WORD & DEED

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Editorial:

Juxtaposynthesis

In the spectrum of colors, we see various hues that result when two primary colors are laid side by side. The same phenomenon may be experienced in a spectrum of thought. In this issue of the journal, we juxtapose primary issues facing The Salvation Army's emerging theology in ways that underpin its varied ministries and transforms its identity. A rich synthesis of insight and self–understanding emerges in the process.

The first four issues of *Word & Deed* focused first on The Salvation Army's doctrine of holiness and then on a matter of increasing importance, our emerging ecclesiology. Early attention to these two foci is appropriate in light of the centrality of holiness to The Salvation Army's collective identity within the Body of Christ. We are to be, in the words of the Lord spoken to Jeremiah, "a people, a name, a praise, and a glory" (Jer. 13:11). The book reviews in the first four issues underscored, within our Wesleyan theological distinctives, the saliency and importance of these two themes: holiness as a people and our life together as a church within the larger Body of Christ, the Church universal.

We begin this issue with the integration of these two themes beginning with the lead article by Phil Needham entitled *Integrating Holiness and Community: The Task of an Evolving Salvation Army*. Here the author provides an incisive analysis of our situation, suggests indications of change presently underway and provides a rationale for pursuing "our self–understanding as a people of God." At the same time, he identifies crucial issues that must be addressed in the future. He concludes with a review of practical steps needed if The Salvation Army is to complete the

task of truly integrating holiness and community. Needham first gave his remarks as
the Coutts Memorial Lecture in Australia this past year. We believe his article is of
such significant value to The Salvation Army world that it merits sharing with a
wider audience.

Mary Docter offers us an important complementary piece entitled *Faith Learn-
ing Across Cultures*. This article was first given as an address at The Salvation Army's
International Symposium on Faith Education in London, England last year. We are
reminded that teaching faith issues must always be contextualized within particular
cultures. Docter provides an orientation toward biblical models for faith education
within a framework of thought that embraces both a high view of Scripture and
culture. She discusses three principles for cross–cultural teaching and ministry and
then provides a most useful discussion of two case studies to help us apply the
principles.

With the juxtaposition of the Needham and Docter contributions in mind, we
next turn to two pieces on The Salvation Army's International Spiritual Life Com-
mission: an invited editorial on the work of the commission by one of its members,
Lt. Colonel Lyell Rader, and the actual commission report. Called into existence by
The Salvation Army's former international leader, General Paul Rader, the commis-
sion produced a significant instrument for guiding The Salvation Army's spiritual
life across cultures and around the world for years to come. The commission's re-
port provides us with a watershed of insight and direction, yet it is not without its
soft–spots and areas of potential controversy occasioning differences of opinion
and judgement. Lyell Rader's use of the word "discernment" in the title of his edito-
rial is particularly poignant and challenges the reader to engage one's own.

Finally, the book reviews and newly featured Readers' Forum, with two readers'
responses to previous issues, adds further to the juxtaposynthesis offered by this
issue. The word juxtaposynthesis was first heard being used at Greenville College
by a professor of Visual Art and Sculpture, Professor Steve Heilmer. The word con-
veys the idea that when two or more things are juxtaposed, the result is often a
synthesis. This is more than just the old adage that "the whole is greater than the
sum of the parts." Something new, something never before experienced, emerges as
insight, clarity of thought, or a novel idea or principle. The emergent new insight is
experienced in a deeper, more profound way. Professor Heilmer's art promotes
juxtaposynthesis as in the time he created a variation of *The Pieta* (the sculpture of
the crucified Christ in his mother Mary's arms) and juxtaposed it with various col-

ored Christmas lights. This also happens in thought when two academic or professional fields are brought together like health and human behavior, psychology and law, psychology and theology, or ministry and media.

We believe there is a juxtaposynthesis of all the content of this issue and with that which has gone before in the previous four issues. We do not wish to comment on the nature of the syntheses occasioned by this issue of *Word & Deed*. That is for you to experience as a reader. However, we do believe that the Holy Spirit can use juxtaposyntheses to work in us and through us as a people, that he is doing so in our individual and collective character, and that this work has to do with restoration to that which he imagined us to be from the very beginning (see Divine Imagination, Vol. 1, No. 2., pp. 1–3). He is the great juxtaposynthesizer. God is doing yet a new thing in and through his people known as The Salvation Army.

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Integrating Holiness and Community: The Task of an Evolving Salvation Army

Phil Needham

Introduction

At the beginning of this paper, I wish to acknowledge the substantive and extensive contribution of the Salvationist for whom this lectureship is named. His role in the development of our doctrine of holiness and his insightful reinterpretation of it are benefits for which we are grateful and from which we have immensely profited. His helpful, though much less extensive, contribution to our ecclesiology, our understanding of the Church as well as of The Salvation Army as a legitimate expression of the Church, should also be recognized. As the title of this lecture suggests, what I intend to do is to bring these two strands together in our thinking, and as I do this, I will draw upon some of Frederick Coutts' wisdom.

I also wish to acknowledge Roger Green's excellent first lecture in this series. In that paper Green pointed the way forward in the evolution of our Salvationist theology and rightfully argued for the development of our theology and of our under-

Phil Needham is a colonel in The Salvation Army and currently serves as the Chief Secretary in the USA Western Territory. This paper was first presented in 1999 as the Frederick Coutts Memorial Lecture in Sydney, Australia.

standing of ourselves as a people of God, a church. I wish to draw on what he had to say, as well.

My thesis is simply this: At this time in our history, it is crucial for Salvationists to understand and live the corporate dimension of holiness and to develop an ecclesiology grounded in the call to holiness. I wish to open discussion and debate on this matter, rather than give you a finished product, for which there is insufficient time. The paper will therefore be suggestive rather than comprehensive, but I hope it will successfully challenge some old, questionable assumptions and stimulate your own thinking.

Where We are

I think there are four key points to be made about our current situation in relation to these issues.

First, though Salvationists still generally (or at least theoretically) agree on the importance of the call to holiness, our commitment to it seems weaker than in our earlier days. Perhaps our accommodation to the culture around us has made us un-comfortable with the radical concepts of a holy lifestyle. Less and less do we use the traditional language of holiness. Many corps do not even have a "holiness meeting," or at least they do not call it that. But Salvationists who know the Scriptures and our own Salvationist history know that our identity as a holiness people or movement is essential to our self-understanding, as well as our mission. What we need, it seems, is help in seeing how holiness can be lived out in this day. I will argue that the corporate or social dimension of holiness is essential to this insight.

Second, I think we are stronger today in our desire to be a "church," though still insecure about the whole question. Early in the 20th century, Bramwell Booth wrote that we are as fully a church as any other,[4] but only fairly recently have we become comfortable actually referring to ourselves as "a church."

Roger Green uses church-sect typology as a model to describe our 135-year evolution.[5] It is certainly true that many of the changes we have undergone are illuminated by the model of a sect's evolution into a church—changes such as greater accommodation of the cultural values of the societies in which we work, more focus on our internal processes, increased bureaucracy, widening of the gap between officers and soldiers, etc. I disagree, however, with Green's suggestion that this evolution should be seen as something good in and of itself, that we should recognize

what we have become as a social group and use that outcome as the basis for a proper self–understanding. I am concerned with any suggestion to allow our ecclesiology to be driven by sociology. Certainly the sociologist can study our evolution from sect–type to church–type and thereby provide us with some helpful insights; but I think our development as a movement should be guided primarily by theological rather than sociological considerations. What we are as part of the Church is far more important than what we are as a church. In fact, I fear that some of our desire to become a "real church" may have little to do with mission and ministry and more to do with acceptance, respectability and, perhaps, even compromise. We need to be very clear about what we really have in mind in our push to become a "church."

Third, we are not yet sure where this whole matter of community fits into our theology. I think this is primarily because we are, to varying degrees, under the spell of Western individualism. We focus on our individual relationship with God and what God can do in our lives personally. We say far less about how God works in community and in our own relationships in community. We have work to do here.

Fourth, consistent with our Western individualism, we still tend to see the relationship between holiness and community as one–directional. We see the development of holy relationships as a function of the holy heart. We can truly love one another when our hearts are right. Community does not nurture holiness; holiness nurtures community. The Church, to the extent that it is truly the Church, is a function of the holiness of its members.

I do not think that the relationship between holiness and community is that simplistic or one–directional. Holiness is also nurtured by community and is meaningless apart from it. It also is a function of community.

To summarize the way I see our present situation: we still see ourselves as a holiness movement though commitment to the radical lifestyle of holiness seems to have weakened; there is a growing trend to see our movement as a church; our strong Western individualism makes it difficult for us to give community a central place in our theology; and we need to do more work in articulating the important role of community in shaping our holiness.

Why We Are Where We Are

The situation in which we find ourselves is partly the result of three unfortunate trends. The first is the privitization of holiness. Our emphasis on the holiness expe-

rience as intensely private has encouraged us to divorce holiness from community. We have nudged ourselves closer and closer to an individualistic interpretation of holiness. Hence, we have been strong on compassion for the lone outsider but weak on nurturing the community of faith where members care for and support one another. How many times have we said that we Salvationists care for those we serve in mission more than we care for our own? And how many times have we sarcastically remarked how difficult it is for the saints to get along? A private holiness will not make us caring of one another and builders of community.

The second trend is toward an ecclesiology divorced from our understanding of holiness. Our adoption of the hierarchical–institutional metaphor as the organizing principle of our movement and its processes has worked against our ability to integrate holiness and community. Since we look at ourselves as an organization rather than an organic body, our relationships with one another are defined more impersonally in terms of keeping the organization running. The organization can run without holiness, but the Body of Christ is holy and requires holiness in order to be itself and carry out its purpose. In hierarchical institutions emphasis is on position and status, with decision making being power–based. In the Body of Christ emphasis is on servanthood and shared power. To the extent that our functional ecclesiology is hierarchical, holiness is severed from Salvationist practice.

This divorce has been further strengthened by the increasing attention given to our social services as a separate enterprise. Norman Murdoch's thesis that The Salvation Army turned to social salvation in the latter 1880s because of membership decline[6] may carry some element of truth. Perhaps this change in direction did precipitate more centralized control over weakened congregations as the social service bureaucracy expanded and organizational structure became more important. Increasingly, the structure developed a life of its own that was divorced from the faith community.

Signs of this divorce between our ecclesiology and our understanding of holiness can be seen in a number of ways. Holiness occupies a smaller and smaller place in our Army life and is seen less and less as the norm for our faith communities. (Some would even say that Salvationists have generally lowered their ethical standards.) There is an inordinate emphasis on quantitative, rather than qualitative, measurements and means of evaluating our ministries, which we more often refer to as "programs." Church growth principles have sometimes been applied without a primary focus on nurturing and discipling saints. Programs have increased, sometimes

with little reference to spiritual intent and content.

The third trend is the continuing organizational prejudice against our self–understanding as a church. This, of course, runs counter to the growing pressure from many Salvationists to see ourselves as a church, but we still have a persistent strain of resistance to this pressure. In our early years, it was largely a reaction to the ineffectiveness of established denominations to reach the masses and the decision that our movement could carry out its mission most effectively outside existing church structures. Today, the resistance is strengthened by a hierarchical organizational structure in which power primarily flows from the top down and the "career tracks" of officers are facilitated by frequent moves. These realities place the focus on the organization rather than the local congregation. The organization becomes more important than the body. This is why, our insistence on commitment to longer appointments to the contrary, we still move officers frequently in order to solve our organizational dilemmas.

There are, however, hopeful signs of change. One of them is that we are giving more attention to theology in general and ecclesiology in particular. I think that the nurture of open theological debate can have a significant influence in helping us to address these issues.

An Important Sign of Change

I think it is significant that we are taking theology more seriously. This is demonstrated, for example, in the appearance over recent years of theological works by Salvationists, the more recent launching of *Word & Deed*, and the upcoming International Theology Symposium to be held in Winnipeg. Theology is what the Church, not an organization, does. It takes place in the context of ecclesiastical community, or it is not true theology. There is no lone theologian. Theology (unlike philosophy) has always been Church dogmatics (to use the title of Karl Barth's theological tomes). The orthodox creeds were hammered out and refined within the ecclesiastical community and were a function of them. They began (as do our Army doctrines): "We believe ..." If we Salvationists are going to take theology more seriously, we are going to have to give more attention to our understanding of the Church.

In fact, this is precisely what seems to be happening. In 1981 I was asked by International Headquarters to write a Salvationist response to the World Council of Churches' ecclesiastical document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM), and

my work was published by the Army in book form in 1986 (*Community in Mission: a Salvationist Ecclesiology*). This was followed in 1990 by a companion volume *One Faith, One Church* (no author identified), which contains responses to specific sections of BEM and clarifies the Army's official ecclesiastical views. Between these two publications, an Ecclesiology Symposium was convened in Winnipeg under the auspices of the then Catherine Booth Bible College. More recently, the 1998 Salvationist Handbook of Doctrine (*Salvation Story*) included an unprecedented chapter on ecclesiology entitled "The People of God." It seems that Salvationist ecclesiology has gone official.

As I have already said, we seem generally to be trying to emerge from our ecclesiastical closet and "come out" to say that our Army really is "church." We are adopting (previously anathema) church terminology, such as congregation, pastor, worship service, order of service, affirmation/confession of faith, tithe, etc. The question of sacramental practice is being raised with increased frequency. Here we need to ask what our real motivation is. To obey a command of Christ? To make clear our full membership in the historic Church? To fullfill a desire to be more like the other churches?

What we need to make sure of is that our self–understanding as a church is the fruit of biblical faithfulness, theological integrity and our Salvationist calling. It should give no quarter to compromise, acceptability, or imitation.

There are plenty of good reasons to give attention and thought to our self–understanding as a people of God, and I would like us now to consider them.

Reasons to Develop Our Self–Understanding
as a People of God

The first reason is our commitment to the message of Jesus that the kingdom of God has arrived. The kingdom, of course, is a social as well as a personal reality. The message requires an understanding of community and a commitment to live in this new community in a specific, concrete context. What does it mean to live, minister, worship in and do mission from this community? Green describes the Army as "an intentional kingdom community."[7] How do we see that intention lived out? Our ecclesiology will help us answer these important questions.

The second reason to develop our ecclesiology is our need for a teaching and

nurturing community that will provide the orthodox guidance we need in developing contemporary thought that is Scripturally faithful. We have already mentioned the important role of the early Church in defining orthodoxy and heresy, primarily through its councils. At every level the community of faith should provide teaching and theological dialogue. Individual experience and illumination can be very dangerous if left uninformed and unguided, not only by Scripture, but also by established theological tradition.[8]

The third reason to develop our self–understanding as a people of God is the necessity corporately to contextualize our doctrine of holiness. If holiness is, as we Salvationists have claimed, perfect love, then it is meaningless outside a community in which the love of God can be experienced, expressed and learned. "If we love one another, God lives in us, and His love is perfected in us." (I John 4:12, NRSV). We must be that kind of community or our holiness is empty. Ecclesiology can help us come to an understanding of who we are as a holy people of God.

I have already referred to the inroads that extreme Western individualism has made in our Army. Forty years ago theologian Emil Brunner saw the threat to the Church as a whole. He wrote:

> The true disciple of Jesus is always a man fundamentally ready for fellowship and capable of fellowship. This is the reason why the New Testament quite specially speaks of the Holy Spirit in those passages where it is dealing with the brotherhood of the *Ekklesia*. For just this is true holiness as the New Testament understands it — a life of real fellowship.... All individualism as a religiosity directed to the salvation of one's own soul is a contradiction of the will of God revealed in Jesus Christ.[9]

I think Brunner saw the danger of extreme individualism damaging and distorting the spirituality and the mission of the Church in the West. Individualism wants to make Church a voluntary piece of our lives, something to take or leave, but as Geoff Ryan discovered in Russia, Church is the true Christian's life. It is the family, the support system, the nurturer, the teacher, the needed homebase for mission. It cannot be done without.[10] Individualism would make the community of faith an option for the Christian, and it comes as no surprise that the Church is in its most serious decline where extreme individualism is well established. Where holiness is not nurtured in a faith community, it dies.

The fourth reason for developing our ecclesiology is to provide a strong theological base for the development of the gifts, leadership, and contribution of all our

soldiers and adherents. We live in a day when we desperately need to train, empower and release for ministry our laity. We also need to train, empower, and release our officers to be authorizers and enablers of our soldiers.[11] But the lack of a Scripturally based understanding of the Body of Christ will make it far more difficult to do this. Without this understanding it is far easier for us to create a hierarchy which honors only the spirituality and gifting of those at the top (the religious professionals) and concentrates power in them.

The fifth reason for developing our self–understanding is the need to approach our shrinkage in the West on the basis of a truly biblical understanding of who we are as the people of God rather than desperately to pursue church growth gimmicks. I have put this last on the list because I believe that we should not be driven primarily by fear of extinction. The fact is, however, that we must face up to our decline (in the West mostly) and deal with it primarily from an ecclesiological conviction rather than concern for organizational survival.

I turn now to the two crucial issues I wish to address in this paper: the holiness of the Church and the corporate dimension of holiness.

Two Crucial Issues to be Addressed

The Holiness of the Church

We need to begin to think in terms of what it means to say that the Church is holy. Heretofore, we Salvationists have tended to think only of an individual saint, or a collection of individual saints, not of the communion of saints. This way of thinking ignores some things worth considering.

First, it ignores the New Testament witness that the life and mission of the New Testament Church was guided, governed, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Coutts saw that just as this work of the Holy Spirit is crucial for each individual Christian, so it is for the Church as a whole and for each congregation. In other words, the Holy Spirit can do His holy work in the life of the Church as well as in the heart of the individual believer.[12]

Second, "saints" always appears in the plural form in the New Testament. Letters tend to be addressed "to the saints" in some congregation or group of congregations. Letters to individuals never address those persons individually as "saint." The practice of designating a specific Christian as a "saint" developed later, as holiness became increasingly uncommon in an increasingly compromised church.

Third, thinking of holiness only in individual terms violates the apostle Paul's important metaphor of the Church as a living Body. In this metaphor wholeness (holiness) relates to the health of the whole body. Health or unhealth in one part of the body affects and can spread to the whole. The true physician is primarily concerned about the overall health of the person he treats and about the health of a part of the body in terms of how it affects the health of the whole. Similarly, a healthy person is one who has been nurtured in some healthy relationships, and a dysfunctional person has been nurtured in a dysfunctionl family and, in fact, still needs dysfunctional relationships in order to continue to be dysfunctional. We are all part of groups and relationships that deeply affect us and are affected by us. Each of us is part of a larger, interdependent body.

An organizational–institutional understanding of the Church cannot honor Paul's organic metaphor. In this view the "body" is defined by status, hierarchy, and the exercise of privilege, power, and political advantage. Interdependence is exercised only for those purposes and not for the health of the body and the accomplishment of its purpose.

Fourth, the Churches' orthodox creeds confess "one holy Catholic [universal] and Apostolic Church." As Salvationists, we affirm these creeds. But what does it mean to say that the Church is holy? Obviously, an organization cannot be holy, though we have sometimes been guilty of glorifying our Army as if there were something sacred about the institution itself. But the Body of Christ can be holy, just as a human body can be healthy, though not perfect in every way. A people can be holy.

We need, therefore, to address this issue of the holiness of the Church as an important dimension of our developing ecclesiology. We need also to address the corporate dimension of Holiness.

The Corporate Dimension of Holiness

Consider the reasons. First, sanctification involves the restoration of community. The stories of the Fall and the first murder recorded in Genesis clearly show that sin profoundly affects the health of relationships, and the apostle Paul speaks of "the hostility between us" caused by sin (Eph. 2:14). In the cross, says Paul, "the dividing wall" has been broken down. The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is a clear demonstration of the unity which His sanctifying work creates (Acts 2). We have too long neglected this corporate, community–creating dimension of the Holy

Spirit's work.

Second, holiness must be seen as a personal journey only as part of a journey in fellowship with other believers. We are "citizens with the saints and ... members of the household of God" (Eph. 2:19). The New Testament only allows me a holiness which is both singular and plural. We can, of course, use the logic of individualism and somehow extrapolate a private holiness, but we would definitely be going beyond Scripture and probably violating it. The New Testament teaches me that I am a saint only if we are the saints.

Third, the call to holiness is a call to the whole Church. It is not a call to a few spiritual super-stars as it came to be seen as the Church moved into the Constantinian compromise. It is a call to all Christ's followers. Jesus' prayer for His disciples includes us all: "Sanctify them in truth ... for their sakes I sanctify Myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth" (John 17:17,19). Paul says that:

> Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to Himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind — yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:25b–27).

Holiness is for "all of us, [who] with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18). Only our extreme individualism makes holiness an option. Holiness is for the whole Church.

Fourth, Brengle himself taught that holiness is meaningless without its corporate expression. He saw this expression primarily in terms of unity. He said: "The religion of Jesus is social. It is inclusive, not exclusive. We can have the glory only as we are united ... The spirit of Jesus in the heart, which is the spirit of holiness, makes all men brothers and brotherly."[13]

Fifth, Coutts has helped us to understand that holiness can only be realized in relationships.[14] "As we grow in the experience of holiness," he said, "we learn how satisfying our human relationships can be."[15]

To sum up, I have argued that we must take seriously both the holiness of the Church and the corporate dimension of holiness. Our final task is now to suggest some ways in which we can bring these two together where they belong, in both our thinking and practice.

The Integration of Holiness and Community

Let me outline what I consider to be the key steps in the task of integrating holiness and community. First, I think we need to move beyond our traditional resistance to being a part of "the Church" or to being "a church." Clearly, William Booth turned against identifying his movement with the churches because he became convinced that their attitudes and processes had become so antithetical to mission that we would simply have to go on our own. But in truth, when we have said "Army" we have said "Church," because an army is a community of people who have come together for specific purposes. We have said something about how we understand "Church."

Recognizing that we are a church with a special mission within the Church's one calling, we need then to oppose any tendency within our ranks toward a stated or implied antithesis in which our emphasis upon individual holiness causes us falsely (and heretically) to disparage the idea of the Church as an entity — that is, to see the true Church only as a collection of holy persons and the institutional church as a very compromised, unholy body. Our real task is to articulate what understanding of "Church" defines us, and to live and minister by that understanding.

The second step is to come to an understanding of how the Holy Spirit works, not only in the individual believer, but also within the Body of Christ, between and among believers. We have already pointed out that the action of the Spirit in the New Testament Church most often takes place within a community of faith, or creates a community of faith. It is also instructive to observe that a number of the terms used to refer to salvation describe its communal as well as its personal benefits — words like reconciliation, adoption, ransom, wholeness. Green refers to the Wesleyan quadrilateral as "an appropriate interpretive way... [to] be understood and embraced in our life together."[16] Two of the four sides of the quadrilateral derive from the community of faith (Scripture and tradition), and as we have already pointed out, the other two (experience and reason) need the guiding influence of the faith community. I think we need to give some serious thought to how the Spirit works in community and some serious attention to how we can be sensitive and responsive to that work.

The third step is to expect the saints to be community-builders. Coutts refers to the remark of some soldiers about their comrade who had experienced the blessing of holiness: "He were not hard to get along with until he were sanctified!"[17] This is

a good illustration of the privitization of holiness. Holiness is seen as an exclusive experience which isolates, even alienates, the sanctified from the unsanctified believers. The issue becomes "I have it and you don't." Or, "He has it, and I don't — and I'm not sure I want it." The amazing thing is that we seem largely to have accepted this distortion, or we think it not uncommon for the person professing holiness to be isolated from others by virtue of his deeper spirituality.

We need an expanded understanding of holiness. We need the standard of holiness to include building community with others, honesty toward oneself and charity toward others, the courage to take the risk of empowering and authorizing others, the refusal to polarize and play politics within the Body of Christ, accountability to others. We need a working understanding of holiness that merges with what the Spirit is doing in the community of faith.

The fourth step is intentionally to separate the holiness of the Church from its structure, offices and forms of government. In other words, avoid and resist institutional idolatry. There is nothing sacred or holy about our organization and its forms of government. In fact, like all institutional structures and processes, they must be constantly scrutinized and evaluated—and changed—if they are to be rescued, not only from ineffectiveness, but also from idolatry.

I want to go even further and say that institutional idolatry weakens corporate holiness by focusing on human accomplishment (defined by institutional standards of measurement) rather than divine miracle (defined by Scriptural teaching about what God does in community). Organizational accomplishments are fairly predictable: certain inputs will usually deliver anticipated outputs. We rightly praise the Salvationist who does the precise things that will guarantee a certain organizationally desired outcome. There is nothing wrong with this. It is not, however, what makes us the Body of Christ. What makes us the Body of Christ is that we are a holy people who have given ourselves over to radical discipleship, have thrown caution to the wind and are preparing ourselves for God's unexpected both in our life together and in our mission. As important as organizational structures and processes are — and we simply could not do without them in one form or another — they must never been seen as holy. This would not be an integration, it would only be an idolatry that would corrupt us.

The fifth step is to resist our tendency toward dualism in how we see the Body of Christ and its means of grace. The Army has benefitted substantively from Quaker spirituality and the example of its radical Christian lifestyle and social conscience.

Where I think we need to exercise caution in adopting its thinking is in the area of the relationship between the spiritual and the physical. Quaker thought often emphasizes the spiritual dimension as all–important, to the disparagement of the physical. The traditional Quaker lifestyle pursues the divestment of unnecessary physical accoutrements, and Quaker worship looks to lean surroundings in order to reduce physical distractions to meeting God. In my view, as much as the Society of Friends has to teach us, what we must critique is a tendency toward a dualism of spirit and matter in which some pure form of the former is pursued and the role of the latter is devalued or even eliminated. This tendency can easily lead to a form of Gnostic heresy, implying that only spirit is good and all things material are evil. Then the biblical doctrines of Creation and the Incarnation are in question.

In his discussion of the Army's position on the sacraments, Coutts seems to draw on Quaker spirituality when he says, "Yet he who personally knows the divine presence has no need of the mediating elements. He possesses the substance of which they are the shadow."[18] One would have to judge that these words imply a dualistic disparagement of the physical as inferior and ultimately unnecessary. They seem to point toward a state which is pure spirit in which there is "no need of the mediating elements." Such a view, of course, is consistent with the idea of immortality, but it calls seriously into question the distinctively Christian doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body.[19] It manifests a lack of integration between spirit and matter, both of which are God's good creation.

Yet, when he subsequently discusses the Army's use of forms and ceremonies other than the traditional Protestant sacraments, Coutts does not call upon Quaker spirituality, but rather a freedom to use different means of grace, never requiring that any particular one must be used.[20] This view is consistent with the approach of the recent Spiritual Life Commission Report and is, I think, the way forward for us. Our best argument for not formally practicing the traditional sacraments is based, not on a questionable disparagement of God–created matter, but the freedom we have in Christ to use all means of grace which he has made available and to avoid the institutional ritualization of any of them.

What does this have to do with the integration of holiness and community? Simply this: Dualism pushes us toward excessive individualism. An important part of what binds us together in community are the physical realities and the means of grace we share. To withdraw from the physical and escape to a spirit realm is to pursue a spiritualist privateness which abandons community. It is precisely to en-

courage the divorce between holiness and community. Hence, we must question all dualistic theology, especially as it may undermine the life of the Body and the value of means of grace.

The sixth step is to explore the universal call to holiness as decisive for our ecclesiology. A priesthood–centered ecclesiology distinguishes the holy calling of the priest from the secular calling of the laity. A holiness–centered ecclesiology sees the Church as comprised of the holy people of God, both priests and laypersons — or better still, an entire nation of priests. (I Pet. 2:9) In fact, it makes a separated priesthood irrelevant and leads inexorably to an understanding of Church without distinctions of spiritual status. If we abandon this holiness–based concept (as we are tempted to do), then we will probably have to base our ecclesiology on precisely that which enables us to enforce spiritual status and privilege: power.

Coutts saw the New Testament Church as undivided by distinctions of priest and layperson. He noted that early Christian leaders were seen by Jewish religious leaders as "untrained laymen." The only priest was Jesus Christ.

> In the new era which began at Pentecost the same Spirit was given to all, the same levels of spiritual experience were open to all, were required of all, and were possible for all. All who were of "one accord in one place were all filled" with the Spirit.[21]

The universal call to holiness defines the Church as a community growing in holiness with no predetermined levels of spirituality, only a dispensation of functions based on gifting and maturity. Holiness, in other words, helps us to understand the nature of Christian community.

The seventh and final step is to find the key to the integration of holiness and community in the doctrine of the Trinity. Coutts pointed out that John 17:21 does not refer to a structural unity or an organic union, but rather to "a spiritual unity as is manifest in the 'oneness' of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There is no richer diversity than is manifest by the Trinity, yet no diversity is more completely a unity, with Father, Son and Holy Spirit sharing every act of thought, will and feeling."[22] Perhaps Coutts has suggested the most important theological key to our task. As a true understanding of holiness requires that we see this blessing as a work in which the Trinity, not only the Holy Spirit, is involved, so also a true understanding of Christian community requires the linkage of our life together with the life together of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The holiness of God is a cold, lifeless, abstract concept apart from an understanding of God as Three–in–One, as a Godhead Com-

munity in which love is shared; and the holiness of God's people is little more than religious arrogance and polarizing behavior unless that people is a Godhead community in which Godhead love is shed abroad. As God is holy in community, so are we. As our holiness is both nurtured and expressed in community, so do we authentically reflect our threesome, holy God.

It is time we took our dust–covered doctrine of the Trinity off the shelf of a dull, useless orthodoxy and put it back in circulation. It was never meant to be a well-protected museum piece, a theological relic of the past to be admired at a distance and protected from invasion. It lies at the heart of our theology. It is the reality that defines both what it means to be holy and what it means to be community. It is the key to the holiness of the Church. I submit that our task of integrating holiness and community will be both profit and pleasure if we undertake it in the fellowship and under the teaching of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Notes

1. See, e.g., Wayne Pritchett, "General Frederick Coutts and the Doctrine of Holiness," *Word & Deed: A Journal of Salvation Army Theology and Ministry* (Fall 1998) I.1:49–64.

2. See, e.g., General Frederick Coutts, "The Salvation Army in Relation to the Church," London: International Headquarters, 1978.

3. Roger Green, "Facing History: Our Way Ahead for a Salvationist Theology," *Word & Deed,* (Spring 1999)*I.II: 23–40.*

4. Bramwell Booth, *Echoes and Memories,* (New York: George H. Doran, 1925) p. 65.

5. Green, p. 29.

6. Norman Murdoch, *Origins of the Salvation Army,* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994) pp. 115ff.

7. Green, p. 36.

8. Green makes this point in arguing for our consideration of the Wesleyan quadrilateral as a methodology to inform and guide our life as an Army. Pp. 33–35.

9. Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith, and the Consummation* (Dogmatics: vol. III), trans. by David Cairns, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960) p.296.

10. Captain Geoff Ryan, "The Community of God? (What Russia has done to my idea of Church)," *The Officer,* (April 1997) pp. 38–40.

11. See Green, pp. 36–37.

12. Coutts, p. 14.

13. Quoted in R. David Rightmire, "Samuel Brengle and the Development of Salvation Army Pneumatology," *Word & Deed,* (Fall 1998) I.1 p. 33.

14. Frederick Coutts, *The Splendour of Holiness,* (London: Salvationist Publishing & Supplies, Ltd., 1983) p. 17.

15. Coutts, p. 38.

16. Green, p. 33.

17. Coutts, *Splendour,* p. 27.

18. Coutts, "The Salvation Army in Relation to the Church," p. 16.

19. In defending the Army's nonpractice of the traditional Protestant sacraments, Salvationist writers and teachers have often called upon the example of the Quakers and the dualism of spirit and matter usually implicit in their theology. I think that this approach to our argument for nonsacramental practice needs to come under close theological scrutiny. Our willingness to use other concrete means of grace certainly calls into question whether we actually have adopted the Quaker view.

20. Coutts, "The Salvation Amy in Relation to the Church," pp. 17–18.

21. Coutts, *Splendour,* pp. 53-54.

22. Coutts, "The Salvation Army in Relation to the Church," p. 14.

Faith Teaching Across Cultures

Mary Docter

A multicultural 21st century is no longer a mere probability; it is a reality. With the rise in technological advances, people migrating for economic well-being, and politically persecuted groups searching for greater freedom, intercultural contact is inevitable even in the most remote parts of the world.[1] In Brussels, Belgium, for example, one new baby in every four is Arab. Koreans populate entire sections of Asunción, the capital of Paraguay. Pakistani laborers, Filipino hostesses, illegal Iranians and Western executives meet daily on Japanese streets, a country with a centuries-old uniculture.[2] In the United States, cultural diversity has become the norm rather than the exception. Leaving out the 170 different Native American groups (which comprise less than one percent of the total population), there still remain over 270 different ethnic groups in the country. Due to the increase in multiracial births and the rapid influx of immigration of people of color,[3] government forecasters predict that by the year 2050 the representative face of the United States will no longer be white.[4] People and the values they represent are spreading around the world in greater numbers and at greater speed than ever before. Therefore, whether we travel abroad or stay at home—wherever home may be—we will inevitably encounter diversity. As a church committed to education and evangelization in the new millennium, The Salvation Army must be prepared to handle these intercultural encounters with effectiveness and sensitivity.

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Culture Defined

Culture helps to determine the way we think, feel, and act, and in doing so, it becomes the lens through which we view the world. But what exactly *is* culture? Literally dozens of definitions exist, ranging from the very broad to the very narrow.[5] In general terms, however, culture is the life–way of any group of people. Unlike much of the biological world, the information humans need for survival is not encoded in our genes. If you raise a dog away from other dogs, it will still be able to behave essentially as a dog. This, however, is not the case for humans. Much of our humanness is taught to us by the culture in which we are reared.[6] Culture provides a set of rules for getting along in life, a model for perceiving, interpreting and relating to the world.

In *Intercultural Encounters*, Donald W. Klopf delineates seven general characteristics of culture:[7]

First, culture is pervasive: it permeates all of society and encompasses virtually everything that is not biological—including visible things such as buildings, clothing, and machines, and invisible things like the laws, rules, norms, customs, and an immense number of other written and unwritten directions that guide and govern our actions as members of society.

Second, culture is learned: the way we behave in our culture is learned early in life from our parents and other adults who are important to us. For example, although heredity provides us with certain inherent human faculties, how we use these faculties stems from the rules of our culture. Thus, while eating is a biological necessity, our culture determines *what* we eat. In some cultures we learn to consume beef and find eating dogs offensive; in other cultures, this may be exactly the opposite.

Third, culture is shared: shared cultural patterns bind us together as an identifiable group, enabling us to live together in harmony.

Fourth, culture is adaptable: our culture adapts to our surroundings. Cultures develop to conform to certain environmental conditions and the available natural and technological resources. Thus, the culture of city dwellers differs from that of people of rural parts; those who live in cold climates adapt to meet needs differently from those who live near the equator.

Fifth, culture encompasses explicit and implicit behaviors. Cultures are made up of overt, explicit ways of behaving, feeling, and acting, which are taught to us consciously. John is taught to eat with a knife, fork and spoon, while Fumiko learns

to use chopsticks. Cultures are also made up of implicit ways of behaving, feeling, and reacting. These are not taught to us, but rather are unstated, covert ways of acting that we pick up unconsciously and of which we are usually totally unaware. For example, we in the West usually don't think about wearing pants, eating at a table, or sleeping in a bed, yet these are culturally determined behaviors. They are habitual and customary, and we tend to perceive them as the only way to behave, if we think about them at all.[8]

Sixth, culture is changeable: cultures continually undergo change, generally due to cultural borrowing, disasters or crises, and environmental conditions. Until the mid 1900s, changes were slow and gradual; today, however, the rate has accelerated greatly. For example, we see changes in our concept of beauty, gender roles, diet, and hobbies, to name just a few.

Finally, ethnocentric behavior is a significant characteristic of culture. Members of every culture regard the way in which their particular group operates as natural, correct and superior, while the ways others think, feel and act seem odd, amusing, inferior or even immoral. Such a perception can be beneficial; it gives us pride in our culture, helps to perpetuate traditions and preserves a sense of cohesion and identity among the group.[9] Nevertheless such ethnocentrism—the belief that the cultural ways of our own group are the only way or the only "right" way—can be dangerous, especially when taken to extremes. Ethnocentrism inhibits adjustment and understanding of other cultures, blinds us from recognizing that they offer viable alternatives for organizing reality, and can lead to parochialism.[10] Only by overcoming our ethnocentric view of the world can we begin to respect other cultures and function more effectively in them.

As part of every person's life, culture is a unifying factor. Nevertheless, although we all have in common some aspects of culture,[11] we also reflect a diversity of cultures. For example, some groups consider life to be linear (beginning with birth and ending with death), while others believe in a cycle of rebirths; some regard aging as undesirable while others reserve the highest respect for the eldest members of the family. There are "doing" cultures (in which members work hard to accomplish things) and "being" cultures (where people are content with their status in life); there are cultures that value change and those that value stability and things as they are; there are cultures that are individualistic (where the self is independent and provides a unifying concept—a direction to one's thinking, a perspective for one's activity, a source of one's motivation, and a focus for one's decision–making) and

cultures that are collectivistic (in which members perceive themselves as part of a group, whether it be an extended family, clan or an organization, and where the group's image, esteem and goals take precedence over personal goals).[12]

In summary, before effective faith education can occur, we need to recognize the extremely powerful influence culture exerts on every aspect of our daily lives. Culture has determined what foods we will eat today and at what time, the clothes we are currently wearing and the organizational structure and style of this very journal. Cultural identity is a fundamental symbol of an individual's existence. It influences our thoughts and expectations, our needs and motivations, our actions and behaviors regarding ourselves, others and the world around us. It shapes our attitudes (what is noble, pure, lovely, etc.), our values (what is right or wrong), and our beliefs (what is true or false). It helps define our worldview, and determines our perceptions of God, our form of worship, how we express our faith and how we teach others about it. And it does it all in *subtle ways*, wielding most of its influence upon us *unconsciously*, so that we enact many of our cultural patterns almost as a reflex. Thus, we see our own way of doing things as natural and correct, and we expect that what makes sense to us should make sense to others. Nevertheless, if we desire to teach and minister to people from other cultures with the least amount of misunderstanding, we must place ourselves into the cultural worlds that *others* inhabit and attempt to perceive the world through *their* eyes.

Faith Teaching Across Cultures: General Theory

Christ initiated Christian mission with His command that His followers carry the gospel to the ends of the earth. From that moment forward, as Christians have worked to fulfill that mission, they have struggled to understand both the message and the method of witness. In the New Testament, we find the apostles wrestling with the implications of bringing the gospel to a culturally diverse world. For example, did Gentiles have to be circumcised? Could Christians eat meat offered to idols? Did new believers have to adopt the Jewish law? Today, we face the same challenges as we attempt to witness to a world equally full of cultural differences.[13]

Few, if any, concerns should be higher on the Christian agenda than how to conceive and express one's faith in one's cultural setting. This subject, sometimes referred to as "ethnotheology," is the subject of Morris A. Inch's brief work, *Doing Theology Across Cultures*. Inch begins his discussion with general theory—exploring the concept of revelation as the basis of theological endeavor, and concludes

that there are not, strictly speaking, many truths, but *one truth* viewed from *differing perspectives*. Thus, Christianity is not capable of radical reinterpretation, but is rather one faith communicated to all mankind.[14]

Using Donald McGavran's study, *The Clash Between Christianity and Cultures*, Inch next considers the tension between biblical authority and cultural integrity and proposes that we must take both a high view of Scripture and a high view of culture.[15] He summarizes that a high view of Scripture holds that the Bible is the Word of God in the words of men—essentially the Salvation Army's first doctrine. This differs considerably from a low view, which regards the Bible not as revelation, but merely as a record of human insight touched in some vague way by God. The low view is unacceptable because it tends to substitute cultural consensus for biblical authority and even goes so far as to promote culture as the arbiter of truth. Inch therefore concludes that, "the high view of Scripture is necessary if we are to interpret the text accurately, affirm it as divinely authoritative, preserve its uniqueness, resist cultural tyranny and promote Jesus as Lord."[16]

Inch next examines a high versus low view of culture. A low view of culture is an ethnocentric perspective which rules out everything not done "our way." It is wrong because it rules out the rich diversity of various cultural heritages and thereby denies the creative expression of humanity as formed in God's image.[17] Instead, he couples a high view of Scripture with a high view of culture. This view recognizes that differing cultures represent a *variety of equally reasonable ways of thinking*, each of which is determined by its own peculiar set of circumstances.[18] Given a high view of culture, the introduction of Christianity will have a direct effect on only a very small part of the culture's essential elements. Studies show that only when the local culture is respected will Christianity truly spread.[19]

Inch concludes by noting that the task before us would be much easier were it not for our high regard for Scripture *and* culture. By promoting one over the other there would be less ambiguity, uncertainty and tension, but there would also be less integrity, excitement and growth. We therefore must resist the temptation to pit one against the other.

Biblical Models

Having laid out the general theory embracing both a high view of Scripture and culture, we now examine some models. To begin, it is reasonable to suppose that the Scriptures will provide us with some definite clues as to how to express our

faith in a cultural setting successfully. After all, the history of the Christian Church has been, in great part, an intercultural experience as the disciples of Jesus attempted to carry out His command to preach the gospel to all peoples throughout the world.

Paul provides perhaps the most obvious example.[20] Recognizing that different audiences are at different stages of knowledge of God, Paul always assumed the perspective of his particular audience, whether Jew or Gentile, when he expressed his faith: "To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law.:... I have become all things to all men, so that by all possible means I might save some" (1 Cor. 9:20,22b).[21] He understood and made adjustments for cultural diversity. Paul was, of course, bicultural: a citizen of the Greco-Roman city of Tarsus, he was also reared in a devout Jewish home and trained in the rabbinical tradition. According to Marvin K. Mayers, the bicultural person is "comfortable and at peace with peoples of diverse styles or norms, while at the same time he is protected from abandonment of his own principles."[22] Thus, while Paul was excited to be the apostle to the Gentiles—and was fully able to appreciate (or at least tolerate) that culture—he still described himself as "of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews" (Phil. 3:5). Maintaining identity with his primary culture was very important to him, an issue he debated with Peter: "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?" (Gal. 2:14b). In other words, "if you are able to maintain your Jewish identity while accommodating to the Gentile culture, why do you require the Gentiles to abandon their identity in favor of the Jewish culture?"[23] Here Paul models an important principle for successful cross-cultural ministry: like the apostle, as we teach others, we must first enter *their* world—living and communing with them—and respect and recognize their culture as an integral part of who they are.

In *The Conquest of America*, Tzvetan Todorov warns of what often happens when this does not occur. Writing about Bartolomé de Las Casas, a 16th century Spanish priest who passionately defended the Indians against Spanish abuse following the conquest, he points out that in spite of his love, Las Casas lacked understanding of the indigenous culture. Todorov asks: "Can we really love someone if we know little or nothing of his identity; if we see, in place of that identity, a projection of ourselves or of our ideals? We know that such a thing is quite possible, even frequent, in personal relations; but what happens in cultural confrontations? Doesn't

one culture risk trying to transform the other in its own name, and therefore risk subjugating it as well? How much is such love worth?"[24]

Paul's admonition to the church at Corinth provides another paradigm. Focusing on his directive concerning the eating of meat offered to idols (1 Cor.10), we note that rather than giving one categorical answer, Paul instead provided a range of appropriate responses. As we examine the three points of Paul's directive, we see a dynamic model for applying biblical teaching to cultural situations, one that preserves both the authority of Scripture and the integrity of culture.[25]

First, participation in the pagan feasts amounted to idolatry and was to be refused under any circumstance. Although some no doubt argued that Christian liberty allowed them to do so, Paul is uncompromising on this: "No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons" (vv. 20–21). The first principle of doing theology within a cultural context is now in place: we must refrain from any practice which compromises our singular allegiance to God or blunts our attack on the powers of evil. As the people of God, we are called to separate ourselves from a sinful world.

Nevertheless, Paul took a very different stand regarding the meat which found its way into the shops lining the Corinthian streets. It was permitted to purchase meat from the shops, regardless of whether it had been dedicated to the gods (as would likely be the case). Because "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it" (v. 26), one need not be concerned about the route the meat took to arrive in the stores. Again, there are two elements behind Paul's thinking: the goodness of God's creation and its availability for humanity's welfare. For Paul the overly scrupulous who disdained the meat offered in shops were in fact rejecting God's gift to them. Dietrich Bonhoeffer warns that "Christian radicalism, no matter whether it consists in withdrawing from the world or in improving the world, arises from hatred of creation. The radical cannot forgive God His creation."[26] With Bonhoeffer's warning in mind, the second principle in our approach has been established: the Christian opts in favor of life and all that enriches it as God's gracious provision.

Third, Paul depicts a scene at an unbelieving friend's table in which the Christian is about to select a piece of meat when warned by a brother nearby that it was secured from the temple precinct. Paul urges, "do not eat it, both for the sake of the man who told you and for conscience' sake—the other man's conscience, I mean,

not yours" (vv. 28b–29a). Here he teaches us that it is better to forego one's privilege than offend another—whether Jew, Gentile, or Christian—for the weaker brother has not yet come to appreciate the fuller implications of faith or the legitimate diversity in Christian practices. Our third principle, then, calls us to be sensitive toward the welfare of others. The Christian's freedom should not overrule loving constraint.

Later, Paul deals with a more difficult issue, that of women being veiled in public, especially in the worship service (1 Cor. 11:1–6). (Interestingly enough, even today the Army debates the appropriateness of women wearing hats!) In general, women uncovered their heads to show grief or as a mark of promiscuity. Paul likely had the latter in mind when he declared, "Every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is just as though her head were shaved" (v. 5). The idea is that except in periods of mourning, decent women should veil themselves.

The cultural context is of paramount importance here. In Inch's words, "The gospel has enough problems to contend with without shocking people by breaches of custom."[27] The fourth principle in our operational model has now been added: when Scripture makes a pronouncement about generic man, there is a transcultural principle involved. Nevertheless, because this principle is necessarily expressed in some cultural context, we must distinguish between the principle and the manner in which it is expressed. Like Paul, we must differentiate between those truths which are *eternal* (absolute, universal and permanent) from that which is merely *cultural* (relative, particular and temporary).[28] The challenge is to refrain from being misled by our culturally–conditioned interpretations of the gospel and to find a stance from which we can look at ourselves from a point of view not bound by our own culture.

Inch summarizes, "Paul wrestled with the implications of Christian faith for himself and the people of Corinth, not crudely with dogmatic assertions to bend them into submission, but expertly with sometimes subtle nuances of meaning. He reasoned that we must not compromise our distinctive as the people of God, that we ought to enjoy God's bounty to the full, that we should be sensitive to how our behavior affects others, and that we should be aware of how the principles of our particular calling can best be worked out in various cultural settings."[29]

For our final biblical model, we turn to the incarnation of Jesus Himself. The nature of the incarnation is perhaps best summarized in Philippians 2:5–11:

> Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but

made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being màde in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

From here, three principles emerge for cross–cultural teaching and ministry.[30]

First, incarnational ministry calls us to humility. To teach those from other cultures, we must first shed all arrogance and presumption, coming first with questions, not answers. We must listen before speaking, learn before teaching, and receive before giving. As Bishop John V. Taylor, long–time missionary to Africa, reminds us, "the one necessary qualification for the stranger who wishes to speak is to know how little he has understood."[31] Christian mission too often occurs as a monologue; to be effective, we need dialogue.[32] As the non–Western church continues as the fastest growing segment of Christendom, we must be open to see that these brothers and sisters have profound insights to share with us about God and our faith. We must minister with genuine humility, recognizing the need for redemption in *our own* lives.

Second, Jesus is the supreme example of servanthood. He was, in Dietrich Bonhoeffer's words, "a man for others."[33] In the context of cross–cultural ministry, this implies self–sacrifice. It may mean setting aside our own cultural notions of what others need and how they should live in order to meet *their* need as *they* define it and in ways that are valid from *their* perspective.

Finally, Christ embodied empathy. He came as one of us, fully experiencing and embracing the human condition. Following Christ (and Paul after Him), we also must become the other—entering the world of those we serve rather than demanding that they enter ours; we must seize the opportunity to see life from the other's point of view. Only then can we build bridges of mutual respect and understanding. Only then can effective faith education occur. Taylor notes:

> Either we must think of the Christian Mission in terms of bringing the Muslim, the Hindu, the Animist into Christendom, or we must go with Christ as He stands in the midst of Islam, of Hinduism, of the primal worldview, and watch with Him, fearfully and wonderingly, as He becomes—dare we say it?—Muslim or Hindu or Animist, as once He became Man, and a Jew. Once, led by the Spirit, the Church made its choice in this matter at the Council of Jerusalem and dared to win the Gentiles by becoming Gentile. Paul and those

who followed him ... claimed that world in its strength and reformulated the gospel in the terms of its wisdom. So Christ in His Church answered the call of the Greeks; He came where they were and became what they were. From within their own culture He challenged their strength and judged their wisdom. He turned their world upside down, just as He had turned Judaism upside down—just as, indeed, if He enters our Churches today, He turns our Christianity upside down.[34]

Case Studies

We turn our attention now to two case studies which exemplify how to *apply* these principles in practical settings. Our examples come from the Muslim and the African cultures.

Muslim Culture

The Muslim faith is more than a religion, it is a way of life: "It seeks to govern not only one's religious thinking but his social, political and cultural activities as well. With little hope of changing the current of Muslim culture, the Christian who comes to such a situation must find a way to express his Christian convictions meaningfully in the cultural setting."[35] Phil Parshall faced this challenge; we can learn much from his pilgrimage.[36]

Parshall describes a traditional missionary approach to Muslims through the story of Halim Ali, a nineteen–year–old dissatisfied with life. One member of a large family living in a small bamboo hut, Halim spent his days toiling and plowing the family plot with a sickly ox. When Christian literature was left at the home, Halim responded with interest. When he arrived at the mission compound, he found a medical clinic, school, training center and an experimental farm, making his own dreary existence suffer by contrast. Receiving food, shelter and religious training from the missionaries, Halim soon became a Christian. When he told his family of his decision, however, "their reaction was predictable and severe: he was 'regarded as a traitor to family, friends, country, and religion.' His options were to recant or flee."[37]

Parshall notes various perspectives here: the *missionary* rejoices in the new believer's conversion; the *home church* in the United States enthusiastically adopts the support of this courageous young man who has "forsaken all" for his new–found faith; but the *villagers* "symbolically bury an old pair of Halim's sandals in retribution against a despicable outcast who dared to reject all societal norms and accepted

a foreigner's religion where adherents eat filthy pig meat and worship three gods."[38]

The results of such conventional methods have been meager at best and the procedure itself held up to question. Therefore, Parshall and his associates have worked through and adopted an alternative approach with direction from a convert named Simon. In two years with this approach, thirty–seven Muslims—many of them family heads—responded to the claims of Christ. Unlike Halim, all remained in their villages, witnessing to Christ as accepted members of their families.[39]

Parshall attributes part of this success to various adaptations he and his team have made to the cultural setting—six adaptations in lifestyle and eighteen in worship practices.[40] Among the adaptations in lifestyle: (1) the missionaries wear the clothing of the villagers; (2) several of the missionary men grow full beards, which corresponds to the appearance of a Muslim religious man; (3) Muslim dietary practices are adopted and no pork is eaten. Among the adaptations in worship practices: (1) a facility for washing prior to prayer is provided for optional use outside the worship center; (2) worshippers remove their shoes and sit on the floor during prayer times; (3) Bibles are placed on folding stands such as are used for the Koran in the mosques, and occasionally Greek and Hebrew Bibles are placed in a prominent position in front of the congregation (demonstrating regard for the "original" Bible such as Muslims feel toward the Arabic Koran); (4) prayer is offered Muslim–style, with uplifted hands and often with eyes open; (5) chanting of the attributes of God, the Lord's Prayer, and personal testimonies is encouraged; Muslim tunes (with Christian words) are utilized; (6) worshipers embrace in Muslim fashion; (7) no particular emphasis is placed on Sunday (seeing that the Muslim considers Friday the holiest day); (8) the name "Followers of *Isa*" (Jesus) is used in order to avoid the negative connotations of the word *Christian*; (9) churches are organized much like the loose–knit structure of the mosque, and converts choose their own leadership. Those who are not of Muslim cultural background are welcome to worship but expected to adopt the prevailing practices. These practices "result in breaking the ghetto complex traditionally associated with missions to Muslims. Thus the Christian faith is introduced as a catalyst into the prevailing Muslim culture."[41]

What basic principles are operating behind these practices and what lessons can we learn from them for cross–cultural ministry? First, note that Parshall's innovative approach takes a high view of Scripture, making both the study of Scripture and Scripture–based worship central aspects of the new congregations. The Bible becomes the focus of the convert's thinking, something which is reinforced by placing

it on wooden stands like those used to hold the Koran in mosques. It should be noted that orthodox Muslims believe all that is said in the Koran to be a settled truth; in fact, the faithful are advised, "He who has denied a verse of the Koran, it is allowed to behead him."[42] Thus, Inch notes, "to say that transferring one's allegiance from the Koran to the Bible under such circumstances is a sensitive issue is, then, a classic understatement."[43] Knowing this, Parshall is not attempting a simple substitution of one book for another, but rather a discipleship *process* that introduces the Bible into its rightful place. As the followers of Isa become more versed in the Scriptures, faulty stereotypes (like the notion that Christians believe in three gods) will necessarily be erased.

Likewise, the adaptation of various Muslim forms illustrates a high view of culture and a concern for not offending the other. For example, the missionaries place no special emphasis on Sunday, manifest a humble attitude divested of the Western feeling of superiority, wear traditional dress, rent very modest homes, and adopt as simple a lifestyle as emotional and physical health permit. For Parshall, "As far as possible, all peripheral barriers to Muslims becoming Christians are to be removed. If there are obstacles to faith, let it be in the area of theological confrontation."[44] Using the name "Followers of Isa" for converts is a good example of removing a potential barrier, for the term *Christian* has a decidedly derogatory connotation in that culture. The Koran teaches, "Take not the Jews or Christians for friends. They are but one another's friends. If any of you takes them for his friends he is surely one of them. Allah does not guide evildoers" (Surah 5.51). So, although the change in designation admittedly runs the risk of losing much of the Christian legacy as represented in the history of the church, it is at least an effort to circumvent the history of mutual antagonism between Muslims and Christians, and to bring attention back to Isa.[45] The church, after all, is to call attention not to itself but to God.

The other adaptations in form which Parshall suggests flow more or less naturally from the ideal of establishing a homogeneous church of Muslim converts. A question arises, however: how is this distinctive church to be related to the Church at large and to the traditional church already established in Muslim countries? Parshall's answer is that the traditional Christian is welcome to worship provided she adjust to the practices of the Muslim–convert church.[46] Like Paul and Jesus before him, the traditional Christian who enters the other's world must humbly adapt to that different culture, not the other way around.

Additionally, it is important to remember that Parshall's approach follows to a

large degree the insights of a national. Embodying humility, Parshall did not come attempting to change the culture, but rather to understand it. He thus enlisted the help of a Muslim convert, Simon, who entered into fraternal dialogue with the missionaries in order to help devise a strategy. Thus, we again note that the best way for Christians to approach cross–cultural ministry is through the help of someone deeply rooted in that cultural context.

Finally, effective faith–teaching requires that we be open to learn from others. Inch suggests that Islam—particularly through its uncompromising emphasis on the transcendent character of God—can teach us much about Christian practice: "It calls into question not only the use of icons and relics, but also the cultic adoration of charismatic leaders and uncritical acceptance of popular ideas of success. The faith modeled by congregations of persons raised in the Muslim religion will be worthy of careful note by the Church at large."[47]

Africa

Our second case study comes from *The Primal Vision*, John V. Taylor's moving account of the Christian presence amid African traditional religion.[48] Taylor begins with a simple story: while living close to a rather remote bush school in Africa, each afternoon he would glance out the window of his thatched hut and see the children at their desks in their clean white shirts and khaki shorts through the open classroom doors. In the evening when they went home, these clothes would come off and the children would emerge again from the huts dressed in the drab, tattered garments of home. Taylor recalls, "Down they would go to the valley with pitchers and paraffin tins to draw the household water; or off to the banana grove behind the house to dig till sunset; or up to the cool winds of the ridge to bring the goats or cattle in from grazing. And if I met them there, these shabby unkempt children, I might not know them, being acquainted only with their groomed and schoolroom selves."[49] From this innocent observation, Taylor reflects:

> This might well be the most terrible failure of the whole Church in Africa— that it meets people only in their best clothes. Those who can see the children only in their uniforms, the clergy only in their robes, the ordinary people only in some "Christian" context, are unlikely to plan or preach or legislate with much wisdom or relevancy. Such Christianity becomes something to be put on at certain times and in particular circumstances, and has nothing to do with other areas of life.[50]

It has become a mere "classroom religion" reflecting a predominantly European worldview.[51]

The Gospel in Africa has been presented by instruction but there has been little appeal to sympathy and imagination. "By confining the kingdom of God within the protective walls of the conscious and the rational," notes Taylor, "it has left untouched the great deep of the subliminal, and unredeemed the glories of the elemental energies of man. The incalculable has been left out of account, the supernatural played down, the mystery glossed over."[52] Christianity has thus become the "white man's religion." For years, religious pictures and films almost universally portrayed a white Christ, child of a white mother, master of white disciples; he was worshiped almost exclusively with European music set to translations of European hymns, sung by clergy dressed in European clothing in buildings of an archaic European style; the organizational structure of the Church and its method of reaching decisions were modeled more closely on Western concepts rather than deviating from them.[53] The form of worship bore almost no relation to traditional African ritual nor the content of the prayers to contemporary African life. But, Taylor adds, "in the last resort these are all merely outward forms that could quite easily give place to others. They are serious because they are symptoms. They persist because they are the school uniform of a classroom religion reflecting a worldview that is fundamentally European."[54] For this reason, although Western Christianity has won its inevitable victories, at the same time it ensures that they should be only partial.

Admittedly, attending to the outward forms of Christianity is not unimportant and many modifications have already occurred regarding the choice of indigenous music, church decor (murals, sculptures and tapestries by African artists adorn some church buildings), the presence of drama and dance in the liturgy and an increasing influence of African leadership.[55] If we focus *only* on external forms, however, we fail to realize that the African way of looking at things persists in many as an inarticulate philosophy long after they convert to Christianity. The insights of the traditional worldview are continually reflected in the thoughts, attitudes, and values of Christian Africans.[56] Taylor speculates that very few of the missionaries and teachers fully realize the profundity of the difference between the Western and the African worldview. Instead:

> Christ has been presented as the answer to the questions a white man would
> ask, the solution to the needs that Western man would feel, the Savior of the
> world of the European worldview, the object of the adoration and prayer of

> historic Christendom. But if Christ were to appear as the answer to the questions that Africans are asking, what would he look like? If he came into the world of African cosmology to redeem Man as Africans understand Him, would He be recognizable to the rest of the Church Universal? And if Africa offered Him the praises and petitions of her total, uninhibited humanity, would they be acceptable?[57]

These are the questions his book attempts to answer.

Taylor spends several chapters dealing almost exclusively with different aspects of African traditional religion and culture, highlighting important differences between the African and European worldviews. For example, an essential feature of primal religion is a sense of cosmic oneness: for the African, the individual's position vis-à-vis the world, is not one of exploitation but of relationship, and the relationship is always essentially personal.[58] Likewise, the concept of self differs greatly from that of the European, who sees her complex identity encased within the shell of her physical being. In Africa, the self is diffused and scattered, "spilling out into the world beyond the confines of the experiencing body, and echoing back again from other selves."[59] Like St. Augustine, Africans believe they live beyond the limits of their bodies. Numerous constituents make up this scattered self, including the power–force, the life–force (or life–soul), the individual soul, the ancestral soul (which is corporate, the on–going life of the clan, that which preserves continuity), and the transcendent soul (that which an individual has in common with God Himself and receives directly from Him).[60] Knowing this, and knowing that the way into life through Christ is through the death of self, we must ask ourselves what does death–of–self mean for a self that is dispersed into many centers of consciousness far beyond the narrow circle of the skull and the precincts of the flesh?[61]

Related to this view of self is the concept of community. In the primal vision, there is a complete surrender of individualism: man is a family.[62] Like a tree, man is a single branching organism whose roots, though invisible, may spread farther than all the visible limbs above, connecting and communing with that part of the family living here on the earth as well as with those who have passed along. An individual who is cut off from the communal organism is a nothing. The vitality, the psychic security, the very humanity of an individual, depends on its integration into the family. Thus, in the old days the formative years were concerned mainly with his being grafted into this community. The most important rituals of adult life were designed to preserve the cohesion of the community; the principal sins were those

that damaged communal relationships, and the most dreaded calamities were child-lessness and the breaking of clan ties, both of which eventually rooted one out of the community. The African prodigal son was concerned less with his own personal restoration than with the reconciliation of the whole family.

Taylor laments that the solidarity of the extended family and all that was inti-mately dependent on it has suffered more disruption from its contact with the mod-ern world than other aspects of the African worldview. Sadly, the Church as well expects the peasant to opt out of the ancient solidarities of family and tribe and become individualized so as to make those personal choices and separations from the mass which it finds central to the Christian experience. And, if he is not ready to capitulate, it waits for the forces of change and disruption to break down his de-fenses. "They are doing so with grim efficiency," but, wonders Taylor, "can we be so confident that they are God's allies?"[63]

A missionary who has worked in Northern Nigeria among the Magazawa does not think so. He explains:

> Pagan parents have repeatedly said to me, "Do not take our children from us." The neighboring Muslims, who delight to speak in proverbs, have told them that Europeans eat people. It is a reference, I believe, to the change we make in children and grown–ups when we have converted them to the West-ern interpretation of Christianity. We are the modern cannibals who eat a man's personality and leave him an unattractive, rude specimen of human-ity, out of harmony with himself and those with whom he has to live.[64]

Because a relationship with Christ involves decision and choice, a change from the old into the new, the Church assumes that the individual must separate him or herself from the old solidarity and leap the great divide into the gathered community of the new creation. But with this assumption, we might be reading into the gospel far more of our Western individualism than is actually there:[65] "For the isolated and unrooted, yes, there must be the choice and the leap, since none can enter commu-nity by drifting. But what of the person whose identity is not separable from the total organism? Can one who knows that he and his grandfather and his grandsons are one person, one blood, one spirit, come into Christ without them? If a man realizes, as Bonhoeffer did, 'how our center is outside of ourselves' ... can such a scattered self be made over to Christ in a single act of decision?"[66]

Taylor thinks not. The Christ of the primal worldview demands decision but not disengagement. And the decision may be communal. Walter Freytag tells how in

their first approach to the Huon peninsular of New Guinea, the Neuendettelsauer Mission refused to baptize any individuals until the tribe had made its response as an unbroken whole and put itself under the "new morality." The missionaries patiently waited for years until the people themselves in their separate tribes came to a kind of national decision, well considered and discussed at length beforehand, and the conscience of the community was awakened. The "new morality" was not the whole Gospel, nor did the people become Christian at one stroke.[67] But when this total reorientation had taken place there was room for personal commitment to Christ and people were baptized on that basis. Even so, Freytag notes, it was usually households rather than individuals that took this step.[68] (Note that this differs greatly from the approach which was common in Ghana, where missionaries settled across the stream from a pagan village, and established a second, Christian village as one by one people crossed over to join them. Not surprisingly, the Church in Ghana is still an alien institution.)[69]

Taylor stresses that he is not implying that "there should be no crisis, no death and rebirth, no costly holiness." But—and this applies equally where the advent of Christianity has been individualistic—we must anticipate that the processes of conversion will be mainly undramatic and hidden within the fabric of the community. "Change," according to Taylor, "should be like a ferment working through the social organism. On closer examination it will be seen to consist of a multitude of tiny responses, imperceptible choices, moral and spiritual battles concerning innumerable issues. The accumulated costliness and pain of such decisions is, I believe, infinitely precious in the eyes of Christ though there is no crossing of the river."[70]

In a culture in which a baby is not a member of the human race by virtue of his birth, but is made a man by the community through a long progression of steps, in which a marriage does not exist through the single act of two individuals, but is made by the whole community over a number of years — in this collectivistic culture it is natural that a person not become a Christian through one rite or one experience, but rather be made a member of Christ through a long series of initiations and decisions within the Body of Christ. A Church that was true to the insights of Africa would have a greater number of initiatory acts and marked stages of advancement, and would make far more of them.[71] Thus, effective Christian ministry will not only respect the integrity of the culture, but will cherish it as a vehicle through which the gospel may be expressed. The African Christian is not to be the product of his culture alone or his faith alone, but of his faith as it is fleshed out in