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THEOLOGY & MINISTRY

Holiness as "Christian Perfection":
Further Thoughts on Entire Sanctification

Growing Saints

Dietrich Bonhoeffer:
A Transformed Life

With God



Salvation Army National Headquarters
Alexandria, VA, USA

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

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Editorial Address:

Manuscripts, requests for style sheets, and other correspondence should be addressed to Major 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.

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Being Perfected in Holy Love

We lead off this issue with the fourth of four articles on the theology of John Wesley, written by our friend and faithful contributor to this journal, David Rightmire, Professor of Religion at Asbury University. With this article he gets to the heart of Wesley's theology of sanctification by identifying sanctification as Christian perfection. While many people in today's world would find this definition much too lofty, Wesley was very clear to identify specifically what perfection was and what it was not. And above all things it was not some sort of human perfection. However, it was a perfection in Christ, filled with the love of God and neighbor. It was the possibility of the fulfillment of all that telos demands—loving what God loves and hating what God hates.

Therefore, Wesley advised in his preaching and his writing that believers should not shy away from this idea, but embrace it in obedience to the word of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount to be perfect as God is perfect (Matthew 5:48). While explanation is needed about what perfection means in the biblical sense, Wesley rested on the firm ground of this biblical doctrine. And we as the editors of this journal concur with the final sentence and the final challenge of this article, which states, "Amidst the varied interpretations of the movement's tenth doctrine over the years, perhaps it is time to reconsider the importance of Wesley's

understanding of entire sanctification as being made perfect in love, and recognize this as the goal of the saving work of God in Christ, and the necessary dynamic of the Army's future life and ministry."

This article is followed by Jonathan Raymond's challenge of this perfection in love in the article entitled "Growing Saints." In that article there is the timely call for the balanced life of holiness in our thoughts, our hearts, and our living. Here is a reminder that sanctification is more than just one or two of these areas of our lives. Sanctification includes the intersection of all three, and then we know the maturity of the Christian experience that is demanded of us. What is critical here is that Jonathan sees this as a life not only for the believer, but for the community of believers—"Growing Saints." And in doing so he envisions what life is to be like in the glorious Kingdom of God. This article, therefore, challenges the completeness and the fulfillment of the Christian life for the individual believer and for all the saints in Kingdom context. This is, indeed, a counter-cultural message, but it is nevertheless a biblical message for all times and ages.

And speaking of a counter-cultural message, consider the third paper in this issue by Judith Brown on Dietrich Bonhoeffer. If ever the admonition to Timothy by Paul to "be rich in good deeds" (I Timothy 6:18) can be applied to anyone it is to Dietrich Bonhoeffer. This twentieth century theologian, pastor, writer, and martyr knew what it meant to love God and love his neighbor, even the poorest of his neighbors—the Jews. He stood with them in their oppression, and was arrested because of his involvement in the conspiracy against Hitler, and was hanged by the Nazis just weeks before the liberation of Europe by the Allies.

But before his death he left a legacy in his writings, and Judith Brown has developed an article focusing on what the lived experience of believers should look like. This article emphasizes the training of believers that is critical to our individual and corporate life in Christ. Just because someone believes in Christ does not mean that person will automatically know how to live out his or her life in Christ as was intended by God. Bonhoeffer developed his understanding of such a life as he led various communities of people in preparation for Christian ministry. In her article Judith Brown so well unpacks Bonhoeffer's thoughts on and integration of several spiritual

disciplines that are vital to the ongoing Christian life. Reading Bonhoeffer will be a good example of David Rightmire's emphasis of perfection in love and Jonathan Raymond's emphasis of the balance of the mind, the heart, and good works for the sake of the Kingdom.

This issue ends with a sermon by Jeremy Mockabee and a book review by Aimee Patterson, both of which will be helpful to the reader in an understanding of our life together. Mockabee's sermon won the Brengle Holiness Award. In the meantime, there have been two recent accomplishments that have enhanced this journal. First, this will be the second issue with the new cover for the journal, and we hope that our readers are enjoying the new look of Word & Deed. And second, as of this issue Word & Deed is now indexed with EBSCO. This arrangement has been a long time coming, but we rejoice that the time is now here. What this means is that the articles from the journal will now be available in that database, and, for example, if anyone from any part of the world looked up John Wesley then in the list of available articles the bibliographic references to Word & Deed would be shown. This expands the outreach of the journal, and for that and so many other things we are grateful.

RJG

JSR

Holiness as “Christian Perfection”: Further Thoughts on Entire Sanctification

R. David Rightmire

Introduction

A proper understanding of The Salvation Army’s commitment to the doctrine and experience of holiness, requires placing it within the larger context of a Wesleyan understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in the divine work of redemption. Having dealt in previous articles with the relationship of holiness to the broader concerns of the work of salvation, and the vital place the doctrine of entire sanctification has in John Wesley’s “way of salvation,”¹ this article will explore in further depth, the dynamic nature of holiness as “Christian perfection.”²

1. Christian Perfection Clarified

The year before his death, Wesley referred to the doctrine of Christian perfection as “the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people

R. David Rightmire is a Professor of Bible and Theology at Asbury University.

called Methodists; and for the sake of propagating this chiefly he appeared to have raised us up.”³ Synonymous with entire sanctification, Christian perfection (grounded in the biblical conception of perfection – *teleiotes*)⁴ is to be understood as one of the operations of grace in the process of salvation. Thus, the Christian life is seen as a process towards the goal of perfection.⁵

Wesley’s doctrine of perfection finds its basis partly in the practical mysticism of Thomas à Kempis, and such Anglican High Churchmen as Jeremy Taylor and William Law (both of Arminian persuasion). Wesley understands Christian perfection as inward and outward conformity to Christ, a circumcision of the heart, involving purification from sin and spiritual renewal. Above all it is seen in love to God and neighbor, the love of a whole and undivided heart.⁶ In his sermon, “The Scripture Way of Salvation,” Wesley defines entire sanctification as “love excluding sin, love filling the heart, taking up the whole capacity of the soul ... as long as love takes up the whole heart, what room is there for sin therein?”⁷

Early on, Wesley recognized that holiness was the end or goal (*telos*) of religion. In 1725, he encountered Bishop Taylor’s *Rules and Exercises of Holy Living*, which convinced him of the importance of purity of intention, whereupon he dedicated all of his life to God. The following year (1726) Wesley read Thomas à Kempis’ *Imitation of Christ*, which stressed “the nature and extent of inward religion, the religion of the heart.”⁸ And a few years later (1728 or 1729) he read William Law’s *Christian Perfection*, which persuaded him “of the impossibility of being half a Christian.”⁹ Wesley preached a sermon on the subject of Christian perfection a few years later, “The Circumcision of the Heart,” which reveals the essence of his understanding of the doctrine. In it he views this work of grace principally in terms of “holy tempers” or a “habitual disposition of the soul” which involves the gift of “those virtues which were in Christ Jesus.” Christian perfection describes, in other words, the characteristics of holy love reigning in the human heart, a love that not only embraces the love of God and neighbor, but that also excludes all sin.¹⁰ The influence of à Kempis, Taylor and Law can be seen in Wesley’s *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (1767), where he defines such perfection as purity of intention (“a single eye”), the imitation of Christ, and love of God and neighbor.¹¹

Positively, perfection is perfect love. Negatively, it is deliverance from

inward and outward sin. The entirely sanctified person, having received the gift of perfect love for God and neighbor, is freed from the necessity of ongoing, intentional sin. Heart purity for Wesley also involves deliverance from evil thoughts and evil tempers.¹² In his sermon “On Perfection” (1788), he uses the following terms to define entire sanctification: to love God with all one’s heart and one’s neighbor as oneself; the mind that is in Christ; the fruits of the Spirit unified; the recovery of the moral image of God, which consists of “righteousness and true holiness”; inward and outward righteousness; man’s perfect consecration to God; and salvation from all sin.¹³ Note that even in the work of perfection, man is not altogether passive, for it involves a total consecration of the human heart to God. Perfection is understood as both a requirement and a promise. Wesley believed that the scriptures bear witness to God’s promise of perfection; that what God has promised he is able to perform; and that God is both able and willing to sanctify now. What is important to recognize is Wesley’s optimism concerning the possibilities of transformation in this life, which stems from his commitment to the sovereignty of God’s grace in Christian perfection.¹⁴

Dealing with the issue of when entire sanctification occurs, Wesley seems to emphasize different elements in various writings. It is, on the one hand, to be received instantaneously in a crisis event,¹⁵ and on the other hand, to be received gradually as one matures spiritually.¹⁶ “The genius of Wesley as a theologian...is that he held both of these elements together, process and realization, a gradual element and an instantaneous one, in subtle and well-crafted tension.”¹⁷ A gradual work of sanctification both precedes and follows the experience of Christian perfection as an instantaneous event, thus holding together both the possibilities and actualities of grace in the Christian life.

Love as the essence of perfection is meant to develop in the Christian life. Thus, Wesley understands Christian perfection as a perfection in love. What then is the difference between new birth (“initial sanctification”) and perfect sanctification? Love has already been instilled into the human heart at new birth. From then on there is a gradual development, with no perfection of concluded development. Wesley states that “there is no perfection ...which does not admit a continual increase.”¹⁸ The distinction between new birth and entire sanctification is a difference in degree within a continuous development of love. Since love is the sum of sanctification, there is only one kind

of holiness (love), which is found in various degrees in believers.

Entire sanctification is seen more clearly as a distinct stage, higher and different from that of new birth, when viewing perfection as liberation from sin. Entire sanctification involves a love incompatible with sin. It is a love unmixed with sin, a pure love. The difference between new birth and entire sanctification is also seen in the fact that the deliverance from the power of sin takes place in an instant. Deliverance from sin in entire sanctification is regarded as analogous with the entrance of death into the body. Wesley writes: "A man may be dying for some time; yet he does not, properly speaking, die till the instant the soul is separated from the body; and in that instant he lives the life of eternity. In like manner, he may be dying to sin for some time; yet he is not dead to sin, till sin is separated from his soul; and in that instant he lives the full life of love."¹⁹

Entire sanctification is not absolute perfection. It is a perfection subject to the limitations of human life (i.e., ignorance, bodily infirmities, mistakes, etc.). Wesley's concept of a perfection of love focuses on the intention and will. In other words, defects in the fully sanctified are not sins "properly so-called." There can be no sin when love is the only principle of action. Mistakes and defects, however, can be regarded as sins in the sense that they constitute deviations from the perfect law. Deliverance from such "sins" comes only at death (absolute perfection). This dual view of perfection maintains both the possibility of perfection, on the one hand, and on the other, its relative character and the continuous need for forgiveness on the part of the fully sanctified. For Wesley, even the most sanctified individual must live on the basis of forgiveness, in unceasing contact with Christ. This is due to the fact that alongside a relative and subjective perfection, he retains the conception of an objective and absolute perfection and a corresponding view of sin.²⁰ In an attempt to explain Wesley's understanding of Christian perfection, Colin Williams writes: "In terms of sin in the absolute sense, as measured by the 'perfect law,' there is no such thing as perfection in believers. It is in terms of the sin of conscious separation from Christ that there can be perfection – a perfection of unbroken conscious dependence upon Christ."²¹

In *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (1766),²² Wesley takes great care to state in what sense Christians are not and can never hope to be perfect.

First, believers are not perfect in knowledge. The pure in heart must continue to study and learn, to develop their minds, in order to avoid "enthusiasm" or fanaticism. Second, since those who are perfected in love are not free from ignorance, neither can they be free from all mistakes, such as errors in judgment or even faulty interpretation of scripture. Having a purified heart by the love of God does not render the believer either infallible or omniscient. Third, Christians are not so perfect as to be free from infirmities: limitations of body or mind. Fourth, perfect love does not eliminate temptations or trials. Fifth, Christian perfection is not a static state, but is always in need of increase and growth in grace. Such a dynamic view of "perfecting perfection," rejects the notion of a "perfected perfection."²³ Nevertheless, the emphasis on growth and development in Wesley's understanding of Christian perfection must not minimize his clear teaching on the instantaneous nature of the realization of holiness (crisis), both preceded and followed by process.

When Wesley addresses in what sense Christians *are* perfect in his *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, he emphasizes not only victory over the *power* of sin, but also victory over the *being* of sin. Those who are entirely sanctified are free from evil thoughts and tempers. By the latter, Wesley means freedom from pride, self-will, and love of the world. Positively speaking, Christian perfection entails the freedom, now graciously restored, to obey the two great commandments – loving God and neighbor. Entire sanctification is *love replacing sin*, love conquering every vile passion and temper, resulting in the renewal of the *imago Dei*, especially the moral image.²⁴ Thus, salvation is more than a forensic exchange in the sense that people are declared to be other than they are (imputed righteousness), but involves actual renewal, transformation, purification by grace (imparted righteousness).²⁵

A proper conception of holiness (the solution) is conditioned by one's understanding of the nature of sin (the problem). "Thinking of sin primarily as violation of a set of behavioral expectations is to risk a seeking of righteousness by human works and to limit holiness to those few functioning at a flawless level in relation to these expectations."²⁶ Thinking biblically, however, Wesley viewed sin in more personal and relational terms. Rather than being a negative "thing" within the person, sin is the deliberate turning away from God, a defective or perverted love, or the violation of covenant

relationship. Thus, “if sin is the orientation of the whole person away from God, then holiness is the whole person turned in love to God. It is not merely the absence of sin, but the presence of the God-given love for God.”²⁷ It involves a genuinely restored relationship. In focusing on Christian holiness from a Wesleyan perspective as restored relationship, believers are free from the dilemmas of perfectionism that have plagued many holiness seekers.²⁸ “The sanctifying goal is a perfect love characteristic of restored relationship, not perfect performance in spite of human frailty, ignorance, and immaturity. The issue is the set of the will, the focus of one’s true affection. John Wesley’s phrase “perfect love” should be thought of as mature, life-restoring relationship to God.”²⁹

2. Role of Religious Affections in Christian Perfection

Wesley’s conception of human nature is reflected in his view of the image of God as including the understanding, the will, liberty, and conscience. He does not use “will” to designate a human faculty of rational self-determination, but rather, he equates the will with the affections. These affections are not simply “feelings,” but the motivating inclinations behind all human action. They integrate the rational and emotional dimensions of human life into a holistic inclination toward particular choices or acts. Wesley called such habituated dispositions “tempers” (in a characteristically 18th century use of the term). The chief example of such a temper (or habituated affection) for Wesley was love for God and neighbor. He viewed holy actions as flowing from holy tempers.³⁰

The role of the affections was central to Wesley’s understanding of both human sin and salvation. In the case of sin, Wesley insisted that the issue was more than individual wrong actions; he frequently discussed sin in terms of a 3-fold division: sinful nature or tempers, sinful words, and sinful actions.

The point of this division was that our sinful actions and words *flow from* corrupted tempers, so the problem of sin must ultimately be addressed at this affectional level. This point is also reflected in the way that the mature Wesley shifted his discussion of the classic Western doctrine of

Original Sin away from questions of inherited guilt, focusing instead on the present disordering impact of Inbeing Sin....The most basic cause of our present infirmity for Wesley was not some “thing” that we inherit, but the distortion of our nature resulting from being born into this world already separated from the empowering Divine Presence. *Deprived* of the effect of this essential relationship, our faculties inevitably become *debilitated*, leaving us morally depraved. For one particular, our weakened affections take on unholy tempers.³¹

Wesley believed that salvation involved the affectional dimension of human life, as well as outward matters. He defined the Christian life as the renewal of this inward dimension, describing such as: the life of God in the soul; a participation in the divine nature; the mind of Christ, or the renewal of the heart in the image of God. The affections are thus awakened in response to God’s gracious empowerment, and then these affections are shaped into holy dispositions (tempers). In fact, Wesley once identified the goal of all true religion as the recovery of holy tempers.³²

The doctrine of entire sanctification obviously brings to bear the issue of the extent which Christians can expect to recover such holy tempers. Wesley defined Christian Perfection as “the humble, gentle, patient love of God, and our neighbor, ruling our tempers, words, and actions.”³³ Note that love is not only said to be present, but it is ruling. God’s love is shed abroad in the lives of all Christians, awakening their love for God and others. But this love is weak, sporadic, and offset by contrary affections in new believers. In the entirely sanctified, love rules to the point that “there is no mixture of any contrary affections – all is peace and harmony.”³⁴ One of Wesley’s most characteristic descriptions of those who have attained Christian perfection was that they are now adult, or *mature*, Christians.³⁵ Such developmental language highlights the dynamic nature of his conception of “perfection” in the Christian life. Wesley assumed that growth in holiness would continue *within* Christian perfection and not just before it.

Affections contrary to love would, of course, be “inward sin.” Wesley believed that this inward sin was overcome in entire sanctification. In a few instances he described this overcoming as a “rooting out” or “destruction”

of inward sin.³⁶ He came to realize, however, the problematic nature of such language, in that to talk of the “destruction” of sinful affections could connote the impossibility of their return. By contrast, he recognized the sad reality that sinful affections (and resulting outward sins) may reemerge in lives previously ruled by love. In order to express the benefits of Christian perfection without denying the potential for the return of sinful affections, Wesley maintained that within the entirely sanctified person, holy tempers (i.e., enduring affections) are presently “reigning” to the point of “driving out” opposing tempers (although these may return).³⁷ Understood in this way, Christian perfection involves “the expulsive power of a new affection.”³⁸ In other words, Wesley was convinced that the Christian life did not have to remain a life of continual struggle. He believed that both Scripture and Christian tradition attested that God’s loving grace can transform our lives to the point where our own love for God and others becomes a “natural” response. To deny this possibility would be to deny the sufficiency of God’s empowering grace and to make the power of sin greater than that of grace.

In emphasizing affections in relation to Christian perfection, Wesley did not wish to de-emphasize actions. He understood actions, however, as flowing from a temper of love. Yet he also believed that ignorance, mistakes, and other human frailties often distort the passage from affection to action. Although Christian Perfection was understood as consisting of holy tempers, it was not characterized by an infallible expression of those tempers in actions. Thus, Wesley’s affectional view of entire sanctification allowed for the transformation of human lives by God’s gracious Spirit, enabling a free response of love to God and neighbor, within the constraints of human infirmity.³⁹

3. The Idea of Love in Wesley’s Theology

It is important to recognize the centrality of love in the theology and preaching of John Wesley. Thus, it is more appropriate to characterize Wesley’s thought as a “theology of love”⁴⁰ than a theology of holiness. In his own words, Wesley indicates the priority and vitality of the dynamic of love:

It were well you should be thoroughly sensible of this, "the heaven of heavens is love." There is nothing higher in religion; there is, in effect, nothing else; if you look for anything more than love, you are looking wide of the mark, you are getting out of the royal way, and when you are asking others, "Have you received this or that blessing?" if you mean anything but more love, you mean wrong; you are leading them out of the way, and putting them upon a false scent. Settle it then in your heart, that from the moment God has saved you from all sin, you are to aim at nothing more, but more of that love described in the thirteenth of the Corinthians. You can go no higher than this, till you are carried into Abraham's bosom.⁴¹

If love is the theological key to Wesley's thinking, then by implication, holiness theology that is authentically Wesleyan must be marked by the dynamic of love. Wesley not only related the terms of "holiness" and "love," but equated them. "They are not, to him, two concomitant aspects of grace but one blazing unity of truth."⁴² These concepts are best understood not in the abstract, but in relation to the dynamic of personal relationship.

Love is the essential inner character of holiness, and holiness does not exist apart from love. That is why Wesley consistently defined holiness, as well as Christian perfection, as love. For Wesley, holiness has to do with persons in relationship, and the dynamic of personal relationship is love. In the words of Mildred Bangs Wynkoop:

Love is the quality of response between persons. Love can only exist in freedom. It cannot be coerced. Freedom is the most fundamental ingredient of love. When love is spoken of, freedom is presupposed and persons are involved. Love describes the kind of response that exists between persons. Love may link the persons into a fellowship or it may short-circuit about itself and reject other persons. In either case it is the relation between persons that is the issue. Love, then, positively or negatively defines holiness or sin. Love, being dynamic and free, includes or excludes others in its search for fulfillment. When the object of love, that about which the total self centers, is God, holiness is described. When...love centers in the self, God is excluded and sin is described.⁴³

If holiness is characterized by love, it is then ethically oriented. This is not to be confused with moralism or legalistic perfection, which serve as superficial counterfeits to a life marked by holy love. Wesley's understanding of Christian perfection was consistently expressed as a perfection of relationship, a perfection of love with both vertical and horizontal dimensions. "Purity is not an end in itself. Purity permits the personality to live in full expression of love to God and man. It is the power of a single-hearted devotion and must be kept intact by daily fellowship with God."⁴⁴

In answer to the question "who is a Christian?" Wesley wrote a letter that reveals his emphasis on love as the chief evidence:

Above all, remembering that God is love, he [the Christian] is conformed to the same likeness. He is full of love to his neighbor, of universal love, not confined to one sect or party, not restrained to those who agree with him in opinions or in outward modes of worship... Neither does he love those only that love him or that are endeared to him by intimacy of acquaintance...His love...is in itself generous and disinterested; springing from no view of advantage to himself, and from no regard to profit or praise...And this universal, disinterested love is productive of all right affections. It is fruitful of gentleness, tenderness, sweetness...courtesy, and affability.⁴⁵

Love is so central to Wesley's understanding of the Christian faith, that one finds it in almost every theological discussion: God is love; the atonement is an expression of love; holiness is love; the meaning of "religion" is love; Christian perfection is a perfection of love. In fact, every stage of Wesley's "way of salvation"⁴⁶ is marked by love.

4. Perfection in Love as the Goal of Salvation

Wesley's teleological approach to soteriology is expressed in the idea of the human spirit coming from God, whose object is to return to him. Everything is directed toward the perfecting of humanity as the condition of glorification. Salvation becomes a process of sanctification by which human-

ity is increasingly purified and perfected to attain its final goal. Everything in the Christian life is to be valued only in so far as it leads to establishing the law of love in the human heart. "Love is the end, the sole end, of every dispensation of God, from the beginning of the world to the consummation of all things."⁴⁷ The object of salvation is the restoration of humanity in the love of God. This is effected by faith, but faith is only the means. The end is love.

This love is linked chiefly to faith in atonement and forgiveness. Love is seen as the direct fruit of justifying faith. Love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Thus God's love, manifest chiefly in the atonement, precedes humanity's love of God, the former regarded as the cause of the latter. God's love in Christ is the source for humanity's love of God and neighbor. A similar causal approach is seen in the bestowal of perfect love on humanity in entire sanctification. As love is the essence of the Christian life, the causal approach is combined with a teleological one in the idea of love. In the process of salvation, love is both the point of origin and the unifying force of the Christian life in new birth (causal). But love is also the final goal – the restoration of the divine image, or being made perfect in love (teleological).

The idea of Christian love is closely bound up with the idea of law. Love of God and neighbor is understood as the fulfillment of the law, the law of love. Obedience to God is regarded as a fruit of the Spirit leading to love for God and neighbor. In undertaking to write his law on the heart of humanity, God has determined to give what he commands. The moral law remains a law to be fulfilled by Christians, although fulfillment occurs through faith and therefore can be regarded as a work of God. The close association of love with the law is evident in Wesley's definition of Christian freedom. In a negative sense it means deliverance from the guilt and the power of sin; in a positive sense it includes freedom to love both God and neighbor – the fulfillment of the law. It comes to mean above all, deliverance from the power of sin, resulting in ethical change. The concept is almost identical with that of sanctification: "And what is Christian liberty but another word for holiness?"⁴⁸

Conclusion

As heir to the Wesleyan-holiness tradition, The Salvation Army needs to

remember its theological heritage, especially in relation to its commitment to the doctrine of holiness. Wesley's concept of entire sanctification as entailing a perfection of love for God and neighbor is crucial for a proper understanding of the dynamic and power of this essential Army doctrine. During a period of "trans-Atlantic revivalism," this eighteenth century Wesleyan theological emphasis underwent some modification as it resurfaced in America in the subsequent century. The late nineteenth century British holiness revival (which serves as the theological milieu for the birth of the Army) was mediated by American perfectionist evangelists, as evidenced in the impact of James Caughey and Phoebe Palmer on the Booths themselves.⁴⁹

Although Salvation Army holiness teaching was fundamentally influenced by both the message and methods of the nineteenth century holiness movement,⁵⁰ its roots in the theology of John Wesley must not be overlooked. The Army from the beginning was committed to the doctrine and experience of holiness of heart and life, viewing this teaching as foundational to its identity and mission. Amidst the varied interpretations of the movement's tenth doctrine over the years,⁵¹ perhaps it is time to reconsider the importance of Wesley's understanding of entire sanctification as being made perfect in love, and recognize this as the goal of the saving work of God in Christ, and the necessary dynamic of the Army's future life and ministry.

Notes

¹ See R. David Rightmire, “Holiness in Relation to Salvation: Pneumatological Dimensions of Wesleyan Soteriology,” *Word and Deed* 11:2 (May 2009): 19-32; “Holiness and Wesley’s ‘Way of Salvation,’” *Word and Deed* 13:1 (November 2010): 39-53.

² For an in depth examination of Wesley’s use of this characteristic term see chapter 4: “Christian Perfection,” in Harold Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1980).

³ Letter to Robert Carr Brackenbury, 15 Sept., 1790, *The Works of the Reverend John Wesley*, Thomas Jackson (ed.) [henceforth, *Works* (Jackson)], 14 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958) 13: 9.

⁴ The Greek *teleiotes* (Col 3:14; Heb 6:1) has been commonly translated as perfection, but also under metaphors of maturation and completeness. The Christian life is not a static *perfectus* in the sense of no further possible improvement, but a dynamic *teleiotes*. Wesley’s references to “perfection” assumed the Greek notion of perfecting (not perfected) grace, a “never ending aspiration for all love’s fullness,” as found especially in the pre-Augustinian Eastern Church writers. Thomas C. Oden, *John Wesley’s Scriptural Christianity: A Plain Exposition of His Teaching on Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 320.

⁵ The idea of perfection can be seen as a typical expression of the teleological alignment of Wesley’s view of salvation. “Everything is directed toward the perfecting of humanity as preparation for glorification. Salvation is understood as a process of sanctification by which humanity is increasingly purified and perfected to attain the final goal. God’s love in atonement and justification aims at the establishment of the law of love in the human heart. The stress falls on the ethical transformation in the human heart, the restoration of the love of God in humankind.” Lindström, *Wesley and Sanctification*, 171-73.

⁶ "The Circumcision of the Heart" (1733), *Standard Sermons*, Edward Sugden (ed.) 2 vols. (London: Epworth, 1966) 1: 266-79.

⁷ Wesley, *Standard Sermons*, 2: 448, 457.

⁸ John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, in *Works* (Jackson), 11: 366-67.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 367.

¹⁰ "The Circumcision of the Heart" (1733), Sermon 17, *Works* (Jackson), 5: 202-12.

¹¹ *Works* (Jackson), 11: 371-73. The full name for this work reveals the consistency of his teaching: *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection as Believed and Taught by the Rev. Mr. John Wesley from the Year 1725 to 1765*. Cf. "On a Single Eye," Sermon 118, *Works* (Jackson), 7:297.

¹² "Christian Perfection" (1741), Sermon 40, *Works* (Jackson), 6: 16.

¹³ Sermon 76, *Works* (Jackson), 6: 413-416; cf. John Wesley, "The New Birth," Sermon 45, *Works* (Jackson), 6: 66.

¹⁴ Albert Outler (ed.), *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 253.

¹⁵ "The Scripture Way of Salvation," Sermon 43, *Works* (Jackson), 6: 53.

¹⁶ *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, in *Works* (Jackson) 11: 442.

¹⁷ Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007), 295.

¹⁸ "Christian Perfection," 1741, *Works* (Jackson), 6: 5.

¹⁹ "Thoughts on Christian Perfection" (1759), in *A Plain Account on Christian*

Perfection, in *Works* (Jackson), 11: 402.

20 Ibid., 394-96.

21 *John Wesley's Theology Today* (London: Epworth Press, 1960): 179.

22 This work affirms what Wesley had written in the sermon "Christian Perfection" (1741), "which remained his standard statement of the doctrine." Outler, *John Wesley*, 253.

23 Albert Outler, Introductory Comment to "Christian Perfection," *Sermons*, in Albert Outler (ed.), *The Works of John Wesley*, Bicentennial Edition [henceforth *Works* (Bicentennial)], 26.vols. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984-87 ff.), 2: 98.

24 "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," in *Works* (Jackson) 11: 387. See also "On Working Out Your Own Salvation," Sermon 83 in *Works* (Jackson) 6: 509, where Wesley refers to sanctification as being "saved from the power and root of sin" and being "restored to the image of God."

25 Kenneth J. Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of Wesley's Theology* (Abingdon Press, 1997), 171-81.

26 Barry Callen, *God as Loving Grace* (Evangel, 1996), 297.

27 Kenneth Jones, *Commitment to Holiness* (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 1985), 73.

28 In line with his Wesleyan heritage, E. Stanley Jones reminds us that such perfection in love is not to be confused with 'perfectionism': "*Make up your mind that you are to be perfect, but perfect only in love, never in the expression of that love.*" When Jesus said, 'Be ye therefore perfect' the word 'therefore' pointed back to the preceding verses which tell of love – love your enemies, love those who do not return the love. A child may love a parent perfectly – as a child – but the expression of that love is imperfect. And the parent knows it, sees through the imperfect expression to the love itself, and rejoices in it. *The perfection in love is perfect but growing.* The bud is perfect as a bud, the flower perfect as a flower, the fruit perfect as a fruit. Each stage is perfect and yet

growing ... *Surrender your perfectionism into His hands – this perfectionism which is only another name for pride.* Be willing to make mistakes and to stumble, knowing you will always be stumbling forward. *Rejoice not in what you are, but in what you are becoming through His grace.* You are on the Way – not at the Goal...*You are not perfect, and yet you have a perfect Savior*" *The Way* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), 186.

²⁹ Callen, 297. In a similar vein, Mildred Bangs Wynkoop defines sin as "love locked into a false center, the self," and holiness as "love locked into the True Center, Jesus Christ our Lord." *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1972), 158.

³⁰ Randy L. Maddox, "Holiness of Heart and Life: Lessons from North American Methodism." *Asbury Theological Journal* 50:2 (Fall 1995): 152-53.

³¹ Ibid., 154.

³² "On Charity," Sermon 91, *Works* (Jackson), 7: 56.

³³ "Brief Thoughts on Christian Perfection" [1767], Jackson ed. 11: 446.

³⁴ "On Patience," Sermon 83, *Works* (Jackson), 6: 489.

³⁵ E.g., "Christian Perfection" (1741), Sermon 40, *Works* (Jackson), 6: 5-6; See notes on 1 Cor 2:6, Col 4:12 in John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes on the New-Testament* (1754), in *Wesley's Notes on the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1987), 512, 548; "On Sin in Believers" (1763), Sermon 13, *Works* (Jackson), 5: 151-52; "On Patience" (1784), Sermon 83, *Works* (Jackson), 6: 488; "On God's Vineyard" (1787), Sermon 107, *Works* (Jackson), 7: 205; "Some Remarks on Mr. Hill's 'Review of All the Doctrines Taught by John Wesley,'" in *Works* (Jackson), 10: 395-96; *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, in *Works* (Jackson), 11: 374.

³⁶ E.g., "The Repentance of Believers," Sermon 14, *Works* 1: 346. He may have taken such language from Homily 26 in the writings of Macarius, which Wesley included in his *Christian Library*. Cf. Pseudo-Macarius, *The Fifty Homilies and the Great Letter*. Trans. by George A. Maloney (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 171-72.

³⁷ "Sermon on the Mount, Discourse 9," Sermon 29, *Works* (Jackson), 5: 387; *Farther Thoughts Upon Christian Perfection*, Q. 12, *Works* (Jackson), 11: 418.

³⁸ Umphrey Lee, *John Wesley and Modern Religion* (Nashville: Cokesbury, 1936), 185.

³⁹ Maddox, "Holiness of Heart," 155.

⁴⁰ Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1972).

⁴¹ *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, in *Works* (Jackson), 11: 430.

⁴² Wynkoop, 22-23.

⁴³ Ibid., 25.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 362.

⁴⁵ Letter to the Rev. Dr. Conyers Middleton, *Works* (Jackson), 10: 68-69.

⁴⁶ Rather than understanding the operations of grace in the process of salvation in terms of the classical construct of an *ordo salutis* ("order of salvation"), Randy Maddox maintains that Wesley's dynamic soteriology should be characterized as a *via salutis* ("way of salvation"). See chapter 7 in Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994).

⁴⁷ "The Law Established Through Faith: II," 1750, *Standard Sermons*, 2: 77.

⁴⁸ Letter to Mr. Joseph Benson, 5 Oct. 1770, *Works* (Jackson), 12: 413.

⁴⁹ For theological analysis of the 19th century American holiness movement in both its Oberlin and Wesleyan manifestations, see chapter 5: "The Nineteenth Century Holiness Movement," in R. David Rightmire, *Sacraments and the Salvation Army: Pneumatological Foundations* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1990), 135-50.

⁵⁰ R. David Rightmire, “Holiness and the Salvation Army: 19th Century Holiness Movement Roots,” *Word and Deed* 15:1 (November 2012), 53-69.

⁵¹ For a theological assessment of the varied expressions of holiness theology in the development of the Army see: chapter 8: “Pneumatological Foundations for Non-Sacramental Theology: Perspectives of Doctrinal Continuity,” in R. David Rightmire, *Sacraments and the Salvation Army*, 205-56.

Growing Saints

Jonathan S. Raymond

All armies need replacements. The Salvation Army is no exception. Leaders retire. Soldiers expire. With time the ranks grow thin without replacements. The succinct articulation of the mission of The Salvation Army by its former General, John Gowans, to “save souls, grow saints, and serve suffering humanity” implicitly speaks to the matter of replacements and the development of future leaders by growing saints. This part of the mission is consistent with Christ’s Great Commission to “make disciples . . . teaching them to obey everything” Christ commanded (Matthew 28:19-20). While easily articulated today, growing saints has its challenges and constraints.

More Than A Good Education

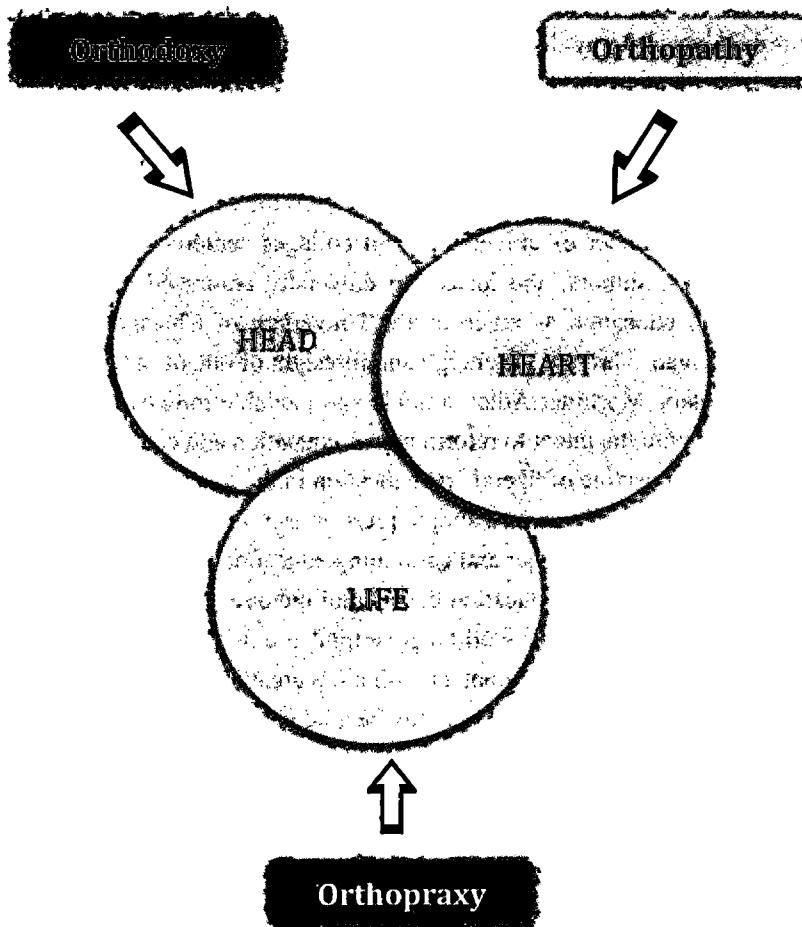
Growing saints is more than a matter of a good education. On the whole, the rank and file of The Salvation Army is possibly better educated today than ever before. This is likely because the proliferation of educational opportunities at every level is a global reality. Salvationists are among the beneficiaries. Salvationists around the world are positively impacted by the unprecedented availability of and access to education. That does not mean the Army is growing more saints than ever before. On a global basis, the

Jonathan S. Raymond is President Emeritus and Senior Fellow of Trinity Western University in Langley, British Columbia (Canada). He resides in Wilmore, Kentucky.

Army is a significant provider of education, operating more than 2,000 schools mostly in the global south and mostly providing education at the elementary level.¹

The Army's capacity to grow saints through higher education stands in contrast to its overall involvement in the provision of education. Only a few Salvation Army colleges function at the university degree granting level. While the argument can be made that more and more Salvationist young people are studying at the college and university (post secondary) level than ever before, and that on-line, life-long learning is available to more and more Salvationists, opportunities for Salvationists are available mostly through secular institutions. In spite of the phenomenal growth of Christian higher education in North America, and in fact around the world in the past forty years, the cost of Christian university level education is prohibitive for most Salvationists. Even if it were affordable, an education at one of the world's finest institutions (Christian or not) does not guarantee content and practices that result in growing saints. Growing saints requires more than a good education.

A saint is a follower of Christ who has matured in the faith and has a heart purified by the Holy Spirit so that the head, heart, and life together reflect holiness, Christ-likeness. Maturity and purity of heart are the marks of a saint. The exercise of growing saints is the making of disciples. It involves bringing the head (orthodoxy; right thinking; cognition), heart (orthopathy; right feeling; affect) and life (orthopraxy; right living; behavior) together over time so that at the intersection of the three (head, heart, and life) growing saints is made possible.

Figure One

We may think of Christ as the perfect one whose essence is the complete overlapping of the three spheres of head, heart, and life. The more integrated and overlapping the three circles of head, heart, and life, the stronger the Christ-following disciple-saint whose nature is increasingly after the likeness of Christ. In the words of the Apostle Peter, he or she participates in the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4).

Great Ideas of Convention

Orthodoxy is “right, correct, straight thinking,” good theory, sound biblically based theology. It is a place to start in growing saints. It’s the raison d’être of Sunday schools and Bible studies, Jr. Soldiers, and Corps Cadets. The orthodoxy of Army discipleship is the task of exposing Christ followers to the great ideas of the Kingdom and the great Gospel narrative of God’s salvation. The great ideas of the Kingdom of God are not easily found in the curricula of the conventional institutions of higher learning. In the past century the great idea movement in higher education took root and proliferated. An increasing number of universities and colleges centered their curricula on great books, authors, and ideas. No university embraced a great ideas orientation to education as much as the University of Chicago where the movement began. Through the energy and foresight of one of the university’s leading scholars, Mortimer Adler, a noble and laudable initiative was begun in the 1940’s with the intent to reform higher education and counter what was believed to be a decline of liberal arts education in the face of more and more specialization. The vision was a simple prescription for a nation increasingly interested in the role of higher and continuing education in a democracy. The best way to gain a liberal education in or out of the university, they argued, is to discuss the writings of the world’s great thinkers. In the process a liberally educated person would be equipped to think the great ideas as captured in the writings of others for posterity, hopefully be guided by them, and possibly add great ideas to them.²

Mortimer Adler and his colleague Robert M Hutchison, the University of Chicago president at the time (1940), aggregated a list of 102 great ideas as follows:

Angel, Animal, Aristocracy, Art, Astronomy, Beauty, Being, Cause, Chance, Change, Citizen, Constitution, Courage, Custom and Convention, Definition, Democracy, Desire, Dialectic, Duty, Education, Element, Emotion, Eternity, Evolution, Experience, Family, Fate, Form, God, Good and Evil, Government, Habit, Happiness, History, Honor, Hypothesis, Idea, Immortality, Induction, Infinity, Judgment, Justice, Knowledge, Labor, Language, Law, Liberty, Life and Death, Logic, Love, Man, Mathematics, Matter, Mechanics, Medicine, Memory and Imagination, Metaphysics, Mind, Monarchy, Nature,

Necessity and Contingency, Oligarchy, One and Many, Opinion, Opposition, Philosophy, Physics, Pleasure and Pain, Poetry, Principle, Progress, Prophecy, Prudence, Punishment, Quality, Quantity, Reasoning, Relation, Religion, Revolution, Rhetoric, Same and Other, Science, Sense, Sign and Symbol, Sin, Slavery, Soul, Space, State, Temperance, Theology, Time, Truth, Tyranny and Despotism, Universal and Particular, Virtue and Vice, War and Peace, Wealth, Will, Wisdom, and World.

The conventional orthopraxy (practice) of the Great Books/Great Ideas movement was the gathering of discussion groups in libraries, classrooms, churches and synagogues to read together and discuss the “canon” of great authors and their works. The methodology of the movement is reminiscent of John Wesley’s small accountability groups known as class meetings that were so effective in growing saints in Wesley’s day and subsequently into the twentieth century worldwide. The brilliance of the Great Ideas movement is that its approach worked powerfully within the framework of universities and does so increasingly today. At the same time, it is exportable beyond the university into community settings in the form of life-long learning. Nevertheless, it lacks Kingdom content and its focus is only a degree of orthodoxy.

Greater Ideas of the Kingdom

The idea of people reading great books and being exposed to great ideas is a worthy one. It is not the path to growing saints, however. The great books often listed in university curricula include the Old Testament. However, the great writings of spiritual giants like Aquinas and Calvin, and Jesus and Paul (the entire New Testament) are missing. The reader will notice that included in the 102 great ideas above are Angel, God, Good and Evil, Justice, Religion, Sin, and Virtue and Vice, less than ten words out of 102 that might occasion some discussion toward growing saints, and hardly enough to constitute an evangelical orthodoxy. Missing are the Greater Ideas of The Kingdom such as:

Faith, Grace, Preventive Grace, Imago Dei, Repentance, Forgiveness, Redemption, Regeneration, Reconciliation, Restoration, Justification, Via

Salutis, Salvation, Obedience, Disobedience, Consecration, Holy Spirit, Sanctification, Scriptural Holiness, Heart Holiness, Humility, Fruit Of The Spirit, Joy, Peace, Longsuffering, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Control, Community, Temptation, Resurrection, The Trinity.

These are great ideas around which discipleship of spiritual orthodoxy is based and by which saints are grown. The Apostle Paul states in his letter to the church at Philippi (2:5) “Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus . . .” These are the very big ideas that the renowned institutions of higher learning completely miss in their laudable effort to liberally educate students and the public. Conventional great ideas are not enough no matter how prestigious the institution of higher learning or how sincere the community based initiative to promote a liberal arts life-long learning effort. Godly Christian leaders will not accrue from exposures to conventional wisdom found in great books and great ideas. This is not to say that there is no value there. But it is to say that what is missing are the core ideas that drive an evangelical understanding of who God is, how we see him in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, how that informs how we see ourselves as fallen and marred in our sinful nature, how God has made a provision in Christ for our redemption and restoration to holiness and Christ-likeness. The great books and great ideas of higher learning are not inclusive enough nor have the clarity to answer the great questions of life: Who are we? Where did we come from? What is the purpose of our lives? What is our ultimate destiny? What is needed are curricula and sustained methodologies that makes possible powerful discipleship that results in the growing of saints, godly Salvationists, who are Christ-like and Holy. What is needed is even higher learning through the orthodoxy of the great ideas of the Kingdom.

More Than Just The Head, The Heart . . .

Even with a strong, Biblical orthodoxy, growing saints must be more than a cognitive ascent to a set of doctrines, propositions, or great notions about God, creation, and destiny. At the heart of the matter is the heart. The Psalmist writes, “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence. And do not take

Your Holy Spirit from me.”

Growing saints includes both growing understanding (orthodoxy) and growing one’s heart (one’s passion, pathos, orthopathy). In reference to Psalm 51: 10 – a “pure heart” is a heart after God’s own heart. It is a heart like Christ’s heart, one that beats with the heart of the God the Father, one that is in union and communion with God, a pure and holy heart, a heart in which God takes up residence. Discipleship that grows saints has everything to do with growing, enlarging, and cleansing one’s heart. In the prayer of the Apostle Paul communicated to the church at Ephesus, he prays that God “would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might through his spirit in the inner man, *that Christ might dwell in your hearts* through faith, that you being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height -- *to know the love of God which passes knowledge*; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” How is this possible? How does one know something that passes knowledge? It is done through the heart, and in the heart when the heart is pure. God places in the heart a deep appreciation of his love, a sense that his love is real, so real that it compels us to live for God and for others (2 Corinthians 5:14). In short, the head and the heart after the likeness of Christ inform and guide the life of a saint. The orthodoxy and orthopathy, together seen in the faith of a godly Christian, expresses itself in holy living, good works, the fruit of the Spirit (orthopraxy). The saint-in-the-making obediently responds to God’s love by loving God with all the mind, heart, soul, and strength and by loving others as one loves oneself.

To be a godly saint is to be holy. It is God’s directive – “Be holy as I am holy” (1 Peter 1:15; Leviticus 11:44). In the writings of John Wesley³, William Booth⁴, and Samuel Logan Brengle⁵, they all make it clear that holiness is a matter of a pure heart. Growing saints then is more than a matter of acquiring a level of cognitive capacity about God, achieving a prescribed level of catechistic proficiency, and being filled with head knowledge. Knowledge as continual clarity and depth of doctrinal understanding is essential. However, the heart guides the engagement of knowledge in the saint’s life in Christ. It is a pure heart, an undivided heart, a heart after the likeness of God’s heart, a

heart filled to the brim with the holy love of God which compels and propels the saint into holy living (action, practice, *praxis*, orthopraxy).

Holy Living: Faith Expressing Itself In Love

John Wesley's favorite scripture verse, one he cited again and again in his sermons and letters, was Galatians 5:6, “ . . . faith expressing itself (working) through love.” The key factor in salvation is faith lived out and expressed in the pure love of God in the heart defined by Wesley as “all inward and outward holiness.” He makes it very clear that holiness is a matter of the heart, a “union with the soul of God, the life of God in the soul of man” and if its “root be really in the heart, it cannot but put forth branches. And these are the several instances of outward obedience, which partake of the same nature with the root; and, consequently, are not only marks or signs, but substantial parts of (true) religion . . . ” God then “is well pleased with all that outward service which arises from the heart; with the sacrifices of our prayers (whether public or private), of our praises and thanksgivings; with sacrifice of our goods, humbly devoted to him, and employed wholly to his glory; and with that of our bodies . . . ”⁶ It is clear that head and heart holiness are to be lived out in obedience. The heart’s love of God and neighbor is to be demonstrated in holy living. Life is ministry to God and man, which responds to God’s grace demonstrating holy love through obedient living.

First, right and righteous thought; second, a heart that is after the likeness of God’s own heart, pure and filled with perfect love, and third; an exemplary life of God’s infilling self, are the central elements of holiness and the keys to growing disciples. We see wisdom and understanding, a pure heart, and an exemplary life perfectly in Jesus who scripture says is the perfect image of God (Colossians 1:14). If holiness is the priority for The Salvation Army, then growing saints (disciples) is the task of guiding self and others to be like Jesus in thought and life evidenced by a pure heart characteristic of a saint.

*To be like Jesus, this hope possesses me,
In every thought and deed, this is my aim, my creed.
To be like Jesus, this hope possesses me.
His Spirit helping me, like him I'll be.⁷*

Growing Saints In A Vacuum?

You cannot grow saints in a vacuum. People are naturally social creatures after the likeness of the Trinity. We are made in God's likeness, morally and socially. When the Apostle Paul says "Grow in grace, using the little word "in", we can assume an ecology of grace. God's grace is the context, the soil in which growth in the likeness of Christ takes place. The means of grace God engages are others, human agency. So growing saints requires a social ecology in support of holiness.⁸

Just as there are biological ecologies, there are social/spiritual contexts for growth, social ecologies within which individuals are immersed. In the social context of human interaction, God employs human agency to share the Gospel narrative, to guide us to faith in Christ, and to continue his re-creation and restoration project. God works with the help of others to restore what he originally had in mind for us from the beginning, that we would be like him in holiness, in maturity and purity of heart. The social context of holiness is our life together in marriage, family, and in faith community. This was true in Jesus' day, in the days of the early church (Acts 2:42-47), and in John Wesley's day in and through his class meetings, bands, and other small, intimate social groups.

Lessons From John Wesley

In John Wesley's day, the church was severely exclusive. Its spiritual vitality was at an all time low. In many cases, mainly the wealthy had access to church life, a seat in the worship service on Sundays, and the pastor's time and attention. Much of the population lacked access to the basic blessings of a faith community. When Wesley was restricted from preaching in churches across England, he took to the example and encouragement of his friend, George Whitefield. He began "field preaching." Previously in churches he had preached to a few hundred, mainly the well educated and affluent, but by preaching in the fields he reached thousands at a time with the result that hundreds and thousands who would otherwise be excluded from hearing the gospel were reached and came to faith. This raised a follow-up question of discipleship and how to grow saints.⁹

Since 1670 in Britain, preceding Wesley, religious societies existed in

attempts to spark religious renewal in the Church of England through small groups, local and national initiatives of Christian education, missions and publications. John Wesley was not the first to initiate small discipleship groups, but he may have been the most successful by organizing people into societies made up of class meetings, bands, and other small group structures. These societies and small discipleship groups excelled at growing saints. They met regularly (once a week), focused on scripture and personal experience, and significantly exercised a high degree of accountability for members' progress in the Christian life, including confession of faults and sins during the past week. Wesley's groups were inclusive and transcended the barriers of social class and gender. The focus was on progress, personal spiritual development, maturing in Christ, and transformation along a continuum of grace from initial salvation (repentance, redemption, regeneration), growing in grace and sanctification, to further growth in grace and glorification of God. Wesley's approach to discipleship through small groups evidenced a balance of head, heart, and life. They promoted sound doctrine through Bible study, heart holiness through accountability (confession, repentance) and holy living through growth in grace, consecration, sanctification, and acts of piety and service. Wesley's Methodist movement promoted powerful social/spiritual contexts for growing saints and then promoting holiness.

William and Catherine Booth were products of the Methodist movement. They grew as saints through the small social/spiritual ecologies of the Methodist class meetings.¹⁰ Roger Green quotes William Booth regarding his "hero and spiritual progenitor" – "I worshipped everything that bore the name of Methodist. To me there was one God, and John Wesley was his prophet. I had devoured the story of his life. No human compositions seemed to me to be comparable to his writings, and to the hymns of his brother Charles, and all that was wanted, in my estimation, for the salvation of the world was the faithful carrying into practice the letter and spirit of his instructions."

The Booths learned the importance of not leaving new converts to the Christian faith at the point of their conversion to languish and die in their newborn faith. They knew the importance of growing saints. From their Methodism it was their personal experience that saints grow in a social/spiritual context, especially in intentional small groups. In the early day of the Christian Mission

and subsequently in the beginning of the Army, they organized lay preachers, local officers, and other volunteers in the ministry and mission into corps, with brigades, bands, songster groups, and other small groups organized in the aggregate into yet another form of religious society raised up to grow disciple-saints and spread scriptural holiness throughout the land.

A Priority On Holiness

The state of affairs today in The Salvation Army is that many resources, strategies, and initiatives are being deployed to grow saints and promote “Scriptural Holiness across the land.”¹¹ Growing saints and promoting scriptural holiness is an Army priority. In some settings there is renewed teaching and preaching of holiness.¹² There continues to develop a robust Army literature on holiness.¹³ Discipleship structures are still in place in many Army corps (Jr. Soldiers and Corps Cadets). There is an emergence of Territorial Bible Conferences and an expansion around the world of Brengle Holiness Institutes. Recently published was a renewed and expanded Handbook of Doctrine¹⁴ and the Army’s Song Book is now under revision with Army theology hopefully retained in its songs and poetry.¹⁵

The questions beg themselves – Within the Army, nevertheless, is enough being done to grow saints? Is the investment of time and attention to matters of the heart enough? Should holiness be more than a priority? Should it be the priority from which all else flows? How important is growing saints to the future of the ministry and mission of the Army? If the three spheres of head, heart, and life reflect the desired balance necessary to the growing of saints so that right thinking, passion, and holy living is possible, how is the Army doing in growing disciples?

The task of growing saints is one of paying attention to and promoting all three spheres: cognitive, affective and behavioral in the making of godly Christians, servant leaders, soldiers who are fully saved (redemption/justification, sanctification/ restoration). The danger is that the Army in the aggregate may drift into imbalances with one sphere (orthopraxy; good works) dwarfing the head and the heart. Another danger is possible fragmentation, rather than integration, of the three spheres of head, heart, and life, a disconnect of the three spheres of discipleship from one another. The Army may

find itself “doing the most good” and “Letting its light shine in such a way that men see its good work . . .” and glorify the Army, but the glory and grace of God goes unrecognized and unacknowledged. The orthopraxis of good works becomes disconnected from Army orthodoxy (belief) and orthopathy (heart), and the spheres of belief and heart holiness, becoming increasingly diminished by benign neglect, lose priority, and remain under resourced.

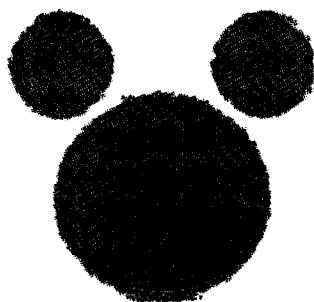


Figure Two

It is an organizational truism that in time all organizations and institutions experience entropy, drift, and decline. The ones that have longevity reinvent themselves, but not all entities experience renewal with the same mission. The landscape of Western higher education is testimony to this truth with so many universities starting out as Christ centered and losing their first love and priorities. The Army is not immune to the forces of drift and decline. It is merely a matter of benign neglect and “sins of omission” that can move an institution into decline. Decline is not always a result of doing the wrong things, but merely not doing the right things, the things that matter most. The areas at risk for the Army may be those implied by figure two above, head and heart, implicit in the accolade that “the Army is Christianity with its sleeves rolled up,” mostly action, with not much thought, and losing heart. Drift and decline can be pushed back by the steadfast resolve to grow saints in an integrated, balanced manner. The right thing in this case is to make the integrated, balanced activity of growing saints a renewed Army priority through which the power of the Holy Spirit expressed through human agency as a means of God’s grace will spread Scriptural Holiness across the land and make possible Kingdom ends for which the Army was established.

Notes

¹ Jonathan S. Raymond, The Salvation Army and Higher Education: The 2004 Andrew S. Miller Lecture, *Word & Deed*, Vol. 7, No. 2, May 2005. This article was written years ago. At the time of its writing the Army had on record 2,279 schools including Early Childhood Education Centers, primary schools, middle schools, secondary (high) schools, and other forms of training schools serving nearly 600,000 students worldwide. The count did not include CFOTS. This article assumes that the Army's level of provision of education globally is of the same magnitude.

² For the past 75 years (approximately), the great ideas movement has flourished and is reflected in the curriculum of a long list of universities and colleges in the form of Great Books programs. The exhaustive review of the movement can be seen by Googling "Great Books" and/or "Great ideas."

³ John Wesley, Sermon XXIII – Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount: Discourse III – Blessed are the Pure in Heart, in *Wesley's Fifty-two Standard Sermons*, (Nicholasville, Kentucky, 1988), pp. 228-239.

⁴ William Booth, *Purity of Heart*, (London: Salvation Books, 2007), originally published in 1902.

⁵ Samuel Logan Brengle, The Way of Holiness, p. 4, cited in R. David Rightmire, *Sanctified Sanity: The Life and Teaching of Samuel Logan Brengle*, (Alexandria, Virginia: Crest Books, 2003), p. 99. "Holiness . . . is not maturity, but purity: a clean heart in which the Holy Spirit dwell, filling it with pure, tender and constant love to God and man . . . All that God asks is that the heart should be cleansed from sin and full of love."

⁶ John Wesley, Sermon XXIV – Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount: Discourse IV, Ye are the Salt of the Earth, in *Wesley's Fifty-Two Standard Sermons*, (Nicholasville, Kentucky, 1988), p. 246.

⁷ Chorus 107, *The Salvation Army Song Book*, American Edition, 1987.

⁸ Jonathan S. Raymond, Social Holiness: Journey, Exposures, Encounter, in Kevin W. Mannoia and Don Thorsen (eds.) *The Holiness Manifesto*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), pp. 166-177.

⁹ An abundance of works exist for the reader to become more acquainted with the mission and ministry of John Wesley including Howard Snyder's *The Radical Wesley and Patterns of Church Renewal*, Kenneth J. Collins's *John Wesley: A Theological Journey*, Theodore Runyon's *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today*, and Richard P. Heitzner's *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*.

¹⁰ Roger J. Green, *The Life and Ministry of William Booth Founder of The Salvation Army*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005). Roger Green offers insight into the life of William Booth and documents the powerful influence of John Wesley and Wesley's Methodist legacy on General Booth's life, theology, and global ministry.

¹¹ Promoting Scriptural Holiness across the land was John Wesley's passion and mission. The Army stands on the shoulders of William and Catherine Booth who were thoroughly Wesleyan in their orthodoxy (doctrines), orthopathy (heart holiness), and orthopraxy (holy living; love for God and mankind).

¹² The Brengle Award for the Preaching of Holiness in the USA Southern Territory engaging second year cadets competition is a good example of promoting the teaching and preaching of holiness.

¹³ For the past fifteen years, The Salvation Army's journal of theology and ministry, Word & Deed, has featured articles on holiness in nearly every issue. Well over twenty articles by contemporary authors are reflected in its pages over the years. In addition, several books by SA authors in the past ten years enrich the publication base for the teaching and preaching of holiness including R. David Rightmire's *Sanctified Sanity: The life and teaching of Samuel Logan Brengle*; the republication of William Booth's *Purity of Heart*, and Andrew Eason and Roger Green's *Boundless Salvation: The Shorter Writings of William Booth*.

¹⁴ *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine*, (London: Salvation Books, 2010) is a treasure trove of wisdom and insight especially pertinent to the Army's orthodoxy and an

indispensible resource in the growing of saints.

¹⁵ The Salvation Army Song Book (SASB) is likewise a treasure trove of Army doctrine. Like many Christian faith communities, the Army sings its theology. The SASB is particularly powerful in growing saints in the power of music to not only teach our orthodoxy, but also move the heart toward heart holiness in response to God's prevenient grace.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Transformed Life

Judith L. Brown

Famous thinkers such as Plato, Socrates, Aristotle and Buddha spent much of their time contemplating the four great questions of life. 1) What is reality? 2) Who is well off or blessed? 3) How do we define goodness? 4) How does a human being become a good person? These knotty questions are paramount because they influence the worldview of an individual, which in turn, shapes a person's value system and his or her character—attitudes, behavior, relationships, and way of life.

Several centuries before Jesus preached and taught in Israel, ancient Greek philosophers thought deeply about goodness, the formation of character, and whether virtue can be taught. Plato believed that the ideal society (state), was the source of the good life, and that the aim of a good society was justice. We are only free to know and to do what is right when reason controls our appetites. When this freedom prevails, justice will triumph in the individual and the state.¹ Yet the Greeks never succeeded in answering the question of how a human being can become good. Without that knowledge, and a methodology to bring about change, people are left to drift through life as victims of their desires and at the mercy of fate.

Judith L. Brown is an editor on the national publications staff for Word & Deed, the War Cry and Crest Books.

Author Dallas Willard maintains that modern Americans have given up on trying to define “goodness”; in our culture a person is already good simply because he/she exists. All we have to do to be worthy is simply to be; consequently, we tend to confuse “worth” with “worthiness.” As a result we do not even bother to define the objective difference between a good and a bad person anymore. Moral knowledge is no longer an objective truth but a matter of opinion or personal preference. Willard says that Christian leaders need to reclaim their faith and its associated morality as a body of knowledge (truth) that can be tested and proclaimed with confidence.² For believers who truly desire to become like Jesus, one precious source of knowledge is the heritage of saints who manifested the fruit of the spirit by faithfully practicing the spiritual disciplines over the course of a lifetime.

Twentieth century pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) concluded that the only life worth living in the world was as a Christian, and he found Scripture to be the final authority for living that life. He believed that God is the only reality and the only goodness, and that the questions “How can I be good?” and “How can I do good?” should be replaced with “What is the will of God?”³

Biographer Eric Metaxas underscores Bonhoeffer’s belief that morality cannot be divorced from a relationship with God. “...There are no ethics apart from doing God’s will. And God, indeed, Jesus Christ is the non-negotiable given in the equation of human ethics.”⁴

In *Ethics*, Bonhoeffer bases his view of reality solely on the truth of the gospel. “There are not two realities, but only one reality, and that is God’s reality revealed in Christ in the reality of the world . . .The world has no reality of its own independent of God’s revelation in Christ. The theme of two realms, which has dominated the history of the church again and again, is foreign to the New Testament.”⁵

For most of his life, Bonhoeffer had an intense longing to know God better and to further His will in the kingdom, a desire fueled by his participation in monastic communities in England. Here he witnessed the strength of fellowship lived in love, the hours of office, meditative singing of the psalms, and hours of corporate silence. Daily Bible readings and prayer bolstered his attempts to be more Christ-like and gave him insights “like the overflow

from an underground river, that deep secret flow of his soul's development."⁶ Ever a seeker of spiritual truth, he had once intended to study under Ghandi in India, and he admired the way that Islam integrated religion into everyday life. Living a faithful sacramental life on a daily basis seemed to be the stream of Christian spirituality that he cherished most. As an instructor at the clandestine seminaries of Finkenwalde and Zingst, he began to teach routine practice of the spiritual disciplines as the key to becoming a person who obeyed God and willed the best for others.

Although Bonhoeffer was executed by the Gestapo at the untimely age of 39, he took full advantage of his short life to become a loyal apprentice of Jesus Christ. His willingness to train spiritually using several disciplines engendered steady growth through grace, resulting in a profound change in his mind, will, relationships, body, and soul. As we look back on his extraordinary life, clearly he must have claimed the identity of an "unceasing spiritual being in whom Christ dwells and delights, someone who lives in the unshakeable kingdom of God."⁷ Even in Tegel prison, where he spent 18 months, for the most part he managed to live in a state of peace and joy. While many other inmates cowered in abject fear every time the building was bombed, Bonhoeffer felt no anxiety because he knew he was safe and cared for by God in the kingdom.

Like his father, he was a true pragmatist, believing that without practical application theology has little value. In the introduction to *Life Together*, he deepens the classic view of doctrine by framing it as obedience to Christ in everyday life, private and public. It was steadfast reliance on the spiritual disciplines that helped to re-form him into the human being God created him to be. One of his most important legacies is that although we cannot become like Christ through good works, God's grace will enable us to change internally when we "train" rather than simply try to become good people. As Jesus declared to the crowd gathered for His Sermon on the Mount, "The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher" (Luke 6:40).

Some of the New Testament letters spell out our need to imitate what Jesus did when he was "off duty" in order to grow in discipleship. "But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to dis-

tinguish good from evil” (Heb. 5:14). And “Do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

Worship

Making worship a routine part of everyday life is one of the chief ways we train to become more like Jesus. It heightens our awareness that God is always with us and helps us to hear his voice. Nowhere is this more evident than in the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. As one of eight children and the youngest son, he grew up in a close-knit, wealthy, aristocratic German family and was confirmed as a youth in the German Lutheran Church. Although his family did not usually attend formal worship services, his mother, a theologian’s daughter, seamlessly wove Bible stories and hymn singing into a daily rhythm for the children. The governesses she hired to help take care of the children had a strong foundation in the Christian faith. Bonhoeffer’s father, a psychiatrist who was not a believer, still wholeheartedly endorsed the spiritual foundation that his wife gave to their growing brood.

Central to Bonhoeffer’s love of worship was a passion for music, which began in childhood and sustained him with great joy and peace throughout his life. He appreciated the way that rhythm, tempo and tone unite in perfect harmony to declare the glory of God. For Bonhoeffer, music was a gratuitous gift that evoked the beauty, goodness, truth and overflowing grace of the Kingdom. It was a means of praising God by expressing his gratitude for creation, love and salvation (new life). Echoing John’s image of heaven in Rev. 15:3, he wrote, “God has prepared for himself one great song of praise throughout eternity, and we who enter the city of God join in this song. It is the victory song of the Israelites passing through the Red Sea, the Magnificat of Mary, the song of Paul and Silas in prison, the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb”⁸ (Rev. 15:3).

According to Bonhoeffer, singing in unison calls for authenticity, discipline and humility in a community that is fully surrendered to the Word. Where spoken words of praise, gratitude and confession are inadequate, music can illuminate the mystery of the Word. When we sing from our hearts to the Lord, it is the voice of the church that is heard, and individual

members simply share in the church's song of glory to God. The more we infuse our singing with love, joy, and discipline, the more richly blessed will be our fellowship. But when our hearts are not overflowing with Christ, and we are without simplicity and humility, our music will be nothing more than self-praise or idolatry.

By the age of eight Bonhoeffer had learned how to play classical music, ably accompanying his mother and sisters at the piano. When he was just 14 he arranged a cantata based on Psalm 42. During the season of Advent his family would sing carols, and on Christmas Eve his mother usually read the story of the nativity. Years later he would compare life in prison to Advent, a time of waiting and hoping when the door is shut and can only be opened from the outside. The family tradition on New Year's Eve was to light candles, drink hot punch, read Psalm 90 and sing a hymn together.

Bonhoeffer's view of the church started to crystallize while he was a young adult. After attending High Mass on Palm Sunday at St. Peters Basilica, he began to see the church as a universal community that cut across racial, ethnic, national and even denominational boundaries. What mattered to him most was understanding the Word, obeying the Word and coming to know God through His extravagant, overflowing grace. At the age of 21 on a trip to Rome, he felt privileged to witness a group of 40 young novitiates sing Evensong with remarkable simplicity, grace and authenticity.

In 1930, while a student at Union Theological Seminary in New York, he observed, to his chagrin, that the gospel in America had been diluted to "an ethical and social idealism borne by a faith in progress."²⁹ But his cynicism mellowed after he sat in the Harlem congregation of Dr. Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., at Abyssinian Baptist Church. Hearing Powell preach against racism and seeing the gospel lived out obediently in black churches became a defining experience for him as a pastor and theologian. It was there that he heard the message of the Cross proclaimed, and it was there that he truly felt the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Worshipping with African-Americans opened his heart and mind to an undeniable link between holiness and suffering, which would figure prominently in his theology before and during World War II.

In New York, Bonhoeffer bought albums of his beloved gospel music

and took them back to Berlin to inspire his university students. Best friend and biographer Eberhard Bethge later recalled that students at Finkenwalde, an underground seminary, “hummed ‘Swing Low, Sweet Chariot’ 20 years before the radio and concert halls popularized it.”¹⁰ In Tegel prison, Bonhoeffer named Kyrie Eleison as his favorite Bach piece. Without a doubt music fed his soul in a visceral way, and he missed it deeply. He likened our relationship with Christ to a *cantus firmus*, a pre-existing melody of music, to epitomize the bridge between human behavior and our relationship with God.

In *Psalms*, the last book that the Nazis let him publish, he writes, “Christ brought in himself the sacrifice of God for us and our sacrifice for God. For us there remains only the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving in prayers, hymns and a life lived according to God’s commands (*Psalms 15 and 60*). So our entire life becomes worship, the offering of thanksgiving.”¹¹

The Word

One of Bonhoeffer’s most compelling statements focused on proclamation of the Word and the human tendency to water down the gospel to make it more palatable. His message is as germane today as it was when the freedom of Europe, perhaps even the entire world, stood on the verge of collapse. “We must be able to speak about our faith so that hands will be stretched out toward us faster than we can fill them . . . Do not try to make the Bible relevant. Its relevance is axiomatic... Do not defend God’s Word, but testify to it . . . Trust to the Word. It is a ship loaded to the very limits of its capacity.”¹²

Clearly, studying scripture and meditating on the Word had a profound impact on the spiritual maturation of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Two Genesis stories in particular helped him discern his role in combatting the Third Reich, which threatened to destroy European Jewry and the core of the Christian faith in Germany. One was the enigmatic account of Jacob wrestling with the stranger at Peniel, which he often invoked in lectures, notes and sermons. The other was the story of the Tower of Babel. These passages, among others, resonated powerfully for him in a time when many people were struggling to do what was good and right.

In 1939, Bonhoeffer knew that the odds of being drafted into the Nazi

military were high. "Though firmly opposed to war on Christian grounds, he was not a pacifist who would have refused to fight in any circumstances. But to fight in order to maintain the Nazi state would be for him a moral impossibility."¹³ Nevertheless, as a leader in the secret Confessing Church, he feared that taking a pacifist stand might make the Church appear unpatriotic. It would be the most difficult choice he would ever have to make.

Seeking to clarify God's plan for his life, he went back to America and the safe haven of Union Theological Seminary. But no sooner had he set foot in New York than he started to agonize over his decision. Like Jacob, he wrestled with God's will for his life, which he came to define as what God requires of us in the here and now. After meditating on Isaiah 28:16, "*The one who believes does not flee,*" he seemed to find peace in concluding that, "I will have no right to participate in the reconstruction of Christian life in Germany if I don't share in the trials of this time with my people."¹⁴

The story of the Tower of Babel, another vehicle for the "rhema" or personal word from God, symbolizes the pride and idolatry of the human race. Its message is that only in vain do we try to reach God through human effort, and that apart from His grace we remain utterly helpless. Bonhoeffer believed that while God can speak to us through a poor sermon, He can just as easily withhold Himself during a heartfelt and eloquent one. In 1933, he gave a radio lecture criticizing any authority figure who allowed himself to become an idol and a false god to the people he governed. The Nazis cut off the broadcast before he finished speaking.

In June 1943, he returned to the Babel story in a letter to his parents from Tegel. "The confusion of language in this story should at last be brought to an end by the language of God, which everyone understands and through which alone people understand each other again," he said. "The church should be the place where that happens."¹⁵

One New Testament passage that spoke personally to Bonhoeffer about the trajectory of his future was II Timothy 4, where Paul urges his young assistant to do his best to "come before winter" before it is too late. Paul, awaiting execution in Rome, has been deserted by all of his cohorts except for Luke. Demas has left for Thessalonica, Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. In his isolation he reaches out to Timothy, asking him

to bring Mark with him, along with his cloak, books and scrolls. Faithful Timothy serves as a wellspring of tangible and emotional support in Paul's final hour of need.

In June 1939, as the news from home grew more and more distressing, Bonhoeffer resolved that, "I cannot imagine that it is God's will for me to remain here (in America) without anything particular to do in case of war. I must travel at the first possible opportunity."¹⁶ So, after just 26 days in New York, he made the fateful decision to sail home to Germany, soon to join the resistance as a double agent in the plot to kill Hitler and dismantle the Third Reich. Putting his life on the line to defend the church's integrity would bring him squarely to the foot of the cross. In the martyrdom that brought him worldwide fame he would truly "lose his life to gain it," forever united with his beloved Lord.

Yet even with the apparent benefit of divine direction, he wrestled with ambivalence about his personal plans. "It is remarkable how I am never quite clear about the motives for any of my decisions," he said. "Is that a sign of confusion, of inner dishonesty, or is it a sign that we are guided without our knowing, or is it both? . . . In the last resort one acts from a level which remains hidden from us. So one can only ask God to judge us and to forgive us...It is now in His hand."¹⁷

Prior to the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the German resistance led a failed plot to seize Hitler and declare him insane and unfit to rule the country. Hans von Dohnanyi, Bonhoeffer's brother-in-law and a key resistance leader, asked him to interpret Matthew 26:52. Here Jesus warns Peter, who has severed the ear of the slave of the chief priest in the Garden of Gethsemane, that those who take up the sword will perish by it. Bonhoeffer replied that although Jesus' warning was still germane in the twentieth century, the political sector needed people who would be willing to risk their lives to overcome evil with good.

Among the many pearls of wisdom found in *Life Together* is specific advice on how to read Scripture. Bonhoeffer urges Christians to read and listen to one chapter of the Old Testament and at least half a chapter of the New Testament every morning and evening. He also cautions the reader not to identify with the speaker in the Bible. "Otherwise, we will become rhetor-

ical, emotional, sentimental, or coercive and imperative; that is, we will be directing the listener's attention to ourselves instead of to the Word. This is to commit the worst of sins in presenting the Scriptures."¹⁸ Finally, in reading the Bible, he advises, we need to be "torn out of our own existence and set down in the midst of the holy history of God on earth."¹⁹ He suggests that it is more important to find our place in God's story than to know His plan for our lives.

Beginning with prayer for the power of the Spirit, Bonhoeffer would spend an entire week on 10-15 verses of Scripture. God's Holy Word suffused him with redemption, goodness, innocence and blessedness. The Sermon on the Mount especially helped him to pray, drove his ideas and actions and marked a clarion call to authentic change that would enable behavior to flow automatically from a pure heart. Here Jesus sets a high bar for those who seek to follow him. They are to eliminate condemnation, contempt, anger, lust and disgust, grudges and revenge from their hearts and minds. They are to find freedom from the desire to manipulate others with their words. They are not to seek human approval but to keep their minds focused on the things that are above. And they are called to love their enemies and to bless those who curse them, a seemingly impossible standard to meet.

This level of radical heart change—far exceeding the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, cannot be achieved by sheer human will. It starts with practicing the spiritual disciplines, which position us to receive the grace of the Holy Spirit. Then the Spirit, in His own time and at His own pace, gradually changes us from the inside out, making us more and more like Christ.

Bonhoeffer emphasized the magnitude of Jesus' seminal commands in a poignant letter to his brother, Karl Frederich. "I would only achieve true inner clarity and honesty by really starting to take [the Sermon on the Mount] seriously. Here lies the force that can blow all of this idiocy (Nazi ideology) sky high like fireworks, leaving only a few burnt-out shells behind."²⁰ Just as God had been angered by the showy festivals and disingenuous sacrifices of the Hebrews, He would have no respect for the worship of anyone who acquiesced to persecution of the Jews in Germany.

After his final return home from New York, Bonhoeffer's love for God spurred him to attend church regularly and to celebrate the Eucharist as

often as possible. Emulating the way that his mother integrated her faith into everyday life, he visited his students at home and invited them to attend musical events hosted by his parents. He wanted his students to view all aspects of life, including politics in Germany, through the Word of God. He wanted them to realize that only Jesus Christ could save Germany, not Adolf Hitler, which was the widespread public opinion at the time. Part of the reason for Hitler's popularity was his ability to exploit the fusion that existed between the national identity of the people as Germans and their religious affiliation as Christians. With seven million Germans unemployed during a global depression, German Christians were willing to put their faith in Hitler to rescue the country from financial ruin. On the other hand, The Confessing Church foresaw an unjust war looming on the horizon and wanted to affirm the Gospel against the heinous policies of National Socialism.

Fellowship

Joining with others in worship, study, prayer and celebration enriches our sense of fellowship and increases our ability to experience God. Yet Bonhoeffer goes beyond the classic view of fellowship to emphasize the centrality of Jesus and the cross. "The more genuine and the deeper our community becomes, the more will everything between us recede, the more clearly and purely will Jesus Christ and His work become the one and only thing that is vital between us. We have one another only through Christ, but through Christ we do have one another, wholly, and for all eternity."²¹

Bonhoeffer affirmed Luther's difficult adage that "the kingdom is to be in the midst of your enemies. And, he who will not suffer this does not want to be in the kingdom of Christ; he wants to be among friends, to sit among roses and lilies, not with the bad people but with the devout people."²² Bonhoeffer saw fellowship as a gracious gift of the kingdom embodying joy, strength, reverence and humility, and this gift was the "roses and lilies" to which Luther had alluded. If Christians do not bear one another's burdens in the fellowship of the cross, he said, other people become no more than objects to be exploited. And if we fail to experience each other's troubles, then the fellowship cannot even be defined as Christian.

Carrying one another's burdens, he went on, allows us to honor the personal freedom of our brothers and sisters. The freedom of other people includes personality, individuality, gifts, weaknesses and eccentricities that can produce friction. To bear the burden of each other means to accept all of that and break through to find joy in it. When we bear with another's sin or the abuse of freedom in which fellowship is broken, we will experience the grace of God. (Col. 3:13)

Bonhoeffer also wrote of the "alien righteousness"²³ that depends on the Word of God being spoken to us by other people. Because we seek and find the Living Word through other Christians in fellowship, we need them to bear and proclaim the Word. "The Christ in our own heart is weaker than the Christ in the word of our brothers and sisters; our own heart is uncertain, our brothers' and sisters' heart is sure."²⁴

Prior to World War II prospective pastors in Germany were receiving no formal training in prayer, worship, and meditation, so they were not learning how to hear and obey God's voice, live out the Gospel and then pass on that knowledge to help others become faithful apprentices of Christ. (During the latter half of the 20th century and the early 21st century, Dallas Willard echoed the same conclusion about churches in America, reminding us that the problem has not gone away).

To fill the void left by the German Lutheran Church in teaching the real meaning of discipleship, Bonhoeffer decided to open an underground seminary that would reestablish a traditional monastic lifestyle. He wanted seminarians to learn pure Christian doctrine, the Sermon on the Mount, and how to advocate for the weak and powerless. Not to be overlooked was the appalling fact that German church leaders had fully succumbed to the Nazis' ruthless plan to eliminate anyone who did not fit the Aryan criterion for superiority.

Prior to opening first Zingst and then Finkenwalde, Bonhoeffer had visited a couple of monasteries in Britain, which prepared him to appreciate the gift of communal living. Together he and 25 students planted a vegetable garden, painted and cleaned rooms, sang together and formed an orchestra. He brought his personal library with him from Berlin—including the complete works of Luther—and a gramophone to play the gospel music he brought

back from Harlem. Singing these songs raised the students' awareness of social justice by highlighting a parallel between black and Jewish oppression. Eberhard Bethge broadened Bonhoeffer's knowledge of the sacred composers, and Bonhoeffer played classical concertos by Bach and Beethoven on the piano. When the weather cooperated, classes and singing were enjoyed outside.

Following a systematic, tightly packed agenda, the seminarians started their day with silence followed by a 45 minute service before breakfast. After breakfast, the group sought to focus on hearing God's voice by spending 30 minutes in solitude and silence. Students would meditate on the same passage of scripture for a week with no help from Hebrew or Greek translations. (Although meditation was not popular with the students, one grateful seminarian wrote to Bonhoeffer from the German front that it had helped him to memorize various passages of Scripture and thus had nurtured his relationship with God). Most afternoons and evenings were spent hiking, playing games, and competing in sports like soccer and shot put. Dinner and recreation were followed by another 45 minute service, more silence and then sleep.

Since Bonhoeffer held a position of authority and leadership, the discipline of service not only enhanced his own growth in simplicity and transparency but also served as a model for the students. One evening at Zingst proved to be a valuable learning experience when he sought help with washing the dishes after dinner. After no volunteers stepped forward, he locked the door, cleaned up the kitchen alone and refused to let anyone else in, an action designed to portray humble servanthood to the ordinands. At Finkenwalde, one of the vicars lauded him as "a man who believes in what he thinks and does what he believes in."²⁵

Talking about others behind their backs was strictly prohibited among the ordinands. Bonhoeffer and his siblings had been taught to think before they spoke and to measure their words carefully. With zero tolerance for gossip and prattle, Karl Bonhoeffer sought to instill simplicity, integrity and clear, unambiguous expression of thought in his children. All of the Bonhoeffer children grew up believing that it was simply unacceptable to speak or write

without having something worthwhile to say.

In *Life Together*, Bonhoeffer turns to James 3:2 to expound on the freedom that this discipline offers us. “He who holds his tongue in check controls both mind and body.”²⁶ Guarding our speech helps us to stop judging, condemning and holding people in contempt, and to “become an occasion for joy instead of nuisance and affliction. I can never know beforehand how the image of God should appear in others. To me, the sight may seem strange, even ungodly. But God creates every person in the likeness of His Son, the crucified. After all, even that image certainly looked strange and ungodly to me before I grasped it.”²⁷

Prayer and Meditation

A committed prayer life plays a critical role in spiritual transformation through the renewal of our minds and wills. Moreover, as Bonhoeffer well knew, prayer and meditation have the power to unite a community in Christian fellowship. Each day he would pray for clarity, protection from sin, growth in holiness, faithfulness and strength to do his work. He saw value in rising early to seek guidance and obey God, as did Jesus, Abraham, Jacob, Moses and Joshua. Since the Psalms and Lamentations mention the availability of special help from God in the morning, he said, our first thought and the first word we utter belong to God.

The beauty of the Psalter, which he called the prayer book of Jesus, is that it is both God’s Word and the prayer of human beings to God. When we come to Psalms that horrify us or shake us to the core—e.g., those infused with innocence, acrimony or curses—it is a signal that someone else is praying. It is here that we meet and unite with the praying Christ who becomes our intercessor. In Bonhoeffer’s view, parts of the Lord’s Prayer were integral to all of the Psalms, which meant that they were the prayers of Jesus.

The practice of intercessory prayer helped to remove condemnation and hate from Bonhoeffer’s heart. To offer intercession for our neighbor “means to grant him/her the same right that we have received, namely, to stand before Christ and share in His mercy,”²⁸ he wrote. It means specific petitions for people with particular problems, a gift of God’s grace and a source of joy

in God and in the community.

Through meditation Bonhoeffer opened his soul, the deepest part of himself, to God so he could hear God's voice and learn from Him. His basic rule was to seek God alone, not an experience of God, and to disregard periods of drought, disinterest and sometimes antipathy that inevitably occur. It is enough to "let the word penetrate and dwell within us,"²⁹ he wrote, with the caveat that searching for new ideas in scripture only distracts us and nurtures our pride. The Word seeks to move us and will work within us all day long even when we are perfectly unaware of it.

Meditation contributed to the integration of Bonhoeffer's faith with ordinary life, German culture and the world. Luke's story of the annunciation must have triggered a childhood memory of seeing his mother weep when she read of Mary pondering the angel's words in her heart. The cry of Psalm 74 that "they have burned all of God's house in the land," produced a righteous anger in him after *Kristallnacht*, when Hitler ordered the burning of synagogues to the ground. Passages from Zechariah and Romans convinced him that God had come to save the Jews first, not the Gentiles, and he firmly rebuked the notion that the Jews' rejection of Jesus had turned them into a cursed group of people.

Solitude and Silence

Silence and solitude enabled Bonhoeffer to withdraw from others to create an empty and open space for God, to deepen his relationship with God and to allow the Spirit to restore his soul. The following excerpts from *Life Together* attest to the extraordinary impact of this powerful practice on his spiritual formation journey.

"If you refuse to be alone you are rejecting Christ's call to you, and you can have no part in the community of those who are called . . . But the reverse is also true: Let him who is not in community beware of being alone. One who wants fellowship plunges into the void of words and feelings, and one who seeks solitude without fellowship perishes in the abyss of vanity, self-infatuation and despair."³⁰

"Right speech comes out of silence; and right silence comes out of speech.

Silence is the excess, the inebriation of the victim of speech. But speechlessness is unholy, like a thing only maimed, not clearly sacrificed,... Zacharias was speechless, instead of being silent. Had he accepted the revelation, he may perhaps have come out of the temple not speechless but silent (Ernest Hello)."³¹

"Let none expect from silence anything but a direct encounter with the Word of God. But this encounter will be given to him or her. The Christian will not lay down any conditions for it. If he/she simply accepts it, the silence will be richly rewarded."³²

"As there are definite hours in the Christian's day for the Word, particularly the time of common worship and prayer, so the day also needs definite times of silence under the Word and silence that comes out of the Word . . . The Word comes not to the chatterer but to one who holds his tongue . . . Silence is nothing but waiting for God's Word and coming from God's Word with a blessing."³³

Bonhoeffer's last letter to his fiancée, Maria von Wedemeyer, points to the power of silence to evoke spiritual comfort and joy that is more real than our earthly existence. "I have had the experience over and over again that the quieter it is around me, the clearer do I feel the connection to you. It is as though in solitude the soul develops senses which we hardly know in everyday life. Therefore, I have not felt lonely or abandoned for one moment."³⁴

Submission

The discipline of submission freed Bonhoeffer to value others, to realize that happiness did not depend on getting his own way, and to yield his body, mind and spirit to God. While an assistant pastor in Barcelona in 1928, he drew larger crowds when he preached than did the senior pastor, who responded by ceasing to announce the sermon schedule in advance. The senior pastor was a poor speaker who did not try to reach the youth. Beyond that, he resisted Bonhoeffer's vision for the church because it would mean more work for him. While Bonhoeffer struggled with taking credit for a full church, he managed to put aside his pride and defer to his superior.

In a meeting with Bishop George Bell, who had direct ties to Churchill,

he expressed humility and shame for the sins of Germany. In no way did he try to mitigate the atrocious wickedness of the Third Reich; rather, he believed that the German people should be willing to suffer for these evils before the world. In fact, his challenge to the German Church on its duty to oppose Hitler's regime was even more forceful. "I believe that the whole of Christendom has need to pray with us that the resistance shall become 'resistance to the point of blood,'"³⁵ he said. Disappointed by a lack of boldness on the part of the Confessing Church leaders, he noted that failure, according to worldly standards, need not mean that we are working outside the will of God. "God's cause is not always the successful one . . . we really could be unsuccessful and be on the right road."³⁶

Meditation on John 5:44 enriched Bonhoeffer's knowledge of the importance of humility and its role in spiritual formation. Through Jesus' words he came to understand that accepting his own sinfulness would rid him of conceit, lead him to associate with the lowly, and to consider himself the greatest of all sinners. "How can you believe when you accept glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the one who alone is God?" Jesus' blunt inquiry to his opponents led Bonhoeffer to place a higher value on his neighbor's will and honor than his own. "How can we possibly serve another person in real humility if we regard his sinfulness as worse than our own?"³⁷ he asked.

During the 18 months he spent in Tegel prison, Bonhoeffer continued his regular practice of the spiritual disciplines—Bible study, meditation, intercession, thanksgiving and praying the Psalms—which greatly sustained his faith. He knew that the road to patience goes by way of discipline (2 Peter 1:6) and that only through discipline can we achieve true freedom. Within six months he had already read the Old Testament two and a half times. And yet for weeks at a time he felt no obligation to read the Bible at all, because he followed the spirit, not the letter of God's law. He declined the official church's prayers because he had not been imprisoned in the service of the church.

From prison he wrote, "I owe all the alleviations and help that I get here not to myself, but to others . . . The wish to be independent in everything is false pride. Even what we owe to others belongs to ourselves and is a part

of our own lives, and any attempt to calculate what we have ‘earned’ for ourselves and what we owe to other people is certainly not Christian, and is, moreover, a futile undertaking.”³⁸

“Even here [in Tegel] we ought to live as if we had no wishes and no future, and just be our true selves. The others come to rely on us, confide in us and let us talk to them. We can have *abundant life* [author’s emphasis], even though many wishes remain unfulfilled,”³⁹ he wrote. Mealtimes fellowship had been such a priority, and he grieved the loss of it so deeply, that he felt moved to ask whether it was an essential part of life since it was part of the kingdom of God.

Once the Tegel authorities learned of his family ties, they moved him to a larger cell that was cleaned daily, permitted him a daily walk and offered him extra food. Yet he refused additional rations and a cooler cell because he knew that other prisoners would be deprived of them. Prisoners and guards were amazed at his sanguine and peaceful demeanor. Calm, levelheaded and supportive, he administered first aid to those who were wounded during air raids. He also raised the morale of other inmates, and they, as well as the wardens, often maneuvered to exchange a few words with him in sickbay.

His generosity and kindness seemed to know no bounds. For example, when a young prisoner could not afford legal aid, he paid for an attorney. To advocate for prisoners who had been abused, he submitted a formal report suggesting changes in the penal system. He shared his food with the person who came to clean his cell. During the winter, he expressed great sorrow after an air raid shattered many of the windows, leaving some prisoners sitting in their cells freezing while his own cell had been unaffected. He urged Bethge to withdraw his money from the bank and to spend it for anything he and his wife Renate (Bonhoeffer’s niece) wanted, which he said would give him much pleasure.

Nevertheless, like any human being under inordinate pressure with no end in sight, his character was severely tested. When the bombs fell at Tegel, he could find no words of Christian comfort or encouragement. He simply looked at his watch and commented that the raid would be over in 10 minutes. Bonhoeffer was tough on himself. He admitted that he enjoyed giving others “a colossal dressing down for indulging in only the slightest rude-

ness.”⁴⁰ Seeing defenseless people verbally attacked’ and assaulted would upset him for hours.

He had a walking companion, a Nazi party leader from Warsaw, who leaned on him for emotional support. At first Bonhoeffer treated him coolly, then he became more supportive and the man responded with gratitude. But after he made some anti-Semitic comments, Bonhoeffer used his influence with the guards to deprive him of small prison comforts, and the man’s whimpering left him cold. He told Bonhoeffer about two other colleagues, one had soiled his pants and the other moaned all day. Bonhoeffer laughed out loud and told him off, calling their behavior a disgrace. Later, however, we can see the stirrings of a significant shift in attitude when he writes, “It is weakness rather than wickedness that drags most people down, and it needs profound sympathy to put up with that.”⁴¹

A painful period arose as he grappled with incongruence between his self-image and the saintly perception that others at Tegel held of him. “Who Am I? . . . Am I really all that which other men tell ‘o? Or am I only what I myself know of myself? Restless and longing and sick, like a bird in a cage, Struggling for breath, as though hands were compressing my throat. Am I one person today and tomorrow another? Am I both at once? A hypocrite before others, and before myself a contemptibly woebegone weakling?”⁴²

Confession

In John 20:23, Jesus gives his followers the authority to forgive sin in His name, so that when we confess to a brother or sister, we are actually confessing before God and become recipients of divine grace. Yet in reality Christians usually perceive each other as part of a community of saints rather than sinners, which makes them feel isolated and reluctant to trust the divine promise. Knowing this, Bonhoeffer directed his seminarians to confess their sins to each other, a practice that Luther had endorsed centuries earlier. Bonhoeffer advised the ordinands to seek out another person for continuous intercession to avoid feeling alone in their sin.

In *Life Together* he urges Christians to accept the reality of sin. “The pious fellowship permits no one to be a sinner. So everybody must conceal

his sin from himself and from the fellowship. Many Christians are unthinkably horrified when a real sinner is suddenly discovered among the righteous. So we remain alone with our sin, living in lies and hypocrisy. The fact is that we *are* sinners!"⁴³

To his confidant, Eberhard Bethge, he confessed a sinful tendency toward a depressive mood or acedia, which he somehow managed to hold at bay while confined in Tegel. "I told myself from the beginning that I was not going to oblige either man or devil in any such way,"⁴⁴ he vowed to Bethge. He asked Bethge to join with him in mutual intercession for strength, patience, health and freedom from temptations. He regretted not taking the Lord's Supper with Bethge one more time as he had planned, which he must have considered a sin of omission.

In confession, he said, we break through to community, to the cross, to certainty, to new life, and we prepare to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion. When we confess our sins we break through our isolation in the darkness by openly admitting our wrongdoing. We relinquish "the last stronghold of self-justification,"⁴⁵ the sin is brought into the light and it loses its power when borne by the fellowship and handed over to God. Confession restores us to true Christian fellowship because it allows us to live in community as sinners and still enjoy the grace of God. The pain of humiliation and blow to pride we feel in confessing to one another allows us to break through to the cross. It is only our relationship with Christ that leads us to the shameful death that comes in confession, in order that we may in truth share in his cross. Through confession, we affirm and say yes to our cross, and experience the Cross of Christ as our salvation. The old person dies, and we share in the resurrection and eternal life. Breaking with the past through confession makes possible a new beginning and the old is passes away (II Cor. 5:17).

"In confession the Christian begins to forsake his/her sins. Their power is broken. From now on the Christian wins victory after victory."⁴⁶ Confession is similar to being baptized all over again; we are freed from darkness and enter the kingdom of God. By confessing a specific sin to one another and accepting forgiveness, we become confident that we are not granting self-absolution but have truly received it from the Living God. We receive the

gracious gift of this certainty through our brother/sister, when we experience the divine presence in that person. We experience the reality of God in His judgment and His grace when we are forgiven by each other. "Mutual, brotherly/sisterly confession is given to us by God in order that we may be sure of divine forgiveness,"⁴⁷ Bonhoeffer wrote.

Jesus said that we should not come to His Holy Table without first being reconciled to God and our brothers and sisters. Therefore, when we feel anxious about our sins, and seek the certainty of forgiveness, confession to a sister/brother can be met with forgiveness in the name of the Trinity. Forgiveness of sins, which once incited Jesus's enemies to charge him with blasphemy, now takes place in the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit.

During the time of preparation for the Lord's Supper, together we experience reproach, support, prayers, awe and joy. Finally, just as the Christian fellowship unites in body and blood at Christ's table, it will also be together in eternity. "Here joy in Christ and His community is complete. The life of Christians together under the Word has reached its perfection in the sacrament."⁴⁸

Simplicity

When we seek the kingdom above all else, our lifestyle will become modest, open and unassuming, and our desire for reputation, money and grandeur will diminish. Although he was a wealthy man, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was accustomed to living simply before he was imprisoned at Tegel. For three months he had lived in a monk's cell at Ettal, a Benedictine monastery in the Bavarian Alps. His room in his parents' home was furnished spartanly. The physical hardships of prison did not bother him, and he was used to being alone. He wrote of a "single-hearted simplicity which could actually welcome martyrdom for the truth clearly seen," and the capacity "to fix one's eyes solely on the simple truth of God, at a time when all concepts are being confused, distorted, and turned upside down."⁴⁹

Sacrifice

By sacrificing our needs and wants we show obedience to God and honor Him as the One who provides for us. Bonhoeffer made the ultimate sacrifice when he gave up his plan to escape with a trusted guard for fear of reprisals against his family. He had a precious and cherished past that he struggled to surrender to God, along with what remained of his earthly pride. Furthermore, he sought to bear his suffering wholly and in gratitude, staying open to others despite the depth of his own pain. His journey seems to have culminated in an experience of dying to self and coming to the Cross, where he became one with God.

"We can sacrifice ourselves for each other in faith, for our life is only a life when it is an offering for God and man, a visible or invisible offering." he said. "The power of the offering is in the power of our fellowship, and because the people of God sacrifice themselves for one another, they are the mightiest in the world."⁵⁰

In "After 10 Years," an essay on the role of resistance leaders written prior to his arrest, he seeks to answer the question, "Who Stands Fast?" "Only the man whose final standard is not his reason, his principles, his conscience, his freedom or his virtue, but who is ready to sacrifice all this when he is called to obedient and responsible action in faith and in exclusive allegiance to God."⁵¹ The purpose of life, for Bonhoeffer, was to find freedom in obeying God and to fulfill His plan for our lives, not to believe certain doctrines or even to avoid sin. He believed that we must be willing to risk committing moral wrongs in order to surrender ourselves completely to the will of God.

"If we want to be Christians, we must have some share in Christ's large-heartedness by acting with responsibility and in freedom when the hour of danger comes, and by showing a real sympathy that springs, not from fear, from the liberating and redeeming love of Christ for all who suffer."⁵²

Gratitude

From Paul's letter to the Colossians we learn that thanksgiving is the source of energy for discipleship, a truth clearly evident in the life of Dietrich

Bonhoeffer. He had no regrets about his decision to return to Germany from America. "I'm firmly convinced, however strange it may seem—that my life has followed a straight and unbroken course," he wrote from Tegel. "It has been an uninterrupted enrichment of experience, for which I can only be thankful. If I were to end my life in these conditions, that would have a meaning that I think I could understand."⁵³

Enroute to the Gestapo prison, Payne Best described him as finding joy in the smallest thing, and feeling gratitude for being alive.

Again from Tegel he wrote, "It's a strange feeling to be so completely dependent on other people, but at least it teaches one to be grateful, and I hope I shall never forget that."⁵⁴

"Gratitude changes the pangs of memory into a tranquil joy. The beauties of the past are borne, not as a thorn in the flesh, but as a precious gift in themselves."⁵⁵

Conclusion

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was stripped and hanged on April 9, 1945, only a few weeks before the Allies liberated Flossenberg, the concentration camp where he spent his final days. Prior to his death, he wrote, "It is only by living completely in this world that one learns to have faith...In so doing we throw ourselves completely into the arms of God, taking seriously not our own sufferings but those of God in the world. That, I think, is faith, that is metanoia; and that is how one becomes a Christian."⁵⁶

His final words were, "This is the end, for me, the beginning of life."⁵⁷ The S.S. doctor who witnessed his death described him as "devout, brave and composed. I have hardly ever seen a man die so submissive to the will of God."⁵⁸

In The Cost of Discipleship Bonhoeffer depicts spiritual formation as the work of God and his grace rather than self-improvement or behavior modification under the law. "It is not as though we had to imitate Jesus as well as we could. We cannot transform ourselves into his image; it is rather the form of Christ which seeks to be formed in us (Galatians 4:19) and to be manifested in us. We must be assimilated to the form of Christ in its entirety,

the form of Christ incarnate, crucified, and glorified.”⁵⁹

Christian discipleship provided the methodology for Bonhoeffer to answer the four great questions about life. Through his experience as a pastor and theologian, he gleaned the knowledge that the Kingdom of God (the spiritual world) is the overarching reality for the entire cosmos. Living and acting with God in His kingdom is the key to a blessed life. A good person strives to love God and other people by following the supreme example of Jesus. God gave us the gift of Jesus as the epitome of sublime goodness, and the way to absorb that goodness and live it from the inside out is to become like him.

If we try to emulate Jesus through sheer will, we will repeatedly miss the mark, become frustrated, and eventually lose hope. Virtually all of us have been down that dead-end road. So God gave us simple tools, the spiritual disciplines, which invite the Spirit to implement the change that we are powerless to bring about directly. As we see in the life of Bonhoeffer, training via the disciplines lets the Spirit do the work of transformation; He uses our small but sincere efforts to restore our thoughts and feelings, our wills, our bodies, our relationships, our broken souls. This slow but steady, integrative re-formation of our personalities usually becomes the work of a lifetime for most of us, and we have no reason to believe that it stops with this world. We are privileged to know many people who are changing right before our eyes, and that knowledge means that becoming like Jesus is possible for everyone. May God bless all of our efforts!

Notes

¹ <http://fmhmh.ycdsb.ca/teachers/f00027452/f00027453/platoste.html>

² Dallas Willard, *Knowing Christ Today*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2009), p.53.

³ From Bonhoeffer's *Ethics*, quoted in Eric Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Prophet, Martyr, Spy* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010), p.469.

⁴ Metaxas, 469.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Mary Bosanquet, *The Life and Death of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p.149.

⁷ Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission*, (New York: Harper One, 2006), p.207.

⁸ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1954), p.58.

⁹ Metaxas, 107.

¹⁰ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Psalms*, 8th ed., (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1966), p.72.

¹¹ *Psalms*, 41.

¹² Metaxas, 272.

¹³ Bosanquet, 206.

¹⁴ Metaxas, 339.

¹⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), p.53.

¹⁶ Metaxas, 340.

¹⁷ Ibid, 336.

¹⁸ *Life Together*, 56.

¹⁹ Ibid, 53.

²⁰ Metaxas, 259.

²¹ *Life Together*, 26.

²² Ibid, 17.

²³ Ibid, 22.

²⁴ Ibid, 23.

25 Metaxas, 279.

26 *Life Together*, 92.

27 *Ibid*, 93.

28 *Ibid*, 86.

29 *Ibid*, 83.

30 *Ibid*, 77.

31 *Ibid*, 78.

32 *Ibid*, 80.

33 *Ibid*, 79.

34 *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 419.

35 Bosanquet, 161.

36 Metaxas, 318.

37 *Life Together*, 96.

38 *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 150.

39 *Ibid*, 234.

40 *Ibid*, 136.

41 Bosanquet, 254.

42 *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 348.

43 *Life Together*, 110.

44 *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 129.

45 *Life Together*, 112.

46 *Ibid*, 115.

47 *Ibid*, 117.

48 *Ibid*, 122.

49 Bosanquet, 161.

50 *Ibid*, 64.

51 Metaxas, 446.

52 *Ibid*, 447.

53 *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 272.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 109.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 176.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 369.

⁵⁷ *Psalms*, 84.

⁵⁸ Metaxas, 532.

⁵⁹ From Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship*, quoted in Bosanquet, 190.

With God

Jeremy Mockabee

We as Salvationists are labeled as a “Holiness movement.” What does this mean? What is holiness? Is holiness given or obtained? Is there a level of Christianity in which holiness is to be considered the top prize for Christians? So many questions about holiness and some I might add I have pondered myself. This morning we are going to take a look in the book of Ephesians and see what Paul discusses related to holiness. We are going to see how what we have learned from our past, how we understand who God is, and then apply Christ in our lives, how we can live out a life fully obedient and submissive to God. This morning’s text is taken from Ephesians 4:17-32.

If we are to define holiness as being Christ-like we must first learn what it means not to be like Him. We are told in this passage of scripture that we must “no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them....” Everything about being a Christian and living as Christ desires us to live is to realize that we are our biggest obstacle. We lean on our own wisdom and our own power and in our own ignorance grow farther away from God. In order to become like Christ and to fill our lives with nothing more than Him, we must completely remove ourselves from the picture. I have no doubt as Christians that our intentions are good and we strive to be like Christ. I believe that it is in our

human nature to want to seek God. We were created for Him by Him. Even the psalmist David says, "Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain." Is this a cry that you and I can say to God every morning as a reminder of what life is all about? Paul in his letter to the Philippians states, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." Christ throughout His ministry was about pleasing God and serving others. We are warned of the consequences of "self-promotion" and selfishness in James where he says, "For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice." If we want Christ to overtake and overwhelm us then we must get out of the way and rely on and trust in our heavenly father.

London businessman Lindsay Clegg told the story of a warehouse property he was selling. The building had been empty for months and needed repairs. Vandals had damaged the doors, smashed the windows and strewn trash around the interior. As he showed a prospective buyer the property, Clegg took pains to say that he would replace the broken windows, bring in a crew to correct any structural damage, and clean out the garbage. "Forget about the repairs," the buyer said. "When I buy this place, I'm going to build something completely different. I don't want the building; I want the site." Compared with the renovation God has in mind, our efforts to improve our own lives are as trivial as sweeping a warehouse slated for the wrecking ball. When we become God's, the old life is over (2 Cor. 5:17). He makes all things new. All he wants is the site and the permission to build. We must learn to get rid of ourselves.

After learning that we must decrease so God can increase in our lives, we must understand that God created you and me to live in holiness with Him. Ephesians 4:22-24 says, "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." We were made to seek Him to live in community along with the Trinity. If this is possible we must understand that we must be in constant pursuit of truth. Not partial truth or truth that fits our theology or ideas. But the truth that convicts,

holds you and I accountable and a truth that promises us everlasting life. But again, we must seek the entire truths of God.

A couple of hunters chartered a plane to fly into the Canadian wilderness. Two weeks later when the pilot came to pick them up, he saw the two animals they had bagged and said, "I told you fellows I could only take you and one moose. You'll have to leave the other behind." "But we did it last year in a plane this size," protested one of the hunters, "and the other pilot let us take two moose." "Well, okay," said the pilot. "If you did it before I guess we can do it again." So the two moose and the hunters were loaded in and the plane took off. Because of the heavy weight, it rose with difficulty and was unable to clear an obstructing hill. After the crash, the men climbed out and looked around. One hunter said to the other, "Where are we, anyway?" His companion surveyed the scene. "I think we got about half a mile farther than we got last year." Partial truths do not work when seeking God. One of many main truths in God's Word is that we are His children. Any respectful father wants to raise his children to imitate his life when it comes to morals and values. We are all heirs to the Kingdom of God. And another great truth is that this is the plan God had intended for each of us the whole time. We are His children. In first John we read, "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Ephesians 5 tells us to, "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." D.L. Moody once said, "A holy life will make the deepest impression. Lighthouses blow no horns, they just shine." There is something special about living a life of truth and shining for others by our actions and words.

If we learn to deny ourselves, and understand that God is the truth that we must seek, than we must apply it to our everyday lives. If we want to continue to live as Christ did we must be careful with what we say, hear, and do. Ephesians 4:25-32 says, "Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. He who has been stealing must steal no longer,

but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. The examples given here in our text of Christ's nature, sound very much like the fruit of the spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control." Can we live in God's nature? Is it possible to carry all these attributes of God on a daily basis? NO! Not if we do not deny ourselves and leave room for the Holy Spirit to give us this gift. Living a life all boils down to one word...Love. If you want to be like Christ then love your neighbor. If you want to be like Christ than love your spouse. If you want to be like Christ than love your enemy. Love, love, love. Everything created or even destroyed by God carried one driving force and that is love. If we want to live up to the full potential of God, than we must live out the full potential of love.

Holiness begins with obedience. Holiness isn't something obtained, but it is a privilege that all believers have. It's not putting check-marks next to a list of things that make someone holy. Holiness is qualitative, not quantitative. Meaning it is how you love, not how many things you do. Holiness is being who God called you to be. Holiness is not a burden on us but an invitation to all of us. You may be able to put a lot of phrases at the end of the statement, "Holiness is...." But when you think about it, it can be summed up by saying, "Holiness is." It's why He created us. It's why He seeks us. It's why He gives us grace. It simply is. This morning, if you find yourself in a rut along life's journey; or if you simply want to stop and realign yourself with God's call on your life; or if you are a making the choice for the first time to follow Christ, holiness is available. For the new believer and for the old believer. God is waiting to fill you with nothing more than Himself. Will you get out of the way?

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Book Reviews

Dean Pallant, *Keeping Faith in Faith-Based Organizations: A Practical Theology of Salvation Army Health Ministry*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2012.

Reviewed by Aimee Patterson

Faith-based ministry is easily domesticated by market-and state-driven funders. This concern came to the attention of Dean Pallant during his appointment as International Health Services Coordinator. His study, a narrative-based practical theology, offers a vision and strategy for a faithfully-oriented health ministry.

The book begins by properly situating the challenge of delivering faith-based health care in the poorest places with the help of external partners. It is Pallant's observation that, although faith-based health ministries and the secular health organizations that work with them are oriented toward the goal of health, the public concept of health often becomes abstracted from the rich, faith-based discourses that once gave it significance. This fragments meaning and leaves the impression that the theological underpinnings of faith-based health ministry have little value. Pallant identifies this situation as not only unfaithful but also unsustainable; both the integrity and the efficacy of faith-based ministry depend upon faith (p. 83). From a narrative perspective, the values that stem from a faith-based community retain integrity only as they are sustained by the practices and habits expressive of the faith (p. 74). Recapturing substantive content for the notion of health occurs through excavating a theological and moral framework. In short, Pallant recovers a faithful orientation toward a particular Christian telos.

A cultural/contextual analysis occupies chapters two through four. Pallant engages thinkers as varied as Polanyi, Etzioni and Wesley and builds on his own observations of Salvation Army clinics and hospitals around the globe.

The Salvation Army's practical engagement with the world requires that it avoid the kind of isolationism or sectarian retreat of which narrative theologians are sometimes accused. But more realistic than achieving a shared vision with others engaged in health care is learning to cross boundaries that would otherwise divide groups from each other. Pallant formulates a revised practice for a faithfully-oriented Salvation Army health ministry as it dwells in tension with other forces (p. 21).

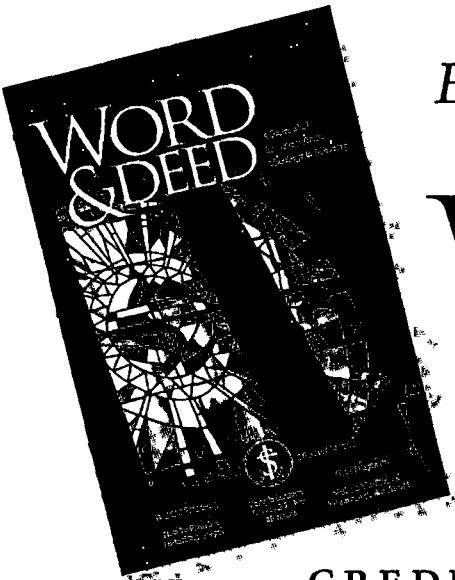
In particular, Pallant perceives the biomedical model of health care to favor services that are specialized. It is his assessment that this kind of care results from a "thin" understanding of health; it can inappropriately isolate a medical need from a patient's larger situation. For health ministry in the poorest places, Pallant advocates a shift toward general, clinic-based ministry that considers patients in a holistic way and creates a continuum of care between hospital bed and home (p. 83). This ministry also embraces resources and skills of a non-specialist nature, the value of which is readily appreciated within the context of a faith community. Clinic-based ministry does not overturn health care but supplements the goals of medicine by engaging healing skills not widely recognized by the biomedical model, such as hospitality and listening. Formulated in this way, Salvation Army health ministry among the poorest people is more than a mere instrument of its funders; it has something very significant of its own to contribute.

Pallant's holistic understanding of health is undergirded by an appreciation of the human being that is more comprehensive than the "autonomous rational individual" of liberal philosophy. Chapter five is directly occupied with the theological reflection that provides soteriological content to the telos of "healthy persons." Moving through the theological categories of creation, fall, and redemption, Pallant determines that a healthy person is a body-soul unity seeking soteriological relationships with others and with God. Summoning Hauerwas, he contends that rightly oriented health care locates medical ends as finite and contingent on God's larger ends. Good care is not limited to the elimination of suffering and illness but extends also, for instance, to learning how to interpret suffering in life (p. 132). Health is not limited to one's physiological condition but relates directly to holiness (p. 94). If this is the case, the institutions best equipped to offer health care are faith-based.

This book shows that Pallant has a wealth of knowledge suited to practical theology, a quality that might be better exploited in a lengthier edition. A strength he demonstrates, one that commends readership beyond those interested in health ministry, is his ability to show that issues in international health ministry also resonate in the broader Salvation Army context. Domestication through government funding and the separation of corps ministries from the social services are widespread problems across the western world. Salvation Army ministries in poor and privileged contexts alike would do well to engage Pallant's vision.

One characteristic of this book—and it reflects the author's dual role as doctoral researcher and Salvation Army officer—is that Pallant facilitates a conversation between narrative theology and Salvation Army thought stemming from the Wesleyan tradition. As someone also attracted to narrative ethics, I appreciate his fruitful work. Although he is appreciative of subtleties of both conversation partners, Pallant is not afraid to set up an interface that is critical. For instance, he disarms Hauerwas' position that a Christocentric liturgy is a necessary ordering form for Christian character. Salvation Army worship, which does not include baptism and the Eucharist, is yet quite character-shaping in an authentically Christian way. Pallant defends this by appealing to the vital role of the Holy Spirit in worship, something often neglected by Hauerwas. On the other side, Pallant chastises Wesley, Booth and others for their vacuous human anthropology. He further critiques Salvationist sources for less than faith-full articulations of Christian ministry, targeting Booth's *In Darkest England* as an exemplar of a sociological vision without adequate theological grounding (pp. 94-97). Certainly Pallant's goal is to recover the best of Wesleyan and Salvationist theological resources in outlining the telos of healthy persons (p. 125). However, he may be doing more than excavating an existing theological and moral framework. Where he suspects there are cracks in the foundation, he may be attempting to build a sturdier structure equipped with resources from narrative thought.

Pallant's work offers challenging reading for those in the field who seek to relate faith and social ministry. I trust his study will also encourage scholars within The Salvation Army to engage in a conversation on teleological expressions of faithfully-oriented ministry.



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