious empowerment of the Holy Spirit” (4, 5). Protestant scholastics may vary in their interpretations of good works as means, conditions, or causes of salvation, but they share a broad consensus that “good works are necessary as evidence of justifying faith” (23). In contrast, they assert that contemporary evangelicals “deny good works have anything to do with salvation ... [and are] a departure from Protestant teaching ... [that] threatens a proper understanding of the gospel.” The authors insist, however, that “good works are nothing less than necessary *for* salvation” (24, *italics mine*). Yet, while good works are affirmed as *necessary* in “different kinds” and various senses (7, 8, 10, 11, 18, 21, 22), they are sometimes qualified and seen as “just short of ... necessary” for salvation, but instead, necessary for Christians (6, 9, 10, 11, 13) as “the consequence of true saving faith” (14). Thus, the various uses of “necessary,” “integral,” and “essential” to describe good works blur the distinctions asserted. And, without thoroughly treating contemporary views, the characteristic of what is unequivocally “necessary for salvation” is not clear or precise, leaving it uncertain how other descriptions of good works as a “result” or “evidence” of salvation are inadequate (2).

In Chapter 2, a biblical theology of good works is explored, beginning with the Old Testament. Originating from a working God who gives good works to be accomplished (Gen 1-2) they are the “logical outflow” of one’s relationship with God (27). Yet, despite distortions caused by the Fall, good works were purposefully restored through covenantal obedience (Abraham 35, Moses 40, David 45-47). Their role in true worship, as illustrated in the Psalms, Wisdom literature (52), and works of justice are highlighted by the Prophets (52-58). The authors merit praise for introducing a biblical theology of good works, an approach not advanced before (30). While overall this is fruitful, there are interpretive questions. The author’s connection of Adam’s work in the garden and good works, the latter being essential to “right relationship with God,” is hazy (30). From Adam, the

authors stretch N. T. Wright's concept of "God's true humanity"¹ to argue that the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 12:1-3) is a call to good works (33); but the correlation is unconvincing.

Chapter 3 focuses on the New Testament. Jesus, the new Adam and true human, restores good works as participation in the redemptive mission of God (64). His call to action, particularly love of God and neighbor, is the substance of good works (63, 65, 67-68) and requires a "greater righteousness" that goes beyond justification, to eternal reward that supports their "necessity" for salvation (64-67). However, it downplays the priority of a devoted heart in favor of "righteous behavior that his disciples must exhibit" (65). The excursus on "the sheep and the goats" illustrates this, where the wicked "failed to *do for him* the things the righteous did" (70 *emphasis mine*). In truth, judgment against the wicked stems from failing to act in fellowship *with* (ἐμὸι,) Jesus (Matt 25:40, 45), aligning with Matthew 7, where only deeds reflecting faithful fellowship with God's will receive eternal reward (vv 21-23). The book of Acts showcases the early church's deeds of piety and mercy that support a positive doctrine of good works. Nonetheless, the authors neglect other themes, such as fellowship with the Triune God, faith, and perseverance in relation to good works in John's Gospel, Paul's writings, Peter, and Hebrews, highlighting gaps in their biblical theology. The comparison of good works in Paul and James, particularly in relation to the distinctions between justification and sanctification, is insightful. However, the distinctions from views commonly held by contemporary evangelicals are not apparent (78-92).² Despite many valid connections, these and other interpretive matters challenge their proposal as what is necessary for salvation.

Chapter 4 presents a strong theological-systematic exposition of good works. God's creative goodness is linked to humanity, as His image-bearers, that emphasizes a mandate of love. After the Fall and the giving of the law, Christ, as the Davidic redeemer of God's creative good works, "insists" on

the inseparability of love for God and neighbor, which is “vitally important and essential to discipleship” (103, 106). In sanctification, believers are transformed into Christ’s likeness and empowered for good works in God’s redemptive mission (109). The authors argue that “good works are means ... of God’s sanctifying work ... [and] conclude that good works are means and even causes of salvation” (119). However, presenting Millard Erickson as representative of evangelicals “departing sharply from historic Protestant teaching” by “equating [salvation] with being ... ‘declared righteous,’” may be hasty (111). Erickson agrees salvation involves means of grace that move believers from justification to sanctification, where “good [works] ... are the fulfillment or completion of faith.” He maintains that works reflect a sanctifying relationship with Christ, and it is this relationship, not the works themselves, that determine eternal life.³ Similarly, the authors assert that, in salvation, relationship as union with Christ both justifies and transforms individuals through His grace, issuing in good works (115-116, 118-119). Thus, both agree salvation and good works extend beyond initial justification.

Asserting that Christianity’s failure stems from believers not translating sound theology into compassionate action, the authors shift to practical application. Chapters 5 and 6 present four case studies and eight strategic principles, offering qualitative examples and supporting “how ... a working faith, actually happen[s]” (127). They stress that works of mercy cultivate missional churches that engage congregations in demonstrating love for God and neighbor (184). Finally, then, the authors conclude that they having presented a positive doctrine of good works that is historical, biblical, systematic, and qualitative in scope. They contend they have demonstrated, “good works are anything but ancillary to salvation and the Christian life; in no sense whatsoever can works of piety and works of mercy be considered optional or ‘add-on’ accessories” (187). As a result, Christians are empowered to demonstrate “commitments to works of piety and

works of mercy ... in such a way that ... even their very identities stand as a challenge to the ideologies that polarize and divide twenty-first century culture” (189).

The book’s main weakness lies in its opening premise and argumentation that, as has been shown, is at times incomplete. The authors’ suggested need for a positive doctrine of good works due to a “crisis of credibility” is presented with reasonable but unsubstantiated hypotheticals and uneven critiques of Reformed evangelicals that fail to fully present their position or offer a comparison with their Wesleyan counterparts. The strength of the work lies in its Protestant scholastic foundation, which defends an affirmative doctrine and proposes an extensive systematic-theological exposition of good works in relation to salvation, from justification to glorification. Overall McCall, Friedeman, and Friedeman present a timely starting conversation on a doctrine of good works for Protestant evangelicals in the twenty-first century.

Endnotes

¹ N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 23; N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God, Christian Origins and the Question of God, Vol. 1* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 263. As cited by the authors, 33, n.15-16.

² cf. Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2020), 724-29. As cited by the authors, Wayne Grudem’s commentary is one of the theological texts used by evangelicals that lacks a clear and sustained treatment of good works. See xiii, n.1.

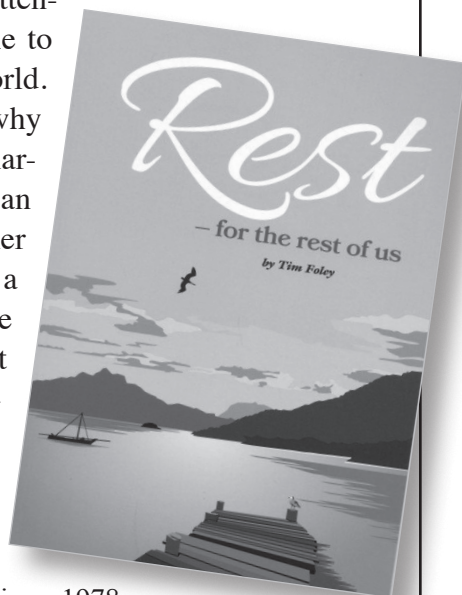
³ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 936, 938-39. As cited by the authors, Millard Erickson is charged with conflating salvation with justification (see 111 n.17-18) and his is one of the theological texts used by evangelicals that lacks a clear and sustained treatment of good works. See xiii, n.1.

Rest—for the rest of us

By Tim Foley

When life demands 24/7 attention, you may find it impossible to rest. We live in a fast-paced world. It doesn't slow down, so why should you? With an engaging narrative, this book by Tim Foley, an experienced scholar and teacher of spiritual formation, provides a refreshing and informative take on the subject of sabbath rest. It speaks to anyone looking to renew their sense of joy and find options for coping with life's pleasures.

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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Book Review

Patterson, Aimee. *Suffering Well and Suffering With: Reclaiming Marks of Christian Identity*. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2023. 137 pages.

Reviewed by April Davis, Corps Officer of The Salvation Army,
Charleston, SC.

As indicated in the title, *Suffering Well and Suffering With* has two main foci, in which the author calls post-modern Christians both to reframe their thinking and adjust their practice of suffering. Patterson's words about suffering carry weight due to her own personal experience with what she refers to repeatedly in her book as "profound innocent suffering" (15). Referring to her own battle with brain cancer, she describes the agony and suffering she experienced, which opened her eyes to the fundamental isolation all human beings experience, made all the worse by pain of different kinds. Out of her battle with cancer and subsequent adjustment to an altered life, rife with continued pain, has come this book, a plea to Christ's Church to remember and reclaim its identity as being "of and for suffering people" (9).

In the second chapter of *Suffering Well and Suffering With*, Patterson begins by describing how the Church began as a people who suffered well. Under attack because of their commitment to Christ, many were tortured and killed, rather than submit to Roman authorities who demanded they deny their Lord and Savior.

This chapter leads into an explanation of two extreme approaches of suffering to be avoided. On the one hand, there are those who avoid suffering at all costs, even suffering for Christ. On the other hand, there are (and there were, in the early Church) those who sought out martyrdom for the glory and eternal assurances they believed it would bring. Patterson reminds her readers that both of these approaches are erroneous (36). Suffering well looks like relinquishing control to God as to when, how, and how much we suffer. We take profound, innocent suffering as it comes and in the midst of it, we glorify God.

Perhaps one of the most compelling points made by Patterson is that oftentimes, as in her case, there will be no resolution to our suffering. Answers will often not be given, and pain will often not be taken away. Suffering well looks like being okay with non-answers. What gives God's people the strength to live with these non-answers is the fact that He is a suffering God, as exhibited in the life and death of Jesus Himself. While human beings may feel profoundly isolated in their personal pain, Jesus literally entered into that pain and because of that, is the only one who truly and completely understands.

In the second part of Patterson's book, she moves on from what it looks like to suffer well into what it looks like to suffer *with* others, to enter into their pain with them and stand in solidarity with those who suffer. The first step to suffering with others is to understand the nature of compassion. The word "compassion," from the Latin root, means "to suffer with," and thus is not simply an emotional response to another's suffering, but rather an entering into it (70).

One way we can do this, says Patterson, is by reintroducing lament into Christian practice and worship. So often, our worship songs glibly dismiss suffering and skip over the process of grief to God's eventual eradication of suffering (84). But this ignores the reality that so many are experiencing now—pain that will go on for the rest of this life, and pain which with every trite word is made more isolating.

Another way we can suffer with others is by reversing the roles of

host and guest. Most times, when thinking of hospitality, we would think of hosting someone else in our own homes, but what if there were a way to instill more dignity in the suffering person than to simply invite them in? Patterson writes that even in our own homes, we can suffer with our comrades by becoming the guest. Rather than having the power over our visitor, we can allow them to lead and to be the host—not in the traditional sense, but in the sense of leading us on a tour through their lives. We can allow the suffering people in our lives to guide the conversation and to be the host with the control (99).

Christians have a rich history of demonstrating compassion and leading the way in taking care of those who are suffering; this is where hospitals originated (105). Yet, along the way, and especially after Christianity became the Roman empire's state religion, Christians began to forget their identity—what they were called to do and who they were called to be (112).

Patterson does well in making a compelling argument as to what the Church should be and why. As aforementioned, her arguments are all the more weighty because of her personal experience with profound, innocent suffering. There is no doubt at the end of the book that there is action required of the Christian reading her words. Christians would do well to take a look at their lives and how they handle their own suffering. Do they avoid it at all costs? Have they compromised their faith in Jesus to avoid suffering? Have they neglected an opportunity to recognize the good work that God is doing in the midst of their suffering? Christians would also do well to take a look at how they handle the suffering of others. It is one thing to bear up under one's own suffering. It is entirely another thing to take on another human being's suffering as one's own. Still, we are compelled by Patterson's arguments, and more importantly by Scripture, to minister God's love to the hurting and broken by standing in solidarity with them and by refusing to abandon them in their suffering.

Patterson uses many modern-day examples of suffering and injustice, such as situations brought about by COVID-19, ripple effects from slavery in Black North-American households, and the effects of colonization on modern-day Native Americans. She calls

for solidarity with these groups of people and for the sacrifice of prestige and power for their sake, even when it causes personal pain or discomfort (123).

What feels to be missing, however, is practical steps for entering into solidarity with these specific people groups. Not everyone may automatically see how to enter into the suffering of Native Americans and Black Americans, or even know what that suffering entails. What types of suffering are we talking about, other than a general existence of fear or of culture loss? And perhaps, if this specific information goes further than the scope of this book, there could at least be some discussion at the end on how to move forward with educating one's self on the suffering of specific people groups. After all, the author intends to spark action within the Church, and this would assist individuals in carrying out the challenges she has posed to them.

Overall, Patterson's book is compelling, challenging Christians to live counterculturally by embracing suffering in a world whose natural inclination is to eradicate it altogether. Instead of taking her cue from the world, may the Church remember who she is; may she learn to bear suffering well, and may she learn to enter into the suffering of those within and around her. We may not be rid of suffering this side of eternity, but by taking Jesus at His word and perpetuating His example, we can make suffering more bearable and less isolating for others, providing them with eternal hope along the way.

If the reader desires to dig deeper into the research behind the author's book and expand their own understanding of its topic, Patterson has included a bibliography, subject index, and Scripture index, all of which may be helpful to this end.

Book Review

Shaw, Benjamin C. F. *Trustworthy: Thirteen Arguments for the Reliability of the New Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2024. 142 pages.

Reviewed by Catherine Fitzgerald, Brown County Coordinator
and Associate Senior Kroc Officer, The Salvation Army, Green
Bay, WI.

Benjamin Shaw's *Trustworthy* provides a succinct overview of the reliability of the New Testament text in a very accessible volume. At only 142 pages in length, the book is a good starting place to evaluate the trustworthiness of Scripture for the Christian leader, lay person, and even skeptic. The author compiles thirteen arguments, including those related to textual evidence, genre, dating, authorship, and traditions. Shaw is an adjunct professor of theology at Liberty University and is passionate about apologetics. After having worked with Gary Habermas for more than ten years and talking to hundreds of religious doubters, this book was a natural outflow of his passion and personal experience.

Each of his thirteen chapters could be an entire book, but Shaw states the main points concisely and includes recommended readings at the end of each chapter for further study. In critiquing the book, some may find that each argument carries a similar amount of space, even though some arguments hold much more weight than others. Each argument is presented as just one of many, and no sin-

gle argument offers indisputable evidence. However, considered all together, the overwhelming evidence suggests that as we have it today, the New Testament is reliable and trustworthy. If the New Testament—and therefore the stories of Jesus—are true, then it is also personally trustworthy as a document to shape our faith, hope, and life choices.

Weaving his own story and skepticism throughout the narrative, Shaw helps readers understand the relevance and necessity of each argument. All people—Christians and non-Christians alike—should wrestle with the question of reliability if we are to truly evaluate our beliefs from a logical, historical, and critical stance. Too often, believers trust the Bible without having ever considered the questions related to historical reliability. This book helps Christians think through the potential issues that may arise from more skeptical minds.

On the other hand, nonbelievers do not trust the Bible and are often unaware of the historical reliability of the text. Perhaps a recent conversation I had can help demonstrate the usefulness of the information contained in this book. Recently, a guest of our daily lunch program began to argue with me that the New Testament cannot be trusted simply on the basis of how old it is. When I engaged him in discussion and presented some of the evidence from this text, he was forced to reconsider his own beliefs. Having this information handy, concise, and in plain language prepared me to present differing evidence lovingly and thoroughly.

Shaw does not enter into any discussions of theology or the meaning of any individual text beyond its historical relevance. For instance, he refers to the conversion of Paul from a persecutor of Christ followers to a Christ follower himself (Acts 9:1-19) and extracts the historical information without considering the manner in which Jesus spoke to Paul, the sovereignty of God, the role of the Holy Spirit, issues of repentance, etc. The author does not engage in making arguments to support either conservative or liberal interpretations of the New Testament, but instead emphasizes that even the more liberal and skeptical historians still have ample evidence for the reliability of the New Testament text. Readers from all de-

nominations and theological perspectives would benefit from the clear articulation of these thirteen arguments. Skeptics would also appreciate that Shaw also draws on the scholarship of non-Christians (such as Bart Ehrman) in his attempt to give as fair a review of the data as possible (p. 59).

Though brief, the arguments are dense and full of information. This may make it a longer read than its page numbers would suggest. Digesting it one argument at a time is recommended. Group study and discussion would be even more impactful. Groups mixed with believers and nonbelievers would be even more interesting.

Overall, *Trustworthy* is recommended for readers of any and every background with interest in the New Testament. Long-time believers will benefit from the fresh articulation of solid historical arguments for our most sacred text. New believers or the spiritually curious will be strengthened in their trust and understanding and forced to critically consider the claims of Jesus on their lives. Young believers with a natural distrust for authority and church hierarchy will feel greatly encouraged that the New Testament can be trusted regardless of the sinful influences sometimes exposed within the Church.

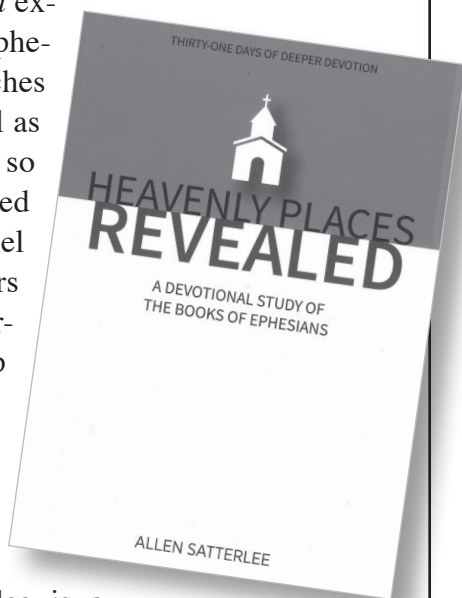
Christians should truly feel like there is nothing to hide when it comes to the reliability of these Scriptures. These arguments and the preponderance of evidence in favor of the historical veracity of the New Testament is unique among other faiths and their most cherished writings. Benjamin Shaw's clear exposition of current scholarship on this topic is a welcome addition to the discussion, helping to strengthen and encourage the faith of believers in all stages of their faith journey.

Heavenly Places Revealed

By Allen Satterlee

Heavenly Places Revealed explores Paul's letter to the Ephesians, which explains the riches of the Christian faith as well as the practical application of it so that believers are strengthened in mind and spirit. Lt. Colonel Allen Satterlee takes readers through a month-long journey of the letter that will help newcomers in their awareness of the epistle's great themes while whetting the appetite of the serious Bible student.

Lt. Colonel Allen Satterlee is a retired Salvation Army officer who with his wife, Esther, served over forty years in The Salvation Army. The author of fourteen books, Satterlee received his master's degree from Liberty John W. Rawlings School of Divinity and continues to work part-time in retirement for The Salvation Army USA Southern Territory as the Spiritual Life Development Officer.



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Book Review

Watson, Kevin M. *Doctrine, Spirit & Discipline: A History of the Wesleyan Tradition in the United States*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2024. 506 pages.

Reviewed by Dan Jennings, Secretary for Personnel, The Salvation Army USA Central Territory, Chicago, IL.

For readers of the book reviews in *Word & Deed*, Kevin Watson will be someone with whom they may already be familiar. Dr. Watson's book, *Pursuing Social Holiness: The Band Meeting in Wesley's Thought and Popular Methodist Practice*, was reviewed in the November 2024 issue of this journal. His voice has proven to be essential to Methodism today regarding John Wesley, the history of the Methodist Church, and understanding of the holiness movement. Watson has written eight books related to these topics and has identified his calling as that of raising up the next generation of leaders for the church. In this book and his other writings, readers gain a sense of his foundational spirit. The author has an affinity for the core principles of Wesleyan doctrine and Methodism. He has noted that the ancient wells of these early principles and writings should be re-dug and their truths rediscovered.

Doctrine, Spirit & Discipline is an essential resource for anyone who wishes to understand the history of the Methodist Church in the United States. It contains a careful and expansive history of Methodism from the perspective of its origins and development in the United States. However, it is not a purely historical work, although

it captures the history of the Methodist Church in America. It is more than a history; it traces every primary touchpoint of Methodism, including the formal separation of the Global Methodist Church from the United Methodist Church in 2022. It can be understood as a reference work featuring American Methodist development, maturation, and transformation. At each critical moment of crisis and change, Watson returns to the lens of doctrine, spirit, and discipline to capture these moments and view them through this filter.

The book's first three chapters describe the establishment of the movement that would become the Methodist Church. This section solidifies the pattern of doctrine, spirit, and discipline. The following four chapters (4-8) give specific attention to establishing the Methodist Church in the United States and highlight the distinctive nature of its American expression. Chapters 9 and 10 give particular attention to the mid-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries and the expansion of Wesleyan doctrine into other emerging denominations. The final two chapters address the contemporary Methodist Church and its continued maturation and development.

The chapters' organization is helpful for those who will use the book as a reference work. Reading the book from beginning to end is also a valuable way to understand the Methodist Church's chronological development. Whether read as a reference tool or as an informative narrative, *Doctrine, Spirit & Discipline* is a valuable and enjoyable read. The book cannot be considered short, containing more than 500 pages. However, the material is interesting and approachable, thus making it seem like an easy read.

Watson's ability as a researcher shines through in this work. He has unearthed beneficial contextual resources to help the reader encounter the transformative moments in the landscape of American Methodism in a way that adds depth. Watson has established an extraordinary balance between writing a history of the Methodist Church in America and a story-telling approach that breathes life into the historical timeline. He also provides a careful treatment of the major branches that emerged from the Methodist Church and the tensions that helped to spawn those branches. There is also a concise (but not rushed) description of Wesley's thoughts and theol-

ogy, which became the foundational pillars of Methodism. Watson often returns to the themes of the book's title: doctrine, spirit, and discipline. This foundation echoes through each branch of the tree of Methodism, enabling the reader to measure how far from its roots it has grown. Doctrine—understood as repentance, faith, and holiness; Spirit—that is, the spirit of Methodism, which was manifested in zeal for experiential holiness of the believer; and Discipline—the development of a method, rule, or basic practices that Methodists would adopt as a way of living a pious life while also being accountable to one another.

As noted earlier, invaluable material is presented concerning the significant branches of the Methodist Church as they were established in America. Watson points to slavery as a critical issue that pulled at the fabric of the Methodist Church's uniquely American expression. He identifies this as "American Methodism's original sin" (p. 51), which led to the initial division in what had become the American Wesleyan tradition. It would also establish an expression of Wesleyanism distinctly different from that of Wesley himself. One result of this tension was the establishment of a branch of the Methodist Church that was uniquely African American. Additional divisions arose as some Methodists grew increasingly intolerant of the Methodist Episcopal Church's defense and acceptance of slavery.

Watson addresses other branches and divisions within the Methodist Church, such as those due to differences in thought on theological formation, global evangelism, education, attitudes toward the more austere and conservative values of early Methodism, the social gospel, the holiness movement, and the doctrine of entire sanctification. Salvationists will find the tension over differences on the doctrine of entire sanctification of particular interest, since in chapters 8-11, The Salvation Army is featured prominently. In Chapter 9, Watson notes that the Army continued to hold to the early understanding of sanctification developed by Wesley. It is pointed out in this chapter that "Brenge's work helped to anchor the Army in its focus on the second part of its work. After sinners were saved, the Army helped them to become sanctified" (pg. 317). Additionally,

near the end of the book, the author provides some insights into the contemporary issues of the Methodist Church, as it is currently going through one of its most significant divisions: the separation of the Global Methodist Church from the United Methodist Church.

As Watson writes about other divisions and developments in American Methodism, the book becomes a “who’s who” of significant individuals influenced by the Methodist Church. Readers will find their collected stories not only exciting, but also serving as a valuable resource for the contributions these individuals have made in the world of Methodism and beyond. It is evident that the author feels pride regarding the Methodist heritage throughout the world, particularly in America. Throughout the book, readers will appreciate Watson’s passion for the Wesleyan understanding of entire sanctification and its development. If one is interested in knowing more about the influence of the Methodist Church in America, this will serve as an invaluable source. I give this book the highest of recommendations; it is a must read.



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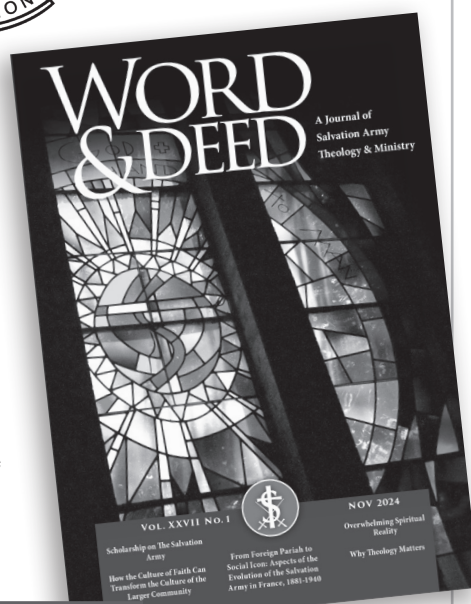
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The purpose of *Word & Deed* is to encourage and distribute the thinking of Salvationists and other Christian writers on topics broadly related to the theology and ministry of The Salvation Army. The journal helps explain ideas central to the mission 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: June 1st • 2025

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

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