

Word & deed

Vol. XX No.2

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A JOURNAL OF SALVATION ARMY
THEOLOGY & MINISTRY

“All Christians Are Priests”:
Martin Luther’s Doctrine of the Priesthood of All Believers

Refreshing Salvation Army Ecclesiology:
An Analysis in Light of the Protestant Reformation’s 500th Anniversary

Reformation 500: Here We Stand and the Matter of Culture

The Incarnation of Mercy



Salvation Army National Headquarters
Alexandria, VA, USA

Word & Deed Mission Statement:

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

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To the Glory of God

Roger J. Green and Jonathan S. Raymond

We rejoice that we are past our twentieth year of publication, and in that time we have preserved papers, articles, sermons, and other material that otherwise would have been forgotten or lost. In doing so we pray that we have served Christ and His Kingdom through this ministry, and for this we give glory to God.

We are appreciative indeed for all who have contributed to this journal through their writings, but our thanks go out also to all who have made this possible—the national commanders, the national editors and their staff. Without their full support this project would have failed long ago. We are especially indebted to the present national commander, Commissioner David E. Hudson, and to the national editor-in-chief and national literary secretary, Lt. Colonel Allen Satterlee. They have been resolute in their support of *Word & Deed*, and following this editorial is a conversation with the national commander about the importance of *Word & Deed*. Because of these two gentlemen, we are moving ahead with confidence into future years of service.

This issue is especially important for two reasons. First we have three excellent articles that were first given as papers at the Reformation 500 Theological Symposium, which will be more fully described in the next paragraph. Second, it is our privilege to introduce two friends, Bill and Diane Ury, who became soldiers less than a year ago. While they are new soldiers, they are not new to The Salvation Army but are quite familiar with our ministry, having participated in camp meetings and officers' councils. They now serve at national headquarters as ambassadors of holiness. At the end of this editorial, brief biographies of the Urys will be given. This issue will conclude with a

homily by Diane Ury entitled “The Incarnation of Mercy” and with some book notes.

Now onto a description of the Reformation 500 Theological Symposium, which was shared with us by Colonel Richard Munn, presently the secretary for ethics and theology in the USA Eastern Territory. Colonel Munn organized this conference.

In recognition and celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation the USA Eastern Territory hosted a Reformation 500 Theological Symposium on October 26, 2017, at the THQ Crestview Conference Center, West Nyack, NY. Over 100 delegates attended the symposium, over 300 watched a live webcast, and an estimated reach of over 22,000 connected through Facebook live.

Three motivating factors combined to bring the event into being:

- The understanding that salvation by grace through faith is central to Salvationist mission and identity.
- The belief that followers of Christ should exercise theological understanding.
- The conviction that familiarity with theory liberates the people of God for greater service.

In addition to worship and service, Salvationists benefit from academic and intellectual stimulation. All are important for full conditioning. The presenters, Captain Andrew Miller, Major Young Sung Kim and Major Amy Reardon, shared academic insights on the reformation impact upon the Church, clergy and culture. Additional North American symposia are anticipated in the future.

And as promised the following paragraphs introduce Bill and Diane Ury to our readers.

Bill Ury was raised in Taiwan as the son of missionaries. His B.A. from Asbury College in history was completed in 1978. Beginning his M. Div. in Israel, he studied for a year at the Institute of Holy Land Studies on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem. After completing seminary at Asbury Theological Seminary, he received his doctorate in 1991 from Drew University in Madison, New Jersey. While there, he and his wife, Diane, served as associate pastors in a Chinese-American United Methodist Church in Chinatown, New York City. After completing his doctorate, he taught as the professor of systematic and historical theology at Wesley Biblical Seminary where he ministered for twenty-four

years. Bill is an adjunct professor at several institutions.

The Urys were pastors at the Elizabeth City Evangelical Methodist Church. Bill has taught Sunday School weekly, preached, and led seminars for nearly forty years. Bill also had the privilege of being the WBS seminary preacher on a nationwide program under the auspices of American Family Radio entitled “The Hour of Holiness” for over nineteen years. Beyond various scholarly articles on biblical and theological themes, he has authored three books, *Trinitarian Personhood*, *The Bearer: Forgiving as Christ* and *In His Image* with co-author, Dr. Allan Coppedge. He has written extensively on discipleship as well.

As a complement to the ministry of teaching and preaching, Bill disciples men and is a part of a weekly accountability group. The Urys have an intense interest in missions and have served overseas often. Both Bill and Diane are fully committed to the ministry of the Gospel as it is expressed in consensual Christianity and the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition specifically. Their deepening relationship of love for The Salvation Army has been one of the richest blessings of their entire ministry. Bill’s calling and personal desire is to incorporate sound, rigorous Christian theological thinking with true pastoral care and personal compassion.

Diane Nelson Ury is from Lapeer, Michigan. She attended Asbury College in the early 1980’s, where she met her husband. They married in 1984. Diane earned a B.A. in sociology from Asbury College in 1983. Her seminary education began at Asbury Theological Seminary, and she holds a Masters of Arts in Theology from Wesley Biblical Seminary. She is an ordained Elder in the Evangelical Methodist Church and was the pastor to young adults at Elizabeth City Evangelical Methodist Church in North Carolina. She taught basic Bible doctrine for six years at an online academy, and taught basic theology for people in the EMC ordination process. Diane is a Bible study teacher, mentor, and discipleship group leader. A former homeschooling mother of four, and grandmother to two little boys, Ryland and Griffin, her deepest commitment has been her family and home. She and Bill have four grown children, and two sons-in-law. Diane’s passion is knowing Jesus Christ, and she loves to teach others to hunger for Him and His Word.

We welcome Bill and Diane as fellow soldiers, and we look forward to contributions from them in issues of this journal as they share with our readers from their wealth of theological and ministerial training and ministry. We are

constantly aware of the need for balance in this journal as we emphasize both word and deed. This sacred task is supported by the leadership at national headquarters, an active board, and a faithful readership. But we recognize that our work would be in vain if we failed to remember that great word from Psalm 115:1 with which we conclude this editorial: “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to your name give glory.”

RJG

JSR

National Commander Shares His Vision for *Word & Deed*

Allen Satterlee

Commissioner David Hudson has served as the USA National Commander since August 1, 2017. As National Commander he oversees Salvation Army operations throughout the United States. In this interview Commissioner Hudson speaks from his heart concerning the importance of Word & Deed as well as his passion for the heart of Salvation Army ministry.

Lt. Colonel Allen Satterlee is the USA National Editor-in-Chief.

W&D: What is the mission and purpose of *Word & Deed*?

David Hudson: I see it as a theological journal of The Salvation Army, a kind of who we are at the deepest part of our identity. We do a lot of things with our branding, the face that we want to show and the service that we want to provide, but *Word & Deed* is a deeper publication than that. It is who we truly are—from that everything springs. The ancient Greek maxim said, “Know thyself.” That’s what *Word & Deed* is, who we are in ourselves.

W&D: How have you personally benefited from *Word & Deed*?

Hudson: I’ve read articles over the years and gotten some ideas, always a good thing. I used to rate the value of a book by how many illustrations I got out of it at a \$1 each. If a book cost \$20 I needed to get 20 illustrations out of it to make it worthwhile. *Word & Deed* was a great buy. Also, it gets into the theology of The Salvation Army. Today there’s less and less writings on

Wesleyan theology. *Word & Deed* is something that when I read an article I know the slant.

W&D: What are your hopes for *Word & Deed*?

Hudson: I'm not minimizing it but I'd like to see *Word & Deed* become more than just a theological journal. I would like to see it actually become a place where people can grow their talents, their abilities, where we can be more diverse in our authors. By diverse I mean more than the sheer number of authors. I'd like to have more women writers, people writing from more diverse ethnic backgrounds, and other perspectives. The gospel of Jesus Christ, and the theology of The Salvation Army is an inclusive one.

We have great people with *Word & Deed*, such as Roger Green and Jonathan Raymond, and now with Bill and Diane Ury. We have great students of the Word that have lots of credibility. People with credibility can speak into other people and help them with their writing. If they give them critique they won't be threatened by it. They would appreciate that critique so they can improve their writing and reasoning.

W&D: In what ways is *Word & Deed* needed for this generation?

Hudson: The Salvation Army has a rich Wesleyan tradition. If you can find a Christian bookstore anymore, you don't see a lot of Wesleyan theology. You see a lot of good Christian publications on how to live, family issues, and maybe on the life of Jesus. While I appreciate these, I don't see a lot on that heartfelt relationship that Wesley talked about; living in relationship with God where holiness is spending time with Jesus because you become like those you spend time with. We can't minimize that. That's the primary reason I'd like to see *Word & Deed* become read by more people, contributed to by more people and become top of mind instead of just something in the stack that they read. I get books all the time, and if a book comes in that's really appealing to me, then it goes to the top of the stack. Wouldn't it be great if *Word & Deed* was one that when it came in it always went to the top of the stack?

When the *Officer* magazine arrives I immediately go to the table of contents and see if there's anybody I know that wrote an article. If I do, I read that article first. I may read some others, looking at the topic and I'll say, "Oh well, that's something that looks interesting," and I'll read that. But I always go to the people I know first. That's why I want *Word & Deed* to get to the top of the stack. It will happen faster if more people knew, not just knew of, but knew the authors.

W&D: Is there anything else that you'd like to add?

Hudson: I'm really excited about the possibilities for *Word & Deed*. I'm very appreciative of the history. It's going to be a high priority of mine to make it one of the publications, and by "the," and I'm not talking about nationally, but internationally. I'd love when I travel, to have officers overseas saying, "My goodness, wasn't that article in *Word & Deed* phenomenal?" I'd say, "Yeah, wasn't it?"

“All Christians Are Priests”: Martin Luther’s Doctrine of the Priesthood of All Believers

Young Sung Kim

Introduction

Is Martin Luther (1483–1546) a *Renegade and Prophet*, as the subtitle of Lyndal Roper’s biography of Luther portrays him?¹ Without doubt, Luther was a towering figure in the midst of the gathering storm of reformation in Europe of the sixteenth century.² Against the corruption of merit-based hierarchical clericalism (including the abuse of indulgences) and the tyranny of the Papacy of medieval Roman Catholicism, Luther rediscovered the evangelical principles of biblical truth which can be enumerated as follows: The supremacy of the Holy Scriptures (*sola scriptura*); justification by grace alone through faith alone (*sola gratia* and *sola fide*); and Christ, the only mediator between God and humankind (*solus Christus*). Luther’s Reformation certainly marked a pivotal point in the history of the Christian church—an ecclesiastical “Copernican Revolution.”³

Fundamentally, Luther’s Reformation was a reformation of the church. At the heart of Luther’s reformation, the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers is located as the cardinal principle of his ecclesiastical reformation agenda. Regrettably, as Timothy George asserts, “Luther’s greatest contribution to Protestant ecclesiology was his doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Yet

Young Sung Kim is a major in The Salvation Army and is the Ambassador for Holiness in The Salvation Army’s USA Eastern Territory.

no element in his teaching is more misunderstood.”⁴

The aim of this paper is to examine Luther’s doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, so that from the standpoint as Salvationists, we can self-reflect and better understand Luther’s reforming agenda within our missional and ecclesiastical context, to be able to actualize his visionary teachings as we go forth in our mission.⁵

In 1520, Luther published his three most influential writings, which encapsulated his foundational Reformation agenda. These treatises explicated the kernel of his doctrinal teaching on the priesthood of all believers, which held implications not only for the Church but also for politics and the relationship between the empire and the papacy. The list of Luther’s three “epoch-making works” of 1520, the so-called Reformation Manifestos,⁶ is as follows: *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate*, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, and *The Freedom of a Christian*. Though somewhat less monumental, I will also discuss Luther’s 1523 treatise titled *Concerning the Ministry*, because that document represents Luther’s critical view of Christian ministry prior to the Peasants’ War (1525).

For the purpose of this paper, I will mainly use these four works of Luther as the primary references to examine the central idea of Luther’s doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. I will also be referring to other writings of Luther, as well as the ideas of several important Luther scholars for this paper.

Part I: The Church as the Community of Saints

Luther’s conceptualization of the church is the starting point for understanding his doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. For Luther, the re-discovery of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers is the nonnegotiable basis for realizing the biblical vision of a truly unified and holy, catholic (“universal”) church on this earth, which is the heart of Luther’s Reformation agenda.

Luther defined the nature of the church as “the community of saints” (Latin, *communio sanctorum*) in line with the creedal declaration of the ancient church, particularly the Apostles’ Creed: “I believe in one holy Christian church, the communion of saints.”⁷ Luther underlined that “Here the creed clearly indicates what the church is, namely, a communion of saints, that is,

a crowd assembly of people who are Christians and holy, which is called a Christian holy assembly, or church."⁸ Luther's emphasis on the communal nature of believers' connection to the church is distinguished from the conception of the church as "the mystical body of Christ" (Latin, *corpus Christi mysticum*), which had been deeply embedded with hierarchically controlled sacramental practice in medieval Roman Catholicism. According to Wilhelm Pauck, for Luther, "the church of Christ" was "a universal fellowship of Christian believers who share with one another all their faith and love."⁹

Luther's doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, which is a fundamental concept of the church as the community of saints, is inseparably linked to the two prime aspects of Luther's evangelical faith: the supremacy of the Holy Scriptures (*sola scriptura*) and Luther's soteriological concept of the Christian as a "justified sinner" (Latin, *simul iustus et peccator*, "at once righteous and a sinner"). First, in Luther's ecclesiology, the Gospel is located at the center of the church community as "the true treasure of the church."¹⁰ Second, as Luther formulated it, the soteriological concept that a Christian is a "justified sinner" functions to unveil the reality of the paradoxical spiritual existence of all participants in the church community in God's sight. Luther expressed the paradox: "We are in truth and totally sinners, with regard to ourselves and our first birth. Contrariwise, in so far as Christ has been given for us, we are holy and just totally. Hence from different aspects we are said to be just and sinners at one and the same time."¹¹ Paul Tillich points out that, through Luther's paradoxical soteriological principle of the "'justification of the sinner' (calling the saint a sinner and the sinner a saint if accepted by God)," the traditional hierarchical ecclesiological system "lost its power and was replaced. Its place was taken in the religious realm by the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and in the social-political realm by the democratic principle of equal human nature in every man."¹²

Part II: The Basic Points of Luther's Doctrine with Contextual and Practical Implications

1) *"All Christians Are Priests."*

In *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, Luther developed his central idea of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers by demolishing the "three walls"¹³ entrenched by the tyranny of clerical imperialism through the Papacy which made Scripture inferior to the church, as well as calling upon the temporal authority (i.e., the state) to reform the church. Luther's basic conception of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers is characterized by the following premise: all Christians not only possess a common baptism, a common faith and Gospel but also belong to the spiritual estate.¹⁴ "The only distinction between Christians is one of office or function (German, *Amt*), not of estate (German, *Stand*)."¹⁵ Luther boldly presented his belief in referring to Paul's metaphorical teaching in 1 Corinthians 12 as follows:

It is pure invention that pope, bishop, priests, and monks are called the spiritual estate while princes, lords, artisans, and farmers are called the temporal estate. This is indeed a piece of deceit and hypocrisy. Yet no one need be intimidated by it, and for this reason: all Christians are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them except that of office. Paul says in I Corinthians 12 [:12-13] that we are all one body, yet every member has its own work by which it serves the others. It is because we all have one baptism, one gospel, one faith, and are all Christians alike; for baptism, gospel, and faith alone make us spiritual and a Christian people.¹⁶

Based on the above revolutionary theological and practical argument, Luther summarized his distinctive notion of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers in a simple axiom: "All Christians are priests"¹⁷ by virtue of their baptism and faith.¹⁸ Luther vehemently asserted that there is no spiritual or intrinsic hierarchical difference between clergy and laity, because all belong

equally in the spiritual estate. In the same affirmation, Luther emphasized that "the temporal power" has equal authority as "the spiritual power," so that the temporal authorities would have their own power to summon a council for the reform of the church.

2) The Priesthood of Christ and the Role of Faith

The priesthood of Christ is the biblical prototype of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.¹⁹ Based on the biblical implication of Christ's priesthood as the theological foundation of the priesthood of all believers, Luther points out that "in His own person Christ is indeed the only High Priest between God and us all. Nevertheless, He has bestowed this name on us, too, so that we who believe in Him are also priests, just as we are called Christians after Him."²⁰ Luther also affirms that "every baptized Christian is a priest already, not by appointment or ordination from the pope or any other man, but because Christ Himself has begotten him as a priest and has given birth to him in baptism."²¹

Against the meritorious and hierarchical clericalism of the Roman Catholic Church, Luther emphasized the egalitarian basis of the role and efficacy of faith as the unalloyed condition of the priesthood of all believers. For Luther, all Christians are priests in "equal degree" not by work but by faith, the God-gifted condition for salvation. In this sense, no one is to be excluded, on the basis of his or her "status," from fulfilling God's calling as a priest either in the "spiritual" realm or the "temporal" realm. He boldly stated this belief as follows:

For faith must do everything. Faith alone is the true priestly office. It permits no one else to take its place. Therefore all Christian men are priests, all women priestesses, be they young or old, master or servant, mistress or maid, learned or unlearned. Here there is no difference, unless faith be unequal.²²

In light of Christ's salvific priesthood and His universal kingship in the Bible, Luther articulates the foundation of the "royal" priesthood of all believers as follows: "Hence all of us who believe in Christ are priests and kings in

Christ, as I Peter 2 [:9] says: ‘You are a chosen race, God’s own people, a royal priesthood, a priestly kingdom, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.’”²³

3) *The Paradox of Christian Freedom*

In *The Freedom of a Christian*, Luther boldly underscored the paradoxical existence of Christian freedom as a significant tenet of his theology: “A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.”²⁴ Truly, alongside the notion that the Christian is both lord and servant, Luther’s paradoxical conception of “Christian freedom” was a radical declaration in conformance with the priesthood of all believers.

According to Luther, the priesthood of all believers, because it is based on God’s sheer gift of justification by grace through faith alone, is both a privilege and a responsibility for all Christians. On the one hand, Christians no longer live under the law of works, but they live in a new personal relationship with Christ. But, at the same time, Christians are servants who are bound by love to bring their lives into conformity to God’s will and to be helpful to their neighbors.²⁵

4) *Called To Serve Others*

Luther’s doctrine of the priesthood of all believers has been misunderstood as if it asserted that every Christian is his or her own priest.²⁶ On the contrary, Luther’s original intention with this doctrinal concept may be better expressed in this statement by Timothy George: “Every Christian is someone else’s priest, and we are all priests to one another.”²⁷ For Luther, the whole purpose of the universal priesthood is ultimately to serve others in sacramental stewardship for our neighbors.

This notion indicates that Luther’s doctrine of the priesthood of all believers is not just a theological propositional framework only confined within ecclesiastical boundaries, but it exists as a dynamic socio-ethical and political reforming agenda for the world. The following bold statement manifests Luther’s heartfelt conviction: “A Christian lives not in himself, but in Christ and in his neighbor. Otherwise, he is not a Christian. He lives in Christ through faith, in his neighbor through love.”²⁸ Considering the practical and pastoral

implications of the biblical assertion of universal priesthood, Luther particularly emphasized the significant practice of "prayer" in the context of the priestly service *coram Deo* ("before God," or "in the presence of God").²⁹ He declares, "for as priests we are worthy to appear before God to pray for others and to teach one another divine things."³⁰

5) *The Seven Functions of the Common Priesthood*

In *Concerning the Ministry*, Luther characterizes the chief functions that all Christians are invited to perform as priests in light of the biblical image of Christ's priesthood.³¹ First of all, on the basis of the preeminent evangelical principle of *sola scriptura*, Luther amplifies that the twofold function of preaching and teaching the Word of God is central for every believer as priest. In fact, for Luther, the ministry of the Word is the highest and "greatest office in the church."³² Other related functions of the priesthood are anchored to this prime ministry of the Word. Luther enumerates the characteristic functions of the priesthood of all believers as follows:

But let us go on and show from the priestly offices (as they call them) that all Christians are priests in equal degree. For such passages as, 'You are a royal priesthood' (I Pet. 2 [:9] and, 'Thou has made them a kingdom and priests' (Rev. 5 [:10])....Mostly the functions of a priest are these: to teach, to preach and proclaim the Word of God, to baptize, to consecrate or administer the Eucharist, to bind and loose sins, to pray for others, to sacrifice, and to judge all doctrine and spirits. Certainly these are splendid and royal duties. But the first and foremost of all on which everything else depends, is the teaching of the Word of God. For we teach with the Word, we consecrate with the Word.³³

Above, we see Luther's brief articulation of seven distinctive functions of believers as priests. First, the chief function of every believer is deeply rooted in the ministry of the Word. Second, all Christians are allowed, "particularly in emergency circumstances,"³⁴ to administer baptism. Third, all Christians are permitted to administer not only baptism but also the Lord's Supper. Fourth,

by rejecting the idea of the mass as a sacrifice, all Christians have “the keys” for “forgiveness of sin” and absolution, without depending on an institutionally sanctioned human mediator. Luther states that “the keys [i.e., the absolution of sins] belong to the whole church and to each of its members, both as regards their authority and their various uses.”³⁵ Fifth, the ministry of prayer is the common right of all believers. Through prayer, all Christians are able to directly access God and to intercede for others. Luther emphasizes that “we may boldly come into the presence of God in the spirit of faith [Heb. 10:19, 22] and cry ‘Abba, Father!’ pray for one another, and do all things which we see done and foreshadowed in the outer and visible works of priests.”³⁶ Six, the believer’s priestly function of sacrifice does not assume a salvific power. Rather, it is understood in terms of worship to God, especially based on the biblical idea of “a living sacrifice” (Rom 12:1).³⁷ Seventh, all Christians have authority to judge doctrine. That is why Luther warned against believers holding superiority over one another in matters of judging doctrine.

Luther concluded his discourse on the functions of the priestly office in *Concerning the Ministry* by rejecting the idea of the “indelible character” of the station conferred upon priests at ordination within the Roman Catholic Church’s sacerdotal system³⁸—that is, that their priesthood was permanent. Luther stated, “in this view of the ministry [of the priesthood of all believers], the so-called ‘indelible character’ vanished and the perpetuity of the office is shown to be fictitious.”³⁹ Walter von Loewenich describes it in this way, “Priests did not have a *character indelebilis* (indelible character) that was presumably conferred on them through their ordination. When they no longer fulfilled the duties of their office they became farmers or citizens like everyone else. The only distinction was in the office, not in the estate.”⁴⁰

6) *The Sacraments Limited to Two with “Both Kinds” of Eucharistic Elements*

Considering the pastoral and theological implications of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers in the context of the medieval sacramental system, which Luther called “the tyranny of Rome,”⁴¹ Luther, in *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, exposed his new interpretation of the sacraments by rejecting the Roman sacrificial theory, which had been reinforcing sacerdotalism. Luther critiqued the Church’s stance on each of the seven medieval sacraments (baptism, eucharist, penance, confirmation, marriage, ordination,

and extreme unction) on scriptural bases and asserted that the Bible only "divinely" institutes two sacraments—baptism and the Lord's Supper.⁴² Luther concluded that "there are, strictly speaking, but two sacraments in the church of God—baptism and the bread (i.e., eucharist). For only in these two do we find both the divinely instituted sign and the promise of forgiveness of sins."⁴³

Luther also denounced a practice he called "despoiling sacrament," which is when clerics withheld the cup from laity during Eucharist.⁴⁴ Luther declared that both kinds of elements—the bread and the wine—should be distributed to the laity at the Lord's Supper as much as to the clergy. Luther argued that "if the church can withhold from the laity one kind, the wine, it can also withhold from them the other, the bread. It could therefore withhold the entire Sacrament of the Altar from the laity and completely annul Christ's institution as far as they are concerned. By what authority, I ask."⁴⁵ Then, he accentuated his conviction that "the sacrament does not belong to the priests, but to all men. The priests are not lords, but servants in duty bound to administer both kinds to those who desire them, as often as they desire them. If they wrest this right from the laity and deny it to them by force, they are tyrants."⁴⁶

Luther refuted the idea of the mass as "a good work and a sacrifice,"⁴⁷ which contributed to the sacerdotalism he perceived in the Roman Catholic Church's clerical system. The idea he was critiquing had justified the function of the sacrificing priest as a human mediator for salvation. Luther rejected this medieval notion of the mass by affirming the salvific function of Christ's vicarious sacrifice for humanity, the necessity of individual faith, and the free access of individuals to God based on the promises of God's Word. Luther delineated his new evangelical understanding of the mass as "Christ's testament" and "a promise of the forgiveness of sins made to us by God" in faith.⁴⁸ He clarified that "as far as the blessing of the mass and sacrament is concerned we are all equals, whether we are priests or laymen."⁴⁹

7) The Relation Between the Priesthood of All Believers and the Office of Ministry

Considering the distinctive relation between the priesthood of all believers and the office of ministry, it is worth noting that Luther used two different Latin terms in distinct ways. According to Bernhard Lohse, Luther used the Latin term *sacerdos* or *sacerdotes* (priest) for the universal priesthood of the believer while, as

a rule, he used another Latin term *minister* or *ministri* (minister) for the pastor. Luther never used the Latin term *ministerium* for the universal priesthood.⁵⁰

In *Concerning the Minister*, Luther defined the distinct factor between a priest and minister in this simple premise: “A Priest is not identical with Presbyter or Minister—for one is born to be priest, one becomes a minister.”⁵¹ For Luther, if the existence of the priesthood of all believers is distinctively attributed to spiritual and baptismal authority, based on the promises of the Word, the role of a minister in the church community is upheld through calling (through *vocatio*). Luther explained what he meant by the above statement as follows: the priest “was born not indeed of flesh, but through a birth of the Spirit, by water and Spirit in the washing of regeneration [John 3:6f.; Titus 3:5f.].”⁵² In 1530, Luther clearly defined the distinction between a minister and a priest. He stated: “It is true that all Christians are priests, but not all are pastors. To be a pastor one must be not only a Christian and a priest but must have an office and a field of work committed to him. This call and command make pastors and preachers.”⁵³

Nevertheless, Luther clarified this critical notion that participating in a different “office” should not be construed as possessing an ontologically superior status but as sharing a vocationally different function in one common “estate.” Luther affirmed that “there is no true, basic difference between laymen and priests, princes and bishops, between religious and secular, except for the sake of office and work, but not for the sake of status. They are all of the spiritual estate, all are truly priests, bishops, and popes.”⁵⁴ However, Luther quickly pointed out that “although we are all equally priests, we cannot all publicly minister and teach. We ought not do so even if we could. Paul writes accordingly in I Cor. 4 [1], ‘This is how one should regard us, as servant of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.’”⁵⁵

Although Luther rejected the ontological aspect of hierarchical human relations or institutional systems, just as he rejected the authority of the papacy, Bernhard Lohse reminds us that Luther insisted on its necessity for preserving the episcopal structure of the church. Luther affirmed that the most important responsibility of the office of the bishop is the ministry of the Word. At the same time, Luther accepted the customary role of the bishop in exercising spiritual and secular authority, as well as judicial powers, for example, in matters of related to marriage.⁵⁶ He believed that there still should be ordained priests, bishops, and so forth; he just did not think they should presume eter-

nal or spiritual power over each other. Luther was keen on order and thought that a church or state without orderly structure would devolve into chaos and anarchy; his concern was abuse of power, corruption, and unscriptural teachings propagated on the authority of the Pope.

8) Ordination and the Consent of the Community

Regarding the Church's significant task and the necessary conditions for the ordination of ministers, Luther emphasized the legitimacy and responsibility of "the consent of the community." He asserted, "Because we are all priests of equal standing, no one must push himself forward and take upon himself, without our consent and election, to do that for which we all have equal authority."⁵⁷ Luther clarified that the primary functions of the office of the ministry are proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacrament. With the exception of an emergency,⁵⁸ the ministerial office can only be authorized by the consent of the church for the sake of the order.⁵⁹

According to Bernhard Lohse, Luther's intention for emphasizing the consent of the church as a critical part of process for the office of ministry is this: "If all Christians, due to their authorization by the universal priesthood, were to lay claim to exercising rights that are theirs as such, the result would be chaos. The task of public proclamation is not given to the individual Christian. In this sense the ministerial office serves order in the congregation as well as in the entire church."⁶⁰

In *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, Luther further discussed the implications of the ordination of ministers which derive from the priesthood of believers. He asserted that, by virtue of the priesthood we share in Christ, all "baptized" Christians have an equal authority and privilege to preach the Word and to administer the sacrament. However, since it is a universal priesthood, the authority of the ministry of word and sacrament has been given to the community as whole, and the individual member of the community would only be allowed to publicly administer the word and sacrament to the entire community on the basis of the consent of the congregation "as the representative of the entire community," not by his or her own initiative.⁶¹ Luther clarified the cooperative process of ordination as follows:

Let everyone, therefore, who knows himself to be a Christian, be assured of this, that we are all equally priests, that is to say, we have the same power in respect to the Word and the sacraments. However, no one may make use of this power except by the consent of the community.⁶²

Luther further emphasized that the office of ministry should be authorized and performed publicly in order to prevent “shameful confusion among the people of God.” He indicated:

It is of the common rights of Christians that we have been speaking. For since we have proved all of these things to be the common property of all Christians, no one individual can arise by his own authority and arrogate to himself alone what belongs to all. Lay hold then of this right and exercise it, where there is no one else who has same rights. But the community rights demand that one, or as many as the community choose, shall be chosen or approved who, in the name of all with these rights, shall perform these functions publicly. Otherwise, there might be shameful confusion among the people of God, and a kind of Babylon in the church, where everything should be done in order, as the Apostle teaches [I Cor. 14:40]. For it is one thing to exercise a right publicly; another to use it in time of emergency each may use it as he deems best.⁶³

Luther did not abolish ordination in the new ecclesiastical context of the Reformation movement. However, he denied ordination as a sacrament. Luther believed that ordination is “an invention of the church of the pope.”⁶⁴ According to Brian A. Gerrish, if the basic definition of ordination is meant as “the act by which one member of the common priesthood is set apart from the rest for the regular and public exercise of the priestly functions,” for Luther, “ordination is virtually synonymous with calling.”⁶⁵ Gosta Hok insists that “in Luther’s view ordination is only a public confirmation of calling, and what is received in calling is not some special gift or grace or power but a *commission* (emphasis mine).”⁶⁶

Bernhard Lohse summarizes the key notions of Luther's view on ordination as follows:

For Luther, ordination denotes an actualizing of the choice and calling to ministerial office. It confirmed the legitimacy of the call; it was an assignment to office in the church, not only in the congregation, as well as a blessing on the office. During the prayer of the congregation the ordinand was given the Holy Spirit, who preserves them in the pure doctrine, permits them to be true evangelists and to remain faithful and true against the devil, the world, and their own flesh. Luther did not recognize a *character indelibilis*, supposedly transmitted to the priest through consecration, but was all the more convinced that the authority and power to exercise the office were transmitted to the ordinand. To this extent ordination was the effective transmission of the ministerial office.⁶⁷

Part III: Luther's Theological Transition in His Doctrinal Position

In understanding Luther's historical and theological legacy, it is crucial to acknowledge that, especially during 1520s, his doctrinal views were modified in certain directions. According to Mark Roger, Luther demonstrated the most noticeable change in his perspective regarding his doctrinal view on the priesthood of all believers, especially its ethical implications or "how the priesthood of all believers should work itself out in practice."⁶⁸ Byoung Hoon Woo argues that the most critical historical cause of the transition in Luther's thinking as a reformer was his own confrontation of the turbulence caused by radical Reformers (e.g., Thomas Muntzer and Andreas Bodenstein of Karlstadt; Luther called them "fanatics") during the mid-1520s and, especially, the Peasants' War (1525).⁶⁹

Based on those historical and ecclesiastical challenges and confrontations, Luther reinforced his conservative position regarding various ecclesiastical as well as socio-political issues, especially on the subject of the relation between the church and the state. For example, it has been suggested that while

Luther's early writings (before the Peasants' War) on the Christian ministry intended to emphasize its more democratic and individual expressions with congregationalism in his ecclesiology;⁷⁰ afterward, his view appears to move to a much more pessimistic and conservative attitude, which influenced the church community, as the Reformation transpired, to establish a more hierarchical governmental structure modeled on the state church system, as seen in his later writings.⁷¹

After experiencing the horribly violent revolt of the Peasants (1524-1525), Luther's view on the role and responsibility of the ordained minister in relation to the status of laity changed. He began emphasizing less its democratic and individualistic authority and the privilege of the laity. He urged focusing on the laity's educational preparation as well as more strict requirements for individual authority for the interpretation of the Bible and the laity's privilege of preaching and teaching of the Word in the public service.⁷² He arranged for more strict and careful selection processes for choosing lay representatives on behalf of other members of congregation.⁷³

Unlike the theological position of radical Reformers such as Andreas Karlstadt or the Zwickau prophets (Nicholas Storch, Thomas Drechsel and Markus Stübner), Luther never supported iconoclasm.⁷⁴ Alister McGrath suggests that, in contrast to the Swiss radical Reformer Zwingli's (1484-1531) emphasis on the allegorical interpretation of the Bible, Luther consistently held, as a fundamental principle of biblical interpretation, the literal sense of Scripture.⁷⁵ Luther's socio-political and theological conservatism throughout the course of his later career as a reformer was influenced by his own political and theological conviction that the church and society should be sustained in "order" and not in anarchy.⁷⁶

Conclusion: All Salvationists Are God's Royal Priests!

There are various aspects to Luther's doctrinal teachings that I have presented, each of which have several valid implications for the Church as a whole, but also for The Salvation Army. As Salvationists in the twenty-first century, it is crucial to understand Luther's teachings so we can pursue informed self-reflections on our ministry, which then best equips us to carry out our mission.⁷⁷

In 1520, at the dawn of the Reformation, Luther declared using his pen, as

mightily as if it were a righteous sword, to the church and the world that all baptized Christians are "priests" by virtue of their faith. This revolutionary assertion of a biblical vision for the community of saints signified a clarion call to end the corruption of meritorious and hierarchical clericalism and the tyranny of the Papacy. Truly, Luther's biblical vision for God's people as the priesthood of all believers was prophetic. It shook 16th-century Western Europe; and, now, 500 years later, we Salvationists have inherited Luther's vision for the priesthood of all believers, and I would boldly state: All Salvationists are God's royal priests by virtue of our faith and the witness of the Holy Spirit that is bestowed into every believer's obedient heart!⁷⁸

Unfortunately, Luther became pessimistic about the outcomes of church order and scriptural interpretation under the influence of ordinary believers, which led him toward greater conservatism. He feared the radical spiritualization of ritual as well as church disorder. Even though the pragmatic and pastoral notions of Luther's doctrine of the priesthood of all believers were modified in this direction during the 1520s, the cornerstone and foundation of Luther's doctrine of the priesthood of all believers are nevertheless contained in his earlier treatises *Concerning the Ministry* (1523), and especially his three major reformation writings (1520): *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate*, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, and *The Freedom of a Christian*.

Luther's revolutionary discovery and teaching of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers can be summarized as follows: The priesthood is bestowed to all baptized believers by the virtue of faith. A Christian's salvation is not dependent upon a particular priest as a mediator, because Christ is the sole mediator between God and humankind. All Christians, as priests, can have access directly to God by faith through the power of the Holy Spirit in Christ. Therefore, as priests, all Christians can promise forgiveness of sins to other Christians as well as administer the sacraments.⁷⁹ All Christians are able to receive these and other blessings directly, as the gospel promises.⁸⁰

For Luther, the Christian scriptures were authoritative and Christ-centered. The theological basis of Luther's teaching of the universal priesthood is his belief that, alongside baptism as a "sign" of faith,⁸¹ Christ's priesthood and the believer's faith constitute the twofold foundation of the priesthood. Taking the biblical implication of Christ's priesthood as the Christocentric foundation of his doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, Luther vehemently rejected the

Roman Catholic Church's idea of the mass as a "sacrifice." Instead, Luther maintained that "the people of God" or "the community of saints" should celebrate the mass as Christ's "testament" and the promise of God for our eternal hope for salvation and holiness.

The pastoral and practical intention of Luther's teaching on the priesthood of all believers is not to promote religious individualism, but to emphasize the communal nature and responsibility of all believers as the *communio sanctorum*. This communal notion of the priesthood rightly manifests itself in the fruit of sacramental stewardship for our neighbors, coinciding with every Christian, as a royal priesthood, faithfully fulfilling their prime function, the proclamation of the Word which is the highest office in the church.

Luther insisted that all Christians are called to be "priests," but not everyone is to become a minister (i.e., ordained pastor). The office of the ministry as "vocation" is ordained and authorized by the consent of the community for the sake of order in a local and visible community of the believers. The virtue of Luther's doctrine of the priesthood of all believers is to boldly declare the nature of congregational life. Timothy George reflects Luther's thoughts in this way: "There is one common 'estate' (*Stand*) but a variety of offices (*Amte*) and functions."⁸² Luther never compromised the central notion that there is no ontological hierarchical difference between the laity and the clergy as well as between the spiritual authority and the secular authority, because all belong in one spiritual estate under God's sovereignty. All Christians serve God and their neighbors through different vocational offices and functions. Nevertheless, we all stand equal in the sight of God as we serve Him in our various ministries.

Let us not forget that all God's priests live in a paradoxical existence of Christian freedom as both lord and servant based on their intimate personal relationship with Christ, who freed us by His atoning love from the bondage of the law of works by grace through faith alone. In line with this ethical implication of the priesthood to the church and the secular world, Luther critiqued the medieval hierarchical sacramental system and concluded that only baptism and the Lord's Supper should be considered as sacraments.⁸³ Based on this revolutionary interpretation of the sacraments, Luther asserted that both kinds of elements—that is, the bread and the wine—should be equally distributed to the laity and to the clergy at the Lord's Supper. Finally, it is worth stressing that Luther also emphasized the significance of the priestly

prayer service of *coram Deo* for others as the central element of spiritual discipline and practice as the priesthood of all believers in the community.

Now, I have an urgent question for all my fellow priests in Christ under the flag of The Salvation Army. My question is: Now what? What are the implications of this central reformation doctrine for our mission? Dietrich Bonhoeffer, himself a Lutheran pastor, later martyred in 1945, wrote an essay on American Christianity under the title "Protestantism without Reformation." In the last part of his essay, Bonhoeffer encapsulated his heartfelt but alarming message to American Christian churches as follows:

God has granted American Christianity no Reformation. He has given it strong revivalist preachers, churchmen and theologians, but no Reformation of the church of Jesus Christ by the Word of God....American theology and the American church as a whole have never been able to understand the meaning of 'criticism' by the Word of God and all that signifies. Right to the last they do not understand that God's 'criticism' touches even religion, the Christianity of the church and the sanctification of Christians, and that God has founded His church beyond religion and beyond ethics....In American theology, Christianity is still essentially religion and ethics....Because of this the person and work of Christ must, for theology, sink into the background and in the long run remain misunderstood, because it is not recognized as the sole ground of radical judgment and radical forgiveness.⁸⁴

The purpose of this paper has been to equip Salvationists for informed self-reflection. So, I want to consider Bonhoeffer's diagnosis of American Christianity, "Protestantism without Reformation." How might this help The Salvation Army community to self-reflectively learn and actualize Luther's reforming agenda in our missional context today?⁸⁵

We Salvationists are heirs of Luther's contribution to the Protestant Reformation, not as an institution but as a reform and revival movement based on our own distinctive Wesleyan holiness heritage. But, are we in any sense holding to "Salvationism without Reformation"? Fellow Salvationists, let us seriously grapple with this issue.

In light of Luther's teaching on the priesthood of all believers, I want to urge each Salvationist to seek answers. How have Salvationists, as God's royal priesthood, embodied and practiced the biblical vision that Luther rediscovered and taught? And, how might we? Especially considering The Salvation Army's quasi-military ecclesiastical structure, are there matters that we have seen Luther emphasize, such as the intrinsic value of all believers or the equal role of laity in scriptural interpretation that The Salvation Army may more robustly apply? How might The Salvation Army apply the insights of Luther's principal agenda for reforming the church in its present day contexts? It will be our privilege and duty to continually seek God glorifying answers for those urgent yet necessary questions to actualize whatever answers are unveiled into our whole being and doing.⁸⁶

Finally, I want to encourage and challenge all Salvationists to take Luther's prophetic vision of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers as an integral part of our missional marching orders to the world. Today, we boldly reassert and declare our God given mission, which has been revealed by our *missional* God to Salvationists since 1865, the year we were born. We affirm our shared priesthood for all believers, regardless of gender, ethnic background and race, around the world. Particularly, for Salvationists who identify themselves as God's *missionary priesthood* for the sake of Kingdom mission (cf: 1 Corinthians 3:5-9), *now* is the time for us to rededicate ourselves to cultivate the land (to meet the people's needs) and to sow the seed (to proclaim the Gospel of grace through Christ alone) within the soil (to be sent to the suffering lands where God places us), thus working with God to create the perfect garden (to bring God's *Shalom* into the wounded world) and producing a good harvest (to lead the lost souls to Christ, the Savior and High Priest).

Endnotes

- 1 Lyndal Roper, *Martin Luther: Renegade and Prophet* (New York: Random House, 2017).
- 2 Paul Tillich indicates that “the word ‘reformation’ has two connotations: it points to a unique event in church history, the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century; and it points to a permanent principle, active in all periods, which is implied in the Spirit’s fight against the ambiguities of religion. This historical reformation occurred because the Roman church had successfully suppressed this principle at a moment when the prophetic Spirit called for a reformation of the church in ‘head and members.’” Cited from Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Life and the Spirit: History and the Kingdom of God*. Vol 3. (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), 184.
- 3 “His name (Copernicus)....suffices to connect the Christian faith with the dark Middle Ages. Pre-Copernican man is seen as caught in the blinding spiritual captivity of the “Ptolemaic Church,” from which this astronomical giant liberated us to lead into the promised land of modern times.” Cited from Heiko A. Oberman. *The Dawn of the Reformation: Essays in Late Medieval and Early Reformation Thought* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986, 1992], 179.
- 4 Timothy George. *Theology of the Reformers* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1988), 95.
- 5 According to The Salvation Army’s International 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 (*The Salvation Army Year Book* [London: The Salvation Army International Headquarters, 2017]).”
- 6 Cf. Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther: An Introduction to His Life and Work* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 48-49. Lohse identifies these writings as the most crucial, though he does not himself use the term manifesto.
- 7 Martin Luther, “On the Councils and the Church-Part III” (1539), Cited from Timothy F. Lull, ed. *Martin Luther’s Basic Theological Writings*, Second edition (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 363. According to Timothy George, “Luther disliked the German word Kirche (which, like church in English, or curia in Latin, derives from the Greek kuriakon, the Lord’s house) because it had come to mean the building or the institution. He preferred *Gemeine*, ‘community’ or *Versammlung*, ‘assembly.’ For him, the true church was the people of God, the fellowship of believers, or, as the Apostles’ Creed has it, the communion of saints. From this perspective Luther developed a richly nuanced doctrine of the church (Timothy George. *Theology of the Reformers*, 87).” See also, Wilhelm Pauck, *The Heritage of the Reformation: Revised and Enlarged Edition* (Glencoe, Illinois, The Free Press, 1961), 31-32.
- 8 Timothy F. Lull, ed. *Martin Luther’s Basic Theological Writings*, 363.
- 9 Wilhelm Pauck. *The Heritage of the Reformation*, 32.
- 10 Jaroslav Pelikan and H. T. Lehmann, eds., *Luther’s Works*, 55 vols. (St. Louis and Philadelphia, 1955-1976), Vol. 31:31. Hereafter, this work will be referred to as “LW.”
- 11 *D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. 58 vols. (Weimar: Bohlau, 1833-),

- Vol. 39. 523. Hereafter, this work will be referred to as “WA.” Quoted by Timothy George in *Theology of the Reformers*, 71.
- 12 Paul Tillich. *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3., 13.
 - 13 Luther’s refutation of the “three walls” constructed by the tyranny of the papacy of the medieval Roman Catholic Church is as follows: “The Romanist have very cleverly built three walls around themselves. Hitherto they have protected themselves by these walls in such a way that no one has been able to reform them. As a result, the whole of Christendom has fallen abominably. In the first place, when pressed by the temporal power they have made decrees and declared that the temporal power had no jurisdiction over them, but that, on the contrary, the spiritual power is above the temporal. In the second place, when the attempt is made to reprove them with the Scriptures, they raise the objection that only pope may interpret the Scriptures. In the third place, if threatened with a council, their story is that no one may summon a council but the pope (LW 44:126).”
 - 14 James Mackinnon, *Luther and the Reformation: The Breach with Rome*, Vol. 2 (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co. LTD, 1928), 231.
 - 15 Ibid.
 - 16 LW 44:127.
 - 17 LW 40:19.
 - 18 Wilhelm Pauck, “Luther and the Ministry” in *The Springfielder*, Vol. XXXVI. Concordia Theological Seminary (No. 1., June 1972), 6.
 - 19 The priesthood of Christ as the theological foundation of the priesthood of all believers: “The gospel and all of Scripture present Christ as the high priest, who alone and once for all by offering himself has taken away the sins of all men and accomplished their sanctification for all eternity. For once and for all he entered into the holy place through his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption [Heb. 9:12, 28; 10:12, 14]. Thus no other sacrifice remains for our sins than his, and by putting our trust altogether in it, we are saved from sin without any merits or works of our own. Of this sacrifice and offering he has instituted a perpetual remembrance in that he intends to have faith in it proclaimed in the sacrament of the altar and thereby have faith in it strengthened (LW 40:14).”
 - 20 LW 13:329.
 - 21 LW 13:329.
 - 22 LW 35:101. Cf. Hank Voss, *The Priesthood of All Believers and the Missio Dei: A Canonical, Catholic, and Contextual Perspective* (Eugene, Oregon: PICKWICK Publications, 2016), 138.
 - 23 LW 31:354.
 - 24 LW 31:344. Luther further explained this radical assertion of the paradoxical principle of Christian existence as follows: “These two theses seem to contradict each other. If, however, they should be found to fit together they would serve our purpose beautifully. Both are Paul’s own statements, who says in I Cor. 9 [:19], ‘For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all,’ and in Rom. 13 [:8], ‘Owe no one anything, except to love one another.’ Love by its very nature is ready to serve and be subject to him who is loved. So Christ, although he was Lord of all, was ‘born of woman, born under the law’ [Gal. 4:4], and therefore was at the same time a free man and a servant,

- ‘in the form of God’ and ‘of a servant’ [Phil. 2:6-7] (LW 31:344).”
- 25 Williston Walker and Richard A. Norris, David W. Lotz, Robert T. Handy. *A History of the Christian Church*. Fourth edition (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons), 430.
 - 26 Wilhelm Pauck, *The Heritage of the Reformation*, 7.
 - 27 Timothy George. *Theology of the Reformers*, 96.
 - 28 LW 31:371.
 - 29 For understanding the concept of coram Deo in the context of Luther’s life and his theological legacy, see, Gordon Rupp, *The Righteousness of God: Luther Studies* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1953, 1963), 81-256. Norman Nagel, “Luther and the Priesthood of All Believers,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 61, No (1997), 277-298. Timothy George. *Theology of the Reformers*, 59.
 - 30 LW 31:355.
 - 31 Luther also articulates the standing of the priesthood of all believers in relation to the functions of a priest as follows: “Here we take our stand: There is no other Word of God than that which is given all Christians to proclaim. There is no other baptism than the one which any Christian can bestow. There is no other remembrance of the Lord’s Supper than that which any Christian can observe and which Christ has instituted. There is no other kind of sin than that which any Christian can bind and loose. There is no other sacrifice than the body of every Christian. No one but a Christian can pray. No one but a Christian may judge of doctrine. These make the priestly and royal office. Let therefore the papists either prove other functions of the priesthood or let them resign their own (LW 40:34-35).”
 - 32 LW 40:23. “Inasmuch as the office of preaching the gospel is the greatest of all and certainly is apostolic, it becomes the foundation for all other functions, which are built upon it, such as the offices of teachers, prophets, governing [the church], speaking with tongues, the gifts of healing and helping, as Paul directs in I Cor. 12 [:28]. Even Christ chiefly proclaimed the gospel, as the highest function of his office, and did not baptize [John 4:2]. Paul, too, gloried in the fact that he was sent not to baptize [I Cor. 1:17], as to a secondary office, but to the primary office of preaching the gospel (LW 40:36).”
 - 33 LW 40:21.
 - 34 Uche Anizor and Hank Voss, *Representing Christ: A Vision for the Priesthood of All Believers* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2016), 77. According to Uche Anizor and Hank Voss, “Luther argues that any Christian could publicly preach, baptize and administer the Lord’s Supper in an emergency situation, but these practices should normally be carried out by those ordained by the congregation (Representing Christ, 174 [Endnote no. 72]).”
 - 35 LW 40:27.
 - 36 LW 31:355. Cf. Uche Anizor and Hank Voss, *Representing Christ*, 79.
 - 37 Adriani Milli Rodrigues, “The Priesthood of Christ and the Priesthood of All Believers in the Theology of Martin Luther” in *Kerygma*, Engenheiro Coelho, SP, (Vol. 11., No. 2, 2015), 92. <https://revistas.unasp.edu.br/kerygma/article/view/766>
 - 38 A sacerdotal system makes the assumption that all religious benefits, including valid worship and even one’s access to God, can only be mediated through the agency and cooperation of priests and officials of the institution. Luther rejected sacerdotalism based on this theological position: “The presence of Christ’s body and blood does

not result from the priest's action. It is instead a consequence of Jesus Christ's power (Cited from Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, Third Edition [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013], 1125)."

39 LW 40:35.

40 WA 6:408. Cited from Walther von Loewenich, *Martin Luther: The Man and His Work* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1982), 161.

41 LW 36:27.

42 Cameron A. MacKenzie, "The 'Early' Luther on Priesthood of All Believers, Office of the Ministry, and Ordination," 4-5 (<http://www.ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/mackenzieearly-luther.pdf>).

43 LW 36:124.

44 LW 36:235 (Receiving Both Kinds in the Sacrament, 1522).

45 LW 36:22.

46 LW 36:27.

47 LW 36:35.

48 LW 36: 37, 38.

49 LW 36:54.

50 Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology: Its Historical and Systematic Development* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 290.

51 LW 40:18.

52 LW 40:19.

53 LW 13:65 (Commentary on Psalm 82, 1530). Quoted by Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology*, 290.

54 LW 44:129.

55 LW 31:356.

56 Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther: An Introduction to His Life and Work*, 179-178.

57 LW 44:129.

58 "In an emergency—that is, a situation in which the official ministry is not available—any Christian may and must assume the responsibility of ministering the Word. Such a situation would arise if the Christian found himself in an area where there was no congregation, or in a congregation in which the Word was not preached purely, or in a location that the ordained minister could not reach in time to perform urgent services. Hence the unordained Christian must proclaim the Word among the heathen, he must contradict a minister whose teaching is error, and he must be ready to perform emergency baptism or grant deathbed absolution (Brian A. Gerrish, "Priesthood and Ministry in the Theology of Luther," *Church History* 34, No. 4 [December 1, 1965], 417)."

59 Wilhelm Pauck, *The Heritage of the Reformation*, 51.

60 Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology*, 293.

61 Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 325.

62 LW 36:116.

63 LW 40:34.

64 LW 36:106.

65 Brian A. Gerrish, "Priesthood and Ministry," 417.

66 Gosta Hok, "Luther's Doctrine of the Ministry" (trans. from the Swedish by Ross

- Mackenzie), *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol. VII (1954), 18. Quoted by Brian A. Gerrish, "Priesthood and Ministry," 418.
- 67 Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology*, 295.
- 68 Mark Roger, "A dangerous Idea?: Martin Luther, E. Y. Mullins, And the Priesthood of All Believers," *Westminster Theological Journal* 72, No. 1 (March 1, 2010), 124.
- 69 Byoung Hoon Woo, "Luther's Doctrine of Universal Priesthood and Its Implications for Today (Originally in Korean)," (*Theological Forum*, Vol. 87, 2017), 222-227. As the most comprehensive and authoritative work on the Radical Reformation in sixteenth century Europe, see George Huntston Williams, *The Radical Reformation [Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies Volume 15]* (Kirkville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2000, Third edition); particularly, Ch. 3 and Ch. 4 for this paper.
- 70 For example, the following quote shows Luther's favorable and optimistic attitude to the individual authority of teaching and preaching the Word in the community based on his 'early' view of 1 Corinthians 14:30. Luther said: "a Christian has so much power that he may and even should make an appearance and teach among Christians—without a call from men—when he becomes aware that there is a lack of teachers, provided he does it in a decent and becoming manner. This was clearly described by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 14 [30] (LW 39:310. *That A Christian Assembly or Congregation Has the Right and Power to Judge All Teaching and To Call, Appoint, and Dismiss Teachers, Established and Proven By Scriptures* [1523], Introduction by Eric W. and Ruth C. Gritsch)."
- 71 LW 39:304. See also, Mark Roger, "A dangerous Idea?", 124-127, 131-132. Brian A. Gerrish, "Priesthood and Ministry," 407-408. Byoung Hoon Woo, "Luther's Doctrine of Universal Priesthood," 224-227. See also, Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther: An Introduction to His Life and Work*, 182-183.
- 72 Alister E. McGrath points out that "although Luther initially appears to have favored the view that all individuals could and should read the Bible in the vernacular, and base their theology directly upon that reading, he subsequently became somewhat skeptical concerning the ability of *Herr Omnes* (i.e., "to use Luther's phrase for 'everyone'" [p. 129]) to interpret Scripture, not least as a result of the Peasants' Revolt of 1525, which seemed to him to rest upon a most distressing misreading and misapplication of Scripture, fostered and encouraged by Anabaptist radicals with a clear political agenda (Alister E. McGrath, *The Intellectual Origins of the European Reformation*, 2nd ed. [Oxford: Blackwell, 2004], 130)."
- 73 Based on the comparison with Luther's 'early' view of 1 Corinthians 14:30 in 1523 (see endnote no. 70), in *Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers* (1532), the following quotes in the context of 'the spread of Anabaptist teaching' in and around Eisenach shows Luther's conservative and passive attitude in regard of the office of teaching and preaching ministry in the community after the period of the Peasants' War (1525). Luther indicated: "Thus we read in St. Paul: 'Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weight what is said,' etc. [1 Cor. 14:29]. This of course is said only of the prophets, and of which ones should speak and which should weight what was said. What is meant by 'others'? The people? Of course not. It means the other prophets or those speaking with tongues who should help in the church with preaching and building up of the congregation, those who should judge and assist in seeing to it that the

preaching is right...For St. Paul is not rigidly concerned about the one method, but he is concerned about order and decent procedure, and gives this method as an example. We had better keep our custom in preaching since it more than the other will keep order among our stupid folk...So much for the words of St. Paul. To sum it all up, the infiltrating and clandestine preachers are apostles of the devil. St. Paul everywhere complains of those who run in and out of houses upsetting whole families, always teaching yet not knowing what they say or direct [Tit. 1:11]. Therefore the spiritual office is to be warned and admonished, and the temporal office is to be warned and admonished. Let each one who is a Christian and a subject be warned to be on guard against these interlopers and not to heed them (LW 40:392-393)."

74 LW 36:233.

75 See Alister E. McGrath, *The Intellectual Origins of the European Reformation*, 159-166.

76 Cf. Wilhelm Pauck, *The Heritage of the Reformation*, 3-9.

77 See, for one Salvationist's perspective on the subject, Shaw Clifton, "Martin Luther and the Priesthood of all Believers" in Shaw Clifton, *Selected Writings*, 1974-1999. Vol. 1. (Alexandria, VA: Crest Books, 2010), 1-5.

78 For understanding the Wesleyan concept of the witness of the Holy Spirit, see John Wesley, Sermons "The Witness of the Spirit, I" and "The Witness of the Spirit II" in Albert Outler (ed), *The Works of John Wesley Volume 1: Sermons I* [Bicentennial Edition, 26 vols, 1984-1987 ff.] (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 267-298.

79 LW 40:24-25.

80 Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology*, 290.

81 See Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology*, 298-305, Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, 353-374.

82 Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers*, 97. See also, Timothy J. Wengert, "The Priesthood of All Believers and Other Pious Myths" in *Priesthood, Pastors, Bishops: Public Ministry for the Reformation and Today* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 1-16. Brian A. Gerrish, "Priesthood and Ministry," 419-420.

83 Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther: An Introduction to His Life and Work*, 49.

84 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Protestantism without the Reformation," in *No Rusty Swords: Letters, Lectures and Notes, 1928-1936*, ed. Edwin H. Robertson, trans. Edwin H. Robertson and John Bowden (London: Collins, 1965), 92-118. As cited by Michael Horton in *Reformation Theology: A Systematic Summary* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 18-19.

85 For further exploration, see these recommended readings from various Salvationists (in alphabetical order): Andrew Mark Eason, *Women in God's Army: Gender and Equality in the Early Salvation Army* (Ontario, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2003), *Conversations with the Catholic Church: A Record of the Papers Presented and Recommendations Made during the Informal Conversations between The Catholic Church and The Salvation Army, 2007-2012* (London, UK: Salvation Books, 2014), David W. Taylor, *Like a Mighty Army?: The Salvation Army, the Church, and the Churches* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014), Denis Metrustery ed., *Saved, Sanctified and Serving: Perspectives on Salvation Army Theology and Practice* (London, UK: Paternoster, 2016), Grant Sandercock-Brown, *21 Questions for a 21st Century Army:*

Being the Salvos Now (Western Australia: Vivid Publishing, 2014), Harold Hill, *Leadership in the Salvation Army: A Case Study in Clericalisation* (London, UK: Pater-noster, 2006), Janet Munn, *Theory and Practice of Gender Equality in The Salvation Army* (Ashland, Ohio: Gracednotes Ministries, 2015), John R. Rhemick, *A New People of God: A Study in Salvationism* (The Salvation Army Central Territory, USA: 1984), Mark Wesley Tillsley, *The Salvation Army Corps officer: A Territorial Survey of Vocational Preparation, Role Efficacy, and Ministry Satisfaction* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Fordham University, 2013), Melvyn Jones, *That Contentious Doctrine: Studies in the history of Holiness Teaching* (London, UK: Salvation Books, 2015), Paul A. Rader and Kay F. Rader, Stephen Court ed., *To Seize This Day of Salvation* (London, UK: Salvation Books, 2015), Phil Needham, *Community in Mission: A Salvationist Ecclesiology* (London, UK: The Salvation Army International Headquarters, 1987), Richard J. Munn, *Salvation Army Married Officer Leadership: For Such A Time As This* (Unpublished D.Min. Thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2004), Rightmire, R. David, *The Sacramental Journey of The Salvation Army: A Study of Holiness Foundations* (Alexandria, Virginia: Crest Books, 2016), Robert Street, *Called to be God's People: The International Spiritual Life Commission; Its Report, Implications and Challenges* (London: The Salvation Army International Headquarters, 1999), Roger J. Green, *War on Two Fronts: The Redemptive Theology of William Booth* (Alexandria, Virginia: Crest Books, 1989, revised in 2017), Shaw Clifton, *Who Are These Salvationists?: An Analysis for the 21st Century* (Alexandria, Virginia: Crest Books, 1999), *Servants Together: Salvationist Perspectives on Ministry* (London: The Salvation Army International Headquarters, 2008), Steve Hedgren and Rob Lyle eds., *Mapping Our Salvationist DNA: Beliefs, Values, Behaviors* (New York: The Salvation Army USA Eastern Territory, 2012).

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Refreshing Salvation Army Ecclesiology: An Analysis in Light of the Protestant Reformation's 500th Anniversary

Andy Miller III

With the sound of hammer and nails on Wittenberg's church door reverberating in our ecclesiological context, the Salvationist's identity can be enhanced if we "plunge 'neath the water" of our Protestant heritage and let it "roll over" us. Too often, Salvation Army history begins on July 2, 1865 in London. Going back to October 31, 1517 in Wittenburg, the ceremonial date we use to celebrate the start of the Protestant Reformation, is a healthy move in the right direction. Still a Salvationist's ecclesiology should be much broader than half of a millennium. Instead, Christians affirm that the history of the Church began in the eternal fellowship of the Godhead before time existed.¹ God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit spoke our world into existence and formed humanity in such a way that the Church would birth a unique group of people called Salvationists. Before this group of amen-shouting, uniform-wearing, brass-playing, and steeple-rejecting soldiers were chartered by the Spirit, a monk needed to pave the way by pounding the gospel's timeless truth in his time.

If we could do a genealogical analysis of our movement, we would come back with a heavy slice of Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli in our ecclesiological history. It goes without saying that The Salvation Army would not exist

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without the movement of the Protestant Reformation. Our theological praxis is a branch of a family tree extending from Luther in Germany which led to the English Reformation. That movement, with Henry VIII's depravity in full view, was the seedbed of John Wesley's Methodist revival, and in turn produced William and Catherine Booth's Salvation Army in London's East End. The Army's expansive ministry with 1.5 million soldiers in 128 countries today is directly connected to the insights of Luther's time. With that historical view in mind, Luther would be quick to remind us that he didn't see his work as groundbreaking or new. His movement fighting the abuses of Roman Catholicism was connected to thinkers and leaders before him, notably Augustine of Hippo, but most specifically to the witness of Scripture. Luther himself was operating within what Professor Kevin Vanhoozer identifies as theological retrieval. He shows that the theological heirs of Luther have the same task:

The main purpose of retrieval is the revitalization of biblical interpretation, theology, and the church today. To retrieve is to look back creatively in order to move forward faithfully. ... Luther translated and contextualized the gospel—which is to say, retrieved it—into the vernacular language and cultural situation of his day. Theology is always missiological to the extent that the search for understanding requires us to speak that understanding into new contexts.²

As Salvationists seeking to serve in the present age, we do well to refresh our ecclesial history with a look at our theological and missional heritage in the Reformation.

In this paper I will highlight the unity of the inheritors of the Protestant Reformation with the aim of showing how The Salvation Army can be refreshed by this tradition. The doctrine of ecclesiology generally highlights several functions of theology. This paper will look at authority, governance, unity, and sacraments through the lens of ecclesiology.³ I will speak specifically to the Army's governance system with a modification recommended in light of the ecclesiology of the Reformers. Then I will make a call for the Army to reinstitute the traditional Protestant sacraments in light of 500 years of consistent ecclesiological teaching.

Leadership and Authority When Everyone's a Priest

The priesthood of all believers and *sola scriptura* are two theological emphases from the Reformation that dramatically impacted ecclesiology. Luther rightly smashed through the concept that people can only access God through priests. Luther pushed against the authority of Rome saying, "...whoever comes out of the water of baptism can boast that he is already consecrated priest, bishop, and pope, though it is not seemly that everyone should exercise the office."⁴ This rediscovery of biblical truth sent shock waves through the world. This concept was furthered by Luther's strong sense that the Bible should be available to all people in their own language. The Reformation's formal principal of *sola scriptura*, a Post-Reformation slogan that describes well the Reformer's view,⁵ repudiates that the tradition of the church (the Magisterium) and the Pope's word carried the same authority as Scripture.

Some scholars have suggested that these two concepts opened Pandora's Box and let the Bible mean anything to anyone. The same is true for the Church. If we are all priests, then as the proverbial statement goes, under every man's "hat [is] his own church."⁶ Dr. Stanley Hauerwas is typical of Luther's critics scolding that *sola scriptura* is the "sin of the Reformation."⁷ The slogan and doctrine is raised to this level of reproach by Hauerwas because he accuses it of leaving the ecclesial community out of the interpretive process and opening its meaning up to an unfettered subjectivism. A similar criticism about these doctrines was notably pitched by Notre Dame history professor Brad Gregory in his book *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society*.⁸ He suggests that the hyperpluralism embedded in *sola scriptura* exalts the individual as an autonomous authority and effectively secularized morality, values, and priorities thus creating capitalism, consumerism, and secularism.⁹ Most then see the 36,000 Protestant denominations in the world as a problem and indicative of what Gregory calls the "fissiparous particularity of Protestant[ism]."¹⁰ As Salvationists, we might be wondering at this point if we would rather unlearn what we have learned about our family tree in Protestantism.

Dr. Andrew Pettegree, an expert in Reformation history and media history, has written a new and highly acclaimed study entitled, *Brand Luther: 1517, Printing, and the Making of the Reformation*. He traces Luther's argument concerning the priesthood of all believers to his short book *To the*

Christian Nobility of the German Nation and calls it the Reformers' "radical time bomb." Pettegree holds that Luther's main goal was the elimination of distinctions between laypeople and priests and posits on several occasions that Luther would have "plentiful opportunities to regret" how the priesthood of all believers was abused.¹¹ Because believers are justified by faith, they have direct access to God, but Professor Pettegree insists Luther did not mean to imply that the priesthood of all believers "have equal interpretive power of interpretation of the Bible."¹² Though his landmark translation of the Bible into German was critical in allowing God's Word to enter into people's hearts and minds, he did moderate this view by arguing for a hermeneutical process by which the Bible can be understood.

It was in the Protestant Reformation that we see the great movement toward councils to find a way to center Scripture's meaning and interpretation. Luther thought of himself throughout his life as being truly catholic in the purest sense of the word. What he and other Reformers were preaching and teaching was consistent with the great and glorious tradition of the universal church. Vanhoozer and Pettegree both show that Luther longed for there to be unity in his effort to bring the church back to the Gospel. We can choose to point our fingers at the "fissiparous" nature of Protestantism or we can look at the Spirit-inspired way so many denominations are united behind what Vanhoozer calls "mere protestant Christianity."¹³ What he has in mind with this nomenclature is that there are basic theological beliefs stemming from the Reformation that unite all Protestants. This family tree becomes a great cloud of witnesses and functions as an interpretative community. The Reformers did not believe in "the priesthood of the believer." Instead they affirmed the "the priesthood of all believers," which suggest that the community then plays a critical role in affirming the direction and interpretation of Scripture.¹⁴

Salvation Army Application

The Salvation Army has a strong article of faith regarding the role of authority and interpretation that is consistent with *sola scriptura*. Notice that the reformers did not preach *nuda scriptura* (scripture naked). They did not insist on ignoring other sources of revelation and authority. For the Reformers, it is through Scripture that we view other knowledge, it is Luther's concept of *norma normans non normata* (the norm of norms which cannot be normed)

that gives insight into how to understand *sola scriptura*. Another version of this saying is “The rule that rules.” This is why for me the “divine rule” words in the Army’s first article of faith are so powerful—it is because we have a full theological method in our first article of faith. Our first article of faith says: “We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were given by inspiration of God, and that they only constitute the Divine rule of Christian faith and practice.” The Salvationist affirms that Scripture is inspired and it is the means by which we rule, norm, or adjudicate beliefs and behaviors. There are other structures of thought that come in to play when interacting with Scripture (tradition, reason, creation, and experience),¹⁵ but the authority of God is revealed in Jesus and through the Scriptures. I have shown in another article that the Army’s utilization of the language “divine rule” is directly connected to John Wesley’s doctrine of the “rule of faith” or “analogy of faith.”¹⁶ It was Wesley’s way of keeping the big story of salvation in front of his reading of Scripture. Scripture reveals this divine rule and the authority of the God who inspired it. The pages and the ink itself are not our authority, but it represents the divine rule, which is God’s authority.¹⁷ It is this kind of sturdy doctrine of revelation that encourages Protestantism and the Army when hearing the criticism of Hauerwas and Gregory.

As we evaluate the Army’s ecclesiology we stand on firm Reformation footing with our doctrine of revelation and Scripture. There have been a variety of calls in recent years to not fall into what Os Guinness calls the “catholic distortion” which exalts the priestly role over that of the laity.¹⁸ The Army has struggled with this separation between officer and soldiers. One of the most influential documents in this area was the 2002 book *Servants Together: Salvationist Perspectives on Ministry*.¹⁹ This short book outlines a theologically robust view of priesthood, calling, service, and ministry. While individual officers and soldiers might regularly be wary of these challenges, there is a structural aspect of our polity that stands in contrast to Luther and the Reformation—namely, our hierarchal system.²⁰ The etymology of the word itself is connected to the Latin word *arche* (head). Our military system features one international leader—the General. As I focused much of my personal study this year on the Reformation, I see similarities in Luther’s critiques to the weakness in our system. To be sure, there are stark differences between the Papal authority and the General’s: Our Generals are elected for terms, not a lifetime, and we don’t have any doctrine close to the infallibility of the

Pope. There is not corruption similar to what existed in the medieval church. Thankfully, we have the opportunity to join Bing Crosby and the cast of *White Christmas* as they ask the question, “What can you do with a general when he [or she] stops being a general?”

Daniel J. Elazar, a Jewish scholar writing in the late twentieth century, has demonstrated that the Reformers’ recovery and application of the idea of covenant has led modern political systems, like the United States, to utilize a structure of separated powers for governance.²¹ The influence of this political concept also impacted the ecclesiastical systems. Could The Salvation Army benefit from the covenant-centered approach toward ecclesiological governance that creates a representative system of separated powers? The constitutional changes that came as a result of the High Council and reforms of 1929 were a key move away from the absolute power of the General in the Army.²² I recognize the significant work done by our current international leader, General André Cox, in seeking transparency for the Army at every level through the accountability movement. I also note that we have a semi-democratic process in place for electing a General through the contemporary High Council.²³

I suggest that a Salvation Army ecclesiology informed by our Protestant heritage should not apply the priesthood of all believers only to the challenges of status between officers and soldiers, but also allow for a more democratic system that authorizes the authority of our military system. The challenges of giving full authority to one person could be devastating. For example, what if a General decided the Army no longer needed to affirm a classic Christology of the dual natures of Christ? What if that General then appointed territorial leaders who agreed with him or her? This example seems extreme, but there is nothing in the Army’s governing structure to prevent such a scenario from happening. If there was a system in place that separated the powers of the Army, we could safeguard ourselves against such challenges. The Army could still designate significant authority to the General, but the total authority would be shared via separated representatives. This embracing of shared responsibility could also make its way to every other layer of Army administration so that at the field level, corps councils are truly representing and owning the ministry of the corps while handing executive and pastoral leadership to the corps officer(s).

Sacraments, Ecclesiology, and Unity

As I resist claims that the diversity within the Protestant tradition is an overall net deficit for the movement, I assume that a consensus has been built through 500 years of Reformation theology. Dr. Roger Olson of Baylor University identifies this unity in diversity as “the Great Tradition of the church.”²⁴ Within that tradition a consensus of interpretation and theology has been held between the early church fathers and Reformers as demonstrated in the ecumenical creeds and the general cohesion of Reformation confessions. Recently an ecumenical statement of faith was advanced to demonstrate the unity of “mere protestant Christianity” to “mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation” entitled “A Reforming Catholic Confession.”²⁵ This Confession was composed by a group of scholars, denominational leaders, local church leaders, and parachurch leaders. The authors and signers represent diverse genders, continents, and theological traditions including Wesleyans, Baptists, Lutherans, Reformed, Anglicans, and Presbyterians. To date, thousands have signed-on to this Confession. A Salvationist could read this document and see close ties to our own eleven Articles of Faith. As I read this Confession, I was filled with joy to claim the unity within the diversity of the Protestant movement of which I claim as a Salvationist. Even as I read the 189 word article about baptism and the Lord’s Supper, I thought there was nothing there that Salvationists could not support. Then, I read the 124 word article about the Church. I was again reveling in the beauty and unifying nature of this statement, until I came to the last 14 words that challenged our Salvationist ecclesiology:

That the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church is God’s new society, the first fruit of the new creation, the whole company of the redeemed through the ages, of which Christ is Lord and head. The truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, is the church’s firm foundation (Matt. 16:16-18; 1 Cor. 3:11). The local church is both embassy and parable of the kingdom of heaven, an earthly place where his will is done and he is now present, existing visibly everywhere two or three gather in his name to proclaim and spread the gospel in word and works of love, **and by obeying the Lord’s command to baptize disciples (Matt. 28:19) and celebrate the Lord’s Supper (Luke 22:19).**²⁶

I have seen these words before as they form a classical articulation of what constitutes the universal church.²⁷ These words hit me in a new way as I read them here because I saw them as blocking the Salvationists from unifying with others within “mere protestant Christianity.” This journey led me to conversations with the leaders of the drafting and steering committees of the Confession. Several of these scholars are familiar with the Army via their connections to Asbury University and Asbury Theological Seminary. I was assured that the Army was not intentionally left out of this process. I was bold enough to ask why not leave these 14 words out of the Confession so as to include 1.5 million Salvationists. The authors of this statement noted these specific words as being connected to historical Protestantism and felt that they would lose the support of Lutherans, Anglicans, and significant flanks of Wesleyan Christians if they removed those words.²⁸ How should a Salvationist respond in this situation? Should we be so cavalier as to suggest that if this is Protestantism’s version of unity, then we want none of it? On the other hand, of such a defensive position another question could be asked. *Have we reached a moment in our ecclesiological history to humbly consider changing our non-practicing position?*²⁹

This presentation has afforded me an opportunity to dive deep into our Reformation roots. One of Martin Luther’s key recoveries was the doctrine of justification by grace through faith (*sola fide*). This theological insight is also key to the Army’s theology as represented in our eighth article of faith.³⁰ The Reforming Catholic Confession caused me to ask this question: Are the signers of this Confession adding to *sola fide* by emphasizing sacraments in this way? Salvationists, myself included, have been quick to say that baptism and the Lord’s Supper are not necessary to salvation. When we make this kind of statement in our non-practicing rhetoric, are we suggesting that the bulk of historic Christianity believes that sacraments are part and parcel to one’s soteriology?³¹ To be blunt, are we protesting that Protestants have not protested enough? Do we think the rest of Protestant Christianity is comparable to the Judaizers of Acts 15 or Galatians 2? Some suggest that the Army’s sacramental position is a prophetic statement to the Church at large and that the Church generally has become too dependent on dead forms.³² Are we so arrogant to assume that our witness to the church is more important than our being a part of it? I add with Shakespeare in mind that we “do protest too much, methinks.”

Catherine Booth was right that the great achievements of the Army were based in what she called the “principal of adaptation.”³³ In our 152 year history and 134 years of non-practicing sacramentalism, I believe it is time for us to adapt for the greater good of the purpose for which God raised up the Army. If the Army were to reinstate sacramental observance, I do not believe we would be casting judgement upon our forebears.³⁴ The Army discontinued the practice of the two traditional Protestant sacraments in 1883. Professor R. David Rightmire explains the rationale behind the non-practicing position within the Army. The thesis of his book, *The Sacramental Journey of The Salvation Army: A Study in Holiness Foundations*, is that the Army abandoned the use of the sacraments because our holiness theology called for “closer communion” with Christ marked by baptism with the Spirit.³⁵ He shows that the ontological dimension of entire sanctification experienced through calls to experience sanctifying grace (‘perfect love’) was so strong that sacramental observance was not a priority for the utilitarian Army.³⁶ The main reason, in the context of this paper, that I suggest a move toward reinstitution is for unity within the church at large. That said, the most direct argument for utilizing the traditional Protestant sacraments in The Salvation Army is from our first article of faith—namely, the authority of Scripture. If our theological and missional distinctives are to prophetically speak to the global Church, then we must be in relationship with that Church. What better place to start that relationship than at the Lord’s table, breaking bread together?³⁷ This would not constitute an addition to our soteriology, because we have a beautiful booster shot against the disease of salvation by works—*sola fide* in our eighth article of faith. It is the prominence and importance of this doctrine that enables us to apply the principal of adaptation now.³⁸ Too often Salvationists have assumed sacraments are connected to soteriology, but they are properly positioned within the discipline of ecclesiology.³⁹

To apply the adaptation principal I suggest utilizing a utilitarian-like argument. What is the greatest good that can come from reinstituting sacramental practice, or, said another way, how can we be “doing the most good” in our ecclesiology? It is my contention that the “good” that would come from reinstitution should cause us to utilize the adaptation principal, and by doing so we would fulfill William Booth’s own comments that “...in some future day, [the Army could reinstitute the sacraments] when we shall have more light...” on the subject.⁴⁰

A Thought Experiment

I propose we employ a thought experiment to think about how reinstitution of the sacraments would impact The Salvation Army. As we engage in this thought experiment, we must first acknowledge that this does not bear the burden of proof. It is subjective and could be twisted and turned in any number of ways. Similar thought experiments could be conducted on any number of practices or theological foundations of the Army, and the imagined results could be used to placate any number reservations that might be entirely valid. In spite of these potential pitfalls, I think it is a worthwhile endeavor because undergirding the most vocal resistance to the reintroduction of the sacraments might be concern of the unknown. Engagement in this thought experiment enables us to step out of our time and look past the difficult decisions that accompany reinstatement and imagine the benefits of rooting our heritage more fully in our ecclesiological identity. More importantly, it empowers us to imagine a life-giving, Spirit-affirming, and grace-filled reality of an Army that is partaking in classic sacraments along with the global Church, His body on earth.

Let's imagine the sacraments were reinstituted on October 31, 2018 to show our connection to the Church at large. How would we reflect on this decision, after ten years of this practice? Here is what I imagine we would discover about Salvation Army ecclesiology. Having clarified questions about what the sacraments mean, utilizing ecumenical confessions like the Reforming Catholic Confession, Salvationists still aggressively fulfill their God-given mission of proclaiming the gospel in word and deed in 128+ countries around the world. The Army also finds ready help from sister churches from the Wesleyan Holiness tradition to offer support for how to implement the Lord's Supper and baptism.⁴¹ They understand the physical and material dimension of the Gospel with great insight, and they take the elements of the Lord's Supper before they move to serve suffering humanity. Much to the surprise of some, Salvation Army holiness theology has not retreated into an ethereal myth of a bygone era. Some suggested 35 years previously that reinstituting the sacraments would result in a diminishing numbers experiencing sanctifying grace.⁴² Instead the Army, the largest denomination in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition, has a better understanding of the sacramental life because of regular reminders of Christ's sacrifice through their observance of the Lord's Supper and their witnessing of

the public statement of new birth through baptism.⁴³

In 2027, Soldiers are still enrolled under the rich symbolic colors of the Army flag. Soldiers and Officers are visibly present in their communities with uniforms identifying their connection to Christ. *Christianity Today* is running an article noting how the Army's embrace of the traditional Protestant sacraments has made the Army one of the most symbolically vibrant denominations in Protestantism. Millennials, now entering middle age, have increased their participation in the Army due its blend of social action and evangelical fidelity. The theologically rich concept of sacramental living still inspires the Army to outwardly show acts of mercy in the communities where they serve. The Army's voice as a prophetic movement within the church has become stronger leading more churches to develop comprehensive solutions to poverty and injustice. At Army gatherings, Salvationists chuckle about the creative ways they used to handle new converts asking to be baptized or wondering why they always miss communion Sunday. They also read the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20 and Paul's reflection of Jesus' words of institution in 1 Corinthians 11 with full force, without doing intellectual gymnastics to explain the Army's position to their converts.⁴⁴ Some Salvationists who formerly and sincerely believed they were disobedient to Christ's commands are at ease by their participation in these means of grace. Upon seeing more people join the Army's ranks, Salvationists could not remember one person who signed a Soldiers Covenant because of their non-practicing position.

To the surprise of Candidate Departments all over the world, people from other traditions are increasingly lining up to join ranks of officership because of its new position. Since the days of George Scott Railton, external recruiting of officers has been an anomaly, but now in 2027, first generation leaders enter and are reviving the 162 year old movement. Additionally, many former Salvationists have returned to the fight for the Army because of the updated position.⁴⁵ Salvationists look back on their heritage not with disdain but with thankfulness for the pneumatological priority they have inherited. The move toward the reinstitution gives young scholars an opportunity to study the rich ecclesiology that led the Army to be non-practicing for 135 years.

Finally Salvationists begin to understand the words of Albert Orsborn's so-called sacrament song "My life must be Christ's broken bread" with greater insight. They repent of thinking of that song as a "mic drop" moment in sacramental conversations. Salvationists now see their partaking of the Lord's

Supper as connected to God's action through Jesus on their behalf and not about them existentially being the elements themselves. Instead uniformed soldiers and officers line up at territorial congresses to hear the band play "Jesus, Thou Art Everything to Me," and consider those words with an increased depth. After they participate in the Lord's Supper they unite to sing Albert Orsborn's words, "My life must be Christ's broken bread, my love his outpoured wine,...that other souls may share His life through mine," aware of their call to be the body of Christ in the world.⁴⁶

The thought experiment above is a creative way of looking at the added benefits of a utilitarian approach for embracing sacraments. Some might suggest that we perform the experiment in reverse and show the benefits of continued non-practice. Such an experiment is already being experienced and I suggest that the errors of the two most repeated arguments, prophetic and spiritualist arguments,⁴⁷ are limited in their ability to increase our effectiveness in mission. The only fruit from those positions is that we continually help the church at large consider their practice by acknowledging our non-practice.

When a soldier signs his or her covenant as a public witness to Christ and a commitment to the principals of The Salvation Army, he or she does not sign anything about supporting the non-practicing position of the Army. Salvationists do, in the Soldier's Covenant, connect their lives to the Army's eleven articles of faith and a variety of personal ethical standards. Some have suggested that the Army's non-practicing stance is essential to our identity. For instance, former international leader, General Shaw Clifton, goes as far as to say non-practice of the sacraments is "part of our birthright" as Salvationists.⁴⁸ To be clear, the Army was founded in 1865, took on our current name in 1878, and discontinued practicing the sacraments in 1883. Instead of a "birthright" it was a decision we made as an 18 year-old movement learning how to stretch our ecclesiological boundaries.⁴⁹ There has to be in more to our *raison d'être* than simply a practice that we don't observe.

Does The Salvation Army have a distinct voice to play in the church at large? Should all 36,000 Protestant denominations circle back 500 years and unite under a new catholic banner and thus abandon the denominations that we believe the Spirit led us to charter and sustain? The insights of the Reformation, most succinctly described in *sola scriptura*, *sola fide*, *sola gratia*, *sola christus*, and *solī Deo gloria*, can be the lens by which contemporary descendants of the Reformation unite and move forward to the fight. The Re-

forming Catholic Confession, I believe, summarizes well the essential beliefs of the Reformation's inheritors. If the Army was explicitly working shoulder to shoulder with these sisters in Christ we would find that our distinctives still enhance the body of Christ. If we have a birthright as a denominational movement, it is in proclaiming a boundless salvation available for all, a boundless Holy Spirit that seriously can sanctify all, a boundless joy expressed by a visible and audible people,⁵⁰ and a boundless Gospel that spills God's Trinitarian love into social, spiritual, and physical spheres of reality. The insights of the Reformation can continue to shape and inspire the Army and cause us to reevaluate some of the ways we have developed ecclesiologically. The Army adds its flavor to the kingdom of God through these emphases, and as we move forward, we do so proud of the family heritage we have as Protestants.

Endnotes

- 1 Dr. Dennis Kinlaw, former president of Asbury University, beautifully mentioned in a sermon, "In creating the world, the Father was looking for a bride for his Son."
- 2 Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Biblical Authority After Babel: Retrieving the Solas in the Spirit of Mere Protestant Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2016), 25.
- 3 It is beyond the scope of this paper to evaluate Salvation Army ecclesiology in light of the marks of the church (One, Apostolic, Catholic, and Holy). I have analyzed the traditional marks in light of Army theology in "*The Good Time Coming*": *The Impact of William Booth's Eschatology* (M.Div. Thesis, Asbury Theological Seminary, 2005), 35-48. Gudrun Maria Lydholm has made great strides to show how the Army fits within the concept of the "*notae ecclesiae*" *martyria, koinonia, and diaconia* (witness, fellowship, and service), *Lutheran Salvationists?: The Development Towards Registration as an Independent Faith Community in The Salvation Army in Norway with Focus on the Period 1975-2005* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2017), 242.
- 4 Martin Luther, "An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility" in *Three Treatises* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1960), 15.
- 5 See N.S. Lane, "Sola Scriptura? Making Sense of a Post-Reformation Slogan," in *A Pathway into Holy Scripture*, ed. Philip E. Satterthwaite and David F. Wright (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).
- 6 Winthrop S. Hudson quoted in Timothy George, "The Priesthood of All Believers" in ed. Paul Baseden and David S. Dockery, *The People of God: Essays on the Believers Church* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2009), 91.
- 7 Stanley Hauerwas, *Unleashing the Scripture: Freeing the Bible from Captivity to America* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), 155.
- 8 Brad Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012).
- 9 Kevin Vanhoozer elaborates that there are other critics like Alistar McGrath who called the priesthood of all believers "Christianity's Dangerous Idea," Richard Popkin who insists that skepticism also finds its roots in the Reformation. Finally Hans Boersma and Peter Leithart usher in the thesis that the Reformation initiated schism in the modern world. Vanhoozer takes on all this argument in his book. For this paper, I was only able to evaluate Gregory's and Hauerwas's challenges; I nevertheless found this chorus of critiquers challenging to my own historical assumption. Still Vanhoozer's response through his book effectively lessened my unease. See *Biblical Authority After Babel*, 8-16. Timothy George also has a helpful article on this subject published in *First Things* under the similar title "The Priesthood of All Believers" accessible at www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2016/10/the-priesthood-of-all-believers. This article is an edited form of an earlier chapter mentioned above.
- 10 Gregory, *Unintended Reformation*, 355. The word "fissiparous" means "inclined to cause or undergo division into separate parts or groups." From the Latin *findere* "to split, cleave" and *parus* "offspring." Accessed at www.merriam-webster.com
- 11 Pettegree, 127.
- 12 Pettegree in an interview with Albert Mohler accessed at www.albertmohler.com/2016/04/25/thinking-in-public-andrew-pettegree/

- 13 Similarly Kenneth J. Collins describes a powerful and united way forward in his book *The Evangelical Moment: The Promise of an American Religion* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005). He explains that “American evangelicalism is a movement that embraces distinctiveness and difference and yet has an overarching unity that is displayed in the common bonds of witness, fellowship, and purpose.” He goes on to show how groups in the Wesleyan tradition, like the Army, provide a “leavening” to evangelical assumptions. See Collins, 14 and 63ff.
- 14 Beyond the scope of this paper is the importance of reformers own scholarly tools being applied to their interpretation. We identify this method as the discipline of grammatical-historical philology where all of the tools of grammar and history are applied to discover the original meaning of the text. See David Bauer and Robert Traina, *Inductive Bible Study: A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).
- 15 Here I use Dr. Howard A. Snyder’s helpful concept of “The Wesleyan Pentalateral” which includes creation as a secondary source of revelation. Snyder shows how Wesley “spoke of the ‘wisdom of God in creation.’ In other words, we really have in Wesley (if we wish to use this kind of model) a pentalateral, not a quadrilateral. See Snyder’s article “The Babylonian Captivity of Wesleyan Theology,” *The Wesleyan Theological Journal* (39:1, Spring, 2004), 7-34.
- 16 Andy Miller III, “A Reason to Shout Hallelujah,” *The War Cry* (July 12, 2012), 14. This understanding of the rule of faith goes back to the early church Fathers. The language in The Salvation Army’s articles of faith is directly connected to Methodist New Connexion’s doctrines. I show this connection in my “*The Good Time Coming*”: *The Impact of William Booth’s Eschatology* (M.Div. Thesis, Asbury Theological Seminary, 2005), 73-91.
- 17 For more on this idea see N.T. Wright short volume, *The Last Word: Beyond the Bible Wars to a New Understanding of the Authority of Scripture* (San Francisco: Harper, 2005).
- 18 He says the catholic distortion is “a form of dualism that elevates the spiritual at the expense of the secular.” He contrasts this distortion with a protestant distortion that does the opposite. Os Guinness, *The Call* (Dallas: Word, 1998), 32.
- 19 *Servants Together: Salvationist Perspectives on Ministry* (London: The Salvation Army International Headquarters, 2002). This book was written by the International Doctrine Council.
- 20 Harold Hill has been the most consistent voice within The Salvation Army seeking to move the Army away from what he identifies as clericalism. His major assertion is that the Army in the late 1978 made a drastic step toward clericalism by introducing the language of ordination into officers’ commissioning ceremonies. He applies the priesthood of all believers to an extreme that Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and Wesley did not support, that is the rejection of any priest, cleric, or order. Instead, each affirmed a role for Christian leaders for status and function. To me his work attaches to a version of the priesthood of all believers inconsistent with the Reformers teaching. Hill’s work is important thinking through a Salvation Army ecclesiology. Harold Hill, *Leadership in The Salvation Army: A Case Study in Clericalism* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2006).
- 21 Daniel J. Elazar, *Covenant & Polity in Biblical Israel: Biblical Foundation & Jewish*

- Expressions* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1995) and his *Commonwealth: The Western Covenantal Tradition from Christian Separation to Protestant Reformation* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1996). He asserts that “covenant involves a coming together (con-gregation) of basically equal humans who consent with one other through a morally binding pact support by a transcendent power, establishing with the partners a new framework or setting them on the road to a new task that can only be dissolved by mutual agreement of the parties to it.” *Covenant & Polity*, 1.
- 22 See John Larsson, 1929: *A Crisis that shaped The Salvation Army's Future* (London: Salvation Books, 2009) and Edward H. McKinley, *Marching to Glory: The History of The Salvation Army in the United States 1880-1992* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 193-202. Additionally John Larsson has documented the various changes to the High Council in his book *Inside A High Council: How Salvation Army Generals Are Elected* (London: The Salvation Army, 2014).
 - 23 I say semi-democratic because the High Council while representing the Army world is not made up of elected leaders but people who have been appointed by the General.
 - 24 See Roger E. Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief: Two Thousand Years of Unity & Diversity* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2002), 52-57.
 - 25 <http://reformingcatholicconfession.com>. The authors admittedly utilize the language of “mere” from Richard Baxter made popular by C.S. Lewis’ seminal book *Mere Christianity*.
 - 26 My emphasis in bold, whatever is quoted from this Confession was found at reformingcatholicconfession.com.
 - 27 When applying to study at Asbury Theological Seminary as a 22 year-old, I remember writing a confident rebuttal to a similar claim in the application process as I had to answer my ability to affirm Asbury Seminary’s Statement of Belief. Despite my enthusiastic response regarding the nerve of such a statement, I was still accepted.
 - 28 My conversations with these leaders were unofficial and based primarily in my friendship with Asbury Theological Seminary President and Steering Committee Chair, Dr. Timothy Tennent. I was not speaking on behalf of the Army but simply as a Salvationist.
 - 29 I recognize here that other notable calls have been made in the past few years for reinstituting Protestant sacraments in the Army. There is not space in this paper to provide analysis of their proposals but I do recommend them to you. David W. Taylor, *Like a Mighty Army?: The Salvation Army, the Church, and the Churches*. (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2014). Philip Needham, “Non-Practice of the Sacraments in The Salvation Army: Reconsidering the Decision 130 Years Later” [126-44] in *Saved, Sanctified, and Serving: Perspectives on Salvation Army Theology and Practice*. Edited by Denis Metruster (London: Paternoster Press, 2016). Needham’s proposal is intriguing because his classic book *Community in Mission: A Salvationist Ecclesiology* (Atlanta: The Salvation Army, 1986) is often pointed to the as the gold standard in defense of non-practice. Needham obviously affirms the Reformational concept of *ecclesia semper reformanda*.
 - 30 “We believe we are justified by grace through faith in Lord Jesus Christ and that he that believeth hath the witness in himself.”
 - 31 It is significant for the Salvationist to observe that generally in ecclesiological state-

ments sacraments are presented; sacraments are discussed in the Great Tradition's ("mere Protestant Christianity's") articulations of soteriology. Too often Salvationists merely assert that sacraments are not necessary to salvation (that is a soteriological statement), but sacraments are connected to what it means to be the church and is thus connected to ecclesiology.

- 32 See Steve Court's, "The Unofficial Sacramental Position of the JAC Editorial Board" found at www.armybarmy.com/JAC/jac50.html
- 33 See Gudrun Maria Lydholm's *Lutheran Salvationists?: The Development Towards Registration as an Independent Faith Community in The Salvation Army in Norway with Focus on the Period 1975-2005* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2017).
- 34 As a sixth generation officer who is raising seventh generation salvationists I recognize that six generations of my family tree have been non-practicing sacramentalists.
- 35 R. David Rightmire, *The Sacramental Journey of The Salvation Army: A Study in Holiness Foundation* (Alexandria: Crest Books, 2016). This book is a revised and expanded version of his earlier *Sacraments and the Salvation Army: Pneumatological Foundations* (The Scarecrow Press, 1990). These two works are connected to his Ph.D. dissertation at Marquette University.
- 36 I have reviewed the recent version of this book in the soon to be printed *Word & Deed* (November, 2017).
- 37 For this point I am indebted to my friend, Captain Keith Maynor.
- 38 I owe this perceptive application of *sola fide* to Professor Roger Green contained in his important "Minority Report on the Reintroduction of the Sacraments Into the Life and Ministry of The Salvation Army," International Spiritual Life Commission (London: March 22-27, 1997). This important paper is not available and is summarized in R. David Rightmire, *The Sacramental Journey of The Salvation Army* (Alexandria: Crest Books, 2016), 206-210.
- 39 For one classical expression see Thomas C. Oden, *Life in the Spirit: Systematic Theology: Volume Three* (Peabody: Prince Press), 261-368.
- 40 William Booth, "The General's New Year's Address to Officers," 2. Roger Green, of all scholars, has done the most through primary research on William and Catherine Booth. He found an exchange between Harold Begbie (Booth's authorized biographer) and the Archbishop of Canterbury Randall Davidson where Begbie offers that "... Booth was occasionally haunted to the end of his life by the thought of Holy Communion. Every now and then he wondered whether his decision had been right; rather wistfully looked back toward the idea of the Eucharist." He also shows Booth again said in another conversation in 1883 that non-observance was not a "settled question." See Roger Green, *The Life and Ministry of William Booth: Founder of The Salvation Army* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 147-8 and 260 note 32.
- 41 Shaw Clifton peppers his chapter on "salvationist sacramentalism" with 35 practical questions that should give the Army pause before reinstituting sacraments. Most of his questions would be answered by drawing upon the unity that exists in "mere Protestant Christianity" and the Wesleyan tradition. See Clifton's *Who Are These Salvationists?: An Analysis for the 21st Century* (Alexandria: Crest Books, 1999), 80-85.
- 42 Shaw Clifton, "People of God--Salvationist Ecclesiology," Part Two: "Our God-Given Position on Sacraments—A Candid Reflection." *The Officer* (March/April 2007), 2-7.

- 43 According to Melvin E. Dieter's classic text, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century* (The Scarecrow Press, 1996) the Army is the largest holiness denomination in the world. Grant Sandercock-Brown encourages an embrace of a "generous sacramentalism" and he somewhat humorously shows that "as a worship leader in the Army you could design any response to the sermon you want. You can use flowers, rocks, pieces of paper, pipe cleaners, nails, little crosses. The list is endless. However, the one thing you cannot use is bread and grape juice, the richest of all symbols in Christianity." *21 Questions for a 21st Century Army: Being the Salvos Now* (Fremantle, Western Australia: Vivid Publishing, 2014), 52.
- 44 As an officer leader, I have to escort people to high levels of reasoning and hermeneutical method to help people understand that we are not disobeying Scripture. If we affirmed *nuda scriptura* instead of *sola scriptura*, we might have a case for abandoning the sacraments. Salvationists have made good technical points about the lack of clarity in Scripture around sacraments. *Sola scriptura* invites the witness of the church into this conversation and calls it to great clarity. While Salvationist have made good points about sacramental passages, we have more often than not dipped our toes into the water of heresy and liberalism to explain our positions. The most frequent heresy committed by Salvationist interpreters is Docetism and is noted by R. David Rightmire in *The Sacramental Journey of The Salvation Army*, 133, 194, and 243.
- 45 To some I know this thought experiment might seem far-fetched. I am not offering a money-back guarantee that our ranks would grow or that former Salvationists would return. Let me be clear though to my point, namely that people have left or not come into our ranks because of our non-observance.
- 46 *The Songbook of The Salvation Army* (London: The Salvation Army, 2015).
- 47 The prophetic argument suggests that the Army is a witness to the church to not be dependent on forms. Of course the Army can be charged with perpetuating forms that have ceased to function. This prophetic stance is most notably defended by Shaw Clifton and Stephen Court. The Spiritualist argument is one that says spiritual realities outweigh material realities and is the most consistent way that Salvationists have flirted with the heresy of Docetism.
- 48 Shaw Clifton, *Who Are These Salvationists? An Analysis for the 21st Century* (Alexandria: Crest Books, 1999), 83.
- 49 In my article, "Suffering to and for Christ in William Booth's Eschatological Ecclesiology" *Wesleyan Theological Journal* (43:1, Spring, 2008), 104-129, I argue with Dr. Roger Green's contention that William Booth's eschatology caused a weak ecclesiology. I make that suggestion because, if anything, his eschatology created a strong mission focused movement. Early Army ecclesiology was not weak but it did lack maturity as it related to understanding its place within the Great Tradition of global Christianity.
- 50 These concepts are the functional foundations that are expressed through the form of the uniform and open airs. Though I am critical of Shawn Clifton's sacramental posture, I have benefited greatly from his chapter on the "Non-Negotiables" of Salvationism in the volume he edited, *New Love: Thinking Aloud About Practical Holiness* (Wellington, NZ: The Salvation Army, 2004).

Reformation 500: Here We Stand and the Matter of Culture

Amy Reardon

The Protestant Reformation changed the world. Politics, economics, art—everything was touched by it. Brad Gregory writes: “What transpired five centuries ago continues today profoundly to influence the lives of everyone not only in Europe and North America but all around the world, whether or not they are Christians or indeed religious believers of any kind.”¹

If this is an overstatement, it is not a dramatic one. The Protestant Reformation changed our systems and our attitudes irrevocably. It cannot be denied that a cultural revolution was afoot already, but when Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on that famous door, he united (to some extent) and galvanized those who were already clamoring for change and those who had never dared to dream that change was even possible.

The Setting

At the point in which Martin Luther entered history, the Catholic Church hovered over the Western world as grand matriarch. Secularism was unknown. Often referred to as “Christendom,”² society and religion were so intertwined that the legal punishment for heresy was death. Wilhelmsin describes the climate of that age from a rather starry-eyed Catholic perspective: “The political order just as the social order belonged to the order of the sacramental. Heaven was intermingled with earth for the purpose of blessing the latter, and time was absorbed inside of eternity. All of creation found its rhythm in the Trinitarian life of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Sacred society, in

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sum was a consequence of the Incarnation and the Redemption. A state separated from the Church, a society stripped of the divine, a religion restricted to the privacy of the individual conscience, would have been nightmares and monstrosities for a man of Christendom in the centuries that it flourished.”³

The idea of humanity being seamlessly connected to the divine and the notion of the world being governed by spiritual principles seem quite lovely. Unfortunately, reality proves that these are eschatological expectations only, and nothing of the kind has occurred under the sun while we still wait for the return of the Lord Himself. So, while Wilhelmsin’s description of the past is inspiring, it lacks accuracy.

Indeed, there was no utopia in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. The Church was notoriously corrupt and its reputation was in tatters. As Justo Gonzalez notes, “while most people still believed in the supreme authority of the Roman see, many found it difficult to reconcile their faith in the papacy with their distrust for its actual occupants.”⁴ It was disconcerting to have one’s sins absolved by priests who were so unrepentantly steeped in their own iniquity. Monasteries and convents had largely morphed into centers for leisure and merriment. Bishops were often appointed because they came from powerful, wealthy families. Priests and bishops unabashedly sired illegitimate children, and monarchs and nobles often provided for those sons and daughters by establishing them as abbots and abbesses. Between the Church and the rulers, one hand washed the other. The Church, the greatest of all landowners, wielded both spiritual and political power.⁵

In addition to the distrust caused by the Church’s moral corruption, uncertainty arose concerning the accuracy of the Scripture the Church was using. Scholarly information increased, partly because the fall of Constantinople a half-century earlier scattered Eastern minds into Western countries. These Eastern scholars brought with them manuscripts that “alerted Western scholars to the many changes and interpolations that had taken place in the copying and recopying of ancient texts.”⁶ Those in the West now wanted to consult original manuscripts and determine where the Church had strayed from the first documents.

Corruption and dubious copies of sacred Scripture had done more than simply pock-mark the theology of the Church. The very fiber of the religion was diseased; the message of the Word was obscured and the sacraments—the rituals that were the cohesion of the Church—had lost their deep meaning.

Passionate individuals had stood up in protest: notably, Wycliff, Hus (who was martyred for his opinions) and Erasmus. But real reform had not succeeded.

Perhaps none of this would have impacted society too much if it hadn't been for the fact that humanity was intellectually evolving and the world was pressing on toward the Renaissance. Education increased, serfdom was eroding, the poor were frustrated at the lack of care from the Church, and a middle class began to take shape. The world was poised for rebellion against its corrosive leaders. In addition, the improvement of roadways and implementation of the printing press meant that ideas and viewpoints had the chance to impact distant communities. People were thinking in new directions and had the ways and means to share those thoughts.

Enter Martin Luther. He was not the only leader in what was eventually a lengthy and widespread movement. However, his bold stance on October 31, 1517 and on occasions thereafter made him the poster boy for the Reformation both then and now. "We recognize, of course, that there were forerunners [and others who would follow] ... but from Luther the opening salvo would come."⁷

The Theology of the Individual

Prior to the Reformation, people saw themselves as part of a community and little more. The theology Luther introduced gave people autonomy. Some have embraced that, and some even to this day find it a scourge upon the Christian faith.

Of Luther's "five solae," perhaps there were two that played the bigger part in shaping culture. The first of the two was *sola scriptura*. Rather than the Church determining what was true and dispensing that information, Luther insisted that Scripture only taught us truth and that all persons should have access to it. "He wanted common people—the farm boy and milkmaid—to 'feel' the words of Scripture 'in the heart.'"⁸ Scripture was the means to a relationship—not with the Church, but with the Master who founded the Church. Scripture became the highest authority for the Christian, not the word of the priest or the papal bull. Faithful to his convictions, Luther himself translated the Bible into German. The printing press was employed to get Scripture and pamphlets of Protestant theology into the hands of the public. These develop-

ments meant that men and women relied more on their own understanding and less on the tutelage of the Roman Church.

The second key *sola* was *sola fide*. Catholic teaching asserts that salvation is impossible without faith *but* can only be completed when a person performs good works, which are joined together with the salvific work of Christ. Faith and works are required, so good works have eternal significance. This theology places intrinsic value on all human action. Luther, on the other hand, believed that people were totally depraved and continued to be so even after salvation. He understood that no human work was adequate to cleanse the soul from sin—however the point was moot to him, because Christ’s work on the cross is complete. Only faith saves, not works. So then, if people were saved by faith alone and not works, their eternal state no longer depended upon the things they did. This swung the door open for new pursuits that were not necessarily motivated by the need to earn one’s way into heaven. The seeds of secularism are found in the notion that the activities of this world have no bearing upon the next world.

According to professor Miguel Ayuso the result of Luther’s teaching was that “man discovered the potentialities that belonged to human nature in and of itself, without any reference to the grace of God. As a result, it stripped man and natural reality of their sacred character.”⁹ While it is true that many people develop their “potentialities” outside of God’s grace, it is likely that was the case to some extent before the Reformation. The point is strong, however, that this new surge of individualism gave rise to new secular discoveries. The question is whether or not that is altogether lamentable. Possibly more lamentable, if true, is his follow-up comment: “The Faith passed from being a corporative act to one that was purely individual.”¹⁰

Brian McCall develops this theme that human acts became selfish and graceless and even helpless under Luther’s theology: “If only faith saves and if only God bestows faith, then God must have predestined from the beginning who would get this justifying gift. The emphasis on predestination further undermined the value of human acts as it emphasized that good or evil acts bore no causal relation to the fate of the predestined soul after death. Even the act of faith lacks human agency as it is completely predestined by God.”¹¹

In other words, why should a person do good or be good if his eternal destination has been predetermined by God, without regard to the character or deeds of the person herself? Carter Lindberg argues the flipside, from a Prot-

estant viewpoint: “All mundane tasks from changing diapers to changing laws were imbued with religious significance, not because human works are salvatory but because God intends neighbors to be served.”¹² In other words, people perform righteous deeds not for their personal gain (Heaven), but because it pleases God.

The Rise of the People

With the ability and permission to read Scripture for themselves and the new conviction that faith saved people—not their deeds and not the “means of grace” provided physically through the Church—people pushed back against the authority of the Church. “Many became convinced that ordinary Christians...could read and understand the Bible without the teaching office of the Roman Church.”¹³ The idea of the priesthood of all believers grew in popularity. People began to consider that life as a clergyman was not the only sacred calling. Contrary to Ayuso’s concern, many people began to see every work as sacred and performed their tasks with that conviction. “They perceived that the Christian priesthood extended to every believer, endowing such temporal vocations as farming and smithery with new dignity and purpose.”¹⁴

Scrutiny of the priesthood led to a new view of marriage. It was no longer seen as the path for the less holy. Luther himself married; initially it was for practical reasons, but it developed into a loving relationship and a very happy family life. Respect for marriage was a laudable shift in Christian thinking. It is still one of the more obvious distinctions between Catholic and Protestant laity. But not only did the shift provide clergy the opportunity for this earthly happiness, it also spoke to laypeople about nurturing genuine love within the marriage bond.

With marriage being cast in a favorable light, the value of a woman also increased. Prior to the Reformation there were not many opportunities for women at all. Many were put into convents against their will. As a result of the Reformation, women were much less likely to wind up in a convent, and more likely to be married. Katarina Luther herself (Martin’s wife) was a nun who abandoned the convent. The Reformers encouraged women to learn the Bible and teach it to their children, and that important task affirmed the value of women. But “when women took the very Protestant notion of the ‘priesthood of all believers’ too far, male leaders began to reassert restrictions on women.”¹⁵ Calvin absolutely forbade women from preaching, but Luther would

consider some exceptions—for example, if no men were available!

In addition to these positive developments, serfdom and misuse of the lowest classes began to abate. However, this was not always through the happiest of means. Peasants saw Reformation theology and the dignity it afforded them as permission to rebel in violent, mob-driven ways against lords and other superiors. Because they were now taught that all men were bought with Christ's blood, they contended that "no Christian should own another as in serfdom." According to Lyndal Roper, Luther considered this idea a misappropriation of his teaching.¹⁶ But the strong conviction of the peasants led to such events as the Peasants' War, a tragic event that killed nearly twice as many people as the American Revolution.¹⁷

The Secularization of the World

Ayuso claims: "The trait that characterizes modern Europe—which...is merely a fraudulent replacement for Christendom—is secularization, which to a good measure is also a result of Protestantism."¹⁸

The godlessness that today seems to have risen to fever pitch in Europe—and to less an extent here in the United States—is a concern, certainly. And Ayuso is correct: much of the secularization of the world was enabled and even inadvertently encouraged by Protestantism. It was not really part of the vision the Reformers had, but it was the result. But while we are yet living before the return of Christ, we might find that there are some positives to this secularization.

The framework of society was impacted by the individualism that the Reformation fostered. It can be argued that capitalism was encouraged in several ways. The refusal of peasants to be mistreated any longer led to the rise of their entrepreneurial independence. The sense of dignity that was now acknowledged in all manner of work also encouraged people to innovate and succeed. In addition, the theology of *sola fida* created an awareness of two kingdoms: the earthly and the heavenly. Neither one impacted the other. That being the case, there was neither harm nor virtue in financial gain in this life, so why not enjoy a little profit if possible? While capitalism did not initiate with Protestantism, "its doctrines did work to remove the ancient obstacles to its widespread adoption."¹⁹

McCall describes what he perceives to be an untoward development: "The

exaltation of the individual, subjective conscience, combined with the destruction of the visible and hierarchical Church—which for centuries exercised her legal jurisdiction to restrain and correct immoral economic activity—tended toward the triumph of individuals and radical autonomy in the economic realm. Individuals could be relied on to interpret Scripture for themselves and to know the truth by an innate moral sense...and were, therefore, best suited to apply scriptural texts to their own economic activity.”²⁰

As a Catholic, McCall sees this individualism as unnatural to the spiritual person. For those who have been nurtured under Protestantism, individualism is most likely viewed as a positive thing (when kept within reasonable boundaries). The individual’s right to interpret Scripture and shape her morals depending on her understanding mean the freedom to do right by choice, not by edict. One can see how these notions impacted the founding of the United States and continue to be a strong part of our national character today.

Perhaps a less positive lasting effect of the individualism the Reformation proffered is the “invisible Church.” With the Reformers, Church became more loosely defined. Grace and salvation depended now upon personal faith and the (permitted) intervention of the Scriptures into one’s life. The institution of Church became less and less critical. Salvation became more “me” oriented, and less “we.” Today many people feel that they can live a life of faith without being duly connected to the body of Christ at all. And of course, many feel no need for Church or religious faith as part of their lives in any way. Before the Reformation and even in its early stages citizenry and validity in the community depended upon Church membership. The Church has become less definable, and one wonders if our communities would feel any impact if the churches were extracted altogether.

While little has been said in this paper of specific Reformers outside of Luther, the Anabaptists must be specifically acknowledged under the heading of secularization. This group of people who originally called themselves “the brethren” urged Zwingli to carry his reformer ideas to what they understood to be the logical, biblical conclusion. In a complete pendulum swing from the Church/state entanglement before the Reformation, the brethren felt that the true Church should pull apart from any structured society. They shunned infant baptism, which inaugurated an infant into the local so-called “Christian society” and offended the brethren due to its lack of personal choice in salvation.²¹ They refused to take up arms, opposing Zwingli’s willingness to

use force to impose Reformed Christianity upon unwilling communities. The Anabaptists segregated themselves into communities outside of normal society. The tradition continues with Mennonites and the Amish. Luther and Zwingli's movement promoted the adoption of Protestantism by town councils and princes. They did not have a vision that involved the separation of Church and state. It was the Anabaptists who set the tone for the separation of Church and state that we now consider so fundamental to our way of life.

While the Anabaptists pulled apart from the rest of society, the Reformation actually increased a sense of nationalism among many people. Parting ways with the Pope and his church meant that the strained allegiance to a far off land came to an end. Nationalism was further encouraged when Bibles were produced in native tongues, such as German. A shared language is a great uniting factor among people, so ties were strengthened within political boundaries as Latin ceased to be thrust upon people and local speech was regarded as fully appropriate, even for conducting worship services.

The arts were also impacted by the Reformation. Luther and Zwingli were concerned about the roles of music and visual art in the Church. Zwingli was against music and any images. He refused to bring into the worship space anything that he did not feel was specifically mentioned in the New Testament. Luther's position was far more receptive. He encouraged music and wanted it sung in the native tongue of the people. He is known for his composition of hymns, many of which are in regular use today. He felt that images were good and helpful, as long as they were not worshipped. Luther was, as regards to the arts, rather open-minded. It must be remembered that most art—especially most high and valued art—had been for the sake of the Church. Luther's view toward the arts and the general tenor of secularization as discussed above made space for other exploration. Just over a decade ago, art historian Julian Stallabrass wrote that "art's uselessness...is its main use."²² Such a notion is an ironic development when one considers that for centuries the purpose of art was to tell the story of God. Whether Stallabrass' assertion is considered intriguing or hopeless, he would never have developed such a thought without the freedom that was brought through the Reformation.

Where Does This Leave Us?

It is hard to imagine the world before the Reformation, where the Church

owned all, controlled all, dominated all. One might have some empathy for the Catholic position that the sacredness of humanity and society was compromised by the secularization the Reformation caused. But this assessment does not take into account something that was very important to Jesus: the “others.”

We are tasked with taking the Gospel into all the world. When Catholic theologians may reflect back on a world that was supposedly in tune with the Trinity, they ignore the fact that Christendom was a Western world reality, not a global reality. Imagine the gulfs between “us” and “them” that simply couldn’t be breached if our world had not secularized. We could never come to the table with people of other faiths and non-Western lands if everything about our society was driven by our doctrine. Our faith would be something we hoarded, not something we could present to others for their consideration.

The faith we uphold has been packaged in different ways by different groups, thanks to the Reformation’s legacy of individualism. By giving people the permission to read and interpret Scripture for themselves the way was paved for a plethora of denominations to emerge. While the Catholic Church may see varied expressions within Christianity as harmful factions, Protestants celebrate the opportunity for each believer to find stated doctrine that seems most worthy, and a worship style that speaks to his heart. In fact, because of the Reformation, an unusual group of worshipers of God came to exist, uniquely clad in uniforms and boldly serving their communities in every way they can possibly find. We call them “Salvationists.”

These Salvationists, unlike the original Protestants, do not embrace such doctrines as predestination, limited atonement, and infant baptism. We believe that people of faith can live holy lives and grow to reflect the image of Christ, whereas the Reformers did not have such a high hope for humanity. There are, however, very many points of doctrine on which we agree. And we are grateful that because of the courage of the Reformers we live in a world where we are free to be what we want to be, and free to choose to believe what we are convinced is of God.

Endnotes

- 1 Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation*, 1.
- 2 The term “Christendom” has been used to describe specific environments particular to different historical ages, and has been used colloquially as well as literally. Here it is used as suits the context of the late Middle Ages.
- 3 As quoted by Miguel Ayuso, “The Protestant Matrix for Modern Politics and Rights,” *Luther and His Progeny*, ed. John Rao, 72.
- 4 Justo Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, Vol.2, *The Reformation to the Present Day*, 6.
- 5 There were, to be sure, tensions and rivalries between princely rulers and the Church. It was sometimes a case of “keep your enemies closer.”
- 6 Justo Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, Vol.2, *The Reformation to the Present Day*, 7.
- 7 Gregg Allison and Chris Castaldo, *The Unfinished Reformation*, 16.
- 8 Timothy George, “Dr. Luther’s Theology,” *Christian History*, April 1992.
- 9 Miguel Ayuso, “The Protestant Matrix for Modern Politics and Rights,” *Luther and His Progeny*, ed. John Rao, 73.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Unfortunately, it is outside the scope of this paper to discuss at which points Wesleyan theology veers from Lutheran, and even, at times, bears similarity to Catholic theology.
- 12 Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations*, 363.
- 13 Gregg Allison and Chris Castaldo, *The Unfinished Reformation*, 16.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Kristina LaCelle-Peterson, *Liberating Tradition: Women’s Identity and Vocation in Christian Perspective*, 178.
- 16 Roper, Lyndal. *Martin Luther: Renegade and Prophet*, location 5136 (ebook).
- 17 Scott H. Hendrix, *Martin Luther: Visionary Reformer*, 156.
- 18 Miguel Ayuso, “The Protestant Matrix for Modern Politics and Rights,” *Luther and His Progeny*, ed. John Rao, 71.
- 19 Brian M. McCall, “The New Protestant Bargain: The Influence of Protestant Theology on Contract and Property Law,” *Luther and His Progeny*, ed. John Rao, 195.
- 20 Ibid, 184.
- 21 Despite his solae, Luther also supported infant baptism – oddly, since it effectively means salvation through a sacrament administered through the Church.
- 22 Julian Stallabrass, *Contemporary Art: A Very Short Introduction*, 126.

The Incarnation of Mercy

Diane Ury

Colossians 1:12-23, 27, 2:9-10

12 May you be filled with joy! Always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his holy people, who live in the light.

13 For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transported us into the Kingdom of the Son of his Love,

14 who purchased our freedom with His blood and has forgiven all our sins.

15 Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation,

16 for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him.

17 He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.

18 Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything.

19 For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ,

20 and through him God reconciled everything to himself.

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He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.

21 This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions.

22 Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.

27 And this is the mystery: Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance of sharing his glory.

9 For in Christ all the fullness of God lives in a human body.

10 So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority.

Each year we hear the Christmas story. This passage is one of my favorite for the season. (If you skipped over reading it, please do go back and read it.) God, in His Nature and Essence, is mercy. That's who He is. He veiled His majesty. The Creator of the heavens, the very One who holds the stars in His Hands, the actual Word that spoke everything into being—the mountains and seas, animals and trees into existence—humbles Himself into the smallest being: an unseen, tiny, unborn baby. The very Word who created all the universe becomes silent, speechless.

Why does He do this? What is God up to? He's sending His mercy. He loves to send His mercy to us.

In the book of Exodus we observe Moses moving into deeper intimacy with God. Yahweh, after 400 years of slavery and bondage of His people, is moving this remarkable leader into the revelation of who He is. The word "holy" is being defined by the Holy One through His Voice, His fiery presence, His rescue, His Word, which is the Law, His covenant. The more Moses knows of Yahweh, the more hungry he becomes for intimacy. God loves this. At the pinnacle of God's self-revealing in the Old Testament, in Exodus 34:6, He passes by speaking His nature aloud for Moses to know. The very first description this fiery, consuming, holy, awe-inspiring Yahweh reveals is "merciful." The Hebrew word is *racham* which means "great tender love, pity, compassion." And it is imperative to understand that its interchangeable meaning, from the

same root is *rechem*, which means “womb.” The definition of *rechem* is the same as *racham*, except that it also includes “womb, protection from harm.”

That His nature is merciful, is the first thing God wants us to know about who He is. *Christ is the visible image of the invisible God* (1:15). *God in all His fullness was pleased to live in Christ.* (1:19) He hears our cries and answers them. “*Let Your mercy come quickly to meet us, for we are brought very low*” (Psalm 79:8).

Jesus Christ is the very mercy of God! He is God Himself breaking into our realm. The ultimate glory and splendor of the unseen, yet completely real (we just can’t see it), supernatural world, enters into the created world! On beautiful Christmas mornings we feast and celebrate that mercy is born. Undeserved Loving Kindness has invaded our darkness—He hates our darkness. He comes into it as light that cannot be overcome, to rescue us! (Col. 1:13). God the Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity, became a human child. He took on our human nature so that we could become God’s child by His divine act and Presence, and so that we could take on His Holy nature.¹ That’s the beautiful message of Christmas. It’s a gift. A free gift from Him. Hear me now. He reached down and scooped us into Himself—all that which is ours, so that He could give us that which is His—His holy character. *May you be filled with joy! Always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his holy people, who live in the light.* (1:12) Emmanuel, God is with us! His nature and His behavior are mercy.

John and Charles Wesley understood the good news of Christmas in this way. Jesus’ coming was not an occasion for some sentimental lip service to a charming baby who would eventually provide our “get out of hell free card.” That baby is Jehovah come to fully rescue humankind and take us right into holiness Himself. Wesleyans sing their theology. Some of our most important thoughts are found in hymns.

The eternal God from heav’n came down,
The King of Glory dropp’d His crown,
and veiled His majesty,
Emptied of all but Love He came;
Jesus, I call Thee by the Name
Thy pity bore for me.
Didst Thou not in Thy Person join

The natures human and divine,
that God and man might be
Henceforth inseparably one?
Haste then, and make Thy nature known
Incarnated in me.

In my weak sinful flesh appear,
O God, be manifested here,
Peace, Righteousness, and Joy,
Thy kingdom, Lord, set up within
My faithful heart, and all my sin,
The devil's works destroy.²

His Mercy is Tender

He sees us as we are, a lost race. God sees with perfect clarity that we are pitiful, even pathetic. We are in complete distress. Human beings honestly cannot do anything about our despair and our despicable lives. We are utterly incapable of helping ourselves. We can't better our human condition. But He can. He sees us, and our plight moves Him to compassion. His pity and tender love encompass us within His great mercy. And like birth labor He moves to bring life.

In Matthew when it is revealed that the Person in Mary's womb is "Emmanuel, God with us," that is a statement of identification. It is more than spatial geography about God's immanence. It is an ontological declaration about the Triune God, and about the extent of His salvation for humankind. God not only sees us, but He becomes us. He becomes our human condition, one of the human race. God the Son wraps Himself up in our human clay. He now knows exactly what it's like to be us through His own personal experience and intimate encounter. He knows what it's like to be you, and all the things you're going through. He tastes the human condition and experience with the deepest kind of knowing imaginable. The Incarnation is the ultimate "knowing." It is the most radical identification, comprehension, experience and encounter in history. The Creator God apprehends His creature into His own eternal Being. Because He is Love, He takes us right into Himself. Mercy is tender, womb-like. He feels our plight with His great compassion and longs to rescue us from harm.

Away with our fears:
The Godhead appears,
In Christ reconciled,
The Father of Mercies in Jesus the child.

Made flesh for our sake,
That we might partake,
The nature divine,
And again in His image, His holiness shine.

An heavenly birth,
Experience on earth,
And rise to His throne,
And live with our Jesus eternally one.³

God's Mercy is tender and His mercy is fierce.

His Mercy is Fierce

Mercy (compassion) is a word Yahweh uses to describe Himself. Mercy is anything but weak; it is the strongest force in reality. (Ask any woman who has labored and delivered a life from within her womb.) With His loving mercy He looks at our death and says, "I won't have that for my beloved people!" His fierce compassion consumes our death in His Life. Through His condescension, conception, sinless life, suffering, death, resurrection and ascension He swallows us up in Life! (2 Cor 5:4).

He sees our sin, and He is powerful to cleanse and consume that, with His holy merciful fire. Our need is so great and so vast; we can be vile. Our depraved state is grim. Maybe some of you have a memory like this. I remember when I was probably five or six years old, having a heart that was so selfish. I was cruel. I was unloving. My heart was dark while I was still only a small child. We should be so grateful for our children's ministries that understand that children can have this darkness in their hearts and need to be set free.⁴ No one told me that Jesus could come into my heart, cleanse me from my meanness and set me free. It was a frightening thing as a six-year-old child to know that I was full of something that I could do nothing about! I needed Jesus. We

all are in that state of being.

Does God know everything? Yes, of course He does! God knows absolutely everything. He knows the depth, height, the breadth of our sin. He knows that the extent of our sinful nature is so deep that it has to be healed in order for it be excised. And the only way for God to heal such an extensive disaster was to become human. “Sin” is not primarily bad behavior. Our destruction comes from willful separation from our source of life, from God Himself. The Incarnation is the healing of that separation, that fatal wound. It is the unification of humanity with divinity.⁵ When the Creator becomes His creature, He becomes our very salvation. Salvation means “healing.” It is more than an experience that happens to us. Jesus IS our salvation. He invites us into this union with His divine nature. The union in biblical language is often translated as “complete,” because we’re no longer separated from our Source. Our person is restored to His Person. *For in Christ all the fullness of God lives in a human body. So you also are **complete** through your union with Christ* (Col. 2:9).

Jesus takes our great human dilemma, our predicament into His Being. Life and Holiness Himself becomes human so that He can recreate, renew and restore us—make us what Jesus calls “perfect,” which means *all that God has ever dreamed we would be*. He joins in Himself the widest extremes of our human predicament with the widest extremes of His holy love. Humanity and divinity together, in a little baby.

For your salvation, He takes all that you are, all that you’re carrying, all that you’re struggling with. He can bring healing there, to the deepest depths of depravity and despair, and He can restore and renew. He comes with healing in His wings, in righteousness and love, He comes in truth and mercy. He will cleanse with fire in order to make us pure vessels for His Presence to the world.

Mercy consumes our death, and our sin. He also consumes our self-centeredness.

Our family has some funny Christmas gift traditions. Perhaps yours does as well. One of ours is filling Christmas stockings with toiletries. Things like toothpaste, dental floss, and deodorant. Things we need for day-to-day life. My children and I were discussing one day how important it is to use the

right kind of deodorant, because when you're super stressed that can seriously increase your level of body odor. In fact, it can become out of control. Maybe some of you also struggle with "the battle of the body odor."

We all carry a fragrance with us every time we enter a room. We all do. Every time. The stain of our sin is so deep that we just can't find a deodorant to apply on the exterior that can keep its smell under control. Especially when we're stressed. That stain causes the fragrance of our lives to become a stench. It's called "flesh." In the Bible "flesh" means living your own life in your own strength, without the presence of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes when I'm under a lot of pressure I can scurry around trying to make things work for my own purposes, and without even realizing it, I can fill the atmosphere with the stench of my self. I don't know if any of you might have that same tendency.

There are some women I know who wear gorgeous smelling perfume, and to be anywhere near them is lovely. But some of us fill the space with self. Jesus wants to cleanse us from that. John the Baptist came with water when he approached our odorous sin, but Jesus cleanses with fire and the Holy Spirit. When we're living in our own strength, for our own selves, whenever we enter a space, what do we flood it with? 1) Stress and anxiety? A person's stress can become palpable to everyone nearby, forcing them to breathe in the toxicity. 2) Do we fill meetings with our grumbling, with critical and negative attitudes that spread throughout the whole space in a few moments? 3) Do we enter the room full of passive aggressive manipulation? Do we make no eye contact, we don't talk, we give the silent treatment or shunning? That is a stench of self that will overtake a whole community. 4) Or are we simply consumed with our own self? Whenever we walk into a room we are obsessed with "how I'M treated. Am I being appreciated? Am I the center of attention? What is everyone thinking about ME? I have to be the one in control, or the funniest one." We can just suck all the air out of the room.

Jesus' mercy can overcome us with a fierce kind of cleansing, where He can join Himself through the Holy Spirit to our nature. He can put to death that self-interest that has the ability to flood any space with an odor unbearable for everyone else. He can recreate and renew, cleansing our natures so that when we enter a space we fill the atmosphere with fresh, selfless air. Jesus mercifully provides a "de-selferant" for the smelly decay of corrupt flesh. The Spirit breathes life into our beings, quickening our humanity to its intended manifestation. We can actually become so like Jesus that when someone en-

ters into the space of our life, they experience the sweet smelling fragrance of Christ. Dr. Helen Roseveare was the most outstanding example I ever had of a person so filled with Jesus that when I was in her presence I was flooded with accepting, abandoned, and unreserved love.

Would you like to become a person like that? A person who IS unreserved love? I want to be that kind of person. A person who showers everyone near them with undeserved mercy, where the other is more important than oneself. Jesus can make us like that, because that's who He is. He can make us a person who is safe. Like a womb. Whenever any person comes into the ambit of our lives, they are safe. They experience our self-giving with no hooks, and no expectations in return. He can give us a nature like His own, that focuses naturally on others. Mercy can do that.

Mercy is tender, mercy is fierce, and mercy re-creates.

Mercy Re-Creates

The One who is love, who is mercy, who is our refuge, He is our creator who comes from heaven and eternity and enters time. History pours into Mary's womb and has united Himself to our human condition forever and ever. He doesn't just apply an external deodorizer, as a "de-selferant," He pours into us His very life through the Holy Spirit. The Bible says that all the promises of God are available to us; they can pour into our lives!

I love 2 Peter 1:3-4. It says, "*Through knowing the Lord Jesus better and better, He gives us everything we need for life and for godliness. He has called us to receive His Own glory and goodness. Through His promises we can participate in the Divine Nature, and escape the corruption of our age caused by evil desires.*"

Our creator comes from outside, from the holy realm, to breathe into our dust clod life, to de-selferize, and to recreate His image in us! Jesus is more than just our example. He did not come only to teach us how to live. He brought our vileness right into Himself, and He fully intends to bring His Holy, loving life, right into us!⁶

He deigns in flesh to appear,
Widest extremes to join,
To bring our vileness near,

And make us all divine;
 And we the life of God shall know,
 For God is manifest below.⁷

When God the Spirit overshadowed Mary, Jesus Christ began to re-create human existence. Where Adam and Eve had ruined humanity by distrust and separation from our Source, now the Source condescends to once again unite Himself to humankind, in a woman's womb, becoming what Paul calls "the Second Adam" (I Cor 15:21-22, 45-49 and Romans 5:15-17).

From the moment of His conception the Son began to recapitulate the hopeless dilemma of human existence by reliving the human race, by enduring all things humans ever have to endure. But Jesus Christ, because He is God, lived every moment of human being in the perfect union and intimacy with the divine source as we humans were supposed to do when creation began. Jesus lived a real human life without sin. Jesus Christ, God the Son, endured every implication and temptation of human life.

Hebrews 2:16-18 says, "*We all know that Jesus came to help the descendants of Abraham, not to help the angels. Therefore it was necessary for Jesus to be in every respect like us, his brothers and sisters, so that He could be our merciful and faithful High Priest before God. He then could offer a sacrifice that would take away the sins of the people. Since He Himself has gone through suffering and temptation, He is able to help us when we are being tempted.*"

As a zygote, the Creator is reigning over the entire cosmos, uninhibited by space and time, reliving human life, just as He had always intended for it to be lived. In the womb, the Triune God began the recapitulation of the Kingdom of Evil.⁸ At that moment of conception human history was turned. It was the incarnation of mercy. The hope of salvation became possible. Our creaturely existence was exalted to the place God had always intended it to be. This historical act of God is the beginning of reconciliation.⁹

The Incarnation of God, the Word made flesh, restores us to His likeness. Our Creator became our Redeemer. So there is no sin, no pain, no horror that Jesus cannot help us gain victory over. 1 Cor. 15:49, 56 "*Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust (Adam) we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven (Jesus).... Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Hear it again: *“For in Christ all the fullness of God lives in a human body. So you also are **complete** through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority”* (Col. 2:9-10). Our faithful surrender to Jesus brings us into union with Him. His powerful authority is available to us for defeating sin, discouragement, despair, disgust. There’s absolutely nothing we face that our union with Jesus cannot help us to endure and to have victory over.

The amazing thing is this: mercy is tender, mercy is fierce, mercy will re-create, and He knocks!

Mercy Knocks

The oxymoron is that the Lord wants our permission. He requires our choice to receive Him today. Just like Mary. Will you open the door of your heart? God came to Mary and asked her if she would be a place where He could make His home, His dwelling place. He comes to each of us and He asks, “May I come and pitch My tent in your life and heart?” He assures us that it’s going to be hard. It was hard for Mary. People will reject us and be cruel if we choose to live by His Word and walk in His ways. But He asks us the same question.

What did Mary reply? Did she say, “But, I really want to be popular...? But, I really want to be successful, and comfortable, and safe...?” That was not her response. She said, “Yes. Let it happen to me according to Your Word.”

God is here! Mercy is here! He comes to every one of us and asks, “Will you, (*insert your name*), be the dwelling place of God?” Will you, like Mary, be the door through which the Eternal One can have access to enter into someone’s closed, dark world? You can become the door for someone else to meet Jesus.¹⁰ But you must completely surrender every single part of your being to God the Son, the Living Word, the Creator, the One who is Merciful, the One who will restore you into His image once again. The Bible tells us God will write His image on our hearts.¹¹ Will you come to the Mercy Seat where He is present? He will re-create you, with fierce, strong love. He will birth His very Life into your being. Into my being. His life, His love, His mercy, His kindness, His patience, His fragrance will flood the world, will infuse every space we walk into. And every person who walks into the space of our lives can experience His merciful loving presence. Jesus will ignite and create god-

ly passions and desires. Then we can be His Body of tender and strong mercy to this hurting and lost world.

“His mercy is on those who fear Him, from generation to generation” (Luke 1:49-50). We have many generations within our ministries. We are those who fear Him. We are in awe of Him. We are the generation who humbles ourselves in reverence before Him. We are embraced into His merciful heart.

His mercy satisfies. His mercy creates and fulfills the desires of our hearts. He gives purpose to our lives. He allows us to be able to receive love. And mercy allows us to be able to give and be love to His hurting world.

*O God, Who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of Him who humbled Himself to share our humanity, Your Son Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.*¹²

Endnotes

- 1 Irenaeus ed. Hans Urs von Balthasar, (Ignatius Press, 1981), p. 54. Irenaeus repeatedly expounded upon God the Son condescending to become fully human in order to re-create humanity as the Second Adam. He calls this recapitulation. God relives human existence so that humans are not just able to be better behaved creatures, but taken right up into the very life of the Triune God.
- 2 Charles Wesley, (The Charles Wesley Society, Madison, NJ 1991), p. 36. This small collection is packed with beautiful, deep theology of the Incarnation.
- 3 Ibid. p. 20-23. This is why, when I teach systematic theology, I intertwine the studies of Creation, Christology, and anthropology together, right near the beginning of the course.
- 4 David Rightmire, (Crest Books, Alexandria, 2003), p. 59. Brengle was committed to ministry to children his entire life, because he knew the capacity for a young heart to be held in captivity to sin.
- 5 Dennis Kinlaw, (Francis Asbury Press, Nappanee, 2002), December 17.
- 6 Thomas F. Torrence, (InterVarsity Press, USA. 2008), p. 95. The entire chapter on the virgin birth contains clarifying theology about the hypostatic union of Christ, and of humans.
- 7 Wesley, p.15.
- 8 Kinlaw, September 30.
- 9 Thomas Torrence, p. 65.
- 10 Walter Wangerin, (Zondervain Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI. 1999), p. 69. This advent devotional is remarkably powerful. Wangerin's ideas about mercy are helpful.
- 11 Jeremiah 31, Ezekiel 36, 2 Corinthians 2-5, to name a few passages about God's plan to write His image upon our heart.
- 12 Phyllis Tickle, (Doubleday, New York, 2000), *Christmas Day Collect*.

Book Review

Howard A. Snyder

The Band Meeting: Rediscovering Relational Discipleship in Transformational Community

By Kevin M. Watson and Scott T. Kisker

Franklin, Tenn.: Seedbed Publishing, 2017. 172 pp.

At the 2017 New Room Conference, sponsored by Asbury Seminary and Seedbed Publishing, seminary professors Kevin Watson and Scott Kisker shared their personal testimonies. They told how their lives had been deeply changed by participating in a band meeting organized according to the original Methodist pattern.

In this small book, *The Band Meeting*, Watson and Kisker explain the history and function of early Methodist bands. Bands were “the engine of holiness” within early Methodism, the authors argue, “the core strategy to bring about holiness, or deep life change, which John Wesley believed God had particularly planted within Methodism’s DNA.”

This book is especially timely for the church today. It explains the strategic role of bands in the whole Methodist system in a way I have never before seen or fully understood. The authors show that in Wesley’s mind, bands had a solid theological and biblical foundation. Reading the book nudged me to join with others locally in forming a band.

The book’s first five chapters explain the history and theology of Methodist bands, including their “rise and fall” within Methodism. The final three chapters focus on practicalities: How to start a band, “Keys to a Thriving Band Meeting,” and personal testimonies—more than a score of them from men and women of varying ages and different walks of life including pastors, sem-

inary students, and professors—people now engaged in bands on the original Methodist model.

Although this book focuses specifically on bands, it covers a broad sweep theologically. It thus gives a good introduction to Wesleyan theology for readers who may not be familiar with this tradition.

Watson and Kisker tie bands directly to Wesley's stress on social holiness. For Wesley, social holiness meant people experiencing God *together*, primarily through joining in classes and bands. Watson and Kisker clarify a key point here. Though class meetings were essential and required of all early Methodists, bands were the real catalyst of deep spiritual change and discipleship. Wesley well understood that disciples should go deeper in their Christian experience than typically happened even in the classes. To be entire Christians and really live inward and outward holiness required actually doing what James 5:16 says, "Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed." This was the biblical charter for bands, such confession and healing seldom happen without them.

Watson and Kisker call for a depth of spiritual experience and accountability that today is countercultural. Yet this is why bands are needed. Bands were countercultural also in Wesley's day. But they worked, for they provided an essential ingredient in discipleship.

Kevin Watson teaches Wesleyan and Methodist studies at Candler School of Theology, Emory University. Scott Kisker is professor of church history at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. Both also participate in bands.

Few leaders in church history have combined word and deed as truly and seamlessly as did John Wesley. May we join his band!

Book Notes

Roger J. Green

Pasquarello III, Michael. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Theology of a Preaching Life*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017.

People's first thoughts of Dietrich Bonhoeffer are as a theologian and martyr. But this book is a reminder that Bonhoeffer was a compelling preacher, and everyone who takes the preaching of the Word seriously will be inspired by this book. The preface to the book well summarizes Bonhoeffer's life as a preacher. "For Bonhoeffer, preaching is at once a theological and practical activity in which God loves, judges, and reconciles the world through the presence of the incarnate, crucified, and risen Lord, who by the work of the Spirit is transposed into the human words of preaching to create a new humanity in Christ" (vi). This book is a remarkable view of the life of preaching for Bonhoeffer, and the three sections—Preparation, Preaching, and Consequences—provide the reader with both historical and theological insight into Bonhoeffer's preaching, perhaps challenging the reader to think about his or her own life of preaching and the weight of the task for all who stand behind a pulpit.

Phillips, Elaine A. *An Introduction to Reading Biblical Wisdom Texts*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2017.

This book is written by a colleague of mine at Gordon College for many years, and an Old Testament scholar of the first order. Elaine Philips also teaches at Jerusalem University College, and not only reads Hebrew but is fluent in the language. Her insights into the Scriptures are compelling, and this

book takes the reader to the heart of wisdom literature in the Scriptures. However, the writer does so in the context of the universal search for wisdom, and that is where Elaine Phillips begins her book before moving into Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job, and Song of Songs. The reader need not fear that this will be a difficult text. Dr. Phillips has the wonderful ability to make complicated subjects understandable and practical, and yet to retain the interest of the biblical scholar. All Christians seek the wisdom of the Scriptures. This book will assist them in that journey.

Hoskins, Steven and David Fleischacker, eds. *Justified in Jesus Christ: Evangelicals and Catholics in Dialogue*. Bismarck, ND: University of Mary Press, 2017.

This inspiring work is the product of faithful dialogue between Evangelicals and Catholics, not unlike the conversations that The Salvation Army had several years ago with the Roman Catholic Church. Of interest to the reader will be that many of the Evangelical participants were from Wesleyan denominations such as the Free Methodist Church, the Church of the Nazarene, and The Salvation Army. The introduction to the book states that “In 2013, the members of the dialogue decided on a four-year round that would cover the topic of justification and bring us to the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation in 2017” (9). And so the theology of this volume covers original sin, initial justification, the relationship between justification and sanctification, and the relationship between justification and final judgment. This work, therefore, is critical not only because it highlights the importance of dialogues among Christians, but also because it reminds us of central biblical doctrines by which we all live and define ourselves as followers of Christ.

Edge, Lynette and Gregory Morgan. *Partnering with God: Being a Missional Salvationist*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017.

Here is a book on the mission of the Church that will be helpful to Salvationists as well as to fellow Christians who are engaged in the work of the Kingdom. What is compelling about this book for most of our readers is that it is written by two Salvationists who have been engaged in the work of

The Salvation Army in several contexts, and who are sharing their insights from that broad perspective, including their experience of teaching within the ministry of The Salvation Army in Australia. Their intention is to move the Army into the future. *Partnering with God: Being a Missional Salvationist* will challenge the serious reader and in some instances will stimulate dialogue. However, in the world in which we live such dialogue is taking place in the Church, and this book constantly places that dialogue within the biblical mandate of the mission of the Kingdom of God, and thereby the mission of The Salvation Army in the global world which the Army engages every day.



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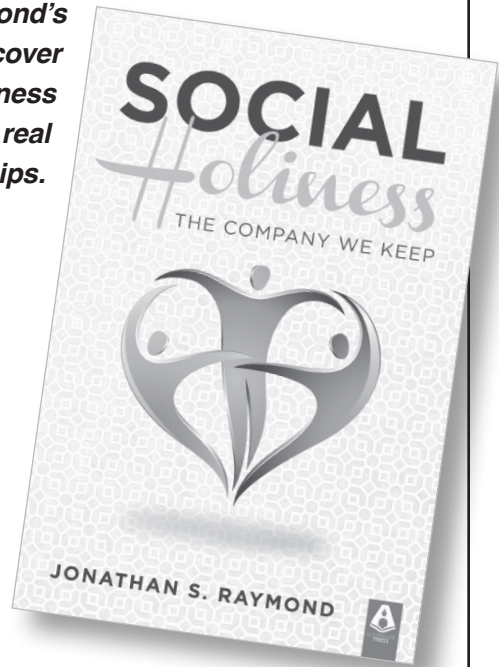
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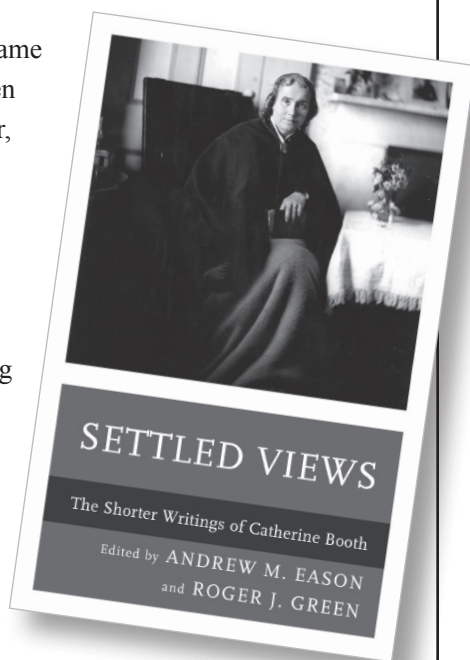


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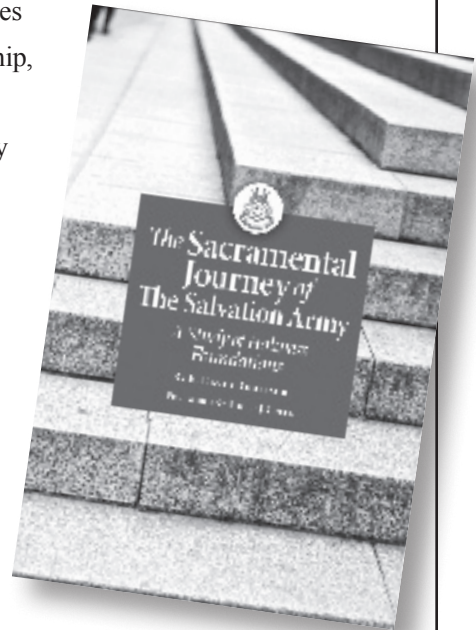
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