

WORD & DEED

VOL. XXII NO. 1



NOVEMBER 2019

A JOURNAL OF SALVATION ARMY
THEOLOGY & MINISTRY

Reconciling All Things

**Conceiving the Corps as a Polity:
The Salvation Army and Stanley Hauerwas**

**Jesus and the Kingdom of God and
The Salvation Army**

Triangular Grace: Pilgrimage in Job, Ecclesiastes & Psalms

Skipping Scripture



Salvation Army National Headquarters
Alexandria, VA, USA

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

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Contributions related to the mission of the journal are encouraged. At times there will be a general call for papers related to specific subjects. Manuscripts should be lengths as follows: academic papers (articles, literature reviews and essays)—5,000 words or fewer; sermons—3,000 words or fewer; book reviews—2,000 words or fewer. The title of the article should appear at the top of the first page of the text, and the manuscript should utilize endnotes, not footnotes. All Bible references should be from the New International Version. If another version is used throughout the manuscript, indicate the version in the first textual reference only. If multiple versions are used, please indicate the version each time it changes. Manuscripts must be submitted digitally in Microsoft Word format. The publication of all manuscripts is subject to editorial review. Authors may be required to make revisions. Once a manuscript has final approval for publication, a 100-word abstract of the paper may be used at the discretion of the editor. The deadlines for submitting final manuscripts are February 1 and August 1. A style sheet is available upon request.

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Reconciling All Things

Jonathan S. Raymond and Roger J. Green

What characterizes *Word & Deed*, The Salvation Army's journal of theology and ministry, over its first twenty years, 1998-2018? It is the afflatus of the divine creative impulse, insight and wisdom from the Holy Spirit into the writings of its authors. As a faith community in moments of devotion, we sing "Breathe on me breath of God. Fill me with life anew," and "Holy Spirit, Come, O Come. Let Thy work in me be done." Then God comes. He answers prayer. The grace of Holy Spirit inspired writing comes and fulfills our prayer, "Breathe on us breath of God. Fill us with life anew, that we may love as Thou dost love and do what Thou wouldst do."

Often a thread of insight, wisdom or truth binds articles and essays of a particular issue of *Word & Deed*. Once again, an inspired subtext of the Spirit, a recurring idea or insight, threads its way through an issue's writings. In this collection of writings, it is a *telos* mentioned by each author. The word *telos* is Greek, meaning an ultimate object, aim or goal. The writings here differ in topic and focus, yet are written not only in ink, but with the Spirit of God, and together affirm that God is reconciling all things to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

The lead article by Sam Tomlin, "Conceiving the Corps as a Polity: The Salvation Army and Stanley Hauerwas," is about how Salvationists understand the political. Tomlin first discusses the early history of the Army, and its relationship to the culture and the nation-state. His discussion of politics then moves on to the culturally established Army today. Using Stanley Hauerwas' perspective on the politics of salvation, he presents ensuing implications for the Army. The author concludes by underscoring the Army's need to pay "greater attention to the life of the corps as an embodied politic" thus to embody a radicalism that "cares for orphans and widows in their distress, and keeps oneself from being polluted by the world" (James 1:27).

The second article entitled "Jesus and the Kingdom of God and The Salvation

Army,” is written by Roger J. Green in two parts and was originally presented as the Andrew Miller Lecture at Asbury University in January of 2018. In part one, “Jesus and the Kingdom of God,” Green not only gives an overview of what Scripture makes clear about the Kingdom of God, but also offers three ways in which our view of the Kingdom is obscured: by secularization, by political rhetoric, and the Church’s uncertainty about its identity, message and mission. In part two, the author discusses the Kingdom of God and The Salvation Army and proposes three most prominent theological places of faithfulness to the Kingdom: eschatology, ministry to women, and care for the poor. Green then brings to focus those places where we do not reflect the Kingdom of God as we should: worship, our view of doctrine, and in making sure every word and action is faithful to the Kingdom (preaching, singing, studying, social ministry). He concludes, reflecting the theology of N.T. Wright, that “We do not build the Kingdom, but we can build for the Kingdom. . . . to God be the glory.”

The third article by A. A. Margareta Ivarsson is entitled “Triangular Grace: Pilgrimage in Job, Ecclesiastes & Psalms.” Ivarsson draws on three Scripture passages (Job, Ecclesiastes and Psalms) to consider a triangular grace in how each passage is about pilgrimage that awakens joy, blazes a trail and births conviction. In all three pilgrimages, abundant yet costly grace shines. Such grace makes possible going the distance in joyful surrender, helps discover our true selves, and mirrors a pathway and refuge, ultimately toward “glory to God.”

David Winters is the author of our fourth work, an essay entitled “Skipping Scripture.” Winters offers a confession of guilt. For years, when having encountered verses not compatible with his “construct of who God is or should be,” or when a verse of a passage has just made him uncomfortable, he has often skipped over it. He formerly justified skipping when hearing Psalm 139 read in corporate worship and noticing exclusions of troublesome verses. The author also justified his disposition toward difficult passages identifying with the prophet Jonah’s indignation when God seemed to ignore or tolerate evil and not justly punish perpetrators. In confessing his inadequate understanding of God, he shares how Scripture also helped him reconcile his confliction and receive a renewed understanding of God’s presence and promises.

We pray that the book reviews and the book notes in this issue underscore the themes of this issue and will be beneficial to our readers.

God is reconciling all things! Come Holy Spirit! Breathe on us breath of God!

JSR, RJG

EDITORS' NOTE

In the last issue of *Word & Deed*, June 2019, David Rightmire wrote a book review of *Like a Mighty Army? The Salvation Army, the Church, and the Churches*. That review had been previously published in the *Wesleyan Theological Journal* and was used by permission of that journal by the editor. We regret that we failed to include the note of that permission on the first page of the book review, and we are pleased to do so here.

Conceiving the Corps as a Polity: The Salvation Army and Stanley Hauerwas¹

Sam Tomlin

This essay is about how Salvationists understand the political. Politics is, of course, a seemingly straightforward concept in Western cultural imagination, describing the process and activities involved in arranging the life of the *polis* of a particular geographical area, especially a nation-state. Yet, from a specifically Christian perspective, I will suggest, with the help of Stanley Hauerwas, that it should not be this simple. In Hauerwas' thought, a politics of statecraft, where politics is understood as being primarily what the nation-state does, and something to which the Church offers constructive critique, is contrasted with a politics of salvation, which challenges foundational epistemologies which divorce concrete Christian practices from beliefs and assumes such beliefs become intelligible only "as they are embodied in a political community we call church."² When considering Army-state relations, it is important that the state is not simply understood as government, but as all its political and military machinery, citizens under its authority, and perhaps most importantly the metanarrative or overarching mythos toward which all these apparatus are geared.

I anticipate that some Salvationists may judge this thesis as an introspective abandonment of the Army's outwardly missional principles. I hope to show, however, that attention to the life of the corps as an embodied politics will strengthen

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the presumed continuing emphasis on the outward-facing mission of the Army, an emphasis I suggest is present in Hauerwas and often mischaracterised by critics. It will be apparent that there is an unapologetic stance throughout that the Army has less of a stake in upholding Christendom and the structures of liberal democratic regimens than it has often thought. This move toward abandoning the Army's culturally established position in the West may appear uncomfortable and more like a death wish than a strategy for growth; yet, in following a Savior who asked his followers to die in order that they might live as opposed to grasping at reputation and cultural privilege, I will argue that the politics of salvation, which, in the words of Hauerwas, makes "the world the world," is the most faithful approach.

THE EARLY ARMY AND THE POLITICAL

It is well established that the early Army was involved in the politics of the societies they inhabited. The maiden tribute case, the numerous arrests and imprisonments for disrupting the police and the Booths' involvement with politicians around the world clearly show the public impact Salvationists had wherever they went. What is perhaps less pronounced in Army history is both the gradual shift in the Army's cultural status and the extent to which the Army's pragmatic ecclesiology arguably contributed to its inability to *name* its existence as a *politics* which might challenge the pretensions of nation-states and their perceived monopoly on what is and is not political.

After an early affiliation with Chartism on William Booth's part,³ there is little evidence that the Methodism mediated heavily by American holiness revivalism prompted a passionate interest in the matters of state for the Booths in the years after their respective conversions and meeting. The saving of individual souls appears to be the driving force in the early years of their partnership.

This did not mean, however, that they did not learn from Wesley's concern for the poor. In reaction to what he perceived as the danger of antinomianism and an over-emphasis on election in popular Calvinism, Wesley's fourfold order of salvation and perfectionism—prevenient grace, repentance, justification and sanctification—allowed both a strong belief in the availability of salvation to all souls which had equal value and the emphasis on good works following conversion. If one could lose salvation, it was crucial for a justified person to grow in holiness which would express itself in good works like caring for the poor.⁴

The availability of immediate full salvation or second blessing holiness, conditional upon its subjective claiming, had clear implications on how the Booths perceived ethics and politics. While falling short of proclaiming salvation as something to be earned, this subjective claiming of full salvation took the form of aggressive evangelicalism and stringent ethical requirements. As Catherine Booth asserted:

We defy infidels *on natural principles* for the results we have to show ... I receive many letters from people after reading our books, congratulating us that we do not teach the Antinomian doctrines of a great deal of the evangelistic teaching of this day, that we don't preach the "only believe Gospel," but that we preach repentance towards God, as well as faith in Jesus Christ, and a life of OBEDIENCE to God.⁵

Moving to London in 1865, the Booths witnessed the crushing reality of poverty. The subjective individualism of their revivalism meant that they initially saw individual sin as predominantly responsible as opposed to wider structural, or political, conditions. In continuation of Catherine's quotation above in a publication on the issue of church and state, she affirmed that "... without this [obedience], mere theories, creeds, and beliefs will only sink people lower into perdition."⁶ There was not a disinterest in societal effects of personal transformation; but any benefits to the state were seen as secondary byproducts of the primary work of salvation. In 1869, William clearly outlined this thinking with the importance of the adverbial *also* to be noted: "The true Christian is a real self-helper. In bringing the truths of religion before the suffering masses we are also assisting in the great work of social reform. The God-fearing, sober and industrious man has a better chance of improving his condition than has his ungodly brother ... When we have taught people to be religious, half the battle has been won."⁷

Illustrating the perceived conceptual difference between the *real* work of Salvationists—salvation and holiness—and the political, involvement in politics was often discouraged. Orders and Regulations for Field Officers in 1886 stated that,

The relation of The Army to Governments is determined by the principle that we are not of this world, and therefore cannot be expected to feel any deep interest in those governments which exclusively belong to it, and which are conducted without any regard to the will of God, and the interests of His Kingdom.⁸

Over time, however, a gradual shift in Army-state relations can be seen: the scope of William's understanding, in particular, of salvation was widened to include relief from temporal misery. Nowhere is this shift more evident than with the publication of William's *In Darkest England* in 1890, the same year that Catherine died. Dean Pallant, for instance, notes the dearth of theological language in comparison with sociological,⁹ and it seems clear that individuals' circumstances are no longer primarily their own responsibility: "A young penniless girl, if she be pretty, is often hunted from pillar to post by her employers, confronted always by the alternative—starve or sin."¹⁰

Ann Woodall persuasively suggests that *Darkest England* precipitated a significant practical transformation, moving the Army toward cultural establishment, in much part due to William's need for public support for his scheme.¹¹ The effects of this were twofold: firstly, more attention began to be spent on internal systems in proportion to outward mission, and secondly, higher public profile came from Salvationist social work as opposed to aggressive evangelism.¹²

Walker notes how, while early Missioners and later Salvationists received considerable establishment opposition through the press and pulpit being compared with Roman Catholics and exhibiting an un-English spirit, by the early twentieth century, the Army had,

... moved from being a sensational, revivalist sect at odds with the Church, police, and local governments to being a religious organization with a social service wing that was often the more prominent part and with strong ties to other Christian and state-run agencies.¹³

A CULTURALLY ESTABLISHED ARMY TODAY

This summary of the ecclesiological legacy left by the Booths can be further illustrated by briefly considering the social stance of the Army in Western nations today. Woodall suggests that William's failure to resolve a creative tension between atonement and incarnational theology gave it the impetus to adapt: "Its [the Army's] commitment to social reclamation prevented it from becoming marginalized as a corybantic sect while its evangelical theology prevented it being lost in a diffusive, social Christianity that was ripe to be taken over by the welfare state."¹⁴ This charitable reading can be reinterpreted, however, by assessing how, in many territories,

the corps wing is declining, while the social wing appears to be thriving.

In the UK, for example, senior soldier numbers decreased from 48,121 in 1994 to 23,573 in 2016, and corps from 823 to 673 in the same period.^{15 16} It is difficult to judge precisely how the social wing is faring in the space provided, but financial records for the Army's Social Work Trust show an increase in spending between 2012 and 2016 from £102,010,000 to £112,735,000 and a small increase in income.¹⁷ Some of this money is spent at corps, but figures also indicate there is a clear divide between corps members and the Army's social work: of the £111,954,000 spent on charitable operations by the Social Work Trust, £80,072,000 is spent on "centres' operations."¹⁸

In Australia, Jason Davies-Kildea notes how the growth in social programs in recent decades is clearly contrasted by decline in corps membership: "There is no possibility of balancing the church and social service activities in the Salvation Army—in every dimension the social side vastly outweighs its church presence."¹⁹ His primary research also illustrates how corps members' experiences are frequently divorced from the social work of the Army with quotations like the following not uncommon: "In my hometown, my home corps, I never saw a lot of the social. I'm sure we gave out food parcels but that was the limit of the social ministry at my home corps. So I didn't see a lot of the social stuff. It was just church."²⁰ Davies-Kildea also notes that the Army's message has clearly adapted its messaging to a public "who are not looking for a religious message in the annual report of their favored welfare organization."²¹ While the word God appears only a handful of times, usually in mission statements and the TC's foreword, the word *homeless* was used 60 times in the Southern Territory's 2016 report.²²

Rather than a holistic Army adapting, therefore, there are indications that the increasingly marginalized corps wing, representing the atonement and evangelical aspects of theology, is publicly and operationally overshadowed by the adaptable social wing which represents the incarnational aspect. This generalization is not to suggest that respective theological emphases are entirely absent from the other wing, but some indications suggest much of the social work of the Army is performed by paid professionals rather than corps members. In the UK, while soldier and corps numbers significantly decreased, employees of the Army (in social centers, corps and headquarters) increased from 3,077 in 1994 to 4,251 in 2016.^{23 24} The UK territory has recognized this in its recent Fit for Mission initiative, emphasizing Integrated Mission which aims to integrate all aspects of the Army's mission, particularly bringing corps and social expressions together. It is my contention that without a

named politics of salvation which acknowledges the pretensions of the nation-state and its epistemological foundations, this will not be possible.

STANLEY HAUERWAS AND THE POLITICS OF SALVATION

Hauerwas' theology is distinctively ecclesiocentric. The Church, rather than finding legitimation in any external society, should exist as a polity with its own epistemological foundations. Hauerwas argues that "Every polity, implicitly or explicitly, entails a narrative which depicts what a person of character should be, as well as how certain virtues, in their interrelation, are central to the moral life."²⁵

The particular narrative that forms the church polity is founded upon the Lordship of Christ Jesus, not as some quaint subjective statement, but as a claim about the very ontology of the cosmos, namely that after the cross and resurrection, a new age has begun, because the rebellious powers have been defeated (Colossians 2.15; Ephesians 1.20-22):

The way the early Christians put this was simply that with Jesus a new "eon" had begun. Such an "eon" is not simply a "worldview" but requires that a social world be created in accordance with the new social relations envisaged. Elsewhere I have tried to suggest the Christian story teaches us to see the world differently, but such seeing requires a community if such a vision is to be sustained.²⁶

Salvation, from this perspective, becomes the incorporation into the Church as citizens of a new Kingdom (Philippians 3.20: *πολίτευμα* (*politeuma*)), as it is the polity God has chosen to *embody*, albeit imperfectly, the life made possible by what God has done in Christ: "Salvation is a political alternative that the world cannot know apart from the existence of a concrete people called the Church. Put more dramatically, you cannot even know you need saving without the Church's being a political alternative."²⁷

This salvation is unmistakably embodiment of a *politics*, with the early Church's use of *ἐκκλησία* (*ekklesia*) clearly mimicking the political assembly of an ancient Greek city. The content of the Church's politics has Jesus as its normative example: "You cannot know who Jesus is after the resurrection unless you have learned to follow Jesus during His life. His life and crucifixion are necessary to purge us of false notions about what kind of Kingdom Jesus brings."²⁸ This means that Christi-

anity does not provide principles or implications for politics, but exists *as* a politics which “is meant as an alternative to all social life that does not reflect God’s glory.”²⁹

In order to be a people who are able to follow Jesus’ commands, Christians need to be trained through a particular set of practices which, again, are deeply linked to the narrative of God’s historical action in Christ. In explicit defense of Hauerwas’ ecclesiology, Wells provides a compelling account of how common worship forms Christians’ moral imaginations.³⁰ Through simple acts of gathering, confessing, sharing communion and being sent out, Christians’ “habits are taught, practices ... are developed, virtues ... are acquired and notions ... are shaped.”³¹

Through subjecting themselves to such practices and training, Christians are able not only to *see* differently, but crucially, they also learn to *speak* differently. For Hauerwas, we can only act in the world we can *see*, and we can only see what you can *say*. By telling one another the truth of Jesus’ victory, this literally opens a new social sphere in which Christians can act. Any failure of the Church to continually draw itself back to its epistemological foundation will result in vulnerability to co-option by alternative *poleis* with their competing epistemologies. Historically, the Western Church has fallen prey to two particular expressions of this.

The first, Constantinianism, is not a simple concept and can be manifested in different ways, but Hauerwas’ main contention is that it casts “Christianity as a truth separable from truthful witness.”³² By this he means a strategy through which the Church attempts to make itself intelligible in social orders by becoming the representative of generally agreed-upon ideas.³³ This approach originates from the time of Constantine, when the Church became officially aligned with empire and abandoned the idea of two simultaneous eons, relegating eschatology to the future; where Christian belief in God’s providential rule once required faith, it is now empirically evident in God’s representative on Earth, the emperor.³⁴ Since everyone is now supposedly a Christian and advancing God’s Kingdom looks similar to advancing the empire, “Christian ethics no longer is the exploration of what makes us faithful disciples, but rather is an attempt to develop an ethic that is workable for all society.”³⁵ Moving from the margins to the center of power, Christians largely abandoned living out of control as they were taught by their Savior on the cross, and they began to trust worldly power and violence to ensure history came out right.

While Constantinianism, in its Roman and medieval forms, provided a set of false universals, Hauerwas stresses that it was still assumed that natural law was only intelligible in the context of the Church’s mediation of divine law. After the Reformation, the context of anchoring natural law and the ordering of Christian life

in the Church was lost, since the sinner is justified by God directly, weakening the mediating presence of the Church. Accordingly,

Such a loss did not seem to be a problem as long as it was assumed that everyone “knew” what it meant to be Christian. However, as it became less and less clear among Protestants what it “means” to be Christian there have increasingly been attempts to “do” ethics. The difficulty is that no consensus about what ethics is or how it should be done existed. As a result, theologians often turned to philosophy for resources in their search for an ethic—resources that ironically helped create the problem of how to relate theology and ethics because now it was assumed that “ethics” is an autonomous discipline that is no longer dependent on religious conviction.³⁶

This turn to philosophy led to the second major distortion of the narrative according to Hauerwas, the Enlightenment. As ethics is divorced not only from doctrine, but also the Church, it is a natural step to challenge the tradition-dependent nature of moral truth.

Truth must be available to anyone at any time on the basis of open and reasoned debate, and anything that cannot be justified on such grounds becomes at best irrational, and at worst dangerous. William Cavanaugh takes particular issue with the popular narrative that suggests the Enlightenment saved Europe from the dangers of public religious truth claims, expressed in the so-called Wars of Religion. In *Theopolitical Imagination*, he demonstrates how, rather than religion being the driving force behind such wars (Protestants often fought Protestants, and Catholics often fought Catholics), what we witness are the birth pangs of the modern nation-state which offers an alternative soteriology to Christianity, where “Both soteriologies pursue peace and an end to division by the enactment of a social body,”³⁷ and crucially, the nation-state’s soteriology primarily acts to save us *from the Church*.³⁸ The secularized theological anthropology upon which the state’s saving *mythos* is based is inherently individualized: for Hobbes, Rousseau and Locke, individuals come together on the basis of contract to protect person and property in a way which relativizes the Church’s public presence.

Hauerwas notes³⁹ how the modern state domesticates religious convictions in two ways: firstly, Rousseau’s civil religion allows religion a role, not on the grounds of faiths’ truth claims, but on the basis for creating citizens. Secondly, liberalism can force faith from the public life altogether as its truth claims are not available to

everyone, so it is deemed irrational. These options may lead to a flattened, banal account of human existence, but this is a small price to pay to live in peace. What Hauerwas finds so interesting is that many Christians accept these foundationalist epistemologies, because they are either thankful for the role states allow them to play in nation-building or they accept the presumption that liberal peace trumps conflict. The problem is that the Church then finds itself in a ceaseless crisis of legitimation where it must find justification for its existence on the terms of the larger order. What this larger order understands as politics cannot help but produce dualisms such as faith *and* politics which cannot conceive of the Church as a political space in its own right, ending serious theological reflection before it has even begun.

Consequently, Christianity becomes one lifestyle choice among many, and Christians not only lose the disciplined training necessary to allow them to perceive competing narratives to their own, but they start becoming formed by them. By accepting concepts of government, power, justice and nationhood as they are defined by liberalism before being understood Christologically, the Church becomes established (literally or culturally) in a way that divorces convictions from practices. This is particularly dangerous, as Christians lose their intelligibility, because what they often present to the world is but a Christianized liberalism, where principles and beliefs replace the concrete polity called church.

DEVELOPING A POLITY OF THE CORPS

This argument has some vital implications for the Army. In allowing itself to become culturally established, the Army arguably finds itself in such a crisis of legitimation, largely dependent on public approval and financial support for its existence.

There is no question that the early Army witnessed remarkable holistic transformation through its work that would amount to a political alternative to the world around it. Might aspects of Army ecclesiology, however, have contributed to the inability to sustain resistance to co-option by the state and cultural establishment?

Pallant has done some important work in this area from the perspective of the Army's international health ministry. Drawing on Hauerwas among others, he demonstrates⁴⁰ along the lines I have argued how easy it is for faith-based organizations (FBOs) to accommodate to corporate or political agendas, and in the Army's case how its individualistic soteriology and consequent corps-social divide contributed. The lack of atonement theology and Christocentricism in the Army's social services even led to the gap being filled by a "humanitarian eschatology."⁴¹ Pallant

persuasively suggests a more faithful orientation for FBOs, founded in the specifically Christian *telos* of healthy persons, so that “FBOs, clinics and congregations can occupy a distinct space and, in doing so, faithfully engage in their fragmented and unhealthy world.”⁴²

Pallant’s work is crucial for the Army to rediscover the space it creates as truly political in its own right. His focus, however, is predominantly on directly reorienting the social wing of the Army rather than emphasizing how the communal worshipping life of the corps can drive this process.

According to Phil Needham in *Community and Mission*, three key tenets of Salvationist ecclesiology exist: firstly as a church on the move; secondly the tentativeness of the church’s relationship to social structures of the world; and finally as a church moving toward the future, the destination of its pilgrimage.⁴³ As a church “on the move,” the Army is like a “band of pilgrims who are called to separate themselves from the oppressive patterns of the present world order.”⁴⁴ These pilgrims, however, hold lightly to their symbols and signs of grace, as the inward reality of grace is immediate.

Two connected issues with Needham’s account can be identified in light of our discussion of Hauerwas. The first is the difficulty of holding a church on the move as Needham understands it with a church that tentatively relates to the structures of the world. As Army history has shown, a church on the move, pragmatically adapting to the specific needs of a society, and relying on the same society’s support to perform its work, often leads to an overidentification with the *mythos* of that society.

The second is the abandoning of some of the traditional marks of the church in favor of the military metaphor. As Needham shows, the military metaphor was chosen, as it symbolized the outward calling of God’s people into an unbelieving world rather than being confined in the cloisters.

For Hauerwas, the reason water baptism and Eucharist are so important is that they are communal acts of remembrance, as Jesus (Luke 22.19) and Paul (1 Corinthians 11.26) suggest, drawing us back time and again to the central events in human history: the cross and resurrection. Our proclaiming of the victory of Christ in cross and resurrection through specific word-based remembrance becomes crucial to resisting the temptations of co-option by narratives alien to the Gospel.

David W. Taylor makes a similar point in *Like a Mighty Army?* where he outlines the potential dangers of missing the *context* in which the sacramental life is lived, namely the community called to witness the saving work of God in Christ:

This weakness is particularly apparent in the continuing individualistic emphasis upon the immediacy of God's grace, without reference to the relationship of God's grace to the community ... Salvationists might wish to continue to speak of God's action as an immediate relationship of grace, but if they fail to hold clearly the concept of *koinonia* they are in danger of missing the context of that action, which is within the community of God's people and their witness in the world, and not simply in a personal and individual relationship.⁴⁵

The military metaphor is a powerful one and continues to inspire and edify Salvationists around the world. There is no call here for its abandonment, but perhaps Salvationists might be open to aspects of how the metaphor leaves us vulnerable in the ways I have attempted to outline: just as there is a danger in remaining cloistered in church buildings, constantly being out in the world—or having symbols which encourage us to be so—we might not always perceive when we are overreaching and *being formed* by the world around us as much as we desire to form it in Christ's image.

It would be naïve to suggest that simply by reintroducing water baptism and Eucharist that all these problems will be solved. Many churches who partake in these sacraments are co-opted in various ways. This is also not to deny that Gospel-centered political imagination is already fostered in corps: as Salvationists gather, listen to the Word and sing, we are formed by the Spirit in the narrative. However, if our current symbols (uniform, flag, etc.) tip the balance one (good and necessary) way, we would arguably benefit from symbols that enact the ontological and eschatological, nonutilitarian nature of *koinonia* and communal repentance to which Salvationists call a nonbelieving world. This ontological, eschatological community (the corps) should not simply have a politics, but *exist as* an alternative politics to all *poleis* which do not give ultimate glory to God. In this sense, reintroducing water baptism and Eucharist would be a good place to start in the fostering of a deeper political imagination which enables the Army to resist a politics which enabled the divorce of its corps and social/charitable wings as argued above.

In addition to this, Salvationists might consider how other aspects of their particular worship of God revealed in Christ orient members toward this political imagination. Officers and those in corps leadership might, for example, see themselves as “ethographer[s] of the rites of empire”⁴⁶ as James K.A. Smith suggests, seeing it as their responsibility to outline how each culture might be *forming us* as we go

to the shops, watch TV or work in a particular industry. This can certainly be done through preaching or illustrations as part of corps meetings throughout the week.

Through holding and building on our proud history of outwardly missional activity, combined with a greater attention to the life of the corps as an embodied politics, the Army will be well placed among God's people to embody a radicalism that "cares for orphans and widows in their distress, and keeps oneself from being polluted by the world" (James 1.27).

Endnotes

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Jesus and the Kingdom of God and The Salvation Army

Roger J. Green

INTRODUCTION

In my estimation, New Testament scholarship has been rescued from the captivity of the mid-1960s toward the end of the twentieth century. The fundamentalist right saw Jesus as a twentieth-century Western businessman and Christianity as a right for the wealthy elite and a condemnation of the poor, and they read the Bible as though it were a message to the private Christian and not to the community of Israel or the community of the Church. The fundamentalist left (still using the term fundamentalist to apply to any group that will not tolerate any opinions other than their own) viewed Jesus as a mystical apocalyptic figure whose message failed and whose words we cannot know with any certainty. We are grateful to the scholars who have rescued the Bible from the right and from the left.

The life, ministry and words of Jesus, the Son of God, have been put back into their religious/social/political context and into the Judaism of the first century, the religion of Jesus. This is remarkable, and it has brought new life to my own reading of the Scriptures. How often had I read the great proclamation of Jesus that “the time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the Gospel” (Mark 1:15). Here is Jesus’ own definition of what the Gospel is, but its countercultural message means that it comes to the listeners as hard news (repent) and as good news (believe).

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My own study of late has been to try to understand the implications of these words in every aspect of the life of Jesus—His miracles, His parables, His preaching, His proclamation of the law. And with this study, a new and fresh, and I have to say—exhilarating—understanding of who Jesus is and what His message was all about has dawned on me. I gladly share what I have learned so that my thinking can be shaped in the context of the communities that I cherish so much.

And the community that is first on that list is The Salvation Army, a community by birth but also by choice. It is for that reason that I have expanded my vision for this paper from simply “Jesus and the Kingdom of God” to “Jesus and the Kingdom of God and The Salvation Army.” The first part of this paper will be an attempt to share some comments about the Kingdom of God. The second part of this paper will measure the life and ministry of The Salvation Army against the demands of the Kingdom of God upon both our personal lives and our institutional life. This is helpful to my own study, because my most recent scholarship has been to research and write about “The Salvation Army and the Anglican Church, 1882-1883,” a paper that I was able to give at a couple of conferences and was published in the journal entitled *Faith and History*. The merger with the Anglican Church did not take place, and perhaps there are some insights from that time that will help us with our understanding of the Kingdom of God and The Salvation Army.

PART I: Jesus and the Kingdom of God

How often have we heard these words and perhaps preached on these words of Jesus in Nazareth: “The Kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe the Gospel.” Jesus’ hearers would have interpreted this message in so many different ways. Zealots would have heard this as a call to retreat from the world and especially from the religious Temple establishment. Sadducees would have thought of a kingdom in compliance with the Roman occupation, with little or no interest in God establishing some kind of kingdom. Pharisees might have envisioned a kingdom headed by some kind of messiah, albeit a messiah who compromised with the prevailing Roman government as long as the teaching of the law was allowed—you know, render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s and unto God what is God’s. And Roman citizens might have seen this as a threat to the Roman kingdom, but initially as a threat from just another bothersome Jewish rabbi whose kingdom was no match for Roman imperialism or to the rule of the Caesar.

Of course what they all missed is that Jesus’ Kingdom was not a political king-

dom—it was not a reconstituted Judaism, although it sprang from Judaism and would bring judgment upon the Judaism of Jesus’ day. Neither was it a threat to Rome (although some Zealots may have interpreted it that way). The Kingdom of God was nothing less than the presence of God in the flesh in the person of Jesus the Christ. Jesus and His Kingdom were inseparable. To know Jesus was to know the Kingdom. This did not dawn on His hearers immediately but was a gradual recognition of what this Kingdom was all about, or more explicitly—who this Kingdom was all about.

Jesus’ first miracle at Cana bore witness to this initial understanding of the Kingdom. One of the most remarkable verses in the New Testament is John 2:11: “This, the first of His signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.” What did they believe? They had not yet witnessed any other miracles or any exorcisms; they had not yet heard the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, participated in the feeding of the five thousand, seen the resurrection of Lazarus, or witnessed Jesus’ own resurrection; they had not heard any parables, had not been taught to pray, had not witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus, and had not seen the ascension of Jesus.

But if believing is taking everything you know about yourself and committing it to everything you know about God, the disciples’ faith began here—at a wedding feast. Because deeply embedded in their Jewish spiritual psyche was the image of the wedding feast in the prophet Isaiah:

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined. And He will destroy on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of His people He will take away from all the earth; for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for Him; let us be glad and rejoice in His salvation” (Isaiah 25:6-9).

That image came alive in their spiritual imagination, but not as a philosophical concept that could be embraced rationally, but as a spiritual truth that they envisioned in Jesus and could be comprehended and embraced by a spiritual reasoning that transcended rational proof. The Kingdom of God was at Cana, because the Christ was

at Cana. And the great metaphor of the Kingdom in the minds of Jesus' disciples—the metaphor of the wedding feast—played out before their eyes on that occasion.

That initial faith was confirmed by the disciples who stayed with Jesus. (Remember that tragic verse in John 6:66 that says, “After this many of His disciples left Him and followed Him no more.”) The miracles of Jesus confirmed the Kingdom message. The Synoptic Gospels all give us the story of Christ stilling the storm after the frightened disciples woke Jesus and cried out, “Master, Master, we are perishing!” (Luke 8:24). And their response, “Who then is this, that He commands even wind and water, and they obey Him?” (Luke 8:25). They were able to answer their own inquiry. The miracles of Jesus always pointed to the faithful truths about the Kingdom of God. And Jesus had command over the natural world just as God did. People witnessed this frequently as Jesus fed the five thousand, walked on the water, or was raised from the dead. And the other categories of miracles did the same—the exorcisms of Jesus, His power over death with the resurrection of Lazarus, or His healings.

Likewise, the parables of Jesus are teachings about the Kingdom of God. And while parables are a complicated and intriguing aspect of Jesus' ministry, it is His parables as story narratives that help us understand Jesus' Kingdom teaching most clearly. This is evident, for example, in the parable of the wicked tenants, where the servants of the householder who were sent to the tenants were beaten and killed, and finally, the son of the householder was killed. Then comes Jesus' judgment upon Israel: “Therefore, I tell you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it” (Matthew 21:43). This message of judgment against Israel proved to be the Kingdom challenge of Jesus to Israel, and thereby manifested clearly whom He was claiming to be. We see this in several ways, but three are noted here.

First, remember that Israel was called to be a light to the nations, a theme prominent in Isaiah (see, for example, Isaiah 42:6; 49:6; 58:8; 60:1; 60:3). However, in story after story, Jesus reminds Israel that she had failed in that promise. And then comes the resounding Prologue to the Gospel of John, culminating in John 1:14 that God came in the flesh. But remember that one of the messages of the Prologue was that “The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world” (1:9). Israel had failed to be a light to the nations. God comes in the flesh to be the light to the world, and later in the Gospel of John, we have the claim by Jesus to be the “light of the world” (8:12). What was begun in Israel, and what failed in Israel, was completed in Jesus Christ.

Second, Jesus challenges one of the great symbols of Israel's past and present—the temple in Jerusalem. At least twice, Jesus confronts aspects of worship at the temple that He found to be contemptible. The story of the cleansing of the temple occurs at the beginning of Jesus' ministry in the Gospel of John and at the end of Jesus' ministry in the Synoptic Gospels. But once again, it is the Gospel of John that elaborates on this event: "The Jews then said to Him, 'What sign have you to show us for doing this?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews then said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?' But He spoke of the temple of His body" (John 2:18-21). Jesus is the new temple. Jesus is the new holy of holies. Jesus surpasses even the temple in Jerusalem. Little wonder that following this event, Mark writes that "... the chief priests and the scribes heard it and sought a way to destroy Him" (Mark 11:18).

Third, Jesus is the new law giver, the new Moses, and calls people to a new law—to His law, the law of Christ. Notice in the Sermon on the Mount how often these words occur: "You have heard that it was said...but I say unto you." This is a call to a new law giver and to a new law—the law of love. And when Jesus was asked to summarize the law (a common rabbinical question in that day), His response was, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40).

Ben Witherington's discussion of law is very helpful here. He writes that "Paul says quite clearly that the Mosaic Law cannot give life. Only God in Christ through the work of the Spirit can (cf. Rom. 8:3; Gal. 3:21). He is equally clear that those led by the Spirit are not subject to the Mosaic Law (Gal. 5:18), but rather to the Law of Christ (6:2), which most certainly does involve good works, as 6:4-5 makes clear."¹

With Jesus' pronouncement that the Kingdom of God is at hand, we are dealing with a new reality. That Kingdom is both a present reality and a future hope. The Kingdom is here and now in the presence of Christ borne witness to by the Holy Spirit in both the life of the individual and the life of the Church. We do not build the Kingdom. It is already here in its fullness. We do build the Church, because the Church is the Body of Christ, and the Body can be built and strengthened. The primary function of the Church is to bear witness to the Kingdom of God in the preaching of the Word and the care of the poor.

But that Kingdom is also a future hope. In a fractured and godless world, the

Kingdom may be obscured, but that does not deny either its reality or its fullness or its future life.

THREE WAYS IN WHICH THE KINGDOM IS OBSCURED

We turn now to the obscurity of the Kingdom, and our awareness of this gives us both the knowledge and the courage to bear witness to the Kingdom. Following this, we will turn to the ministry of The Salvation Army specifically.

The Kingdom is obscured first by the process of secularization, which we see dramatically, especially in the West. One of the most profound analyses of secularization can be found in the writings of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, formerly the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations in the United Kingdom. I was privileged to hear his lecture when he received the Templeton Prize in 2016. Appropriately, his lecture was entitled “Faith in the Future: The Promise and Perils of Religion in the 21st Century,” and his analysis of secularization was very well crafted.

Broadly speaking, secularization is the increased loss of influence of religion upon the broader culture, which results in the marginalization of religion and religious institutions. Today, this is especially evident in Western Europe and increasingly in North America. One example is France, which has declared itself a secular nation. An example closer to home, however, is England. As an example from the nineteenth century that we can relate to, when William and Catherine Booth began their ministry, probably about 60% of the population went to church and, as Timothy Larsen has carefully demonstrated in his work entitled *A People of One Book: The Bible and the Victorians*, the Victorians were all conscious of the Bible, knew the biblical stories and could quote from the biblical texts.²

And so, when the Booths began their ministry, they spoke into a culture that was both biblical and connected to the Church, and much of the Church was clearly evangelical and Wesleyan. This partly explains the success of their ministry in terms of numbers of converts. As an example of this, General John Larsson records in his recent book entitled *Those Incredible Booths* that when Bramwell Booth was General:

In Britain the work had grown to unprecedented size and influence. With 5,000 active officers and 150,000 senior soldiers at work in 1,500 corps and 200 social centers, the Army in the land of its birth had never been bigger. The annual intake of cadets was growing each year and by 1928 would reach 700.³

Contrast that to the most recent statistics for the United Kingdom Territory, which records that there are 1,042 active officers, 23,573 senior soldiers, 673 corps and 43 cadets.⁴ This is a remarkable decline especially given the population growth in the United Kingdom in the last hundred years.

But that is an example of the impact of secularization, with religion and religious institutions moved increasingly to the margins of social/political/economic life. The Church can either cave in to this secularization, or it can live in hope for a Kingdom that one day will be recognized by all peoples and all nations. The call to Kingdom living and Kingdom preaching has never been more urgent, but this takes courage. And so, the call is a call to courage to be the Kingdom people that God intends us to be in the world in which He has placed us. And if this is any consolation—this is a task far greater than the Booths faced in their day.

Second, the Kingdom is also obscured by the political rhetoric so common today that calls people to “the right side of history.” Conversations can be stopped immediately with the question, “Don’t you want to be on the right side of history?” However, I propose that that is not the question for the Christian. Our question is, “Don’t you want to be on the right side of the Kingdom of God?” How did the Prophets of the Old Testament answer that question? How did the Christians of the early Church answer that question? Most significantly, was Jesus on the right side of history while hanging on a Roman cross? Had He wanted to be on the right side of that historical context, He would have appeased the Jewish leaders of Jerusalem and the Roman leaders of the Empire.

Rather, there was the constant and unrelenting challenge to both the Jews and the Romans. Consider the cleansing of the Temple incidents that we have already mentioned. Or consider Jesus’ words in all three Synoptic Gospels to the Pharisees who showed Jesus a coin with Caesar’s image on it. “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:21). This is not a simple statement of how we Christians are to relate to church and to state. What we have here is a revolutionary statement in terms of calling His hearers to absolute uncompromising commitment to God and His Kingdom. The meaning of the statement is summarized by N. T. Wright in this way:

Once again Jesus’ sayings demand to be heard on at least two levels. It could mean simply ‘worship the true God as He deserves.’ But in context, when Jesus is faced with a coin bearing a blasphemous inscription, the familiar train of thought encapsulated in Psalm 96 suggests that we hear the saying

as a deeper challenge. ‘Give to God what is God’s;’ in other words, give to YHWH and to him alone, the divine honor claimed blasphemously by Caesar. This is not a summons to a detached piety. It is a call to renounce paganism, and to worship and serve the true God and no one else.⁵

Is it possible that Dietrich Bonhoeffer reflected on this statement of Jesus when he decided to enter into the conspiracy to kill Hitler? Bonhoeffer, the pastor, the theologian, and even the person with pacifist inclinations, decided to worship God and God alone, and he refused to bow to a blasphemous and idolatrous dictator and culture. And for his part in the conspiracy, on April 9, 1945, only weeks before the liberation of Germany by the Allies, Bonhoeffer was hanged. So let’s ask the question again—was Bonhoeffer on the right side of history or the wrong side of history? I think that the case could be made that he was on the right side of the Kingdom of God and willing to suffer the consequences of his actions, totally submissive to the calling of God in his life.

Third, the Kingdom can be obscured when the Church is uncertain about its identity, its message and its mission. That lack of certainty takes many forms, but it comes about when there is a malaise about the nature of authority. With a failure to recognize the authority of Scripture and therefore the authority of God, the Church makes up its own rules and regulations. The rupture within the Episcopal Church in the United States did not come as the result of certain ethical questions (as was commonly reported), but when people in the Episcopal Church recognized that the Church had lost all sense of authority above the authority of the self. And so, the Anglican Church was formed under the leadership of bishops outside of the United States, and it is flourishing, because it has a clear sense of the nature of the authority of God revealed in Scripture. Those in the Anglican community did not leave the Church. The Church left them. And to embrace the historical Christian Church they formed the Anglican Church.

I rejoice that this is not an area of contention within The Salvation Army. We are clear about the nature of authority and therefore about our message and mission. However, we are not always clear about our identity, and that lack of clarity can have an impact upon our message and ministry. Maintaining an awareness of who we are and what we do is integral to our message and mission. Christian Smith is a world-recognized scholar in the field of sociology, including the sociology of religion. He is presently teaching at Notre Dame (and in the interest of full disclosure is a Gordon College graduate). One of his books is entitled *American Evangelicalism:*

Embattled and Thriving, but in spite of that title, there are principles that he discovered in this definitive work that are important to the wider Church and therefore to the Army. I will dwell on only one here. Christian Smith states that

We might hypothesize that religious groups that are more capable of constructing distinct identity boundaries vis-à-vis outgroups will produce more satisfying morally orienting collective identities and will, as a consequence, grow in size and strength. By contrast, religious groups that have difficulty constructing identity distinctions in a pluralistic environment will grow relatively weaker.⁶

Simply put, this is not the time to discard our identity boundaries for the sake of being relevant to our age—in the pluralistic age in which we live, what the culture deems appropriate is always a moving target. But for the sake of our message and our mission, especially our love of our neighbor, and therefore, for the sake of fulfilling the commandment to love God and neighbor, this is the time to affirm our identity. Christian Smith has demonstrated that affirming our identity will therefore produce a “more satisfying morally orienting collective identity”—in our case an identity that wants to follow the law of Christ.

Likewise, I am prepared to demonstrate that we grew in size and strength for one reason—because we constructed an identity that was quite distinct from the broader culture. We were never intended to be just another community church, but an Army of salvation. What Smith calls identity markers are critical to this life, the uniform being one obvious identity marker. Likewise, an inability to construct or maintain such an identity will result in a weakened identity and therefore a weakened ability to carry out the mission. Lack of clarity here obscures the Kingdom of God.

PART II: The Kingdom of God and The Salvation Army

It is time to bring the message home. In this section, I want to mention the places where the life of the Army is faithful to the Kingdom of God, and places where we need to be more intentional about our Kingdom life and therefore our love for Jesus and His Kingdom. I want to deal first with aspects of our Kingdom life where we get it right. And, as mentioned, in order to do this I reflect somewhat upon a previous paper that I wrote and was published in a recent issue of *Faith and History*. The article was entitled “The Salvation Army and the Anglican Church, 1882-1883.” For

reasons that are beyond the scope of this paper, the Anglican Church approached the Army in 1882 and wanted to bring us within their community and under their jurisdiction. Discussions and correspondence took place, but the negotiations broke off in 1883. But there were lessons learned.

The three most prominent theological places where we have been faithful to the Kingdom are a sense of eschatology, the ministry of women, and the care for the poor. William Booth had a theological vision of history and therefore of the Kingdom of God. The Army was going to win the world for Jesus, and with that accomplished, Jesus would return to finally and completely establish His Kingdom. While others in the nineteenth century were postmillennialists, Booth's contribution was to relate the eschatological message to the Army. Little wonder that the Army grew so much. When Booth moved to London at the age of nineteen, he knew only two people—his sister, Anne, and her husband. When Booth died in 1912, the Army was in fifty-eight countries.

Growing up in the Army, I well remember in my earlier years singing with my parents in the open-air meetings the following song (and although today I would not use the exact same language, still I appreciate the eschatological vision incorporated in the song):

We're bound for the land
Of the pure and the holy,
The Home of the happy, the Kingdom of love;
Ye wanderers from God in the broad road of folly,
O say, will you go to the Eden above?⁷

We retain an eschatological vision in spite of an increasingly secularized world in which we live. We believe that in spite of the numbers of the Army today, especially when compared to the increase in population size, the Kingdom of God is fully present in the resurrected Christ and that we are moving toward a new Heaven and a new Earth. Of course, it is up to us to think eschatologically, to sing of the eschaton, and to preach a full message of the Kingdom of God. We may not be postmillennialists, but we need to retain the millennial vision that we are moving in hope not back to a reconstructed Garden of Eden, but toward a “new Heaven and a new Earth.”

Second, the Army has a remarkable history of fulfilling the vision that “in Christ there is neither . . . male nor female” (Galatians 3:28). While we always need to be more intentional about this, we are committed to this vision as not only a fulfill-

ment of the biblical message of complete redemption, but likewise to the commitment that the phrase “in Christ” also means the life lived out both personally and corporately in the Kingdom of God. We believe in women in ministry because of the Bible and not in spite of the Bible.

Some of you may have seen David P. Gushee’s book entitled *Still Christian: Following Jesus Out of American Evangelicalism*. Gushee was certainly one of the outstanding ethicists within evangelicalism, and his departure has caused controversy for many reasons. However, my purpose in mentioning the book here is that one of the reasons for Gushee’s departure from Evangelicalism was because of his denomination’s stance of women in ministry, which ranged from silence to outright hostility. But Gushee seemed unaware that within the Wesleyan evangelical tradition there is a long-standing commitment to women in ministry in the Church, with no brighter stars than Catherine Booth and the multitude of women who followed her in ministry and still do. This is being faithful to the Kingdom, and despite failures, our record is still commendable as witness to the Kingdom of God.

Third, we are intentional about our care for the poor. I am always moved when I hear Salvation Army officers recite their Officer’s Covenant, which reads in part a promise “to care for the poor, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, love the unlovable, and befriend those who have no friends.” This means that Matthew 25 is a living reality to our common life, and every act of grace that we provide around the world is a reflection of the Kingdom of God.

However, are there places where we do not reflect the Kingdom as much as we should? I will mention three here. The first is in our worship. I contend that we need a refreshed look at our worship experiences in the Army, and of course a balance between formalism and the movement of the Holy Spirit is always needed. Remember that in our early days, the spiritual temperature of our meetings was high. Bramwell Booth, who loved especially the all-night prayer meetings, testified that he occasionally saw people levitating to the altar, and that occasionally, “The floor would sometimes be crowded with men and women smitten down by a sense of overwhelming spiritual reality, and the workers of the Mission would lift their fallen bodies and carry them to other rooms, so that the meetings might continue without distraction. Doctors were often present at these gatherings.”⁸

Fortunately, like the Wesleyan revival, the excesses died out. But I contend that both in The Christian Mission and The Salvation Army, the worship was biblically centered, the preaching of the Gospel was the heart of the meeting, and the songs and

hymns were chosen with great care, as the Wesleyan hymns played an important role.

As mentioned with the Gushee book, we live in a time when many evangelicals are abandoning evangelicalism, and often going into Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism and Eastern Orthodoxy. One of the most recent moves out of evangelicalism to Rome is Christian Smith, mentioned earlier in this paper.⁹ When I ask my friends who have made this pilgrimage, two answers are usually given. They want to connect to the two-thousand-year-old historic Church and her traditions, and they want a community that takes worship seriously, where not a word is wasted and not a moment is squandered. It is beyond doubt in my own mind that what has sustained the Church through good times and bad times is worship, and for the Army to be faithful to the Kingdom, we need a renewed vision of worship, beginning with accentuating biblical preaching in our worship and viewing the Army *Song Book* as our theological textbook. We have a treasury of hymns and songs that proclaim the Gospel clearly, and our people are going to learn their theology as much by singing as by hearing the preached word. Singing has traditionally been the great Methodist contribution to the Church. Let us continue with this contribution.

And when that worship is complemented by the study of Scripture and the class meeting, then our people are in touch throughout the week with the Word and with each other, and growing saints in the life of holiness, both personal and corporate, becomes a lifelong commitment.

A second way in which we need to reflect the Kingdom more is in our view of doctrines. One of the ways in which the Reformation challenged the Roman Catholic Church was here. Protestants thought that Roman Catholics viewed doctrine as too static. Protestants thought of doctrine as living, breathing realities, reflecting the life of the Church in every generation and speaking to the Church and to the culture in understandable language. And so, it is little wonder that the Protestants formed Confessions, because the Christian faith needs to be confessed anew in every generation.

We understood this in our early years. In *The Christian Mission*, we moved from seven doctrines to ten doctrines to eleven doctrines rather effortlessly, as there was need for further expression of what we believed as a developing community. However, once those eleven were proclaimed, we ceased to be good Protestants, and we failed to retain our vision of doctrine as continually needing restatement and even additions. Having served on the International Doctrine Council, I know somewhat of Salvationists' interest in expanding our doctrine to include the resurrection of Jesus or adding to our doctrines to include doctrines of the Church and mission. Being faithful

to the Kingdom as good Protestants means embracing a Protestant view of doctrine.

The third way is simply to make absolutely sure that our every word, our every action reflects the Kingdom of God. Are we preaching the Kingdom? Are we singing about the Kingdom? Are we studying about the Kingdom? Are all of our social ministries ministering to the whole person and thereby reflecting Kingdom values? We do not build the Kingdom, but we can build *for* the Kingdom.

Here are only some initial thoughts about the Kingdom. In the meantime, we rejoice in this final proclamation: “He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness, and transferred us to the Kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:13-24).

To God be the glory.

Endnotes

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- 4 See *The Salvation Army Year Book 2017* (London: The Salvation Army International Headquarters, 2017), 249.
- 5 N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 506.
- 6 Christian Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 97.
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Triangular Grace: Pilgrimage in Job, Ecclesiastes & Psalms

A. A. Margareta Ivarsson

“I’m a pilgrim, and I’m a stranger; I can tarry, I can tarry but a night;
Do not detain me, for I am going, To where the fountains are ever flowing,
I’m a pilgrim, and I’m a stranger; I can tarry, I can tarry but a night.”
(Mary Dana Shindler)¹

Invitation to pilgrimage² was first impressed upon me during early childhood, listening to my mother sing “I’m a Pilgrim.” A mystical experience, to “tarry but a night” awakened my mind to the evening sojourn, a day’s work ceasing, the safe haven of family life, providing restful “refuge.”³ Christian pilgrimage applies both to “the already” and “not yet”⁴ of human existence. Pondering the “The Sacred Journey,”⁵ I considered how pilgrimage awakens joy, blazes a trail and births conviction. In light of triangular grace drawn from Job, Ecclesiastes and Psalms, I am revisiting these aspects of pilgrimage, interwoven with Scripture. Richard Rohr summarizes his view of Scripture as “Incarnational Mysticism”⁶ and a “text in travail,”⁷ while T. E. Fretheim connects with “a power-sharing God, indeed a creation-sharing God.”⁸ P. J. Leithart explores “modernity” and “postmodernity,”⁹ while W. P. Brown provides a world of metaphor and image.¹⁰ P. H. Reardon advocates for Psalms as Christology.¹¹

According to the Westminster Larger Catechism, “Man’s chief and highest end is to glorify God and fully to enjoy Him forever.”¹² If that is so, how does pilgrimage, drawn from biblical wisdom literature, inform the quest of glorifying and enjoying God? How does life become a “pilgrimage” with and to God?

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Pilgrimage Awakens Joy. When Charles Foster says that Christians seem to have “a lot more *fun*,”¹³ it stems from the discovery of the empty tomb on Resurrection morning. The deepest suffering ever wrought in human history produces pilgrimage that awakens joy. Our understanding of triangular grace in the context of biblical wisdom flows from Christology. Reardon underlines that “ecclesiology precedes canonicity . . . we begin with Christ. Christ is not only the Mediator between God and man; He is also the Mediator between the Old Testament and the Church.”¹⁴

Resurrection joy determines how we read Job. The pilgrimage in Job bears evidence of underlying joy, as Job relentlessly trusts in God. “I know that my Redeemer lives . . .”¹⁵ says Job, directing focus away from himself and toward glorifying a God who is not dependent on circumstances. God responds and Job self-corrects, as if he, all along, has been anticipating God’s intervention. Job’s previous attempt to control God’s responses is mysteriously reversed by divine paradox, when Job realizes God’s power is imparted into his own pilgrimage. He is “allowed to be other than God, released from tight divine control.”¹⁶ God responds by offering God’s Self to Job, rather than by providing logical answers to Job’s questions, and Job is awakened to the joy of mystery.

Pilgrimage in Ecclesiastes may seem like anything but joy, resounding the contemporary cry of everything meaningless. Yet, as we approach the book in Christological context, the underlying theme conveys pilgrimage as a joyful corrective to meaninglessness. Matthew Henry’s Commentary¹⁷ summarizes how underlying joy glorifies God when God’s sovereignty sets us free: “We must with an entire satisfaction acquiesce in the will of God, and, not pretending to find the bottom, we must humbly and silently adore the depth of His unsearchable counsels, being assured they are all wise, just, and good. . . .” This invitation assumes a complete reversal from despair to relationship with a sovereign God, neither impressed by modernity’s claim to secularism, nor by postmodernity’s claim as “Vapor’s Revenge.”¹⁸ Pilgrimage that awakens joy is a shocking countercultural move in Leithart’s context; however, “personal identity cannot be anchored convincingly without transcendence.”¹⁹ Meaninglessness invites grace: “The lesson Ecclesiastes teaches is faith, the necessity of faith, by showing the utter vanity, the emptiness, of life without faith.”²⁰ As postmodernity challenges modernity’s strife for wealth and fame, pilgrimage awakening joy receives momentum, a radical antonym to the utter despair in our contemporary culture.

In the Book of Psalms, we find on every page exhortations to exuberant joy. Psalms 1-3 set the tone, providing “the theological outline of the book: first, the Man (Psalm 1), then the Messiah (Psalm 2), and finally the Suffering Servant (Psalm 3).”²¹ Christ-centered pilgrimage is always awakening joy, regardless of circumstances: “To be happy is to entrust one’s whole self, existence, and future to God.”²² At the cross, we find that “to stand-under is still the best way to *under-stand*.”²³ When we “gaze upon” the cross,²⁴ pilgrimage awakens joy as an underlying force of strength in the face of suffering on the path toward healing.

Pilgrimage Blazes a Trail. Triangular grace drawn from Job, Ecclesiastes and Psalms assumes that pilgrimage is never static. Job’s friends sit with him for seven days²⁵ before they offer advice. Their guidance, although biblically sound in other contexts, is not applied correctly to Job’s momentum of pilgrimage. Job, however, listens to his friends, while waiting on God for answers. In a sense, God has previously prepared Job for the moment of testing, through “interrelatedness”²⁶ in grace responding to Job’s relentless devotion. God acts indirectly, “within a committed relationship”²⁷ with Job, ever faithful in relationship: “Intrinsic to the divine hiddenness is divine freedom. . . it [the Book of Job] upholds divine freedom, the right of God to be God.”²⁸ Job blazes a trail, keeping his integrity²⁹ during opposition. Job knows God and himself: “Because God speaks, Job has everything even though he has nothing.”³⁰ Job’s pilgrimage awakens joy and blazes a trail of glorifying and enjoying God.

Pilgrimage in Ecclesiastes blazes a trail of honesty. “Boredom is the mood of Ecclesiastes. It is a modern mood. . . This is the deepest pit of all.”³¹ While “modern foundationalism is an intellectual effort to shepherd wind. . .”³², Ecclesiastes unwraps the meaningless strife of postmodernity. From the positional stance of meaninglessness, Ecclesiastes brings us to the place where everything has its designed time under the sun.³³ There the lies of postmodernity are uncloaked, and we are stripped of our futile endeavors to play god in our own lives and in others. Suddenly, there is hope. While “there are many pleasant recreations on the deck of the *Titanic*,”³⁴ the time is ripening, as our longing for God becomes stronger than fleeting pleasures. Pilgrimage blazes a Christological trail, a powerful response to meaninglessness, offering transformation to a desperate culture. “Vapor’s Revenge”³⁵ becomes the momentum for God’s redemptive revenge.

This countercultural claim blazes a trail toward “The Metaphor of Pathway”³⁶ throughout Psalms, a pilgrimage through beautiful terrain and terrifying darkness. With the word as “lamp”³⁷ illuminating the immediate “path,”³⁸ we navigate a pilgrimage of grace that is abundant, but not cheap: “Such grace is *costly* because it calls us to follow, and it is *grace* because it calls us to follow *Jesus Christ*.”³⁹ Breathtaking heights meet deep valleys with fierce battles in between. Through metaphor we are brought back to the trail, again and again, as the road always winds toward God, with God as companion. Pilgrimage blazes a trail for Rohr’s “text in travail,”⁴⁰ developing, not as limited revelation with endless setbacks, but as the perfect place of pilgrimage, fueled by joy as underlying theme, blazing a trail through the wilderness with grace for transformation. Finally, we move toward closer “interrelatedness”⁴¹ with God.

Pilgrimage Births Conviction. Grace in Job is exquisite, when despite his inner turmoil, he refuses to become defined by his friends. Job remains in covenant relationship with God, while extending grace in community with his friends. In conversation with God, Job realizes that the boxing match is over. God’s vindication provides long-desired rest for Job. Subject to his Maker, he finds his ultimate place of freedom.

God is silent in Ecclesiastes, but He is not absent. Pilgrimage in Ecclesiastes blazes a trail, coming to terms with human nature in relationship with God: “Because God is silent, Ecclesiastes has nothing even though he has everything.”⁴² Peter Kreeft quotes Fulton Sheen, speaking of “‘black grace’ instead of ‘white grace,’ revelation by darkness rather than by light. . . Ecclesiastes frames the Bible as death frames life.”⁴³ From this empty place, echoing the despair in our contemporary culture, pilgrimage births conviction of the necessity for incarnational revelation through Christological truth.

Pilgrimage through the Psalms births conviction of “pathway,” “strongly associated with divine protection and deliverance” and “refuge,” “a domain of existence established by and identified with God.”⁴⁴ Both of these are pillars of truth calling for personal relationship with the living God. “I’m a stranger” means moving toward the unknown, and “refuge” suggests that “I can tarry but a night.”⁴⁵ Psalms become the mirror in which we can truly see ourselves as God sees us. Leithart’s “unmaskings” of “real truth behind the modern pretense”⁴⁶ provide a fitting language. In Psalms, we wrestle with this paradox not merely as intellectual knowing;⁴⁷

rather, Christology in the Psalms strips us of selfish introspection, as we contemplate Christ in motion, willingly embracing *Via Dolorosa*. There, our hearts are moved toward pilgrimage that births conviction. Lament and praise stem from the same source: a sovereign, living God, with ears to hear and eyes to see.⁴⁸ The Psalms encourage engagement in “participatory knowing”⁴⁹ with God, who breathes divine life into our nostrils, saving us from death. We return from rebellion⁵⁰ receiving a heart transplant of love. As co-creators with God, we become a “power-sharing”⁵¹ people, seeking to glorify and fully enjoy God. Pilgrimage then comes toward us from the future, enveloped in triangular grace, gently pursuing us by divine provision within the “already” and “not yet.”⁵²

IN SUMMARY

Triangular grace, abundant and costly, shines through Job, Ecclesiastes and Psalms. Pilgrimage awakens joy, as we trust God from the perspective of the empty tomb, defying the cries for meaninglessness, heeding exhortations to exuberant joy, as we behold the cross. Pilgrimage blazes a Christological trail of integrity, offering hope as a paradox, where “pathway” and “refuge” light the path for others. Pilgrimage births conviction of God’s ferocious love and our response to that love. We follow our heart’s conviction in radical countercultural existence, while allowing transformation of life to spark transformation in others.

Grace in Job teaches us to go the distance in joyful surrender to the living God. Grace in Ecclesiastes helps us unmask our false selves, so we can discover our true selves in God. Grace in the Psalms mirrors our intentional and sacrificial pilgrimages of “pathway” and “refuge.”

Triangular grace shines, and our joyful pilgrimage blazes a trail of conviction, mercifully embraced and guided by the “unforced rhythms of grace”⁵³ toward the ultimate end: “to glorify God, and fully enjoy Him forever.”⁵⁴

Endnotes

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- 2 Psalm 84:5.
- 3 W. P. Brown, *Seeing the Psalms* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 16.
- 4 Craig Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church: A Community Created by the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Company, 2000), 33.
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- 6 Richard Rohr, *Things Hidden: Scripture as Spirituality* (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2008), 131.
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- 8 T. E. Fretheim, *Creation Untamed: The Bible, God, and Natural Disasters* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2010), 32.
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- 15 Job 19:25.
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- 32 Leithart, 75.
- 33 Eccl. 3.
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- 35 Leithart, 19.
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- 37 Psalm 119:105.
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- 40 Rohr, 11.
- 41 Fretheim, 9.
- 42 Kreeft, 21.
- 43 Ibid., 23.
- 44 Brown, 39.
- 45 Shindler.
- 46 Leithart, 39.
- 47 Rohr, 110.
- 48 Psalm 135:18.
- 49 Rohr, 11.
- 50 Psalm 81:10-16.
- 51 Fretheim, 32.
- 52 Van Gelder, 33.
- 53 Matthew 11:28-30, *The Message*.
- 54 Vos, 3.

Skipping Scripture

David E. Winters

Do you ever skip passages of Scripture when reading the Bible? I'm guilty of that. I don't understand some parts of God's word. Some passages don't "speak to my condition," as our Quaker friends so aptly put it. Some verses are not compatible with my construct of who God is or should be. And some parts just make me uncomfortable.

A case in point is Psalm 139. This is one of the most beloved and most often quoted of all the Psalms. We are assured of God's faithful presence with us and His intimate knowledge of us, and we are reminded that He wonderfully created us. Our hearts leap with praise for God's workmanship and great love for us.

Then we get to verse 19, and the music stops. It feels as though David ruins a perfectly good Psalm with words of vitriol and hatred. Is it even politically correct to think these thoughts, much less write them down and include them in Scripture? Because I am made uncomfortable, I usually skip verses 19-22, not understanding how the passage could possibly apply to my life's circumstances. Fortunately, the Psalmist quickly gets back on track for a strong finish in verses 23-24 with assurances that God understands my anxiety and will lead me to Himself.

I felt justified ignoring these verses after hearing Psalm 139 repeatedly read in corporate worship with the exclusion of these verses. Others obviously felt the same. It didn't fit, so I left it out. That is until recently, when I read these words from what might have been the Prophet Jonah's point of view. Jonah was not the bathrobe-wearing, scruffy-bearded teenager so often depicted in our Sunday School

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lessons. He was a mature prophet and God's voice in Israel during precarious times for the Northern Kingdom. He had successfully prophesied the restoration of the boundaries of Israel under the reign of King Jeroboam II, "in accordance with the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, spoken through his servant Jonah, the prophet" (2 Kings 14:25). His stature as God's prophet is measurably enhanced when Jesus compares himself to Jonah (Luke 11:30). My understanding of Jonah's story was helped greatly by Pastor Colin Smith of Moody Radio.

Jonah knew God's Word intimately, as evidenced by his prayer in Jonah 2. Uttered from the belly of the great whale, this prayer is comprised entirely of verses from the Psalms and other Old Testament passages. My favorite is from Psalm 42, where in a description of how God's love and grace envelop us, the Psalmist declares, "All Your waves and breakers have swept over me." Jonah captures the bitter irony here, as he prays this while under the ocean's surface, making the words true in a literal sense (Jonah 2:3).

How could such a faithful servant of God rebel so grievously by refusing God's direct command to go to Nineveh? After all, God was just asking him to preach a few sermons and then get on with his usual ministry, right? I think there's a little more to the story than that. We need to understand who the Ninevites actually were.

Nineveh was a major city of the Assyrian Empire, and its inhabitants were hated and feared by all the surrounding nations. They worshipped idols, practiced slavery and demonstrated no mercy. They were cruel torturers, and their prisoners were mutilated, impaled on stakes and burned alive, among other forms of sacrifice. The prophet Nahum says of them, "Woe to the city of blood, full of lies, full of plunder, never without victims" (Nahum 3:1).

They were antithetical to everything the God of Israel represented. It would be hard to overestimate the anger and loathing Jonah felt toward the Ninevites. Jonah knew exactly what God meant when He said, "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me" (Jonah 1:2).

In reality, Jonah didn't want them to come to salvation. He wanted them destroyed, much the same as God had done with Sodom and Gomorrah. Surely that is what they deserved, and Jonah reasoned that God should want this as well, in keeping with His divine holiness. When God commanded His prophet to preach to the wicked Ninevites, Jonah felt it was an affront to everything he believed about righteousness and justice.

Now my deleted verses from Psalm 139 make sense, taken as if spoken by Jonah: "If only You would slay the wicked, O God! Do I not hate those who hate You,

O Lord, and abhor those who rise up against You?” Even though not written by Jonah, he was certainly familiar with this passage. This is righteous indignation and Jonah’s voice for a God who cannot tolerate evil. Verses 23 and 24 reveal a darker tone when taken in context, as the writer asks God to look into his heart, see the hatred there, and then challenges God to “see if there is any offensive way in me.”

Jonah attempts to justify his disobedience to God (Jonah 4:2-3). After the miraculous conversion of more than 120,000 souls, perhaps the greatest revival campaign of any preacher in history, he continues to be angry at God. “I knew You would do this, and I wanted no part of it. That’s why I fled to Tarshish,” we can almost hear him saying. In a final irony, Jonah’s anger has so distorted his thinking that he actually accuses God of being Himself. “I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love,” echoing words repeated throughout the Old Testament.

Looking at Psalm 139 in light of Jonah’s experience teaches important lessons. Never underestimate God’s great compassion for people unlike ourselves. The depths of this love are unfathomable. In the same way, never underestimate His boundless love for You. He will pursue you relentlessly, forgive you unconditionally and love you eternally, just as He did with Jonah. God’s workers are more important to Him than the work they are doing, and their relationship with Him is more important than their accomplishments for Him.

Jonah’s story also teaches us not to assume we have God figured out, nor can we predict how He will or should act in all circumstances. Expecting how God should respond to life’s trials will eventually lead to frustration and disappointment. The Lord reminds us that “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:9).

I’m going to have to reconsider my habit of skipping verses when reading the Bible. My excuses are weak. If I don’t understand something, I must wrestle with it until God gives me clarity of thought. Many resources are available to help me. If I assume that a passage doesn’t apply to me, I may miss an important lesson God is trying to teach me. Or perhaps, I can use an unexpected insight to help a friend in need.

If some verses don’t fit my construct of God, the truth is that my understanding of God is woefully inadequate, and I have much to learn. Paul reminds us that “All Scripture is inspired by God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16 NASB). I need to prayerfully ask Him to search my heart, listen for His instruction and be willing to alter my construct. God will teach me His ways.

As I grow in the grace and knowledge of God, the cognitive dissonance I experience with some passages will decrease, and I will learn to let God be God. As A.W. Tozer so wonderfully advises in *The Pursuit of God*, my faith will increase if I will just keep looking at Jesus Christ. This is confirmed by Hebrews 12:2: “Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith.”

And if I ask God with the Psalmist, “Can I hide from Your presence? Can I run away from Your love?” the Father will answer me with a gentle “No... never.” Why? Because of His great promises which hold me tightly to Him. “I will never leave you or forsake you” (Joshua 1:5), and, “I have loved you with an everlasting love” (Jeremiah 31:3). I never skip those verses.

BOOK REVIEW *by Dean Hinson*

Martin Luther: The Man Who Rediscovered God and Changed the World

By Eric Metaxas

(New York: Viking, 2017)

After enjoying Eric Metaxas' biographies of William Wilberforce (2007) and Dietrich Bonhoeffer (2010), I was eager to read this account of Martin Luther, and I was not disappointed. This book is extensively researched and very readable, revealing the story of a complex individual bursting upon history at just the right time.

I particularly enjoyed the picture Metaxas paints of the medieval world into which Martin Luther was born. As the century changed from the 15th to the 16th and against the backdrop of an all-controlling, corrupt Catholic Church, events converged to make this a time ripe for reformation. As Metaxas highlights, in 1439, the printing press was invented; in 1453, Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks; and in 1492, Columbus discovered America. These events and others set the stage for an Age of Discovery not just in ships across seas but in the minds and lives of Europeans.

Along with these earth-shaking events, the Renaissance (spurred in part by the influx of Greek philosophy following the Fall of Constantinople) birthed such men as Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci. The Renaissance also set the stage for a move from scholasticism to humanism. "Returning to the classics" inspired scholars to revisit the Bible, and through his reading of the Bible, Luther rediscovered the concept of "living by faith."

Metaxas seeks to set the record straight regarding many of the myths that have grown up around Martin Luther—about whom he says, "We now know far more about Martin Luther than about anyone from his era and possess endless corrobo-

rative documentation about him” (p. 7). Seven myths he identifies are: 1) Martin’s humble peasant parents, 2) the strictness of his father leading to his severe idea of God, 3) lightning leading to monastic vows, 4) the effects of Luther’s trip to vile, vulgar Rome in 1510, 5) the “nailing” of his 95 Theses on the Wittenberg church door, 6) his battles with the devil following the Diet of Worms in 1521, and 7) the escape of his future wife, Katharina, from her nunnery in 1525. Although these events did take place, the stories surrounding them have expanded and truth has at times been lost in fiction.

I was also intrigued by the political situation during Luther’s life that both set the stage for the events that influenced Luther and protected him at various stages. The conflicting political and territorial interests of Frederick III, Elector of Saxony (a portion of modern Germany), Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor and the papacy during this period certainly played a major role in moving the Reformation forward. What Metaxas calls a succession of six particularly awful popes didn’t help matters. His account of their continued and complete corruption is far different from what we know of the papacy today.

Metaxas places Luther’s actions on the shoulders of John Wycliffe and Jan Hus (as well as others) and takes pains to stress that Luther came on the scene at just the right time. The conditions for the Reformation came together in many arenas—religious, political, cultural, geographical and personal. Much of what Luther wrote and preached had already been said by others. Luther had the advantage of the invention of the printing press, and therefore, the ability to print on a wider scale made his ideas accessible to many. After so many years of being shut off from new ideas or publications, people developed a desire for written material that spread like wildfire.

Metaxas sees Luther’s stand at the Diet of Worms as the moment when “the modern world was born” (p. 218). He ranks it with (and then above) the historical events of the Norman Conquest (1066), the Magna Carta (1215) and Columbus landing in the New World (1492). I thought the portrayal of Luther’s life that culminated in his “Here I Stand” proclamation is the strongest section of the book. The author found the second half of Luther’s life harder to capture. The Reformation was monumental and transformative, but the subsequent developments and those who attempted to move forward with Luther’s new concepts often went astray. Luther also made some drastic decisions, and his writings are at times hard to defend. His negative view of the Jews or his opposition to the Peasants’ Revolt are two such examples.

While the events and people in Luther’s later life are mentioned by Metaxas, it is harder to stay engaged with the telling of this period. Luther’s legacy at times

makes us wince and wonder what the genius mind that brought us the Reformation was thinking. The consequences of his actions that led to his opposition to the Peasants' Revolt are not as thoroughly covered as I would have liked. On both a positive and negative aspect, the rise of nationalism or a German identity owes much to Luther. Some of this is attributed to the advance of the German language both in his preaching and in his Bible translation; at times, he even invented German words to express the ideas he was trying to explain.

The highlight for me comes in the legacy that Luther leaves and the way his life has shaped our world. As the subtitle says, he was "the man who rediscovered God and changed the world." These two ideas taken together highlight what Luther did and the effect of his life for years to come. Some of the ideas that were shaped by the Reformation are the following: the conception of the individual making a difference; religious liberty and the choice every person has in establishing his or her course in life; self-government as a consequence of those ideas; and pluralism denoting a diversity of views rather than a single approach, which led to, among other things, the variety of denominations we have today. All of these ideas, and others that developed from Luther's life and thought, have exhibited both positive and negative impacts, but without question have shaped the world in which we live.

Care must always be taken in reading Metaxas. His previous biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer reveals at times a lack of depth in research. Also, he has occasionally drawn conclusions that are not warranted by the research he has done. As with other biographies by Metaxas, this biography should be read and studied against other works on Martin Luther.

However, one of the author's strengths is that he tells a story well, and he tries to relate past events to today's world. Metaxas wrote on page 5, "Martin Luther is as dramatic a tale from history as one can discover, and as one should expect, its ramifications in history and for us today are similarly dramatic." This is an excellent book, and I would recommend it for anyone interested in history, especially to see how the change from the medieval to the modern world laid the foundation for the world we minister in today.

BOOK REVIEW *by Bill Ury*

Settled Views: The Shorter Writings of Catherine Booth

By Andrew M. Eason and Roger J. Green

(Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2017)

Once again, Eason and Green have teamed up to offer to The Salvation Army and to the Church at large access to primary sources that are virtually inaccessible.¹ Their combined background as educators and authors in the Army's history and theology within the larger Wesleyan/Holiness milieu offers an extremely helpful orientation to the major themes that the Army's Mother promulgated. Carefully and succinctly introduced, Catherine's theological method is shown to have been thoroughly grounded in the Wesleyan quadrilateral. Though reminded several times that she was not formally trained, her homeschooling, training in Methodist and Holiness circles and lifelong self-education placed her at the forefront of theologians in the late Victorian period. Thomas Oden claimed that between Teresa of Avila and Georgia Harkness, the premier female theologian was Phoebe Palmer. Eason and Green have given us another to be considered in that rank. The difference between Catherine Booth and the others mentioned is that she not only wrote theology but raised a large family, inaugurated a culture-altering ministry, preached every Sunday (at least, from that fateful morning service in 1860 on), and raised both funds and sustained friends at the inception of the Army's worldwide ministries. Her influence and fruitfulness are truly one of the most remarkable stories in all of Christian history.

Each of the five compiled sections of theological writings (salvation, sanctification, female ministry, prophetic engagement with cultural sins and missions) is begun with a short, contextualizing introduction to the particular theme. These *précises* are instructive without being heavy-handed. As we read the primary sources, we will find agreement with their assessments while also being encouraged to dig

into the text for ourselves. The book ends with a concise, general conclusion. The authors are masters at whetting one's appetite for more, and to that end, they provide several helpful bibliographies. It is here that we begin to get a feel for the kind of work that is involved in an endeavor like this. First, this book lists all of Catherine's known works. Second, there are a series of other bibliographies that give the interested mind direction on further research. I will continue to read Catherine's works because of their guidance.

Roger Green has helped the Army to see our founders in a realistic light over the years. He has sensitively nudged us away from hagiography into grateful reality. That tone permeates this work as well. The authors deeply respect Catherine, but they also remind us of her weaknesses and places of illogicality (and even her infirmity in misspelling "believe" often). They affirm her straightforwardness. In fact, their adjectives help us to form a picture of this giant who came to important "settled views" with relentless candor, prophetic forthrightness, little patience with apathy, and a defiant, intolerant, judgmental, even condemnatory approach. As they describe her engagement with cultural sins, she could be "terrible in denunciation" (257). She knew that she was called to "disturb the present" (Ibid.). She experienced the cost of emphasizing the truth rather than being accepted for mollifying it. Commissioner George Scott Railton reflected that she would have rather been viewed as a "narrow-minded bigot" than be deterred from the whole truth revealed for proclamation to the whole world (257-258).

It is evident to any student of Church history that denominations too often forget their founding progenitors or move away from the theology which birthed them. There is a healthy challenge in this book to regain our Wesleyan/Holiness roots as Salvationists while retaining our distinctives. One can sense that Booth would not sit easy with the saccharine soteriology of modernity which was already being advanced in her day. She was rightfully concerned with any "lower grade" theology of Christian life which allowed keeping even a "little of the image of the devil." By their very nature, articles, letters or sermons cannot exhaustively explore any idea, but here they often reveal the profound elements of a theological system.

Catherine grounded reality in the love of God. That love was the foundation of creation which was climaxed by communion with His created image. This love is the ground and grammar of her theology. Thoroughly committed to original sin and all of its vicissitudes, she is clear on the life or death decision before every person. Very few evangelists are clearer than she on the aspects of how one is born again. It becomes evident why Catherine commanded audiences in the thousands. Her rhe-

torical style and biblical theology are intertwined flawlessly. For her, conviction, repentance and faith are irreplaceable elements in the new birth. The reader will want to dwell on her stirring call to see, hate and renounce all sin (56-59). But immediately, her conception of a richer salvation that most never hear comes forth. Mirroring John Wesley, she summarizes the Christian life in three synoptic terms: repentance, faith and holiness (49). In a distinction that, I believe, places her as one of the Wesleyan tradition's clearest exponents, Booth underscores the sufficiency of the substitutionary atonement but adds every time that its concomitant, regeneration, is also present for salvation in Christ to be truly effective. Christ has come to subdue sin and to renew His image in us. Grace both redeems and heals us from sin's death-producing power. There are points where one wishes she had clarified between the use of the term sin as actions and as self-centered nature. It is confusion there which can deter a full comprehension of the full salvation which she advocates. We are "saved from sin, from second purposes, from selfish aims" (64).

Catherine always keeps in tandem the objective and the subjective elements of the atonement. Like her theological forebears, she sees clearly the antinomian implications of an overemphasis on the objectivity of the atonement to the exclusion of the full "healing" of the restored, moral image.² We can almost see her pleading to "step right into the lifeblood of His broken, bleeding side." Her dynamic and personal pneumatology, which is evident everywhere, allows her to emphasize the goal-oriented nature of salvation. At the new birth, the love of God is introduced to the soul, and the spiritual eyes of the believer are opened to the full purpose, the "scheme" of the Triune God (98). Her pastor-theologian perspective burdens her with the awareness that most Christians are fed an inadequate theological diet which limits their vision of salvific grace. The definition of a Christian as a "miserable sinner" does not incorporate the fullness offered to all in Christ. Her plea was to bring that epithet into the presence of the Savior and to then answer realistically the question: What has grace really produced in my life? (93). One senses her anguish over this defeatist attitude when so much more has been provided. The state of the Church of her day was a constant consternation to her. I have found over the years that Catherine's rejection of the antinomianism inherent in the Christian's righteousness as "filthy rags" one of the most compelling rebukes against the belief against sin as an unremovable reality (96-97, 111-112).

She fought that inadequate form of the Gospel with its biblical antidote. Her didactic gifts were harnessed to be "exceedingly plain and practical" in countering with graphic theological prowess any incomplete conceptions of the power of the

love of God in the human heart. For her, the “most glorious top stone” was the reality of the sanctified life (104). Contrasting the passages of “lower walk” mentality, which smacked of Marcionism or Jeffersonian exclusions of the full message of the Bible, Booth advocated preoccupation with the far more numerous “higher class” of Scriptural indicatives. By the power of triune grace, we can possess more than a heart that was a “cage of unclean birds” (102, 109).

It is here that a vital portion of our history as Salvationists is highlighted. The authors include it for our reflection. Catherine says that it was to the “poor Salvation Army” that many wrote or came for counsel to deal with the lie of a “partial” sanctification. Many Christians came to this upstart Mission, this uncouth group of street evangelists, to find the secret to a clean heart (103). She lays out an outline that is every bit as insightful as the megachurch preachers of our day. She is not tied to any particular language set here. For her, the realization of sanctification resided on four heads: 1) return (self-knowledge), 2) embracing God as the highest good, 3) coming to a “death-point,” 4) and lastly, being possessed by divine love (99-101). One would be hard-pressed to find a more complete analysis of heart holiness than that. It was that gift which was the most good, and in her terms, the “highest good” that could be offered by the Army (101).

Even though she was undaunted in her perception and proclamation of holiness of heart, there was an equally strong focus on the social implications of the soul ensconced on a “chariot of love” and “dwelling in God and God in it” (100). I am not aware of a more trenchant and powerful statement of the equality of women than the one found here given its length. Catherine’s ire is clear, because she sees the obtuseness that kept many women as second-class citizens in the Church. Scripture, tradition, reason and experience are garnered here to support her stance. One wonders if her interlocutors ever responded, or if more recent feminists are truly aware of the balanced yet groundbreaking interpretations she offers which resulted in suffrage and vocational freedoms for women in and beyond the Army.

No one can question the history of English culture as the battle was fought over alcohol, perversity, sex trafficking and other forms of slavery by the Army. Nothing Wesley or Wilberforce wrote on societal sins is filled with more clear-headed, prophetic passion than the writing that is found here.³ The book ends with the Army Mother’s call to world mission. This statement sums up much of what this book illuminates; she wrote, “This is the kind of holiness the world wants—a real, practical laying of ourselves and all of our interests on the altar of sacrifice for the extension of the Kingdom and the salvation of men” (101).

One more note—I am learning of our Army’s past emphasis on discipleship and more recent missteps or mere dismissal of that element of following Christ’s model of ministry. The inclusion here of one of her very earliest pieces, “How to Train New Converts,” adumbrates the influence of her mother and Mrs. Key that led the Methodist Class meeting which formed much of Catherine’s worldview (132-135). Every family in the Army should read the clear call to specific family discipleship (62-69). There is no greater need in the Army than to transmit to the next generation the whole life of God. It is undeniable that the Booths passed on the legacy of faith. We must learn from them.

The index is adequate. There were concepts that I wished to return to that were not easy to find in using it. I also hoped that there could be a biblical index. That would have served the teachers and preachers among us well. We need to reference this theologian much more as we progress.

As a pastor-teacher, I always read with an eye to a book’s usage within the Church. A book of this nature must be published by scholarly firms in order for it to be made available. Though the cost (near \$100 for hardback) is prohibitive for many individuals, I would strongly recommend purchasing it for a corps library. It could serve as a tremendous introduction to the thought and heart of the Army. Few, sadly, will ever read a full book on theology, but these chapters offer a balanced taste of some of the holistic ministry of the Army. It would be useful for small groups, Sunday School discussions, corps cadet training, sermon preparation and spiritual formation. It may be that the Officers’ Councils could be given to engaging with this remarkable source.

I found myself growing in gratitude with each page of this unique monograph. First, I am grateful to the authors for their labor of love in a context, still, which allows few voices like Catherine’s. Second, I commend the Army for being willing to be countercultural in theology and praxis, as they offer the “highest good.” Third, I am grateful for the Army’s encouragement of women, from its inception, to live, speak and write regarding the fullness of salvation. I have long said that my favorite theologians in the Army are the women. That view is even more settled now that I have been able to sample these well-chosen glimpses into the passionate heart and facile mind of the Army’s initial theologian. May her tribe increase.

End Notes

- 1 Seven years ago, they produced a similar monograph based upon the works of Army's co-founder with *Catherine, Boundless Salvation: The Shorter Writings of William Booth* (New York: Peter Lang, 2012).
- 2 She refers to the "vermin" of antinomianism (42).
- 3 Roger Green has given more of the history of Catherine's voice and action in what the introduction names as the "foremost" biography (an estimate I totally agree with) (1). See *Catherine Booth: A Biography of the Cofounder of The Salvation Army* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996).

BOOK NOTES by Roger J. Green

A Legacy of Preaching: The Life, Theology, and Method of History's Great Preachers

By Benjamin K. Forrest, Kevin L. King, Bill Curtis, Dwayne Milioni, eds.
2 Vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018)

Preaching has been central to the life and worship of the Church since the New Testament's proclamation of the Gospel. The two volumes of *A Legacy of Preaching* underscore that vital importance by looking at the great preachers during the last two thousand years of the history of the Church. The editors ordered this subject chronologically. Volume One deals with preachers from the apostles to the revivalists. It is in this volume that the revivalists include three of the leaders of the First Great Awakening in America and the Wesleyan revival in England—Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley and George Whitefield. Volume Two deals with preachers from the Enlightenment to the present day. Each volume has a helpful introduction as well as a Scripture index and a subject index.

Readers will be interested in the preachers who were included in this work, as well as, perhaps, in some of the great preachers who were not included in these volumes. Nevertheless, the editors have done well in choosing some representative preachers from across the centuries, even if your favorite was not included. Only two women were highlighted, and the readers of *Word & Deed* will be pleased to know that Catherine Booth was one of them. The writer of these Book Notes was asked to write the chapter on Catherine Booth, and I chose the title, "Catherine Booth: Preacher of Holiness," attempting to capture the heart of Catherine Booth's preaching in that title.

These two volumes are helpful as a reminder of the vast preaching legacy of the Church, and as a witness of how central the preaching of the Good News of the

Kingdom of God has been and continues to be in the life of the Church. They also may be inspirational for all who are called to preach in our culture.

Merritt, John G. and Allen Satterlee, *Historical Dictionary of The Salvation Army*, Second Edition (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

Here is a volume that should be on the shelf of every Salvationist, and other readers may be interested in this as well. This is an invaluable tool for understanding the Army from A to Z. The first edition was edited by Major John G. Merritt. Lt. Colonel Allen Satterlee, recently retired as the Editor-in-Chief for The Salvation Army USA National Headquarters, took over this project, lending his considerable editorial skills to this second edition of the *Historical Dictionary of The Salvation Army*. What Colonel Satterlee said of the first edition in the Preface could easily apply to this edition as well—this was “a massive undertaking involving countless hours of meticulous research, letter writing, editing, and thousands of other details unknown to most who never attempt such a work” (xv). We stand in debt to both of these Salvation Army officers for producing this invaluable resource of information about The Salvation Army.

There is a wide range of topics covered in this volume, and the appendices as well as the extensive bibliography are invaluable. And parenthetically, for any readers not aware of this series, you are encouraged to see the volumes included in *Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies, and Movements*. Of particular help might be the *Historical Dictionary of Methodism*, the *Historical Dictionary of the Holiness Movement*, and the *Historical Dictionary of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation*. Such reference works are treasured additions to anyone’s library.



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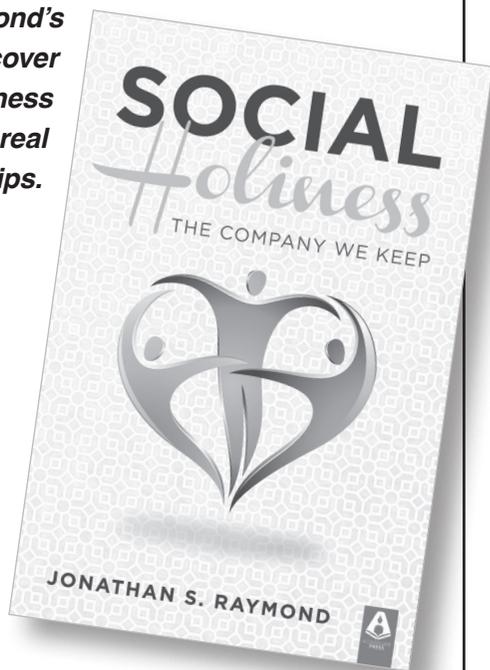
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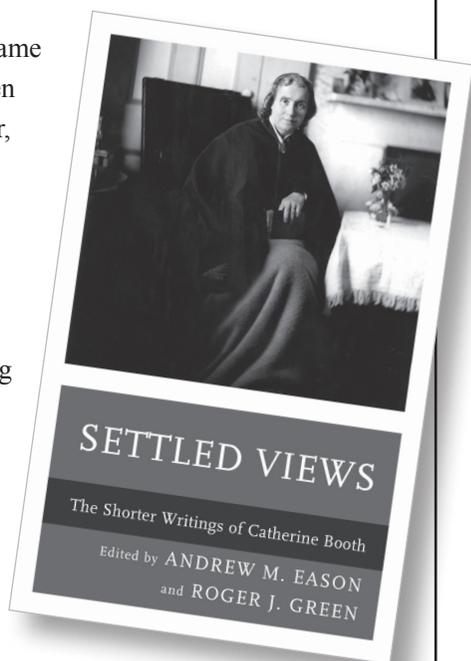
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Edited by Andrew M. Eason & Roger J. Green

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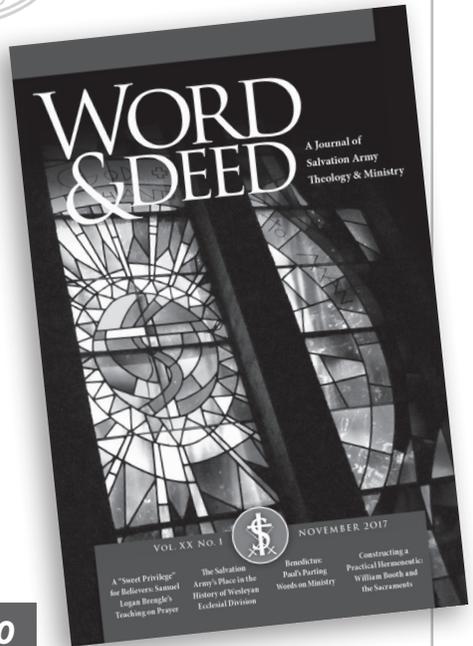
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