



Word & Deed Mission Statement:

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

Salvation Army Mission Statement:

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

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Editorial Policy:

Contributions related to the mission of the journal will be encouraged, and at times there will be a general call for papers related to specific subjects. The Salvation Army is not responsible for every view which may be expressed in this journal. Manuscripts should be approximately 12-15 pages, including endnotes. Please submit the following: 1) three hard copies of the manuscript with the author's name (with rank and appointment if an officer) on the cover page only. This ensures objectivity during the evaluation process. Only the manuscript without the author's name will be evaluated. The title of the article should appear at the top of the first page of the text and the manuscript should utilize *Word & Deed* endnote guidelines. All Bible references should be from the New International Version. If another version is used throughout the article, please indicate the version in the first textual reference only. If multiple versions are used, please indicate the version each time it changes; 2) a copy on a 3 1/2 inch floppy disk, using Microsoft Word format; 3) a 100-word abstract of the article for use at the discretion of the editor (e.g., on The Salvation Army's web page or in advertisements about the journal). Please note that neither the hard copies nor the disk will be returned to the author and that all manuscripts are subject to editorial review. Once articles have been selected for inclusion, the deadlines for submitting final material for the journal are March 1 for the spring issues and September 1 for the fall issues. A style sheet is available upon request.

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The Salvation Army and Methodists in Dialogue

By God's grace The Salvation Army has never been an isolationist sect, but throughout the history of the Army there has generally been great appreciation for other Christian communities of faith. We recognize now more than ever that we belong to the rich tapestry of Christian communions, but realize also that we have something significant to contribute to the life of the Church. This self-awareness is especially evident at this time in our history because the Army, represented by the International Doctrine Council, has entered into theological dialogue with two other communities of faith, the World Methodist Council and the Seventh-day Adventists. Readers will understand, of course, that we have much more in common with Methodism. The Founders of the Army, having been reared in Methodism, took with them into the founding of the Army basic Methodist doctrines, some Methodist polity, and a Methodist ethos of ministry and mission. Therefore it is appropriate that we devote the next two issues of *Word & Deed* to some of the papers that were read and discussed during the two theological dialogues with representatives from the World Methodist Council.

One of the co-editors of this journal, Roger J. Green, is privileged to be a member of the International Doctrine Council, and so took part in all the theological dialogues, and confesses to being both blessed and humbled by the high esteem in which these other Christians hold The Salvation Army. They appreciate the many significant contributions that we make to the Christian Church, and they affirmed yet again that this is the time for clarity of thought about our own denominational identity. Likewise, those of us who took part in these talks were grateful for the way in which God has worked in the lives of other believers. The

discussions were wide-ranging, from denominational history and theology to matters of polity and mission. Biblical authority and hermeneutics, holiness, Christology, and eschatology were only some of the theological topics discussed and debated during our time together.

In this issue and the next issue of the journal, May of 2006, we have chosen papers from both Salvationist writers and Methodist writers. The readers of the journal will know the Salvationist writers. And we are privileged to be able to publish papers from some of the most important and gifted leaders of Methodism today. We count it an honor that our Methodist friends have decided to allow *Word & Deed* to be the primary venue for their papers.

Colonel Earl Robinson is well known to our readers. We asked him to provide the guest editorial for this issue of the journal because as the chair of the International Doctrine Council Colonel Robinson was responsible for arranging these dialogues. His extensive experience in representing the Army in ecumenical matters was invaluable as he provided leadership of the Salvation Army delegates to these discussions.

The first paper, "Wesleyan Essentials to the Christian Faith," deals with essential Christian doctrines such as sin, grace, justification by faith, and holiness. Dr. W. Douglas Mills is well qualified to lead this discussion. At the time of the dialogues he was the senior pastor of the First United Methodist Church in Clyde, Texas, and a member of the executive committee of the World Methodist Council. Presently, he serves as the associate general secretary of the Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Affairs for the United Methodist Church. This paper is followed by the Army counterpart, "Salvation Army Doctrines," written by Gudrun Lydholm. She was a member of the International Doctrine Council during the writing and publication of *Salvation Story: Salvationist Handbook of Doctrine*. During the time of the first dialogue with the Methodists, she was still a member of the International Doctrine Council while she shared the territorial leadership of Finland and Estonia with her husband, Colonel Carl Lydholm. Gudrun Lydholm is now a commissioner in The Salvation Army and she and her husband serve as the territorial leaders in the Norway, Iceland and the Faeroes Territory.

The third paper was given by George H. Freeman, General Secretary of the World Methodist Council. His paper, "Wesley and the Poor: Theory and Practice

from Then until Now," reminds readers that John Wesley and early Methodism emphasized a ministry of mercy to the poor, a ministry also important to William and Catherine Booth. After this historical overview, the implied question raised in this paper is whether that ministry is still viable, not only among Methodists, but within the broader Christian Church. Dr. Freeman speaks and writes from a wealth of both pastoral and administrative leadership within Methodism and is a very gracious supporter of The Salvation Army. Following this paper is another subject of great importance to Salvationists and other Christians. The paper is entitled "Women in Early Methodism" and deals with the elevated status of early Methodist women, the spirituality of early Methodist women, and the resultant ministry of women at that time in preaching and works of piety and mercy. This paper draws upon the great treasury of writing and hymnody in Methodism. At the time of the dialogues, author Dr. Paul W. Chilcote was academic dean and professor of historical theology and Wesleyan studies at Asbury Theological Seminary, Florida campus, Orlando, Florida. He also served on the United Methodist Church/Evangelical Lutheran Church of America bilateral dialogue. He has recently accepted the position of visiting professor of the Practice of Evangelism at Duke Divinity School. Dr. Chilcote has written extensively on Methodist history and doctrine, and we commend his most recent book to our readers: *Recapturing the Wesleys' Vision: An Introduction to the Faith of John and Charles Wesley* (InterVarsity Press).

The fifth paper was written by a member of the Army's International Doctrine Council. Major Lester T. Ferguson, who presently serves as a divisional commander in the Army in the Caribbean, wrote on "The Salvation Army's Priority Focus on Evangelism." The paper provides a historical overview of the subject and relates it to the subject of evangelism specific to the work of the Army in the Caribbean. It concludes with a vision of ministry to the whole world.

These papers are carefully chosen because they well fulfill the driving mission of this journal—emphasizing both the theology and the ministry of The Salvation Army within the broader context of the Christian Church. Our own understanding of theology and ministry becomes even clearer in the light of these dialogues, and in this and the next issue we are indebted to the Salvationist contributors. But we say a word of special thanks to our friends in the World Methodist Council who so graciously shared in these dialogues with us and have

allowed us to publish their papers. We rejoice in the extensive ministry for the sake of the Kingdom that is so clear and compelling in the World Methodist Council. We can only pray that this issue and the following issue of *Word & Deed* will enhance what God is already using for His work and for His glory here on earth.

RJG

JSR

Bilateral Theological Dialogues

The Salvation Army with the World Methodist Council & The General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists

Earl Robinson

At the conclusion of the Winnipeg 2001 International Theology & Ethics Symposium, General John Larsson, then Chief of the Staff, referred to the rationale behind the symposium and said this concerning the task ahead for The Salvation Army:

Article 3 of the rationale for the present symposium sets well the "what" scene for the task ahead: "The Army has a contribution to make to theological/ethical dialogue in the Church, especially with respect to the inclusive gospel, a mission-based ecclesiology, the partnership of evangelism and social action/service, the call to holiness and high moral principles and sacramental living, equality in ministry."

The same Article 3 also moves ahead to touch on the "how" of the task ahead: "We will not be able to make that contribution in significant ways if we do not provide effective means of nurturing theologians and ethicists in Salvationist theological/ethical debate." ¹

Colonel Earl Robinson served as Secretary for International External Relations from 1997 to 2005 at International Headquarters. One of his responsibilities had to do with ecumenical representation and discussion, including the initiation of Salvation Army bilateral theological dialogues. He continues to serve in his fourteenth year as a member and his tenth year as Chair of the International Doctrine Council, the participant committee designated by the General for theological conversations with other Christian World Communions.

The General had previously mentioned that there are more “thinkers” than ever in the Army these days, resulting in “a renaissance of creativity that holds out high hopes for our future as an Army.”²

But how do those thinkers become heard in the theological/ethical and missional dialogue of the Church as a whole? How do we move forward from the significant internal sharing of thought, which now exists in our movement, to a broader sharing beyond ourselves? How can we more effectively contribute to the thinking of the “universal Christian Church” of which our mission statement indicates we are a part?

Seeking responses to those questions has partly formed a foundation to our having recently engaged in bilateral theological dialogues or conversations with other Christian World Communions. This new development in our movement may be an important step towards our voices being more effectively heard beyond ourselves. It may be one of the ways to open up broader areas of sharing Salvation Army theological/ethical and missional perspectives with our colleagues in the Church of Christ universal.

Background history to Christian World Communion dialogues.

There is of course nothing new about there being dialogue in the Church—multilateral as well as bilateral dialogue. Such dialogue existed in the New Testament era—amongst our Lord’s disciples, between Peter and the Jerusalem Council, between Paul and Barnabas. And such dialogue was responsible for the classic creeds of the early Church.

But bilateral dialogue between Christian World Communions in the form which that currently takes and which The Salvation Army has now adopted—that is relatively recent. Its beginning occurred shortly after the 1962-65 Vatican II Council. As an indication of what was to come, ecumenical observers had been invited by Pope John XXIII to Vatican II, including invitations for representatives from the World Council of Churches and the Conference of Secretaries of Christian World Communions, both of which The Salvation Army was a member. To my knowledge we were not represented during the four autumns that the council met, but 37 delegates of other Christian Communions were at its opening. One of our colleagues in the Seventh-day Adventist dialogue was there, off and on, and has informed us of the recognition that was given to Eastern

Orthodox and Protestant observers. In November 1964, the 2,200 bishops and Pope Paul VI promulgated the Vatican II Decree on Ecumenism. It was the official charter of the Roman Catholic Church's active participation in the ecumenical movement, described as being "fostered by the grace of the Holy Spirit" for "the restoration of unity among all Christians" who "invoke the Triune God and confess Jesus as Lord and Savior."³

Some wondered if the Vatican II decree would make much difference since its wording seemed still to indicate that the Roman Catholic Church was the only real basis for Christian unity. But in 1965, the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, which Pope John XXIII had established in June 1960, agreed to a joint working group with the World Council of Churches, with a five-year experimental mandate that continues to this day. And contact established between the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church during Vatican II led to the 1965 formation of a "Lutheran/Roman Catholic Working Group" that also continues to now. Those two working groups marked the beginnings of formal bilateral theological dialogue. Although the Lutheran working group started with discussing non-controversial issues, it led to what is the most well known document of bilateral dialogues, the "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification" signed in 1999 by the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation. That declaration indicates that the Lutherans and Roman Catholics have a basic consensus on justification and that the respective condemnations leveled at each other during the Reformation in the sixteenth century do not apply to those today who hold the position outlined in the document.

Because, since 1965, bilateral dialogues have become so significant, under the auspices of the Conference of Secretaries of Christian World Communions, eight international meetings of a Bilateral Forum have been organized, the most recent of which was held in 2001. The aim of the Forum is to provide a space and a time whereby Christian World Communions engaged in bilateral dialogues may exchange information, consult together on emerging issues and trends, and reflect on the coherence and integrity of the dialogues. The 2001 Bilateral Forum report says this: "The dialogues have been influential in changing the attitudes of divided Christians to one another. They have led to changed relationships between churches." That is often the outcome of opening up broader areas of sharing theological/ethical and missional perspectives with colleagues in the

Church of Christ universal, which is one of the primary goals of our entering into bilateral dialogues. When we share ideas with each other, it is not just an opportunity to have our voice heard on theological, ethical and missional ideas. We often find that what unites us as members of the body of Christ is of greater significance than that which has divided us, and so are able to move closer to the goal of unity in diversity.

The Bilateral Forum report also gives information about the International Bilateral Dialogues that have been and are taking place. From the beginnings of such dialogues in 1965, there are now about 30 officially listed international bilateral dialogues that are taking place, according to information obtained from the Secretaries of Christian World Communions.

From that general bilateral dialogue background, how did the current Salvation Army dialogues come into being?

Background history to Salvation Army Christian World Communion dialogues

1. With the World Methodist Council

The first such arrangement was made with the World Methodist Council (WMC). The background to that arrangement is noted in a Salvation Army International News Release of September 24, 2001 that reads as follows:

At the World Methodist Council meetings in Brighton, England, the following motion was passed: "In the light of correspondence with General Gowans, the Council Officers ask that the World Methodist Council be open to an exploration with The Salvation Army as to how the two bodies might reach a new, if informal, recognition and relationship as sister Communions sharing the same tradition."

This motion arose from earlier recognition by officers of the Council that The Salvation Army is a Christian World Communion in its own right, as is the World Methodist Communion, both bodies having membership in the Conference of Secretaries of Christian World Communions. That recognition acknowledged that The Salvation Army would not therefore be

likely to seek membership in the World Methodist Council. However, the suggestion was made that the common heritage of both communions provides grounds for a closer informal relationship. The two communions are both rooted in the historic Wesleyan tradition of saving faith in Christ, committed to the proclamation of the gospel wherever people are found, and have a shared concern for holiness of life.

With reference to the second paragraph of the above news release, I had conversations on a number of occasions about the possibility of engaging in WMC / SA conversations with the former WMC General Secretary, Dr. Joe Hale. He made the point that it would not be in our interests to become part of the WMC ourselves (as the Nazarenes and Free Methodists had done), because we are recognized as a Christian World Communion on our own, but that we ought to look at the possibility of bilateral dialogues. He made this point as well at a WMC executive board meeting when Donald Fites (at that time chair of the USA SA National Advisory Board) asked why The Salvation Army was not part of the WMC. At that board meeting that Joe Hale was asked to begin official negotiations with General Gowans to consider our engaging in theological conversations. The General therefore received a letter concerning this matter from Joe Hale on behalf of the World Methodist Council Officers in the autumn of 2000. The General's reply indicated that this would be given consideration and that in turn led to the motion that was passed in Brighton in 2001. When we recommended to the General and the Chief of the Staff that we work towards that possibility, they agreed that such a move would be appropriate, as part of the mandate of the office of international external relations, as follows: "The General has no objection at all to us strengthening friendship-links with other denominations—including our parent-denomination: the Methodists. But this does not of course stretch to any consideration of 'union' in any form with any of them."

I explained the qualification concerning "union" in my annual report that year to the Conference of Secretaries of Christian World Communions when I referred to our plans for bilateral dialogues. Many of the CWCs would have similar approaches so that there were not any public comments about the qualification. However, in private, Monsignor John Radano of the Roman Catholic

Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity did question me about it. He suggested that The Salvation Army could become an Order of the Catholic Church. In turn, I indicated that there are Salvationists who think that St. Francis of Assisi had the markings of being a Salvationist. Although Monsignor Radano's remark was to some extent a humorous aside, I think he was somewhat serious about the suggestion and he went on to say that we could be part of the Franciscan Order or perhaps an Order on our own. I then made a point about how strongly we believe that God raised us up to be The Salvation Army with our own distinctive contributions to the Church as a whole. That point was also reinforced when we met for informal discussion with Monsignor Radano and Cardinal Walter Kasper, the President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, at the Vatican in February 2005. During that conversation Cardinal Kasper welcomed the possibility of having further conversations with The Salvation Army in order that we might become more aware of such distinctive contributions by each of our communions.

2. With the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

There was only one bilateral conversation in which The Salvation Army had been engaged prior to our discussions with the WMC. That was with the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (SDA) in the early 1990's but it did not take on the official form of a bilateral dialogue. We only met once with them at that time. Dr Bert Beach of the SDA told me that it was decided by The Salvation Army that there was to be no follow-up to that initial gathering because of such engagements not being a priority for us at that time. When Bert therefore found out that we were engaging in dialogue with the WMC, he asked if the Army and Seventh-day Adventists could resume their dialogue. The General and the Chief of the Staff then agreed to proceeding with that bilateral conversation in addition to our WMC conversations.

3. Bilateral theological dialogue orientation for the International Doctrine Council

It was also agreed by the General and the Chief of the Staff that one of the areas of the ongoing mandate of the International Doctrine Council would be that of being "the designated committee to be involved with the Secretary for

International External Relations in theological dialogue with ecumenical bodies or other Christian World Communions in order to provide a Salvation Army perspective to such dialogue". Because this was to be a new responsibility for the council, we arranged for the Reverend Canon David Hamid, at that time Director of Ecumenical Affairs & Studies of the Anglican Consultative Council (now Suffragan Bishop in Europe), to spend a day with our council to provide bilateral theological dialogue orientation. Because of Dr. Hamid's working with a number of bilateral dialogues in which the Anglican Communion had been engaged, this proved a very helpful exercise. He said this concerning several directions that bilateral dialogues/conversations can take:

a. They can be **comparative conversations** with the two sides telling their histories and explaining their doctrinal positions, and then comparing notes.

b. They can work towards **convergence**, with lines of thinking beginning to come together.

c. Anglicans are most comfortable with working towards a **common statement**, an agreed text or document around which both sides can say, 'Yes; this is our faith.' The statement may not be expressed in language related to one particular tradition but in language agreeable to both groups.

d. The Anglican goal of conversations with other Christians is to work towards **visible unity**. That does not mean organic unity that has to do with structure but involves there no longer being barriers to unity. It has to do with a visible unity given to us by God, not something we create ourselves, but our response to God's call to make our unity visible (John 17:20-21).

Current Salvation Army/ Christian World Communion Dialogues

Thus far, The Salvation Army has only been involved in Christian World Communion bilateral theological dialogues with the World Methodist Council and the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, two sessions having been held with each of those communions. We met with the World Methodist Council at The Salvation Army Sunbury Court Conference in the United Kingdom in June 2003 and at the World Methodist Council headquarters location in Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, USA in January 2005. Our meetings with the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists were at the Seventh-day Adventist headquarters location in Silver Spring, Maryland, USA in January

2004 and at The Salvation Army Jacksons Point Conference Center near Toronto, Canada in March 2005. Representative papers from those four sessions will form the major content of this and future issues of *Word & Deed*.

With reference to the World Methodist Council, it has been tentatively agreed that we should be working towards a recommendation that our dialogue continue for another five-year cycle. If approved, that cycle would commence some time after the World Methodist Council's General Conference of July 2006, no earlier than 2007. It would conclude in 2011, with the possibility of three or more dialogues being scheduled for that five-year period, leading to a formal statement of understanding.

With reference to the Seventh-day Adventists, there was tentative agreement that we should be working towards a recommendation that there be a third and final dialogue meeting that would take place some time after the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Session of July 2005, also no earlier than 2007. If approved, this meeting would develop a formal statement of understanding to provide closure to the dialogue.

Our conversations have been in the form of "comparative conversations" but with "lines of thinking beginning to come together" as we have discussed areas in which there is little or no disagreement, the Church's primary mission to the poor for example. We have also sought to understand each other's perspectives where there are distinctive differences, our standing on the historical sacramental observances of the Church for example. At the end of the conversations, the formal statements of understanding, referred to above as a "common" statement will likely focus upon consensus concerning such agreement and differences. Based upon discussions to date it is expected that the statements will also reveal ways in which we have been able to see that what unites us as Christian World Communions is of greater significance than that which divides us.

When the dialogues have concluded with the World Methodist Council and the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists there will then be the opportunity to recommend further dialogues with other Christian World Communions. Because of the intensity of the dialogues, it is anticipated that in the future The Salvation Army will be engaged in only one dialogue at a time.

Notes

1. John Larsson, "Salvationist Theology and Ethics for the New Millennium," *Word & Deed*, vol. 4, no. 1 (November 2001), p. 20.

2. *Ibid*, p. 15.

3. Number 1 of the Introduction to the "Decree on Ecumenism" ("Unitatis Redintegratio"), proclaimed by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on November 21, 1964 at St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican.

The Wesleyan Essentials of Faith

W. Douglas Mills

According to the Handbook of Information (2002-2006), the World Methodist Council links together the family of Methodist and Wesley-related churches in 132 countries around the world. These churches have identified themselves as "Methodist" or "Wesleyan," by claiming a familial inheritance and, presumably, identifying common essential characteristics. Those characteristics are formed by a common history and connection to the Wesley brothers, John and Charles. The identifying marks also include similar institutional structures (or self-conscious differences). More than any other quality, the World Methodist Council would claim for its family members a common theological heritage: the Wesleyan "essentials." Although the World Methodist Council adopted a statement of the Wesleyan essentials in 1996, the production of such a consensus of faith was an arduous task that has taken the greater part of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries to complete.

A common history and similar stories of conversion, more than theological theses, define Methodist and Wesley-related churches. John Wesley never wrote a systematic theology of the Methodist essential doctrine, but he did write several historical narratives describing the Methodist movement. Commenting on the importance of its history, American Methodist historian Russell Richey noted that, "history made a statement of Methodist belief, belief about God at work,

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belief about Methodism itself. For Methodist history was sacred history. At least it was so initially."¹ As the movement developed, the need arose for Methodist leaders to explain theological doctrine, which they did in the context of shared history. Thus, the "Wesleyan essentials" are to be identified not in creeds or statements of faith, but in the theological history of the movement. It is the goal of this paper to identify the historic Wesleyan essentials, and also to note some of the primary sources and better secondary resources in which these essentials are detailed.

The root of the family tree is Charles and, particularly, his older brother John Wesley, both Anglican priests whose preaching, teaching, and organization invited others to participate in what was eventually designated the "Methodist movement." Fellow students at Oxford University derisively called the Wesleys and some of their friends the "Holy Club," "Bible moths," "Sacramentarians," and the "Methodists," all scornful names used to identify them and to indicate something of their character. Thankfully, the latter, and none of the former, became the name by which the group was known. John Wesley liked the disciplined life of the small circle of Oxford friends, though he became convinced that God demanded more of him. After their father's death in 1735, John and Charles requested and received appointments as volunteer missionaries to the new colony of Georgia. Subsequently, John accepted appointment as priest to Savannah, where, to some degree, he revitalized the life of the parish. In Savannah and Frederica, John formed little (pre-)Methodist societies, much like the one at Oxford and committed to similar characteristics. However, infrequent and unproductive contacts with Native Americans left John disappointed. After less than two years in Georgia and hastened by a trumped-up grand jury indictment, John followed Charles back to England.

One of the essential marks of John Wesley, that of an evangelical conversion experience, came upon his return to England. John remained spiritually distressed for several months after his return and his spiritual searching brought him into conversation with his Moravian friend, Peter Bohler. Then, on the evening of May 24, 1738, at a prayer meeting on Aldersgate Street in London, John felt his heart "strangely warmed," which convinced him that the holiness he sought by methodical discipline began, instead, by trusting in the pardoning, empowering grace of God in Jesus Christ.

John continued, perhaps with new zeal, his discipline of reading, studying, praying, and preaching—also essential marks. As he preached from place to place, he observed that people were being changed by God. Persuaded by his friend George Whitefield to consider the “vile” prospect of outdoor preaching, John took the message outside of consecrated walls. While he did not draw the large crowds that came out for Whitefield, John soon found himself preaching to thousands. According to his diary, only three or four thousand attended each of his first outdoor sermons. (Whitefield attracted 30,000 during the same period!) Within a year, Wesley was preaching to ten thousand at Rose Green and fifteen thousand at Kennington Common.² Even brother Charles, initially a critic of the practice, changed his mind after ten thousand came to hear him at Moorfields in June of 1739.

Many then and now, especially those who opposed the Wesleys, came to think of field- or open-air preaching as a distinctively Methodist characteristic, but such was not the case. Order and discipline characterized the revival built on preaching salvation by grace and the necessity of personal change. John continued to preach inside churches and preaching-houses, as well as out, and, more significantly, he continued to organize and attend band meetings and to circulate among the many society meetings (which were not yet distinguished as “Methodist” at this point). Professor Richard Heitzenrater highlighted the essential point:

Contrary to some impressions, most of the occasions when persons “received” remission of sins or were “comforted” were those small group meetings, not the large open-air preaching services. Wesley notes many occasions when persons were “thunderstruck,” “wounded by the sword of the Spirit,” “seized with strong pain,” “cut to the heart,” or “sunk to the earth.” Word soon circulated that the people were “falling into strange fits” at the society meetings; the same also began happening occasionally in the public services at Newgate and elsewhere. Wesley heard that many were offended at these outward manifestations of God’s power, but explained that in most cases, the stricken persons were relieved through prayer and were brought to peace and joy.³

Irregular preaching in the open fields offended many and encouraged harsh words from some. One story, often told, recalls the challenge of Beau Nash, who accused John of holding outlawed conventicles. At the very least, Nash claimed, if the open-field meetings were not seditious, they were, nevertheless, wrong-headed because John's preaching "frighten[ed] people out of their wits."⁴ In addition to Nash, others accused John of encouraging dangerous emotionalism, especially when he spoke too plainly about sin.⁵ Still other persons charged John with undermining family values by allowing women to be in positions of leadership or simply by allowing women to spend too much time at class meetings. There were also theological disputes, particularly with Calvinists, Moravians, and antinomians.

The Early Sources of Essential Doctrine

From the start, John constantly claimed that he taught nothing but what was in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England, the Homilies of the church, and the Book of Common Prayer. By this he claimed more than simply a preference for Anglican theology; he meant to place Anglican thought, and his own, squarely in the center of the Christian tradition. John did not claim to be the recipient of an extraordinary divine revelation; instead, he intended that his own preaching and that of his assistants should cover the breadth and depth of Christian theology, in particular that part so infrequently heard from the English pulpits.

In the first twenty-five years of the revival, the Wesleys encouraged doctrinal uniformity "through personal contact with detractors, public arguments with critics, discussions at annual Conferences, and yearly examinations of the preachers. John expected disciples and detractors alike to discover the essential doctrines in the sources—letters, tracts, and sermons—that he provided. John used tutorials and publications, encouragement and reprimands," as Professor Heitzenrater showed.⁶ As early as 1742, John published *The Character of a Methodist* in order to demonstrate that Methodism is genuine Christianity, to "put into more scriptural terms the description of a perfect Christian," and to properly define the term "Methodist."⁷ In it John differentiated between opinions (convictions that are to be treated with respect) and central articles of Christian faith. His satirical phrasing is often quoted and sometimes misunderstood: "The dis -

tinguishing marks of a Methodist are not his *opinions* of any sort. His assenting to this or that scheme of religion, his embracing any particular set of notions ..." ⁸ In 1749, in *A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists*, John's narrative of the origin and early history of many Methodist institutions, he again wrote that "*orthodoxy, or right opinions*, is at best but a very slender *part* of religion, if it can be allowed to be any part of it at all ..." ⁹ And, again, in 1763, John wrote to the Lord Bishop of Gloucester: Faith "is not 'an assent to any opinion, or any number of opinions. A man may assent to three, and twenty creeds; he may assent to all the Old and New Testament (at least as far as he understands them) and yet have no Christian faith at all.'" ¹⁰

According to John, the Wesleyan essentials differed not from the orthodox teaching of the church of his mother and father. Early in the revival, John asserted that the movement was in harmony with the Church of England and that the essentials he preached were the "plain old religion of the Church of England, which is now almost 'everywhere' spoken against, under the new name of 'Methodism.'" ¹¹ In response to the questions of a "serious clergyman" in 1739, John declared that the doctrines he and his followers preached were "the doctrines of the Church of England; indeed, the fundamental doctrines of the Church, clearly laid down, both in her Prayers, Articles, and Homilies." The differences—and John admitted differences—resulted because some Anglican clergy failed to preach and teach the orthodox Christian essentials. From that "part of the clergy who dissent from the Church (though they own it not)," Wesley admittedly differed on the issues of justification, sanctification, and the new birth. ¹² Thus, there is here in his journal entry of 1739, one of the early listings of the essentials of the Wesleyan movement.

The import of this notation in John's journal is the fundamental assertion and belief that, at their core, the essential Wesleyan doctrines were Christian doctrines. To make his point, John preached the sermon "Scriptural Christianity" on 24 August 1744 in St. Mary's church at the University of Oxford. He considered the historical sweep of Christianity, "as beginning, as going on, and as covering the earth," and he asserted that he offered "no *peculiar notions* now under consideration; that the questions moved is not concerning *doubtful opinions* of one kind or another; but concerning the undoubted, fundamental branches (if there be such) of our *common Christianity*." John had warned the crowd that he intend-

ed to make a practical application, which he did by asking a series of pointed questions, all designed to prove that scriptural Christianity did not exist at St. Mary's. "Where does this Christianity now exist? Where, I pray, do the Christians live?" "Is this a *Christian* city? Is Christianity, *scriptural Christianity*, to be found here?" John's questions and his conclusions indicated that he did not find scriptural Christianity in that place, although he desperately desired it.¹³

John energetically defended his method and his substance when he published *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* in 1743 and *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* in 1744. In these, John presented his apology, a reasoned and articulate presentation, for the faith of those who would be called Methodists. He argued not only for the rationality of his own emphases but also for the essential reasonableness of the love of God; he demonstrated that Christianity is "founded on and in every way agreeable to eternal reason."¹⁴ He sought to revitalize primitive Christianity and to witness to his concurrence with the essential genius of the English Reformation. Kenneth Collins well summarized the point. "Wesley took such care in crafting the *Appeals*," Dr. Collins wrote, "precisely because he believed so much was at stake: not simply a defense of Methodism, not merely the reasonableness of the Christian faith, but also an apologetic for vital Christianity."¹⁵

In the early stages of the Methodist movement, then, John Wesley insisted upon doctrinal consensus. Consensus, he reasoned, served as the stabilizing factor of the "connexion."¹⁶ At the first conference, or meeting with his assistants in 1744, John posed for discussion the questions 1) What to teach? 2) How to teach? 3) What to do? The questions themselves better indicated John's dialectical methodology than his openness to free discussion. No one doubted that John had the final word in answer to the questions.

John insisted upon and personally defined faithfulness to Christian truth; he relied upon the most authentic sources for elaboration. In addition to the primary documents of the English Reformation—the Articles, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Homilies—John studied early church writings and particularly emphasized writings prior to the Council of Nicea.¹⁷ He appealed also to Chrysostom, Basil, Jerome, Augustine, and read even from the Spanish mystic Gregory Lopez. John was satisfied that he was loyal to the heart of Christian doctrine; he was equally convinced that his detractors had lost contact with the true

sources of Christian thought. '

As the Methodist movement spread, John provided the requisite theological instruction in a host of different genres. John abridged the first four Edwardian Homilies, the sum of which he "extracted and printed for the use of others."¹⁸ He published the doctrinal questions and answers of his conversations with his assistants, the various editions of which are all titled with some version of *Minutes*.¹⁹ In 1755, John hastily prepared an edition of his Bible commentary, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*. He reissued it a year later with corrections, then he and Charles revised and expanded it in 1762. Along with the four volumes of *Sermons on Several Occasions* published by 1760, John felt he had provided the resources for doctrinal consensus among the preachers.

On the converse, John also specified what Albert Outler called the "negative limits" of Methodist doctrine in "The Model Deed." It stipulated "that preachers in Methodist chapels were to preach no other doctrines than is contained in Mr. Wesley's *Notes Upon the New Testament* and four volumes of *Sermons*." Dr. Outler explained well the import in John's day and hinted at the tension and problem in our own:

This provided his people with a doctrinal canon that was stable enough and yet also flexible. In it, the Holy Scriptures stand first and foremost, and yet subject to interpretations that are informed by "Christian Antiquity," critical reasons *and* an existential appeal to the "Christian experience" of grace, so firmly stressed in the Explanatory Notes. The "four volumes" mentioned in the "Model Deed" contained either forty-three or forty-four sermons, depending on whether or not one counts "Wandering Thoughts." All this suggests that Wesley was clearly interested in coherent doctrinal norms but was equally clear in his aversion to having such norms defined too narrowly or in too juridical a form.²⁰

Essential Doctrines

Each of the several denominations that make up the fellowship of World Methodism has adopted constitutional and doctrinal documents in which the essential Wesleyan themes are manifest. As an example, the four largest Wesley-

related churches in North America—the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ) Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church, and the United Methodist Church (UMC)—share a common heritage, a common episcopal polity, and a common set of doctrinal standards that articulate the Wesleyan essentials of faith. The theology of all four denominations is determined by the Twenty-Five Articles of Religion and the General Rules. Originally, John Wesley edited the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion into twenty-four, which he sent to the Methodists in the new world. The 1784 Christmas conference, which organized the Methodist Episcopal Church (predecessor to all four) added one article, “Of the Rulers of the United States of America,” making a total of twenty-five. The General Rules were published by John and Charles Wesley in 1743 and served as a kind of contract of accountability among members of the societies. There are three general rules: 1) to do no harm; 2) to do good; and 3) to attend to the ordinances of God. The Wesley brothers explained each of these three in larger detail.²¹

From the sources, we can begin to itemize what John Wesley considered essential doctrines, distinct from religious opinions. General essential doctrines, according to John’s sermons and tracts, included that of the Trinity and the divinity and redeeming work of Christ. He expected his preachers to emphasize “the three grand scriptural doctrines—original sin, justification by faith, and holiness consequent thereon.”²² When he wrote to a Roman Catholic in 1749, John affirmed the historic Christian faith by following the outline of the Nicene Creed for its content. In his sermon, “Catholic Spirit,” John delineated heterodoxy—Deists, Arians, Socinians—which doctrine he rejected.²³ Specifically, then, what are the Wesleyan essentials of faith?

1. John Wesley began with the problem of human sin. Though God created human beings in God’s own image and endowed them with perfect righteousness and holiness, human beings have a corrupted nature. “Although man was made in the image of God,” Wesley preached, “yet he was not made immutable. ... He was therefore created able to stand, and yet liable to fall.”²⁴ No part of human nature is immune, no part untouched. John could not have been more clear about the radicalness, the completeness of sin. While in Georgia, he had preached: “Our nature is distempered, as well as enslaved; the whole head is fain, and the

whole heart sick. Our body, soul, and spirit, are infected, overspread, consumed, within and without, in the eye of God, full of diseases, and wound, and putrefying sores." The "one thing needful," the one remedy which God provides, "is the renewal of our fallen nature."²⁵

2. The answer to the desperate human condition of sin is God's unmerited grace. John Wesley called "prevenient" that grace of God which restores to everyone the freedom to respond to God. The Wesleys expressed the idea in song:²⁶

Depth of mercy! Can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?
Can my God his wrath forbear?
Me, the chief of sinners, spare?

Now incline me to repent!
Let me now my fall lament,
Now my foul revolt deplore!
Weep, believe, and sin no more.

A merciful God provides a way out of our human condition before we ask, and even before we know to ask. "Incline me to repent" refers to the work of God's prevenient grace, God's action before we give conscious thought to God or to our need for God. Left alone, sinful human beings are not able to find their way to God and attain salvation. But, asserted John Wesley, sinful human beings are not left alone. God acts first. Contemporary theologians Walter Klaiber and Manfred Marquardt stated it this way: "God's grace precedes all human knowledge and decisions. That is the basis for the Pauline message of grace, as it was discovered anew in its full depth and radicalness, by the Protestant Reformers and as it was represented by Wesley in his own way."²⁷

3. John Wesley accepted as an essential of faith the Protestant principle of justification by faith. Prevenient grace leads to justifying grace, the grace of God by which, through faith in Christ, sins are forgiven. Justification means pardon, in which the guilt of the past is removed and a new relationship between person and God is begun. In his sermons "Salvation by Faith," "Justification by Faith," and others, John explained that justification precedes sanctification and that it

occurs on the basis of faith without the need of preparatory good works. Klaiber and Marquardt pointed out that John drew his understanding of this essential principle from the 'Thirty-Nine Articles and from the Homilies' and "was so little known in eighteenth-century England that its emphatic proclamation by Whitefield and the Wesleys called forth strong protest and opposition."²⁸

Related to justification is the essential mark of assurance. As a result of his Aldersgate experience, John became convinced that Christian experience meant participating in an event of reconciliation that was initiated by God. It involved a divinely given sense of assurance. Contemporary theologian Ted A. Campbell explained: "The normal experience of early Methodist people involved not only belief in Christ but also a supernatural sense that one's sins had been pardoned by Christ. John Wesley and the Methodists referred to this aspect of their religious experience as 'assurance of pardon.'"²⁹ In their hymn, "And Can It Be That I Should Gain," the Wesleys sang:

No condemnation now I dread,
 Jesus, and all in him, is mine.
 Alive in him, my living head,
 And clothed in righteousness divine,
 Bold I approach the eternal throne,
 And claim the crown, through Christ my own.³⁰

4. Having died to sin in justification, the Christian is born again to new life. Regeneration inaugurates the quest for holiness, or sanctification. In the eighteenth century, the term used for sanctification was "Christian perfection." Contemporary theologian Theodore Runyan explained it this way:

To be sure, justification is by grace alone; the merits are the merits of Christ alone; but the change in *status* is not the end, the goal of salvation. Why? Because in the "great salvation" (Wesley's term for his more expansive view) God has more in store for us. God not only justifies, thereby providing the foundation for the new life, but opens up hitherto unimagined possibilities for *growth* in grace. God's goal is to *create us anew, to transform us, to restore us to health and to our role as the image of God.*³¹

The new birth is the beginning of new life in Christ, the beginning of growth in holiness. Holiness denotes the transformation of one's will and affections. Sanctified human beings come to love and desire that which God loves and desires, doing what is right and avoiding what is evil because that is what their sanctified wills truly desire. The goal of sanctification is entire sanctification, or Christian perfection. Perfection is the fulfillment of the two-fold great commandment, to love God and to love neighbor.³²

Holiness has two components: inward and outward, or personal and social holiness. The personal quest for perfection is undertaken with the whole company of believers. Class meetings, societies, and bands bring pilgrims together for encouragement and accountability. Those on the path make use of the "means of grace:" study of scripture, prayer, and receiving the Lord's Supper. Inward, or personal, holiness requires complete reliance on God and God's grace. Outward, or social, holiness indicates the manner in which the redeemed demonstrate love for God in love for neighbor. Christians seek the sanctification of the world around them. In hymnody, the Wesleys held personal and social holiness in tension:³³

Father of everlasting love,
To every soul thy Son reveal,
Our guilt and suffering to remove,
Our deep, original wound to heal,
And bid the fallen race arise,
And turn our earth to paradise.

Contemporary Expressions of Essential Doctrine

This point is especially important to world Methodism. In its one hundred and twenty-year history, the World Methodist Council has adopted only three documents to describe the common tenants of Methodist belief: one on evangelism, one on doctrine (to which we will turn our attention shortly), and one a social affirmation. When, in worship, believers use the World Methodist Social Affirmation, they commit themselves to "seek abundant life for all humanity; to struggle for peace with justice and freedom."

These essential doctrines are found also in the World Methodist Council document, "The Wesleyan Essentials of the Christian Faith." At its 1996 meet-

ing in Rio de Janeiro, the World Methodist Council received a report from a working group that had composed a statement of essential Wesleyan themes.³⁴ The task force, composed of representatives from five of the standing committees, had labored under John Wesley's model of conferencing. Members joined together for Bible study and to read and study again the sermons and writings of John Wesley. They prayed and worshiped together, and they wrote a draft declaration of Wesleyan essentials. The five-hundred member council edited the report and adopted it as a common statement of belief. The document, "Wesleyan Essentials of the Christian Faith: The People Called Methodists," is affirmed by the seventy-seven (plus) Methodist and Wesley-related member churches of the world fellowship. "Wesleyan Essentials" represents one of the best concise statements, in which member churches have found a faithful consensus of the essential Wesleyan faith.

"Wesleyan Essentials" affirms the Christian faith, "truly evangelical, catholic and reformed, rooted in grace," and insists on the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It acknowledges scripture, both Old and New Testaments, as the primary rule of faith and, importantly, it affirms the beliefs contained in the Apostles' and Nicene creeds. In Wesleyan style, it emphasizes the grace of God, creative, prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying. It affirms the sufficiency of Christ's atoning work. It acknowledges the origins of all Methodist and Wesley-related churches in the work of John and Charles Wesley.

In the "Wesleyan Essentials" document, member churches of the World Methodist Council make bold statements about worship, witness, service, and life together. Worship is rightly given a central role in the life of faith, and the importance of the means of grace is recognized. Importantly for the current conversations, the statement acknowledges the church as the place where the sacraments, communion and baptism, are celebrated and where the Gospel is proclaimed (though not exclusively so). Accepting this statement, member churches agree to proclaim Jesus Christ to the world and to be "signs of Christ's presence in our communities." Member churches pledge to serve the world in the name of God, "to suffer with the least," and to hold together "works of piety and works of mercy." Member churches "share a commitment to Jesus Christ that manifests itself in a common heart and life, binding believers together in a common fellowship." Member churches endeavor to establish relationships with

believers of other religious traditions." Presumably this commitment extends as well to the establishment of relationships with the Salvation Army.

In fact, these Wesleyan emphases are witnessed in the ongoing dialogues with other faith communions. That these are the Wesleyan essentials is attested by their appearance in the publications and reports of other Methodist ecumenical dialogues. Whether in conversation with the Orthodox Church, the Anglican Church, or the Roman Catholic Church, Methodists affirm the essentials of faith as they were expressed in the creeds of the early church and councils. Methodists confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior, they worship one Triune God, preach the one Gospel, and accept the authority of the scriptures. The Wesley-related churches look to the Sermons and Notes of John Wesley for guidance and to the Articles of Religion as an expression of the Apostolic faith. With other dialogue partners, Wesley-related churches have confessed the fallenness of humankind and the need for redemption. We have affirmed the sufficiency of Christ's redemptive work and the deep connection between forgiveness of sins and making righteous, that is, between justification and sanctification. In these, and in many other instances, Wesley-related churches have been consistently certain of the Wesleyan essentials of Christian faith.

An Essential Doctrine in the Current Context

On one other matter, that of ecclesiology, Wesley-related churches and the World Methodist Council have been consistent; this issue is of vital importance to the current dialogues. Everywhere in the world, where one finds a Wesley-related organism, that body understands itself as "church." Echoing the wording of Reformation Protestants and the Anglican communion, Wesley-related bodies define "church" as a visible congregation, identified by the mark of faith, in which preaching and the Sacraments take place. In dialogue with Roman Catholic partners, the World Methodist Council declared that:

A profound understanding of the Church must begin with a reflection on the Word of God, who brings the Church into being and continues to make the Church what it is. The Word spoken to us in Christ calls forth our response. Thus, the Church is sustained by a conversation, initiated by the Lord. God, who called all worlds into being by the power of his

Word, speaks to us kindly and with sternness, gently and with thunderous warnings, with laws and with love, in proclamations to his people and heart-to-heart to each and every one. By calling together a messianic community in which the promises were fulfilled, Christ made himself known as Messiah. As he called his flock to follow him, he showed himself to be the Good Shepherd.³⁵

The Church was formed by God, is preserved by God, and functions to serve God's mission in the world, according to these declarations, therefore, is an essential element of common belief. Wesley-related bodies understand themselves to be a part (but not the whole) of the one (the ground of our ecumenical conversations), holy (set apart by God), catholic (intended to be universal), apostolic church. The church is apostolic insofar as it stands in continuity with the witness of the apostles.

In addition to these elements, Wesley-related churches include another dimension, which is distinctly Wesleyan. Wesley-related churches insist that discipline or accountability is an element of fellowship.³⁶ A part of the accountability includes the ordering of ministry. All believers are "ministers," in the sense that each is given gifts for service. But some within the body are ordained, set apart, for particular ministries within the body. Historically, Wesley-related bodies inherited a three-fold pattern of ministry that includes deacons, elders, and bishops. While there are nuances and varieties of understandings about these orders of ministry, and while not every Wesley-related denomination includes the episcopal order, other dialogue statements of the World Methodist have indicated the importance of the role and symbol of the episcopacy and the need for continued discussion around it. The report of the United Methodist and Roman Catholic dialogues declared that, "the question of the role of episcopacy in apostolic continuity and in serving the worldwide communion continues to be a fruitful area of discussion."³⁷ It would be a fruitful area of discussion in the current context, too, along with a discussion of ecclesiology and orders of ministry.

Indeed, given these "Wesleyan essentials of faith," we can identify other questions that might provide a starting place for other useful discussion in a Methodist-Salvation Army dialogue:

♦ If it is a given that The Salvation Army has its origins in William Booth, a minister of the British Methodist connection, to what extent does The Salvation Army recognize the Wesleyan essentials in its movement?

♦ Does The Salvation Army understand the purpose of its origins to be that of reform of the New Connexion in much the same way the Wesleys understood the Methodist movement to be a reform of the existing church?

♦ John and Charles Wesley advocated frequent communion (attendance at the Lord's Supper) for followers and expected every elder to celebrate the Lord's Supper every Lord's day. How is this expectation met in Methodist communities and was the expectation dropped in Salvation Army communities?

♦ What are the common points for mission and ministry between Methodists and Salvation Army, and what are the doctrinal differences that might prevent this?

♦ What is the goal of dialogue between Methodists and Salvation Army? While the goal of any dialogue can be nothing less than full and complete organic union, it is important to keep this question always before us in order to consider interim and more immediate goals as well.

Notes

1. Russell Richey, "History in the Discipline," in *Doctrine and Theology in The United Methodist Church*, Thomas A. Langford, ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 201.

2. Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 100; hereafter *WATPCM*.

3. Heitzenrater, *WATPCM*, 100-1.

4. The story is found in Wesley's journal, W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds., *The Works of John Wesley*, Bicentennial Edition, vol. 19, *Journals and Diaries* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 64, and is retold by Kenneth J. Collins, *A Real Christian: The Life of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 71.

5. See Charles Yrigoyen, Jr., *John Wesley: Holiness of Heart and Life* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 20-2.

6. Heitzenrater, *WATPCM*, 212.

7. Rupert Davies, ed., *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 9, *The Methodist Societies: History, Nature, and Design* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 31; hereafter *WJW*, volume: page.

8. *WJW*, 9:33.

9. *WJW*, 9:254.

10. Gerald R. Cragg, ed., *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 11, *The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1975), 532-3.

11. *WJW*, 19:106.

12. *WJW*, 19:96.

13. Albert C. Outler, ed., *The Works of John Wesley*, Bicentennial Edition, vol. 1, *Sermons 1-33* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 172, 175, 178, 179.

14. *WJW*, 11:55.

15. Collins, *A Real Christian*, 84.

16. Thanks to Albert Outler for arguing this point, "The Wesleyan Quadrilateral—in John Wesley," in *Doctrine and Theology in the United Methodist Church*, Thomas A. Langford, ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 75.

17. Following here Cragg, *WJW*, 11:8-9.

18. Journal, Nov 12, 1738, *WJW*, 19:21; identified by the Bicentennial Edition as *The Doctrine of Salvation, Faith and Good Works* (Oxford, 1738).

19. See Heitzenrater, *WATPCM*, 174, 212, for explanation of the *Minutes of Some Late Conversations between the Rev. Mr. Wesleys and Others* and the *Large Minutes*.
20. Outler, "The Wesleyan Quadrilateral," 76.
21. *WJW*, 9:67-75.
22. See Heitzenrater, *JWATPCM*, 204, for the argument and the quote from the Telford edition of John's letters.
23. Geoffrey Wainwright, "From Pluralism Towards Catholicity? The United Methodist Church After the General Conference of 1988," in *Doctrine and Theology in The United Methodist Church*, Thomas A. Langford, ed., 224.
24. *WJW*, 2:189.
25. *WJW*, 4:354.
26. Franz Hildebrandt, and Oliver A. Beckerlegge, eds., *The Works of John Wesley*, Bicentennial Edition, vol. 7, *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of The People Called Methodists* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 284-5.
27. *Living Grace: An Outline of United Methodist Theology*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001, trans.), 227.
28. *WJW*, 1:109ff; 1:181ff, and Klaiber and Marquardt, *Living Grace*, 268-72.
29. Campbell, *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 56.
30. *WJW*, 7:323.
31. Theodore Runyan, *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 83-4.
32. See Scott J. Jones, *United Methodist Doctrine: The Extreme Center* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 210-16, for a good discussion of the United Methodist understanding of perfection as goal.
33. "Let God, who comforts the distressed," *WJW*, 7: 606.
34. See Paul W. Chilcote, ed., *Wesleyan Tradition: A Paradigm for Renewal* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 19-21, for a liturgical expression of the statement. The task force was appointed by Donald English, then Chairperson of the World Methodist Council. It was chaired by Ned Dewire of Methodist Theological School of Ohio.
35. Report of the Joint Commission Between the Roman Catholic Church and World Methodist Council, *The Apostolic Tradition*, 1986-1991, fifth series, 11-2.
36. Campbell, *Methodist Doctrine*, 65.
37. *Methodist-Catholic Dialogues: Thirty Years of Mission and Witness*, 2001, 26

Salvation Army Doctrines

Gudrun Lydholm

Introduction

There is a growing understanding of how much worship and celebration influence and form theology. This is an "old" understanding which the churches to a certain extent are rediscovering. Prosper of Aquitania (390-463) who was the secretary of Pope Leo the Great, phrased the sentence: *Lex orandi, lex credenti*—the law of prayer is the law of faith, meaning all that is thought about God and man originates in what is experienced in worship as a reality. Only what has value there has relevance for the thinking and therefore for theology.¹

An indication of this is the great influence which songs and hymns have on faith development. The Salvation Army Song Book has over the years been instrumental in teaching Salvation Army doctrines. Faith and belief has been expressed in the poetic words of the songs, and by singing the words over and over again faith has matured and been nurtured.² Often the song book together with the Bible has been used for personal devotions, the words being read and pondered upon.

The eleven articles of faith are part of the song book and are not generally used for recital in worship, only for special occasions such as soldiers' enrolment and officers' ordination. But by being there they are read and form the basis of belief.

Commissioner Gudrun Lydholm and her husband, Commissioner Carl Lydholm, are the Salvation Army territorial leaders for Norway, Iceland and The Faeroes territory.

The origin and status of our doctrines is stated in *Salvation Story*. The origin is Wesleyan as they resemble the Doctrines of the Methodist New Connexion (1838). *Salvation Story* states: "Our doctrinal statement, then, derives from the teaching of John Wesley and the evangelical awakening of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While there was significant correspondence between evangelicals in the mid-nineteenth century, indicated especially in the eight-point statement of the Evangelical Alliance of 1846, the distinctives of Salvation Army doctrine came from Methodism. Our strong emphasis on regeneration and sanctification, our conviction that the gospel is for the whosoever and our concern for humanity's free will all find their roots there."³

Throughout our history there have been several Doctrine Books to explain our faith. They have mainly been used for teaching purposes as catechisms. The last one in this series of books is *Salvation Story* published in 1998. The previous one was published in 1969.

Salvation Story differs from its predecessors: "It is narrative in form, so that teaching is presented in short paragraphs, rather than point by point. This should enable the progression of thought to be clearly seen and allow for flexible use in both study groups and the classroom. The narrative style means that we examine the truths of our faith on two levels, both as the work of God in history which accomplished our salvation, and as the record of our own journey of faith, from sin through to salvation and holiness. The narrative approach is reflected, too, in the Handbook's title: *Salvation Story*. Salvationists base their understanding of doctrine on the witness of the Bible, the living word of God. Our Articles of Faith make that clear, and therefore this book seeks to be faithful to Scripture."⁴

In order to substantiate *Salvation Story* and put our doctrines and theology even more on the agenda of local corps communities both in teaching and worship *Salvation Story Study Guide* was produced.⁵ "Perhaps the purpose of the Guide can best be summed up by describing it as a link between the doctrinal teaching of the Handbook and the thinking and living of the individual Salvationist as well as the Salvationist community in particular settings. It is not enough to assent to the truths of Scripture and to the Army's doctrinal positions. Our faith must penetrate, transform, and enliven both the mind and the life of us all. It must be a living faith. It must be our own faith. The purpose of the Guide

is to stimulate our ownership of a faith that is alive and thought out.”⁶ All the chapters include the following sections:

1. Belief
2. Life
3. Worship
4. Bible Studies

All of this points to the fact that we ground our faith and theology on *Lex orandi, lex credenti*.

1. THE FORMATION OF SALVATION STORY—REFLECTION OF OUR DOCTRINAL THINKING AND DEVELOPMENT AT THE START OF THE NEW MILLENNIUM

The process of writing *Salvation Story* and the international review of the manuscripts with subsequent revision took 6 years from 1992—1998. It was an international project reflected in the membership of the Doctrine Council who wrote the book as a joint venture and in the input from all international leaders on the first draft. It was a fertile exercise in contemporary theological reflection of our doctrines. Many themes came up in the initial discussions and at a later stage due to the international reaction to the draft. The process did reflect diversity, not necessarily between different parts of the world alone, but as much within the same geographical zone. It also reflected the profound change that is taking place from the dualistic thinking lurking in our heritage to the more holistic thinking of today.

The eleven doctrines

As mentioned in the introduction our eleven doctrines are very close to the Methodist New Connexion of 1838. Additions to the original statements made from time to time in the 1870s reflect the influence of the 19th century Holiness Movement.

In the process of *Salvation Story* an attempt was made to write a set of contemporary doctrines to stand alongside with the traditional eleven. Various efforts were made to write doctrine based on a Trinitarian model as well as on

the more systematic "eleven" model. Some of the results can be seen in *Salvation Story Study Guide*.⁷ The final result of this exercise was eleven contemporary doctrines which ended by being the summaries of each chapter of *Salvation Story*. They do express our contemporary theological agenda and the focus of our belief today.

This paper will highlight particularly the development in theological understanding reflected in the comparison with the eleven doctrines and our contemporary summaries.

Salvation Army Doctrines

As set out in Schedule 1 of
The Salvation Army Act of 1980

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.

We believe that there is only one God, who is infinitely perfect, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things, and who is the only proper object of religious worship.

We believe that there are three persons in the Godhead—The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, undivided in essence and co-equal in power and glory.

We believe that in the person of Jesus Christ the Divine and human natures are united, so that He is truly and properly God and truly and properly man.

Summaries from *Salvation Story*

We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were given by inspiration of God and that they are the only divine rule of Christian faith and practice.

We believe that there is only one God, whom alone we worship, externally existing in three co-equal persons, of one essence, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We believe in God the Father, creator of heaven and earth, preserver and governor of all, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love.

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's eternal Son conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of Mary, in whom humanity and deity are united. He lived a perfect life, died an atoning death, was raised from the dead and

lives at the right hand of the Father, he intercedes for his people and will return in power and glory.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of life, who convicts, regenerates, sanctifies and empowers for ministry all who believe in Christ as Saviour and Lord.

We believe that our first parents were created in a state of innocence, but by their disobedience they lost their purity and happiness, and that in consequence of their fall all men have become sinners, totally depraved, and as such are justly exposed to the wrath of God.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has by his suffering and death made an atonement for the whole world so that whosoever will may be saved.

We believe that repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, are necessary to salvation.

We believe that we are justified by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and that he believeth hath the witness himself.

We believe that continuance in a state of salvation depends upon continued obedient faith in Christ,

We believe that we were created in the image of God to live in harmony with God and creation, a state which was broken by disobedience and sin, and as a result, we live under the compulsion of sin, separated from God and unable to save ourselves.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ suffered and died to save the whole world and was raised by the glory of the Father so that whoever turns in repentance to God and has faith in Jesus Christ will be saved.

We believe that we are justified by grace through our faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and are born again by the Holy Spirit, who testifies to salvation in our hearts as we continue in an obedient faith relationship with Christ.

We believe that it is the privilege of all believers to be wholly sanctified, and that their whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our lord Jesus Christ.

We believe in the sanctification by grace through faith as the privilege and calling of all who profess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour and who accept the power of the Holy Spirit to lead a life of holiness.

We believe in the Church, the body of Christ, justified and sanctified by grace, called to continue the mission and the ministry of Christ.

We believe in the immortality of the soul; in the resurrection of the body; in the general judgement at the end of the world; in the eternal happiness of the righteous; and in the endless punishment of the wicked.

We believe in Christ's return in glory, the completion of God's Kingdom, the resurrection of the body, the final accountability of all persons to God, Heaven and Hell, the endless despair of those who reject salvation and the eternal happiness of those who are righteous through faith.

Word of the living God—chapter one

In the first manuscript of *Salvation Story* this chapter was the last chapter. This was based on the rationale that there is a difference in our faith in God and our trust in the authority of the Scriptures. This would be expressed by stating our creed first and then giving the source of our faith. In the revision this was altered, so the source came first and then the actual creed. "The source of Christian doctrine is the Bible. We hold a faith that finds its definition and defense in Scripture. For this reason, the First Article is a preliminary statement that establishes the Bible as the sourcebook for Christian doctrine."⁸

There is no real difference between doctrine one and the equivalent summary, though there might be a change in the interpretation of how we understand inspiration and authority. In the paragraph on inspiration it is stated: "The writers of the Bible, who often used many different literary sources, were so enlightened and directed by the Holy spirit that they produced a wholly trustworthy and enduring witness to God's saving work for humanity, centered upon the life and person of Jesus Christ."⁹

When it comes to the question of authority Scripture is seen as the primary

authority; even though we do acknowledge two other sources. "The Bible, then, is the major authority for the Christian. However, the Bible itself teaches that there are three pillars which provide a secure foundation for Christian faith and practice. These three are: the teaching of Scripture, the direct illumination of the Holy Spirit and the consensus of the Christian community. The Bible is not safely used without reference to the general understanding of the Christian community throughout history, any more than it is understood without the help of the Spirit." ¹⁰

"So the Christian has three authorities for understanding God's Word and applying it: Scripture, Spirit and Church. Each authority confirms and sanctions the other two." ¹¹

The words infallibility and inerrancy are not part of our doctrines, but they might appear in teaching the doctrine and in the over all understanding. Therefore there is an appendix which deals with these word. "The Salvation Army's statement of faith does not include any reference to the infallibility or inerrancy of Scripture. What we do affirm is that we can rely upon the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament for instruction and guidance in matters of divine truth and the Christian life, because in Scripture we meet the inspired Word of God himself, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit who inspired the writers also illumines those who read its pages and leads them to faith." ¹²

Trinity—chapter two

To cover the issue doctrines two and three appear at the lead of the chapter, while the summary is short. There is a difference between the summary and the doctrines.

The phrase "whom alone we worship" stands in the place of "proper object of religious worship" and moves worship into the center of the doctrine, making it personal instead of institutional. In the chapter there is a section on worship as the human response to God. "Christian worship is our wholehearted response to the God who is eternally in community, living, and acting, relating to his creation, known by his works and revealed by his saving activity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit." ¹³

The summary strengthens the Trinitarian aspect. Instead of two doctrines concentrating first on the only God and his qualities and then on the three per-

sons of the Godhead, we state the one God in three persons as the starting point and ground. In dealing with our second and third doctrines *Salvation Story* starts with the chapter on the trinity entitled—"The God who is never alone." The fellowship aspect of the trinity is at the center and is an expression of what I called our more holistic approach. "God is never alone. Within himself he enjoys perfect and full fellowship. Although he is always three, he is not three individuals who could be in competition or opposition. He is three persons, always united in being, attitude and action, a threefold God of love."

"These three persons commune with one another. God relates within himself. God is himself a communion. He is always Father, son and Holy Spirit, each one always in fellowship with the others."¹⁴

It does not mean that each person of the Godhead is not dealt with; chapters three, four and five deal exclusively with each person, but all having the Trinitarian aspect as the ground. In the trinity chapter *Salvation Story* states: "The three-in-one definition attempts to describe a God who as Father creates, governs and sustains; as Son redeems, befriends and disciplines; as Holy Spirit sanctifies, counsels and empowers. In persons and work he is three: in personality and love he is one."

"The three persons of the Trinity are continually revealing one another to us. The New Testament tells us that the Spirit bears witness to Jesus, Jesus Christ reveals the Father and testifies to the Spirit, the Father testifies to the son."

Creator of Heaven and earth—chapter three

Because the trinity is dealt with first and includes a discussion on monotheism as well the following chapters are more concentrated on the specific character of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The difference between the summary and doctrine two is that God's fatherhood is mentioned, and instead of just describing God as "infinitely perfect", his perfection is described in terms of holiness, wisdom, power and love. Another difference is that in the doctrine God is "the Creator, Preserver and Governor of all things". In the summary God as creator of Heaven and earth is stressed, and as such preserver and governor of all. It is in the view of creation that a more holistic approach is evident.¹⁵ We are confirming God's creation as good, both the material and spiritual creation. "The universe and all it contains possesses

dignity and meaning because it is not a result of chance or accident. It is the expression of divine intent and authority, which gives delight to its creator.”¹⁶ “Christian teaching recognizes the power of evil, but claims that ultimately God is sovereign and his creation good.”¹⁷ “The relationship of God to his creation is one of loving care and concern. Humanity’s stewardship of the earth is a reflection of that care, as human beings are made in the image of God. ... The world was made to praise God and reveal his glory. Our stewardship of it furthers that end.”¹⁸

We are confirming our stewardship of creation which is reflecting contemporary concerns for creation, ecology and a theology of creation.

God’s eternal Son—chapter four

The summary of chapter four on the doctrine of Jesus Christ differs considerably from doctrines four and six which deal with the person of Jesus Christ. The summary is more narrative than our doctrine and resembles the old creeds. What the doctrines concentrate on are the human and divine nature of Jesus and his atonement for the whole world by his suffering and death. There is no mentioning of the resurrection and the second coming.

The summary states the eternal sonship of Christ, that he is conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of Mary and this places him in the eternal as well as the temporal context. His life here is underlined as well as the resurrection and his resurrected life. That is absent from the doctrines as they are centered upon the salvation he brought and our response to this. *Salvation Story* states: “The whole New Testament resounds with the proclamation that God raised Jesus from the dead. The resurrection of our lord Jesus Christ in bodily form turned apparent failure into triumph and confirmed the power of self-giving love over evil and death. God’s transforming presence is truly among us: Jesus is exalted as Lord and Christ. ... The existence of the Church, Christ’s living body on earth, is evidence of his risen life.”¹⁹

The belief in the resurrection has always been fundamental for Salvationist faith, but it is not clearly stated in our doctrines. The teaching has always been part of our different doctrine books, but not part of the indirect teaching, I mentioned in the introduction, as the presence of our doctrines in the songbook represents.

The Holy Spirit, Lord and giver of life—chapter five

We do not have a specific doctrine on the Holy Spirit mentioned as part of the Godhead in doctrine three. Doctrine seven states "regeneration by the Holy Spirit" in connection with repentance and faith. That is all when it comes to our doctrines. A much stronger focus on the Holy Spirit is evident in contemporary theology and is closely linked to the prominence of the Trinity. When belief in the Trinity has been looked upon as a sort of theological construction following statements on the one God instead of a living reality—God is triune and has always been—the role of the Holy Spirit in creedal statements has been less prominent. Because of the focus on the Trinity stronger creedal statements on the Holy Spirit are crucial and reflected in our contemporary theological agenda.

Here we state the Holy Spirit both on the cosmic scale as Lord and giver of life and on the personal scale as the one who works in us. Again creation is in focus and *Salvation Story* states: "The Creator acts by the movement of the Spirit. With energy like the wind, yet able to impose form and order, the Spirit effects and sustains the living process and brings creation toward the fulfillment of God's purposes. The Spirit remains creatively active in the world." ²⁰

Concerning the Spirit as agent of re-creation *Salvation Story* states: "The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sinfulness and need of salvation, and leads us to repentance and faith. Through regeneration, he imparts new life in Christ and enables us to live as saints in the reality of the Resurrection." ²¹ "He sanctifies us as God's people, enabling us to bear the fruit of the Spirit. He calls us to continual repentance. He re-awakens us to the memory of Jesus and continues to remind us that we are at present sinners saved by grace to live victoriously." ²²

This renewed concentration on the Holy Spirit is also reflected in our approach to holiness. ²³ It effects our belief in the Church ²⁴ as well and gives voice to it: "At Pentecost the Holy Spirit became the creator of the Church through which God initiated the reign of Christ and the mission of his people. In the ongoing life of the Church the Spirit initiates and seeks to guide and sustain genuine religious revival and spiritual renewal." ²⁵

All chapters end with a sort of mission appeal. This is very evident in chapter five: "The Holy Spirit is always contemporary. He is God acting for us today, giving us confidence in the Christian mission and enabling us to look forward

with hope to the ultimate fulfillment of God's purposes. By pointing back to the work of Christ for us, he points ever forward to the Father's ultimate creative purpose of uniting all things in him."

"Within the flow of the salvation story, the Holy Spirit, giver of life, guides and vitalizes our mission to live the story, to tell the story and to help others to make it their own."²⁶

In accordance with our grounding in *lex orandi, lex credenti* the contemporary aspect is crucial. This comes to the forefront in our dealing with the Holy Spirit as seen in the mission appeal.

Distorted image—chapter six

This concerns the doctrine of humanity. The doctrine focuses on the creation story in the second chapter of Genesis, while the summary concentrates on the first chapter of Genesis with the image of God and the original destiny to live in harmony with God and creation. The holistic approach which I mentioned in the introduction is evident here as well. In this chapter our place as part of creation is present: "the universal experience of human sin has brought estrangement from God and disharmony within God's created order."²⁷

Jesus as the true image of God or as a full human being emphasized: "God's intention for us all, as created in his image, has been realized in Jesus Christ. In him we see the full human expression of God's holiness and love. He is the true image of God, the one through whom we find our hope of fulfilling God's intention."²⁸

There is a difference in the wording and images which reflects contemporary vocabulary or perhaps the unease in using wording which does not really resonate with contemporary theology. Instead of being sinners, totally depraved, "we live under compulsion of sin." Instead of being exposed to the wrath of God "we are separated from God and unable to save ourselves."

The word depravity is dealt with in the chapter. "In statements of doctrine, depravity is often called total depravity. This does not mean that every person is as bad as he or she can be, but rather that the depravity which sin has produced in human nature extends to the total personality. No area of human nature remains unaffected."²⁹ This explanation of depravity bridges the language of the doctrine with the language of the summary.

Concerning the expression the wrath of God this is also explained in a way that it connects the two different wordings. "Divine wrath is evidence of the faithfulness of God, who is righteous and true to himself. It is a powerful expression of the love and holiness of God. In his wrath, God judges and condemns sin, while in his love he seeks to bring us to repentance. ..."

"The Bible links our sinful state, our separation from God, and the wrath of God, with the sting or anguish of death. It also warns of the dreadful possibility of spiritual death resulting in final separation from God." ³⁰

Salvation Story—chapter seven

The difference between doctrines six and seven, heading this chapter, and the summary is in the vocabulary. Again, we insert the resurrection in the text.

Our doctrines, our teaching and our preaching have always concentrated on the atonement and as part of this negated any element of predestination teaching that denies our emphasis on "whosoever will may come". This is still the case, but the challenges and questions of today have changed so the concentration might be or seem somewhat diluted, as a lot of our teaching and preaching are directed to the "saints" more than the "sinners."

The "mission appeal" at the chapter's end reflects this: "The love and mercy of God are mysteries beyond human comprehension. In the story of salvation we recognize the astounding generosity of God's love towards us and all people. We realize the depth and gravity of our sin and discover the joy of our salvation in Christ."

"The Church's mission is to share the story of this generosity, to lift up the atoning Cross for all the world to see, to proclaim the gospel's inclusiveness, to demonstrate its saving power, and to pray urgently that people everywhere will know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." ³¹

The "mission appeal" in each chapter does reveal our continuing focus on mission, even though our theological agenda might not reveal this clearly.

Salvation experience—chapter eight

Doctrines six, seven and eight are at the head of this chapter. The summary has a slightly different vocabulary, but the real difference lies in the role of the Holy Spirit. That is stressed both in doctrine six and in the summary. In the sum-

mary however the Holy Spirit is the agent, the one who testifies to salvation in our hearts. Doctrine 8 states that "he that believeth hath the witness in himself." It could be understood as an effort on our part and not a witness made alive by the Holy Spirit. The doctrine's vocabulary is based on 1 John 5:10, but without the statement of verse 6—"it is the Spirit who testifies" it can be misunderstood.

The summary is perhaps more Pauline based on Romans 8 instead on 1 John 5, but I do not think that it reflects a major move from Johannine to Pauline theology. It is more the general tendency in *Salvation Story* of concentrating on the active role of the Holy Spirit.

The mission appeal in this chapter as well as the previous one does reflect that we speak from within the Church and that our own ecclesiology is developing and on the agenda.³² "The mission of the Church is to invite the world to claim this salvation. The Church that has received the good news of grace has the privilege of preaching it to a world in despair. The Church that has learned to trust in Jesus has the joy of inviting to faith those who no longer trust. The Church that has the assurance of sins forgiven has the confidence to bring this message of God's reliable provision."³³

Full salvation—chapter nine

Doctrines nine and ten head this chapter. There is quite a difference between the doctrine and the summary. The role of the Holy Spirit is underlined as the agent of our sanctification—the one giving the power to live a holy life. We are repeating the faith pattern from our creedal statement on salvation in our statement on sanctification.

We are underlining that sanctification is by grace through faith. This is to combat any illusion that we might gain sanctification through our own effort and to make sure that the close connection between sanctification and redemption is kept in focus. "Discovering and appropriating for ourselves the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit is not a new experience unrelated to saving faith and the experience of regeneration. The same grace at work in our lives both saves and sanctifies. We advance towards the fulfillment of that which our conversion promises—victory over sin, the life of holiness made actual, and all the graces of salvation.

Over the years there has been some difficulties with understanding our

doctrine on holiness and really taking it to heart, especially when it in translations at times have given the impression that sanctification is perfection. The chapter does address that. In this chapter the concept of us being created in the image of God is related to holiness as well. "We are called to reflect the holiness of God."³⁴ "The life of holiness is not mysterious or overwhelming or too difficult to understand. It is life in the footsteps of Christ who is the true image of God. He is the truly holy one, who revealed the holiness of God in the wholeness and fullness of his human life and in the manner of his self-offering to God. To see him is to be marked by it. Holiness is Christlikeness."³⁵

The chapter on holiness also addresses the move away from the "second blessing" theology common in historical Salvation Army preaching and teaching. Even though both the crisis and the process dynamics are addressed the predominantly European stress on the process even to the point that the crises experience is minimized can be seen. *Salvation Story* tries to balance to two views to underline the value of paying attention to both. "At such times the Holy Spirit is overwhelmingly present with power for holy living. We experience a moment of grace that leads to spiritual breakthrough. We move into a new level of relationship with the holy God, with others and with ourselves."

"Such life-changing moments are widespread, but dramatic experiences are not always a feature of our growth in holiness. The Holy Spirit deals with us as individuals and leads us on into holiness in the way he sees fit."³⁶

"There is a crisis/process dynamic in the life of holiness. Experienced as a crisis, sanctification becomes a lifelong process. We are in the process of becoming what we already are in Christ. The holy life, however, will always be marked by an "already but not yet" reality. We are already sanctified but not yet sinlessly perfect ... the truly holy life is marked by the signature and seal of Christ himself."³⁷

This chapter also stresses what I referred to in the introduction as a more holistic approach. The concept of social holiness is covered by relating holiness with wholeness. "The God who sanctifies is the healing God who makes us whole. The term 'wholeness' points to the comprehensiveness of God's saving power in Christ and of the Spirit's sanctification. ... This means that there can be no holiness without wholeness. Holiness can only be seen as redemptively touching all of life."³⁸

In the mission appeal at the end of the chapter this is evident as well. "The holy life is a Christ-service for the world, expressed through a healing, life-giving and moving ministry. It is the life of Christ which we live out in mission ... the mission of God's holy people encompasses evangelism, service and social action." ³⁹

As the belief in sanctification has been a hallmark for the Army and belongs to our very treasured heritage from Methodism we are concerned that it continues to relate to our Salvationists' faith experience in all parts of the world. Some of the changes in vocabulary, in images and perhaps even in the theological thinking is an expression of this concern.

People of God—chapter ten

We do not have a doctrine on ecclesiology apart from the fact that all our doctrines begin with we and therefore imply that it is a communal faith and that there is a faith community behind the statements. In the heading of the chapter there is a quotation of Bramwell Booth.⁴⁰ "Of this Great Church of the Living God, we claim and have ever claimed, that we of The Salvation Army are an integral part and element—a living fruitbearing branch in the True Vine." ⁴¹ In this quotation it is our belonging to the Church Universal which is in focus, not what we believe about the church.

The image of the church which has been chosen for the summary is the image of the body of Christ. In the quotation from Bramwell Booth it is the image of the vine, both of them biological images which imply growth and changes. This expresses very well the core of Army ecclesiology. The church is understood as a living organism with potential for growth and change and not as a static institution. By using the image of corpus Christi, the body of Christ—his body on earth, we acknowledge the significance of the name for our community of believers—"the corps."

The summary gives voice to the belief that as a community we are justified and sanctified by grace. It is not only a personal experience but a communal one as well. Over the years we might have tended to focus more on the personal experience, our own personal faith journey than on the communal faith journey. This is "corrected" by the summary.

Another important part which reflects our history and heritage is that we

underline that the Church is sent out in the continuation of the mission and ministry of Christ. Chapter ten states: "The Church gathers that it may be sent out in mission. The Church is not a self-absorbed society brought together for security and socializing. It is a fellowship that releases its members for pilgrimage and mission. The Holy Spirit creates the Church not only for our benefit, but also to make our witness and mission possible." ⁴²

In the chapter the crucial role of the Holy Spirit is underlined in headlines as these: "the Church is created by the Holy Spirit for fellowship. The Church is created by the Holy Spirit for healing. The Church is created by the Holy Spirit for nurture. The Church is created by the Holy Spirit to equip for ministry and mission. The Holy Spirit empowers the whole Church for witness. The Holy Spirit empowers the Church for mission." ⁴³ This is another indication of the strengthened focus on the role of the Holy Spirit which is evident in our contemporary theological agenda. Under the first heading is stated: "Together we are God's household, his family, as we abide in Christ and he in us. This intimate community is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is he who enables us to gather in fellowship as one, sharing life together, growing up into Christ our head, discovering in him freedom from prejudice and sin."

"The importance of such fellowship can hardly be overestimated. Within this community we experience healing, help and happiness. As holiness is relational, holiness of life is to be realized in community." ⁴⁴ The more holistic approach which I have related to in this paper is evident here as well.

The chapter addresses the issue of the Church as a sacramental community in the way we understand this concept and states: "Jesus Christ is the center of the Church which lives to be a sign of God's grace in the world. As the sacramental community, the Church feeds upon him who is the one and only, true and original Sacrament. Christ is the source of grace from whom all other sacraments derive and to whom they bear witness. He is what is signified in the sign of the sacraments."

"As the body of Christ the Church is his visible presence in the world. It is God's sign (sacrament) of the life together to which Christ calls the world, the visible expression of atoning grace. Rooted in the risen life of Christ, the one and only true, and original Sacrament, the Church daily discovers, celebrates—and is transformed by—his grace. It gathers around Jesus Christ, lives by faith in him

and is blessed to be his sacramental community.”⁴⁵

Under this heading there is a small paragraph on the sacraments plus an appendix after the chapter.⁴⁶

In the last section it is clear that our understanding of the church is the living and moving organism as opposed to a more institutional concept: “the Church lives by hope. It is caught up in the movement from Pentecost to the *Parousia*, from the beginning of the Church to the return of Christ and the fulfillment of his promises. The Holy Spirit frees God’s resurrection people from the grip of past failures and renews them for God’s future in Christ.”⁴⁷

Kingdom of the risen Lord—chapter eleven

There is quite a difference between doctrine eleven and the summary. It is not only a question of contemporary language, but of a more profound difference. In the summary the return of Christ and the completion of his Kingdom is mentioned. This can be compared to the summary in chapter seven on Jesus Christ, in the way of a more narrative approach and a resemblance of old creedal statements. The summary does not mention the immortality of the soul—this is another expression of more holistic view instead of a dualistic. The question is dealt with in *Salvation Story* and in more depth in the *Study Guide*.⁴⁸ The summary chooses to let the words of the old creeds, “resurrection of the body,” stand as the only central statement—this is another expression of a more holistic view instead of a dualistic one.

The summary ends on a positive note with the eternal happiness instead of ending the statement as the doctrine does with the endless punishment of the wicked. I suppose that is symptomatic for contemporary theology and for how we communicate the gospel to day.

2. THE SALVATION ARMY AND THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS

In its first years of existence the Army observed the Lord’s Supper as a monthly celebration and practiced infant baptism. In 1883 the founder decided to change to a non-observance of the sacraments “for the time being.” There were different reasons for this—practical as well as theological. From a practical point of view, there were real fears of dissension and division within the movement and confusion about the mode of administration—for instance, women adminis-

tering the sacraments, discussion on fermented wine/unfermented wine etc. From a theological point of view the Army had the conviction that it was free to respond to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the same way as the New Testament Church had been. They felt free to adapt the message of the gospel to meet the needs of their specific mission, even at the expense of a continuity with the history and tradition of established churches. Catherine Booth especially, but also William Booth shared with some quarters of the nineteenth century holiness movement a deep mistrust of ritualistic practices that might lull believers into a false sense of security regarding the reality of their relationship with God. Communion with Christ, in holiness teaching, was the outcome of an inner transformation, an entire sanctification, where the purity of Christ was mirrored in the life of the believer. In contrast, the sacraments appeared to be outward practices, indicating superficial religion, without inner power.⁴⁹

During the years a development of our theology has taken place and *Salvation Story* testifies to that. I have mentioned that a more holistic approach has taken place which can be seen in our theology of creation. William Booth's theology of creation was determined by his understanding of sin. He saw the whole created world as in bondage to sin with no hope of regeneration apart from the work of Christ. It was difficult therefore for Booth to affirm that material things could convey the grace of God, or that our human senses could be used to perceive and appreciate his presence. *Salvation Story* in its whole approach does mediate an acceptance of creation as inherently good and an understanding of creation to be the vehicle of God's grace. This makes room for the acknowledgement that material things can and do speak of God, that the bodily senses can communicate his grace.

As mentioned in dealing with our ecclesiology the ground of our belief concerning the sacraments is the basic belief in Christ as the one and only, true and original sacrament, and that therefore all sacraments derive from him. "He is what is signified in the sign of the sacraments."⁵⁰ In appendix 9, which deals with the sacraments, it states: "A sacrament has been described as an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace. It is a sign of grace that can be seen, smelled, heard, touched, tasted. It draws on the most common human experiences to express the most uncommon divine gifts. It takes what we take for granted and uses it to overwhelm us with the surprising grace of God."⁵¹ In the

concluding paragraph it states: "We observe the sacraments, not by limiting them to two or three or seven, but by inviting Christ to suppers, love feasts, birth celebrations, parties, dedications, sick beds, weddings, anniversaries, commissions, ordinations, retirements—and a host of other significant events—and, where he is truly received, watching him give a grace beyond our understanding. We can see, smell, hear, touch, and taste it. We joyfully affirm that in our presence is the one, true, original Sacrament. And we know that what we have experienced is reality."⁵²

Salvation Story was published in 1998 and since then the debate on our non-observance of the sacraments has continued and been intensified. During this period the report from International Spiritual Life Commission came out which dealt with Salvation Army worship and spiritual life. There were calls to enrich Salvation Army worship and part of these calls were calls to make use of symbolic acts in different ways and settings without turning them into rituals. Many corps have enriched worship life through symbolic acts and found an immense value of something visible and touchable. This has opened the door even further for a debate to reintroduce the sacraments or make the administration of them possible in certain parts of the world. The debate has always been there, but it has become worldwide and been intensified.

This is where we stand today in the midst of debate, trying to think through our theology concerning these matters and to see what a possible reintroduction of the observance of the sacraments could mean. It is a debate with strong opinions and feelings for and against and no clear indication of which direction we might be heading for.

Conclusion

The limits of this paper have excluded a more in-depth analysis of the development of our theology. I have only been able to touch upon some of the distinctions between our doctrines and the summaries of *Salvation Story* which reflect our contemporary theological agenda. The main ones are a more holistic/creationist position which to certain extent plays a role in our present consideration concerning our non-observance of the sacraments. There is an understanding of the human person that includes "the image of God" and a fuller account of the historicity of Jesus. There is much more emphasis on the person

and work of the Holy Spirit and a greater focus on community including a developing ecclesiology. We do retain our belief in the authority of Scripture, even though the understanding of inspiration and authority might have changed slightly.

I think this reveals that the contemporary ecumenical theological themes are reflected in the focus of Salvation Army theology of today.

Notes

1. Kevin W. Irwin: Context and Text. Method in Liturgical Theology. Liturgical Press 1994. Chapter 1

2. Most hymns are by Salvationists, but a number are traditional Christian hymns and some by Charles Wesley and John Wesley. Song books from other cultures than the Anglo-American reflect the church traditions of the culture. E.g. the Nordic countries and Germany have a substantial part of the hymns from the Lutheran tradition. This reflects itself in Salvationists' faith.

3. Appendix 12 pp. 130-131

4. Introduction to *Salvation Story* p. xiv

5. First published in 1999

6. Introduction to *Salvation Story Study Guide* p. vi

7. Examples of contemporary Salvationist Creeds p. 121-131

8. *Salvation Story* p. 1

9. *Salvation Story* p. 5

10. *Salvation Story* p. 7

11. *Salvation Story* p. 8

12. *Salvation Story* p. 13

13. *Salvation Story* p. 19

14. *Salvation Story* p. 16

15. I will return to this in dealing with our stance to the sacraments as our whole approach to creation is one of the fundamentals, which might lead us to reconsider administering the sacraments.

16. *Salvation Story* p. 27

17. *Salvation Story* p. 28

18. *Salvation Story* p. 30

19. p. 41

20. p. 52

21. Also in connection with the Holy Spirit we stress the reality and relevance of the resurrection for our lives

22. p. 53

23. See chapter nine

24. Ecclesiology has appeared on our agenda the last 20 years and is still in process.

Salvation Story does address our self-understanding as a church. I will return to that under chapter 10.

25. p. 54

26. p. 55

27. *Salvation Story* p. 59

28. *Salvation Story* p. 60

29. *Salvation Story* p. 63

30. *Salvation Story* p. 65

31. *Salvation Story* p. 75

32. I will return to that under chapter ten

33. *Salvation Story* p. 84

34. *Salvation Story* p. 87

35. *Salvation Story* p. 88

36. *Salvation Story* p. 90

37. *Salvation Story* p. 90

38. *Salvation Story* p. 93

39. *Salvation Story* p. 94

40. He was the son of the founder and the second general of the Army

41. *Salvation Story* p. 100

42. *Salvation Story* p. 107

43. *Salvation Story* pp. 103—105, 108

44. *Salvation Story* p. 104

45. *Salvation Story* pp. 105 -106

46. I will return to the question of sacraments and their celebration in the last chapter of this paper.

47. *Salvation Story* p. 109

48. p.104

49. Based on a working paper on the sacraments from the Doctrine Council

50. *Salvation Story* p. 105

51. *Salvation Story* p. 113

52. *Salvation Story* p.114

Wesley and the Poor: Theory and Practice from Then until Now

George H. Freeman

While a student at Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, from 1969—1972, my Methodist History classes taught me that whenever John Wesley served Holy Communion, an offering was always received which was designated “for the poor.” Bishop Nolan Harmon’s lectures in “United Methodist History, Doctrine and Polity” included the instruction to *always* receive an offering for the poor when you conduct a service of Holy Communion, “*because Mr. Wesley did!*”

As a young neophyte pastor, I informed my church finance committee that we needed to receive an offering for the poor, in the tradition of Mr. Wesley. They eventually agreed, reminding me that it had never been done that way before! We quickly found there was no mechanism for disbursing such an offering, so a pastor’s discretionary fund was established. As I became aware of local needs, emergencies, etc., this fund was available to assist. When I began serving in my first appointment, approximately \$10–\$12 per month was realized through this offering. The average need/request was, of course, for much larger amounts than this!

Throughout my pastoral ministry, offerings were received at the monthly service of Holy Communion. Often these were designated for one of the missions in the community or one of the special offerings of either the denomination or of the Annual Conference. Worshippers gave to support the offering, and the

amount received was often in direct proportion to the amount of publicity that preceeded it, and/or the level of the emotional appeal of the cause for which the offering was being solicited. Something was lost in the translation from Bishop Harmon's class to the first Sunday of every month in the local church to which I was appointed. People lost sight of the historic connection of an offering "for the poor," and instead gave to yet another special offering of the Church.

What was it that convicted John Wesley of the need to receive an offering "for the poor?" Was this rooted in his life and thus in his theology? How are Methodists now engaged in receiving such an offering for the poor, if at all?

Much has been written about John Wesley's emphasis on the spiritual life and on social holiness. His concern for and ministry with the poor are reflected throughout his writings. To understand his emphasis on the poor, one must attempt to understand the economical environment in which John Wesley lived and ministered. This will be addressed as we look at Dr. Richard Heitzenrater's paper *"The Poor and the People Called Methodists."*

Several influences in John Wesley's life no doubt had an impact on his life's work and his commitment to holiness of heart and of hand. Growing up in the parsonage at Epworth brought him in touch with the disciplines of the spiritual life at an early age. His devout mother, Susanna, took seriously her role of mothering and nurtured her children in the word of God and in submission to authority. There is no doubt that her influence prepared John for a life of service to God. John's formal schooling at the London's Charterhouse preparatory school and at Oxford University helped shape his image of an obedient servant of Christ. His spiritual growth throughout his life and especially his Aldersgate experience helped shape his boldness in proclaiming the good news of God to all persons, especially to the poor. In order to show that God was indeed at work in history he pointed to the Methodist movement and declared *"And surely never in any age or nation, since the Apostles, have those words been so eminently fulfilled, 'the poor have the gospel preached unto them,' as it is at this day."*¹

His Boyhood

One could assume that John Wesley's concern for the poor originated from his own childhood. The 15th of 19 children and second son born to Rev. Samuel and Susanna Wesley, stretching their meager family resources was a way of life

in the parsonage at Epworth. Samuel Wesley was a learned man. The son and grandson of dissenting clergy, he was educated at Oxford (Exeter College) and entered the ministry of the Church of England. Epworth seemed to be less of an appointment for someone like Samuel. He combined a commitment to high church Anglicanism with a dedication to church discipline that was more characteristic of his Calvinist heritage. The combination of the two earned him much disfavor in Epworth. Samuel regarded himself as a person of importance in communication with the wider English society, reform movements, and intellectual circles while ministering to a sometimes beleaguered group of rural people. Samuel was too much for the Epworth congregation, as comfort rather than challenging their mores was their priority.²

Samuel landed in debtor's prison, due in part to the expense of maintaining his family at home, and because of his lack of know-how in financial matters. He was liberated from three months in debtor's prison at his bishop's intervention. The fire in the Epworth thatched-roof parsonage in 1709 destroyed most of the family's personal belongings. During the rebuilding of the parsonage, the Wesley children were scattered for a brief period of time, some with relatives in London, others with neighboring villagers. John was referred to as a "brand plucked from the burning," and upon their reunion when the new parsonage was completed, Susanna had a new zeal for reforming her children's manners and their religious life. This reformation and zeal was particularly focused on John. Two years after the fire she wrote under the label of "S.J.," meaning "son John," her prayer:

I would, if I durst humbly offer thee myself and all that Thou hast given me, and I would resolve (Oh give me grace to do it) that the residue of my life shall all be devoted to Thy service; and I do intend to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child that Thou has so mercifully provided for, than ever I have been, that I may do my endeavor to instill into his mind the principles of thy true religion and virtue. Lord, give me grace to do it sincerely, and prudently, and bless my attempts with good success.³

Although there are references to poverty in the Wesley family at Epworth, the rebuilding of the parsonage as a brick structure of Georgian architecture

would seem to contradict the notion of such poverty. Samuel Wesley took upon himself another debt of £400 for its construction, this on an annual salary which was purported to approach £200 and which included income from the attached farm. This normally would have provided income sufficient for their family needs in that day. The family connections provided the Wesley sons with the means to attend preparatory school and then to Oxford University, placing them among the elite in the nation.⁴

John Wesley's interest in helping the poor is a widely known characteristic of his ministry. Activities such as teaching, feeding, and clothing poor children; furnishing gainful employment to the jobless; giving loans to struggling entrepreneurs; visiting the sick and imprisoned; providing food, clothing, money, shelter, books, medicine and other essentials to the needy, are all associated with Wesley's emphasis. Yet these were not the normal daily activities expected of an eighteenth-century Oxford don, especially one such as Wesley, who was raised in a relatively posh Church of England rectory by parents with a scholarly bent (even though in the hinterlands), schooled in one of the finest public schools in the country, educated at purportedly the best of the Oxford colleges, and fellow of another college at the University.⁵

John Wesley was prepared for Oxford University in part by his mother's home schooling and also by the preparatory school he attended from 1714-1720, the Charterhouse School in London. In 1732, at the age of 63, Susanna wrote a letter to John at his request and gave an account of her practice of self-teaching. She taught her seven daughters to read before they were taught to sew. The boys were taught in preparation for preparatory school, then Oxford, and then ordination. "Susanna was clear that the primary goal in her education was to save the souls of her children."⁶

Susanna's letter stated that a regular schedule was the first principle rule she followed. A strict disciplinary schedule was followed. As soon as the children were capable, three meals a day were eaten with nothing in between. They were taught to "fear the rod" and were permitted to cry only softly. Susanna claimed that the house was as quiet as if there were no children present.

Susanna emphasized in her letter to John that the greatest need was to break the child's will for the sake of religious education. Self-will was identified as the root of rebellion and therefore the root of sin. Susanna believed that forcing the

child to surrender the will rendered the child compliant to authority, parent and to God, and that peace and salvation came from such compliance. Because the will was regulated early, religious observance, prayer and politeness were obtained and observed in the home.

The Wesley children were taught to read at the age of 5 and it was expected that the alphabet was to be mastered on day one. After learning their letters, the children began reading in Genesis. Scripture was used for learning, and for memorization. Each day contained a review of the lessons learned that day. Susanna expressed amazement at how much learning could take place each day.

Susanna's letter to John, who was twenty-nine at the time, conveyed a sense of hard work, discipline, and respect for authority. John became a master of the disciplined, devoted, methodical life, largely due to the examples set by his mother in the Epworth parsonage.

His education in London and Oxford

During his years at the Charterhouse School (1714-1720), John was educated with the sons of other clergy, lawyers, and the elite. He studied Greek, Latin and classical learning which prepared him for the honor of attending Christ Church College at Oxford. Later in his life John regarded his years at Charterhouse School as a time of laxness. His prayer life, chapel attendance and religious study were present, but there was a stark difference in the atmosphere at his preparatory school and that of Oxford University. Oxford University in the eighteenth century was, like Cambridge University, a Seminary of the Church of England. The laity were also educated, but a religious-academic curriculum was dominant in the University.⁷

The ethos of Oxford in the eighteenth century was an important factor in shaping John Wesley's thoughts and ideals. Neither the faculty nor the students were allowed to marry. Once elected to a fellowship, a faculty position, a don or professor could either teach or not teach and receive a stipend from the college. Many of the college fellows hung around the colleges until they could earn a living or receive a call to a parish church, which then allowed them to surrender their fellowship, stipend, or to marry. This atmosphere resembled monasticism in some ways and the hierarchy of the Anglican Church in others.

John Wesley had not developed the practice of writing a diary, or journal, in

his Oxford years. His letters home reflected health concerns: a smallpox threat, an unusual bloody nose, and a fascination with George Cheyne's study, *Essay of Health and Long Life*, influenced him throughout his life. He expressed no anxiety over academic affairs, but frequently mentioned money and concerns over debt, to which his parents responded as they were able.⁸

The Methodist movement began with the "Holy Club" at Oxford. John Wesley himself wrote the following account of the first society called Methodist:

In November, 1729, four young gentlemen of Oxford—Mr. John Wesley, Fellow of Lincoln College; Mr. Charles Wesley, Student of Christ Church; Mr. Morgan, Commoner of Christ Church; and Mr. Kirkman, of Merton College—began...reading chiefly the Greek Testament. The next year, two or three of Mr. Wesley's pupils desired the liberty of meeting with them; and afterwards one of Mr. Charles Wesley's pupils. It was in 1732 that Mr. Ingham, of Queen's College, and Mr. Broughton, of Exeter, were added to their number. To these, in April, was joined Mr. Clayton of Brazen-nose, with two or three of his pupils. About the same time Mr. James Hervey was permitted to meet with them, and afterwards Mr. Whitefield.⁹

The Club was actually started by Charles Wesley during his second year at Oxford in 1727. He was able to persuade several others to join him in organizing a society. They met first every Sunday evening, then two evenings a week, and finally every evening from six until nine o'clock. Their meetings and manner attracted the attention of both the faculty and students.

John Wesley was not at Oxford when the society was first formed. When he returned, he immediately associated himself with the society and was recognized as its head. Their activities included the study of the Bible in Hebrew and Greek; the study of the classics; visits to the prison, the poor and the sick; and religious instruction of poor children. At the time the work of the society was so novel that the news of it began to spread well beyond Oxford. They were met with both praise and criticism. The society was called by various names, such as Bible Moths, the Reformer's Club, The Godly Club, The Enthusiasts, and The Holy Club; but the name "Methodists" stuck with them. Although it was sometimes