

# WORD & DEED

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A JOURNAL OF SALVATION ARMY  
THEOLOGY & MINISTRY

*Editorial: Language Matters*

*Remembering Lt. Colonel Allen Satterlee*

*Excerpt from 'Encounters with Christ: The Man Born Blind'*

*The Prayer of the Prophet: A Sermon on Habakkuk 3:1-2*

*The Personalizing Spirit*

*Devotional*

*Unless or Until? A Theological Reflection on Commitment in  
Contemporary Leadership*

*Holy Adventure: Biblical Pointers*



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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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# Editorial

## LANGUAGE MATTERS

Language shapes culture and culture shapes language. They are determined by each other. We live in a world where much of American culture is being shaped by language that is vicious, angry, cruel and unnerving without regard for the common good. The Kingdom of God will have none of this, and if we acknowledge that our thoughts are manifested in our language, then the words of Paul in Philippians 4:8 are striking: “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

Fortunately the Christian Church is shaped by language that rises above all cultures, speaks to universal biblical truths and reflects the holy love of God. The articles in this issue of *Word & Deed* remind us not only of the language with which many of us were reared, but which shape a Christian culture of love. Here are some of the words that are critical to that endeavor:

**Promotion to Glory.** This is language unique to The Salvation Army when someone dies. However, we are happy to share this beautiful image and this language, and several Christian friends outside of the Army have used this language at funerals. It is an expression of leaving this world to be with Jesus, and this is how we begin this issue because our friend and colleague, Allen Satterlee, has left us and we will miss him. As Editor in Chief he was fully committed to *Word & Deed*, and moved the journal into new directions that the journal enjoys today. We gladly include Allen’s biography as well as an article written by him that well highlights his writing abilities.

**Devotion.** We have labelled the second article in this issue of *Word & Deed* as a Devotional, written as a song by David Winters. In the Evangelical Christian

community we are familiar with the word devotion, and “having devotions” during the day is a pattern for many Christians, providing the opportunity to take our minds off the whirlwind of daily activities and for a few moments concentrate on our relationship with God.

**Sermon.** Martin Luther reminds us that the preaching of the Word is the most important function of the Church. It is the means by which the truth of the Scriptures is open to the listener, always inviting the listener to turn to God, and should be the center of Christian worship. Early in this issue we include another sermon by our friend, Christopher Scott.

**Commitment.** Here is a word common to Christian service. We are committed both as laypersons and ministers/officers to our vocations. The fourth article, written by Henrik Andersen, deals with that word in terms of posture and not position. As the author writes, this opens up possibilities because “It creates space for robust discipleship, rooted not in long-term projections but in spiritual attentiveness and obedience”.

**Biblical Pointers.** The first doctrine of The Salvation Army asserts the inspiration of the Scriptures, and the foundation of the Scriptures is also part of our vocabulary. The study of the Scriptures, both personally and communally, is indispensable to the life of every Christian. Our friend Lyell Rader, who was Promoted to Glory many years ago, still speaks through his articles reproduced in this journal. In this case Lyell gives some Biblical Pointers toward the Christian life as one of a holy adventure, highlighting, as we do in The Salvation Army, the biblical doctrine of holiness.

**The Holy Spirit.** We conclude this issue with theological language that is essential to the life of the Church. In the case of this article by Bill Ury the person and work of the Holy Spirit, often undervalued by the Church, is spelled out in the context of the Trinity. This article well reminds us of the life and ministry of the Holy Spirit in His “divine personhood” not only as that relates to God the Father and God the Son, but also as it relates to our understanding of a full commitment to God and God’s plan of salvation. Theological language is rooted in biblical language and meaning, and this article constantly makes that connection.

In conclusion, we pray that both this Editorial and the Book Reviews will also help in building the vocabulary that shapes the life of the Christian mind and thereby develops a Christian culture that is pleasing to God and to our neighbors as we witness by word and deed what Christianity should look like in our time. We develop a Christian culture by our words and our actions and pray that such

a Kingdom culture will speak to a fallen world and bear witness to the words of our Lord: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15).

We would like to close this Editorial on a personal note. There is no greater recognition in the academic world than to have a *Festschrift* written in one’s honor. This is a volume of articles and essays written to highlight a scholar’s achievements throughout his or her academic vocation. Last November at the annual Salvation Army Scholars and Friends Session held during the American Academy of Religion/ Society of Biblical Literature Meetings in Boston our friend and colleague, David Rightmire, was presented with a *Festschrift* written in his honor. This well deserved tribute is entitled *Seeking More Light: Essays in Salvation Army Thought Honoring R. David Rightmire*, and was edited by Andy Miller III and Rob DeGeorge. Such a recognition was so well deserved, and we add our congratulations to David both for this achievement and for his academic life that this book exemplifies.

RJG  
JSR

# *Under Two Flags*

By Jason R. Swain

In this up-close look at the visionaries and events that helped build The Salvation Army and its God-inspired movement, discover how early Salvationists overcame rivalry, misunderstandings, and unexpected hurdles to set the foundation for a unified mission and forge ahead in giving their utmost for His Highest.

Major Jason R. Swain was commissioned as a Salvation Army officer in 1998 and served in many different types of appointments in the USA Southern Territory. He joined the publications staff at USA National Headquarters in July 2018. He is currently the corps officer at the Northeast Kentucky Corps in Ashland, Kentucky.



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# Remembering Lt. Colonel Allen Satterlee



On June 3, 2025, friends and family gathered at the Gwinnett County Corps to celebrate the life and ministry of Lt. Colonel Allen Satterlee, who was Promoted to Glory from his home in Lawrenceville, Georgia, on Wednesday, May 28, 2025. He was 72.

Lt. Colonel Satterlee served as Editor-in-Chief and Literary Secretary for National Publications from 2011 to 2019. Over the course of his life, he wrote hundreds of articles and fourteen books, with his fifteenth currently in production with Crest Books. He submitted his last manuscript just a few weeks before his death.

As Editor-in-Chief, Lt. Colonel Allen Satterlee instituted a series of upgrades to The War Cry, YS (now Peer), Crest Books, Word & Deed and online publishing

initiatives. These upgrades included cultivating contributions from Salvation Army writers, redesigning publications, changing the frequency of publication, and outreach to new audiences such as incarcerated people.

While serving in a variety of appointments around the world, Lt. Colonel Satterlee was especially fond of his time at National Headquarters. In his final issue of *The War Cry* as Editor-in-Chief, he wrote:

After being here for a while, I started telling people that I had been appointed to a playground. Everything about the appointment seemed to be a perfect fit: from the working environment at NHQ to the opportunity to write, from the creative process in building monthly publications to the ministry opportunities that came out of all that. I kind of felt sorry for the different national commanders because they couldn't be in my appointment. It was my playground, and I didn't intend to get off the swing.

Lt. Colonel Satterlee never did get off that swing after retirement, writing for the USA Southern Territory's publications and continuing to publish books with Crest. He also mentored numerous writers in The Salvation Army, even hosting regular writer's groups for constructive feedback and encouragement.

Allen Edward Satterlee was the middle of three sons to Don & Mary (Butters) Satterlee. He was born on April 21, 1953, at MacDill Air Force Base, Tampa, Florida. Soon after graduation, Allen entered Evangeline Booth College in September 1973 as a member of the Soldiers of the Cross session of cadets.

He served in corps appointments in St. Petersburg, Melbourne, and Tallahassee, Florida, and he went on to open the work in West Pasco County, Florida.

Captain Allen began dating Lieutenant Esther Sands, and the couple were married on January 2, 1982. Together, they served as corps officers in various cities before he was appointed as the director of The Salvation Army's Southern Territorial Historical Center.

He began formal education with Liberty University and developed an impressive journalistic career writing for the *Southern Spirit*, *The War Cry*, and *The Officer* magazine, published at International Headquarters. He also began publishing books, beginning with *Notable Quotables*, followed by *Sweeping Through the Land*. Over the years, Allen wrote fourteen books as his career in journalism flourished, with another that is currently in the process of publication with Crest Books. His last published work was *Heavenly Places Revealed* (2024).

Majors Allen & Esther Satterlee were called to overseas service with editorial ministry in Singapore, Papua New Guinea, and as divisional commanders in the

Western Jamaica Division. From there, Allen was named National Editor-In-Chief for the Publications Department at National Headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia. With that appointment, they were promoted to the rank of Lt. Colonel. They retired from NHQ in 2019.

Making their retirement home in Lawrenceville, Georgia, Colonel Allen continued working for the Army, serving as editor of the *Southern Spirit* and later as Territorial Spiritual Life Development Officer.

On his own time, he maintained an online Bible study with participants from around the Army world. His love for writing included developing budding authors, and for a number of years, he conducted monthly writing classes for several small groups.

The National Publications department joins Salvationists from all over the world in celebrating the legacy of Lt. Colonel Allen Satterlee — a constant champion for the gospel of Jesus Christ. Few have done as much as Lt. Colonel Satterlee did to communicate the gospel and tell the story of The Salvation Army in the pages of Army publications. While we grieve his absence in this life, we rejoice, knowing that he has received his final promotion and now sees his Savior face to face.

Lt. Colonel Allen Satterlee is preceded in death by his brother, Bob. He is survived by his wife of 43 years, Lt. Colonel Esther Satterlee; children Jay Satterlee (Chastity), Sharon Autry (John), John Satterlee, and Anna Satterlee; his sister Melissa Montgomery and brother Major Mark Satterlee. He was the proud grandfather of Shannon, Jayme, Kayde, Cloey, Eliana, Isaiah, Sebastian, Claudia, Jackson, and Jayden.

### **Books by Lt. Colonel Allen Satterlee**

1. *Heavenly Places Revealed*
2. *Pilgrimage Revealed*
3. *Joy Revealed*
4. *The Kingdom Revealed*
5. *Notable Quotables*
6. *In the Balance*
7. *Determined to Conquer*
8. *Voices from Haiti*
9. *Salvation Assault*
10. *Sweeping Through the Land*

11. *Songs of the Soul*
12. *Turning Points*
13. *Turning Points Second Edition*
14. *Historical Dictionary of The Salvation Army*  
(editing/co-author credit)
15. *Encounters with Christ*  
(Forthcoming)

Excerpt from  
*Encounters with Christ: The Man Born Blind*

**JOHN 9:1–34**

*Lt. Colonel Allen Satterlee*

What terrible deed had his parents committed that their son was born blind? And if they weren't to blame, what was the man's sin that condemned him to a sightless existence? Could it be that while he was yet unborn his infant mind conceived of something so horrible that God stole his sight away? Or was it as some religions taught — that this man had lived a previous existence and so grievously transgressed in that life that his condemnation carried over to the present one? The disciples wondered who had sinned — the man or his parents? (John 9:2).

Jesus' answer only perplexed them more: "It is not because of his sins or his parents' sins," Jesus answered. "This happened so the power of God could be seen in him" (John 9:3).

In a total departure from what He had previously done when healing people, Jesus knelt in the dirt and spit in it until He had enough mud to spread across the blind man's eyes. But He didn't stop there. Jesus then sent this blind man to stumble over two miles across town to find a specific pool where he was to wash. In all the gospels, no one had to go through what Jesus put this man through. The man knew it was Jesus who did this but little else. That little bit was enough for him to hope that these would be the last blind steps he would take. Up until this time, the blind man knew only how to beg. Any journey of any length was difficult and perilous. He went, and in going and obeying, received his sight.

Such an act with such a result should have caused tremendous rejoicing, but

instead it threw Jerusalem into chaos. Some wondered if it was even the same man. Maybe because they had never really looked at him — only his disability. Without the disability, they simply did not know how to relate to him.

The unnamed man was brought to the religious leaders for their verdict. But rather than accepting the miracle, they were angry that Jesus dared heal the man on the Sabbath day of rest. They concluded that anyone doing unnecessary work was sinning against God, and healing someone could have waited one more day. Others weren't so sure. Wasn't a miracle itself an act of God, proof of God's approval of Jesus? The debate grew more heated until they decided it could only be settled by interrogating the formerly blind man.

How strange it must have been on the most wonderful day the now sighted man had ever experienced to find his eyes filled with angry faces, shaking fingers, and a room filled with utter confusion. He wanted to see aunts, uncles, cousins whose voices and touch had been the only ways he had known them. He wanted to see what the dogs looked like whose fur he had stroked or the goats or the sheep. There were foods he had eaten and touched but never seen, and he had wondered about these and so many things. But here he was with these people forcing him to defend himself and this mighty act. Rather than focusing on the miracle, the leaders demanded to know about the one who performed it.

Asking the man what he thought, they were infuriated when he said, "I think he must be a prophet" (John 9:17). Thinking he might have been delusional or an imposter, they sent for his parents to either answer for him or to confirm that he truly been born blind. The parents entered, knowing that to stand with Christ would bring a severe penalty: being put out of the synagogue. Such banishment could last up to two months, robbing a person of their place of worship and the center of their cultural and community life as well. While under banishment in public arenas, other Jews were not permitted to come within seven feet of them. If a person happened to die while being put out of the synagogue, stones were thrown at his coffin. Rather than risk this punishment, the parents distanced themselves from their son, pointing out that he was of legal age to answer for himself.

The reaction of the parents is terribly tragic. When they realized their infant son was blind, they must have struggled, must have grieved over the situation. Who can guess how many times they prayed, perhaps even asking God to give their boy his sight? Now, in this moment, their fondest wish for him, their most heartfelt prayer was answered. And instead of standing proudly with their healed son, they slinked away in silence. Even today, some say they will follow God if He does some great

act, rights some great wrong, delivers from some great danger. But too often when God clearly intercedes, the momentary thrill of answered prayer is forgotten. Foxhole prayers and commitments shouted in the heat of battle are often abandoned when the threat is over. And these parents, their prayer answered, chose to slip quietly away, untouched by the further grace that God could give them.

The Pharisees now turned on the healed man. Abandon your gratitude! Forget about the miracle and side with us against this Jesus who healed you! But unlike the parents, the man stood firm, arguing convincingly that if this Christ were not from God, His miraculous acts could not take place. His prayers would be unheeded by a God He had made His enemy. And so, in utter frustration, the man found himself thrust out of their presence as alone as his loneliest day of blindness.

Jesus found him and asked a soul-defining question. "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" (John 9:35). Yes, the man had met Jesus, but only in his blindness. Now it was time to meet Him with his sight. "Who is He, sir? I want to believe in Him" (John 9:36). The man had to grapple with the meaning of his healing. He should have found help and guidance among the religious leaders, but they had angrily abandoned and rejected him. But this had left him at the best place he could be. He needed answers that could be found nowhere else. Then Jesus spoke words that surpassed the miracle of healing. "You have seen him," Jesus said, "and he is speaking to you." The man then confessed, "Yes, Lord, I believe." And he worshipped Jesus" (John 9:37–38).

Why did the man have to cross the city with mud on his eyes? Why did he have to be the center of controversy? Why did his parents desert him? Why was he rejected on the very day he should have been received back by society? Why were people angry when there should have been the grandest party in anyone's memory? It goes back to what Jesus said originally. "This happened so the power of God could be seen in him" (John 9:3). The healing that was begun in his eyes ended in the depths of his soul.

### Discussion Questions

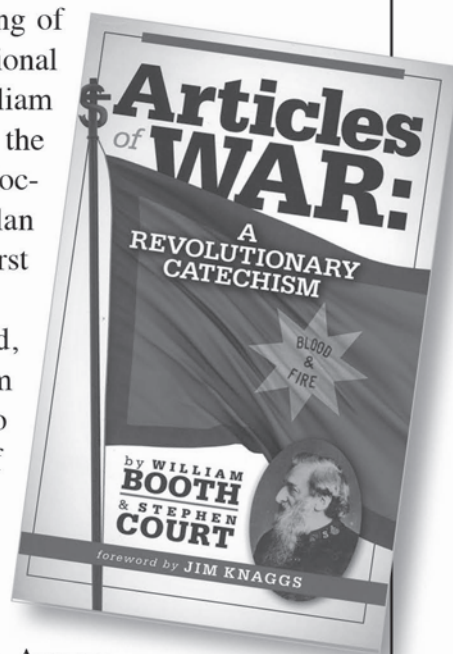
1. Given that this man had been blind all his life, why do you think Jesus made his healing so complicated?
2. What do you think the Jewish leaders were trying to accomplish by attacking the healed man and his miracle?

# *Articles of War*

By William Booth and Stephen Court

This book is a powerful blending of the theology, ethics, and missional passion of two soul mates, William Booth and Stephen Court. It is the expansion and updating of a doctrinal catechism and strategic plan for the salvation of the world first put forth by Booth in 1903.

Incredibly straightforward, it brims with practical realism about what it actually takes to live in the world as a disciple of Jesus. Among the many attractive descriptions of the Christian life is the emphasis on the centrality of love in the character and living of the Christian. Among the uncomfortable facts is the absolute rejection of cheap forgiveness. The reader doesn't have to agree with every detail of the book's strategy to be affected and mobilized by the authors' call to turn everything over to Jesus and His Kingdom.



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# The Prayer of the Prophet

## A SERMON ON HABAKKUK 3:1–2

*Christopher L. Scott\**

Sometimes we get answers to our questions that we don't want, but we learn to live with them. Getting answers we don't want is part of life, part of being an adult, part of maturing, and is part of being a believer in God. Our friend Habakkuk is learning that too.

Thus far in the book of Habakkuk we've learned about Habakkuk's *problems* in chapter one. In chapter one we read Habakkuk's first question about God's inactivity. Habakkuk essentially asks in Habakkuk 1:2–4, "How long will evil continue and when will you stop it?" Next we read God's first answer to Habakkuk in Habakkuk 1:5–11. God essentially responds, "I'm going to stop it, I know what's going on, and you'll be surprised how." Therefore Habakkuk asks a second question in 1:12–2:1. He questions God's inconsistency and basically asks, "Why use greater sinners against less sinners?" In chapter two we learned about Habakkuk's *patience*. God provided his second answer to Habakkuk in 2:2–20 in which God basically says, "I have a plan for the future, a message for the faithful, and punishment planned for the Babylonians." Now we move on to chapter three which reveals Habakkuk's *praise* about God (Hab 3:1–2).

In this process we are seeing Habakkuk go from a wonderer, to a watcher, and now to a worshipper. Habakkuk started in gloom, now he ends in glory. Habakkuk went from why to worship. Habakkuk's faith has been tested (chapter 1), taught (chapter 2), and is triumphant (chapter 3).

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\* Christopher L. Scott serves as senior pastor of Lakeview Missionary Church in Moses Lake, WA. This sermon was originally prepared and delivered at Lakeview Missionary Church on May 14, 2023, the fifth in a series called "Reverent Wrestlings".

Don't miss this: Habakkuk worships God even though God doesn't answer his prayers in the way he hoped God would. James Montgomery Boice calls chapter three of Habakkuk one of the great prayers of all the Bible.<sup>1</sup> Chapter three of Habakkuk is the pinnacle of praise. As Warren Wiersbe has written about Habakkuk, "His circumstances hadn't changed, but he had changed, and now he was walking by faith instead of sight. He was living by promises, not explanations."<sup>2</sup> Chapter three of Habakkuk is the mountaintop destination of Habakkuk's journey that began in a low valley of distress in chapter one.

If we were to summarize Habakkuk 3:1–2 into one sentence it would be this: Hearing about God's plans leads Habakkuk to fear God, to encourage God's plans, and to request mercy from God. In these two verses we learn that *revelation* from God leads to *trust* in God. We'll read about Habakkuk's reply broadly (v. 1), Habakkuk's response specifically (v. 2a), and Habakkuk's request (v. 2b).

### **Habakkuk's Reply—Habakkuk 3:1**

After God's second answer to Habakkuk (Hab 2:2–20) we read what Habakkuk says in reply to God. "A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth" (Hab 3:1).<sup>3</sup> In this verse let's notice what we learn about the prophet, his prayer, and his music.

#### ***The Prophet***

His name, "Habakkuk," shows up two times in the Bible (Hab 1:1; 3:1). While the book of Habakkuk is often quoted in Scripture,<sup>4</sup> his name is only mentioned twice and his family is not revealed.

His position might be more clear than his family heritage. He probably was an ordained priest who was part of the temple liturgical singing. He appears well educated, deeply sensitive, and based on literary style he was as much a poet as prophet.<sup>5</sup> His aptitude for music is clear. There are musical notations in Habakkuk 3:19 which indicate Habakkuk was a composer of music.

He likely lived in Judah in 607–604 BC under king Jehoiakim (Jer 22:15–17; 2 Kings 23:34–24:5) in the final dark days of the southern nation of Judah.

His role within Judah as prophet was a covenant mediator. He had a responsibility to offer intercession for the people (Gen 20:7; Exod 32:11–14; Isa 63:15; Jer 14:7–9). Habakkuk found himself living in Judah while Babylon was approaching. Yet God was in control of both nations, thus only God's grace could sustain the prophet and the people.

### ***The Music***

If you're like me you have trouble reading the word, "*Shigionoth*." That word is transliterated, not translated,<sup>6</sup> because we don't know what it means. But, in light of the musical note at the end (Hab 3:19), it probably has some type of musical-liturgical significance and perhaps this chapter was a song. It could refer to excitement or celebration that would be wild and playful.

### ***The Prayer***<sup>7</sup>

The "prayer" we read about here is a response to God's revelation. As I shared earlier, chapters one and two of Habakkuk involved an interchange between God and Habakkuk. Chapter three is the effect of that interchange. The British preacher Martin Lloyd Jones once said, "Prayer is more than petition, and includes praise, thanksgiving, recollection, and adoration."<sup>8</sup> I think that's a good summary of what Habakkuk is doing in Habakkuk 3:1.

The first thing we learn from Habakkuk's prayer is that *peace in the midst of God's plans comes when we realize obscurity does not mean invisibility*. Habakkuk was a man living in the seventh century in Judah, became the author of a small book in the Old Testament, was probably not well known, but he was known by God.

Habakkuk, the prophet, wrote a book of just three short chapters. His book contains fifty-six verses. Luke's first seven chapters are as long or longer than the entire book of Habakkuk. We can compare Habakkuk's three meager chapters with the fifty-two chapters of Jeremiah, the forty-eight of Ezekiel, and twelve of Daniel.<sup>9</sup>

Habakkuk's book might be small but the man was not minor in God's eyes. If there's one thing we can learn is that obscurity doesn't mean invisibility. And that's a lesson for us in the Church today.

Just because we are not famous or well-known doesn't mean God doesn't hear us, know us and respond to us. Even if you are a new Christian, never volunteer in church, only occasionally attend church, and never donate to church, God listens to your prayers. God knows. And he responds to your need.

### **Habakkuk's Response—Habakkuk 2:2a**

While we read Habakkuk's reply in the form of a prayer in verse one, next we see his response in words to God. "Lord, I have heard the report about You and I fear" (Hab 3:2a).

### ***The Report***

The “report” that Habakkuk refers to here are the responses of God in Habakkuk 1:5–11 and in 2:2–20. The book of Habakkuk is a report from God to Habakkuk about God’s plans to use the Babylonians to judge Judah. Here’s a brief timeline. In 607 BC Habakkuk writes. In 605 BC Babylon comes to Judah and Daniel is taken into exile in Babylon. In 597 BC Babylon comes again to Judah and Ezekiel is taken into exile in Babylon. In 586 BC Babylon finishes what they started by completely destroying the city of Jerusalem. To correctly understand this timeline we need to know who were the kings in Judah and what kind of kings they were.

King Jehoiakim ruled in Judah from 609–605 BC under Egyptian influence and from 605–601 under Babylonian control. King Jehoiakim killed innocent people who opposed him, he refused to pay poor laborers (2 Kings 23:35–37; Jer 22:13–19), he allowed prophets and priests to commit adultery and abuse their authority (Jer 23:1–2, 9–11), he killed Uriah the prophet for prophesying that Jerusalem would fall (Jer 26:20–23), and he burned the prophet Jeremiah’s hand-written prophecy about the destruction of Jerusalem (Jer 36).<sup>10</sup>

King Zedekiah ruled 597–586 BC in the last days of Judah. After Judah’s rebellion against Babylon, the Babylonians captured king Zedekiah, killed his sons in front of him, and then they gouged out his eyes (2 Kings 25:7).

### ***The Fear***

Habakkuk hears this report and reveals his “fear.” Imagine how you would feel if God told you that a foreign nation was going to come and conquer you because of your country’s sins. We might compare this to the fear that Americans experienced during the Cold War.

The second thing we learn from Habakkuk’s prayer is that *peace in the midst of God’s plans comes when we fear God*. Sadly, most Americans don’t fear God.<sup>11</sup> How do I know? We take his name in vain in our personal speech, on the radio, in books, and on TV. We mock God with bumper stickers that say, “In the beginning man created God.” We post pictures on social media of a cross as first letter of in the word, “toxic.”

We should fear God. I love Johnny Cash’s version of the traditional folk song known as “Run On” or “Run On for a Long Time.” Johnny Cash titled it, “God’s Gonna Cut You Down” on his *American V: A Hundred Highways* (2006) album. The song is about how we all come before God in the end and how sinners will get

their just punishment. (Because of copyright laws I am not able to quote the lyrics in print, but you can listen to the song on your favorite music app.)

So what does the fear of God look like in believers? It is a reverence and respect for God's person and God's works. We respect and revere God as the creator of the universe and sustainer of our lives. Proverbs 1:7 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction."<sup>12</sup> The fear of God guides us as we approach him asking for forgiveness for our sin as well as the way that we walk with him. We know that God loves us (Rom 8:38–39) but we fear him because he also disciplines us (Heb 12:1–6). Yet, we also should fear God because we will meet the Lord at the judgement seat after the rapture of the Church, known as the Bema Seat, where our works will be judged (1 Cor 3:11–15; 2 Cor 5:10).

So what does the fear of God look like in unbelievers? Their fear should be of judgement, eternal death, and forever separation from God (Luke 12:5; Heb 10:31). Unbelievers should fear God because they will face God, at the Great White Throne Judgment, after the 1,000-year millennial reign of Christ. At that Great White Throne judgment their rejection of the Savior is what judges them (Rev 20:11–15)

A fear of God is correct because of who God is and it is healthy because of who we are. Peace comes when we fear God because fear is a way to acknowledge that he is in complete control while we are not.

Habakkuk fears God because he knows about God's wrath, but Habakkuk also knows about God's potential for mercy, which is part of Habakkuk's request which we read next.

### **Habakkuk's Request—Habakkuk 2:2b**

After Habakkuk's reply and response, now we read Habakkuk's request. "O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy" (Hab 3:2b).

### ***The Name of God***

The name of God, "LORD," is mentioned twice in Habakkuk 2:2 and eleven times in the book of Habakkuk. The NASB translation uses "LORD" in small caps as a translation of *YHWH*<sup>13</sup> (transliterated as *Yahweh*). Some people believe it comes from the verb, "to be" in Hebrew. Other names for God based on Hebrew are "God" from *Elohim* (which is the more universal name for God) and "Lord" from *Adonai* (which was a divine title for God). The word "Jehovah" in some Bibles consists of the Hebrew consonants from *Yahweh* combined with the Hebrew vowels from *Adonai*.

YHWH is called the “Tetragrammaton” (which means four letters) and was the covenant name of God from Exodus 3:14 where God reveals to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” This indicated God’s covenant faithfulness and should evoke confidence. One commentary on Habakkuk 2:2 tells us, “The choice of ‘LORD’ here rather than the more general term for God probably emphasizes the fact that Habakkuk addressed his words to Israel’s covenant God.”<sup>14</sup>

### ***The Plans of God***

Habakkuk’s phrase, “Your work in the midst of the years,” describes a brief time of God’s two acts of judgement. First, God’s purging judgement of Judah. Second, God’s consuming judgement against Babylon. Thus Habakkuk is asking for God to preserve the nation of Judah—the righteous ones—through the seventy years of judgement that God is sending on Judah which Jeremiah predicts (Jer 25:11; 29:10).

### ***The Request to God***

We’ve briefly looked at the name of God Habakkuk uses, the plans of God revealed to Habakkuk, now the request Habakkuk has for God. “O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.”

Habakkuk 2:2b reveals a fresh manifestation of God’s power. That word, “wrath,” is translated from the Hebrew word, *rogez*, which comes from a word which means “to tremble” or “to shake.”<sup>15</sup> It describes a time when foundations will be shaken and God’s people will go into exile. It describes an agitation, excitement, or disturbance.<sup>16</sup> We’ll see that same word, *rogez*, in Habakkuk 3:7 and 3:16.

Habakkuk 2:2b reveals a full measure of God’s pardon. In addition to “wrath” we also read about God’s “mercy.” The Hebrew word for “mercy” is *rakhm* and comes from a word associated with the womb of a woman. The use of this word indicates the compassion and tenderness which Habakkuk wanted from God.<sup>17</sup> Habakkuk 2:2 reminds us that “God is the God of mercy, so to pray for mercy (even in the day of his wrath) is to plead for that which is central to His character.”<sup>18</sup> Our God can display wrath as well as mercy.

### ***The Confidence in God***

Now that we have an understanding of the name of God Habakkuk uses, the plans God shares, Habakkuk’s request of God, next we see Habakkuk’s confidence

in God. Habakkuk might not understand everything, but he believes God's ways are best even if Habakkuk doesn't fully understand them.

Habakkuk's confidence is based on God's work in the past. Habakkuk was aware of the amazing things God had done in the past for Israel such as the exodus from Egypt and the conquest of Canaan. Habakkuk prays God will not just reveal his wrath, but his mercy as well.

The third thing we learn from Habakkuk's prayer is that *peace in the midst of God's plans comes when we accept that God's methods are best even if we don't understand them*. This is a hard concept for us to accept, but is essentially the message of the entire book: Peace in the midst of God's plans comes when we accept that God's methods are best even if we don't understand them.

This is where Habakkuk has arrived in this book. This is the position in which Habakkuk has grown into. He didn't start there, but he gets there.

Experiencing peace in the midst of God's plans only comes when we accept that God's methods are best even if we don't understand them. That's the position we sometimes have to grow into as followers and worshippers of God. We grow in maturity and faith when we learn to accept God's plans and God's methods to be the best for us even if they are painful, inconvenient, or confusing.

Maybe you retired thinking about enjoying the golden years only to be plagued with health issues. Maybe you went to school thinking you'd have a great career, only to struggle to find work your whole life. Maybe you were excited to get married only to learn your spouse had an addiction he or she didn't tell you about. Maybe you always enjoyed working but after having kids you weren't able to return to work.

God's methods are best even if we don't understand them. A woman who learned God's plans are best even if we don't understand them was Fanny Crosby.

## Conclusion

Fanny Crosby was born in 1820 but her father died the same year. She published her first book of poems in 1844 but didn't become a Christian until 1850. She began using her literary talent to write hymns for church worship. She wrote more than 9,000 hymns from 1864 to 1889. Popular hymns such as "Blessed Assurance," "Tell Me the Story of Jesus," "To God Be the Glory," and "All the Way My Savior Leads Me" are among her most popular hymns still sang today.

In addition to writing hymns she traveled alone around the United States speaking at rescue missions, made numerous visits to the White House, and was voted "best known woman in 19<sup>th</sup> century America."

All of this was accomplished in spite of her blindness. She became blind at six weeks old due to a physician's mistake. As a result, she learned to compose, edit, then dictate her hymns to someone else who wrote them down (she never learned to read Braille).

In Fanny's first autobiography she wrote, "If perfect earthly sight were offered to me tomorrow, I would not accept it. Although it may have been a blunder on the physician's part, it was no mistake of God's. I verily believe it was His intention that I should live my days in physical darkness, so as to be better prepared to sing His praises and incite others so to do. I could not have written thousands of hymns—many of which, if you will pardon me for repeating it, are sung all over the world—if I had been hindered by the distractions of seeing all the interesting and beautiful objects that would have been presented to my notice."<sup>19</sup>

I'm not sure if most of us would say that? Habakkuk didn't as he began this book, but later his faith matured and he eventually trusted God and submitted to God's plans even when he didn't like God's plans. May we too trust God's plans even if we don't see them or understand them.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *The Minor Prophets*, 2 Vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1986), 2:417.

<sup>2</sup> Warren Wiersbe, *Be Amazed: Restoring an Attitude of Wonder and Worship* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010), 157.

<sup>3</sup> Scripture taken from the New American Standard Bible, Copyright The Lockman Foundation 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995. Used by permission.

<sup>4</sup> Habakkuk 1:11 is quoted by Paul in Acts 13:39. Habakkuk 2:4 is quoted by Paul in Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11. The author of Hebrews also quotes Habakkuk 2:4 in Hebrews 10:38.

<sup>5</sup> J. Ronald Blue, “Habakkuk,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1:1508.

<sup>6</sup> The plural form appears here in Hab 3:1, the singular form appears in Psalm 7:1.

<sup>7</sup> Psalm 17, 86, 90, 102, 142 all have “prayer” in the title. This prayer is like those Psalms that also contain the name of the person that prays them.

<sup>8</sup> Martin Lloyd Jones, *From Fear to Faith: Rejoicing In The Lord In Turbulent Times* (Carol Stream, IL: NavPress, 2011), 55.

<sup>9</sup> Habakkuk is called a “minor prophet” simply because of its size, but not because of its impact or importance. Habakkuk was a minor prophet with a major message and a major ministry.

<sup>10</sup> Adapted from J.K. Bruckner, “Habakkuk, Book of” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*, edited by Mark J. Boda and Gordon J. McConville (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2012), 296.

<sup>11</sup> In America we don’t talk much about fear. I had trouble finding any discussion about the fear of God here in my commentaries from Habakkuk.

<sup>12</sup> God had told the Israelites about this in Deuteronomy 10:12, 20–21, “Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul ... You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve Him and cling to Him, and you shall swear by His name. He is your praise and He is your God, who has done these great and awesome things for you which your eyes have seen.”

<sup>13</sup> YHWH occurs 6,823 times in the Old Testament. See Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs. *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 217–19.

<sup>14</sup> Richard D. Patterson, “Habakkuk” in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2008), 10:427.

<sup>15</sup> Waylon Bailey, “Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah” in *New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 20:356.

<sup>16</sup> O. Palmer Robertson, “The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah” in *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 218.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Boice, *The Minor Prophets*, 2:424.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Stanislaw, “To God Be the Glory: Fanny Crosby,” in *More Than Conquerors: Portraits of Believers from All Walks of Life*, ed. John Woodbridge (Chicago: Moody, 1992), 108–111.

# The Personalizing Spirit<sup>1</sup>

*Bill Ury\**

## **1. A. The “Cinderella” of Theology**

I can remember the smell of those crammed stacks three floors below the entryway of Drew’s library in that ponderous year of bibliographic research. I had to be constantly moving to keep the motion-activated light enabled. Struggling to see, I saw an article’s title was so startling that my immediate response was an internal heresy alert. “The Cinderella of Theology: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit,” glared at me.<sup>2</sup> Its argument was that the Spirit was in the ‘house’ of divinity but our overall treatment of Him was much less than a co-equal divine person. Defensiveness turned to conviction as I continued to read. Even though I was giving my entire life to a study of the Trinity and counted myself as an orthodox Trinitarian, for too long I had unconsciously sidelined the Spirit.

Over the last forty years I have witnessed the same uneasy relationship between the Spirit of God and believers. The Holy Spirit is undeniably accepted by commitment to basic Christian doctrinal standards but not treated with anywhere near the same personal intimacy that we claim with the other two Persons of the Trinity. At Asbury University in February of 2023 the Spirit of Jesus surprised everyone by showing up in glorious fashion. As the president of Asbury College said to a reporter concerning an earlier (1970) revival, “Last Tuesday, the Lord came to chapel, and we have been paying Him homage ever since.” Ecumenical revival history verifies this gracious – even surprising - freedom of the Spirit to exalt Jesus to the glory of the Father. Yet we struggle with how to posit a robust personal relationship with the Spirit.

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In the flow of Christian thought, I would argue that my shockingly acceptable deficiency in the doctrine of the Spirit is revealed in most of our experience and theological reflection. And we are not alone chronologically. Any serious student reflecting on the personhood of the Spirit in Church history will find reservation, a lack of clarity and the resultant diminishment of the reality of the personhood of the Spirit in individual experience, ecclesial awareness and transformative engagement with the world. One clear indication of reticence was the demand for what occurred at Asbury University to be ‘defined.’ Rather than responding with gratitude for an unmistakable outpouring of the Holy Spirit in self-giving and healing Triune love, there was an onslaught of critique. Whatever the Holy Spirit was doing it had to line up with proper definitions and alignment with prescribed “proofs” of true revival and agreed upon allowable experiences. The admonition to test the spirits is always apropos. But, we seem to be most uneasy when the Spirit shows up unannounced and begins to re-define the personhood we have surmised as sufficient.

I had the distinct privilege of preparing for an ecumenical conference in Memphis in 2024. Part of our discussion pertained to another ‘outpouring’ that was called the “Memphis Miracle.” The history of that little-known yet remarkable move of the Spirit of Holiness to confront and cleanse from bigotry and racism was based in the origins of an African-American denomination, the Church of God in Christ, which was founded by a Spirit-filled pastor from Mississippi. As I dug into its background, I found that a similar reaction to the person of the Spirit in His transforming work followed the remarkable influence of the charismatic leadership of C.H. Mason on the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition in the South. As his influence grew, primarily in the area of Mississippi and Tennessee, many disparaged his theology and ecclesiology. His services were critiqued as “fanatical and chaotic, unleashing uncouth “holy rollers.””<sup>3</sup> Emotional expressions of the Spirit’s descent upon believers was widely criticized. But Mason was neither deterred nor silenced by these indictments. He kept offering the full Gospel to those who were not included as acceptable evangelical elites. His undaunted clarion call to entire sanctification in a period of our history rife with cruel and demonic racial violence produced a context of holiness of heart and life that contested racism, injustice and sexism while never losing sight of the discipleship of saints that could live in perfect love for their antagonists.

Mason understood the radical changes needed in a devastating era of de-personalizing thought and actions. His emphasis on an intimate relationship with the Holy

Spirit not only crossed boundaries but engendered real change in human relations that otherwise remains hopeless.

## **B. A biblical theology of the infilling of the Holy Spirit**

Much of our reticence pertaining to the Holy Spirit is our lack of understanding His particular divine personhood.<sup>4</sup> Even though the Father is also unincarnate we seem to not have the same difficulty in relating to Him.

Passages like Ephesians 4 must be clearly theologically exegeted. Paul writes, “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond peace” (4:3). But he immediately underscores the personhood of the Spirit in the next phrase that begins a grand view of Christian unity inseparable from trinitarian personhood. “There is one body and one Spirit” (4:4). It is quite evident that we are more at ease in emphasizing the unity and the bond the Spirit enables while we are less inclined to ground that economy in a robust personal ontology. The typical move from the acts we deem as loving or holy to the Spirit as person can actually depersonalize the Spirit and the “Cinderella” effect is set in motion. He is more defined by our experiences than informing them with His own personhood. An imposed inadequate concept of unity in the Church always results if oneness is not based upon the by the enabling and sanctifying power of the “One” person of the Holy Spirit?

The ‘miracle’ of a white man washing the feet of a black man in repentant love and the resultant revival in several denominations that occurred in February 1994 in Memphis arose out of a communal humility and openness to the Spirit’s cleansing presence, power and revelation that formed every ecclesial structure, equality of leadership and the hard work which followed. The fruit of the Spirit is His before it is bestowed upon us. He is the Lord who is love and pours that love into our hearts (Rom 5:5). To not allow Him that lordship is to grieve Him (Eph 4:30).

Markus Barth’s remarkable study on Ephesians begins by pointing out what he calls its “bewildering strangeness.”<sup>5</sup> He notes how little is actually said about Christian action amidst society’s ills. But his lifetime focus on the Pauline epistles notes that Ephesians is essentially a series of prayer-like reflections that lifts the believer above simple indicative-imperative causation. The believer is reminded that there are inimical spiritual principalities and powers (6:12) that have all been confronted and defeated – the wall has been broken down by the atoning work of Christ. Thus, Barth intuits that Christians are called to a fearless “soldierly life” without the enthusiastic evidences of other fillings of the Spirit as in Acts 2 or I

Cor 14.<sup>6</sup> What the saint must contend with is the idolatrous tendency to live with “walls” for as he contends, a “wall-worshiping church serves an idol.”<sup>7</sup> Maybe it is not so shocking, given the historical sidelining of the third Person of the Trinity, that what he is not clear on is the personhood of the Spirit who fills and restores in order that walls within and without might be properly dealt with. Without constant sensitivity and yieldedness to the One Spirit we conflate His work with His essence. Any reserve on His personhood results in a retrenchment of ours.

The many metaphors and symbols of Scripture that pertain to the Spirit do not initially help us in discerning His personhood. Breath, wind, fire, oil and living water do not automatically bring to the surface an indication of deep personal nature or mutuality.<sup>8</sup> But even the earliest references to the Spirit hovering over His creation (Gen 1:2) elicit an ‘hypostatic’ or ‘personal’ interpretation.<sup>9</sup> Only progressive revelation gives a clearer understanding of the intimacy that is offered to every believer with the Holy Spirit.

The ‘breath’ that makes Adam a living being foreshadows the Holy Spirit’s intention for all persons (Gen 2:7). In the flurry of external threats we can often miss the deeper one. The Old Testament maintains a fundamental question: what happens when the Breath of God fills a person? A pagan Pharaoh sees Someone *working in* Joseph (Gen 41:37). The first person filled with the Spirit is a craftsman for the Tabernacle who brings a creative *beauty* which is not merely human (Ex 35:30-33). Moses prophesies that all of God’s people would *prophetically* proclaim the words revealed to them by the Spirit (Num 11:29). Both judges and kings show us that the Spirit gives wisdom and *power* which is supernatural (ex. Judg 15:14). Despite these enablings we are confronted at every point with a deeper need. What we find is a movement from externals to the internal, the heart, from actions to character. The deepening realization of the Old Testament is that a person does not have to build buildings or interpret dreams but one does have to be like Yahweh in truth, goodness, righteousness and love. That requirement can only be facilitated by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.<sup>10</sup>

The creeds (ex. the Constantinopolitan 381AD) emphasize the Spirit as Lord, Creator and Inspiration for the prophets. They draw their consensual beliefs not only from the Old Testament but mainly from the recounting of the life and ministry of Jesus. For He is conceived by the Holy Spirit (Lk 1:35). The person of the Son is incarnated by the person of the Spirit. At the baptism in the Jordan the Spirit descends upon Him as a dove as He moves into ministry. The prophesied Messiah must be anointed by the Spirit (Mt 12:17-18). Jesus is driven into the wilderness by and in

the Spirit (Lk 4:1-14). At his first (and last) hometown sermon the fulfillment of all prophecy is confirmed as the Christ affirms the person of the Spirit, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me...” (Is 61:2, Lk 4:18). It is by the personal endowment of the Spirit in and through Jesus that all His ministry takes place. Exorcism is by the Spirit’s power (Mt 12:28). No part of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ is separated from the Spirit. Hebrews 9:14 challenges any bifurcation of the personally self-giving Triune Life from the Atonement when the author writes that it was “through the Eternal Spirit that Jesus offered Himself without blemish to God the Father.”<sup>11</sup>

Likewise, believers are to recognize that no part of life and ministry is possible without the inbreathing of the Holy Spirit. Human life is symbolized by the breath we take which points to our createdness and sustenance found only in the Spirit. The earliest Aramaic-speaking theologians like Tatian and Aphrahat were attuned to this. They viewed the result of sin in a pneumatological way. To rebel was to lose the Breath of God and thus, to lose one’s chest or lungs which meant immediate spiritual death. For them, salvation was the return of the Breath or Spirit of God. He is the One who brings life to the spiritually dead.

It is little wonder then that the Spirit makes being born from above possible (Jn 3:3-8). This powerful transformation is not fully explainable, but the reality of His life-giving presence is unmistakable. And Jesus, again using the pictures of the older testament describes the “rivers of living water” that flow out of the hearts of believers which John is quick to clarify that it is the Spirit who is the source of that dynamic overflow of fruitfulness (Ezek 47:1-6, Jn 7:38). On the last night before His passion Jesus offers a discourse on the Trinity and his deepest description of the personhood of Another Comforter sent by the Father, the Paraclete, the Convincer, and “Convicter”, the One who witnesses to Jesus (15:26) who will be known by the disciples because He will dwell in them, He will be ‘in’ them in a new way (Jn 14:17).<sup>12</sup> The commissioning of the disciples is a consonant with a submergence into the life of the Trinity, a baptism into the clearly emphasized interpersonal life of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19). Like Jesus, the disciples will be sent forth but only as they have received the promise, the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Lk 24:47-49, Acts 1:4-5). A promise that is insistently repeated five times.<sup>13</sup>

They must receive the reviving breath of the Spirit (Jn 20:21-23) and the sanctifying fullness of the Holy-making Spirit, who “hovers” in the same creational power now at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) which alters the disciples who are cowering

behind closed “walls” so that fear is replaced by the power and love necessary for the transforming life of the Trinity to be made known in Jerusalem and to the ends of the earth. Wesley perceptively describes Pentecost as the fulfillment of all ‘the glorious dispensations of Gospel grace.’<sup>14</sup> Would it be so bold as to say that Pentecost was the first Gospel day?

It is an astounding biblical claim that believers can live their lives with the same relationship to the Spirit that Jesus had. The same mutual knowing, dependence, intimacy, power and holy love of Jesus in the indwelling Spirit are available to everyone who is born of the Spirit and baptized into His divine life and filled with His personal presence.

### C. The Spirit as Person

Is it possible for us to track where we may have missed the unique personhood of the Spirit and as a result correct our perspective and restore the relationship the Triune God offers? Why is it that we are consistently silent about the personhood of one of the Persons of the Trinity? Who is it that personally renews, restores and reconciles who in Himself is not fully a Person?

Augustine’s brilliant “On the Trinity” took fifteen years of theological reflection. The indelible influence of his neo-Platonic background tilted him in an intrasubjective direction. The heavy emphasis on the perfection of the One produced a reserve in Augustine pertaining to the threeness of God. He abruptly asked “Quid tres?” (“three what?”) as he was troubled by the use of the term ‘person’ for the Threeness of God.<sup>15</sup> In order to protect against the constant concern of making God in our image, that is, understanding His personhood as individuated to the detriment of divine simplicity, the Bishop of Hippo preferred to speak of “modes” and “relations.” One dives into this paradigm-forming work after the initial seven books of biblical interpretation to find a startlingly marvelous panoply of psychological symbols for the Triune life. The most famous being memory, understanding and will.<sup>16</sup> But that sets a trajectory in Christian thought in the West which we have never fully recovered from. A person, divine or human, is more than a mind or a will.

When it came to the Spirit he was most at ease with the concept that the Spirit was the actual dynamic of mutual love between the Father and the Son. The Spirit is the bond (*vinculum*), the relational intimacy between the other two divine modes.<sup>17</sup> That move, regardless of its glory, needed some ecumenical corrective. It is my contention that the Eastern Church had already pointed the way for full, personal

pneumatology. Ecumenical theology done with principled conviction based upon consensual agreements normally provides the context for both truth and love to be expressed by the Church. Perhaps the long use of the Spirit as “*vinculum*” or bond between the Father and the Son needs to be reassessed. No matter how hard one tries speaking of the Spirit as bond, or as relation, never quite incorporates the fullness of meaning that person entails. The Spirit is much more than the communion between the Father and the Son. He is divine person who both gives and receives love.

#### **D. The Importance of “personhood” for all theology**

It is a lifetime study to discern and more, to try to understand the full meaning of ‘person’ as it was applied to the Trinity and then to Jesus of Nazareth. The Christian who is willing to dive into that discussion is quite brave. But, if we are truly desirous to know what creation, new creation and re-creation are at base one cannot find any concept richer, more elucidating, more redolent with potential. The intriguing history of the earliest uses of ‘person’ are all functional. It was used in histrionic (theater) contexts as actual masks, then particular roles played. This usage directly connects us to an etymological study which points immediately beyond mere function. In Greek, *prosopon* tilts our perception to that which is ‘toward’ *pros*, ‘the eye’ *opos/n*. A bit later in Latin we find that *persona* carries the idea of that through (*per*) which sound (*sona*) comes. Eyes and mouth are both distinctive elements of the face. So, all talk of person pertains to that which is most distinctive, the face. At base, a person is one who communicates or gives of themselves in a face-to-face relationship. A progression of mask – role – player – character – individual is discernible.

The debates that rage until today concerning Trinitarian personhood all come back to this fundamental concern. How do we retain the revelation of a personal God without making Him some sort of divine committee? And if we resort to ‘mode’ language to protect from over-socializing God’s nature, how can we do so without losing mutual, personal intimacy in God and with God?

To summarize the Christian discernment of personhood in nutshell form I would say that when the Church has been the most open to see the Trinity as three divine persons whose salvific purpose is to take those who are *defaced* by sin and to revive and then restore, this side of heaven, a personhood that is more than reason, or volition, or function, and more than a constant face-turning rebel. It is in those short segments of time that the Church has been the most effective change agent

in culture. And never at any other time. Is it any accident that the Church exploded in Europe as she was delving into the nature of Three Persons in unity and the One Person in whom dwells two natures? Or that revival and societal reformation result when the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Love is recognized and given free reign?

William Booth's culture-changing discipleship of Salvationists never encouraged esoteric theology, but he would declare that, "we do err, I am sure, by not sufficiently acknowledging and glorifying the co-operating work of the Holy Ghost. Why not say, 'The Holy Ghost was at work this afternoon'? 'Blessed Spirit, I thank Thee'?"<sup>18</sup> Samuel Logan Brengle begins his accessible study of the Spirit by exploring the Spirit's "personality"<sup>19</sup>

Time disallows the most exciting and unnerving jaunt through our own history one will ever find. Let the names of those who paid the price to point us deeper into the mystery of personhood in its theological, anthropological, soteriological and might I add, societal implications. These brilliant thinkers include, the Cappadocians, Athanasius, Hilary of Poitiers, Bonaventure, Richard of St. Victor, and Aquinas. They gave us a panoply of insights that really weren't uncovered and built upon until after the Enlightenment threatened the loss of personhood at the feet of the crushing idol of independent reason alone.

We have forgotten how powerful and irreplaceable Trinitarian theology is in regard to personhood. Without the perichoretic (the mutual indwelling) oneness of God in three Persons, all one can ultimately conceive are the impersonal realities of power or choice, will or reason, or rights. The result of those concepts informing culture is a loss of relationship, any positive authority, a view of benevolent transcendence, truth, meaning, even life itself. Without Christianity's notion of personhood, we would be living in an existence of utilitarian pragmatism, or one of tyrannical coercion, or one of hedonistic passion. And those always threaten.

That is what broke the hearts of a young couple in the East End of London. The tens of thousands of people who lined the streets of London at William Booth's funeral attested to the fact that there was no one else who saw their faces. They mattered to him as persons and they knew it. The Salvation Army has a theological heritage which has striven to understand how the personhood of God permeates both heart and life.

Created for fellowship by the Breath of God we affirm intimate self-giving is at the center of God's own being and He has made to draw our being from His. To be like God is to love as persons. As Dennis Kinlaw acknowledged presciently,

“to be a person is to be in relationship.”<sup>20</sup> Sin is the opposite of self-giving and destructive of all true unity. Thus, eternal life can only begin by our turning from everything that has kept us self-curved. All human fellowship, to be what God intended, must reflect Triune intimacy, openness, selflessness. Eastern Christian theologians explored the mutual indwelling of all three divine persons as the very essence of reality. The description in Scripture of salvation includes a turning from sin back to God in the Spirit-enabled re-establishment of a face-to-face relationship with God. But the immediate effect of that intimacy is a turning of our faces to other persons who have never seen the face of God. Has Lewis revealed the work of the Spirit as our basic need for the revivifying, personalizing Spirit in just the title of a book, “Till We Have Faces?” Exactly.

## 2 A. The Spirit, The Salvation Army and Ecumenical Theology

With a strong foundation in consensual Christianity and its Wesleyan-Arminian trajectory, The Salvation Army expressed a distinctive and holistic theology which was evidenced in all of its major elements. These characteristics draw strong support from a foundational pneumatology.

i. **Trinitarian/Theological:** The Salvation Army (TSA) grounds all reality, and thus, all ministry in the love of God.<sup>21</sup> A trinitarian communion of love was the source and foundation of creation which was climaxed by the communion of two persons created in the divine image. That paradigm is quite evident, though not supported by extensive articulation, in the evangelical thought of the Booths. Love, for them, is never saccharine sentimentality. It always involves the dynamic of the unchanging moral law and the restoration of the moral image by the infilling of the Holy Spirit in all of its Gospel promise. This *agape*, trinitarian, shared love is the ground and grammar of Salvationist theology. A distillation of the Army’s Wesleyan theology incorporates a consistent and formative balance of two essence statements: holiness and love. The essence of God was to be reality that every Christian was to receive by faith. This Wesleyan *telos*, the goal of trinitarian love in the heart which is expressed in “true righteousness and holiness” (Eph 4:24) could only be realized by the personal presence of the Spirit of Jesus.

As Wesley, before them, there was little emphasis on the intricacies of the immanent nature of the Triune Life. Affirming the creeds and consensual thought on what was considered vibrant but highly contemplative theology, the Army’s doctrinal basis focused on how to communicate theology in popular language and

tangible service.<sup>22</sup> Offering justice in unjust circumstances while never lessening the place of personal righteousness in every area of life is the desire of all Salvation Army ministry.

ii. **Christocentric/Missional:** In full agreement with the Spirit's revealed agenda to point to the Son (John 14-16) to the glory of the Father, the Army does not separate Christology from Pneumatology. Asked what doctrine was the principal one for the Army William Booth replied, 'The bleeding Lamb'.<sup>23</sup> Redemption through the entire Incarnate life of the God-Man completed in the Cross and Resurrection is non-negotiable in the Army's evangelistic doctrine. Salvation through the Incarnate Son's self-giving sacrifice is central to every other facet of doctrine superseding all else. To be born from above was, for the Booths, to be brought into gracious union with Christ. The undercurrent for all salvation was the work of the Son and the Spirit. One sees how formative oneness with the Triune God was for Catherine. She wrote, "All through the New Testament, and indeed the Bible, no truth is taught with greater force and frequency than this, that without a vital union of the soul with Christ all ceremonies, creeds, beliefs, professions, church ordinances, are sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, and all who trust in them are deceived."<sup>24</sup>

What formed their Christology was the self-emptying love which was revealed in His incarnate life of being sent. The mission of the Son must become the mission of believers. Service was the expression of the mutual deference of the persons of the Trinity. "As the Father has sent Me, so send I you." (John 17:21). What they also knew was that no sending would be possible or fruitful without the next command, "Receive the Holy Spirit." (20:22).

Catherine summarizes the Christian life in three synoptic terms: repentance, faith, and holiness.<sup>25</sup> She is one of the Wesleyan tradition's clearest exponents of the judicial sufficiency of the substitutionary atonement, while adding every time that its concomitant, regeneration by the Spirit, is always present in order for salvation by faith through grace to be truly effective. Christ has come to pardon our sin and to renew His image in us. Grace both redeems and heals from sin's death-producing power. We are, as she put it "saved from sin, from second purposes, from selfish aims."<sup>26</sup> The purpose of the Cross is always and only holiness. Mission reveals the aim of the persons of the Trinity in the heart turned outward.

iii. **Pneumatological/Transformational:** Salvationist theology is permeated with a distinct emphasis on the Holy Spirit. The motto "Blood and Fire" emblazoned on the Army's flags inseparably relates the Cross to Pentecost. The sun and rays

on our Crest indicate the light and fire of the Holy Spirit. On the shoulders of every Salvationist in uniform are two S's. The consensus is that they represent 'saved' to 'serve' but what needs to be emphasized is the Trinitarian soteriology and anthropology latent in those letters. It is only a full salvation through the Spirit that can produce the kind of servant heart which is free of self-promotion or the kind of service which is only fleeting or recognized. A spirit that sees all persons as marvelous in God's eyes.

Thoroughly committed to total depravity and original sin the Founders of the Army eschewed any criticism of latent Pelagianism in their Wesleyan/Arminian perspective.<sup>27</sup> Due to the rejection of the Life of God, an ever-present life-or-death decision had to be offered to every person. But the recurrent refrain was that sin and death were the result of the turning from, the spurning of the offered love of their Creator. One of John Wesley's clarifications for seekers in his day was the constant affirmation that repentance did not save. It was, as he articulated, "remotely" necessary. What was "immediately necessary" for the entire way of salvation was faith.<sup>28</sup> The same pastoral guidance is present in many of the references to repentance in the Booths. Very few evangelists (or theologians) are clearer on each aspect of how one is born again.<sup>29</sup> Their hearers had to be led carefully through all the elements which preceded regeneration. But it is here that a pneumatological emphasis pertains. The work of the Savior is only fulfilled as the Spirit applies transformative grace. Prevenient, convicting, saving and sanctifying grace are all the work of the Spirit in the believer's life. There is separation of substitutionary atonement from regeneration. Both must be applied concomitantly for salvation to occur. The debt of sin is removed as the defacement of sin is counteracted when the re-personalizing work of the Spirit occurs.

The theology preached and written in Salvationist theology keeps in tandem the objective and the subjective elements of the atonement. Like their theological forebears, the antinomian implications of an over-emphasis on the objectivity of the atonement to the exclusion of the full 'healing' of the restored, moral image is consistently cautioned.<sup>30</sup>

### **B. A "Personalizing" Pneumatology:**

A dynamic and personal pneumatology, evident everywhere in their combined corpus, forms a telic orientation, a ubiquitous emphasis on 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.<sup>31</sup> The Booths viewed the over-used definition of a Christian as only a ‘miserable sinner’ as truncating the fullness offered to all in Christ. In a poignant passage Catherine wonders if a believer were to bring that self-description into the presence of the Savior and then that one was to realistically answer the question: what has grace really produced in my life?<sup>32</sup> Catherine’s rejection of the antinomianism inherent in most of the theologies regarding subjective righteousness as only ‘filthy rags’ is a compelling rebuke against the belief that sin was an unremovable reality.<sup>33</sup> She fought that inadequate form of the Gospel with its biblical antidote. For her, the ‘most glorious top stone’ was the reality of the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying work. By the power of triune grace every Christian can possess more than a heart that was, as she put it trenchantly, a “cage of unclean birds”.<sup>34</sup>

Here a vital portion of Salvationist soteriology is highlighted. Even though it might be reasonable to not expect more than an initiatory experience of saving faith, the offer was always a “full” salvation. The economic Trinity bestows that which both humanizes and personalizes. The Spirit restores the moral image and renovates the heart in other orienting love. It is the Spirit of God who personally fills with perfect love and enables selfless open-faced service.

Catherine relates that it was to the ‘poor Salvation Army’ that many wrote or came for counsel on how 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.<sup>35</sup> 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. It was that gift, a heart set free from self-will and filled with perfect love, which was the most good, in her terms, the ‘highest good’ that could be offered by the Army.<sup>36</sup>

### **i. Contextual Theology – The Spirit and London’s East End:**

The recreation of the Spirit has immediate cultural implications that must arise if biblical salvation is present. Sanctification as full-orbed biblical salvation was never a navel-gazing enterprise. Self-preoccupation is confronted by the Holy Spirit at every point of Salvationist theology. It is often thought that the ministry to those whom Booth graphically referred to as the ‘submerged tenth’ of English society began out of meeting social needs. Roger Green’s assessment regarding the actual beginnings of the Army’s social outreach has

brought the relationship of evangelism and meeting needs into clearer historical and theological focus.<sup>37</sup>

In a remarkable piece Booth referred to his shift in evangelistic focus as the sole emphasis of the Army as a “War on Two Fronts.”<sup>38</sup> Actual evangelism within the evangelical tradition has always borne the potential conflict of emphasis between conversion and meeting human needs. The Wesleyan tradition from which the Army drew its life both theologically and practically, was originally able to balance personal and social needs in the offer of a full salvation. Through several influences the Booths became convinced that to separate the spiritual from the crushing physical context of those to whom they ministered was not possible. They were surrounded every hour by the de-humanizing conditions of places like East London. No other sustained ministry to the ‘least, the last and the lost’ was as effective. And the reason for that was theological.

It was not only the brokenness of culture or the rampant injustices that surrounded them. They believed that wherever the Holy Spirit had free reign then biblical justice would result. Other forms of justice might sound right but could be easily distorted into a cultural idol. They always proclaimed biblical principles which confronted an ‘idolizing’ of politics and economics. Only sanctification, the union of the heart with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, could ultimately keep demands for rights from becoming self-serving.

Of note, this Gospel ministry to the poor never devolved into mere sympathy or the impersonal dispensing of physical assistance. As the ‘personalizing’ Spirit recalibrated the self-curved person into an other-oriented servant the effect was that every person was viewed as made in the image of God and thus of inestimable value. Created value was never lost in the necessity to fully respond as a person. No matter what the state of the needy there was the unflinching insistence that there should be some responsible work or appropriate engagement which would lift the self-esteem of the recipients.<sup>39</sup>

## **ii. The Army, Personhood and the Life for a ‘Faceless’ World - Revival and Reformation in the Spirit**

Lillian Taiz has written extensively on the social ministry of the Army. One quote that has challenged me for years is her assessment of a subtle but tectonic shift in emphases. She concludes: “During the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Army ceased to be a working-class dominated religious organization. Its social institutions

offered temporal salvation to the poor while its spiritual work ministered to the upwardly mobile. In contrast to the blood-washed warriors of the nineteenth century, Salvationists of the twentieth century generally regarded themselves as members of a church *that sponsored professionalized Christian social services to the downtrodden.*<sup>40</sup>

I have thought long and hard about the astounding work of the Army. Its efficiency and effectiveness are rightfully lauded. My assessment is that the majority of those involved in this culture-altering service offer their gifts with an undercurrent of mere pragmatism with its necessarily incomplete results. At the very place where the de-personalized need personalizing ministry the most that can be offered are the rudiments of a ‘dis-imaging’ functionalism. Perhaps this alignment is found in a Harper’s Weekly article about the Army’s work among the poor and lowly as a mix of “sociology as well as heartology?”

Our second General, Bramwell Booth, charted a larger vision. “By our union with Christ we are to beget children unto the Spirit.... Yes, that is it; that is what the world needs, mothers and fathers in God – men and women **who will co-operate with Him in the production of a race of holy men (and women) who will die rather than remain sterile and barren** in the service of their Lord, who will stand forth in spite of every difficulty and devil as the makers of men.”<sup>41</sup> No better statement could describe what I have called ‘re-personalizing’ work of the Holy Spirit.

In a day of cultural reserve on any hint of offensive language it is hard to offer any indication of true need, especially when there are serious personal issues at play. One wonders what might result if we were to precede every rank and need with inherent personhood. Every officer, soldier, board member, employee, client is first and foremost viewed as a person. The radical nature of real holiness makes sense only if personal restorative revival has begun in every corps. If our hearts are truly turned outside ourselves then there lies the answer to all cultural sins and brokenness. We must preach, experience and express what the Gospel truly is. In short: Created Persons, Depersonalized humans, Incarnate Person, Personalizing Spirit, Re-Personalizing (re-creative) ministry.

Full salvation must incorporate the objective and subjective results of trinitarian self-giving. To eliminate the entire sanctification of a person is to miss the divine intention of all holiness. The Holy One desires His holy love to be presented to every social construct. To offer less is to truncate His image. The result of that limitation is unfilled personhood. Nearly every time I have heard the cries of the

disenfranchised, the down-trodden, the dehumanized in the last couple of years my inner response has been, “that person is made for holiness, they are crying out for holy love.” And that reality is only given in a face-to-face engagement. True compassion is always personal: All are made to image the Triune God in mutual self-giving, All are responsible to receive grace and allow it to remove every vestige of self-curvature, and, All can be fundamentally transformed, changed from hiding to sharing, giving, seeing and caring.

Three main responses to societal needs in early Methodism. 1. Pastoral response to every known crisis, 2) Localized action was always the starting point, 3) Systemic abuses were confronted in a variety of ways. Any review of the methods of the Army in our earliest days must note similar approaches however, I also find a distinctive perspective for evangelical ministry. Take for instance Brengle’s concept of sharing burdens: “This knowledge (of Jesus), to be maintained, *must be cultivated*, which is done by communion with Him.... To really know each other (we) must live in each other’s hearts, enter into each other’s joys.... And so, to know Jesus there must be sympathy, fellowship, friendship *constantly cultivated*.”

Many may scroll to another Instagram picture after the unnerving photos of the burgeoning tent cities of the homeless in our cities, but the Army must always “do something.” Those were the exact words William directed to his son when confronted with the homeless problem in London. A dear friend who is a counselor once gave me a list of the top-ten needs for every person: Attention, acceptance, appreciation, support, encouragement, affection, approval, security, comfort and respect. These are all needed without sin in the picture. To be a person is to give to and receive these gifts from another. There is no need to wring our hands in the face of any tragedy. We know the foundations of reality, the ground of all atoning grace, the purposes of God for every person – no matter what their mental or physical capabilities. It is the Spirit who bestows *agape* love in the heart and thus enables one to see and to respond to the actual roots of injustice.

Any study of sacrifice, forgiveness or relationship in Scripture must include the concept of ‘bearing.’ Could it be that bearing the needs of the ‘dis-imaged’ ought then to be the major orientation of all social ministry? Several definitions have caught my attention over the years of charting the Church’s view of the neediest. It has always been (and always will be) impossible to bear the “riff-raff,” the “muckrakers,” the “submerged tenth,” the “least and the lost” without the Spirit of Jesus connecting the server to the served.

## Conclusion

It is imperative that we, the Church of Jesus Christ, draw upon all the heritage we have been so graciously given. We must dive into the full implications of trinitarian orthodoxy. Apparently, we can only do one thing at a time. And I believe that it is our humble duty to dive into a deeper and richer pneumatology. If the Person of the Spirit becomes our Life, then Jesus will be exalted and the Father glorified.

Our understanding of imaging God may not be, first our reflection of God, but in fact, the divine means of offering His life to us. There is no image without His Breath, His Life. He made us for Himself, for union, for complete identification. It is at this crucial nexus, the Image of God, that the Three-personed God engages with our personhood. The deeper we explore the Son of God in relationship with the Father and the Spirit the more we understand ourselves. His 'very good' carries with it an understanding of personhood which is sourced in the Trinity and is fulfilled in a permanent union with one Person of the Godhead for eternity. Self-giving holy love enters here through the Image of God Himself to bear, redeem, transform, re-create the image. He has made us, in His image, to bear His likeness in holy love.

Personhood is the issue of the day. Personal identity, questions involving gender, sexuality, marriage, family and children surround each of us daily. At the heart of The Salvation Army's witness is that the Lord the Spirit would restore the image of God in all of our hearts so that we, as those who are created, redeemed and filled with the Holy-making Spirit can receive and offer the selfless love of the Triune God as persons. May that personal meaning and fulfillment and freedom to love the other more than we love ourselves be the result of whatever the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of God deigns to bestow and produce in the days ahead.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> A longer form of this paper was presented at the annual ecumenical forum of Christian Churches Together in Memphis, TN on Oct. 10, 2024. The Salvation Army continues to seek fellowship with any group who confess Jesus as Lord. The various forms of our ecumenical outreach is part of our desire to seek true unity in the Spirit.

<sup>2</sup> The Cinderella of Theology: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit” is an article by Dutch theologian George Johan Sirks that was published in the Harvard Theological Review in 1957. The article is about how some theologians began to informally refer to the Holy Spirit as the “Cinderella of theology” because of the Spirit’s lack of focus in theological research and reflection. The article suggests that the Holy Spirit had been overlooked and ignored, while God the Father/Creator and Jesus Christ received more attention.

<sup>3</sup> Ivan Hartsfield, *Sanctified Imagination: Christian Holiness in Afro-Pentecostal Tradition* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2023), 80.

<sup>4</sup> This paper will use the traditional language for the Trinity without any over-application of revealed terminology so as to incorporate anthropocentric elements to the discussion.

<sup>5</sup> Markus Barth, *The Broken Wall: A Study of the Epistle to the Ephesians* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press) 1959, 26.

<sup>6</sup> Barth, *Broken Wall*, See his list on types of prayers, 187, Distinction between the typical ‘revival’ experience, 65.

<sup>7</sup> Barth, *Broken Wall*, 156.

<sup>8</sup> David S. Cunningham discusses the diminishment of the triad, “Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier” that was used in many ecumenical statements. The ‘nuanced’ criticism of that reading included the potential of modalism, tritheism, and the undercutting of a full trinitarian economy (the works of the Trinity are undivided). It fascinates me that his option is “Source, Wellspring and Living Water.” See *These Three are One* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 71-73, passim.

<sup>9</sup> It is fascinating that the end of the canon places the Spirit and the Bride offering an invitation to the faithful to approach the glory of God (Rev 22:17). Could this chiasm be telling us something of the personhood of the Spirit at both the beginning and ending of all things? It is also of interest that the invitation is for those who are seeking the satisfaction of “living water” one of the symbols for the Holy Spirit (22:17c).

<sup>10</sup> E.g., Ezek 11:19, 18:31, 36:26

<sup>11</sup> Conceived by the Holy Spirit (Mt 1:13,20; Lk 1:35)

Baptism and Descent of the Holy Spirit (Mt 3:16)

Life and Ministry Anointed (Christ) by the Spirit

Full dependence (Lk 4:1) led, guided, drove

Temptation (Mt. 4:1-11)

Filled with joy by the Spirit (Lk 10:21)

Teaching (Lk 4:18)

Exorcism (Mt 12:28)

Healing (Lk 4:18)

<sup>12</sup> New Birth by the Holy Spirit (Jn 3:3-8)

Descent and Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2)

Life Anointed by the Spirit (Jn 7:37-39)

Full dependence (Lk 11:1-3; Acts 1:4-5)

Temptation

Teaching (Mt 10:18-20, Lk 12:11-12, Mk 13:11, Jn 3:34)

Exorcism (Mk 9)

Healing

Sinful Nature (John 13-17 as a solution)

Sending Forth (Mt 28:19-20, Lk 24:47-49, Jn 21:21-23)

<sup>13</sup> Overarching Promise – Jesus initiates the fulfillment in John 3:6-7

Mt 3:11 He will baptize you w. the Holy Spirit

Mk 1:8 He will baptize you w. the Holy Spirit

Lk 3:16 He will baptize you w. the Holy Spirit and fire

Jn 1:33 This is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit

Acts 1:5 You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit

<sup>14</sup> John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament* reprint of 1754 edition (Salem, OH: Schmull Publishers, n.d.), 278.

<sup>15</sup> Augustine, *On the Trinity*, Bk. 5: ch. 9, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 92. The discussion takes up books 5 and 6.

<sup>16</sup> This is found in *On the Trinity* Book 10, chaps.17-19 and passim. His successive analogies presciently discover psychological intricacies that are simply astounding for the fourth century.

<sup>17</sup> Augustine, *On the Trinity*, Bk. 5, chaps. 10, 13, 17, 19.

<sup>18</sup> William Booth, *The Founder Speaks Again: A Selection of the Writings of William Booth*, arranged by Cyril J. Barnes (London: Salvationist Publishing, 1907), 41.

<sup>19</sup> S. L. Brengle, *When the Holy Spirit is Come* (Atlanta: The Salvation Army Supplies and Purchasing Dept., 1982), 1-9.

<sup>20</sup> This phrase was used hundreds of times in Kinlaw's speaking ministry. The foundation for that ontology can be found pervading his *Let's Start with Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 10, 28-29, 36, 38. See also, *Preaching in the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 76-80.

<sup>21</sup> Booth, *Darkest England*, speaking of the source of all Army outreach William states, "I believe

in the very heart of God Himself.” Ibid., 280. See also an intriguing discussion on the heart of the Father, Ibid., 43.

<sup>22</sup> *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine*, (London: Salvation Books, 2010), 51-77. A typical assessment of the need for sound doctrine while not rejecting sincere input from continual doctrinal clarification is found in S. L. Brengle’s chapter, “What is Fundamental?” in *Resurrection Life and Power* (Atlanta: Salvation Army Supplies, 1925), 28-38.

<sup>23</sup> *Handbook of Doctrine*, 142.

<sup>24</sup> Catherine Mumford Booth, *The Highway of Our God*, (Atlanta, GA: Salvation Army Supplies, 1986), Part One, Chapter Four: 27.

<sup>25</sup> See the discussion of Wesley in “Principles of a Methodist Further Explained,” *The Works of John Wesley* ed. Thomas Jackson (London: 3<sup>rd</sup> edition 1872), VIII: 472-474, hereafter *WJW*. Andrew M. Eason and Roger J. Green, *Settled Views: The Shorter Writings of Catherine Booth* (Bloomsbury, Bloomsbury Publishers, 2017), 49. Also, *Highway of Our God*, Part II, Chap. One: 32-36.

<sup>26</sup> Eason and Green, *Settled Views*, 64.

<sup>27</sup> It is fascinating that Wesley’s longest theological treatise is on original sin found in “The Doctrine of Original Sin according to Scripture, Reason and Experience,” *WJW*: IX: 192-464.

<sup>28</sup> “*The Scripture Way of Salvation*” III:1, *WJW*: VI:48. Here Wesley discusses the conditions of justification.

<sup>29</sup> Catherine Booth, *The Highway of our God*, 9-13 on repentance, 17-24 on saving faith. Both sections are heavy on genuine repentance and the renunciation of sin as a foundation of true faith. Belief is never mere assent it is a total reversal of life.

<sup>30</sup> She refers to the ‘vermin’ of antinomianism. Eason and Green, *Settled Views*, 42.

<sup>31</sup> Henry H. Knight III, “The Transformation of the Human Heart: The Place of Conversion in Wesley’s Theology” in *Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition* in Kenneth Collins and John Tyson eds. (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 44-45. Eason and Green, *Settled Views*, 98.

<sup>32</sup> Eason and Green, *Settled Views*, 93.

<sup>33</sup> Eason and Green, *Settled Views*, 96-97, 111-112

<sup>34</sup> Eason and Green, *Settled Views*, 102, 109.

<sup>35</sup> Eason and Green, *Settled Views*, 103

<sup>36</sup> Eason and Green, *Settled Views*, 103, 99-101. John Wesley referred to this as “evangelical repentance.”

<sup>37</sup> William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (London: International Headquarters of The Salvation Army, 1890), 31. The ‘Submerged Tenth’ refers to the most destitute of English Society. He compared these persons to the slaves emancipated decades before. They were caught in the vice of cruel cultural systems. He was deeply aware of the decimation of much of the culture around him that most of the Church neglected or treated with disdain. Booth used many graphic terms for the neediest in his time, cf. “the vilest of the vile” (166) “human sludge” (81).

<sup>38</sup> Title of a sermon preached in 1898 which changed the course of the Army's ministry.

<sup>39</sup> Booth, *Darkest England and the Way Out*, 80. He says in a chapter entitled "Chaotic Charity", "There has never been an attempt to treat them as human beings. (The poor) are simply units... which dehumanizes.... It is well, no doubt, sometimes to administer an anaesthetic, but the Cure of the Patient is worth ever so much more." What follows are numerous ministries to lift the poor out of the 'bog' in which they were hopelessly submerged.

<sup>40</sup> Lillian Taiz, *Hallelujah Lads and Lasses: Remaking the Salvation Army, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2001), 144.

<sup>41</sup> Catherine Bramwell-Booth ed., *Trumpets of the Lord: Bramwell Booth Speaks* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947), 233.

# Devotional

*David Winters MD\**

## ***“Devotion” – A Song of Communal Devotion***

### **Verse 1**

*Jesus, Savior, take our devotion  
Fix our minds on what is true.  
Body, soul, our will and emotion  
Consecrate to abide in you.*

### **Chorus**

*We will follow, bowed in rev’rence  
We surrender to know your pow’r.  
Fill us with your love and your presence,  
As we worship with all we are.*

### **Verse 2**

*Living sacrifices of worship  
Set apart in wondrous light.  
Loving mercy, knowing your Lordship  
Walking humbly and doing right.*

### **Verse 3**

*Spirit-led to know all your fullness  
Savior we belong to you.  
Transformed, now we see all your goodness  
Make us holy in all we do.*

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I have been asked to explain the life events that led to the writing of this song. In reality, I did not so much write a song, as I assembled truth from Scripture in order to explore aspects of devotion. Here is my testimony.

I considered the meaning of devotion at a major turning point in my life. I retired from a 38-year career as a Family Medicine physician, leaving a busy practice. At the same time, due to extended family circumstances, my wife and I relocated to another state. I gave up an active role in the corps where we had worshipped and fellowshiped for 26 years. We left behind our younger daughter in college, and since her three siblings had already moved away, we were suddenly empty-nesters.

Even though I had control over all these decisions, or so I thought, I experienced an unexpected loss of identity, which I should have anticipated. I was newly retired, living in a new town with a new home, new corps, no children at home, and significantly fewer responsibilities. Many of you have experienced similar changes.

By God's provision, within weeks of moving I was a delegate to The Salvation Army's National Seminar on Holiness, and came under the teaching of some of the Army's finest thought-leaders. I was challenged in many ways. Perhaps most importantly, I came face-to-face with the relative deficiency of my understanding of biblical concepts such as salvation, justification, holiness, righteousness, regeneration, sanctification, and reconciliation, among others.

Also, for the first time in my adult life, I had unassigned discretionary hours to fill, and this was a wonderful gift from God. Like never before, I immersed myself in Scripture, prayer, meditation, and contemplation through solitude and silence. Setting aside medical literature, I was now able to read on a variety of topics, including ancient devotional classics as well as more contemporary Christian thought. Importantly, I was learning to listen in prayer. While prayer is conversation with God, we sometimes focus on using many words, making requests, and telling God what we think he should do, rather than resolving to be silent in his presence to listen for his voice. I had missed the balance.

My relationship with God changed. I thought that the Christian life consisted of believing in God, reading Scripture daily, asking God for answers to prayer, being active in my corps, engaging in acts of service, being obedient, and generally trying to please Him for the time I have on earth.

Pastor and podcaster J.D. Walt from Seedbed.com calls this "Believe and Behave". While commendable, it is not by itself the fullness of life to which God calls us. Walt

teaches that in addition to all that, what God also wants from us is to “Behold and Become”, entering into a continual awareness of our relationship with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We behold Jesus in all his holiness and glory, and adopt a lifestyle which allows the Holy Spirit to reshape us in the image of Christ through relationship with him.

Richard Foster<sup>1</sup>, Dallas Willard<sup>2</sup>, and others suggest we should prioritize our lives based on the spiritual disciplines Jesus practiced while he was here on earth in bodily form. This is what it means to “follow” Christ. We do what he did. Consider solitude, for example. “Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray” (Mark 1:35 NLT). In his book *Prayer*, Foster suggests this describes “a pattern of life more than a single event. Jesus needed frequent retreat and solitude to do his work. Yet we somehow think we can do without what he deemed essential.”<sup>3</sup> The same is true for other disciplines.

I believe devotion is the pathway from the cross leading into a life of increasing Christlikeness. Devotion is not an advanced state of spiritual understanding; however, it is more than mere intellectual assent to doctrine. Devotion is an everyday love relationship with God which is obedient, consecrated, infused with humility, and practiced through continuous active surrender to God. Diane Leclerc writes “Entire devotion to God is perhaps the best expression of our love for God.”<sup>4</sup>

We intentionally schedule time to practice those activities that Christ practiced. These include Scripture reading and study, prayer, worship, meditation, fasting, simplicity, solitude, submission, service, and others (see Richard Foster<sup>5</sup>). Through these, we place ourselves before the Holy Spirit where he can re-create us in the fullness of Christ, as he develops the fruit of the Spirit in us. “And the Lord – who is the Spirit – makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

After several years on this journey, I now ‘pause at the side of the road’ to document lessons learned on devotion, in the form of a song. This is not a complete story. We have all of eternity for God to continue his work in us, and to draw us closer to Himself in his presence.

The song is written from a communal perspective because we cannot be in full relationship with God apart from a relationship with our fellow believers. Solitary worship is essential, but incomplete. Jesus was usually in the company of his followers. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit form the fellowship of the Trinity.

The song describes various characteristics of devotion based on Scriptures that detail how the Spirit shapes us. The Scripture provided is not to support the words

of the song, but to demonstrate how the song is a distillation of Scriptural truth into just a few words. The song points to Scripture.

I want to share the background from a line in the chorus, “We surrender to know your power.” One of my greatly respected critics challenged me, “Dad, what does that even mean?” Fair question. The power addressed here is not the ability to do great deeds in God’s strength. Rather, it is the power to begin to grasp the depths of God’s love. Paul writes in Ephesians 3:18 “And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is.”

I doubt we will get very far in that process without complete surrender to God, even as Paul cautions in the next verse, “(Christ’s love) is too great to understand fully.” But the effort yields its own reward, as he promises, “Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God” (Ephesians 3:19), giving us hope.

What follows is each line of the song, along with some of the scriptures from which the words of the song are derived:

## **Verse 1**

### ***Jesus, Savior, take our devotion***

“Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you.” John 21:17

“He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior.” Titus 3:6

“Be still, and know that I am God.” Psalm 46:10

### ***Fix our minds on what is true***

“Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.”

Philippians 4:8

“Anyone who accepts his (Jesus’) testimony can affirm that God is true. For he is sent by God. He speaks God’s words, for God gives him the Spirit without limit.” John 3:33-4

### ***Body, soul, our will and emotion***

“You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.” Mark 12:30

“You must worship no other gods, for the Lord, whose very name is Jealous, is a God who is jealous about his relationship with you.” Exodus 34:14

***Consecrate to abide in you***

“Abide in me, and I in you.” “Those who abide in me, and I in them, bear much fruit.” John 15:4,5 NKJV

“The Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” Galatians 5:22-23 NLT

“For apart from me, you can do nothing.” John 15:5

**Chorus*****We will follow, bowed in rev’rence***

“Jesus called out to them, ‘Come, follow me.’” Matthew 4:19

“Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me, because my servants must be where I am.” John 12:26

“In your hearts revere Christ as Lord.” 1 Peter 3:15 NIV

***We surrender to know your pow’r***

“Humble yourselves under the mighty power of God.” 1 Peter 5:6 NLT

“I pray that...he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit.”

“May you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is.” “Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.”

“Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.” Ephesians 3:16, 18-20

***Fill us with your love and your presence***

“For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.” Romans 5:5

“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

“And this is the secret: Christ lives in you.” Colossians 1:27

“Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him.” Ephesians 3:17

“Your presence among us sets us apart.” Exodus 33:16

***As we worship with all we are***

“Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.” Psalm 29:2

“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord.” Jeremiah 29:13 NIV

“God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.” John 4:24 NLT

## **Verse 2**

### *Living sacrifices of worship*

“I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.” Romans 12:1

### *Set apart in wondrous light*

“I have set you apart from all other people to be my very own.” Leviticus 20:26

“Everyone was gripped with great wonder and awe, and they praised God.” Luke 5:26

“He called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.” 1 Peter 2:9

“For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness, and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear son.” Colossians 1:13

“Happy are those who hear the joyful call to worship, for they will walk in the light of your presence, Lord.” Psalm 89:15

### *Loving mercy, knowing your Lordship*

#### *Walking humbly and doing right.*

“The Lord has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6:8

“Learn to do good. Seek justice.” Isaiah 1:17

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” Romans 10:9

“God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Philippians 2:9-11

## **Verse 3**

### *Spirit-led to know all your fullness*

“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.” Romans 8:14

“May you experience the love of Christ...Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.” Ephesians 3:19

“Until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.” Ephesians 4:13

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” John 10:10 NIV

### ***Savior we belong to you***

“He made us and we are his. We are his people...” Psalm 100:3 NLT

“Don’t you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.” 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

“And the glorious presence of the Lord filled the Temple.” 2 Chronicles 7:1

### ***Transformed, now we see all your goodness***

“Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good, and pleasing, and perfect.” Romans 12:2

“Let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God – truly righteous and holy.” Ephesians 4:23-24

“For the Lord is good.” Psalm 100:5

“Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life.” Psalm 23:6

“I am confident I will see the Lord’s goodness while I am here in the land of the living.” Psalm 27:13

Make us holy in all we do

“So set yourselves apart to be holy, for I am the Lord your God...I am the Lord who makes you holy.” Leviticus 20:7-8

“But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy.” 1 Peter 1:15

“For God’s will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time.” Hebrews 10:10

“Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth.” “And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth.” John 17:17,19

“Now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.”  
Colossians 1:22

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline : The Path to Spiritual Growth* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2018 fourth edition).

<sup>2</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines : Understanding How God Changes Lives* (New York: HarperCollins, 1988).

<sup>3</sup> Richard J. Foster, *Prayer : Finding the Heart's True Home* ( New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 101.

<sup>4</sup> Diane Leclerc, *Discovering Christian Holiness : The Heart of Wesleyan-Holiness Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2010) 30.

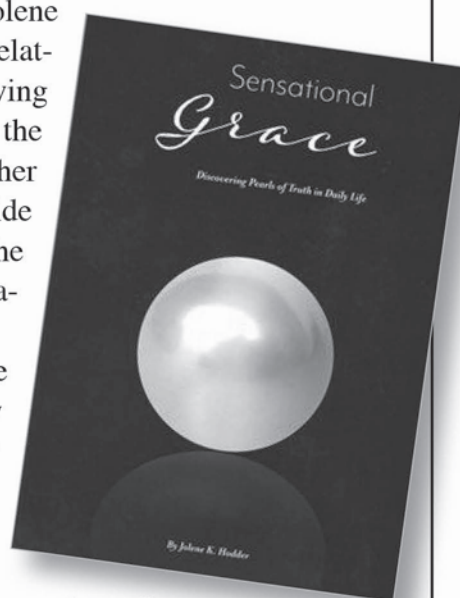
<sup>5</sup> Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*.

# *Sensational Grace*

By Commissioner Jolene K. Hodder

In these days where the weight of the world feels heavy, the issues are complicated, and there are few simple answers, Commissioner Jolene Hodder shares everyday, relatable life experiences, drawing out deeper spiritual truths in the process. Follow along as her modern-day parables provide refreshing reminders about the gift of God's unmerited favor—His grace.

Commissioner Jolene Hodder is a Salvation Army officer with a passion for leading others to Christ and then equipping, motivating, and preparing them for effective ministry. Jolene is the author of two published books, *A Bend in the Road* and *Walking in White*. She currently ministers as the USA National Secretary for Program in Alexandria, Virginia.



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# Unless or Until?

## A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON COMMITMENT IN CONTEMPORARY LEADERSHIP

*Henrik Andersen\**

### **Introduction: Beyond Structure, Toward Posture**

Over nearly four decades of leadership within The Salvation Army, I have witnessed how both the **content of leadership** and the **context in which we lead** have changed. While some developments reflect intentional theological reflection—such as a movement from control-based structures toward servant leadership—others have been shaped by necessity.

One shift is particularly striking across many Western territories: the steady decline in the number of people committing to officership. As a result, an increasing number of corps—and in some contexts, entire ministries—are now led by **employed personnel rather than covenanted officers**. While this change is often marked by faithful leadership and due to practical necessity, it has created uncertainty—not only about the **spiritual role and responsibility of those in such positions**, but also about the **meaning and expectations of officership itself**. Some officers find themselves asking how others can hold the same responsibilities without having made the same commitments, or what covenant means when the same authority can be exercised without it. Yet beneath this structural and vocational tension lies a deeper question—one not ultimately of title or contract, but of **commitment**.

What kind of commitment does spiritual leadership require today? And how do we name and form that posture in a way that honors both The Salvation Army's heritage and the realities of contemporary ministry?

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## Three Postures of Commitment

In various areas of Church life, we can observe at least three distinct postures of commitment. While each reflects different attitudes toward calling and responsibility, only one aligns with a spiritual posture of discerned obedience.

### 1. “As Long As” Commitment

This is the consumerist posture: “I’ll stay as long as it suits me. As long as I feel good. As long as my needs are met.” Though rarely stated so bluntly, this mindset can appear subtly in a church culture shaped by individualism or low expectations. It lacks resilience and confuses comfort with calling.

### 2. “Until” Commitment

This is the career-based posture: “I’ll serve until I find something more fulfilling. Until I’m promoted. Until I need to make a career move.” While often responsible in tone, “Until” remains rooted in **self-directed criteria**—its limits are defined by personal thresholds or opportunity, rather than spiritual discernment.

### 3. “Unless” Commitment

This is the vocational posture: “I will stay unless the Lord clearly calls me elsewhere. Unless I can no longer give my best. Unless the mission is compromised.” This posture reflects biblical models of calling—Abraham who moves only when God leads, Ruth who binds herself to Naomi’s people, and Paul, who stays or moves by the Spirit’s leading. What unites these stories is not permanence, but obedience—a readiness to remain or move solely at the Spirit’s direction.

The biblical call to spiritual leadership is consistent: offer yourselves as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1), share not only the gospel but your very lives (1 Thessalonians 2:8), and be found faithful as stewards (1 Corinthians 4:2). Notably, it is **faithfulness** that is required—**not permanence**. Jesus himself called his followers to take up their cross daily (Luke 9:23)—a rhythm of surrender, not a contract of permanence.

In the reflections that follow, I focus primarily on how the “unless” posture shapes spiritual leadership—particularly in the context of **officership and other forms of spiritual ministry** within The Salvation Army.

## Covenant, Calling, and Commitment in the Army

The Salvation Army has historically held two formal covenants—Soldiership and

Officership—as expressions of vocational and spiritual commitment. While these forms remain important in many contexts, conversations are emerging about **new models of membership and discipleship** that reflect changing cultural and ministry realities.

Though these covenants may no longer **explicitly require lifelong service**, they are still often **interpreted and experienced as permanent commitments**. This implicit expectation, though historically shaped, may no longer align with the vocational realities faced by many leaders today.

As I reflect theologically, I find that Scripture only explicitly calls for lifelong commitment in two areas: to **Jesus and His Church**, and to **one’s spouse**. These are covenantal in the truest sense—relational, enduring, and formed in love. Ministry leadership, by contrast, is **vocation**: spiritual, weighty, and accountable, but not covenantal in the same absolute way. This distinction allows us to take **“life” out of the structural language of commitment**, while keeping the full **weight of faithfulness** in its spiritual posture.

We are not asking those entering into spiritual leadership—whether officer, soldier, employee, or member—to guarantee a lifetime of service. Instead, we are inviting them into a **spiritually grounded commitment**: “I will remain faithful unless the Lord clearly calls me elsewhere, unless I can no longer give my best, or unless the mission is compromised.”

This shift does not weaken commitment—it strengthens it. It removes permanence as an assumption and replaces it with **discernment and surrender**. “Unless” doesn’t mean *forever*—it means *obedient*. It reframes calling not by duration, but by **Spirit-led availability**.

There are also emerging conversations within the Army about introducing *timed officership*—a defined commitment (e.g., five or ten years) that allows for intentional entry and a **faithful conclusion** after the agreed term. While not a substitute for vocational calling, this model could function alongside the “unless” posture, offering leaders clear opportunities to reflect, discern, and renew their sense of calling. In some cases, a timed approach may help individuals grow into an “unless” mindset over time. Rather than weakening commitment, this layered model could support healthier leadership pathways—anchored in discernment, not duration.

This reframing also honors the reality that some leaders come to discover their calling through *practice*, not just pre-commissioning conviction. Officers and employees alike can be shaped by this posture of presence.

I remember speaking at my farewell meeting before entering training college.

The Territorial Leadership was present, and I stood in front of the congregation and said something like this: *“I am following Jesus, and my commitment is to him—not to The Salvation Army. If these paths ever lead in different directions, I will follow Jesus.”* I was young, probably too bold, and no doubt more radical than wise—but I meant it. Looking back, I didn’t have the language of “unless” yet, but that was the posture I was trying to express. And here’s the beautiful irony: that was more than forty years ago—and I am still here. It has always been an *unless* commitment, and it has, so far, lasted a lifetime.

### Implications for Leadership Formation

Reframing commitment around **posture rather than position** opens doors for a renewed understanding of leadership within The Salvation Army—one that is faithful to our mission and responsive to cultural realities, vocational nuance, and spiritual discernment.

It invites us to reconsider how we perceive **officership and membership**. The “unless” posture challenges assumptions of permanence and opens the possibility of a covenantal commitment that is deeply rooted in faithfulness, discernment, and obedience. This may lead to the emergence of **new forms of vocational ministry**—including employees and lay leaders whose spiritual authority comes not from title but from posture. When we honor the deep commitment of those who serve vocationally **outside our two traditional covenants**, we resist the unhelpful differentiation between “real officers” and “committed employees,” and instead affirm all who faithfully respond to God’s call in their context.

This shift also affects how we **present ministry opportunities**. Rather than asking for a lifetime up front, we invite people into a Spirit-led journey—offering a high calling with language that reflects humility, reality, and grace. In doing so, we lower no standards; rather, we raise expectations of spiritual attentiveness and intentional discernment.

It may also help us connect with emerging generations. Many young people today hesitate to make lifelong commitments—not out of reluctance, but from a place of **integrity**. They simply do not know what life will bring. The “unless” posture honors that honesty without encouraging disengagement.

*It offers a pathway to full-hearted commitment without demanding a lifelong guarantee.* It creates space for robust discipleship, rooted not in long-term projections but in spiritual attentiveness and obedience.

The “unless” model may not yet offer a fully developed framework—but it does

offer a **direction**. It is a hopeful reframing of vocational commitment, one that centers availability, surrender, and spiritual obedience rather than formal duration. If embraced, this could influence how we train, appoint, and encourage leaders across the Army—creating space for both long-faithful service and seasons of meaningful vocational engagement.

This is not only a theological correction—it is spiritual liberation.

### **Conclusion: Staying Faithful, Not Forever**

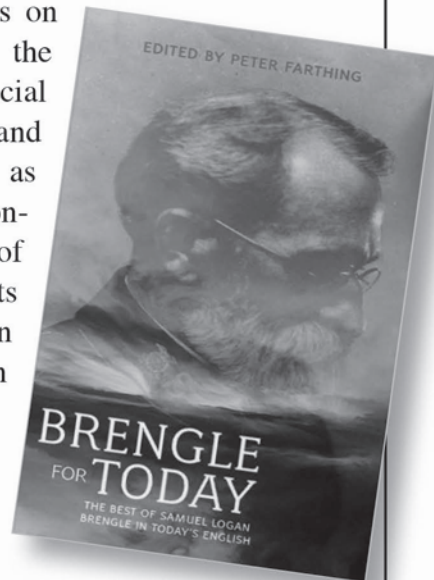
The Army's future does not depend on promises of permanence. It depends on leaders—officer and employee alike—who are willing to say: “I will stay unless the Lord leads me elsewhere.” That posture is covenantal—even when not lifelong. It is not a loophole. It is what obedience looks like in real life.

# *Brengle for Today*

Edited by Peter Farthing

Commissioner Samuel Logan Brengle was The Salvation Army's most influential teacher of holiness and an author of several books on the subject. While serving as the International Spiritual Special Ambassador, he often taught and preached on what he described as the "second blessing" of personal holiness. In this collection of wisdoms, the author re-presents Brengle's original teachings in plain language for the modern reader.

Peter Farthing wrote and co-produced the award-winning documentary *Our People* and the book *1865: The Year that Made The Salvation Army*. He has developed courses for corps and small groups, including courses on holiness and Salvation Army theology. He currently resides in Sydney, Australia.



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# Holy Adventure

## BIBLICAL POINTERS

*Lyell Rader*

In her reflection on reaching sixty, entitled *lots of Candles, Plenty of Cake*, Anna Quindlen writes of her faith:

... The mark, I suppose, of an indelible connection to religious faith is that ability to go deeper, to burrow into the self, to expand spiritual connections and limitations. I'm stuck too close to the surface. Perhaps that is because of my own shortcomings. Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that I was raised in a Church that does not invite its people to go deeper, or to move very far beyond its outward forms (1012:149).

It is timely for us to come apart for a while to explore our own doctrine of "going deeper," to conceive of words and ways to communicate it more invitingly, and to refresh our sense of holy adventure.

Our setting is idyllic. The human landscape, the prospect for mission, is less so. There is widespread spiritual yearning, yet mounting disaffection from the churches; especially among the young, anger at its abuses, offence at its politics, ambivalence toward its message. Two university students encountered John Stott some years ago. They had been reared in Christian homes but had left the church. Did they no longer believe Christianity to be true, he asked. "No," they answered, "that was not the problem." Then what was the problem? "What we want to know," they said, "is not whether Christianity is true, but whether it's relevant" (*Between Two Worlds*, 1982:138).

There is declining biblical literacy. Donald Burke, president of Booth University College in Winnipeg, writes:

Although we affirm Scripture's importance, biblical literacy among

Salvationists (and other Christians) is diminishing rapidly. The Bible plays a decreasing role in most sermons. Sunday school curricula often trivialize scripture in an attempt to be fun or trendy. Bible study groups spend less and less time studying and function more like group therapy sessions. The result is that we can no longer assume shared knowledge of the Bible, even among Christians (*Salvationist*, August, 2011:18).

There is deafness to our antique church-talk, resistance to what Kosuke Koyama called our “teacher complex.” “There was none that could speak to my condition” said the Quaker George Fox.

And there is growing predeliction to tinkering. Robert Wuthnow:

The single word that best describes young adults’ approach to religion and spirituality – indeed life – is tinkering. A tinkerer puts together a life from whatever skills, ideas and resources that are readily at hand” (After *The Baby-Boomers: How Twenty- and Thirty Somethings are Shaping the Future of American Religion*, 2007:13).

We turn in this yeasty time, to four words of our Lord which delineate our doctrine. Along the way, we will highlight particular accents of our Salvationist holiness tradition.

## Come

*As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea – for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people. And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and follow him (Mk 1:16-20).*

The call was measured, personal, and yet harbinger of a wider call to come. “... I, when I am lifted up from the earth,” said Jesus, “will draw all people to myself’ (Jn 12:32).

## *A universal call*

On the Mercy Seats of Sri Lanka, often dulled by tropical damp and heat, is found the same resplendent word: “*Come*—all ye who are weary and heavy laden.” There is another view, of course, that “All men are not created for the same end, but some are fore-ordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation” (John Calvin, quoted in Thomas Oden, *John Wesley’s Scriptural Christianity*,

1994:264). But Salvationists would agree with Frederick Buechner:

The whole purpose of God's slogging around through the muck of history and of our own individual histories is somehow to prod us, jolly us, worry us, cajole us, and if need be, bludgeon us into reaching "mature manhood, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ep 4:13) (*Wishful Thinking: A Seekers ABC*, 1993:26).

### ***A responsible grace***

The word was an invitation. The ball was in their court. Our freedom is never overrun by an imperious grace. That is why we preach for response and let grace do its work. In the end, we are as holy as we want to be.

### ***A transformative power***

The Greek is emphatic. "Come," Jesus said "and I will *make you to become* fishers of men," partners in a conspiracy of goodness, agents for the kingdom of grace.

Wrote Albert Schweitzer of Lambarene:

He comes as One unknown, without a name, as of old, by the lake side he came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same words: "Follow thou me!" and sets us to the tasks which he has to fulfill in our day. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience who He is (*The Quest of the Historical Jesus*).

### **Follow**

*As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother." He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth." Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions (Mk 10:17-22; Mt 19:16- 30; Lk 18:18-30);*

*Then he said to them all, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me” (Lk 9:23; Mt 16:24; Mk 8:34).*

A golden applicant, young, privileged and, by all accounts, good. That is the preoccupation of the story. He seeks the *summum bonum*, the highest good. Jesus, looking at *him*, loved him. What is it that prompts such eagerness. It is all of grace.

### ***Prevenient grace***

Wrote the Victorian poet Matthew Arnold:

But often, in the world’s most crowded streets  
 But often, in the din of strife  
 There rises an unspeakable desire  
 After the knowledge of our buried life:  
 A thirst to spend our fire and restless force  
 A longing to inquire  
 Into the mystery of this heart which beats  
 So wild, so deep in us – to know  
 Whence our lives come and where they go  
 (Matthew Arnold in James Houston, *The Heart’s Desire*, 1992:96).

We may assume grace. God is always “previous.” The 8<sup>th</sup> century monk St. Stephen the Sabaite understood: “Art thou weary, art thou languid/ Art thou sore distressed?/ Come to me, saith one, and coming be at rest.// If I ask him to receive me/ Will he say me nay?/ Not till earth and not till Heaven/ Pass away (SA *Song Book*, 1987:228).

### ***Self Denial***

We have to deal with the “self.” We are by nature, as the ancients said, *incurvatus in se*, curved in upon ourselves. From that crookedness comes all the inventory of our sins. Self exoneration will not help us.

In 2005, Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton conducted a long investigation into the religious lives of American teenagers. They found that 97 percent of teenagers professed some sort of belief in the divine, 71 percent reported feeling either “very” or “somewhat” close to God and the vast majority self-identified as Christian. What they believe is remarkably consistent across different denominations and traditions. The researchers found that the de facto creed of America’s youth has five main premises:

- A God exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.
- God wants people to be good, nice and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
- The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
- God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.
- Good people go to heaven when they die (*Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, 2005:162-163).

No admission of guilt in such views. No cost, no cross, no deliverance. There is a peculiarity in the text: the Greek translated “go” is the command usually used by Mark in healing stories (1:44; 2:11; 5:19,34; 7:29). It points to an infirmity deep in the lad's heart.

Self-exoneration will not do, neither will self-obliteration. Some of our songs can be misread in this way: for example, Thomas Monod's “O the bitter shame and sorrow” which ends successive stanzas: “All of self and none of thee!” “Some of self and some of thee!” “Less of self and more of thee!” “None of self and all of thee” (*SA Song Book*, 1987:548).

Eugene Peterson captures the intent of the Lucan text:

You are not in the driver's seat – I am. Don't run from suffering, embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self. What good would it do to get everything you want and lose you, the real you? (Lk 9:23-25, *Message*).

But how can this be done? In Frederick Buechner's novel, *Godric*, the rough old saint, converted from a dissolute and violent past, reminisces:

Word went forth that there was healing in my hands. Something was in my hands at least and rests there yet though they're all knotted now and stiff like claws. Folk come from miles to have me touch them. Could I but touch the churlishness within myself or kiss old Godric clean! (1980:42).

## Tarry

“I will not leave you orphaned... I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate” (*Jn 14:18,16*). And, see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay [KJV, tarry] here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high” (*Lk 24:49*).

### *Spirit baptism*

It is by Spirit baptism that we become a Christian, we are enfolded into the Church Militant and Triumphant—one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism (Ep 4:4-5). It is the baptism of the *Holy Spirit*, dramatized at Pentecost (see *Handbook of Doctrine*, 2010:203) by which the holy adventure begins. Our companion on the way is the one our Lord called *Comforter* (KJV following Wycliffe, *com-fortis*, Greek, *parakletos*).

### *Deeper cleansing*

Early or late (or repeatedly) on the journey, we may become aware of an incompleteness. Perhaps, from his own experience Will J. Brand wrote:

When from sin's dark hold thy love had won me,  
 And its wounds thy tender hands had healed,  
 As thy blest commands were laid upon me,  
 Growing light my growing need revealed.  
 Thus I sought the path of consecration  
 When to thee, dear Lord, my vows were given;  
 And the joy which came with full salvation  
 Winged my feet and filled my heart with Heaven  
 (*SA Song Book*, 1987:534).

General Paul Rader put it this way:

Salvationists believe that when the love of God evokes the surrender of the soul's inner citadel to the lordship of Christ, there is a crisis of inner cleansing, a radical reordering of the person's vital priorities in terms of his or her new identity in Christ. The result is a continuing hunger for God and his righteousness expressed in a disciplined pursuit of godliness and daily submission to his will (*Historical Dictionary of The Salvation Army*, 2006:136).

There is an inner cleansing, a resetting of the default of the soul to love of God and neighbor. There is a disciplined, continuing pursuit of godliness in what Wesley called acts of piety and acts of mercy. Withal, there is a many-colored grace (I Pe 4:10), well timed and fitting (He 4:16).

Commissioner Samuel Logan Brengle's spiritual encounter has become a classic template for many Salvationists:

It was a heaven of love that came into my heart. My soul melted like wax before fire. I sobbed and sobbed. I loathed myself... Every ambition for

self was now gone. I walked out over Boston Common... weeping for joy and praising God... It seemed my heart would break with love... (In John Larsson, *Saying Yes to life*, 2007:65).

As a young Captain, John Larsson (later General) sought a similar experience with officer friends as mentors. “Despite their long and intense pounding of the doors of heaven on my behalf, and my taking hold of every ounce of faith of which I was capable, the breakthrough I yearned for did not come,” he later wrote.

I have ... had to conclude that not all believers will experience such breakthroughs of the Spirit as vividly as Samuel Brengle did that Tuesday morning. The wonder and glory of never-to-be-forgotten *felt* inpourings of the Spirit are not given to all of God’s children. Some are called to experience the presence and power of the Spirit in less intense ways. Those ways may not be as spectacular, but they are just as real and just as valid. For it is the same Spirit that is at work within – enriching, removing imperfections and adorning us with virtues. In accepting that truth, I myself have found rest from the yearnings within. It is a deep, abiding and satisfying rest (99).

let us be frank that we are easily duped by the emphasis of our culture upon technique, experiences and speed which can lead us to deny or disdain the walking pace of spiritual transformation.

The stress of our culture upon ambition and competition may lead us to conceive of a two-tier salvation, plaudits and senior status going to the elite “entirely sanctified.” Eugene Peterson has a tempering word in the introduction to his book (with Marva Dawn), *The Unnecessary Pastor: Rediscovering the Call*

Books have covers, which give a false sense of completeness. It’s all there, laid out nice and tidy for you. But life is not that way. Neither ministry nor spirituality is that way. I’m not like that, and neither is Marva. life is full of starts and stops, blind alleys, disappointing detours, and bad guesses. Eventually, by God’s grace we find our way into acts of obedience, acts of praise. But along the way we spend considerable time extricating ourselves from brambles and scratching our heads You mustn’t suppose that Marva and I are working at a higher level than you are. There are no higher levels in the life of Christ – there is simply following Jesus and obeying him, day after day, struggling with sin and sinners, and being surprised by grace and resurrection (2000:vii).

### ***Disciplined pursuit***

God is not finished with us yet. The perfection language of the New Testament

(Mt 5:48; Co 3:14; He 6:1, etc.) refers, as Thomas Oden points out, to a “dynamic perfecting grace” rather than “static perfection.”

The key idea is not that of getting to a fixed state of perfection in a motionless sense – a very un-Wesleyan notion, but rather being in a continuing process of growth in grace... The process of receiving sanctifying grace... is never capturable as a still photograph, but must be a history that can be conceived only narratively and lived out personally” (*John Wesley’s Scriptural Christianity*, 1994:322).

Let us admit the adventure can grow old. The spiritual, wrote Paul Tournier, consists only in a series of new birth. “There must be new flowerings, new prophets, new adventures – always new adventures – if the heart of man, albeit in fits and starts, is to go on beating (*The Adventure of living*, 1965:39).

God is patiently at work. Let us be patient with him. Wrote George MacDonald: Make me all patience and all diligence;

Patience, that thou mayst have thy time with me;

Diligence, that I waste not thy expense

In sending out to bring me home to thee.

What though thy work in me transcends my sense –

Too fine, too high, for me to understand –

I hope entirely. On, Lord, with thy labor grand

(*Diary of an Old Soul*, 1994:43).

## Go

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations... (Mt 28:19).

“Father... I have made your name known to those whom you gave me. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world...” (Jn 17:1,17-18).

Jesus said to them again... “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me so send I you. When he had said this he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit”” (Jn 20:21-22).

The adventure entails beliefs, spiritual practices and a dedicated lifestyle. Our Lord sets out a lifestyle in this text: sent as he was sent.

Christian Smith followed up on his study of teenagers with a similar project focusing on the spiritual lives of American twentysomethings. He found this:

The majority of those interviewed stated... that nobody has any natural or general responsibility or obligation to help other people. Most of those

interviewed said that it is nice if people help others, but that nobody has to. Even when pressed – What about victims of natural disaster or political oppression? What about helpless people who are not responsible for their poverty or disabilities? What about famines and floods and tsunamis? – No, they replied. If someone wants to help, then good for that person. But nobody has to (Christian Smith and Patricia Snell, *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults*, 2009, quoted in Ross Douthat, *Bad Religion: How We Became a Nation of Heretics*, 2012:235).

Our Lord is on a different page. Chick Yuill tells of attending a Christian rock concert, young people swaying and dancing to a deafening pulse. At the end, the house lights went down, the lead singer gave his challenge and the altar call began: “So, guys, come and get your sins forgiven, become mates with God, and get to go to the big party in heaven. If you’re up for that, raise your hand and we’ll pray for you.” Seventy or eighty did so and were directed to a counseling room. But Yuill was troubled.

I just went home and sat up late into the night reflecting on what a poor job my own generation had done in passing on the gospel to a group of gifted and sincere rock musician evangelists. For they were, after all, simply repeating in the idiom of their generation a formula that has been rehearsed many times over many years in more formal jargon of church-speak. It’s a formula that has reduced the gospel to little more than a guaranteed safe passage to heaven... But to stop there misses the point of it all. When we acknowledge Jesus as Saviour and Lord we are doing much more than obtained a passport into heaven. We are enlisting in a project that will involve us in working to bring the rule of God to every situation, a project which aims at nothing less than the renewal of the creation... (*Moving in the Right Circles*, 2011:15).

This then is the outline of the holy adventure—coming, following, tarrying, going – the legacy we incarnate and pass to our children.

### **Refreshment for the Journey**

Claiborne, Shane, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, Enuma Okoro. *Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals*. Zondervan, 2010.

Foster, Richard J. *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. Harper San Francisco, 1998.

Taylor, Barbara Brown. *An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith*. Harper One, 2009.

Weatherhead, Leslie. *A Private House of Prayer*. Hodder & Stoughton, 1958

# *Easter People*

By Phil Needham

*Easter People* continues the story of Jesus, guiding readers through meditations representing the transformative event of Jesus' resurrection (Easter Sunday) and what it meant for the church and the world. Each daily reflection spans the season of Eastertide, continuing the story of a resurrected Jesus through Pentecost week.

Phil Needham and his wife Keitha are retired officers living in the Atlanta area. They share a vision of The Salvation Army as a missional people of God who are called by Christ to follow Him into the world, be His credible disciples, and share His compassion with the excluded. Phil is also the author of *Community in Mission, He Who Laughed First: Delighting in a Holy God, When God Becomes Small*, and *Following Rabbi Jesus: The Christian's Forgotten Calling*. *Easter People* is the third in the series of books of meditations based on the Christian Year.



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# Book Review

Robert F. Darden and Stephen M. Newby. *Soon and Very Soon: The Transformative Music and Ministry of Andrae Crouch*. Oxford University Press, 2025. 424 pages.

Reviewed by Ronald W. Holz, Emeritus Professor of Music, Asbury University, Wilmore, KY.

Andrae Crouch may be considered the primary guiding light in the development of Christian “Praise & Worship” as well as what became known as CCM, ‘contemporary Christian music.’ A very gifted song writer, performer (voice and keyboards), and evangelist, Crouch is rightfully heralded among the finest artists of his era, a career that stretched nearly 50 years, broadly speaking 1960 - 2010 (Crouch died in 2015). His acclaimed songs are now in many denominational hymnals, our own *Salvation Army Songbook* containing his ever-popular *Bless His Holy Name*.

In this detailed, insightful study of Crouch, both as a performer and creative artist, Darden and Newby have provided well-documented commentary and analysis of Crouch, his music, and his ministry. They provide a good overview of his full, productive life. The strengths of the study come in a very thorough review of Crouch’s career and compositional output. However, a cautionary note must be raised concerning what can be deemed as a somewhat pedantic approach. For example, the authors provide a tune-by-tune discussion on every vinyl disc produced by Crouch and his associates. I found I gained the most insight into Crouch by reading their discussions of both the discs and the musical ministry in smaller batches, rather than in large chunks.

The book follows Crouch’s career in primarily chronological fashion, from his early days as a rising talent, through his fine work in the group Andrae Crouch

and the Disciples, to his final solo career. The authors blend ministry and touring with the recorded albums, the latter providing good summaries of what was being achieved, admired, and imitated by other musicians. The coverage is borderline encyclopedic, and Crouch fans will be particularly drawn in.

While the musical discussion is generally not too technical, readers may find some of the shared harmonic analysis daunting. For example, in the analysis of the song “Oh I Need Him” on the *Soulfully* disc, the authors state what could be challenging to some readers: “The song’s common chord progression (I—iii—vi—vi—I—II7—ii—V11—I) are reminiscent of the power ballads of the 1970s” (p. 140). Nevertheless, there is not, generally speaking, a haze of musicological jargon that would put off the ‘untrained’ ear or musical mind.

Likewise, while Crouch’s lyrics are given attention, they are rarely quoted or discussed in detail, unlike the review of musical and stylistic content. I would have preferred much more insight into Crouch’s lyrics, rather than just a running commentary, song-by-song, of the primary musical elements. I believe Crouch was a savvy lyricist, gifted with theological insight that he was able to make palatable to the widest audiences of his day. Even very well-known Crouch hits like *To God Be the Glory (My Tribute)*, the title hit *Soon and Very Soon, Through It All*, and *Bless His Holy Name* could have fared better with more analysis of their texts, side by side with the authors’ fine stylistic commentary on primarily musical grounds.

Crouch’s sincere, dynamic ministry and evangelistic posture throughout his musical life is well covered. We not only receive a fine overview of his development as a Christian artist, the reader is provided very fine insight into the general “California” scene in the early 1960s in which Crouch emerged and what followed across the nation, and then the world. Plus, the authors carefully connect Crouch to his Pentecostal-Charismatic origins in his father’s ministry, particularly in the Church of God in Christ [COGIC].

What I particularly appreciated throughout were the authors’ fair, balanced treatment of Crouch’s emergence as world-famous musical figure, a true leader in whatever area he was engaged, in addition to the so-called Christian rock scene (TV appearances on shows like *Saturday Night Live*, film scores or songs used on films, guest artist with other ‘name’ musicians of the day, Grammy Awards and nominations). He maintained his posture as a fervent evangelist, even when fame launched him into the limelight, and at the top of the contemporary music scene, Christian or otherwise. The book also does not stint on racial aspects, dealing fairly with Crouch’s appeal, and sometimes ambivalent acceptance, in both Black

and white subcultures, religious or otherwise. This was fascinating reading. His declining years, due to health issues, are also given clear treatment, including even his one controversial ‘run-in’ with the law on a drug charge that was not ultimately proven, though it did cause some trouble for him, especially among more conservative circles, African-American and Anglo.

Crouch’s colleagues and collaborators are given ample coverage, with many primary source quotes from interviews and letters lending credibility and strength to the emerging portrait of Crouch. He had many fine associates and friends who contributed significantly to his success. Chief among these was Bill Maxwell, a master in handling the recording sessions, touring, and a host of details, and no mean drummer, either. There was such talent gathered around Crouch, and he always prominently featured these fine musicians, including my favorites, Billy Thedford and Fletch Wiley. They not only performed well, but came alongside Crouch in his arranging and musical settings. Great singers were drawn into his circle, none more important than his twin sister, Sandra, who joined him in church ministry in his final days.

The modern internet can help us recover much of Crouch’s artistry when his many albums are no longer commercially available. YouTube and other platforms contain a wide sample of his performances throughout his career. A patient search will yield much.

The authors provided extensive footnotes to support their on-going arguments. There is also a good, helpful array of photos. The reader is taken on a far-flung journey across the world with Crouch and his fellow musicians, and one learns so much about the details of their musical collaboration, friendship, and shared ministry of a life so well given to the cause of Christ. Ultimately, we learn about Crouch himself, the writers providing an excellent survey of this fascinating man and his achievements. The adjective provided in the book’s title—*transformative*—is exactly correct.

# *The Sanctified Salvationist Showman*

By Eddie Hobgood

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

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



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# Book Review

Hummel, Daniel G. *The Rise and Fall of Dispensationalism: How the Evangelical Battle Over the End Times Shaped a Nation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2023. 382 pages (including glossary, bibliographic essay, and index).

Reviewed by Amy Reardon, Divisional Secretary for San Diego County, The Salvation Army, San Diego, CA.

*The Rise and Fall of Dispensationalism* is a history of the development of the doctrine of dispensationalism in the United States. As Hummel delineates, once-dominant dispensationalist understanding of end-times prophecy has been on the decline in seminaries and intellectual circles, but the average adult in the pew is often unaware that other interpretations exist, especially if that adult was born in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Salvation Army has not committed itself to a specific eschatological theory. While the *Handbook of Doctrine* isn't completely unbiased on all end-times matters, it has this to say: "The differing interpretations suggest that the Bible leaves us with the mystery of God and his purposes for us, which are finally beyond speculation. Our best response is to be silent before the mystery, confident in the good purposes of a loving God and in the redemption offered in Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, in my lifetime as a Salvationist I have not heard the end times preached or taught a great deal within our corps. But I think it would be an overstatement to say that we have remained "silent before the mystery." I was eager to read and review *The Rise and Fall of Dispensationalism* because it is my hope to draw attention to the fact that dispensationalism should not automatically be assumed the one true biblical understanding of the end times. And as we Salvationists do

not have a stated eschatological doctrine, it would be wise to tamp down dogma when approaching the subject and leave room for “mystery.”

Hummel’s book will help Salvationists consider what they have been taught and from whence it came. He outlines how dispensationalism – originally called premillennialism – grew, staggered, morphed, resurged, and so on, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century until today. The reader may be tempted to jump to the last portion of the book because some of the early history seems remote. But Hummel’s careful tracing of thought development aides us in considering what is ‘wheat’ and what might be ‘chaff.’

This is a history book, but it is a history of eschatological thought. A prior understanding of this theology seemed to be assumed at some level. There was a surprisingly brief glossary at the end, which I wish had been more extensive. Though I didn’t think of myself as a novice on this subject, I found myself googling certain terms to get a more complete understanding.

The book is divided into three sections: The New Premillennialists (1830-1900), The Dispensationalists (1900-1960), and The Pop Dispensationalists (1960-2020). In 1928, “premillennialists” were given the moniker “dispensationalists” by Philip Mauro – previously an influential teacher of the doctrine who abandoned the teaching and intended the new name to be pejorative.<sup>2</sup> The three critical tenets of the doctrine are:

1. The story of humanity is divided into dispensations – periods of time in which God is doing specific things with humankind. Usually it is thought that there are seven dispensations; we live in the sixth.
2. The Bible can only be interpreted literally, from the first word to the last. Those who find metaphor, allegory, etc. are denying the inerrancy of Scripture.
3. The Church and Israel are forever separate, and there are prophecies in the Old Testament that are yet to be fulfilled for Israel.<sup>3</sup>

As the doctrine changed shape over time, other points were crystalized, such as: the rapture is imminent and guarantees a means of escape for God’s people; the kingdom of God only exists in the future when Christ returns (in other words, Christ did not inaugurate the Kingdom when he came to earth, nor did the Holy Spirit when he descended in Acts); charismatic gifts only existed in the first days of the Church. Opponents of dispensationalism accused them of preaching an easy grace, where salvation could be achieved by mentally acknowledging Jesus Christ without repenting from sin and allowing Christ lordship over one’s life. They were

also accused of doing little for humanity besides preaching salvation. Because they did not believe the Kingdom would be initiated until Christ returned, many of them did not see any point in trying to correct societal ills – such as racism - in the meantime.

There are many famous names throughout history that are part of the story of dispensationalism. From John Nelson Darby to Dwight Moody to Cyrus Scofield and his famous reference Bible, the doctrine grew. Initially it spread through individual preachers who drew large crowds, then conferences and informal, non-denominational influence. Eventually schools were developed, such Biola (Bible Institute of Los Angeles), and then seminaries. The most influential scholastic voice of the doctrine in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was Dallas Theological Seminary, which nurtured many top dispensationalist theologians for many years. But eventually, the theology was co-opted by those who were not as interested in biblical interpretation as they were in storytelling. The third portion of the book tells this part of the story.

“Scholastic dispensationalism” diminished as “pop dispensationalism” gained a foothold. The pop variety shed some of what had been key points and focused on what was more sensational. It capitalized on the rapture. It expanded thought on things like the antichrist, the mark of the beast, the tribulation and the role of the Middle East. This thought line prompted Zionism and prophetic interpretation of world events as they unfolded. These ideas became so prevalent in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that many Christians – Salvationists included – are unaware that there are other ways to interpret the prophecies found in Daniel and Revelation.

In this section of the book we find names of people we’ve heard on the radio or seen on television, or whose books we’ve read - people who have shaped the way we have understood the end times. With Hummel’s guidance, we can see straight lines of theological thought as well as aberrations. It was interesting to read, for example, how Billy Graham’s urgency for salvation was rooted in the dispensational idea that the rapture was imminent, yet he embraced the neo-evangelical (non-dispensational) teaching that the Kingdom of God was “already, but not yet.”

The rapture has captured the imagination of Christian novelists and movie makers (*Left Behind*, for example). But it is also a prominent theme in secular media. Some secular movies have made actual reference to the rapture, but there are other dystopian themes that are based on the rapture (*Avengers: Infinity War* has an event known as the “snapture”) and on Armageddon. Hummel is enlightening as he draws attention to the impact of pop dispensationalism on so many aspects of our culture.

Does dispensationalism, then, “fall” in the end? Hummel says that “the project

of dispensationalism was too big, too sustained, and too consequential to have a clean ending” (341). What really did meet its demise, he asserts, was the scholastic approach to the doctrine. Most all seminaries that supported it eventually withdrew from it. The doctrine became watered down by its media version in so many ways: Christian novels, teachings, and music, but also a secular penchant for the rollicking story that can be told based on a rapture-like event.

It is my hope that Salvationists will take the time to read this excellent book in order to consider that what always seemed straight biblical truth may have been conflated by people, institutions and media throughout history. Because eschatology has varied legitimate interpretations, it is not an arena where we should speak emphatically. Let us be humble before the word of God and understand that it is often, indeed, mysterious.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine* (London: Salvation Books, 2010), 242.

<sup>2</sup> There were old premillennialists, too – but they are not a major part of this historical telling.

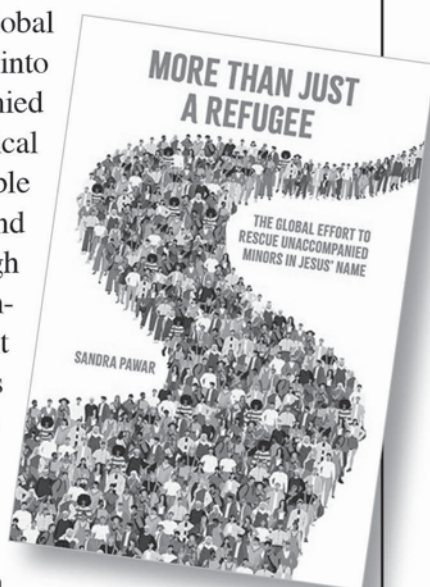
<sup>3</sup> This is a critical part of dispensationalism, yet I felt it was under-explained in the text.

# *More Than Just A Refugee*

By Sandra Pawar

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

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



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# Book Review

Licona, Michael R. *Jesus Contradicted: Why The Gospels Tell The Same Story Differently*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2024. 266 pages.

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

Many Christians, and particularly those that read the Bible, will know that the Gospels of the New Testament contain some contradictions between them. The book *Jesus Contradicted*, written by Michael R. Licona, came about because of a personal crisis of faith caused by this very issue. Typically, there are three main responses by Christians to these inconsistencies. The first is to ignore them. The second is to acknowledge them but gloss over them in order to keep the peace. The third is to force the texts to agree even when they don't (11). Unfortunately, despite the attempt of these approaches to "save" God's name, they only end up making God look worse and Christians look guilty (12). In this book, the author provides a fourth option of response, which is to examine ancient biographies and cultural norms in order to understand the genre and purpose of the four Gospels that are included in our Bible today.

An important finding of Licona's research into ancient biography, the genre of literature to which he argues the Gospels belong, is that ancient biography was not held to the same standard of accuracy that modern biography is today. In fact, it was not only acceptable but recommended, and even expected, that authors would build on other sources and supplement with additional information (48), as well as intentionally rephrase what was already written (86), and transfer the actions of one person to another person or even to another place (119). Some may argue that most of the people to whom we attribute authorship of the Gospels would not

have been very literate, or at least not in Greek. However, we learn in chapter 3 that, most likely, the authors of the Gospels would have used an amanuensis, or secretary, to write for them. These secretaries, as individuals educated in writing and comfortable in the Greek language, would have been familiar with the literary techniques of that day used to craft ancient biography (56). It is also important to note that ancient biography possessed a different purpose than does modern biography. We look for accuracy in the details, checking dates and place names and chronology, whereas the purpose of ancient biographers was to put the character of their subject on display through writing about their words and actions. Paraphrasing or transferal of words and actions to another person were not considered untruthful, but rather an essential of their art (57).

This information helps evangelical Christians to understand why we see inconsistencies between the Gospel accounts, although as the author acknowledges, this will still leave many uncomfortable. Can we trust what Scripture says if it doesn't record history the exact way that it happened? This leads into chapters 11 and 12, which encourage us to take a look at our views on the nature of the divine inspiration of Scripture and the inerrancy of Scripture. Most evangelical Christians would deny a view that Scripture was divinely dictated word for word to its human authors, but still hold a traditional view of the inerrancy of the Bible, meaning that in its original form it was without any errors (195). Licona advocates for a view that interprets divine inspiration (or God-breathed, *theopneustos*), to mean that Scripture comes from God in a special way (183). His view of the nature of divine inspiration allows for human error even in the original Scriptures, and leads to what he calls "a commitment to the *infallibility* and *authority* of Scripture". This means that although there may be grammatical errors and erroneous details, Scripture as the Word of God will not fail in its purpose, which is to make God known to His people. It also means that it has a unique authority in the lives of Christians (206). Too often have well-meaning Christians attempted to force Scripture into a box that not even God intended for it to fit in. It is important to note that while we do believe Scripture to be God-breathed and authoritative, it is God that is to be worshipped, and not the Bible (216).

Licona presents important information from his research in *Jesus Contradicted* that it would be beneficial for all evangelical Christians to consider as they evaluate their own views about Scripture and particularly the Gospels, which are so often targeted by non-Christians wanting to poke holes in the foundations of Christian faith. He is very thorough in examining various aspects of the issue, and he acknowledges

up-front (as well as throughout the book) that this new perspective may make many Christians uncomfortable. It is hard to accept a perspective on divine inspiration and biblical inerrancy that runs contradictory to what has been widely believed and accepted within the Church for so long. Still, the author provides plenty of historical examples and specific citations from Scripture itself to support his claims and expound on his research.

The author does well in accomplishing his objective, which is to provide information to strengthen the faith of the Christian who may face critical attacks about the integrity of Scripture and who may also be experiencing a crisis of faith all of their own. As he mentions multiple times throughout the book, the way we approach Scripture matters. We should never come with preconceived ideas and expect the Bible to fit into our box. Rather, we should come as blank slates and allow Scripture to speak for itself, to form us instead (218). He doesn't demand the reader's acceptance of his personal research and claims, but rather encourages the reader's openness to Scripture directly and freedom from views of Scripture imposed on them by other people.

As aforementioned, the information presented by Licona in *Jesus Contradicted* may be difficult for many evangelical Christians to swallow, because it requires reframing one's thinking about divine inspiration and biblical inerrancy. However, if the end result is to strengthen one's faith and change the Christian's position from one of defense to one of a solid confidence in the Bible, these considerations are certainly worth it.

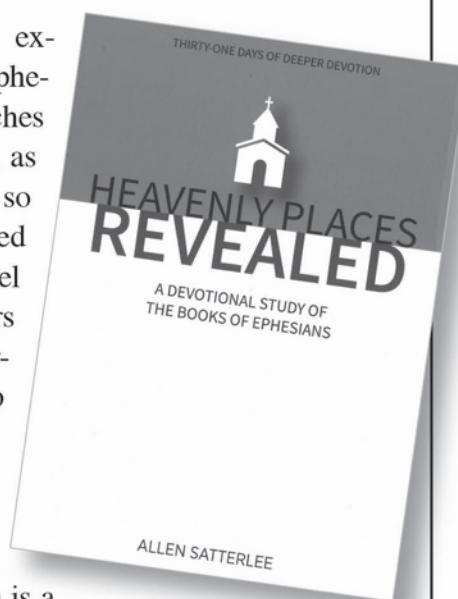
Licona's research extends well beyond the parameters of this book and he has expounded further on certain aspects of this topic in his other works, which are listed in the bibliography at the end of the book. There are also a general index and Scripture index that may be helpful as additional resources to the reader.

# *Heavenly Places Revealed*

By Allen Satterlee

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

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



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# Book Review

Schreiner, Patrick. *The Transfiguration of Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Reading*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2024. 183 pages.

Reviewed by Young Sung Kim, Divisional Candidates' Secretary for  
SWONEKY Division, The Salvation Army, Cincinnati, OH.

Patrick Schreiner's *The Transfiguration of Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Reading* is a significant contribution to New Testament scholarship, restoring attention to a Gospel event often overlooked in Western Christology. He convincingly argues that the transfiguration—Christ's radiant manifestation before Peter, James, and John on the high mountain (Matt. 17:1; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28; cf. 2 Pet. 1:17)—is not a peripheral episode but a theologically pivotal revelation of Christ's identity, mission, and cosmic glory.

Schreiner challenges readers with the provocative question, "Would the story of Jesus be any different if the transfiguration hadn't happened?" (p. 2) and warns that "neglecting the transfiguration puts us in danger of distorting the Christian faith" (p. 146). The transfiguration discloses God's work *ad intra* (in himself) and *ad extra* (outside himself), demonstrating the unity of the Son's Christological ontology and salvific mission, revealing his divinity, eternal preexistence, glorification at the Father's right hand, and historical humanity without distortion.

Schreiner structures his book into five chapters, examining distinct aspects of the transfiguration: its necessity, setting, signs, sayings, and theological implications. In the opening chapter, "The Necessity of the Transfiguration," he explores its theological locus through two contrasting frameworks: "Five Reasons We Neglect the Transfiguration" and "Five Reasons Not to Neglect the Transfiguration." His

argument for attending to the transfiguration establishes the book's foundational claim, rescuing it from marginalization in modern Christology and presenting it as a hinge event in God's redemptive history. Schreiner maintains that "the transfiguration is a key moment in the life of Christ" (p. 18) and "a gateway to Jesus's cross, victory, and exaltation in our theology" (p. 18), articulating a "two-level Christology" uniting Jesus' earthly suffering and heavenly glory in one person.

Chapter two examines the transfiguration's setting: its timing ("six days" / "about eight days") echoing creation and new creation patterns, the mountain evoking Sinai, the three disciples—Peter, James, and John—and the spiritual "ascent" motif of purgation. Schreiner introduces a "hermeneutical grammar" encompassing four interpretive approaches—literal (historical), spiritual (typological), tropological (moral), and anagogical (eschatological)—demonstrating how biblical events function on multiple theological levels.

Chapter three focuses on theophanic marks—the "Glorious Signs": Jesus' shining face and white garments, the bright cloud, and the presence of Moses and Elijah. He introduces a "Trinitarian grammar," showing that these signs point to Jesus' mediatorial role and fulfillment of the Law and Prophets, bridging the Old Covenant and Christ. The "Glorious Signs" reveal Jesus' identity while foreshadowing believers' transformation and future glorification, echoing Ernst Käsemann's assertion (cf. *New Testament Questions of Today*, 1969) that historical-critical exegesis must remain integrally connected to theology, as Christ rules creation with sovereign authority. Schreiner grounds his analysis in the Synoptic narratives through careful historical and textual study, consistently highlighting their broader theological significance.

Chapter four forms the theological center of Schreiner's argument, developing a "Christological grammar" grounded in the "Chalcedonian definition" (which affirms Christ's dual nature as fully God and fully human) and in the Synoptic Gospels' account of the Father's declaration at the transfiguration: "This is my beloved Son...listen to him" (Matt. 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35). Schreiner emphasizes that the Father's pronouncement, "This is my beloved Son," both confirms Jesus' unique eternal Sonship and corrects Peter's failure to grasp the singularity of Jesus' identity and the necessity of his messianic suffering. He rightly argues that Peter misunderstood Jesus' ontologically exclusive and superior status in relation to Moses and Elijah, as affirmed by the Father's declaration that Jesus alone is God's "beloved Son." Although Peter had confessed Jesus as the Messiah, he had not fully acknowledged Jesus' exclusive ontological identity, which reflects his eternal relationship to the Father. Schreiner stresses the biblical affirmation that Jesus is

“not a triumvirate of equals with Moses and Elijah” (p. 101) and is the new Prophet and Mediator whose salvific mission necessarily includes suffering on the cross.

Peter’s “blunder,” Schreiner observes, resonates with Martin Luther’s distinction between the theology of glory (*theologia gloriae*) and the theology of the cross (*theologia crucis*), revealing the tension between human expectations of triumph and God’s redemptive purpose through suffering. Schreiner emphasizes that the transfiguration unveils Christ’s glory while preparing the disciples to embrace the paradox of a suffering yet reigning Messiah, shaping discipleship and pointing to believers’ participation in God’s nature and the hope of future union with Him.

Schreiner demonstrates that the transfiguration is not merely symbolic but a dynamic, declarative revelation with enduring spiritual significance. Salvation extends beyond forensic justification, encompassing transformative participation in God’s nature and pointing toward deification as an essential dimension of God’s redemptive work. The transfiguration thus reveals not only Jesus’ salvific glory and double Sonship but also the believer’s future destiny of union with God.

In the final chapter, “The Transfiguration and Theology,” including the conclusion, “Restoring the Transfiguration,” and the appendix “Light from Light,” Schreiner synthesizes the biblical accounts to illuminate theological themes across salvation history—from creation, incarnation, baptism, Gethsemane, the cross, resurrection, and ascension, to the *Parousia* and new creation.

Schreiner reinforces his thesis that the transfiguration reveals Jesus’ double Sonship, manifesting both epiphany (Jesus as God) and apotheosis (Jesus as man), emphasizing his cosmic preexistence. Schreiner highlights formational and eschatological implications, calling readers to reorient ecclesial practice, theological imagination, and spiritual formation around Christ’s revealed glory and the promised transformation of the new creation. As Schreiner declares, “His transfiguration is not only about his transformation; it is about our transformation and the transfiguration of the cosmos” (p. 151).

Several further strengths merit attention. First, Schreiner’s critique of theological “forgetfulness” regarding the transfiguration in modern Western Christology serves as a corrective recovery of Christ’s eternal identity and redemptive mission, emphasizing Jesus’ double Sonship: preexistent, messianic, and suffering Savior revealed in cosmic glory.

Second, while Schreiner argues that the transfiguration reveals the unity of Jesus’ eternal identity and mission, a constructive question arises from feminist theology: Does his interpretation address the ontological concern of Jesus’ maleness, as posed by Rosemary Radford Ruether: “Can a male Savior save women?” (cf. *Sexism and*

*God-Talk*, 1983), highlighting concerns that traditional, male-oriented interpretations of Christology—shaped by patriarchal structures—may inadequately represent women. Schreiner does not directly engage this issue, yet the transfiguration opens space for reflection. Jesus’ glorified humanity transcends the particularities of his historically male body without diminishing his full humanity. Jesus’ maleness reflects functional ontology, indicating his incarnate role in salvation history rather than limiting his universal and transformative salvific reach. The transfiguration thus reveals not the exaltation of maleness but the future dignity and transformation of all human bodies, anticipating redeemed humanity’s shared equally by women and men. Schreiner’s analysis could be enriched by explicitly acknowledging these inclusive implications, affirming the universality of salvation while maintaining the integrity of Christ’s incarnate mission.

Third, the interpretive tension between history, theology, and contemporary meaning has shaped Christian exegesis from the patristic era to the present. Schreiner’s engagement with patristic insights, along with his frequent references to their writings, deepens the reader’s understanding of the transfiguration as simultaneously historical, mystical, and eschatological, effectively combining exegetical analysis with theological interpretation to illuminate the biblical message. Gregory of Nyssa’s distinction between *historia* and *theōria* exemplifies this. In *The Life of Moses*, Gregory highlights two complementary dimensions: *historia*, the concrete historical events forming faith’s foundation, and *theōria*, contemplative participation in divine reality that those events enable. Moses’ journey to Canaan (*historia*) serves as a pathway to mystical vision and union with God (*theōria*), understood as ἐπέκτασις (*epektasis*)—the soul’s “perpetual spiritual ascent” (p. 127)—without conflating historical and spiritual dimensions. Schreiner’s synthesis demonstrates Jesus’ double Sonship, integrating his historical humanity with divine glory.

Considering pastoral implications for Wesleyan spiritual formation, Schreiner’s integration of exegesis with theological reflection aligns with the Wesleyan emphasis on holistic transformation as growth in God’s holy love through grace, described as *entire sanctification* or *Christian perfection*. He locates the source of this transforming holiness in the glorified Christ, who reveals both his divine ontology as “the radiance of God’s glory (the eternal Son)” and “the exact imprint of God’s nature” (Heb. 1:3), and his cosmic messianic identity as the exalted Son at the Father’s right hand (cf. 2 Pet. 1:17; p. 113). Apostolic and patristic witnesses interpreted the transfiguration as confirmation of Jesus’ eternal Sonship and a foretaste of believers’ eschatological glory.

However, in my opinion, while Schreiner compellingly presents the transfiguration as a “mountaintop” event in Christ’s life with redemptive-historical significance, his treatment is somewhat limited regarding the ontological, soteriological, and vocational role of the Holy Spirit within the broader Trinitarian framework. The Spirit’s cooperative work in manifesting Christ’s glory—together with the Father and the Son, and in relation to the Spirit’s distinct personhood, as emphasized by the Eastern Church Fathers—remains underexplored. Addressing this could further enrich the theological and pastoral implications of the transfiguration for Christian formation and Trinitarian spirituality.

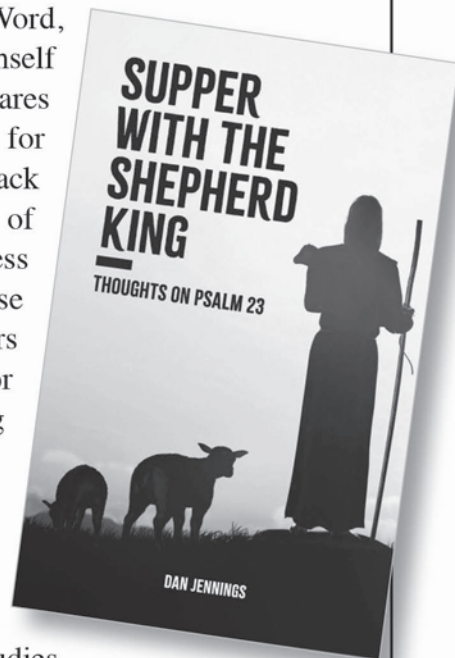
In conclusion, Patrick Schreiner’s *The Transfiguration of Christ* is a timely and enduring corrective to the neglect of this pivotal Gospel event, offered with careful exegetical and biblical-theological depth. He refocuses attention on Christology, soteriology, and the hope of believers in Christ’s double Sonship. Schreiner invites readers to ascend the mountain with the disciples, behold Christ’s unveiled glory, and descend—carrying the cross, following the suffering Messiah, and living in hope of the world to come—anticipating the glorified Christ at the Father’s right hand, in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

# *Supper with the Shepherd King*

By Dan Jennings

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

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



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# Book Review

Nicholson, Suzanne, ed., *Cooperating with the Holy Spirit: Theological and Practical Reflections on the Asbury Outpouring*. Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 2025. 272 pages.

Reviewed by Stephen Seamands, Emeritus Professor of Christian Doctrine,  
Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY.

On February 8, 2023, the regularly scheduled chapel service in Hughes Auditorium on the campus of Asbury University in Wilmore, Kentucky, didn't conclude in the usual fifty minutes. Instead, it continued for the next sixteen days! During that time, as the Holy Spirit was poured out, the palpable, unmistakable sense of God's presence was manifest in profound, life-changing ways. And in the extended times of praise and singing, those gathered there experienced worship--sublime and heavenly—unlike anything they had ever known before.

Within a few days the whole world was aware that something unusual was happening, as news of what was now being labeled the “Asbury Outpouring” spread like wildfire on social media. Before it was over, more than fifty thousand people from across the world had flocked to the small town in central Kentucky to experience firsthand what was taking place. In addition, there had been 285 million hits related to the Outpouring across various social media platforms.

Of the approximately half dozen books that have already been published about the Asbury Outpouring, *Cooperating with the Holy Spirit* is undoubtedly the most ranging and comprehensive. Written by nearly two dozen faculty and staff of the Asbury Community who witnessed the events firsthand, it is intentionally

collaborative, with many diverse voices, stories and writing styles. The result is an account of the Asbury Outpouring which is not only extremely informative but also truly inspiring.

The eighteen chapters of the book fall into three sections. The first simply attempts to tell the story of *what* happened during the Outpouring from various and differing perspectives. These include stirrings of the Spirit on the Asbury campus and the Wilmore community prior to the Outpouring; what occurred during the first few days when mostly Asbury students and local residents filled Hughes Auditorium; how the focus shifted to welcoming outsiders as the world began to show up in Wilmore; the unique multicultural, multiethnic dimensions of the Outpouring; the serendipitous, divinely orchestrated prayer encounters which happened during the Outpouring, and the way Asbury Theological Seminary along with several local churches opened their doors when there was simply not enough space to seat everyone in Hughes.

The second section contains foundational biblical, historical and theological reflections on revival and considers *why* God sometimes appears among his people in extraordinary ways, such as the Asbury Outpouring. These chapters demonstrate that such happenings are in keeping with scriptural understandings of how God's presence is sometimes experienced. They are also in accord with the historical accounts of past evangelical revivals, and are congruent with a biblical theology of sacred space, a Christian understanding of prayer, and a Wesleyan theological framework.

The third section offers practical insights in *how* to address the various challenges that arise during such outpourings of the Spirit. For example, in making spur of the moment decisions, how do you balance institutional policies with being flexible and open to the Spirit? Given the complexities and extensive demands of an Outpouring, how do you organize and conduct worship? How do you manage the myriad of media requests for access and interviews while also protecting students? How do you deal with infrastructure challenges when a town of six thousand is suddenly descended upon by tens of thousands of people? And how do you help students process their profound encounters with God during the Outpouring in the weeks and months that follow, when things have settled down?

In addition to the eighteen chapters included in it, this book would benefit from a concluding summary chapter presenting the major themes or emphases of the Asbury Outpouring such as radical humility, consecration, the holiness of God,

generous hospitality, the centrality of worship and the priority placed upon Gen Z. Reflecting on these themes and their ongoing relevance for us today would have made an already rich volume of essays even richer.

That being said, by offering so many engaging and varied perspectives from first-hand witnesses, this volume enables readers to gain a vivid awareness and sense of what happened during the Asbury Outpouring. It also underscores what those who have deeply studied revivals have come to understand—that they are both truly divine and truly human.

At the heart of all true revivals is the profound, at times palpable awareness of the manifest presence of God. This is what draws people, produces conviction and repentance, causes tears to flow, results in seemingly instant conversions, transformations and healings, releases unspeakable joy and gratitude, and evokes deep awe and worship. In his perceptive reflections on revival, based on what he had witnessed in during the First Great Awakening, Jonathan Edwards maintained that such times are characterized by an intensification and acceleration of the normal work of the Holy Spirit, resulting in a fresh discovery of what he called “the divine excellency of Christ.” The essays in this volume are in keeping with Edwards’ assessment. In reading them one comes away with a deep sense of the divine nature of what occurred during the Asbury Outpouring.

Yet although revivals are truly and uniquely divine, they are also profoundly human events. As the Asbury Outpouring unfolded, there were so many concrete issues that emerged and decisions that had to be made. Protocols had to be established, security and safety concerns addressed. As scores of unrecruited volunteers came forward to help, how were they to be deployed? How would altar prayer ministers be trained and equipped? How would worship teams be chosen and “consecrated”? Media coverage of the Outpouring, especially through social media platforms -- Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok—presented a unique set of challenges. Those in leadership had to make decisions about how to navigate all of that. Then as thousands of people descended on Wilmore, there were problems--from parking to sewage—with which the overwhelmed city and local residents had to contend. This book clearly reveals how truly human the Asbury Outpouring was.

It also reminds us that it is a mistake to set the two aspects—divine and human—over against each other. For surely, the same Holy Spirit who was working, so palpably and powerfully in Hughes auditorium (and the other

overflow venues in Wilmore) where people gathered to worship, pray and seek God, was also working, palpably and powerfully, in superintending and guiding those involved in overseeing the very human dimensions of the Outpouring.

# Book Review

Wright, N. T. and Michael F. Bird. *Jesus and the Powers: Christian Political Witness in an Age of Totalitarian Terror and Dysfunctional Democracies*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2024. 185 pages.

Reviewed by Donald E. Burke, Professor of Biblical Studies, Booth University College, Winnipeg, MB

Prolific authors N. T. (Tom) Wright and Michael F. Bird have joined forces to tackle the urgent yet contentious issue of the relationship between the Church and the state. While this is an issue that has challenged Christians from the earliest days of the Church, it has emerged with great urgency in recent years, particularly as Western democracies have shown signs of stress, authoritarianism has threatened, and Christians have aligned themselves with particular political leaders and causes. In this context Wright and Bird ask, How should Christians relate to their governments?

One of the strengths of this book is the way in which the authors ground their discussion in a consideration of the biblical and theological foundations of the church/state relationship. This task occupies the first five chapters of the book. Then in chapters six through eight the authors draw out the implications of their findings for the present context in which democracies are fracturing, political discourse is polarized, and totalitarianism looms.

Foundational to the book is the authors' assertion that the ultimate purpose of God in the world is the establishment of God's Kingdom and the renewal of creation, a viewpoint that Wright, especially, has espoused in many of his earlier scholarly works. While the Kingdom of God has been inaugurated with the resurrection

of Jesus the Messiah and his enthronement as Lord, the full establishment of the Kingdom of God, the resurrection of the followers of Jesus, and the renewal of creation await the fulness of time and, importantly, is the work of God (and not our responsibility). The vocation of the Church is not to *build* the Kingdom itself but rather to *build for* the Kingdom. According to the authors this means that the Church, in its actions and values, is called to act in ways that anticipate the Kingdom, recognizing that the Kingdom has been inaugurated but not yet fully established. Christians are to build for the Kingdom, living out its values with the conviction that the establishment of the Kingdom and the renewal of creation are God's ultimate goal for the world that should guide their decision-making. Further, since according to Wright and Bird humankind was created in the image of God and therefore has a vocation to work for the flourishing of the world and to build for the Kingdom of God, withdrawal from the world and its governance is not an option for Christians.

Human government has been established for the ordering of life and as a means of building for the Kingdom of God. Therefore, according to Wright and Bird, Christianity has always had a political dimension. For example, the early Christian confession that "Jesus is Lord" presented a clear challenge to the Roman claim that "Caesar is Lord" and asserted the sovereignty of God over the world—a sovereignty that will be established fully in the future. But in the present, with the Kingdom inaugurated but not yet fully established, the relationship between the church and the state is both complex and ambiguous. Historically, at times the Church has succumbed to the temptations of temporal power and compromised its vocation to build for the Kingdom while at other times it rightly has been drawn into the struggle against idolatrous claims made by the state and its leaders. The challenge for the Church is to navigate through these complexities as it builds for the Kingdom of God.

After laying this foundation, Wright and Bird devote their final three chapters to providing specific guidance to Christians on practical matters of Christian engagement and involvement with government. The authors provide an evenhanded discussion of contentious issues. For example, while acknowledging that the first instinct of Christians is to obey governmental authorities, they argue that when governing authorities make idolatrous claims to power, Christians should oppose those governmental figures and even the state itself. In a controversial statement, they assert that in the most extreme cases, even "uncivil disobedience" (that is, violent opposition) against the state may be warranted (pp. 119-121).

On the one hand, the authors oppose Communism, Christian Nationalism, and what they term “civic totalitarianism” by which they mean a soft authoritarianism that lurks under the guise of being progressive. Each of these “isms” espouses a dangerous ideology that makes totalizing, idolatrous claims that run counter to the ultimate sovereign rule of God. On the other hand, Wright and Bird advocate for liberal democracy as the form of government that has the greatest potential to build for the Kingdom. They conclude that, “Liberal democracy is ‘liberal’ in the sense that it regards civic freedoms as an inherent good that should not be subject to limitation unless completely necessary, and it is ‘democratic’ in the sense that voting rights apply equally to all citizens and each citizen’s vote should have the same weight.” (p. 158) They go on to acknowledge that while liberal democracy is not perfect, it is in their view the “least worst option for human government” (p. 158).

Wright and Bird have written a valuable introduction to the biblical, theological, and practical considerations that should inform a Christian understanding of the relationship of the Church to civil government. With its blend of biblical, theological, historical, and practical considerations, the book encourages readers to think more deeply—and more Christianly—about how we should relate to governmental authority.

In their discussion, the authors resist the temptation to elevate any one biblical text (for example, Romans 13) above all others to provide easy answers to the questions they pose. Instead, they wrestle with the variety of texts upon which one might draw. More importantly, they situate their discussion within the context of the larger Christian hope for the full, eschatological establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth and resurrected life in a renewed creation. Finally, they helpfully draw upon the history of the Church’s relationship with the state, noting both those times when the Church influenced positively the character and actions of governing authorities—that is, building for the Kingdom—and those occasions when the Church compromised the Kingdom of God in its pursuit of power, wealth, and influence. The result is a nuanced account of the foundation for Christian relationship with the state.

Full appreciation of the argument put forward by the authors would be enhanced by familiarity with their other writings, particularly those of Wright. While Wright and Bird intend this book to stand on its own, this background information about their understanding of the purpose and ultimate goals of God’s work in the world through Jesus Christ is essential to their argument. At times, they draw upon this previous work in ways that are too brief to be fully comprehensible to readers who are not familiar with it.

Salvationists frequently understand themselves and the Salvation Army to be “apolitical”, thinking that we operate apart from national or partisan interests. However, history tells us otherwise: the early Army was influenced profoundly by 19<sup>th</sup> century British imperialism and, as has been shown by Rebecca Carter-Chand<sup>1</sup>, Salvationists and the Army in Nazi Germany gave at least tacit support to the regime. Careful consideration of this book may help Salvationists to think more deeply about our relationship with the state, beyond the recitation of the apolitical mantra.

In conclusion, *Jesus and the Powers* is a book that encourages Christians to think more deeply as Christians about our relationship with civil governments. The authors have achieved their goal.

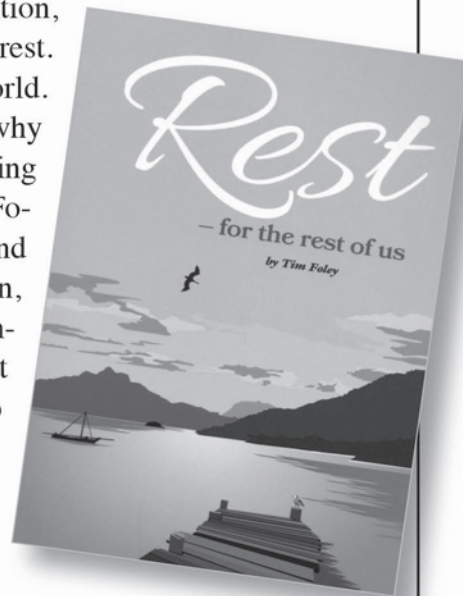
## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Rebecca Carter-Chand, “The Politics of Being Apolitical: The Salvation Army and the Nazi Revolution,” *Word & Deed* 18, no. 2 (2016): 3-30.

# *Rest—for the rest of us*

By Tim Foley

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



Lt. Colonel Tim Foley has been a follower of Jesus Christ since 1978. He was commissioned as a Salvation Army officer in 1982. He currently serves as the Divisional Leader for Officer Development in the Northwest Division of the Western Territory. He holds a master's degree in theology and a doctorate degree in spiritual formation for ministry leaders.

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# Book Review

Hobgood, Eddie. *The Sanctified Salvationist Showman*. Alexandria, VA: Crest Books, 2024. 307 pages.

Reviewed by Nathan Miller, Associate Professor of Musicology, Asbury University, Wilmore, KY.

Nishan der Garabedian (1860-1937), better known as “Joe the Turk,” was one of the most famous, and certainly most colorful, Salvationists in the early history of the Salvation Army in America. His life and adventures are brought to life by Eddie Hobgood in his book, *The Sanctified Salvationist Showman*. Joe’s flair for the dramatic and eagerness to make a scene to share the gospel led to his acquiring a level of fame and popularity few Salvationists have reached. He continues to find his way into Salvation Army curriculum for children and adults alike and has even been immortalized as a porcelain figurine sold in Salvation Army trade departments—a kind of totem for the spirit of early Salvationists. Despite his persistent notoriety, there has not been a monograph that has attempted to tell his full story until this recent publication by Crest Books.

The book unfolds as a thorough accounting of Joe’s life from his personal papers and reporting from Salvation Army periodicals and local newspapers. Citations from these sources are generally presented as long form quotations that retain the voice and spirit of the original text, but often lack contextualization. Hobgood structures the first and last three chapters chronologically. The beginning three chapters detail his early life as the son of an Apostolic Armenian priest, the tragedies of losing both parents in childhood, falling from faith, and the journey that brought him to San Francisco and conversion through Salvation Army street meetings. The final three

chapters briefly note his life post-retirement, his death and its reportage in local newspapers and Salvation Army publications, and the work of Armenian heritage groups in the United States to help preserve Garabedian's legacy.

Chapters four through nine explore themes within Joe's life and ministry as a Salvation Army officer in vivid detail through extensive research. After early appointments on the West Coast, Joe spent 35 years (1890–1925) as a national 'Travelling Special,' during which he crisscrossed the country, using spectacle to preach the gospel. (p. 51) These stories, told with color a life befitting Joe the Turk, pull together many of the dramatic adventures that made Joe such an iconic figure of American Salvationism. Among the several useful appendices is a thorough listing of all 52 reported arrests of Joe the Turk, with citations demonstrating the breadth of Hobgood's research (197–209). Another appendix includes large excerpts of articles from the *American War Cry* about the Armenian Genocide (219–247)—a valuable resource for future scholars.

There are two significant deficiencies in the book. First, Hobgood does not engage with recent scholarship on the Salvation Army in America that might contextualize Joe's life and ministry more richly. An engagement with Diane Winston's *Red Hot and Righteous* (Harvard University Press, 2000), which looks at the early Army in America and how it borrows and tropes cultural idioms and entertainment, would have helped readers better understand how Joe was received by Salvationists and those they sought to evangelize.

In chapter nine, "The Winds of Change," Hobgood suggests that "from the beginning" the Salvation Army "welcomed everyone" and believed in "equality and inclusivity." (153) But by failing to acknowledge the Army's departure from some of those ideals—such as the move from multi-racial to segregated corps in the early 20th century—the text reads more like hagiography than serious historical work. A dialogue with Warren Maye's, *Soldiers of Uncommon Valor*, (West Nyack: Others Press, 2008) could have provided a more nuanced understanding of the Army's fluid racial history and shown how someone from an othered minority like Garabedian found a place within the Army.

Second, and more importantly, Joe's folkloric tales are never seriously questioned. Hobgood clearly admires Garabedian's willingness to "become all things to all people" to win souls (1 Cor. 9:22, NIV), especially through the adoption of the persona "Joe the Turk." While noting the irony of an Armenian taking on a Turkish identity—especially considering the Armenian Genocide—Hobgood stops short of reckoning with its full implications. His thorough research is on display as

he shows through richly sourced newspaper accounts Garabedian's willingness to stretch the truth regarding his identity by promoting himself as a "real, live Turk," that had "lost all his bloodthirstiness for everyone except the devil" (52). However, despite Joe's proclivity to stretch the truth, Hobgood never seems to seriously question or evaluate the wildest claims of Garabedian. He acknowledges some of these challenges in the preface to the book, noting the stories about Joe "sometimes arrived at the end of their journey slightly different than they began" (7).

This problem is clearest in chapter seven, with the unintentionally ironic title, "Truth is Stranger than Fiction," which recounts a tale from Macomb, Illinois (123-137). In this story, the mayor and a crew of "outlaws from Texas" control the town and its saloons (125). After threats, arrests, and a failed assassination attempt on Joe by the mayor, Joe and the Macomb Salvationists were able to run the mayor and his "so-called lawmen" out of town (127). Where after, the townspeople asked Joe to serve as interim mayor, in which role he also appointed the Corps Officer as interim chief of police. The story reads like a dime-store Western. This doesn't suggest that the story couldn't be true, but it should raise an alarm for a historian, causing one to seek to verify the claims of such an account.

Despite Hobgood's otherwise thorough mining of sources, this story relies solely on Salvation Army publications—the *American War Cry* and *The Conqueror Magazine*. A search through archival newspapers from Macomb show no hints of any such story, one that certainly would have drawn the interest of local reporters. The town's historical archives also have no mention of Joe's tenure as mayor, or of any particular political turmoil during this time. Ryan Heinz, a journalist for the *Macomb Eagle*, published a two-part investigation of this story in 2004 (May 29 and June 5).<sup>1</sup> He consulted Dr. John E. Hallwas, a noted local historian and professor emeritus at Western Illinois University, who answers the question of how much truth is there to this claim, by firmly and succinctly stating—"zero."

Hobgood acknowledges that "a backwards glance at history" tends to romanticize and idealize historical "heroes," though he suggests that it's "highly unlikely" that these historical characters "actually saw themselves that way" (153). This statement, however, is oddly juxtaposed to an image of Joe the Turk on the opposite page from one of his songbook pamphlets that shows him bejeweled in a flamboyant and heroic self-styled uniform. In the many self-reported stories that Joe filed with the *War Cry*, we find an officer that saw himself, and the Salvation Army, as heroes in a great war. Throughout the book we also find an officer who eschewed capitalizing on his fame for his own personal financial gain and died without enough money

to pay for a headstone for his grave. By presenting Joe the Turk as a romanticized hero, the book misses an opportunity to ask deeper questions about the implications and paradoxes of life of Nishan der Garabedian.

Altogether, this text is the fruit of a passionate, painstaking research project that succeeds in gathering and preserving the stories of Joe the Turk. It is clear—especially from the foreword by Hobgood’s daughter, Annie Hobgood-Bridges—that Joe is a hero to the author. But that affection seems to have kept Hobgood from asking hard questions about the life of a showman who sometimes twisted facts to serve the Army’s mission. If presented simply as a collection of stories rather than as history, the book would be quite effective—especially for future historians. As it stands, it reflects an earlier era of Salvation Army historiography, when publications served more as tools of inspiration than of inquiry. Recent works, such as General John Larsson’s *1929: A Crisis that Shaped The Salvation Army’s Future* (London, Salvation Books, 2009), among many others, model how to move beyond hagiography and tell fuller and richer narratives that ask hard questions about the characters and events that shaped The Salvation Army.

## Endnotes

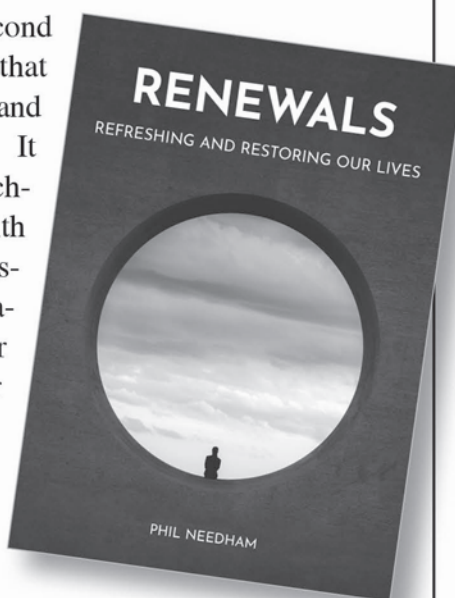
<sup>1</sup> Ryan Heinz, *Eagle Staff: Mayor Joe the Turk or the Armenian*, Macomb Eagle, Macomb, IL, May 29 and June 5, 2004.

# *Renewals*

By Phil Needham

*Renewals* launches the second half of the Christian Year that some churches call Trinity and others call Common Time. It explores how the Trinity teaches us to relate to all those with whom we have a close or distant relationship. All our relationships are covenantal: our personal relationships, our church relationships, and our relationships with the world. They call for constant renewal.

Phil Needham was a retired Salvation Army officer living in Atlanta who shared a vision of The Salvation Army as a missional people of God who are called by Christ to follow Him into the world, be His credible disciples, and share His compassion with the excluded. Needham was Promoted to Glory in 2023 and is the author of *Christ at the Door* and *Easter People*. *Renewals* is the fourth in his series of books of meditations based on the Christian Year.



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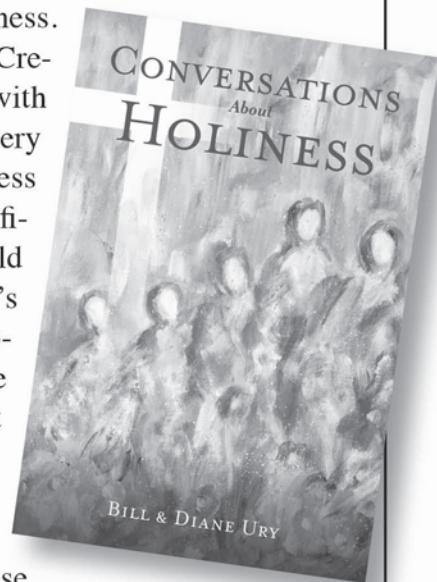
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