WORD & DEED

VOL. XVIII NO. 1 NOVEMBER 2015

A JOURNAL OF SALVATION ARMY THEOLOGY & MINISTRY

CREST BOOKS

Salvation Army National Headquarters
Alexandria, VA, USA

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

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

Editorial Address:
Manuscripts, requests for style sheets, and other correspondence should be addressed to Lieutenant Colonel Allen Satterlee at The Salvation Army, National Headquarters, 615 Slaters Lane, Alexandria, VA 22313, Phone: (703) 684–5500. Fax: (703) 684–5539. Website: www.publications.salvationarmyusa.org Email: Allen_Satterlee@usn.salvationarmy.org.

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

Vol. 18, No. 1 November 2015 **ISSN 1522-3426**

Cover Photograph, 614 Corps, Birmingham, AL, by Brian Wallace.

Word & Deed is indexed in the Christian Periodical Index and with EBSCO.

WORD & DEED

A JOURNAL OF SALVATION ARMY THEOLOGY & MINISTRY

VOLUME XVIII · NUMBER 1 NOVEMBER 2015

Faith Seeking Understanding

Jonathan S. Raymond and Roger J. Green

St. Anselm (1033-1109) is known to many for his memorable work *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, which means, "faith seeking understanding." In the direct address to God he prays, "I long to understand in some degree Your truth, which my heart believes and loves. For I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe in order to understand [*credo ut intellectum*]. For this also I believe,—that unless I believed, I should not understand."

The Salvation Army today stands intentionally in the light of St. Anselm's testimony. Faith informs what we understand and the truth we see. It brings clarity to vision otherwise obscured. Faith seeking understanding describes the nature of the Army's four international symposia on theology and ethics: "Salvationist Theology and Ethics for the Twenty-First Century," Winnipeg, 2001; "People of God – Salvationist Ecclesiology," Johannesburg, 2006; "Our Doctrine of Holiness," London, 2010; "Jesus – Universal Lord and Savior," London, 2014.

Word & Deed was privileged to publish many of the papers from the first three symposia. With this issue, we are pleased to present four papers from the 2014 symposium. For each symposium, The Salvation Army's International Doctrine Council provided the planning and oversight on behalf of the General, and its chairman led the event. At the time of the 2014 symposium, Commissioner Robert Street was the chairman. The commissioner served as guest editor of this issue and wrote an editorial reflecting on the symposium. Following his editorial are the thoughtful contributions of four authors on the symposium's theme, "Jesus – Universal Lord and Savior."

In his article "In Christ Alone," Major Geoff Webb addresses the straight-

forward claims of the gospel we find in Christ. He affirms: "A robust understanding of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as mediator of our salvation will be necessary for The Salvation Army as it responds to the complex reality of the world in which we live out God's mission—'the whole world redeeming.'" In "The Christ of Theology," Lt. Colonel Ian Barr makes the case that "The Christ who emerges from the pages of the Bible and the life of the church remains partially hidden from view. We approach Him, not solely as individuals who are on familiar terms with Him and with His story, but as worshippers in awe and reverence at the mystery of the self-revealing, self-giving God." Lt. Colonel Karen Shakespeare grounds her discussion in H. Richard Niebuhr's classic work, *Christ and Culture*. She tackles the challenges that culture presents the ministry and mission of Salvationists, concluding that "Ultimately, the people of God have a dual calling: Christ calls us out of our natural culture to Himself, and then sends us back into the world, so that in any place or culture we may be witnesses to His transforming work." Finally, in Lt. Colonel Wendy Swan's paper "All Things Under His feet," she explains how the idea of Jesus as the Lord is affirmed within the church and the world, and this occasions the understanding of God's politics of protest and compassion. His politics as Lord are ours as well.

From its very beginning, thoughtful authors have guided the forward movement of the Army. That remains true today. The Salvation Army's international symposia and this journal continue that tradition. May "faith seeking understanding" continue to be our watchword. Glory to God!

JSR
RJG

International Theology & Ethics Symposium
Jesus – Universal Lord & Savior

Robert Street

In October 2014, in a London suburb, delegates to the International Theology and Ethics Symposium unanimously affirmed The Salvation Army's foundational belief that Jesus Christ is universal Lord and Savior. In making this affirmation, the 43 delegates also confirmed their allegiance to the one who is the reason for and at the heart of Christian faith. Having accepted Jesus as Savior, they worship Him as Lord, believing both His love and His power are boundless.

The delegates were officers and soldiers specifically selected from countries and cultures around the globe to bring a rich variety of insight and understanding of Christian faith. They had been invited to examine the theme of "Jesus – Universal Lord and Savior," to consider its individual and universal implications and, crucially, to identify ways in which the Army can communicate its truths to a divided, diverse, uninterested, hostile or unbelieving world.

Eight papers expounding on the theme were presented, each one designed to explain and consider issues essential to an authentic understanding of what allegiance to Christ implies. The papers were: "Jesus of History," "The Christ of Theology," "Christ and Culture," "Universalism – Will All Be Saved?," "Servant Lord," "All Things Under His Feet?," "Saved – from What to What?" and "Christ Alone." Each paper received a prepared response from another delegate, as discussion and prayer were integral to the proceedings. Four of the main papers are shared with *Word & Deed* readers in this issue, providing a sample of what was presented.

Robert Street is a retired Commissioner in The Salvation Army. He served as Chairman of the International Doctrine Council and the International Theology and Ethics Symposium in 2014. He produces the One Army *international teaching resource.*

Throughout the symposium, established beliefs were given thorough examination in a spirit of mutual trust and respect and confidence in God's guiding hand. This confidence was not misplaced. By looking daily at the person, work and love of Christ, His Lordship was repeatedly welcomed and confirmed.

Relationship

In affirming their belief that Jesus Christ is universal Lord and Savior, the delegates also expressed their gratitude to God for the divine initiative that made the affirmation possible. The love of God in Christ speaks of divine grace, signifying that His purposes for mankind are rooted in the relationship with Him, in Him and with one another. The delegates also drew attention to the implications of the outworking of Christ's Lordship—both in their own lives and in those of their fellow Salvationists. They shared a conviction that more could and should be done to live out the full significance that the affirmation carries. They concluded that Jesus' claims over all aspects of life are often not understood, or embraced as fully as Scripture teaches. In particular, Jesus' command that we should not only *be* His disciples but also *make* disciples needed deeper recognition and obedient outworking.

In an increasingly secular society, there is an ever-present danger that Christians forsake the claims and teaching of Christ for an unreliable mix of ideas and philosophies taken from a multitude of religions and worldviews. It is vital that Salvationists know in whom they believe, remind each other of what they believe and share their faith with each other and the world. The call to be like Christ was integral to every discussion. Jesus was seen to be both truly and properly God and truly and properly man, this having implications for His followers, who are similarly urged to bring together the spiritual and physical aspects of life and live as Jesus in their communities—authentically displaying the holy life in its personal, relational, social and political dimensions.

Salvation

It was salutary to again recognize that major hurdles exist in any attempt to communicate the gospel. They may vary from culture to culture, but, crucially and universally, the fact that there is little understanding of any need for salva-

tion is a huge challenge. The concept of being saved is generally not recognized by other religions, and even within Christianity some denominations pay little attention to it. Salvation is rarely preached in religious cultures in which members are regarded simply as sons and daughters of God, or baptism at birth grants assumed membership in the body of Christ. Nominalism, tribalism, divisions with the church, doctrinal arrogance, the embracing of the prosperity gospel and cultures that avoid confrontation in relationships all add complications to Christian witness already compromised by consumerism and secularity. In many Western societies, lack of interest, apathy and general denial of any personal need of God or accountability to Him hinder acceptance of the significance of salvation and the claims of God on individual lives. We must face the facts. Salvation as understood by Salvationists is not a readily recognized concept for billions around the globe.

Communication

The gospel is nearly always proclaimed across a gap or barrier. Apart from geographical, socioeconomic and language barriers, intergenerational issues need careful attention, both within and outside the church. Cross-generational communication could be enhanced by the provision (or better use) of culturally relevant teaching material that highlights the claims of Christ, universal Lord and Savior, over all aspects of our lives. Such material could include teaching on how to win others for Christ.

Globally, much effort is required to ensure that communication of the gospel is appropriate and effective. It is vital to listen to others, especially non-Christians, and try to understand their thinking in order to be relevant to their lives and situations. It is also vital that the Army is not distracted from this task by too much internal reorganization and dependence on programs rather than on the power and guidance of God. The attitude and spirit in which we serve—prioritizing those who do not yet know Jesus—is all-important. Without the Spirit of Christ empowering our motives and actions, we will not fulfill our God-given mission.

Servant Lord

Many even within the Army ignore or are unaware of the fuller implications of Christ's servant heart, so the depth of understanding and experience to make Christian living authentic may not always be evident. Crucial qualities that find their source in Jesus such as love, justice, integrity, mercy, humility, equality, servanthood, community, forgiveness and unity are irreplaceable. However, they can be overlooked in all cultures. Aggressive and un-Christlike traits mar the ministry and harm Christ's cause. There is no substitute for the example of Jesus, who chose servanthood and suffering for our salvation. This servanthood was neither accidental nor temporary. It revealed the heart of God. Delegates to the symposium encouraged leaders at every level to look to Jesus and embrace His gracious spirit. In doing so, they made a call for "a shift from a self-serving approach to religion" to "a faith expressed in sacrificial living, as demonstrated by Christ." Being ready to listen, to ensure we are meeting real needs and not perceived ones, reflects the Christ who still gives time to each of us individually.

Authenticity

At the heart of any effective endeavor to proclaim Christ is the authenticity of His followers. Where failures in communication have prevented the gospel from being heard, authenticity is often in question. Therefore, the delegates recognized the need for the Army to engage openly and faithfully with society, responding to human need and challenging unjust structures while organizing itself according to Kingdom values. It must be in the business of constantly displaying the eternal values of the Kingdom of God, rather than being overwhelmed by the surrounding culture and assumed values. The Army must be a medium for the life of Christ as transforming of individuals and communities. In living out the Kingdom we are called to make the presence of Christ real in the world and extend His Kingdom by pushing back the sin, dysfunction and despair that distorts and limits human flourishing.

Authenticity, integrity and transparency were highlighted in the symposium as indispensable to Christian living and as genuine expressions of our worship of Jesus as Lord and Savior. He not only brought the Good News, He *was*, and *is*, the gospel. His spirit must shape our lives and be in our priorities and witness.

Universal

At the commencement of the symposium, delegates were encouraged to "receive from one another with humility and gratitude"—to seek a universal vision broadened by what each could bring to each other. The gospel is for the world. The world belongs to God. Delegates had each come with their own experiences, convictions and understanding of Scripture and God's will for their lives. It would be essential for them to honor one another, listen and learn as they offered their contributions. Throughout the symposium, they did so with ever-growing appreciation and understanding of one another, together becoming an authentic expression of Christian faith and fellowship–united in the one universal Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. It is my hope and prayer that the international Salvation Army will be increasingly aware of the importance of giving ever-growing witness to this, too.

Christ Alone

Geoff Webb

The phrase "Christ alone" was controversial in its Reformation formulation as *solus Christus*, and it remains so in times of religious pluralism. More recently, the popular worship song "In Christ Alone" has attracted controversy over its couplet, "Till on that cross as Jesus died, / the wrath of God was satisfied".[1] What is the biblical basis for Christ alone? What is its historical context? How has the rise of the theory of religions as an academic discipline prompted new questions about Christ as the unique mediator of salvation? Such questions must be considered for the sake of interfaith dialogue, as every religion that makes authoritative and unique claims of truth must tackle the question of how to view other religions.

I have experienced three different cultural contexts in my life. I grew up in the Singapore/Malaysia command, which encompassed diverse groups, from the Dayak people of Sarawak to the cosmopolitan, multi-faith population of Singapore. I lived much of my adult life in highly secularized and multicultural Australia. And I spent some time on international secondment to the Muslim-majority Pakistan territory. Since I can only speak from personal experience, I cannot presume to understand the widely divergent contexts in which Salvationists operate. While I can speak from a historical understanding of the theological issues, the topic requires other voices to contribute to the dialogue.

In the industrialized and urbanized Western locale from which I am writing, there is a suspicion of metanarratives, and truth is considered relative. Cognitive ceilings are collapsing and being replaced with personal experience as a supreme

---

Geoff Webb is a Major in The Salvation Army, the Vice Chair of the International Theological Council and a Divisional Commander in Western Victoria, in the Australia Southern Territory.

authority. The availability of the internet to express personal opinion diminishes academic rigor and expertise and elevates a kind of theologizing that may often trace its influences to a curious mix of popular culture, narcissism and superstitious nonsense. Thus, much of Western theology does not readily engage in sustained reflection on world issues such as poverty, injustice, systemic corruption, abuse of power, internecine conflict or ideological oppression.[2] From this perspective then, Christ alone will therefore look very different from the trajectory the dialogue might take for a Christian woman in a male-dominated, Muslim-majority country, for example. Lest theology becomes lopsided and culture-bound, it is important that different voices are heard.[3] For this reason, this paper must invite further dialogue in response.

The Biblical Basis for Christ Alone

First, we must start with Scripture. The consistent affirmation of the New Testament involves an unconditional commitment to Jesus Christ as the unique revelation of God, and mediator of divine salvation. The language of mediator occurs fairly late in New Testament writings, but even in earlier writings Christ's role as mediator is implicit; for instance, when Paul speaks of Christ as the means of reconciliation with God (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

Christ is shown as the culmination of the law so that all who believe may be righteous (Romans 10:4). But the need for the proclamation of the gospel is also evident, lest people do not have the opportunity to hear the message (Romans 10:14-15)

From Luke to Acts, salvation is universally available but found only in Christ: "There is no other name under heaven given among people by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). In the Pastoral Epistles, it is similarly in the context of God's will for universal salvation that the language of Christ as mediator is actually used (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

Ephesians notes inclusion in Christ for those who "heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Ephesians 1:13).

In the letter to the Hebrews, Christ mediates a better covenant (Hebrews 8:6-13 and Hebrews 12:22-24). It is through Christ (alone) that the faithful ones offer sacrifices of praise to God, giving thanks for what Christ has brought to perfection (Hebrews 13:15 and Hebrews 12:2).

Such an element of thanks for what Christ has done is also evident in Revelation 5:1-10. This passage describes the "beatific vision" of Christ, the only one worthy to open the scroll because He has "purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Revelation 5:9). Thus the finality of Christ remains linked with the universal scope of salvation.

It is in the Gospel of John that the language of exclusiveness of Christ and universality of salvation is perhaps clearest: "No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). But what does this mean specifically? There could be a continuum of understanding: at one extreme would be the belief that *particular* election by God requires *explicit* faith in Christ; at the other would be the understanding that everyone will ultimately be saved through Christ's work, which is universally available and efficacious.

A Historical Snapshot of Christ Alone

The Johannine worldview dominated in the credal statements of the great councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon, but the medieval period saw the inclusion of other elements. In the Reformation period, *solus Christus* became one of the five pillars of Reformation theology. It was primarily a counter to the Roman Catholic claim that salvation was mediated through the church, and should also involve veneration of Mary, the saints and relics.[4] *Solus Christus* affirmed that it is only through the historical Jesus Christ and His mediatory work that our salvation has been accomplished. His sinless life and atonement exchange on our behalf suffice for us to be justified. Thus did satisfaction become penal substitution, which subsequently dominated Protestant soteriology. (More recently, some theologians have highlighted other atonement "pictures" instead of penal substitution; for example, N. T. Wright and the *Christus Victor* theme;[5] Roger Haight's Christology, "from below"; and Abelard's moral exemplar theme.[6])

Even so, there was controversy among the Reformers as well, with Calvin vigorously defending Luther's claim that salvation was available through Christ alone. Zwingli had maintained the possibility that pious pagans could be saved. Calvin was scornful of such an idea.[7]

The Enlightenment brought its own attack on the idea of Christ's uniqueness. Goethe's attack on a long-time friend is an example of the way in which Enlightenment thinkers responded: "What a narrow-minded man you are, to sup-

pose that your Jesus is alone important, all other great ones counting for nothing. There are many great men, many seers, many leaders."[8]

Those in Reformed circles maintained a narrowly defined understanding of the mediation of salvation through Christ alone. The "offence of particularity" is most closely associated with this Reformed emphasis on particular redemption and characterizes the so-called exclusivist position that affirms *solus Christus* and *fides ex auditu*.[9]

Others, such as John Wesley, appeared to be more inclusive. Perhaps this was due to the difference between the Reformed understanding of election and irresistible grace and the Wesleyan understanding of prevenient grace and the universal availability of salvation. Wesley considered salvation to be conditional upon faith in God, but such faith need not necessarily be explicitly Christian. He spoke of the difference between those who have the "faith of a servant" and those who have the "faith of a son."[10] What remains unclear is whether he considered the faith of a servant to be saving faith, since it did not bring assurance of salvation. Such assurance could only come through Christ. Wesley tended to view Christ's mediatory work especially "from the perspective of His divine nature, but provided with a human nature as a necessary instrument for His atoning work."[11]

This openness to seeing others as included in salvation had, by the late nineteenth century, developed into a growing conviction that other religions were not intrinsically evil. As David J. Bosch wrote in *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, "At the World's Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago in 1893, Christians fraternized freely with adherents of other faiths, but not without condescension. The new view was that Christ did not come to destroy other religions but to fulfill them."[12]

Over the subsequent century, with the development of the theory of religions as an academic discipline, this view broadened to include a series of debates relating to claims for the supremacy and finality of Christianity.

The Contemporary Debate Concerning Christ Alone

Within a contemporary theology of religions three main views have been advanced: exclusivist, inclusivist and pluralist.[13]

Exclusivist

No major systematic theologian currently holds to a rigorous exclusivism. Gavin D'Costa identified Barth as exclusivist, although Barth primarily attacks Christianity-as-religion rather than other religions.[14] Exclusivism is most commonly found among Lutherans and Calvinists, who hold both to the concept of faith in Christ alone as the source of salvation and to the need for explicit faith in Christ through hearing the gospel.

Exclusivists would argue that if saving grace is available other than through explicit faith, how is Christ necessary for salvation? Additionally, exclusivists would not allow for virtuous actions on the part of people who have not expressed explicit faith, arguing that this is a departure from the principle of *solus Christus* and expresses Pelagian tendencies.

Some exclusivists may refuse to speculate on the ultimate destiny of non-Christians. They would claim that we cannot know a non-Christian's fate and must entrust them to the justice and mercy of God. The same argument may be made for those who are ignorant of salvation, although exclusivists would not want to speculate how this may occur. Such issues can also become very important for groups of people that hear the gospel for the first time: because of their communal structure, if the leader embraces Christianity, the whole tribe does, but how does this involve explicit faith by individuals?[15]

Pluralist

At the other extreme, pluralism makes the Christian truth-claim relative. While this may be the postmodern agenda, it cannot remain unchallenged. Pluralists would argue Paul's position that "whom you ignorantly worship, him I declare unto you" (Acts 17:23).

John Hick has famously championed this position: he notes that the great majority of the world is non-Christian, and people's birthplaces usually determine their religion. Hick argues for a theocentric rather than Christocentric approach.[16] All religions are in fact a variety of human responses to the one divine reality. God's universal saving implies that all people should have equal opportunities to be saved.[17] For Hick, Christ differs from other humans only in degree rather than substance.[18]

Carson provides a strong critique of the impact of pluralism on the church, although he also expresses the hope that instead of the way that "the worst features of pluralism may grind us down…they may become 'irritants' which, in the providence of God, are used to recall the church to a renewed emphasis on the gospel within the framework of the Bible's plot line."[19] The issue for pluralists is the absolute finality and universal normativity of Christ.

Inclusivist

Those who wish to retain the tenets of Christianity, while relating to their contemporary contexts with openness and inclusion, often adopt inclusivist approaches. One such approach involves seeing Christ as the fulfillment of other faiths, with other religions being preparatory for accepting Christ. This is evident in the Council Statement released by the International Missionary Council in Jerusalem in 1928:

> We recognize as part of the one Truth that sense of the Majesty of God and the consequent reverence in worship, which are conspicuous in Islam; the deep sympathy for the world's sorrow and unselfish search for the way of escape, which are at the heart of Buddhism; the desire for contact with ultimate reality conceived as spiritual, which is prominent in Hinduism; the belief in a moral order of the universe and consequent insistence on moral conduct, which are inculcated by Confucianism.[20]

The problem inherent in this view is that other religions need to be seen in their own integrity rather than simply as preparation for the Christian faith.[21]

Karl Rahner suggests that non-Christian religions may still be able to mediate divine grace until the Christian gospel is preached to the followers of those religions. Such followers are "anonymous Christians," or recipients of divine grace without conscious awareness of it. For that reason, Christianity includes other religions. (A topic that connects at this point but which I will not touch upon is the matter of enculturation.)

Rahner has been widely criticized, including by Hans Küng, who sees

Rahner's approach as a back door through which non-Christian humanity can be swept into the church.[22] By contrast, Küng insists on the profession of faith as critical.[23] Pluralists would claim that "anonymous Christian" would be a deeply offensive term to a Muslim or Hindu, and could result in them responding that Christians are anonymous Hindus or anonymous Muslims.[24]

Rahner makes clear that his term is a matter for dogmatic theology, rather than interfaith dialogue. Even so, he notes:

> Non-Christians may think it presumptuous…for the Christian to regard the non-Christian as a Christian who has not yet come to himself reflectively. But the Christian cannot renounce this "presumption" which is really the source of the greatest humility both for himself and the church. For it is a profound admission of the fact that God is greater than man and the church…On such a basis we can be tolerant, humble and yet firm towards all non-Christian religions.[25]

The issue at hand is whether or not explicit faith is required for salvation.[26] For J. N. D. Anderson, Charles Kraft and others, there is salvation outside of Christian faith.[27] The timing of such an expression of faith is another part of the question. Rahner, for example, maintains that anonymous Christians still need an encounter with Christ after death for their lives to be complete and for them to be prepared for eternity. Over the last fifty years, more and more evangelical theologians have also considered post-mortem evangelism.[28]

The Challenge for Us Today

Is Christ alone still important today? It could be argued that without the concept, the incarnation and atonement are diminished and made relative, and God's salvation for humanity expressed in Christ is minimized as just one of many possible ways. How then shall we define Christ alone? Is it helpful to maintain that God is revealed supremely and perfectly—although not exclusively—in Christ? This acknowledges that God is at work in other religions. The danger of attempting to define *solus Christus* is placing the church in the position of being the arbiter of salvation: while salvation may be available outside the church, the

church still defines it, and who receives it.

Furthermore, an exclusive claim for the uniqueness and absoluteness of Christ could result in Christians seeing other religions and their followers as inferior. Isolating Christianity from other religions reduces the opportunity to reach others with the gospel. Strauss helpfully reminds us that if we "uphold the principle of the uniqueness and absoluteness of Jesus Christ [that] does not exclude the practice of conversation with the followers of other religions."[29]

Perhaps the following analogy might prove helpful. In Pakistan, in the guarded compound of the Training College, there was always a *chowkidar*: someone who functioned as a kind of security gatekeeper. When a vehicle or pedestrian arrived at the college's gate, the *chowkidar* would look out to identify them. If uncertain, the *chowkidar* would go out, armed, to identify the person and his or her business at the college. Usually, however, the *chowkidar* would recognize the person from a distance and readily open the gate to admit the visitor. Perhaps Jesus Christ is analogous to a divine gatekeeper as well as to the gate itself. The gate for entry is Jesus, since only the blood of Jesus is efficacious for sin. Yet Christ, as gatekeeper, recognizes the heart-intent of the arrival, and graciously admits the person within the scope of salvation provided through the cross. From a human vantage point, we may also recognize those within the scope of salvation: we may be confident from their lives, and their profession of faith in Christ in this world, that the divine gatekeeper will admit them. Yet we are not the gatekeeper, and therefore we cannot always know—especially the point at which prevenient grace becomes convincing and saving grace. Rather we leave such matters to the grace of God expressed in Christ.

While making no claims to be gatekeeper ourselves, we still affirm Jesus Christ to be the universal Lord and Savior, and therefore we seek to engage the conversation with others. Gavin D'Costa pointedly claims:

> The credibility of Christianity will partly depend on the way in which it can respond to the bewildering plurality that characterizes the modern world…If Christianity is not able to see itself as distinct and unique in any sense at all, it will probably be assimilated and absorbed by traditions that do feel they have a special vision for the world. People are not particularly interested and challenged by nothing at all! On the other hand,

> if Christian theology denigrates the rich heritage of millions of women and men it will fail to respect the goodness of creation affirmed within its own creed and foolishly turn its back on the many riches and glories found within other religions. By facing up to the difficult theological issues…one can only hope that various churches will be able to deal more constructively with the complex reality facing them.[30]

Jesus Christ is greater than any Christological or soteriological statement, and Salvationists must engage others with the humility that comes from recognizing how far we are from being able to comprehend the divine mystery of God in Christ. Even so, a robust understanding of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as mediator of our salvation will be necessary for The Salvation Army as it responds to the complex reality of the world in which we live out God's mission: "the whole world redeeming."

Endnotes

1 The Presbyterian Church excluded it from its new hymnal not because of the reference to "the wrath of God" but because of the "satisfaction" language linked to that aspect of atonement theory, which drew analogy to feudal practice. Interestingly, in 2013 there was an extensive discussion in *Salvationist* concerning whether the song should be included in the new *Salvation Army Song Book*.

2 As David Wells notes in "Evangelical Theology" in *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology Since 1918* by David F. Ford (editor) with Rachel Muers (contributor) (3rd edition, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 616.

3 Increasingly, such voices are non-Western; e.g. the Indian theologian Raimondo Panikkar or Patrick Kalilombe, a biblical scholar and Roman Catholic bishop from Malawi.

4 *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus* ("There is no salvation outside the church.") was Cyprian's famous phrase, further strengthened by Pope Boniface VIII's assertion (in *Unam Sanctum*) that, consequently, "it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman pontiff."

5 N. T. Wright notes that the penal reference in Romans 8:3 refers to the fact "that on the cross God condemned *sin* in the flesh of His own Son. [Paul] does not say that God condemned the *Son*" in his unpublished 2005 lecture, "Starting points and opening reflections" on www.ntwrightpage.com/Wright_Auburn_Paul.htm.

6 Roger Haight, *Jesus, Symbol of God* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000); also Haight's "The Case for Spirit Christology" in *Theological Studies* 53 (1992). Haight's controversial position counters Christ alone with its Spirit Christology.

[7] "Thus, all the more vile is the stupidity of those people who open heaven to all the impious and unbelieving without the grace of Him whom Scripture commonly teaches to be the only door by which we enter into salvation." John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), book 2, chap. 6, 341–342.

[8] Goethe in: J. S. Whale, "The Offence of Particularity," *Victor and Victim* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 80.

[9] "Christ alone" and "faith comes through hearing": that is, salvation through Christ requires explicit faith in Christ, which arises from hearing the gospel and results in repentance, baptism and new life.

[10] In sermon 106, "On Faith," in Wesley's *Sermons*, he appears to acknowledge that Muslims, Jews and "heathens" often exhibit such faith that their lives shame many who are called Christians. The faith of a servant may be in view here, at least wherever they "retain (notwithstanding many mistakes) that faith that worketh by love."

[11] John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament,* 366.

[12] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission,* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993), 322.

[13] Originally coined by Alan Race in *Christians and Religious Pluralism: Patterns in the Christian Theology of Religions* (London: SCM Press, 1983). See also: Gavin D'Costa, *Theology and Religious Pluralism: The Challenge of Other Religions* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986). D'Costa argues strongly against pluralism (as represented for D'Costa by Hick) and defends Rahner, who D'Costa considers inclusivist. Interestingly, Barth becomes D'Costa's focus when defining the exclusivist position; whereas Barth seems less easily categorized. Migliore further develops this schema into five positions: exclusivist, developmentalist, transcendentalist, dialogical and pluralist. D. L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 161–164.

[14] "Like the justified human being, true religion is a creature of grace." Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (London: T&T Clark, 1978), 326.

[15] A classic example of this issue was the Dayak people and the widespread conversion to Christianity in the 1970s. They became quite devout despite continuing many of the customs of traditional (animist) religion.

[16] "We have to realize that the universe of faiths centers upon God, and not upon Christianity or upon any other religion. He is the sun, the originative source of light and life, whom all the religions reflect in their own different ways." John Hick, *God and the Universe of Faiths* (London: MacMillan, 1973), 131.

[17] Gavin D'Costa, *Theology and Religious Pluralism: The Challenge of Other Religions* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 628.

[18] See Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Christology: A Global Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 183–185.

[19] D.A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 514.

[20] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission,* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993), 480.

[21] Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding,* 162. Migliore also pointedly comments, "Christianity's relation to Judaism has been distorted by the idea that the Hebrew Bible and Judaism have no significance beyond serving as a preparation for Christian faith."

[22] Even so, Rahner finds support with others like C. S. Lewis, who claims, "There are people in other religions who are being led by God's secret influence to concentrate on those parts of their religion which are in agreement with Christianity, and thus belong to Christ without knowing it. For example, a Buddhist of good will may be led to concentrate more and more on the Buddhist teaching about mercy and to leave in the background… the Buddhist teaching on certain other points." C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (San Francisco: Harper, 2009), book 4, chap. 11.

[23] "Christianity cannot be reduced or 'raised' to a nameless—that is, anonymous—Christianity. To anyone who thinks a little about the two words, anonymous Christianity is a contradiction in terms, like wooden iron. Being humanly good is a fine thing even without the blessing of the Church or theological approval. Christianity however means a profession of faith in this one name." Hans Küng, *On Being a Christian,* 126.

[24] See the discussion by Gavin D'Costa, *Theology and Religious Pluralism: The Challenge of Other Religions* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 636.

[25] Karl Rahner, "Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions," *Theological Investigations, Vol. 5: Later Writings* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1966), 134.

[26] Even among evangelicals this can vary. J. N. D. Anderson, *Christianity and Comparative Religion* (London: IVP, 1970), 102-46. Anderson asserts that there are certain conditions under which one can argue for salvation for those without explicit faith in Christ. He calls for a modest re-evaluation of the Evangelical position.

[27] See also Charles Kraft, *Christianity in Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1979), 254. J. N. D. Anderson, *Christianity and Comparative Religion* (London: IVP, 1970).

[28] For example, George Beasley-Murray, Charles Cranfield, Donald Bloesch, Clark Pinnock, Gabriel Fackre and Nigel Wright. See Robin Parry and Chris Partridge, *Universal Salvation: The Current Debate* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 2003), 229.

[29] S.A. Strauss, "The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ and Pluralism from the Perspective of the Reformed Confession," *Acta Theologica* (2006), 2, 38.

[30] As Gavin D'Costa notes in "Theology of Religions" in *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology Since 1918* by David F. Ford (editor) with Rachel Muers (contributor) (3rd edition, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 638-639.

The Christ of Theology

Ian Barr

"What is bothering me incessantly is the question…
Who Christ really is for us today."

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer from a Berlin prison in 1944

In an old railway poster promoting my hometown, a family dressed in 1930s bathing costumes is enjoying a day in what is reputedly the world's largest tidal public swimming pool at the time. The sun is blazing, the sea is deep blue and the tide is well in. The ebb and flow of the tide in that pool has always been a problem for swimmers; you never took a leap from the diving boards until you were certain of the state of the tide.

Theology has its own ebb and flow. The juxtaposition of the first two lectures in this symposium, "The Jesus of History" and "The Christ of Theology," mirrors the ebb and flow of Christology[1] in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Martin Luther used the terms "from above" and "from below" to distinguish the two main approaches to the study of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. He said, "Philosophers and doctors have begun from above; and so they have become fools. We must begin from below, and after that come upwards."

Luther draws us from below, the man Jesus who is both Savior and Lord, to the Christ who is God come down from above:

Ian Barr is a retired Lt. Colonel in The Salvation Army in the United Kingdom and a member of the International Theological Council.

> He endured good and evil things like anyone else, so that there was no difference between Him and anyone else, save that He was God and had no sin.
>
> To conquer sin, death, the curse and the wrath of God in His own person is not the work of a creature, but the work of the Almighty.
>
> Therefore we teach the people that they are justified through Christ, that Christ is the conqueror of sin, death and the eternal curse, we bear witness at the same time that He is God.

Christology from below begins with the reality of Jesus' humanity and proceeds from this point to determine the meaning of His divinity. Christology from above begins with the divinity and pre-existence of Christ.

In general, modern reformed Christological theories have followed Luther in that they have come from below. In effect, the three waves of the quest for the historical Jesus in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were attempts to find a satisfactory Christology from below.

However, these successive waves have also enabled a flowering of Christology from above in two remarkable ways. The first is what D. M. Baillie calls "the end of Docetism"—explaining away or even denying Christ's full humanity in practice, if not in theory, by Christians and the church. The second is what Baillie calls "a new historical radicalism." This has enabled a more objective and critical approach to the text of the gospels so that we are able to ask what something means, both in terms of the content and context of what Jesus said and what the incarnation is about.

It is not my intention to chart the ebb and flow of Christologies from above and below, but to consider three particular perspectives that emerged in twentieth-century theological thinking: the Christ of faith, the Christ of theology and the Christ of testimony.

The Christ of Faith

It is clear from the New Testament that by the time the synoptic gospels were written the apostles and the early church had a strong sense that Jesus

was greater than a prophet, and significantly more than a human agent commissioned to fulfill God's purposes in the world. The first Christians believed that the man Jesus, who had walked with them and taught them, was also divine. The Gospel of John and the letters of Paul describe how Jesus was present and active in creation, sharing in the divine nature, and central to the redemption of all things. Thus the great theological themes of Judaism and God's activity in creation and in the redemption of all things are ascribed also to Christ at an early stage in the church's development. As the German liberal Protestant scholar Adolf von Harnack[2] put it, "Jesus does not belong to the gospel as one of its elements, but was the personal realization and power of the gospel, and we still perceive Him as such."[3]

Harnack represents the thinking behind the first phase of the quest for the Jesus of history: the Jesus of the gospels is the starting point of faith, and the true picture of Jesus will only emerge when we rediscover Him in His own historical setting, independent of the dogma that the church has built around Him. There was an assumed discontinuity between the Jesus of the gospels and the Christ of dogma.

However, the mid-twentieth-century German theologian Ernst Kasemann[4] rejected any talk of discontinuity between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. The *Kerygma,* or preached message of the early church, represents the continuity between the preaching of Jesus and the church's preaching about Jesus. The common theme running between the two is the realization of the Kingdom of God. This is the message of Christ and the message about Christ. More recent writers such as Geza Vermes and E. P. Sanders have sought to read Jesus in the historical and cultural context of first-century Palestinian Judaism as well as placing Him in the historical context of the time.

According to Kasemann, what emerges from the pages of the synoptic gospels and the preaching of the apostles recorded in Acts is not so much the Jesus of history as the Christ at the center of the faith of the early church.

Emil Brunner[5] speaks of three stages of development in the primitive church's belief about Jesus: the preaching of the early church presents the man Jesus of Nazareth, "who went around doing good…because God was with Him"; the Christ of Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi; and the pre-existent and eternal Word and Son of God presented by John and Paul.

The story of Peter's confession in Mark 8:27-30 is a key moment in the

synoptic accounts of the ministry of Jesus:

> Jesus and His disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way He asked them, "Who do people say I am?"
>
> They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."
>
> "But what about you?" He asked. "Who do you say that I am?"
>
> Peter answered, "You are the Messiah."

Whichever version of the story we read, in Peter's answer the man Jesus becomes immediately both a theological figure and an object of faith. The term "Messiah" certainly has a strong theological dimension to it, more so when it is expressed as "God's Messiah" by Luke.

From what we may learn of sectarian Judaism of the time, the two expressions "the Messiah/Christ" and "the Son of the God" had not been regarded as synonymous up to this point. In the synoptic gospels Jesus is viewed through the lens of Jewish Messianic expectation. The story is also told from the perspective of the church's developing beliefs about Jesus. Therefore, as both Messiah and Son of God, Jesus emerges as the fulfillment of Jewish expectations and hopes, but that is a long way from saying they thought He was divine.

The synoptic writers therefore present a theological picture of Jesus conditioned by what the primitive Christian community understood to be the significance of His life, death and resurrection and by their Jewish background.

The strand of continuity runs through the gospels to the *Kerygma* in Peter's sermon in Acts 2: "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."

The third stage of the emerging Christology of the church in the apostolic era might be termed "cosmic" or "Logos" Christologies in which John and Paul present Jesus as co-eternal with God and preexistent. Paul expresses this theme in the Christological hymn in Philippians 2:5-11:

> Christ Jesus…Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage;

> rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself. Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place.

It is also expressed in Colossians 1:

> The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things.

The Logos theology found in the prologue of the Gospel of John brings together Jewish and Greek philosophy in the tradition of Philo of Alexandria.[6] "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning" (John 1:1).

In the Judaism of the century before the birth of Christ, the Word was God's way of expressing Himself to the world. The Word, much like wisdom, had come to be separately personified and described as acting and speaking. In the Greek philosophy of that era, the Word was the thing underpinning the universe and holding all things in order.

John's Logos theology continues to hold an important place in Christology. The late-twentieth-century Christology of Norman Pittinger, for example, focuses particularly on John's concept of the eternal, pre-existing Logos incarnate in Christ.

F. F. Bruce noted that "the Christ of faith, if disunited from the Jesus of history, is apt to be a figure of pious imagination."[7] The New Testament is both historical and theological in its presentation of Jesus, even if it is not entirely consistent in its chronology or historical detail. What emerges from its pages is the Jesus of the faith of the primitive church.

The Christ of Theology

St. Anselm[8] sums up the central question for Christology in the title of his classic *Why Did God Become Man?* (*Cur Deus Homo?*). The incarnation is an essential component of Christian teaching not just because "God has revealed Himself in Christ," but also because "God has acted decisively in Christ to save." The whole New Testament focuses on one man: Jesus of Nazareth. If there had been no such focus, or if the texts had been uniform in the nature of their description, there might have been no need for Christology or critical inquiry into the significance of Jesus Christ to the Christian faith.[9]

In the first quarter of the fourth century, Athanasius made the same point clearly in his study *On the Incarnation of the Word*: "Being incorporeal by nature and Word from the beginning, He has yet [out] of the loving-kindness and goodness of His own Father been manifested to us in a human body for our salvation."[10]

The ultimate meaning of the incarnation is to be found in the saving work of Jesus. Present and active in the creation of the world, He is present, active and central to its redemption. The doctrine of the human and divine natures united in Christ is essentially soteriological.[11]

The council of Nicea in 325 and the Nicene Creed that finally emerged from the Council of Constantinople in 381 made it clear that "Christ was in no sense a part of the creation, subordinate to God, but that He was equal with God, of one substance with the Father."[12]

However, given this equality with God, what was the relationship between the divine and human in the person of Jesus Christ? Again in Nicea, and in the creed, there is a strong link between Christian teaching about the person of Jesus and the saving work of Jesus. In effect, the doctrine of the incarnation is a theological necessity. Only God can save, and the church proclaimed the man Jesus as Savior. The problem was how the man Jesus could also be God, and how the immutable and impassible God could become human.

In the period following Nicea, Gregory of Nazianzus[13] taught that if the divine Logos did not assume human nature in its entirety, Christ could not be our perfect redeemer. "What is not assumed cannot be redeemed," he said. "That is saved which is united with God."

This set the scene for events leading to the Council of Chalcedon that took

place in 451. Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople,[14] had taught that Jesus was truly man and truly God, but that the union of divinity and humanity was moral rather than "essential." What Chalcedon produced was a highly detailed definition of the dual nature of Christ, strongly polemical in its composition and clearly intended to silence all dissenters.[15]

Even in Mary's womb, according to Cyril of Alexandria,[16] "the body was that of the Word." In the union of Word and flesh "existed a single concrete being." Mary was, in the words of the statement from Chalcedon, *theotokos*, or "God-bearing."

Father George Florovsky sums up the argument:

> The Christian message was from the very beginning the message of Salvation, and accordingly our Lord was depicted primarily as the Savior.
>
> Erroneous conceptions of the Person of Christ with which the early church had to wrestle were criticized and refuted precisely when they tended to undermine the reality of human redemption… and it was inferred that the redeemed had to belong Himself to both sides, i.e. to be at once both divine and human, for otherwise the broken communion between God and man would not have been re-established.[17]

Jesus Christ is not just a Revealer, He is also a Redeemer. That is the point of the incarnation. The hypostatic union of the human and divine in the nature of Christ is to be understood primarily as a necessary preparation for the redemptive work of Jesus rather than as a philosophical problem.[18]

The Christ of Testimony

We come now to a rich seam of thinking that runs through much of the Christology of the twentieth century: the Christ of testimony. The surprising thing for some evangelicals is that this theme is taken up by theologians who are not obviously either evangelical or conservative.

Emil Brunner is an interesting example of this. Notwithstanding his espousal of radical biblical criticism, rejection of the virgin birth, discounting the Fourth

Gospel as an historical source, and treating some of the synoptic material as legendary in the literal sense of the word, Brunner maintains that "the Christian faith does not arise out of the picture of the historical Jesus, but out of the testimony to Christ." He maintains:

> Jesus Christ is more than all the words about Him, the Word of God, the decisive self-communication of God is a person, a human being, the man in whom God meets us. Christ is not to be discovered by research or human reason, but in a real relation to a real Thou.[19]

Rudolf Bultmann took this a step further, saying, "In faith we are not concerned with the Jesus of history as historical science sees Him, but with the Jesus Christ of personal testimony who is the real Christ, and whom John shows just as plainly as the Synoptists."[20]

Donald Baillie did not disagree with his friend Bultmann's idea of the Christ of personal testimony, but he taught that the meaning of the cross cannot be understood apart from what we know about the one who died on the cross. Christ is "the lamb slain before the foundation of the world,"[21] but it is against every Christian instinct to minimize or reduce the importance of the historical events of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, as these things have eternal significance.

Quoting Archbishop William Temple, Baillie comes to the inevitable conclusion that the *mysterium Christi* ("mystery of Christ") must always remain a mystery: "If any man says that he understands the relation of Deity to humanity in Christ, he only makes it clear that he does not understand at all what is meant by an incarnation."

Rather than explain away the apparent contradiction between the divinity and humanity of Jesus, Baillie invites us to approach the matter as a paradox. Paradox, he says, comes into all religious thought and is common in human experience:

> God can be known only in a direct personal relationship, an "I and Thou" conversation, in which he addresses us and we respond to Him…Since a paradox is a self-contradictory state-

> ment, we simply do not know what it means or what we mean by it unless it has that direct connection with the faith which it attempts to express.

Baillie takes us further into the area of personal experience and testimony as he considers other areas of Christian faith and practice that are rich in paradox. To demonstrate what he calls "the paradox of grace," he cites the testimony of St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 15: "I labored more than any of them [the apostles], yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me." It is in the "yet not I" that the paradox is worked out in experience. There is no lessening in the element of mystery; it is not explained away. This is the human experience of divine grace operative in our lives. It certainly helps us understand how it is possible that God was in Christ.

The mystery of the incarnate Christ is understood through experience even if it defies human attempts to rationalize it. That is not to say that God cannot be thought of as an objective reality, or the incarnation be thought of in objective terms. As Father Bulgakov put it, "While the mystery cannot be stated in words without contradiction, it is actualized and lived in religious experience that is in the direct faith-relationship towards God."[22]

The German theologian Jürgen Moltmann testified in his autobiography, *A Broad Place*, "I had come to the Christian faith in God through fellowship with the assailed Jesus…But the traditional interpretation of sin, sacrifice and grace did not reach into the depth of my experiences of death."[23] It was his encounter with the sufferings of Jesus, rather than the liberating news of redemption, that drew the young Moltmann. He had seen tens of thousands killed in the bombing of Hamburg. He belonged to that generation of Germans who could not shake off the guilt of Auschwitz and the Holocaust. His own disabled brother had been murdered in a Nazi euthanasia program.

Through his own experience of suffering he came not only to a from below apprehension of the meaning of Christ's agony; he came also to a from above understanding of the fellowship of suffering at the heart of Christian teaching both on the incarnation and the Trinity.

Conclusion

In the final paragraph of *History and Interpretation in the Gospels*, the Anglican scholar Professor R. H. Lightfoot wrote,

> It seems then that the form of the earthly no less than of the heavenly Christ is for the most part hidden from us…And perhaps the more we ponder the matter, the more clearly we shall understand the reason for it, and therefore shall not wish it otherwise: we are probably as little prepared for one as for the other.

Evangelicalism has increasingly come to speak in terms of individual salvation and personal relationships. The quest for the historical Jesus demonstrated in each of its three phases that we can never fully know all that happened in Galilee or Jerusalem 2,000 years ago. The Christ who emerges from the pages of the Bible and the life of the church remains partially hidden from view. We do not approach Him solely as individuals who are on familiar terms with Him and with His story, but as worshippers in awe and reverence at the mystery of the self-revealing, self-giving God.

Appendix

The Confession of Chalcedon:

Following, then, the holy Fathers, we all unanimously teach that our Lord Jesus Christ is to us One and the same Son, the Self-same Perfect in Godhead, the Self-same Perfect in manhood; truly God and truly Man; the Self-same of a rational soul and body; co-essential with the Father according to the Godhead, the Self-same co-essential with us according to the Manhood; like us in all things, sin apart; before the ages begotten of the Father as to the Godhead, but in the last days, the Self-same, for us and for our salvation (born) of Mary the Virgin Theotokos as to the manhood; One and the Same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten; acknowledged in Two Natures unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the difference of the Natures being in no way removed because of the union, but rather the properties of each Nature being preserved,

and (both) concurring into One Person and One Hypostasis; not as though He were parted or divided into Two Persons, but one and the Self-same Son and Only-begotten God, Word, Lord, Jesus Christ; even as from the beginning the prophets have taught concerning Him, and as the Lord Jesus Christ Himself hath taught us, and as the Symbol of the Fathers hath handed down to us.

Endnotes

[1] Christology is the critical study of Christian teaching on the person and work of Christ.

[2] Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930)

[3] Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2010), 281.

[4] Ernst Kasemann (1906–1998)

[5] Emil Brunner (1889–1966)

[6] Philo of Alexandria (20 BC–50 AD) was a Hellenistic Jewish philosopher who attempted to harmonize and fuse Greek philosophy with Jewish philosophy.

[7] F. F. Bruce, *The Real Jesus* (London: Hodder & Stoughton Religious, 1985), 21.

[8] St. Anselm was the archbishop of Canterbury from 1093 to 1109.

[9] Alan Richardson and John Bowden, *New Dictionary of Theology*, 100.

[10] The underlining follows the original text.

[11] Soteriological/soteria refers to salvation.

[12] Alan Richardson and John Bowden, *New Dictionary of Theology*, 103.

[13] Gregory of Nazianzus (329–389) was the patriarch of Constantinople and one of the three Cappadoccian Fathers.

[14] Nestorius (428–431) was the bishop of Constantinople.

[15] See Appendix

[16] Cyril of Alexandria (376–444) was the patriarch of Alexandria

[17] George Florovsky (1893–1979) was a Russian Orthodox priest, theologian and ecumenist.

[18] Hypostatic union is the mutual indwelling of humanity and divinity in the nature of Christ. The word "hypostasis" appears several times in Hebrews.

[19] Emil Brunner as quoted by John McQuarrie in *Jesus Christ in Modern Thought*, 288–289.

[20] Rudolf Bultmann, *The Mediator*, 322.

[21] Revelation 13:8

[22] Father Bulgakov as quoted by Donald Baillie.

[23] Jurgen Moltmann, *A Broad Place: An Autobiography* (Fortress Press, 2009), chap. 16.

Christ in Culture

Karen Shakespeare

We listened and watched as the Salvation Army band marched up the rough road towards the hall. The lyrics to the music came to mind: "See amid the winter's snow / Born for us on earth below / See the Lamb of God appears / Promised from eternal years." It sounded somewhat incongruous on a hot and sunny Christmas morning in Nairobi, Kenya. The mix of cultures was clearly evident. The Victorian British poetry had placed the incarnation of Jesus in a context familiar to the original listeners, but here in Nairobi snow was highly unlikely on this, or any other, Christmas Day. The straight lines of the march and order of the brass musical arrangement fell uneasily to people whose musicianship was more fluid and full of improvisation. Yet the truth was for everyone: Jesus is the promised Messiah, born for us.

Who is Christ?

"The Son is the image of the invisible God…for God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross" (Colossians 1:15a, 19-20). Jesus Christ is the unique and universally relevant self-disclosure of God. He is God among His people, healing, restoring and redeeming. There are no exceptions to the reconciliation that is offered, a reconciliation that has the power to transform individuals,

---

Karen Shakespeare is a Lt. Colonel in The Salvation Army, the Chair of the International Theological Council and the Divisional Commander of the Southern Division in the United Kingdom.

communities and societies in the creation of a new humanity that encompasses both insiders and outsiders (Ephesians 2:11-22). Michael Nazir-Ali writes that Jesus "stands in our place and does what we cannot and will not do. His whole life of God-centredness, of doing His Father's will, of utter dedication and obedience, is to be seen as the inauguration of a renewed humanity…the new life bursting forth from the empty tomb is a foretaste of the transformation that God wills for the whole of the created order."[1]

The story of this divine revelation and decisive act of reconciliation is told in the context of a particular time and a particular culture, but it is a story that claims to be universal. Every description of Christ is an interpretation that is shaped by the church, history and culture.[2] His story is always heard and understood within a cultural context, yet it has the power to critique, challenge and to make sense of the multiple stories that are at the heart of all human cultures.

This paper will explore the relationship between Christ, culture and The Salvation Army. Following some initial definitions, it will review the major options for this relationship and make some tentative suggestions for the Salvation Army context.

Culture and Worldviews

A popular definition of culture states that it is "the way we do things around here."[3] It has to do with the conscious and unconscious rules and patterns that shape our way of life; the things that seem natural to think, do and believe. It is "the total non-biologically transmitted heritage of man."[4] Eunice Okorocha argues that culture unites the different aspects of life into a logical whole, and immersion leads to the belief that our way of doing things is right.[5]

Human beings are shaped by, and shapers of, culture. We learn the norms and expectations of our culture as we grow and develop, but as we come into contact with other cultures and experiences we contribute to the process of cultural change. As our beliefs and practices are called into question, a shift in allegiances begins, and new beliefs, practices and customs are assimilated or adapted as we form them in the light of our existing culture. Thus, "cultures are never monochrome and static; they are always complex and changing."[6]

Charles Kraft argues that human culture is part of the created order, a provision of a loving God for human well-being, which provides parameters for

belief, behaviour and for relationships.[7] It is "the milieu in which all encounters with or between human beings take place and in terms of which all human understanding and maturation occur."[8] God is transcendent and absolute, completely beyond or outside culture, which is a means through which He, and His people, can work in the world. This does not assume the rightness of all cultural norms, because every culture is inevitably affected by human rebellion against God. The implications of the reconciling work of Christ must be set as the standard against which each culture is measured.

When Christ redeems human beings they begin to act with new motivation and new allegiance. They may change their attitude to, and use of, cultural forms and processes in light of their faith. What is consistent with salvation, wholeness and human flourishing is affirmed, and that which is to do with sin is challenged and rejected. In time this can lead to cultural adaptation as groups of Christians live differently in the existing culture. Despite the possibility of misunderstanding, misjudgment or abuse, this model assumes that although God exists totally outside of culture and human beings totally within culture, there is the possibility of Christ shaping culture in new ways through His people.

Worldviews are the presuppositions that underlie our cultural beliefs and practices, the "deep-level perceptions of human reality."[9] Worldviews provide the stories through which we view reality and answer the basic questions of human existence; they are expressed in symbols and include praxis, a way of being in the world. They are the foundations upon which culture is built, the underlying concepts that test new experiences to see if they are culturally valid and acceptable. Worldviews can be challenged and changed in a process of deep significance for the individual as fundamental assumptions about life are revised, but on a daily basis they are often assumed and unquestioned. Thus, if our Christian experience and understanding does not challenge both our place in culture and the worldview that underlies it, what might be the limits of our transformation?

Christ and Culture

In Western theology, H. Richard Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture* (1952) is foundational to this subject, and subsequent writers have built on it. Niebuhr does not claim to have begun a new discussion, but rather to have joined a

conversation that has persisted since the early church wrestled with interpreting the connection of Jesus to Jewish culture. He acknowledges the variety of Christian approaches to the relationship between Christ and culture, contrasting the various works of the church with the ultimate work of Christ, and stating his "conviction that Christ as living Lord is answering the question in the totality of history and life in a fashion which transcends the wisdom of all His interpreters yet employs their partial insights and their necessary conflicts."[10]

Niebuhr identifies three broad streams of thought: "Christ against culture," "Christ of culture" and "Christ above culture" The latter takes three distinct forms: synthesis, paradox and transformation. Each contributes to our understanding, but all offer a partial interpretation and none provides the definitive answer. Niebuhr maintains that each believer has a duty to consider the arguments and make a response in faith and in the awareness that any decision is limited by incomplete understanding, the measure of faith, location in culture and core values.[11]

Christ against Culture

"Christ against culture" sees the world as a hostile environment for Christian belief and practice,[12] resulting in Christian withdrawal from worldly influence. The declaration of Jesus as Lord is accompanied by rejection of the surrounding culture and the construction of a Christian environment, a safe space free from contamination by the world.[13] It maintains a clear distinction between Christianity and culture and advocates a radical Christian lifestyle. Some aspects of holiness traditions resonate with this approach, with the creation of separated communities of true believers seeking to practice holiness and avoid the godlessness of the world. Nevertheless, the very act of withdrawal marks out Christ against culture as flawed and partial in its response to Christ, who did not withdraw from humanity, but "made His dwelling among us" and lived distinctively in the world.[14] In His final prayer for the disciples He did not ask that they be taken out of the world, but that they be protected in the face of evil.[15] Thomas K. Johnson comments, "probably Jesus recognised that the real problem with worldliness is not something 'out there in the world' but rather something deep inside ourselves—our own unbelief, pride and ingratitude toward God."[16] Withdrawal is not the answer.

Challenges for The Salvation Army – I

The faithful existence of The Salvation Army depends upon its engagement with the world and its witness to the surrounding culture of the universal relevance of Christ. However, it is also true that, at some times, in some places and to some extent, Salvationist practice has reflected the withdrawal that is typical of Christ against culture. Alongside an espoused theology that prioritizes evangelism, service and social justice exists Salvationists' self-preservation. The early Salvationist practice of keeping converts and soldiers busy in an attempt to help them build an alternative lifestyle has led to a multiplicity of events and programs, a self-sufficient subculture that emphasizes Christian values and protects against worldly influences. Thus, alongside mass evangelism like open-air ministry and evangelistic campaigns, where engagement with the world happens in the relative safety of the group, Salvationists are encouraged to subscribe to an internal culture which has the potential to encourage separation. Thus families, friends, music, literature, leisure activities and, at times, employment opportunities may be bound together to form a coherent whole-life focus. Though this lifestyle may only apply to a minority of Salvationists and may be equally true of members of other churches, it nevertheless illustrates a potential danger for all Christians: a retreat from the world. The inevitable consequence is a widening gap between Christianity and culture, a loss of communication and isolation.

There is much that is valuable in Salvation Army tradition, but if the original purpose is lost and it becomes traditionalism, motivated by its own internal values, it will have lost its way, and the Army will lose its connection with the culture in which it serves.

Christ of Culture

In contrast, "Christ of culture" sees Jesus as the fulfillment of society's hopes and aspirations. Unrelentingly positive in its view of the relationship between Christ and secular powers, it interprets culture in the light of Christ, viewing those things that are consistent with Christianity as most important while understanding Christ in terms of culture. The position is attractive because it makes Jesus seem understandable in the light of societal norms, using familiar and accessible language, and Christian authenticity is to be found by affirmation

of, and immersion in, culture. However, this is a weak position that does not do justice to the robust challenge of the gospel. Both Christians and non-Christians criticize it as inadequate, compromised and lacking in theological depth. Niebuhr summarizes: "It is not possible honestly to confess that Jesus is the Christ of culture unless one can confess much more than this."[17]

Challenges for The Salvation Army – II

As the church attempts to avoid the pitfalls of separation and isolation, it is confronted with the equal and opposite dangers of loss of distinctive values and collusion with non-Christians. This is typically evidenced in lifestyle changes and compromised standards of living. Almost 150 years since its inception, in many territories The Salvation Army faces challenges resulting from societal change and rapidly evolving lifestyles. Our internationalism adds further complexity, as each territory seeks to be relevant to its own culture. The reality is that we cannot remain simply as we are, but neither can we unreflectively and unconditionally accept the changing values and practices of society. The Salvation Army must find a way to respond to the many cultures in which it operates without compromising the essential values of Christ. It may not look the same in every context and the critical issues that each territory must address may vary, but the Army cannot uncritically embrace cultural change. The Soldier's Covenant states, "I will make the values of the Kingdom of God and not the values of the world the standard for my life." This alone must shape our response.

Christ above culture

"Christ above culture" is described as the church of the center, falling between the extremes of radical discipleship and cultural accommodation. Recognizing both the primacy of divine grace and the necessity of obedient service, Christ above culture locates the church as working out its relationship with God within society. Culture is viewed as neither good nor evil and has the potential to be elevated and transformed by Christ.

A synthetic solution attempts to take both Christ and culture seriously, affirming the authority of each in its own sphere, yet also recognizing difference.[18]

Colin Greene attests that Jesus represents the answer to the most funda-

mental questions of human existence and human destiny, at every age. "Each age constructs an image of Jesus out of the cultural hopes, aspirations, biblical and doctrinal interfaces that both make Jesus accessible and simultaneously illustrate something on the genius of the particular age in question."[19] Greene argues for the inevitable interaction and interdependence of our understanding of Christ and of culture; culture shapes how we understand Christ, and how we understand Christ shapes culture. Whereas this is helpful in describing the relationship between Christians and society, questions about the relative authority of Christ and culture are inevitable. Who or what is the final judge when there is conflict or an impasse?

Dualism argues that a synthetic solution does not face up to the pervasive reality of human sin and the need for reconciliation to God through Christ, but it also seeks to both hold together, and distinguish between, loyalty to Christ and responsibility for culture. In practical terms, dualism has led to both an antinomianism, which refuses to accept the authority of human (and therefore sinful) law, and to cultural conservatism, which allows state and economic life to continue unchallenged but exhorts Christians to live exemplary lives within the existing social norms, which are transitory and sinful.

Finally, Niebuhr moves towards a conversionist motif, which he believes represents the great central tradition of the church. This formulation of Christ above culture acknowledges the gap between Christ and culture and sees its resolution in transformation. It is therefore less susceptible to compromise than synthesis and more hopeful toward culture than the paradox of dualism. Holding together themes of creation and redemption, incarnation and atonement, the conversionist looks to the redemption of culture through the cross. History is thus a continual interaction between God and humanity, which looks toward a final eschatological consummation but also acknowledges the transformational power of a present encounter with God.

Michael Nazir-Ali writes, "A proper view of the uniqueness of God's revelation in Christ and its universal significance must be at the start, and at the heart, of Christian responses to this complex and ever-changing world that we inhabit."[20] All that is necessary for human flourishing arises from a proper understanding of the person and work of Christ. The church has a responsibility to be the "new humanity,"[21] to create communities that produce and model the integrity and wholeness that marks true Christianity. It must be distinctive, affirming what

is good and critiquing all that is inconsistent with biblical standards of justice, compassion and peace. The church must be both incarnational and prophetic, holding the values of each in tension as it seeks to be faithful in the present age.

Differences are inevitable. Our starting point will influence our engagement with culture. Different cultures present different challenges and the possibility of cultural change varies according to context. The priorities of a persecuted minority church will differ from those of a church that it is a dominant power, or one regarded as antiquated and irrelevant. Similarly, Christians will not always agree on the way forward, either within or between cultures. Our interpretation of both culture and Christ is limited by understanding and experience; nevertheless, we can know and proclaim the Lordship of Christ in ways that are appropriate to our context.

The role of the Bible is crucial. D.A. Carson sees the broad biblical narrative as the "norming norm" that not only allows us to describe culture, but also to say what it should be, and to work to bring about change where necessary. This narrative provides us with a worldview that shapes our response. "The Lordship of Christ over all of culture demands that Christians, even while they pursue evangelism and disciple-making, must earnestly seek to establish Christ's claims within the broader culture in which they live, not by withdrawing and setting up counter-models, but by engaging and transforming the culture.[22] This commitment to engagement can only be effective if it is founded upon love and grace. The focus must not be on judgment, but on reformation and enhancement.

Christians are not called out of the world, but in "the ultimate cross-cultural experience," those who are redeemed by Christ are sent back into the world as both hearers and bearers of the word of God.[23] Johnson identifies four distinctive engagements between the Bible and culture: critique, correlation, counter-culture (construction) and contribution. Firstly, Scripture critiques culture, confronting values that are not consistent with Christ's demands.[24] Secondly, in a process described as correlation, the Bible speaks to a range of human needs, life questions and deep anxieties, offering an end to alienation and separation through Christ. As all of life is brought under the lordship of Christ, a Christian counter-culture is constructed in which new relationships and practices demonstrate the values of Christ's kingdom. Finally, when Christians live distinctively according to biblical principles, they contribute in positive ways to the wider culture of their place and

time, becoming agents of transformation and influencing societal norms.

Challenges for The Salvation Army – III

The conversionist model resonates clearly with Salvationist faith and practice. Our faith is rooted in a story of transformation that is not culturally limited but is universally relevant for all time. An inevitable consequence of this story is the changed lives of individuals and groups. If it does not lead to new praxis, the story has not been fully heard. However, Christian practice alone is not sufficient; it must be accompanied by a deep inner transformation.

Our worldview shapes how we act and react. It embodies our ultimate concerns. Christ challenges not only our cultural practices, but also the worldview that undergirds them. If our worldview is not transformed, we will not be changed at the deepest level, and at times of stress or anxiety we will revert to pre-Christian beliefs and practices. A challenge for the Army is to find ways of speaking to the deeply held but often unconscious worldviews that shape the lives of its people. In every culture, Salvationists must find ways of understanding, communicating and living the message of Christ who will affirm, judge, purify, heal and transform His people in the depths of their being.

In a rapidly changing world with a multiplicity of cultures this will inevitably lead to diversity. The practices of former years and different places must be reviewed and, where necessary, supplemented, adapted or abandoned. We cannot assume that what is effective in one age and environment will be in another. "If the gospel is to be received as something which communicates the truth about the real human situation…it has to be communicated in the language of those to whom it is addressed and has to be clothed in symbols that are meaningful to them."[25]

Conclusion

The Salvation Army cannot fail to respond to changes in its environment, or it will become like a dinosaur, unable to survive in a new landscape, and doomed to extinction. Nor can be like a chameleon, taking on the color of its surroundings, uncritically accepting what it encounters. This can only lead to absorption into the prevailing culture, and the loss of that distinctive prophetic

voice that accompanies, and lives in tension with, incarnational mission. If the Army is to survive and flourish in the twenty-first century we must learn to read cultures and find the resources to critique and to dialogue with what we find there. A sound understanding of the biblical story is essential, as well as the courage to be the people Christ calls us to be in our time and context. The Salvation Army will not remain the same but will be transformed, drawing on the life of the past and being renewed in the present.

Ultimately, the people of God have a dual calling: Christ calls us out of our natural culture to Himself and then sends us back into the world, so that in any place or culture we may be witnesses to His transforming work.

Endnotes

[1] Michael Nazir-Ali, *The Unique and Universal Christ: Jesus in a Plural World* (Paternoster, 2008), 53, 60.

[2] H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1952), 29.

[3] See Marvin Bower, *The Will to Manage: Corporate Success Through Programmed Management* (McGraw-Hill, 1966).

[4] Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Orbis Books, 1990), 46.

[5] Eunice Okorocha, "Cultural Issues and the Biblical Message," *Africa Bible Commentary*, 2nd edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010).

[6] Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 141.

[7] Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Orbis Books, 1990), 104.

[8] Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Orbis Books, 1990), 113.

[9] N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Fortress Press, 1992), 123.

[10] H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1952), 18.

[11] H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1952), 234.

[12] See 1 John 2:15-17 for a biblical example of this interpretation of the world.

[13] The world is here identified as evil (1 John 2:15-17).

[14] John 1:14

[15] John 17:15

[16] Thomas K. Johnson, "Christ and Culture," *Evangelical Review of Theology*. Vol. 35, No. 1, (2011): 4-16:5.

[17] H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1952), 122.

[18] Matthew 22:21

[19] Jaroslav Pelikan as quoted by Colin J.D. Green, *Christology in Cultural Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003), 23.

[20] Michael Nazir-Ali, *The Unique and Universal Christ: Jesus in a Plural World* (Paternoster, 2008), xi.

[21] Ephesians 2:15

[22] D.A. Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited* (Grand Rapids, MI: William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008), 81.

[23] Thomas K. Johnson, "Christ and Culture," *Evangelical Review of Theology*. Vol. 35, No. 1, (2011): 4-16:7.

[24] See for example Hosea, Micah 6:8

[25] Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 141.

All Things Under His Feet?

Wendy Swan

"There is not a square inch, literally 'thumb's breadth' in the whole of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry 'Mine!'" [1]

The Lord Is Jesus!

The New Testament affirms that Jesus Christ is Lord of Heaven and earth.[2] In Him the Word of God, which creates and rules the world, became incarnate. God Himself, the Creator and Lord of Heaven and earth, is revealed in Christ.[3] In announcing the arrival of the Kingdom of God,[4] Jesus declared that the new and final order of history had come and, at the same time, was "not yet."[5] His Kingdom and Lordship then is eschatological in nature—inclusive of both present reality and future. He *is* Lord by virtue of His passing through suffering and death to His resurrection and exaltation; and in the distant future He *will be* Lord at the final judgment of the world with every knee bowing and "every tongue confessing that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father."[6]

Christ's Lordship manifests particularly in His rule over the church: those in the world who gather to affirm His Lordship and then scatter in service in His name, for His sake.[7] By its very existence, the church proclaims to the whole of creation that the world stands under the Lordship of Christ.[8]

The Lordship God gave to Christ found its consummation in the final day of

---

Wendy Swan is a Lt. Colonel in The Salvation Army, the Secretary of the International Theological Council, the Command President of Women's Ministries and the Chair of Moral and Social Issues Council of the Hong Kong and Macau Command.

judgment and fulfillment. But as God's promise and gift, it is even now already real, present, unlimited and complete, whether or not humanity acknowledges it. Wherever God's grace awakens the miracle of faith, the "hidden" Lordship of Christ is made plain and visible.[9] But beyond the last judgment, when all enemies will be subject to Him, the Lord will be visible to all.[10] The relationship between the church and the world cannot be seen in its true light apart from the awareness of the coming judgment and promise of the coming Kingdom. The proclamation of the Lord's coming therefore is already the judgment upon all who claim self-sufficiency and self-security. His promised coming bears the hope which dispels all apparent meaninglessness of human life and suffering and provides guidance and direction in the ordering of the world's affairs.[11]

What is unique and revolutionary about the Christian faith in Jesus is not His deification and glorification by the church (which has given Him many of the theological and political titles of worldly rulers).[12] Often misunderstood is the statement that Jesus is, by virtue of His resurrection, Lord;[13] for Jesus could be understood—in analogy to earthly rulers—as these rulers' heavenly overlord. Perhaps a more accurate statement is the reverse: "the Lord is Jesus." The image of the ruler is related to the person and history of Jesus and thus radically transformed. For Christians to use the titles of rule and lordship in order to call Jesus the true Lord and ruler of the world—the Jesus who was mocked because of His helplessness and murdered on the cross by rulers—involves a radical reversal of the ideal of rule and kingship: the Lord as a servant of all; the ruler of the world as a friend of tax collectors and sinners; the judge of the world as a poor outcast.

Opposing Powers

The church is fully aware that God's will is not yet done on earth as it is in Heaven.[14] The New Testament speaks of several powers that remain active in their opposition to Christ. Satan, though defeated and cast out of Heaven, still "roams" the earth.[15] Sin, though condemned, still exerts a terrifying force both within and outside the church.[16] Principalities and powers represent the structure of the universe in the present age. While deriving their existence from God, they may nevertheless stand in opposition to His will. Where loyalty to Christ is lacking, they enslave humanity.[17]

One can see the influence of powers in opposition to Jesus Christ in human pride, rebellion, ingratitude and death.[18] However, Christ is the bearer of God's authority to forgive sin, cast out devils and prevail against sickness and death.

The New Testament indicates that behind the persecution that Christians may endure lies the hostility of powers under the rule of Satan.[19] The death of Christ was a direct consequence of the attempt of the powers to destroy Jesus, who was discovered to be none other than "the Lord of glory."[20] This attempt led to His victory. Christians share in this victory so that despite persecution and difficulty, we are more than conquerors, and by faith reign with Christ.[21] The Christian life, then, acknowledges this constant tension between opposing powers.

In spite of this, the love of God through His Spirit may guard the hearts and minds of Christians who stand against the "wiles of the devil."[22] The New Testament affirms the completeness of Christ's victory[23] and claims that the salvation Christ obtained embraces the whole world, including the cosmic powers. Because Jesus is Lord over the powers, we have the possibility of the alleviation of human poverty, suffering and injustice in each generation, culture and context. But how and in what manner might such Lordship be affirmed and realized?

Lordship Affirmed

Within the Church

The nature of the church's internal life makes an effective declaration to the world, for good or ill, concerning Christ's power to overcome social problems, create community, reconcile conflict and reverse purely human estimates of what is understood as greatness and power.[24] Where our domestic and social relationships are shaped in the Lord,[25] and where the Body of Christ is built up in the world, an inescapable influence is made in surrounding society. Our treatment of each other never merely demonstrates love and care in a humane way, but rather presents opportunities to allow the grace of God to work through us as individuals and our structures in such a way that they can be conformed to the image of Christ and bear witness to the world of God's grace.[26] The exercising of power in the church through its systems of governances must always be grounded in the proper nature of the church as "communion." In other words, any teaching must communicate more than just words; it must

also communicate a life orientation in Jesus Christ: a way of being *in* Christ. In its internal exercising of power, the church can communicate the content of faith in a way that accords wholly, partially or not at all with the meaning of faith. It is this process of listening to the authentic experiences of others that marks the difference between the church functioning as a collective and functioning as a communion.

The call to the church is to demonstrate the Lordship of Christ in the world through self-emptying love. The cross is not just an example to be followed; it is to be put into practice in daily life. But it is an example nonetheless, because it is the exemplar—the template, the model—for what God now wants to do by His Spirit in the world, through His people. N. T. Wright reminds us that the church is never more in danger that when it sees itself simply as the solution-bearer and forgets that every day it too must say, "Lord have mercy on me, a sinner,"[27] and allow that confession to work its way into genuine humility. The problem is when a Christian empire seeks to impose its will dualistically on the world by labeling other parts of the world as evil while seeing itself as the avenging army of God.[28]

Within the World

God's people are related to the people, structures, systems and institutions of this world.[29] Yet God's people have been granted freedom.[30] Christians are free to be subject to rulers, but only insofar as that subjection can be lived out in the freedom that comes in being subject to the true Lord.[31] Wages are to be earned, but only insofar as doing so makes clear that the gospel is free of charge. Taxes are to be paid but only insofar as those taxes are "things that are God's."[32] Customs are to be observed, but only insofar as that leads towards liberating others to find the freedom in Jesus Christ.[33]

Unfortunately, there are institutions and systems that cannot be preserved in a Kingdom of love. If it is subordination to powers that makes men and women human, and if God desires to save His creatures in their humanity, then the powers cannot simply be destroyed, set aside, broken or replaced. If we accept that exploitive powers are part of a fallen creation, then we should consider their redemption and restoration of purpose.[34] The church of Jesus Christ is about restoration, but restoration is costly and takes time. However, the hope

that such unconverted systems cannot *finally* stand in the presence of the one who raised that Lord from the dead weakens their oppressive hold and places one in a position to do a redemptive work.[35]

Therefore, those who declare that Jesus is Lord will inevitably undertake the task of transforming the cultures and neighborhoods in which they live, knowingly or not.[36] They understand not only that the world is the focus of God's redemptive efforts, but also that the world as it is now is far from ultimate.[37] Any action to be taken in transformation must follow the lead of what emerges in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Himself, and what emerges is the annihilation and the embrace of everything that is, in other words: redemptive love in the midst of absolute loss.[38]

Christians are to stand with everyone, particularly those who stand closest to the cross: the neglected, the poor, the homeless, the sinner, the forgotten and the lost.[39] The church is to make clear that the crucified and resurrected one is Lord, to walk with everyone to the cross, to hang there with everyone, to rise with everyone to newness of life.

The self-deification to which institutions are inclined must be unmasked. No institution is complete in itself; nor is it in a position to guarantee its own survival. The Lordship of Jesus means that every institution must come to be what it is not yet. God alone grants reality (and from the outside) and every reality has its reason for being only in God.[40]

William Cavanaugh reminds us that the church is a gift of the God who is alive with freedom.[41] It is neither a political party nor a program. It is nothing in itself and lives by the breath of the Spirit of God. It inhabits a space and time that is never guaranteed by coercion or institutional weight but must be constantly asked for, as a gift of the Spirit. By the power of the Holy Spirit we imagine a different order.[42] But such imagination must be enacted so it does not remain a dream. The church is not the church unless it bears bodily witness to its Lord. The way to bear witness to the broken body and shed blood of Christ in a broken world is for the church to place its body in sacrificial solidarity with those who suffer.

To lay one's body down in this present evil age is to believe that the reality of this world is not the truth. To live a holy life is to love not only with good intentions, but also with hands, backs and blood. It means to give where God gives, to be gifted with the *meta-nois*, the mind of Christ.[43] This is the work "which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life."[44] We are to expend our

bodies in "politics of love"—standing in the gap, giving our own bodies to be broken, our blood to be shed for one another in witness to the one at the right hand of God the Father. God is coming to reign and rule precisely where the Pharisees will not be found: among the poor, the sick, the dying and the damned.

God's Politics—and Ours?

Insofar as theology is about personal and social transformation, it must also be political, for the nature of the society is at stake in any act performed in the name of Christ. Our encounter with the commissioning and universal Lord marks not just a change in us or a change in the world—most fundamentally, we are in a new world.

It is this newness that the apostle Paul expresses when describing his encounter with the exalted Christ on the road to Damascus. And while what Paul describes is a revelation, we share with Him this encounter with Christ according to His universality. At the heart of Paul's politics is an immoderate trust in space and time as the medium of communication of divine truth.[45] Divine truth can never be grasped except by living within it, for it is a truth that we can experience as something that fills us but of which we can see no limit.

It is this lived experience of truth within discipleship that grounds Salvationist politics in resilience and hope. As disciples, we freely choose to trust a power that is greater than us, freely allow ourselves to be shaped by this power and commit to being instruments of this power to shape the world. We do not live politically by our own power, only by the power of the Creator who is present in Jesus Christ. The Salvation Army has no politics in the sense of favoring one political party or system over another, but we do engage in politics in the sense that the word itself suggests.[46] I submit for consideration what might provide an embryonic framework for Salvationist politics, grounded in its call to holiness:

> We call Salvationists to restate and live out the doctrine of holiness in all its dimensions—personal, relational, social and *political*—in the context of our cultures and in the idioms of our day while allowing for, and indeed prizing, such diversity of experience and expression as is in accord with the Scriptures.[47]

Politics of Protest

This theme begins theologically with the disruptive presence of the risen Christ in Acts 9, who speaks to Paul on behalf of the church in Damascus. Jesus puts Himself bodily, disruptively, in Paul's way. Protest begins when we put our bodies somewhere where others do not expect or want us to be. It is a form of disruption. Protest need not be violent. Indeed, in its most powerful forms it is peaceful, but still disruptive. Part of the energy of political protest in this disruptive sense comes from the fact that it can lay bare to public view the nature of sovereign power within the state: the moral character of the state we have built up or which we allow it to be, as a political community.[48]

On the road to Damascus, Jesus speaks on behalf of the church in Damascus. Salvationist politics of protest must also embody this principle. We must always speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. This is a fundamental part of our embodiment in Christ: we empower the marginalized, impoverished or oppressed to find their own voice. We bring their situations to the attention of society. This must inclusively address the common needs of people, whatever their beliefs. This, too, needs a certain kind of Christian speaking. This is a compassionate, open communion that turns outward, projecting solidarity beyond its own boundaries. It is in its compassionate and therefore active commitment to the marginalized, poor and dispossessed that our Army demonstrates how its identity is grounded in communion with the Lord Jesus.

As a "boots on the ground" and visible people of God, we protest racism and sexism; we protest systems that imprison people in social or economic classes; we protest national expenditures of resources for the sake of self-preservation. We support and partner with institutions that help clarify the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ.[49] We join hands with like-minded individuals pursuing the same general goals as us, recognizing that they may have different reasons. There is much with which to agree in peace initiatives, economic reform movements and those that seek physiological, psychological or social welfare. It of course takes wisdom and deliberation to decide how to distinguish between relative allies and those that are not. But to make clear that Jesus Christ is Lord requires that we not let the given order be. Our every act must make clear that this world is the focus of God's redemptive resolve. We do so because Jesus Himself has awakened grace and compassion in our lives, because our Lord

poured out His life for those who are lost and impoverished and because no servant is above his or her master.

Politics of Compassion

I define compassion as empathy with action. This distinction is important.[50] Compassion involves awareness of suffering or need as well as judgment and consideration of the best way to respond, taking anger into account. Such anger is not merely expressive, emotional or impulsive, but purposeful and controlled—issuing in a reasoned response to a situation.[51]

Marcus Borg has paid particular attention to the contemporary implications of a biblical understanding of compassion, including its connection to justice and sovereignty.[52] His work offers a politically relevant reading of the implications of compassion, which corresponds to his usage of love or agape.[53] He argues that what is commonly judged as apolitical or anti-political is *eros*, or filial love, rather than agape. Agape is not solely focused on strong feelings between two people, dependent on the qualities of the other or bound up with need for the other but with the other's neediness. This is self-emptying love for others. It displays a true sense of the disinterested;[54] no power relationship between agent and recipient of compassion, only concern for the welfare and justice of all. Compassion takes the individual beyond the immediacy of one-on-one relationships into the public realm, facilitating both recognition and visible presence of the hidden Other.[55] Politics of compassion based on agape also moves towards recognition of the *causes* of suffering, injustice and inequality. Attention to the needs of the individual sufferer alone is never sufficient. Compassionate action challenges existing political arrangements where the causes of the suffering are systemic—failures of social justice rooted in a given socio-political order. And so, as a political paradigm, compassion "lead[s] us to see the impact of social structures on people's lives. It leads to seeing that the categories of 'marginal', 'inferior' and 'outcast' are human impositions. It leads to anger towards the sources of human suffering, whether individual or systemic."[56]

What might an adoption of the politics of protest and compassion offer the world? Quite simply—it will challenge the status quo. Such politics require holy courage, but is this not what we ask for when we pray, "Except I am moved with compassion, how dwelleth thy Spirit in me?"[57]

Further Reading

Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998.

Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958.

Barth, Karl. "The Doctrine of Reconciliation." *Church Dogmatics* IV.1. London: Bloomsbury, T&T Clark, 1956.

Beckwith, Francis J. *Politics for Christians: Statecraft as Soulcraft*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010.

Borg, M.J. *Meeting Jesus for the First Time: The Historical Jesus and the Heart of Contemporary Faith.* San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1994.

———. *The God We Never Knew: Beyond Dogmatic Religion to a More Authentic Contemporary Faith*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1997.

Bretherton, Luke. *Christianity and Contemporary Politics*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Brueggemann, Walter. *The Prophetic Imagination*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 2001.

Cavanaugh, William T. *Theopolitical Imagination.* London: T&T Clark, 2002.

———. *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics and the Body of Christ.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1988.

Clifton, Shaw. *Who Are These Salvationists? An Analysis for the 21st Century*. Alexandria, VA: Crest Books, 1999.

Davies, Oliver. "Christian Politics." *Theology of Transformation*. London: T&T Clark, 2007.

Davies, Oliver, Paul D. Jantz, and Clemens Sedmak. *Transformation Theology*. London: T&T Clark, 2007.

Greenholm, C.H. *Christian Social Ethics in a Revolutionary Age: An Analysis of the Social Ethics of John C. Binkett*. Uppsala: Tofters Tryckeri, 1973.

Gutierrez, Gustavo. *A Theology of Liberation.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1973.

Keen, Craig. "The Church and Culture." *The Transgression of the Integrity of God: Essays and Addresses* Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2012.

Moltmann, Jurgen. *The Church in the Power of the Spirit.* London: SCM Press, 1977.

Nessbaum, Martha. *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Storkey, Alan. *Jesus and Politics: Confronting the Powers*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005.

The Salvation Army. *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine.* London: Salvation Books, 2010.

———. *The Song Book of The Salvation Army.* Alexandria, VA: The Salvation Army, 2015.

Tinder, Glenn E. *The Political Meaning of Christianity: The Prophetic Stance: An Interpretation.* San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991.

Ure, Michael, and Mervyn Frost, eds. *The Politics of Compassion*. London: Routledge, 2014.

Whitebrook, M. "Compassion as a Political Virtue." *Political Studies* 50(3) (2002): 529-44.

Williams, Rowan. *Faith in the Public Square*. London: Bloomsbury, 2012.

Wink, Walter. *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* Minneapolis:Fortress Press, 1982.

Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *Until Justice and Peace Embrace*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1987.

Wright, N.T. *Evil and the Justice of God*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Press, 2006.

Yoder, John Howard. *The Politics of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1994.

Endnotes

[1] Abraham Kuyper cited by Nicholas Wolterstorff in "Christian Political Reflection: Diognetian or Augustinian?" *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 20, No. 2 (1999): 152. Kuyper taught that the Christian faith is not simply personal salvation but rather a worldview, an all-embracing understanding of reality of the world that has God as its center with far-reaching implications in every area of life.

[2] Matthew 28:18

[3] John 1:14; Colossians 2:9

[4] Alternatively "Kingdom of Heaven"

[5] The Greek *basileia* translates as "kingdom." While it has sometimes implied static governance, it is most properly understood in its dynamic sense of kingship and the actual act of reigning.

[6] Philippians 2:6-11

[7] The Salvation Army, *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine* (London: Salvation Books, 2010), 250-252.

[8] Ephesians 3:10

[9] Augustine of Hippo in *City of God* describes the church as an exiled people in the "city of the world," called to maintain a distinctive ethos while surrounded by disbelief and to live according to a future hope in which the church will be delivered from the world in order to become part of the "city of God." Until that deliverance, the church shares the fallen nature of the world. The Salvation Army, *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine* (London: Salvation Books, 2010), 237.

[10] Hebrews 10:13; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 1:7

[11] Mark 8:35f; John 12:25; Romans 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:4-11. John Wesley particularly emphasized the present reality of the Kingdom of God, and subsequently so did The Salvation Army. He taught that as individuals were transformed by the grace of God they would experience Kingdom

life in the present. However, the establishment of the Kingdom on earth went beyond an internal rule of Christ in human hearts. It demanded an outward expression, which impacted the world.

[12] In Ancient Egypt, pharaohs were considered gods. Following Julius Caesar, who was formally deified as "the Divine Julius," and Caesar Augustus, *divi filius* ("son of the Divine One"), many Roman Emperors in the first through fourth centuries claimed divinity. Examples abound in various cultures and faith groups regarding divinity and lordship—Chinese emperors have been deified as "sons of Heaven" since 221 BC. Japanese emperors were until 1945 considered divine descendants of the goddess Amaterasu. The Dalai Lama is considered to be a re-incarnation within Tibetan Buddhism.

[13] The Salvation Army, *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine* (London: Salvation Books, 2010), 130.

[14] Matthew 6:10

[15] John 12:31

[16] Romans 5:12ff

[17] Galatians 4:8-11; Colossians 2:16,20

[18] "Moral failure always begins with a rejection of God's sovereignty and ends in oppression by corrupt, self-seeking hierarchies or powerful elites. Nevertheless the Lord not only judges and punishes this sin but He is also the Redeemer who will re-enable right living" (Zephaniah 3:1-13). The Salvation Army, *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine* (London: Salvation Books, 2010), 120.

[19] Romans 8:35ff; Ephesians 6:10ff; 1 Peter 4:12-14

[20] 1 Corinthians 2:8

[21] Romans 8:37-39

[22] Ephesians 6:10ff; Philippians 4:7; 1 John 4:4

[23] The Salvation Army, *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine* (London: Salvation Books, 2010), 224.

[24] Matthew 20:25-26; Ephesians 2:11-19

[25] 2 Corinthians 5:16

[26] Salvationists believe that through grace humanity can be restored to the image of God, *imago Dei* (natural, political, moral). Outside the purview of this paper is the question of how structures and systems might reflect the Lordship of Christ and demonstrate grace in matters of governance.

[27] Luke 18:13

[28] N.T. Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Press, 2006). See also a paper entitled "Power—Use and Abuse: Exploring the Issue of Power in the Church and in The Salvation Army." Available through Thought_Matters@nzf.salvationarmy.org.

[29] "Any account of the Christian life has to reckon with the dual problematic of Christian political thought: that we are called to seek first the Kingdom of God but also to seek the welfare of the city even though it be Babylon." Luke Bretherton, *Christianity and Contemporary Politics* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 189.

[30] Galatians 5:1ff Moltmann challenges the church to remember that the acknowledgement of Jesus as Lord leads not to domination through service but to service for freedom. Jurgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (London: SCM Press, 1977).

[31] Romans 13

[32] Mark 12:13-17

[33] 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

[34] Walter Wink suggests it is precisely because the powers have been created in, through and for the humanizing purposes of God in Christ that they must be honored, criticized, resisted and redeemed. This is what Jesus did, concretely and historically, by living a genuinely free and human existence in contesting the powers. Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1982), 1. John Yoder in his work *Politics of Jesus* reinforces this view but declares that the power's sovereignty must be broken, not redeemed.

[35] 1 Peter 2:11-3:9; 4:7-11

[36] Tertullian (c. 160-225) in *Apology* (chap. 37) says that Christians are often accused of being unengaged with the affairs of life because they are too concerned with eternity. However, as he also underlines, in reality, Christians participate in the economic and social life of the empire and offer benefits to it. Because of this, Christianity actively supports the social and moral order. In *Stromata* (4.26), Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215) accuses human cities of being cities in name only—claiming that only Heaven could be properly described as a city in a perfect sense. However, Clement also believed that the presence of Christians on earth, while an "alien citizenship," is nevertheless a true citizenship. The life of the heavenly city may in some dimension be anticipated here on earth. In that sense Christianity's alien citizenship is a seed of transformation acting within and on behalf of the world. Similar sentiments are echoed in Origen (c. 185-254) in his *Contra Celsum*. John Chrysostom (c. 347-407) in *Homilies* (16.2) notes that for Christians the only true city is the heavenly Jerusalem. However, he taught that earthly citizenship should be so informed by a heavenly vision that it is transfigured and the social order is sacralized.

[37] Wolterstorff terms this undertaking of redemptive work within the world as "world formative Christianity," which holds that the saints' responsibility to struggle for reform in the social order is one facet of discipleship for which our Lord Jesus has called the redeemed. It is not an addition to our faith; it is part of the Christian DNA. Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983).

[38] Craig Keen, *The Transgression of the Integrity of God* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012), chaps. 10 and 11.

[39] The Salvation Army, *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine* (London: Salvation Books, 2010), 253.

[40] "To be converted is to know and experience the fact that, contrary to the laws of physics, we can stand straight, according to the Gospel, only when our center of gravity is outside ourselves." Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1973), 205.

[41] William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics and the Body of Christ* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988).

[42] Both Walter Brueggemann's *Prophetic Imagination* and Cavanaugh's *Theopolitical Imagination* are excellent resources for exploring this concept.

[43] 1 Corinthians 2:16

[44] Ephesians 2:10

[45] Oliver Davies, "Christian Politics," *Transformation Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2014).

[46] Derived from the Latin *polis*, meaning the city and its citizenship.

[47] The Salvation Army, "Call to Holiness," *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine* (London: Salvation Books, 2010), 217.

[48] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).

[49] The Salvation Army continues to value and partner with like-minded organizations at international, national and local levels, working together for the betterment of humanity.

[50] In contrast to pity, compassion involves far greater commitment to substantial help and a willingness to become personally involved. One can pity a person while maintaining a safe emotional distance. While pity can be condescending, compassion assumes equality in common humanity. Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 301-304.

[51] To the extent that anger is based on thought and evaluation, directed at the causes of suffering and informed by knowledge of events, that anger is objective and rational. The Salvation Army's response to social injustice includes "swift evaluation of the damage to the underprivileged; an absence of fear; a clear idea of the goal and how to achieve it; an understanding of what matters most to people; a readiness to be a voice for the voiceless; and the will to take definite action to bring about a change in the situation." Shaw Clifton, *Who Are These Salvationists? An Analysis for the 21st Century* (Alexandria, VA: Crest Books, 1999), 162.

[52] Marcus Borg has paid particular attention to the contemporary implications of compassion to justice and sovereignty. Marcus Borg, *The God We Never Knew: Beyond Dogmatic Religion to a More Authentic Contemporary Faith* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1997).

[53] Love has sometimes been considered a politically inappropriate emotion because of its manifestation in intense, one-on-one relationships that, for some, lead to irrational

thinking. Because of this, there is then no space between people, for the in-between space is where politics takes place. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

[54] I am grateful to Lt. Colonel Ian Barr for sharing this concept at the International Doctrine Council in March 2014.

[55] Arendt argues, "Public visibility and natural invisibility constitute the criteria of sound political action and citizenship" in her reflections on stateless refuges. She says to be visible means to appear, to show oneself to others and to be seen and remembered by them, and vice versa. A public space is the condition *sine qua non* for recognition and participation to succeed. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

[56] Marcus Borg, *The God We Never Knew: Beyond Dogmatic Religion to a More Authentic Contemporary Faith* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1997), 150

[57] The Salvation Army, *The Song Book of The Salvation Army* (St Albans, UK: Campfield Press, 1986), song 527.

Book Notes

Reviewed by Donald E. Burke

Various Authors. ***Conversations with the Catholic Church***. London: Salvation Books, 2014.

I commend *Conversations with the Catholic Church*, published by Salvation Books, to Salvationists. It arose out of a series of five informal conversations between representatives of The Salvation Army and representatives of the Roman Catholic Church between 2007 and 2012. Broadly speaking, the five conversations dealt with the nature of the church, revelation, salvation, sanctification and mission.

Divided into five sections corresponding to five conversations, the book is structured to provide readers with an overview of the papers presented and the ensuing dialogue at each of the meetings. The accounts of the conversations are the most interesting part of the book, expressing the spirit in which these meetings took place. In the brief accounts, the dialogues emphasize the common ground the two traditions share. Where one might expect disagreements of opinion they are noted, but the details of those disagreements and how they were addressed are not provided.

I was also pleased to learn that during each gathering the participants shared in worship with one another either in a Salvation Army corps or a Catholic church. It is clear from the accounts that bonds of mutual understanding and fellowship were forged through this process. It would be most interesting to

---

Dr. Donald E. Burke is the President, as well as a Professor of Biblical Studies, at Booth University College in Winnipeg, Canada.

learn from participants how their understanding of the other tradition changed and how the dialogue influenced their own views.

Each of the book's sections also includes papers by members of each tradition on the topic under consideration. These papers were presented during the meetings and provided a starting point for discussion. The presenters were given the difficult task of summarizing the teachings of their respective tradition on the very broad topics they were assigned. This means, of course, that much more is omitted than could be said in the essays. Yet most of the writers do an admirable job of opening up the topic from within their own tradition. While obvious points of difference between the Catholic Church and the Army regarding matters such as the role of women, the place of sacraments and the nature of authority in the church may have been discussed during the meetings, they do not play a prominent role in the papers preserved in this volume. It is clear that the emphasis was upon finding common ground and mutual understanding.

One common characteristic of all the papers—both Catholic and Salvationist—is that the authors use their respective traditions to support their theological perspectives. Thus, for example, the Catholic writers draw upon various encyclicals, council documents and individual writers, while the Salvationist writers draw upon the Founders, Generals, Orders and Regulations, Handbook of Doctrine and a short list of Salvationist authors. While the Catholic Church is fully aware of the role that tradition and the magisterium of the church play in their theological work, a careful reading of the Salvationist papers will confirm a similar role for Salvationist tradition in our own theological discourse. The Salvationist papers give the impression that while our first doctrine gives primacy to Scripture in matters of Christian faith and practice, our praxis tends to subordinate the interpretation of Scripture to Army tradition and distinctives. These essays make that clear.

I will focus on two of the Catholic papers, because as a Salvationist these interested me most. The first paper by Reverend Professor Brendan Leahy, "The Christian Faith – a Catholic Perspective," provides an interesting overview of the Catholic faith under the broad headings of mystery, communion and mission. Much of the language in this presentation, especially that of mystery, will feel odd for Salvationist readers. Our tradition generally does not cultivate or fully appreciate mystery. We are much more pragmatic and action-oriented, both in our life of faith and in our expression of it. But having said that, there

is much to appreciate in this section of the essay. When discussing communion and mission, Leahy delves into areas in which Salvationists be apprehensive. For example, there is an emphasis on the structure of apostolic authority in the Catholic Church, which reaches its pinnacle in the Pope as the Bishop of Rome and the successor to Peter. This is foreign language to Salvationists, yet the author provides a sound overview of the Catholic perspective.

As a Salvationist, I found much to affirm and learn in Dr. David Crawford's paper, "The Theology of Mission – a Catholic Perspective." In this paper, mission is grounded deeply in theology and social mission is linked with the broader mission of Christ. Citing Pope Benedict XVI, Crawford writes:

> The church's work must not lose "its splendor"; it must "not become just another form of social assistance"…Christian charity is distinct from social welfare and secular philanthropy insofar as it is carried out for the sake of love and in love, and seeks not only to respond spontaneously to material needs, but also to do so out of a love that makes the Trinity visible. Christian charity not only manifests God's seeking out man in all of his suffering and in the very ambiguity of his worldly situation. It also manifests God's willingness to pour Himself out in love. In so doing, it responds not only to material needs, but to the profoundly human need of every person for love.

These few pages alone were worth the price of the book!

From the papers preserved in *Conversations with the Catholic Church* and the summary accounts of the dialogues, it is apparent that much common ground exists between the Catholic Church and The Salvation Army—unsurprisingly, since both share faith in the same Lord. Yet we also note that there are some significant divergences.

There also exists a difference in tone between the Catholic and Salvationist papers. The Catholic contributions tend to be more "aesthetic," and the Salvationist contributions tend to be more "transactional." Catholic theology is more concerned with a kind of beauty of relationship among the persons of the Trinity and how this manifests itself in the mission of the church in the world, whereas Salvationist theology is more concerned with the relational

transactions between God and humanity. As a result, we often characterize justification, sanctification, salvation and mission more in terms of submission, obedience and grace.

One practical matter should be noted: the title of the book is presented in three significantly different ways on the dust jacket and within the book. This creates confusion that could have been avoided with careful editing.

Frequently, the fruit of ecumenical dialogues is limited to the circle of those who directly participated in the conversations. The publication of *Conversations with the Catholic Church* allows the benefits of the dialogue to be shared with a wider audience, who will learn much about the Catholic Church and about The Salvation Army by reading it.

Henry Gariepy and Stephen Court, *Hallmarks of The Salvation Army*

Roger J. Green, *The Life & Ministry of William Booth* (with Abingdon Press, Nashville)

How I Met The Salvation Army

Carroll Ferguson Hunt, *If Two Shall Agree* (with Beacon Hill Press, Kansas City)

John C. Izzard, *Pen of Flame: The Life and Poetry of Catherine Baird*

David Laeger, *Shadow and Substance: The Tabernacle of the Human Heart*

John Larsson, *Inside a High Council; Saying Yes to Life*

Living Portraits Speaking Still: A Collection of Bible Studies

Herbert Luhn, *Holy Living: The Mindset of Jesus*

R.G. Moyles, *I Knew William Booth; Come Join Our Army; William Booth in America: Six Visits 1886 – 1907; Farewell to the Founder*

Philip Needham, *He Who Laughed First: Delighting in a Holy God*, (with Beacon Hill Press, Kansas City); *When God Becomes Small*

Joe Noland, *A Little Greatness,*

Quotes of the Past & Present

Lyell M. Rader, *Romance & Dynamite: Essays on Science & the Nature of Faith*

Amy Reardon, *Holiness Revealed*

R. David Rightmire, *Sanctified Sanity: The Life and Teaching of Samuel Logan Brengle*

Allen Satterlee, *Turning Points: How The Salvation Army Found a Different Path; Determined to Conquer: The History of The Salvation Army Caribbean Territory; In the Balance: Christ Weighs the Hearts of 7 Churches*

Valiant and Strong

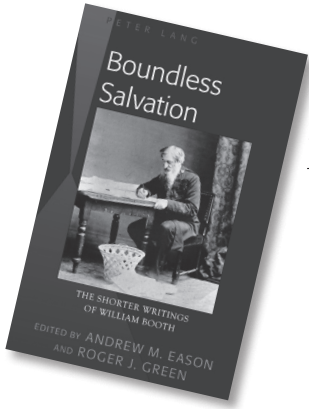
Harry Williams, *An Army Needs An Ambulance Corps: A History of The Salvation Army's Medical Services*

A. Kenneth Wilson, *Fractured Parables: And Other Tales to Lighten the Heart and Quicken the Spirit; The First Dysfunctional Family: A Modern Guide to the Book of Genesis; It Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time: Some of the Best and Worst Decisions in the Bible*

A Word in Season: A Collection of Short Stories

Check Yee, *Good Morning China*

Chick Yuill, *Leadership on the Axis of Change*



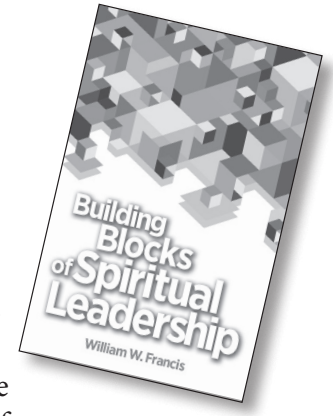
Boundless Salvation: The Shorter Writings of William Booth

Edited by Andrew M. Eason and Roger J. Green

William Booth wrote extensively on a variety of topics. The most important of his shorter writings are reproduced in this volume along with scholarly commentary. *Boundless Salvation* argues that Booth's life and ministry must be understood in relation to the Methodist theology and transatlantic revivalism that inspired and guided him.

Available through amazon.com *for $42.95 (paperback) and $71.05 (hardcover) or directly from Peter Lang Publishing through* peterlang.com.

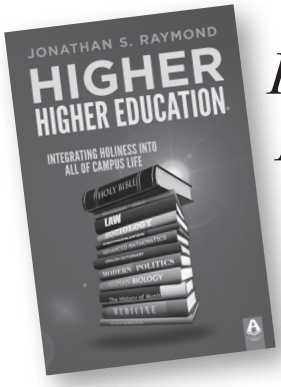
Building Blocks of Spiritual Leadership



By William W. Francis

William W. Francis reveals the basic elements of strong and effective spiritual leadership by drawing on his extensive leadership experience in various positions, as well as the wisdom of the Bible and historical and contemporary figures.

Available through crestbooks.com *for $10.00.*



Higher Higher Education: Integrating Holiness into all of Campus Life

By Jonathan S. Raymond

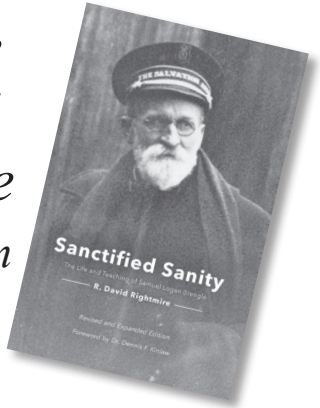
Christian higher education goes through cycles of ascendency and decline. We are now in a cycle that calls us to a fuller understanding of the holiness of God in shaping a higher vision. Educators who are leaning forward will see beyond intellectual development and job preparation.

Available through lamppostinc.com, *Amazon or Barnes & Noble for $15.00.*

Sanctified Sanity: The Life and Teaching of Samuel Logan Brengle

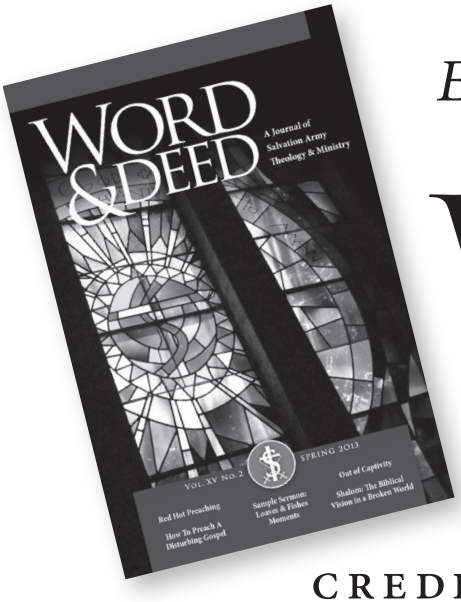
Revised and Expanded Edition

By R. David Rightmire



Part biography, part theological assessment, this revised and expanded edition focuses on Samuel Logan Brengle's understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification. His numerous writings are made accessible and placed in the context of his life journey and global ministry. This edition includes two new chapters, photographs and the only comprehensive bibliography of his works.

Available through amazon.com *or* francisasburysociety.com *for $12.50.*



Experience Christianity in Action with…

WORD & DEED

CREDIT CARD ORDERS:
1-800-SAL-ARMY (1-800-725-2769)

☐ **Yes!** **Please start my subscription to Word & Deed – A Journal of Salvation Army Theology & Ministry**

☐ ***Gift*** * ☐ **1 Year (*2 Issues*): $18.00** ☐ **2 Years (*4 Issues*): $36.00**

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

* DONOR (*If Gift*): _____

List additional Gift Subscriptions separately. **International Orders:** Canada, add $4 per yr. for each subscription. Other international destinations, add $8 per yr. for each subscription. Back issues of **Word & Deed** available by contacting the war_cry@usn.salvationarmy.org. Make Check/Money Order payable to "The Salvation Army" (U.S. funds drawn on U.S. bank only) — all subscriptions must be pre-paid.

SEND TO:

THE SALVATION ARMY
Circulation Manager • National Publications
PO Box 269 • 615 Slaters Ln. • Alexandria, VA 22314