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9. Noll, 112.

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12. *Parl. Deb.*, Lords, 5th ser., 13 (1893): 1273.

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# ***DENOMINATIONAL IDENTITY IN A WORLD OF THEOLOGICAL INDIFFERENTISM: SOME INSIGHTS FROM JOHN WESLEY AND 'THE PEOPLE CALLED METHODISTS'***

***David B. McEwan***

This article has been peer reviewed.

*This article examines the importance of denominational identity for the early Methodists and its implications for us today. John Wesley clearly believed God had raised up the Methodists to live and proclaim the message of scriptural holiness. The challenge of maintaining the ethos of the Methodist communities required close attention to those critical elements that shaped both their lives and their beliefs. Evidence is presented of Wesley's commitment to focus on the 'essentials' that defined his movement, while leaving room for diversity on 'non-essentials' to allow for cooperation in mission between different Christian traditions. Having identified these critical elements in Wesley's own day, the question is asked how this might be applied today, not only in a local church setting but also for those involved in theological education and ministerial formation.*

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## **Introduction**

In the last ten years or so there has been a spate of books, articles, and conferences expressing concern about evangelical identity and denominational identity. Recently the Assemblies of God raised questions about the current importance and practice of speaking in tongues within their movement. Many Reformed denominations are seeking to return to a more robust form of Calvinism and my own denomination (Church of the Nazarene) is concerned about the loss of our Wesleyan heritage, particularly the emphasis on holiness of heart and life.

The focus of this paper is not to examine whether the current concerns are valid, nor is it to examine all the possible reasons for this loss of 'identity.' Instead, I want to look briefly at one particular concern highlighted by many denominational scholars and leaders—

the lessening of an emphasis on 'our theological understanding' in favour of a more generic approach to Christian belief and practice. This reflects the desire to lower the perceived barriers to involvement in church by nominal or non-Christians (being 'seeker-sensitive') and the widespread adoption of one style of worship by evangelical churches (the 'praise' service) that emphasises positive feelings but has minimal theological content. Given the link between belief and practice, should we seek to re-establish what we once believed was important in forming our communities (for example, in such areas as salvation, ministry, and mission)? Do we approach this best by re-shaping practice or by re-emphasising our doctrinal heritage? I want to approach this from the theological framework established by John Wesley in which belief and practice are intimately linked. In my opinion the loss of key theological emphases contributes to the loss of 'spiritual astringency' experienced in so many of our churches. I believe that what Wesley had to say has implications for our day, and many of the key lessons can be applied to other denominational settings.

From the early 1740's Wesley was clear in his own mind that the pursuit and propagation of holiness of heart and life was the very reason that Methodism existed:

By Methodists I mean a people who profess to pursue...holiness of heart and life, inward and outward conformity in all things to the revealed will of God; who place religion in an uniform resemblance of the great Object of it; in steady imitation of him they worship in all his imitable perfections; more particularly in justice, mercy, and truth, or universal love filling the heart and governing the life.<sup>1</sup>

Wesley believed that the Methodists were 'called to propagate Bible religion through the land—that is, faith working by love, holy tempers and holy lives.'<sup>2</sup> More explicitly, he believed that 'this doctrine ['full sanctification'] is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists; and for the sake of

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<sup>1</sup> John Wesley, *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984-), vol. 9: *The Methodist Societies*, Rupert E. Davies, ed., (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984-), 123-24 (hereafter cited as *Works*). Note the exhortation on pp. 124-125, where the social nature of the 'pursuit' is emphasised. See also *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), Vol 14:329 (hereafter cited as *Works* (Jackson)).

<sup>2</sup> John Telford, ed., *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley*, 8 vols (London: Epworth Press, 1931), 6:291 (hereafter *Letters* (Telford)). 6:291

propagating this chiefly He appeared to have raised us up.’<sup>3</sup> Wesley admitted that the reality for most Christians was that this experience came to them just before death, but all could know it now by faith if only they had that expectation. The creation and nurturing of that expectation was the central task of Methodism. Early in 1767, Wesley thought that preaching on perfection had been lost throughout most of the country, so he encouraged the preachers ‘to speak plainly and to press believers to the constant pursuit and earnest expectation of it.’<sup>4</sup> At the upcoming 1768 Conference in London it was to be determined ‘whether all our preachers or none shall continually insist upon Christian perfection.’<sup>5</sup> ‘Shall we go on in asserting perfection against all the world? Or shall we quietly let it drop? We really must do one or the other; and, I apprehend, the sooner the better.’<sup>6</sup> Obviously the decision was made to continue to preach, teach and model holiness of heart and life in the Methodist societies.

### **Wesley’s Understanding of the Role of Theology in the Christian Life**

Albert Outler maintained that Wesley’s theological genius lay in the area of practical theology, where ‘doctrinal opinions were to be valued for their service to vital faith.’<sup>7</sup> He believed that Wesley always sought to avoid a split between belief and behaviour, while being careful to keep the distinction between ‘faith itself and all conceptualizations of faith.’<sup>8</sup> He would allow for differing opinions on doctrinal formulations provided they did not undercut the life of faith. Theology was to be done in the midst of society where the practical concerns of persons seeking how to live the Christian life

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<sup>3</sup> *Letters* (Telford), 8:238. See also John Wesley, *Minutes of Several Conversations, between the Rev. John Wesley, A.M. and the Preachers in Connection with Him. Containing the Form of Discipline Established among the Preachers and People in the Methodist Societies* (London: G. Whitfield, 1797), 1. Wesley’s *A Short History of the People Called Methodists* is instructive for tracing the growing number of testimonies to Christian perfection, especially during the holiness revival of 1760-63; see *Works*, 9:426-503. See also *Works*, 24:121; *Works* (Jackson), 10:455-56.

<sup>4</sup> *Letters* (Telford), 5: 46-47. In preaching on perfection, Wesley advised: ‘But we must speak very tenderly on this head, for it is better to lead men than to drive. Study to recommend it rather as amiable and desirable than as necessary.’ See *Letters* (Telford), 3: 213; *Works* (Jackson), 8:286.

<sup>5</sup> *Letters* (Telford), 5:61, 88.

<sup>6</sup> *Letters* (Telford), 5:93.

<sup>7</sup> Albert C. Outler, ed., *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), iv.

<sup>8</sup> Outler, *John Wesley*, 27.

were paramount. Wesley was always open to new light being shed on his theological understanding of his relationship with God, and thus he actively sought the contributions of others to his theological development.<sup>9</sup> Conceding that Wesley was flexible in his theological understanding does not mean that he was a theological vagrant. Mildred Bangs Wynkoop proposes that as one studies all the changes Wesley makes,

...it becomes obvious that he is discovering the difference between the 'substance' of doctrine and the 'circumstance' of it, a category of analysis which he considers of real importance. In other words, some truths are firm, and biblical study and experience continue to prove them firm. They are the 'fundamentals,' such as the truth that men may be saved from all sin in this life. The method, time, adaptation to imperfect humanity and a host of other questions having no direct scriptural word, yield their truth to us as to Wesley, only in experience. As important as these truths may be, they are not revealed truths, but historical and in that sense peripheral. Wesley did not consider any question relative to faith beneath his dignity or unworthy of his concern. But he did not fall into the trap of confusing the circumstance with the substance of Truth.<sup>10</sup>

Randy Maddox observes that Anglicanism in Wesley's time was particularly focused on the first four centuries of the Church, where theology was a practical discipline to guide the character and practice of the Christian.<sup>11</sup> The discipline of study, instruction and pastoring was directed towards forming a thoroughly Christian worldview in the believer. The role of the theologian (who was normally a pastor) was to understand and then communicate the nature of the relationship between God and humanity, integrating reflection on anthropology and soteriology with that on the nature of

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<sup>9</sup> Edgar W. Thompson, *Wesley: Apostolic Man: Some Reflections on Wesley's Consecration of Dr. Thomas Coke* (London: Epworth Press, 1957), 14-15.

<sup>10</sup> Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, 'A Hermeneutical Approach to John Wesley,' *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 6:1 (Spring 1971): 15-16 (hereafter cited as *WTJ*). See also Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1972), 302-62; Rob L. Staples, 'Sanctification and Selfhood: A Phenomenological Analysis of the Wesleyan Message,' *WTJ* 7:1 (Spring 1972): 4-7; A. Skevington Wood, 'Lessons from Wesley's Experience,' *Christianity Today* 7 (April 1963): 5-6.

<sup>11</sup> Randy L. Maddox, 'John Wesley: Practical Theologian?,' *WTJ* 23:1-2 (Spring-Fall, 1988): 122-47. See also Don A. Thorsen, 'Experimental Method in the Practical Theology of John Wesley,' *WTJ* 24 (1989): 117-41; Randy L. Maddox, 'Wesleyan Resources for a Contemporary Theology of the Poor,' *Asbury Theological Journal* 49: 1 (1994): 36-44.

God. This made theology a very practical concern that sought to communicate its truths primarily through catechisms, liturgies, commentaries and spiritual discipline manuals. Much of the theologising was in response to the needs and questions of the Christian community.<sup>12</sup> Maddox identifies Wesley as having this same set of concerns with his 'praxis-related theology' that was developed from, and communicated through, a variety of forms: creeds (the Articles of Religion), liturgies (*Book of Common Prayer*), sermons (the Homilies and his own sermons), commentaries (*Explanatory Notes on the Old Testament* and the *New Testament*), hymns, conferences, occasional essays, catechetical materials, educational and devotional material (*Christian Library*), journals and letters. He concludes that Wesley clearly pursued serious theological activity in the forms common to his Anglican setting and appropriate to the early Christian model of practical theology.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, 'Wesley's primary interest in the formation of Christian character shapes his discussion of theological issues and provides his theological emphases.'<sup>14</sup> For Wesley, doctrines were not ends in themselves but guidelines to help his people know how to tell the gospel story and live it with integrity.<sup>15</sup> The goal of the life of faith was holiness, with his understanding of Christian perfection as the 'most distinctive single element.'<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Maddox, 'John Wesley: Practical Theologian?', 123. For many, this makes Wesley an outstanding pastoral theologian; see for example William J. Abraham, *The Logic of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 9.

<sup>13</sup> Maddox, 'John Wesley: Practical Theologian?', 130-33. See also Maddox, 'Respected Founder/Neglected Guide: The Role of Wesley in American Methodist Theology,' *Methodist History* 37:2 (1999): 72; Maddox, 'Reading Wesley as a Theologian,' *WTJ* 30:1 (Spring, 1995): 7-54.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas A. Langford, 'The United Methodist Quadrilateral: A Theological Task,' in *Doctrine and Theology in the United Methodist Church*, Thomas A. Langford, ed. (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1991), 239. It is why Wesley's *Christian Library* has more biography than any other genre of literature.

<sup>15</sup> Langford, 239.

<sup>16</sup> Outler, 30. He continued to develop and nuance this understanding of Wesley; see the bibliographic listing of Outler's writings in Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994), 396-97. One of the critical articles is Albert C. Outler, 'A New Future for Wesley Studies: An Agenda for 'Phase III', *The Future of the Methodist Theological Traditions*, 34-52. See also Frank Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England* (London: Epworth Press, 1970), 117.

### **“The True, the Scriptural, Experimental Religion” of the Heart**

Building on the experiential and theological discoveries of the first part of his ministry, Wesley believed that love and relationship were crucial in terms of defining the essential nature of God and human beings. The perspective from which he approached the task of theologising comes from his conviction that the essential nature of God is love and that all other facets of his nature, character and purposes are in harmony with this. Human beings are created in the image of God, and the interrelationship between God and his creation is characterised by a relationship of love. The implication here is that salvation has to be understood within a framework of relationship between the Lover and the beloved (focusing on ‘the heart’).

I say of the *heart*. For neither does religion consist in *orthodoxy* or *right opinions*;...A man may be orthodox in every point...he may think justly concerning the incarnation of our Lord, concerning the ever blessed Trinity, and every other doctrine contained in the oracles of God. He may assent to all the three creeds—that called the Apostles’, the Nicene, and the Athanasian—and yet ‘tis possible he may have no religion at all...He may be almost as orthodox as the devil...and may all the while be as great a stranger as he to the religion of the heart.<sup>17</sup>

It is for this reason that Wesley can define the essential nature of Christianity as ‘the true, the scriptural, experimental religion’ of the heart.<sup>18</sup> God’s plan of salvation has to do with the restoration of a relationship of love based on trust, rather than the intellectual command of doctrines and conformity to rules and regulations. This makes personal and community transformation the critical test of correct theological reflection, formulation, and application.

With the focus on love, Wesley believed that God usually began his work in the heart: ‘Men usually feel *desires* to please God before they *know* how to please him. Their *heart* says, “What must I do to be saved?” before they *understand* the way of salvation.’<sup>19</sup> Doctrinal

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<sup>17</sup> *Works*, 1: 220-21. For a thorough discussion of Wesley’s views on ‘opinions’ and a list of references to his writings that mention them, see n. 65, p. 220. On ‘heart religion,’ see *Works*, 1:698; 11:272-74; 26:179; *Works* (Jackson), 11:11; *Letters* (Telford), 4:302-03.

<sup>18</sup> *Works*, 1:105-06.

<sup>19</sup> *Works*, 11:479.

understanding may open up the possibility of a person entering an experience, it can challenge their experience or affirm it, but it cannot substitute for it. Even knowledge of Scripture itself cannot substitute for a relationship of love.

For how far is love, even with many wrong opinions, to be preferred before truth itself without love? We may die without the knowledge of many truths and yet be carried into Abraham's bosom. But if we die without love, what will knowledge avail? <sup>20</sup>

Gregory Clapper argues that 'heart religion' is Wesley's 'orienting concern' theologically; that is, it 'gives consistency to, and provides guidance for, the various particular theological activities that a thinker undertakes.' This influences the selection, interpretation, relative emphasis and interweaving of theological affirmations and practices.<sup>21</sup> This is in harmony with the common observation amongst Wesleyan scholars that Wesley's whole theological enterprise can be identified as a 'theology of love'.<sup>22</sup>

In his sermon, 'A Caution against Bigotry' (based on the text of Mk 9:38-39) Wesley reminded his people not to think they were the only truly Christian church in either theological opinions or praxis, but to embrace members of other churches who also served the gospel and were fruitful in their ministry.<sup>23</sup> A similar point is made in the sermon, 'Catholic Spirit' in which he emphasises unity in doctrinal essentials and being gracious over matters of opinion.<sup>24</sup> Wesley's 'catholic spirit' was not, however, a 'speculative latitudinarianism,' an 'indifference to all opinions,' nor a 'practical latitudinarianism,' with its indifference to public worship and the

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<sup>20</sup> *Works*, 1:107. See also *Works*, 9:84-85; 26:223; *Works* (Jackson), 10:73. See his positive evaluation of the holy character of 'heretics' like Montanus and Pelagius in *Works*, 2:555-56; *Letters* (Telford), 4:158.

<sup>21</sup> Gregory S. Clapper, 'Wesley's "Main Doctrines" and Spiritual Formation and Teaching in the Wesleyan Tradition,' *WTJ* 39:2 (Fall 2004): 100. Clapper draws his material from Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 18-19.

<sup>22</sup> Some of the best and most succinct accounts of this are to be found in David L. Cubie, 'Wesley's Theology of Love,' *WTJ* 20:1 (Spring, 1985); W. Stanley Johnson, 'Christian Perfection as Love for God,' *WTJ* 18:1 (Spring, 1983); Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007); Wynkoop, *Theology of Love*.

<sup>23</sup> *Works*, 2:63-78.

<sup>24</sup> *Works*, 2:81-95. It is in this context that we have his oft-quoted reference from 2 Kings 10:15: 'Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart...If it be, give me thine hand.'



manner of performing it.<sup>25</sup> Wesley insisted each person must be a faithful and committed member of a local congregation, while having an attitude of openness, love and encouragement toward others.<sup>26</sup> There were a number of doctrines he deemed to be essential to being a Christian and not a matter of 'opinion.'<sup>27</sup> For example, he was concerned with the rising popularity amongst Christians of the viewpoint that human beings were innately good, and in opposition to this view he staunchly upheld the doctrine of original sin.<sup>28</sup> The subsequent doctrines of justification and the new birth were equally 'fundamental.'<sup>29</sup> In 'The Principles of a Methodist Farther Explained' (1746) he wrote: 'Our main doctrines, which include all the rest, are three, that of repentance, of faith, and of holiness. The first of these we account, as it were, the porch of religion; the next, the door; the third is religion itself.'<sup>30</sup> When defending his doctrinal position on justification, salvation, faith and the work of God in accomplishing them, he writes that he does

<sup>25</sup> *Works*, 2:87-92. See also *Works*, 11: 477-79; *Letters* (Telford), 3:201-03.

<sup>26</sup> *Works*, 2:93-95.

<sup>27</sup> For an analysis of Wesley's varying lists of 'essential doctrines' see Ted A. Campbell, 'The Shape of Wesleyan Thought: The Question of John Wesley's "Essential" Christian Doctrines,' *Asbury Theological Journal* 59:1 & 2 (Spring/Fall 2004): 27-40. See also Jerry L. Walls, 'What Is Theological Pluralism?,' *Quarterly Review* 5:3 (1988); Randy L. Maddox, 'Opinion, Religion and "Catholic Spirit": John Wesley on Theological Integrity,' *Asbury Theological Journal* 47:1 (1992); Howe Octavius Thomas, 'John Wesley's Awareness and Application of the Method of Distinguishing between Theological Essentials and Theological Opinions,' *Methodist History* 26:2 (1988); Howe Octavius Thomas, 'John Wesley's Understanding of Theological Distinction between "Essentials" and "Opinions",' *Methodist History* 33:3 (1995).

<sup>28</sup> Wesley published his lengthiest treatise against this understanding; see 'The Doctrine of Original Sin: According to Scripture, Reason, and Experience,' in *Works* (Jackson), 9:191-464. It was followed later by a sermon abridgement ('Original Sin,' 1759), which he regarded as a key doctrinal statement; see Outler's introduction to the sermon in *Works*, 2:170-72. The critical foundation for his belief in original sin and why he regarded it as an essential Christian doctrine was the clear teaching of the Scripture, confirmed by 'daily experience'; see *Works*, 2:172-76; *Letters* (Telford), 4: 67.

<sup>29</sup> *Works*, 2:187. See also *Works*, 21:444, 56.

<sup>30</sup> *Works*, 9:227. In a letter to George Downing and to various clergymen Wesley mentioned 'three grand scriptural doctrines - Original Sin, Justification by Faith, and Holiness consequent thereon'; see *Letters* (Telford), 4:146, 237. A similar list is given in a letter to Lady Huntingdon in John R. Tyson with Boyd S. Schlenther, *In the Midst of Early Methodism: Lady Huntingdon and Her Correspondence* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 104-05. To the Earl of Dartmouth he mentioned 'righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost...given only to those who are justified by faith'; see *Letters* (Telford), 4: 147. To James Knox it is 'Justification by Faith and Holiness' which is to be experienced and not just understood; see *Letters* (Telford), 4: 303.

‘instil’ into the people a few ‘favourite tenets...as if the whole of Christianity depended upon them’ and these are frequently summed up as: faith working by love, loving God and neighbour with one’s whole being and doing all the good one can as a consequence.<sup>31</sup>

It is clear that Wesley contended for a gracious acceptance of diverse views on matters of theological opinion, provided that one’s personal life and relationships were characterised by the transforming power of God’s love. He seemed to be content to accept the essentials of the faith as they were expressed by the classical creeds of the early church and his own Anglican heritage. In the final decades of his ministry he did admit the need for these essentials to be understood to some degree in order to prevent heart religion becoming a fixation on feelings, lacking any anchoring in the classical theological affirmations of faith. He explicitly acknowledged the role of the theological teaching of the early church, as well as the sixteenth and seventeenth century Anglican formularies expressed in its homilies, articles and liturgy. He felt this gave a firm foundation from which to read, interpret and apply the classical consensus of the faith to his own day. Within this framework, he was perfectly happy to cooperate with other churches and their leaders in the propagation of the gospel and in service to the community. However, that did not mean Wesley was indifferent to the theological and practical context that shaped the spiritual formation of his own people.

### **The Methodist Ethos**

In a sermon reflecting on the rise and development of the Methodist movement, Wesley emphasised that...

From the very beginning, from the time that four young men united together, each of them was *homo unius libri* – a man of one book. *God taught them* [emphasis mine] all to make his ‘Word a lantern unto their feet, and a light in all their paths.’ They had one, and only one rule of judgment with regard to all their tempers, words, and actions, namely, the oracles of God. They were one and all determined to be *Bible-Christians*...And indeed unto this day it is their constant endeavour to think and speak as the oracles of God.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *Works*, 11:128-29.

<sup>32</sup> *Works*, 3:504. See also *Works* 3:496; 4:145-46; *Works* (Jackson), 13:258-61.

Wesley remained confident that a sound interpretation could only arise from first grasping the whole picture of salvation revealed in Scripture, rather than beginning with isolated proof texts which could easily be manipulated to prove almost any doctrinal or practical point. For example, when considering the nature of 'real religion,' he reminded his people that 'it runs through the Bible from the beginning to the end, in one connected chain. And the agreement of every part of it with every other is properly the analogy of faith.'<sup>33</sup> He commented in another sermon: 'How small a number will you find that have any conception of the analogy of faith! Of the connected chain of Scripture truths, and their relation to each other. Namely, the natural corruption of man, justification by faith, the new birth, inward and outward holiness.'<sup>34</sup> He appealed for his Methodists to consider this question: 'Hath not the whole word of God been delivered to you, and without any mixture of error? Were not the fundamental doctrines both of free, full, present justification delivered to you, as well as sanctification, both gradual and instantaneous? Was not every branch both of inward and outward holiness clearly opened and earnestly applied?'<sup>35</sup> Methodism 'is the religion of the Bible...So that whoever allows the Scripture to be the Word of God must allow this to be true religion.'<sup>36</sup> Wesley believed that the Methodists were 'called to propagate Bible religion through the land - that is, faith working by love, holy tempers and holy lives.'<sup>37</sup>

According to these [the oracles of God] it lies in one single point: it is neither more nor less than love—it is love which 'is the fulfilling of the law', 'the end of the commandment'. Religion is the love of God and our neighbour...This love, ruling the whole life, animating all our tempers and passions, directing all our thoughts, words, and actions, is 'pure religion and undefiled.'<sup>38</sup>

More explicitly, he believed that 'this doctrine ["full sanctification"] is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called

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<sup>33</sup> *Works*, 2:483.

<sup>34</sup> *Works*, 4:89. See also *Works*, 2:501.

<sup>35</sup> *Works*, 3:516.

<sup>36</sup> *Works*, 3:585-86. See also *Letters* (Telford), 6:123.

<sup>37</sup> *Letters* (Telford), 6:291.

<sup>38</sup> *Letters* (Telford), 6:189. See also *Works*, 2:462-63, 70; 3:22, 99, 117.

Methodists; and for the sake of propagating this chiefly He appeared to have raised us up.'<sup>39</sup>

Wesley was convinced that the faith community played an essential role in promoting and maintaining holiness of heart and life. It had become obvious that the continuance of his message and movement could not simply depend upon his extensive written sermons, tracts and other published materials. The life and ministry of each local society was crucial; particularly the preachers and the doctrinal clarity and persuasiveness of their sermons on Christian perfection. His letters to the preachers were filled with exhortations to remain faithful to the task of consistently proclaiming Christian perfection in spite of opposition from within and without the Methodist movement.<sup>40</sup> He knew that sermons on Christian perfection were not always gladly or regularly given by his preachers, and at every Conference they were asked: 'Are you going on to perfection? Do you expect to be perfected in love, in this life? Are you longing after it?'<sup>41</sup> In March 1772 he complained to Charles Wesley, 'I find almost all our preachers in every circuit have done with Christian perfection. They say they believe it; but they never preach it, or not once in a quarter. What is to be done? Shall we let it drop, or make a point of it?'<sup>42</sup> Yet in May 1773 he felt able to declare, 'In most parts of this kingdom there is such a thirst after holiness as I scarce ever knew before. Several here [Cork] in particular who enjoy it themselves are continually encouraging others to press after it. And two of our travelling preachers who for some years disbelieved it are now happy witnesses of it.'<sup>43</sup> He wrote to members of the societies and asked about their preachers, 'Does he preach Christian perfection clearly and explicitly?'<sup>44</sup> He commented on the circuit at Launceston in 1776:

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<sup>39</sup> Letters (Telford), 8:238. See also John Wesley, *Minutes of Several Conversations*, 1; Wesley, 'Short History,' *Works*, 9:426-503. See also *Works*, 24:121; *Works* (Jackson), 10:455-56.

<sup>40</sup> See for example *Letters* (Telford), 6:111, 224, 226, 240, 376; 7:92, 98-99, 206, 352. See also *Works* (Jackson), 8:326.

<sup>41</sup> Wesley, *Minutes* (1803), 14. They were also asked if they were reading the *Sermons*, the *New Testament Notes*, the *Plain Account* and the *Appeals*.

<sup>42</sup> *Letters* (Telford), 5:314.

<sup>43</sup> *Letters* (Telford), 6:25-26. See also *Letters* (Telford), 7:219, 77.

<sup>44</sup> *Letters* (Telford), 5:166. For other letters exhorting preachers and society leaders to encourage others to seek perfection, see *Letters* (Telford), 5:242, 254, 257, 261-62, 291, 306, 312; 6:97, 357, 359; 7:90, 153.

Here I found the plain reason why the work of God had gained no ground in this circuit all year. The preachers had given up the Methodist testimony. Either they did not speak of perfection at all (the peculiar doctrine committed to our trust), or they spoke of it only in general terms, without urging the believers to 'go on to perfection', and to expect it every moment. And wherever this is not earnestly done the work of God does not prosper.<sup>45</sup>

In the letters to the preachers themselves there is a continuing refrain regarding the content and frequency of their sermons on Christian perfection. Doctrinally, the sermons were to stress that this was a definite, instantaneous work of grace subsequent to the new birth, receivable by simple faith alone and it was to be expected now. Wesley was insistent that his preachers were to proclaim the reality of Christian perfection continually, explicitly and insistently (preaching for a decision 'now'). Those who spoke against Christian perfection were no longer to lead or preach.<sup>46</sup>

The lay members of the societies were to be equally active in promoting Christian perfection, and Wesley was glad to record their experience as he heard about it by correspondence or through his own visitation.<sup>47</sup> He advised one of his lay leaders, 'Your own soul will be quickened if you earnestly exhort believers without fear or shame to press after *full* salvation as receivable *now*, and that by simple *faith*.'<sup>48</sup> In seeking Christian perfection, it was important that the lives of his people be models for others to follow. He told Mary Bishop that 'Sister Jane's experience is clear and scriptural' and was a good model for her own spiritual experience.<sup>49</sup> Miss March was reminded that 'it is certain no part of Christian history is so profitable as that which relates to great changes wrought in our souls: these, therefore, should be carefully noticed and treasured up for the encouragement of our brethren.'<sup>50</sup> Personal experience was not only important for encouragement, it was also important in understanding and explaining how the experience of Christian

<sup>45</sup> *Works*, 23:28. See also *Works*, 22:400, 60; 23: 234, 304, 79, 92; *Letters* (Telford), 7:216, 259, 276, 283; 8:184.

<sup>46</sup> *Letters* (Telford), 8:188, 255 and Wesley, *Minutes* (1803), 146.

<sup>47</sup> See for example *Letters* (Telford), 5:315; 6: 37, 38; 7:98, 176, 193, 226-27; 9:518-21. Wesley continued to record testimonies in his *Journal* accounts for this period; see for example *Works*, 22:233-34, 36, 72, 76, 82, 345-46, 49-50, 75, 423, 32-35, 41, 44, 60, 62, 69; 23:6, 10, 24, 48, 130, 35, 37, 40, 65, 69, 87, 91, 204, 13, 34, 38, 45, 69, 317, 23, 37, 49, 55, 58, 75, 405, 15; 24:9, 11, 13, 33, 89, 128, 33, 69.

<sup>48</sup> *Letters* (Telford), 6:13. See also *Works*, 23:10; *Letters* (Telford), 6:59, 233.

<sup>49</sup> *Letters* (Telford), 5:290. See also *Letters* (Telford), 5:261-62; 7:167.

<sup>50</sup> *Letters* (Telford), 5:237.

perfection may be realised. Pastoral care was to be a priority within each society and Wesley informed Elizabeth Ritchie that 'one admirable help toward conquering all is for believers to keep close together, to walk hand in hand, and provoke one another to love and to good works. And one means of retaining the pure love of God was the exhorting others to press earnestly after it.'<sup>51</sup> If there was no expectation of perfection, few would seek after it and there would be few, if any, testimonies to the experience. This underscores the vital importance of the Methodist community, where believers were taught to read and interpret the Scriptural text in the light of God's plan of salvation as understood by Wesley. He published a definitive collection of hymns for his people as an essential element of their spiritual formation and the promotion of Christian perfection. In the preface he made the point that it was large enough...

to contain all the important truths of our most holy religion, whether speculative or practical; yea, to illustrate them all, and to prove them both by Scripture and reason...The hymns are...carefully ranged under prayer heads, according to the experience of real Christians. So that this book is in effect a little body of experimental and practical divinity...In what other publication of the kind have you so distinct and full an account of scriptural Christianity?<sup>52</sup>

The conduct of the believers needed to be regulated and not simply left to personal freedom, as this opened the door to enthusiasm. On the other hand, Wesley recognised the danger of replacing a dependency on the work of the Spirit with a mechanical application of the Methodist general rules.<sup>53</sup> This made it important to consult with those experienced in the ways of God over such questions,<sup>54</sup> as this was an 'appointed means which it generally pleases God to bless.'<sup>55</sup> Here again there is a strong emphasis on the living authority of the Holy Spirit, to be discerned by the faith community in harmony with the Scriptures.

The lives of the members of the societies were significant as models for seekers to follow and as sources of spiritual experience

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<sup>51</sup> *Letters* (Telford), 6:94. See also *Letters* (Telford), 8:80, 156.

<sup>52</sup> *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists* (1780) in *Works*, 7:73-74. The structure of the hymnal laid out Wesley's mature understanding of the *ordo salutis*; see the contents (77-78) and the first section of the introduction to the volume (1-22).

<sup>53</sup> *Letters* (Telford), 5:344. See also *Letters* (Telford), 6:263; 7:224.

<sup>54</sup> *Letters* (Telford), 5:278; 6:58, 126, 127, 178, 239.

<sup>55</sup> *Letters* (Telford), 6:237.

and encouragement.<sup>56</sup> Methodists needed to improve their understanding of the doctrine and practice of Christian perfection as much as possible in order to be of help to others and to minimise difficulties in these areas. Wesley encouraged his people to read widely in order to enhance their understanding of Methodist doctrine and practice. He told them that this ‘can no otherwise be done than by reading authors of various kinds as well as by thinking and conversation. If we read nothing but the Bible, we should hear nothing but the Bible; and then what becomes of preaching?’<sup>57</sup> He stressed the importance of reading and subsequent Christian conversation amongst the members of the societies. There was a danger that his people would read the wrong material or things that were less than helpful for their spiritual journey. Sorting this out was not easy without a great deal of experience, so he urged his people to keep to Methodist publications (including those Wesley had translated and/or edited), where they would find all that they needed, ‘speculative or practical.’<sup>58</sup>

Thomas Langford has proposed the term ‘ethos’ as a good way to describe Wesley’s references to the role of the community of faith in theological reflection and application.<sup>59</sup> This can be defined as its characteristic nature, attitudes and values; its way of viewing and living in the world. The emphasis is then on its dynamic, relational qualities rather than a static, formally-defined belief system. It was in this sense that Wesley strongly treasured the heritage of the early Church (especially of the first three centuries), the Church of England (particularly of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries),<sup>60</sup> and his own emerging Methodist movement.<sup>61</sup> This latter point is critical.<sup>62</sup> Over time a distinct Methodist ethos arose shaped by its

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<sup>56</sup> See for example *Letters* (Telford), 5:261-62, 290; 7:167.

<sup>57</sup> *Letters* (Telford), 6:129-30. See also *Letters* (Telford), 8:247 and Wesley, *Minutes* (1803), 33.

<sup>58</sup> *Letters* (Telford), 6:125-26, 201.

<sup>59</sup> See Langford, ‘Introduction,’ *Doctrine and Theology*, 11-13.

<sup>60</sup> *Works*, 4:393-94. He regarded the Church of England as a ‘scriptural church’ and valued its authority ‘only less than that of the oracles of God.’ See for example *Works*, 9:308; 11:117, 63-71, 85, 290; 26:49-50; 419, 26; *Letters* (Telford), 3:245.

<sup>61</sup> In a letter Wesley said, ‘This is the scriptural way, the *Methodist* way, the true way’; see *Works*, 26:489.

<sup>62</sup> Neither Campbell nor Jones in their analysis of Wesley’s theological authorities makes reference to Methodism itself; see Scott J. Jones, *John Wesley’s Conception and Use of Scripture* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1995), 169-76; Ted A. Campbell, ‘The Interpretative Role of Tradition,’ in *Wesley and the Quadrilateral: Renewing the Conversation*, W. Stephen Gunter et al, eds. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 63-75.

Anglican roots but with conspicuously Wesleyan features: the sermons, hymns, liturgy, testimonies, society rules and accountability structures, conferences, letters, the growing corpus of Methodist writings and edited works, all largely bearing the stamp or seal of approval of John Wesley himself. Angela Shier-Jones sees this as the most important factor in understanding Methodism and the way it theologises as a community.<sup>63</sup> Wesley upheld the authority of the community above that of any individual, no matter how exalted. This was why his Methodist Conferences were so important - especially in helping to understand and teach Christian perfection.<sup>64</sup> The contribution of the community to understanding what was involved in practical discipleship was critical; Wesley especially valued the experience of the saints in these communities to illuminate and provide clear examples of the teaching of the Scriptures.<sup>65</sup>

While Wesley did not elevate doctrine over heart experience, he argued that heart experience would not long survive without a clear biblical and doctrinal foundation. The Methodist people were so dependent on lay leaders and local preachers (who were often not formally educated in divinity) and it was vital that their experience be formed by a sound theological understanding. As the Methodist movement developed, Wesley overtly included it as an essential faith community for his people, and explicit references to antiquity and the Church of England decline. He believed that Christians could not afford to ignore the theological essentials established on a firm scriptural foundation by the early Fathers, and the Church of England, but if the message and experience of Christian perfection was to be kept alive, then the theology and practice of the Methodist community itself was critical to this task.

The dialogue and debate with his critics outside of Methodism was conducted at the level of doctrinal substance, but this type of conversation was not to be imported into his societies. Material on the substance is primarily found in his sermons, the *Notes*, and several smaller treatises, where Scripture is paramount - both in formal quotations, inexact references and allusions. The language

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<sup>63</sup> Angela Shier-Jones, *A Work in Progress: Methodists Doing Theology* (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2005), 3-11 especially. See also Shier-Jones, 'Conferring as Theological Model,' in *Unmasking Methodist Theology*, Clive Marsh et al, eds. (London: Continuum, 2004), 82-94; Stephen Dawes, 'Revelation in Methodist Practice and Belief,' in *Unmasking Methodist Theology*, 114-16.

<sup>64</sup> *Works*, 21:165.

<sup>65</sup> *Works*, 1:592-611. See also *Works*, 2:239.



and imagery of the sermons are shaped by the Bible and they are rich with direct references to Scriptural texts. However, when we move to the pastoral advice given in his letters, the lack of direct or indirect reference to Scripture in comparison with the sermons and treatises is noticeable. He constantly urges them to read Methodist publications (largely his own), and these are rich in Scripture – but Scripture that has already been interpreted and applied by Wesley and other sympathetic writers. His people are rarely referred to the Bible text on its own, which surely indicates the vital importance of the perspective of the reading community and Wesley's determination that this be a Methodist community.

In his pastoral writings a number of vital affirmations emerge. Wesley strongly maintained the intimate link between the living voice of the Spirit and the written word of Scripture. The Scripture was always to be applied by the Spirit and so there was an emphasis on the Christian experience of the reader(s) rather than merely life experience in general. However, it was vital that his people listen to the Spirit and read the Bible within a Methodist framework; particularly the Methodist hermeneutical approach of working with the analogy of faith rather than seeking proof texts. The role of personal and community expectation and experience was vital. He constantly urged them to listen to Methodist preachers, participate in Methodist worship, and read Methodist works, with Wesley's own sermons and other writings being of critical importance. His people needed to have regular conversation with those who were either testifying to Christian perfection or diligently seeking it, for without community support and encouragement many would simply give up. There were constant references to personal testimony (both spoken and written), as well as the importance of the Conferences and other Methodist meetings.

It was in this living laboratory that the circumstance of Christian perfection was to be worked through and the conditions needed to be as favourable as possible. Wesley believed that to enter into endless disputes and argumentation over the nature and experience of Christian perfection would be completely counter-productive, as it tended to undermine the necessary trust in God's promises and faithfulness. This is why Wesley constantly urged his people not to read, hear or converse at length on spiritual matters with those who would deny the Methodist understanding. This explains his many cautions against the misuse of reason. It was a fine tool in debate with his critics, but could easily undermine the 'simple trust' (faith) so necessary if his people were to experience and maintain a

relationship of perfect love. In the societies it was common sense and wisdom that were to be in evidence, not philosophical argument. As in every relationship of love, the acids of doubt, discouragement and criticism were fatal, hence the strategic role of the societies to provide an atmosphere (ethos) of encouragement and support. Wesley's life and ministry demonstrates the central importance of the community of faith in theologising and the continued health of Methodism is inextricably tied to the Spirit-formed ethos of its own community.

## Conclusion

In the history of the church as a whole, let alone our own denominations, there has always been a tension between 'faithful remembering' and 'reformation/renewal.' The challenge for churches and theological colleges is to enable a faithful preservation of our denominational 'heritage' while helping to articulate our beliefs and practices in relevant and appropriate forms for today. In western societies like ours there is the ever-present temptation to value innovation and novelty for its own sake, to adopt 'success models' (so often defined in terms of numerical growth) from other theological frameworks that are often antithetical at heart to our own ethos. There is no problem with learning from others and adopting/adapting their programs, methods and techniques as long as we carefully discern whether these will enhance our life and witness as Wesleyan communities or eventually be destructive of them. In his 'Thoughts upon Methodism' (1786), John Wesley wrote:

I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out.<sup>66</sup>

The importance of maintaining a clear Wesleyan ethos is underlined by Wesley's specific identification of 'doctrine, spirit and discipline' as the core constituent elements in the spiritual formation of the people called Methodists. His concerns were valid ones and history has borne out that they were not misplaced in the subsequent history of the wider Wesleyan movement.

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<sup>66</sup> *Works*, 9:527.

Arising from this brief overview, there are a number of points that we need to consider in terms of the life and formation of our own Wesleyan communities. If we believe our contribution to the Body of Christ is still an essential emphasis, how deeply are we committed to that purpose? It will not happen simply by accident or as a by-product of some other concern, but will require us to be intentional - our key leaders (both ordained and lay) must actually believe, live and share that biblical message. We will need to be clear about, and committed to, the doctrines and practices reflective of the purpose, with a willingness to say 'no' to that which hinders its fulfillment, no matter how popular or successful they may be in other contexts.

Wesley was able to insist on his Methodist people working with certain community structures and forms, while he could also direct those exercising ministry in these settings to a large degree. He was able to insist on his people substantially limiting their theological input to that which he approved. All this made it easier to set the theological framework for the spiritual formation and mission of the Methodists. The range of resource materials available to us today is vast compared to his day and we are unlikely ever to recover the degree of control that Wesley was able to exercise over the early Methodist community. The challenge of obtaining and then maintaining the kind of ethos regarded as essential by Wesley is significant, and I intend to give attention to this issue in a future paper.

# **MORE INSPIRATIONAL THAN PENETRATING: THE SALVATION ARMY'S USE OF HISTORY**

**Jennifer Hein**

This article has been peer-reviewed

*With a culture that values action over words, The Salvation Army has tended to produce inspirational popular history, rather than penetrating academic works. It co-opted biblical narratives, church history and personal testimonies to save souls, create community and encourage soldiers to further action. As it moved from a mission to a defined denomination, history was used to elevate officership and diminish the voices of key pioneer soldiers, such as James Hooker in South Australia. This has paralleled the disempowerment of soldiers and encouraged a passive 'lay' role. Revitalization of the soldiery can be assisted by a recovery of 'lay' involvement in history. New techniques in church history which encourage 'bottom-up' perspectives could bridge the divide between popular and academic history.*

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In 1887 Hawkins, a Melbourne *War Cry* journalist, queried the lack of reports from the Australasian headquarters. The General Secretary replied that, 'I believe it can be truly said of the Salvation Army everywhere, that we are so busy making history that we have not sufficient time to write it.'<sup>1</sup> The Australian officer was repeating a saying of Catherine Booth, the wife of the Army's founder, William Booth.<sup>2</sup> A century later it had become a truism both within and outside the Army world, and could be reported at such events as the centenary of the opening of the Norwood Citadel.<sup>3</sup>

It should not be assumed from this that The Salvation Army has not produced historical writing. In fact it has flowed out of its

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<sup>1</sup> *War Cry* (Adelaide), 25 November 1887. The General Secretary was a senior staff-officer. Staff-officers were officers (ministers) temporarily attached to headquarters, which had oversight of the corps (churches) in a division (area). Note that the term 'corps' traditionally refers to the body of soldiers (members) and 'barracks' or 'citadel' refers to the building.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick de Latour Booth-Tucker, *Catherine Booth: The Mother of the Salvation Army* vol 1 (London: The Salvation Army, 1910), 44. William Booth is often referred to as the 'Founder' and Catherine as the 'Army Mother.'

<sup>3</sup> *The Eastern Courier*, 13 August 1997.

publishing houses since they were established, predominantly in the form of biographies. Walter Hull, a journalist for the Australian *War Cry* claimed, 'A personal opinion is that the Army is stronger on biographical writing than any other aspect of book publishing. For example, percentage-wise, we have not issued a large amount of theological or doctrinal work...' <sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, the works which were produced were aimed predominantly at those who were already committed to the Army, either as soldiers or as supporters. As such they retained an inward focus. When aimed at a wider market, they had an apologetic function. This has resulted in a body of work that is predominantly hagiography and has perhaps unkindly been referred to as 'the enormous condescension of historiography.' <sup>5</sup> Nor was there significant study on the Army from outside of the organization. Accepting the movement's firm denial of being a church at face value, church historians have often relegated The Salvation Army to the place of an interesting nineteenth century mission. <sup>6</sup>

In recent years historians have become interested in The Salvation Army and it is becoming a legitimate topic for academic study. Norman H. Murdoch's *Origins of the Salvation Army* was the first attempt at a history of the movement written from an outside perspective. In his preface Murdoch concedes that 'not all army history has been done badly', implying that most of it has. <sup>7</sup> Murdoch does not outline what he would consider to be 'good' history, but from the tenor of his writing, it can be assumed to be a critical analysis of the movement and its place in its wider society. He cites with approval Howard R. Murphy's complaint that the Army is more interested in being 'inspirational than penetrating.' <sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *War Cry* (Australia), 25 August 1984. Reprinted in Walter Hull, *Paper Platform*, (Melbourne: The Salvation Army, 1993), 191.

<sup>5</sup> Theodore Koditschek, 'Pulling the Devil's Kingdom Down: The Salvation Army in Victorian Britain,' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 33:2 (1 August 2002): 293.

<sup>6</sup> For example, Bruce L Shelly has a comparatively lengthy half page on The Salvation Army, mentioning its evangelistic and social service work between sections on the Nonconformist labour movement and Christian Socialists. *Church History in Plain Language* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 411.

<sup>7</sup> Norman H. Murdoch, *Origins of The Salvation Army* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1994), ix. Murdoch is the son of Salvation Army officers, but in attempting to avoid the 'pitfalls of hagiography' he borders on hostility in his language and could be seen as an external writer.

<sup>8</sup> Howard R. Murphy, review of Arch Wiggins, *The History of The Salvation Army: Volume 4 1886-1904* (New York: The Salvation Army, 1964), in *Victorian Studies* 8 (Dec 1964): 185-6.

This complaint raises a number of questions. To what extent is it realistic to expect an organisation to conduct critical self-analysis of its own history? Given the available records, is it possible to construct a 'good' history of The Salvation Army? How does The Salvation Army use its own history? Is the Army's use of history effectively inspirational? Is the divide between popular and academic writing an artificial one and therefore unhelpful? Is there a way to bridge the divide and be both penetrating and inspirational? These may be more useful questions than simply wondering why The Salvation Army persists in writing 'bad history.'

Fully answering these questions would require a paper in each case. In addition, it is clear that regional differences play a part. Most of the current research into Salvation Army history has been conducted in North America, even when the research is on countries outside of America. A survey of recently published historians shows that Andrew Eason, Diane Winston, Norman Murdoch, Pamela Walker, R. G. Moyles and Roger J. Green are all located in either Canada or the United States, with Glenn Horridge a lone Briton. A study of the factors leading to this imbalance would be instructive. Instead this paper will outline some general tendencies in the Salvation Army use of history, with the focus on examples from South Australia, in the expectation that a case study from a specific context will suggest trends in The Salvation Army as a whole and raise questions as to the reasons for any regional exceptions.

At present there are few books on the history of The Salvation Army in Australia and none on South Australia. The last book published was for the 1980 centenary.<sup>9</sup> Although engaging and readable, like most Australian history writings it suffered from relying on secondary sources and a tendency to be Eastern-states-centric. There are reasons for this. Many of the original records have been destroyed and now exist only as citations in the earliest histories. The International Headquarters of The Salvation Army in London suffered a direct hit by an incendiary bomb on 11 May 1941. On 22 April 1975 the first Australian Corps, now known as Adelaide Congress Hall, and the South Australian Divisional Headquarters, which was located in the same building, were destroyed by fire.<sup>10</sup> The Clare Corps records were similarly lost in a fire in 1917.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Barbara Bolton, *Booth's Drum* (Sydney: Hodder and Stoughton, 1980).

<sup>10</sup> Undoubtedly equivalent examples could be found in other locations but the author will be demonstrating her own biases by preferring to use South Australian examples in this paper.

<sup>11</sup> *Yorke Peninsular Country Times*, September 1980.

However, even without these losses, it is doubtful that the historical records would be complete enough for traditional approaches to church history. From the time that a *War Cry* editor instructed his officers to 'give us a report of work done, souls saved; not an essay,' the detailed recording of events has been a low priority.<sup>12</sup> Some early officers were illiterate or at best semi-literate.<sup>13</sup> Corps membership rolls were often rewritten for internal purposes such as the assignment of numbered 'cartridge' envelopes for tithing, making accurate statistical analysis of soldiers impossible.<sup>14</sup> Corps history books were only introduced in South Australia in 1912 and few were consistently maintained. Given the Methodist enthusiasm for recording every minute detail, it is difficult to comprehend that one of its offspring could have such modest written records.

The mind-set of making history rather than writing it has also led to the lack of a well-defined archival policy. Corps records are the responsibility of the corps, but unless a commanding officer shows a particular interest in history, there is no impetus to record historical information, or even to keep old records. Corps that close down are not required to pass on the records to headquarters. It is often only the interest of soldiers or other parties that ensures this happens, thus leaving Salvation Army artifacts prey to both internal and external private collectors or simply destruction. Too much of South Australian history has been preserved by enthusiastic 'dumpster-diving' and not all of the saved material has found its way back into official hands.<sup>15</sup> There have been changes in the focus of historical writing from ecclesiastical forms to religious history, making the lack

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<sup>12</sup> *War Cry* (Adelaide), 20 June 1884.

<sup>13</sup> For example, the Adelaide *War Cry* normally edited officers' reports, but the 29 April 1887 edition contains an unedited report from 'Brudder Gough', a lieutenant stationed at Riverton. The quality of the writing casts doubt on the literacy of his commanding officer, Captain Harry Symons, if Gough was assigned to write the Corps reports.

<sup>14</sup> For example, the earliest known Soldiers Roll in South Australia is at Mount Gambier Corps. It contains several lists, presumably for this purpose, and is unlikely to be the original roll.

<sup>15</sup> For example, the Victor Harbor Corps history book was lost during its nine year closure from 1963-1972. No one now remembers who took the book home for safe-keeping. South Australian David Morris was a renowned 'dumpster-diver', collecting much of the material from corps that closed down. The South Australian Heritage Centre Archive and Museum owes its existence largely to his influence.

of corps records less of a barrier.<sup>16</sup> However, it is significant that North America has the best-resourced archives as well as the most prolific Salvation Army historians.

One factor in the lack of penetrating historical writing may be related to officer training. William Booth adopted the revivalist distrust of formal theological training and abandoned his own studies to conduct evangelistic work.<sup>17</sup> Until recent years few officers in Australia had undergraduate qualifications and no officer has completed postgraduate study in Australian Salvation Army history, preferring to concentrate on the social welfare, leadership or theological aspects of their work.

It is debatable how much this affects research in the area, given historical work is rarely undertaken by church leaders, who tend to lack the time to undertake painstaking primary research. The historians mentioned previously are not officers and the most penetrating South Australian denominational histories have also been produced by laypeople.<sup>18</sup> However, the residual distrust of theological education has meant that there has been until recently little encouragement for even lay soldiers to conduct in-depth historical research of The Salvation Army and few mentors available to support them.

Neither the lack of material nor the lack of a culture of historical writing fully account for the 'bad history' of the complaints. The real problem can be seen in a work which Murdoch might concede is not done badly. *The History of The Salvation Army* is a multi-volume work begun by Robert Sandall and is one of the most important records of Salvation Army history. In his preface to the first volume, Albert Osborne paid 'tribute to the persistent care with which the author has given himself to his task.'<sup>19</sup> Sandall researched his work

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<sup>16</sup> Some of the changes in focus are outlined in John Gascoigne, 'The Journal of Religious History 1960-2010: The Changing Face of Religious History over Fifty Years,' *Journal of Religious History* 34:3, 262-272. The journal itself was founded in 1960 to explore expressions of religious practice, rather than the then focus on ecclesiastical structures.

<sup>17</sup> George Scott Railton, *General Booth* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912), 43.

<sup>18</sup> David Hilliard's history of the Anglican Church in South Australia, *Godliness and Good Order* (Netley: Wakefield Press, 1986) and Arnold Hunt's history of South Australian Methodism, *This Side of Heaven* (Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1985) are just two examples of this. In the Salvation Army Colonel Henry Gariepy, 'promoted to Glory' this year, was a notable exception. It may be significant that he also was based in North America.

<sup>19</sup> Robert Sandall, *The History of The Salvation Army: Volume 1, 1865-1878* (New York: The Salvation Army, 1947), vii. Sandall's desire to 'set things down correctly' is



carefully and uncovered inconsistencies in the material. These included a mistake John Gore, co-founder of The Salvation Army in Australia, made in the date of his own conversion.<sup>20</sup> Sandall was prepared to conflict with 'ideas long and widely held,' yet according to Osborne even this work was not written out of academic interest, but so that the 'study of its History [might] bring to so many readers a new stimulus to holy enterprise.'<sup>21</sup>

This is the crux of the tension between academic historians and Salvation Army writers. Historians expect academic excellence – explanations of the motives of leaders, historical perspective, an assessment of the initial context, the Army's impact on a society, causes, trends, underlying social processes, etc. The Salvation Army has had no interest in any of these on more than a superficial level. Nor is it likely to, unless such analysis can be used to further its core objectives. It is primarily a practical movement and even its history is merely a tool to be used. Murphy complained that 'This book, to put it bluntly, is intended to save souls, not to feed scholarly curiosity.' Yet even he sensed that such a statement would be taken as a compliment by Arch Wiggins, the writer of the book he was critiquing.<sup>22</sup>

It is curious that both Murphy and Murdoch expected The Salvation Army to conform to their expectations of historical writings. From its earliest days The Salvation Army was prepared to co-opt even biblical history to the service of evangelism. Instead of sermons carefully exegeting Bible passages, officers told stories of Jonah, 'the captain who ran away' and of Jesus Christ arranging for a 'Great Open-air Demonstration in Galilee' after his resurrection.<sup>23</sup>

It was a bold move in a climate that was already unsure of the legitimacy of the then newly published Revised Standard Version translation of the Bible, let alone the adaptation of biblical characters, but it also gave the soldiers courage in the fight. If Moses and Aaron could go 'before Pharaoh to demand the right to march

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expressed in a letter to Australian historian Percival Dale, 6 January 1945, D151197, Salvation Army Heritage Centre, Melbourne.

<sup>20</sup> According to Sandall, comparison with the date of The Salvation Army's use of the Edinburgh Castle, Stepney, London, as a preaching place showed that Gore had given the wrong date in a widely quoted letter to William Booth in 1880. Robert Sandall, *The History of the Salvation Army: vol 2, 1878-1886* (New York: The Salvation Army, 1950), 243-244.

<sup>21</sup> Sandall, 2: vii-viii.

<sup>22</sup> Murphy comments that 'the author not only failed to do his duty as an historian but would have considered it wrong to do so'. Murphy, 186.

<sup>23</sup> *War Cry* (Adelaide), 8 June 1883, 10 June 1887.

and serve God' and God was mighty enough to defeat Pharaoh's army with the result that 'Moses marched the Salvation Army out of Egypt,' then being arrested in Kapunda for marching in the streets was merely a temporary setback and even vindication of their determination to claim the world for Jesus.<sup>24</sup>

Prior church history was used in a similar manner. The Salvation Army appealed to a direct religious lineage that reached back to the apostles. It was the same claim that John Wesley had made in defence of Methodism.<sup>25</sup> In a clear identification with church history, Catherine Booth pointed out that persecution had accompanied the work of the church throughout history, citing opposition during the Reformation, and to George Fox, and to the Methodists.<sup>26</sup> At a North Adelaide Demonstration, it was declared that 'we [are] the Apostolic succession' of Acts 1.<sup>27</sup> This was language foreign to Salvation Army theology, but it served to reassure converts that they were supporting a mainstream expression of evangelical faith.

Personal history was also to be conscripted into God's service, public testimonies being a feature of Salvation Army meetings. Converts were expected to demonstrate the reality of their commitment by immediately making a public declaration of their new-found faith to the rest of the congregation. They were then required to attend open-air and other meetings - standing near the front and being ready to participate in the meetings by relating stories of their conversion and subsequent growth in holiness.<sup>28</sup>

Early testimonies emphasised prior misdeeds in order to magnify the grace of God. A remarkable number of early converts had been on the verge of slitting their wives' throats, and had been unapprehended thieves or unremitting drunkards. One man claimed he had tried to blow up his house with his wife in it! Almost every convert claimed to be the worst of all sinners.<sup>29</sup> Given the emphasis on testimonies and a miraculous conversion, it was tempting for soldiers to exaggerate their circumstances prior to conversion. Those

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<sup>24</sup> *War Cry* (Adelaide), 5 December 1884.

<sup>25</sup> See 'On Laying the Foundation of the New Chapel,' Sermon 122 in John Wesley, *Works* vol 6.

<sup>26</sup> Opposition was identified as a hallmark of the faithful church. *War Cry* (Adelaide), 22 June 1883. See also 25 January 1884.

<sup>27</sup> *War Cry* (Adelaide), 3 June 1887.

<sup>28</sup> *War Cry* (Adelaide), 25 February 1887.

<sup>29</sup> *War Cry* (Adelaide), 22 June 1883, 29 June 1883, 7 December 1883, 18 January 1884.

who could not claim a criminal past could testify to spiritual indifference. Those who had not been regular church-goers proclaimed how long it had been since they had sat in a pew. Regular church-attenders became mere seat-warmers.<sup>30</sup> There were indeed startling transformations of drunkards and nominal Christians, if perhaps not as many as was claimed. And although tainted with an element of reverse pride, such testimonies were designed to persuade listeners that no sin was too extreme to experience the forgiveness of God. All were welcome in the Kingdom of Heaven, no matter how appalling or indifferent their past.

Testimonies were a way in which every soldier could take part in the life and purpose of the church. Education, social status, appearance and race were all irrelevant to the ability to tell a story. Even language was no barrier. At Angaston the German converts gave their testimonies in German.<sup>31</sup> In Naracoorte, 'Charlie the Chinaman' testified and was later 'taking a prominent part in the meetings by reading from a Chinese Bible in his own language, and then explaining the same in English.'<sup>32</sup> At Bowden one Easter there were testimonies from the Scotch, the Cornish, and an Aborigine in his own tongue.<sup>33</sup>

Testimonies also created a sense of community. Those who shared were no longer strangers, but brothers and sisters in Christ. This was important to those whose main friendships were found in the pub culture and who needed replacements if they were to have any hope of conforming to the temperance expectations of The Salvation Army. It was also attractive to those used to the stiff formality of the typical church of the time. A seeker in Jamestown admitted to having been 'brought up to the Church of England, but I like your plain, outspoken talk.'<sup>34</sup>

William Booth had repeatedly urged his soldiers to 'go for souls and go for the worst.'<sup>35</sup> The soldiers in South Australia took his command to heart, gleefully reporting when they saw the 'worst characters in town' saved.<sup>36</sup> Salvation experienced by one was often

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<sup>30</sup> *War Cry* (Adelaide), 4 May 1883, 16 May 1883, 18 November 1887, 25 November 1887.

<sup>31</sup> *War Cry* (Adelaide), 12 December 1884.

<sup>32</sup> *War Cry* (Adelaide), 19 December 1884, 1 April 1887.

<sup>33</sup> *War Cry* (Adelaide), 15 April 1887.

<sup>34</sup> *War Cry* (Adelaide), 21 January 1887.

<sup>35</sup> Harold Begbie, *Life of William Booth: The Founder of the Salvation Army*, vol 2 (London: MacMillan and Co, 1920), 473.

<sup>36</sup> *War Cry* (Adelaide), 1 February 1884.

the catalyst for more of their friends being saved, the rough testimony of a former comrade in strife being much more effective than the most eloquent sermon.<sup>37</sup> Testimonies were not long discourses. At a Hallelujah Supper at Bowden there were sixty-four testimonies in ten minutes, approximately one every nine and a half seconds.<sup>38</sup> Children's testimonies were also found to be effective. Little Nellie, aged nine years, could state that 'I am glad that I am a little soldier of the cross. I am still trusting in the Lord.'<sup>39</sup>

It was the use of 'unlearned testimonies' that formed some of the objections to Salvation Army methods.<sup>40</sup> However, the use of refined services and erudite sermons had done little to attract the working classes. The Adelaide *War Cry* quoted an unnamed Presbyterian Doctor of Divinity who stated, 'Something was needed to break up the staid and dignified formality of the churches, and to impress the myriads of men with the Importance and Utility of Salvation and the so-called cultivated and scholarly preaching of the present day is utterly useless to souls needing a Saviour.'<sup>41</sup>

With such a strong emphasis on personal testimony, it is little wonder that the first intentional international historical records were biographies. George S. Railton wrote about Salvation Army figures such as John Allen, (*The Salvation Navy*, 1880) and this was followed by biographies of Catherine Booth by W.T. Stead (1890) and Frederick de Latour Booth-Tucker (1892), and General Booth by Railton (1912) and Harold Begbie (1920).<sup>42</sup> Biographical works remain the key focus of Salvation Army publications. These works retain the purpose of testimonies; to demonstrate the grace of God in the lives of converts, to create a sense of community, and as encouragement and inspiration for continuing their efforts. Consequently, they are predominantly descriptive, rather than

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<sup>37</sup> *War Cry* (Adelaide), 27 July 1883, 25 April 1884, 22 August 1884.

<sup>38</sup> *War Cry* (Adelaide), 22 August 1884.

<sup>39</sup> *War Cry* (Adelaide), 10 October 1884.

<sup>40</sup> *War Cry* (Adelaide), 11 April 1884, 18 April 1884.

<sup>41</sup> *War Cry* (Adelaide), 11 April 1884.

<sup>42</sup> George Scott Railton, *The Salvation Navy: Being an Account of the Life, Death & Victories of Captain John Allen, of the Salvation Army* (London: The Salvation Army, 1880); Frederick St. George de Latour Booth-Tucker, *The Life of Catherine Booth, the Mother of the Salvation Army* (London: The Salvation Army, 1892); W. T. Stead, *Catherine Booth* (London: James Nisbet & Co, 1900); George Scott Railton, *General Booth* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912); Harold Begbie, *The Life of General William Booth, 2 Vols* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1920).

analytical, and are aimed at contemporary Salvationists, rather than an intentional record for posterity.

In the preface one of the earliest biographies of William Booth, Bramwell Booth wrote a rare purpose statement for Salvation Army historical writing:

We cannot think it possible for anyone, especially a Salvationist, to read it without being compelled ever and anon to ask himself such questions as these: 'Am I living a life that is at all like this life? Am I, at any rate, willing by God's grace to do anything I can in the same direction, in order that God may be more loved and glorified, and that my fellow-men may be raised to a Godlike and happy service? After all, is there not something better for me than money making, or the search after human applause, or indeed the pursuit of earthly good of any kind? If, instead of aiming at that which will fade away, I turn my attention to making the best of my life for God and for others, may I not accomplish something that will afford me satisfaction at last and bear reflection in the world to come?'<sup>43</sup>

Booth later outlines a secondary purpose for the book – to raise money for a Memorial Scheme to erect premises for training officers, headquarters and halls, and the extension of the work internationally.<sup>44</sup> These two purposes have remained the same for much of Salvation Army writing. Indeed, two resources produced recently were designed not so much as historical references but as encouragement to continue the social and evangelistic mission of The Salvation Army. *Insane* by Nealson Munn and David Collinson, a book which outlines specific historical events, includes study questions which address similar current social issues.<sup>45</sup> *Boundless Salvation*, an analysis of Salvation Army history, theology and mission by John Cleary, was deliberately produced as a four part DVD series with an interactive study guide in order to facilitate group discussion.<sup>46</sup> Both challenge the participants to relate Salvation Army history to current circumstances and encourage further action in those areas. As an example of the second purpose, proceeds for Geoff and Kalie Webb's *Authentic 'Fair Dinkum' Holiness* have supported the building fund for the Ingle Farm

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<sup>43</sup> George Scott Railton, *General Booth* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912), iii-iv.

<sup>44</sup> Railton, v.

<sup>45</sup> Nealson Munn & David Collinson, *Insane : the stories of crazy salvos who changed the world* ([Melbourne]: The Salvation Army, 2007).

<sup>46</sup> John Cleary, *Boundless Salvation* (Salvation Army Southern Territory: Radiant Film & Television, 2008).

Corps.<sup>47</sup> Yet, however similar the purposes for historical writings are, there is one area which has intensified over time – the emphasis on work done by officers.

Being a practical organization, The Salvation Army used any suitable person for a task, regardless of their race, gender, social status, education or rank. This freedom to act without excessive reference to hierarchy meant that the Army could respond to situations and needs as they arose, rather than after approval from a committee. This enabled innovative solutions from unlikely sources.

Bernard Watson observed that:

The Army was certainly not created by an officer marching before and a mass of highly docile soldiery coming on behind. Sometimes the picture emerging from the study of Army history is of the soldiery advancing enthusiastically and the officer behind having a bit of a job to keep within shouting distance!<sup>48</sup>

Traditionally there was little difference between soldiers and officers, apart from the commitment of time. The first South Australian corps was founded and was expanding, with a half-built hall, by the time the first officers arrived in February 1881. Soldiers could, and did, participate in meetings with testimonies, Bible readings, singing and sermons. They wrote reports for illiterate officers, ran the finances and led the march to new outposts. Richard Briant, a pioneer South Australian soldier, never became an officer, but founded and ran the East End Corps and was in charge of divisional finances for several years before ill-health forced his retirement. Allowing soldiers to function in these roles was an excellent way of finding potential officers.

However, as the movement turned into an organisation, with a defined structure and hierarchy, independent action by soldiers was discouraged and declined. Officer roles became more managerial and soldiers turned into members.<sup>49</sup> The appearance of more passive language reflected a more passive role for the participants. Instead of an army, they were becoming a congregation; spectators, rather

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<sup>47</sup> Geoff and Kalie Webb, *Authentic 'Fair Dinkum' Holiness* ([Melbourne], The Salvation Army, 2007), 11.

<sup>48</sup> Bernard Watson, 'The Contemporary Framework (2): Amidst the Workers,' *The Officer*, April 1970: 261-265.

<sup>49</sup> Harold Hill traces this process in *Leadership in the Salvation Army: A Case Study in Clericalisation*, Studies in Christian History and Thought (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006).

than active combatants in the 'war against sin and Satan'. Language doesn't just describe, it also subconsciously creates identity and informs expectations.

Historical writing reflected this trend, with accounts increasingly concentrating on the activities of officers, rather than soldiers. This could be attributed to the availability of material – it is easier to access centralised official officer records than those of soldiers. While this might be true of accounts of those in the international hierarchy or events of denominational importance, this trend was also evident in local history, where material was more evenly available for both officers and soldiers.

The concentration on officers did not just apply to new events, but led to a revised treatment of history. Significant 'laity' started disappearing from the historical records. It can be clearly seen in the change in presentation of James Hooker, a founding member of The Salvation Army in South Australia. Hooker was one of the first soldiers enrolled in the Adelaide I Corps. His involvement in the Army's work probably stemmed from an interest in the temperance movement.<sup>50</sup> John Gore and Edward Saunders recognised each other as English Salvation Army converts from their testimonies at a temperance meeting held at the Wesleyan Church of which both Saunders and Hooker were members. Although Hooker had no prior experience of the Army, having arrived in Australia in 1852, well before Booth's involvement with the East London Christian Mission (a precursor to The Salvation Army), he must have been attracted by the enthusiasm of the other two men, for when they discussed starting The Salvation Army in Adelaide he joined in their enterprise. Their first open-air in Light Square was held the following night. Hooker arranged some of the temporary halls used for subsequent meetings. He donated the land and organized finance for the purpose-built barracks of Adelaide I Corps (that later included the South Australian Divisional Headquarters and Training Home for officers).<sup>51</sup>

In 1882 the Hookers went on a holiday to England. James Hooker used the opportunity to expand the work in South Australia, meeting William Booth, lobbying for more officers and paying for the passage

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<sup>50</sup> *Advertiser*, 24 March 1906; *Chronicle*, 1 October 1910; Geoffrey R. Needham and Daryl I. Thomson, *Men of Steel: A Chronicle of the Metal Casting Industry in South Australia* (Croydon Park: G.R. Needham, 1987), 30; *Local Officer and Bandsman*, 1 November 1944.

<sup>51</sup> *War Cry* (London), 20 July 1882; *The Salvation War 1882* (London: The Salvation Army, c. 1882), 146.

of several. When it was clear that no more officers were available, he arranged for fifty single women to take advantage of the free passage offered by the colony to domestic servants. These 'Hallelujah Lassies' were a significant reinforcement for the corps and several later became officers.<sup>52</sup>

This plan was so successful that it is likely to have influenced the immigration portion of Booth's *In Darkest England* scheme. Like other contributors, Hooker's name is not mentioned, but the shortage of domestic servants and the availability of paid passage for suitable women are mentioned in his proposal. It is unlikely that Booth did not have Hooker's efforts in mind when he wrote this section.<sup>53</sup>

On his return Hooker travelled widely in South Australia on business, being associated with the principal railway bridge-building work carried out in the colony.<sup>54</sup> He claimed that 'wherever I go the people are asking me when the Salvation Army are coming.'<sup>55</sup> It is likely, given the rapid expansion into country areas, that Hooker was able to pave the way for new corps with his business contacts. He took an active role in the opening of corps such as Jamestown and visited a number of others.<sup>56</sup>

A founding member of the Adelaide I band, on the departure to Sydney of Thomas Sutherland, the first officer and founder of the band, Hooker was appointed the first bandmaster. He soon realised that he could not conduct and at the same time play the clarinet, which needed two hands to play. He relinquished the position, although he remained in the band. He also arranged for the immigration of Bertram Fry, a member of the original Fry family which had founded the first Salvation Army band.<sup>57</sup>

More importantly, Hooker was appointed Inspector of Buildings for the Salvation Army and given responsibility, along with Captain Thomas Gibbs and Richard Briant, of managing 'all work in South Australia'. He accompanied subsequent commanding officers to various towns in South Australia, giving advice and conducting

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<sup>52</sup> *The Salvation War*, 146; *War Cry* (London), 20 July 1882, 7 October 1882, 4 April 1883. The careers of those who became officers can be traced in subsequent *War Cry* reports.

<sup>53</sup> William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, first printed 1890, (Atlanta: The Salvation Army, 1984), 197.

<sup>54</sup> *Advertiser*, 24 March 1906; Needham & Thomson, 30.

<sup>55</sup> *War Cry* (London), 20 July 1882.

<sup>56</sup> *War Cry* (Adelaide), 4 April 1884.

<sup>57</sup> *War Cry* (London), 22 December 1881, 20 July 1882; *War Cry* (Australasia), 16 August 1958, 31 August 1968.



negotiations for the lease and purchase of properties. Hooker never became an officer, but remained a staunch Salvationist until his death in 1906.<sup>58</sup>

In the summary of worldwide Army work in 1882, it was reported that:

Early in the year Mr. Hooker, the builder of this hall, who had stood almost in the position of a father to the work in South Australia from the first, visited this country on business. Passing up and down amongst our corps, he induced a great many of our people to emigrate to the Colony, thus conferring not only the great benefit upon both lands, and upon those few from amongst our over-crowded population, but also helping to provide a well-trained company of soldiers there, from amongst whom, as well as from the Australian converts, plenty of officers should be obtainable for the whole continent.<sup>59</sup>

By 1950 Hooker's role in the founding of The Salvation Army in South Australia was already being downplayed in official histories, becoming a 'friend', rather than a co-founder. In addition his innovative use of existing resources to support Army objectives was assumed to be a government commission:

The builder was James Hooker, an iron-founder and engineer, who was so good a friend to the pioneers that he became known as 'The father of The Salvation Army in South Australia'... At this meeting Hooker who, with his wife, was in England combining with his furlough a governmental mission to secure emigrants, described how the work had been started in Adelaide... An advertisement in the *War Cry* (7<sup>th</sup> October 1882) invited on his behalf applications from 'fifty Blood and Fire lasses' who were cooks, housemaids or in general service, for free passages to South Australia. A considerable number reached Adelaide early in 1883, and found situations at once.<sup>60</sup>

Note that there is no record of a commission or payment for this task by either the colonial government or the Adelaide City Council, and no mention of Hooker in letters and reports by either the London Emigration Agent or the Commissioner of Crown Lands, who administered the scheme. It therefore must be concluded that Hooker was acting without official standing, and had decided to take

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<sup>58</sup> *War Cry* (Adelaide), 7 September 1883; *Local Officer and Bandsman*, 1 November 1944; *Advertiser* 1906.

<sup>59</sup> *The Salvation War*, 146.

<sup>60</sup> Sandall, 2: 245-6.

advantage of the colony's assisted passage schemes to reinforce the work of the Salvation Army with soldiers who had been converted in England.

Shortly afterwards the first Australian history distanced his involvement even further:

Early in 1880 Mr. James Hooker, proprietor of the large foundry at the north end of Light Square, had erected at the corner of Hindley and Morphett Streets a terrace of sixteen two-storied shops and dwellings. There was a row of old buildings at the rear. At the suggestion of Saunders, these were demolished, and on the site Mr. Hooker erected for the Corps a Barracks eighty feet long by forty feet wide. The rent was £130 per annum...Brother James Hooker, who had become a Salvationist, played a clarinet, and was later appointed Bandmaster. When on a business trip to England, this comrade helped the infant cause by visiting a number of Corps with the Founder, suggesting to young women Salvationists the advantages of migrating to Australia under the South Australian Government Scheme. In this he anticipated something of the Army's migration activities of forty years later.<sup>61</sup>

By the Australian Centenary in 1980, Hooker had become simply another helpful immigrant Salvationist:

Now James Hooker – another immigrant Salvationist – was supervising the building of a hall at the corner of Morphett and Hindley Streets...When [this] proprietor of a flourishing foundry, and his wife paid a visit to England in 1881 they were able to give William Booth a glowing report of the Army's progress in Australia. They also recruited young women Salvationists under the South Australian Government's Scheme.<sup>62</sup>

But in a recent treatment, Hooker was reduced to being merely the landlord:

James Hooker, who was the owner of a large foundry, erected the Hooker Building in 1880 at the corner of Hindley and Morphett Streets, Adelaide. A row of old buildings at the rear were demolished and on this site Hooker erected and leased to The Salvation Army the first barracks.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Percival Dale, *Salvation Chariot* (East Melbourne: The Salvation Army, 1952), 5.

<sup>62</sup> Bolton, *Booth's Drum*, 13. Note that there is no record of prior contact with The Salvation Army before the Burnett meeting. The date of 1881 is incorrect.

<sup>63</sup> Ken Sanz, 'Our First Corps,' *Hallelujah* (Summer 2007): 39-42.

The process of downplaying the role of soldiers was probably unconscious, a symptom of a culture that stresses the importance of officership. *The Orders and Regulations* states that 'the salvation war requires the performance of special duties, to which God calls suitable persons by various means. No call can be more important than that to officership.'<sup>64</sup> The Salvation Army is, above all, a practical movement and the emphasis on officers has important purposes. It discourages action independent of the organisation and promotes greater unity in the diversity of an international organisation. It encourages others to officership by implying that ministry of lasting consequence is only available through full-time commitment. It was particularly important when the Founder, William Booth, was ageing and there was a danger of loss of purpose under a new leader, even if it was his son Bramwell. There had already been defections from two of his sons, Ballington and Herbert, and it was critical that control was exercised over the organization to prevent it fracturing completely. The authority of officers and the 'chain-of-command' to headquarters needed to be strengthened. Ranks became regulated. 'Deserters' were publicly punished.<sup>65</sup>

This is, of course, a simplification of the process,<sup>66</sup> but either consciously or unconsciously the progression had an effect on how history was written. The changed mindset enabled historians Robert Sandall and Dale Percival to determine the relative input of Gore and Saunders into the commencement of The Salvation Army in Australasia based upon their rank upon retirement.<sup>67</sup> John Coutts could not imagine a simple soldier achieving what John Gore had, so claimed that in holding the first meeting in South Australia Gore 'had not waited for his Captain's commission to arrive from London

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<sup>64</sup> *Chosen to Be a Soldier: Orders and Regulations for Soldiers of The Salvation Army* revised edition (London: The Salvation Army, 1999), 79.

<sup>65</sup> The marks where Herbert Booth's name was chiselled from the foundation stones he laid as the Australasian Territorial Commander are still visible at corps such as Norwood. For an analysis of the events surrounding the defections of Booth's children see St John Ervine, *God's Soldier: General William Booth* vol 2 (London: W. Heinemann, 1934), 750ff.

<sup>66</sup> Harold Hill spent an entire doctoral thesis (now the previously cited book) analysing the change in organisational norms that I have dismissed in a few sentences. Harold Hill, 'Officership in The Salvation Army: A Case Study in Clericalisation,' PhD thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 2004.

<sup>67</sup> Letter from Percival Dale to Robert Sandall [March 1945], D151197, Salvation Army Heritage Centre, Melbourne.

before taking action'.<sup>68</sup> In fact, there is no evidence that Gore had ever intended to become an officer and did not become one until late 1883.<sup>69</sup>

Recently there has been concern expressed that Salvationists are increasingly merely passive participants in Sunday worship, rather than the dynamic fighting force of previous years. The recommendation of a Salvation Army leadership conference in Hong Kong that a theology of the 'priesthood of all believers' needed to be developed to encourage greater involvement in ministry' led to the writing of *Servants Together*. It stresses that traditionally there have been no rigid lines between soldier and officer and that 'it has been one of the distinctives of The Salvation Army to believe that there is no essential ministry exercised by a Salvation Army officer that could not also be carried out by a soldier.'<sup>70</sup>

Part of the revitalisation of the soldiery may come from a recovery of 'lay' involvement in historical mission and a key to this is the neglected primary resource of newspapers. The Salvation Army newspaper, the *War Cry*, was first published in Britain in 1879. One of the printers, James Barker, was subsequently appointed the Australasian Territorial Commander. Soon after his arrival Barker established the publication of a local version of the *War Cry* in each colony. The first edition in South Australia was produced on 6 April 1883. Victoria and New South Wales editions soon followed. The four page, weekly broadsheet (expanded to eight pages by 1890) gave detailed corps reports, including particulars of meetings, events, supporters, testimonies of soldiers, difficulties experienced by officers, physical opposition, international news, expansion methods and much more. Although there is not a continuous run available, it has the potential to provide a unique insight into the everyday beliefs and worship of the ordinary attendee. In addition, local secular and religious newspapers gave lengthy reports of meetings, legal proceedings and the reactions of the wider community. Pamela Walker made extensive use of the local press to locate The Salvation Army in its social, political and religious context in *Pulling the Devil's Kingdom Down*, which gave the book a much greater depth than if she had relied solely on internal Salvationist records. It also

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<sup>68</sup> John Coutts, *The Salvationists* (London: Mowbrays, 1977), 51.

<sup>69</sup> *War Cry* (Adelaide), 9 November 1883.

<sup>70</sup> Earle Robinson et al, *Servants Together: Salvationist Perspectives on Ministry* (London: The Salvation Army, 2002), 9, 78.

enabled an analysis that included the stories of soldiers as well as officers.<sup>71</sup>

Although the creation of heritage centres in some locations has enabled this material to be more widely available, this is not new. The question is then why has it not been used in the past? The answer may be as simple as a lack of historical training. But it may also lie in the reports giving new insights into the life of soldiers in local corps, rather than significant officers. The new awareness of the importance of an empowered soldiery enables these resources to be examined with a different attitude.

Can history produced by a denomination be both penetrating and inspirational? The Salvation Army's primary aim has been to build God's Kingdom, rather than provide critical analysis for academics. It could be argued that this is the aim of all internal denominational historians. However, with a greater historical self-awareness can come a more effective use of history to inspire. Just as it is unrealistic to expect outside academics to identify the grace of God operating in the lives of past believers, it is also unreasonable to expect them to make the internal critical analysis necessary to motivate future development.

How history is written has changed. There is an increasing emphasis on church history being written from the perspective of the every-day life of a religious movement - from the 'bottom-up', rather than from the 'top-down'. Gerald Pillay has stated that 'crucial to the understanding of the whole Christian story is the history of ordinary people, of worship and worshipping communities, of life and thought, of Christian morality and spirituality, and not, as the case has so often been, of mainly synods and doctrinal development.'<sup>72</sup> In an organization that has always stressed the priesthood of all believers, this is an important point. Salvation Army soldiers were not just part of the congregation, but maintained a significant involvement in the Army equivalent of synods and ecclesiastical hierarchy.

With the new developments in religious history, the interests of academic and Salvation Army historians may coincide. New ways of looking at historical records are particularly useful to an organization that has mainly produced popular history. Academics

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<sup>71</sup> Pamela J Walker, *Pulling the Devil's Kingdom Down: The Salvation Army in Victorian Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

<sup>72</sup> Gerald J. Pillay, 'The Challenge of Teaching Church History from a Global Perspective,' in *Enlarging the Story: Perspectives on Writing World Christian History*, Wilbert R. Shenk (ed) (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), 83.

have discussed reading 'with the grain', i.e. analysing a document with the writer's intent in mind. Feminist theologians urge 'reading behind the text' – looking for voices that have been excluded or stories that are not being told. Murphy himself felt that Wiggins' book could be used to examine the intellectual categories which informed the thinking of the Army's leadership.<sup>73</sup>

Seeing the past as a foreign country, with no relevance to the present, is unhelpful. It fails to acknowledge that much of what happens in the present is in reaction to events of the past. Furthermore, how the past is described - the choice of leading characters, the analysis of their motives, the figures that are dismissed - has a profound impact on the future. Historical writings shape our view of who we are and what we can achieve. The Salvation Army has instinctively understood that history can inspire the future. It has often failed to demonstrate the understanding that by over-emphasising particular groups, it excludes those it wishes to inspire. However, with a greater self-awareness of its own dynamic history, a more determined preservation of historical memory, and the new tools offered by developments in how history is written, there is every reason to expect that Salvation Army history can become both penetrating and inspirational.

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<sup>73</sup> Murphy, 186.

## **THE TREES IN THE HEART OF THE GARDEN**

**Joseph Coleson**

*Wesleyans apply the hermeneutical principle of the 'Analogy of Faith.' Only the entire testimony of Scripture can establish the meaning of any of its parts, whether large or small. It is crucial that we understand what the first three chapters of Genesis assert God's purposes for creation, including the human creation. What they report, we pay attention to. What they do not report, we may not assume. The creation of adam began with a single individual but God created adam in two stages. The first human was not yet gendered. Only when God 'built' the second human does the text introduce the idea of human gender by calling the two individuals 'woman' and 'man.' The narrator invites us to think of the adam as learning how to care for the garden by observing God plant it. Work and service were a significant part of the guardianship that God ordained that humankind would exercise over the earth. The encouragement to eat from any and every tree in the garden was an act of generosity on God's part. The fruit of every tree (but one) was available for human consumption. The prohibition against eating the fruit of one particular tree was a protection against evil. In the garden, the first pair needed to learn the lessons and gain the experience of the garden before venturing beyond it. 'Knowledge of good and evil,' was too much and too dangerous for them at this early stage of their development. God's long-range plan was not the permanent residence of all humans in the Garden of Eden. It was a learning place, during a probationary time.*

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### **Introduction**

A positive Wesleyan understanding of, and living into, the Christian Scriptures takes seriously the biblical witness that God's story is about relationship. It celebrates God's gracious and marvelous work of restoring all the varied relationships disturbed by the initial (and ongoing) human turning away from God. This construal of the meaning(s) of the biblical text does not rule out careful exegetical

work, or make it optional. Indeed, it requires it all the more. With most of my colleagues in Wesleyan institutions worldwide, I am a scholar working in and for the church, as well as in and for the academy. These two locations need not be contradictory, need not be mutually exclusive, need not be in adversarial relationship one with the other. The church, including its scholarly daughters and sons, can and should view and practice church and academy as complementary, even as mutually dependent.

The church and our Wesleyan heritage have been part of my life from the beginning. A memory so early I cannot date it is of a picture hanging on the wall of a basement Sunday school classroom, a picture of Jesus carrying a lamb in his arms. I *knew* Jesus loved me! Of course, those early Sunday-school stories included the story of creation. The major elements of those childhood pictures usually included a man standing behind a waist-high shrub, waving to a woman a few yards away. She also stood behind a shrub, or perhaps leaned out from behind a tree, her hair long and strategically styled. The tree usually was an apple tree. Ripe apples hung within easy reach, and often a snake entwined a limb. Its attention also was on the woman, and it looked as though it were preparing to move toward her.

We learned from these lessons about God's good creation, about God's perfect provision for our parents in the Garden, and the simplest explanations of the first human rebellion that caused their expulsion from Eden. Later, reading Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Lewis's *The Magician's Nephew* or *Perelandra*, or certain elements in Twain - among many we could mention - we picked up other images and deeper insights. But so much more awaits the reader of the biblical text itself that we may say these are to it as a three-acre pond is to the Pacific, or as Mount Coot-tha on the western edge of Brisbane is to Everest. Sad to say, going deeper and higher also reveals that some of what we may have learned not only is wrong; it is an impediment to a comprehensive biblical faith.

### **A Wesleyan Hermeneutical Paradigm**

I do not intend to claim that any single thing in these papers is *uniquely* Wesleyan. However, it seems to me that insofar as Wesleyans approach the Bible differently from others within the Christian tradition, our differences lie mostly in our passionate



insistence upon measuring everything by the *analogia fidei*, the Analogy of Faith, as determined by careful use of what we have come to know familiarly as the Wesleyan Quadrilateral. I am aware that use of the *term* 'Wesleyan Quadrilateral' makes some uncomfortable, and some avoid using it, altogether. I myself do not use it often, but it will serve as convenient shorthand here, as the 'spirit' of the term seems to me to have become a part of our Wesleyan DNA.

A text usually comprises a collection of paragraphs; a paragraph usually is a compilation of sentences. Sentences are words brought together in various ways for various purposes. Words may carry meaning by the combining of smaller units called morphemes, or solely by reason of their letters, or sets of letters comprising single sounds, called phonemes. Understanding sentences requires knowledge of grammar, syntax, punctuation, and other issues. Understanding words requires knowledge of philology, comparative linguistics, etymology, and other disciplines. Learning to read is not impossible, but it is a multi-layered task. It *should* mystify the uninitiated at first, and the sense of awe at the mystery of language *never* should depart from the novice, the apprentice, the journeyman, the master, or even the doctor.

Another way of saying this is to say that Wesleyans insist on interpreting Scripture *literally*. The catch here is that we prefer also to define 'literal.' The literal meaning of any word, phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph, pericope, section, book - even of a nuance - is what its divine and human authors intended it to say. If metaphor is intended, we interpret as metaphor; if pun is intended, we interpret as a pun (though the general reader often takes 'pun' to be a 'non-literal' category). Irony, hyperbole, parable, fable, and other common biblical literary features and genres all require the same 'literal' approach, if we would apprehend them aright.

To pursue this understanding of 'the literal meaning' a bit further, we may assert that, while the divine Author of Scripture may have intended more than the various human author(s) knew, the divine Author did *not* mean something completely other. Thus, for example, if the divine author intended a functional ontology for Genesis 1, and the human author(s) in a pre-scientific world *could not* have intended a material ontology, today we may not read Genesis 1 as a material ontology, merely because we live in a scientific world whose primary interests lie in a material, rather than a functional, ontology. If the divine and human authors of Genesis 2:18 intended us to read *ezer* as 'power,' and we now are capable of

reading 'power,' then only a stubborn obstinacy will keep us stuck on another reading, merely because it is traditional.

Moving briefly to another point, Wesleyans affirm Scripture as God's inspired Word written, but we understand at the same time that its production was not a static process; it was a dynamic one. I like the phrase 'synergistic partnership.' God initiated, prompted, inspired. God's human partners thought, composed, researched, wrote, revised, arranged, and edited. Some made notes as they copied, notes that eventually found their way into the text, proper. Dare we say these copyists were not part of the process of divine inspiration? The Scriptures surely reflect their divine authorship and, just as surely, their human authorship, also. God, who calls humans to partnership in many ways, wanted it that way in the shaping of the Scriptures.

If this is true - and most Wesleyan scholars would agree it is - then in one sense both 'historical criticism' (read 'source criticism'), *and* the sometimes fierce opposition it evokes are red herrings; too often, each is used as a straw man by those on the opposite side of the divide. Every biblical scholar worthy of the title agrees on two conclusions: 1) the Hebrew Bible in its present (canonical) form is late Judean/Exilic/Post-Exilic; 2) some part or parts of virtually every text comprises or incorporates earlier source material(s), some of it *much* earlier. Both statements are true; we live in and with the paradox that creates.

How, then, do we come to learn that these and other interpretive understandings are essential to the exegetical/hermeneutical task? How do we function as faithful, careful exegetes and hermeneuts? How do we bring ourselves and others to the instruction *of* the Word, and avoid the snare of becoming judges *over* the Word? For this, we need the aid of reason, of tradition, and of experience. Here is where the image of the geometric figure of a quadrilateral breaks down, even if we imagine it as a trapezoid, with Scripture as its foundation. Reason, tradition, and experience are not *almost* equal sides of a trapezoid, with Scripture. They are tools of a differing order; we use them to come to a coherent understanding of Scripture.

Through the application of reason, prompted by simple observation, we know first and most certainly that Scripture is not univocal, not a monotone, not a monochrome, not a monolith, not an undifferentiated list of maxims or propositions. It follows, then,

that we must interpret Scripture if we are to understand it. Of course, reason is used imperfectly every day in biblical interpretation, but if we cannot use reason at all, we cannot do anything at all with Scripture, beyond the simple reading of it. We cannot think about it, because thinking involves reason. We cannot ask it questions, because questions are products of reason. We cannot ponder how to apply it, nor how to bring it incarnationally into our lives, individually and as the body of believers, for pondering is just another term for reasoning.

On another point, I would place the consideration of ancient history, geography, culture, languages and literature, anthropology, and other disciplines under the rubric of 'reason' here. We routinely bring all these and more to bear in our study of the scriptural text and texts, using reason to determine what is pertinent, and how. For the Old Testament specialist, the ancient world of western Asia, Egypt, and the eastern Mediterranean is a delightful garden with, we may say, many specimens of another 'Tree of Knowledge.' (Its fruit is poisonous only when eaten with pride; come to think of it, this was true also, in a way, of the original Tree of Knowledge.) Our tree of knowledge remains largely a secret, but it is not necessarily so. It is only that the fee for entry into this garden is paid in time and effort, and most consider the fee too high.

On the points in the narrative of Genesis 2-3 to which we shall direct our closest attention, help from the tradition of interpretation is what we may call 'uneven.' At various points, we shall discuss correctives to parts of the tradition. Then, if our conclusions are accurate and our proposals sound, experience - as Mr. Wesley understood and valued experience - will affirm them and help to verify that these understandings indeed are of God, and are good for the church, forwarding a Wesleyan understanding of God's romance with God's people.

We come, then, through the exegetical process, to the hermeneutical principle so dear to Mr. Wesley, the 'Analogy of Faith,' the principle that only the entire testimony of Scripture can establish the meaning of any of its parts, whether large or small. With respect to the first three chapters of Genesis, however, we need to observe a qualification: the section, Genesis 1-3, stands at the head of the Christian Scriptures. We may argue over whether these chapters were first-written, but they now are first in the canon. It is crucial that we understand what these chapters mean, 'literally.' What they assert of God's purposes for creation, including the human creation, is primary. What they report, we pay attention to.

What they do not report, we may not assume. Other texts, and the ideas we derive from them, we measure against these. This will be the touchstone for our application of the Analogy of Faith in these discussions.

### **One Human, One Garden, Two Trees**

A brief note on Genesis 1 will help as we move into Genesis 2. The narrative of the Creation Week actually ends with the institution of the Sabbath, Genesis 2:1-4. It includes seven occurrences of the Hebrew verb *bara*, usually translated 'he created.' The middle three of these seven occurrences are in 1:27, 'So Elohim created (*bara*) the *adam* in [God's] image; in the image of God [God] created (*bara*) him/it [the *adam*]; male and female he created (*bara*) them.' Without saying how or with what, the Hebrew verb *bara* always indicates a very special act on God's part. God always is the subject; the object always is of signal import. *Ergo* creation of the *adam* upon this earth was special-times-three: the text tells us so.

Seven exegetical findings from Genesis 2 will give us more than we can assimilate quickly, more than enough to ponder and process incarnationally in a lifetime of learning and practicing the already-but-not-yet of the household of faith. We shall deal with them in an adaptation of the poetic arrangement here, 'three times, even twice three times, plus one.'

**One human (*adam*).** We shall translate Genesis 2:7, 'So the Lord God [*Yahweh Elohim*] formed the *adam*, dust from the ground, and breathed into its nostrils the breath of life, and the *adam* became a living creature.' The first Hebrew verb is *vayyetsar*, from *yatsar*. It means to form or shape, as the potter forms a jar, or the sculptor shapes a likeness from clay. We are invited to think of God as coaxing a human figure from clay scooped from the ground - carefully molding it inch by inch, with God's own fingers. The text does not allow us either to insist or to deny it happened this way, *physically*, but we are invited to *picture* it this way, as an expression of the value God places upon the crown of God's earthly creation. Sculptors care about their masterpieces. God cares about *adam*, about us, the more because we are not a lifeless, but rather a living, 'sculpture.'

The summary report of human creation (Gen 1:26-27) reveals

that *adam* is the human race. Here, we learn that the creation of *adam* began with a single individual. That God created *adam* in two stages is another evidence of our importance in God's eyes. We must remember, too, that throughout this chapter God's creation of the human race was not finished until the second step was completed. A significant implication is that this first human was not yet gendered. The idea of human gender is nowhere in this text until it reports God 'built' the second human. Then, and only then, does the text introduce the new reality of human gender by calling the two individuals 'woman' and 'man' (*ishshah*, 'woman,' occurs in the text before *ish*, 'man'). This will become more important, not less, as we continue, and is a major reason for leaving *adam* untranslated for now. (The Hebrew text says God formed the *adam* from the *adamah*. If we need a translation now, 'earthling from the earth,' or 'human from the humus,' reproduces the Hebrew pun.)

To form the *adam*, God used *aphar*, usually translated 'dust.' Some scholars and versions translate 'clay,' partly because *aphar* occurs as a synonym for *homer* ('clay'); e.g. in Job 10:9 and Isaiah 45:9. In short, *aphar* is a general term, meaning 'dust,' 'dirt,' or even 'earth,' and includes, but is not limited to, clay. *Aphar* also provides a literary and theological link to God's final statement to the man at the end of this section (3:19). We may conclude that God formed the first human from the specific kind of *aphar*, dust, or earth, that we would call 'clay.'

With the detail that God 'breathed into its nostrils the breath of life,' the author again took pains to reflect God's loving care and attention on the climax of God's earthly creation. The figure sculpted by the fingers of God now lay before God life-size and life-like, but thus far life-less. God bent and breathed; human life began. It is not too big a stretch to say, even, that all humans since carry the breath of God, as a part of our bearing the image of God.

'Living creature' translates *nephesh khiyyah*, the phrase used in Genesis 1 to designate the creatures of the seas, the skies, and the dry land. The seven-times-mentioned animal kingdom of Genesis 1 now attains its perfection by the inclusion of *adam* as its ultimate representative. We should note that 'soul' is not a literal translation of Hebrew *nephesh*, except in a very specialized sense having nothing in common with the popular meaning of English 'soul.' A human is a *nephesh khiyyah* in the same way almost any other member of the earthly animal kingdom is a *nephesh khiyyah*; most are sensate, animate, mobile creatures, endowed with breath. A literal translation of *nephesh* is 'throat'; close off the throat, and the

individual creature's life ends. The 'soul' of later Greek philosophical thought is not present in this text.

**One garden (*gan*).** If God formed the *adam*, then planted the Garden, as most translations have it ('Then *Yahweh Elohim* planted a garden,' or something similar), the narrator invites us to think of the *adam* as learning how to care for the garden by observing God plant it. God planted this garden 'in Eden, eastward,' i.e., east of ancient Israel, which lay along the Mediterranean. About six hundred miles east of Jerusalem is the area earliest known as Sumer, through which flow even today two of the rivers of Eden, the Tigris and the Euphrates. It is not surprising that scholars have looked for Eden in that region, nor that the name Eden itself is most commonly traced back through Akkadian *edinu* to Sumerian *eden*. The Akkadian noun, however, means 'steppe-land, wilderness.' If that meaning seems too strong an objection to overcome - steppe-lands usually are *not* so well watered - another root found both in Ugaritic and in Hebrew, *dn*, '[a place] well watered,' supplies a more plausible etymology.<sup>74</sup>

Verse 9 does not report a new, second creation of trees, nor is it the forgetfulness of an editor that he already had described God's creation of trees earlier, on the third creation day (1:12). Rather, the trees planted in the garden were of various species already created, but now planted in and for the new environment of the garden. Moreover, Hebrew *kol-ets*, 'all kinds of trees,' does not mean God now planted *every* already-created species in the garden. Rather, every tree God now placed in the garden was 'desirable to the view [eye], and good for food.'

Two trees *may* have been newly created for the garden. We may translate verse 9b, 'Now the tree of life was in the midst of the garden; also, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.' 'In the midst' does not mean, 'among the rest of the trees, generally,' but 'in the middle,' though this does not require us to insist on mathematical precision. By the end of the account, these two trees will be at the center of the action. Their placement in the center of the garden, here at the beginning, is a hint to the reader, 'Remember these trees.' If the author intended us to take this account literally in a physical sense, the fruit of the tree of life was the immediate means by which the first human pair maintained immortality. At least, that

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<sup>74</sup> Another objection to an Akkadian derivation need not detain us here.

is the implication of God's decision to deny further access to it after the first pair had sinned (3:22-24).

In verse 15, we see God's intention for the relationship between the *adam* and the garden environment. First, the *adam* was to 'work' or 'serve' it. Hebrew *avad* denotes the service of Israel to God, of citizen-subjects to kings, and of servants to masters. Service, *per se*, is not dishonorable, nor beneath the human station. In fact, 'agent' often would be a more accurate and precise translation of both Hebrew *ebed* in the Old Testament and Greek *doulos* in the New Testament, though both usually are translated, 'servant,' 'slave,' or the like. Work and service are a significant part of the dominion God ordained that humankind would exercise over the earth, in and from the beginning (1:28). This also is part of what it means to be created in the image of the God who worked to bring the creation itself into being.

The second verb here (*leshamerah*, including its suffix pronoun) means 'to guard, watch over, keep, protect it'. We cannot know now whether physical dangers lurked in the garden. But in some way the garden and its denizens needed guarding; God appointed the *adam* to that task. Later, if the human pair had been thinking in larger terms, they may have realized that resisting the serpent's temptation would have been a fulfillment of this appointed stewardship.

**Two trees (*ets ve-ets*).** Verses 16 and 17 record the first words of God in Scripture to a human being, if we take it that the blessing of 1:28-30 was spoken later to the man and the woman, together, as that text would seem to report. These words are introduced by the verb 'commanded,' but the first part of the command really is an invitation to eat freely. We may translate, 'From every tree of the garden, eating you may eat.' This construction indicates a superlative degree; it means, 'You *certainly* may eat!' The 'command,' then, is to eat freely: eat what you wish, when you wish. Moreover, this is but the first of many such commands. I will go further. This first one demonstrates the central character of *all* God's commands, from every time and every context: God wills absolutely the absolute good and delight of God's creatures. Here in this first context of the garden, *everything* is allowed, except one tiny little thing, and that for a very good reason. Later, prohibitions were multiplied because of human obtuseness, but the character of every command, whether mandate or prohibition, is the same as this one: every *mandate* is for the ultimate good and joy of all persons and all things; every *prohibition* is for the ultimate good and joy of all

persons and all things. In Eden's paradise, a single mandate of invitation encompassed every basic physical provision.

In this context, we translate the singular prohibition, 'However, from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you may not eat from it, for on the day of your eating from it, dying you shall die' [i.e., you certainly shall die]. We translate the conjunction (*vav*), 'however,' because it introduces a sharp contrast between this prohibition and the provision that immediately precedes it. The repetition, 'from it,' ensured there could be no mistake or excuse about which tree was meant.

The two *constructions* are identical: 'eating, you may eat' (v 16), 'dying, you shall die' (v 17). As noted, this is a very emphatic way of commanding/urging, forbidding, or stating that something was or was not done. The encouragement to eat from any and every tree in the garden was intense, even passionate. God planted the garden for the *adam*, and formed the *adam* to enjoy the garden. As parents take great delight in the joys and pleasures of their children, so God takes great delight in *our* pleasures and joys. Despite much contrary urging, even among Christians (who should know better), this includes the physical joys God has formed us for, and has created for us (among their other reasons and purposes). The emphasis here is on the *abundance* of the provision: the fruit of every tree (but one) was available for human consumption. God is overwhelmingly generous.

But God did pronounce one prohibition along with the abundant provision. Why? God intended the prohibition as protection against evil. In the garden, the first pair knew very little. They were God's infant children, safe in their protected world, with a safely circumscribed habitation, and do-able tasks to perform. All their needs were met, including the human needs for significant relationships with God, with each other, and with their environment; the needs for physical and other sustenance; and the need for significant work. As the infant needs to learn the small, safe home environment before venturing into the broader, more adventurous but also more dangerous world, so the first couple needed to learn the lessons and gain the experience of the garden before venturing beyond it. 'Knowledge of good and evil,' i.e. all kinds of knowledge, was too much and too dangerous for them at this early stage of their development.

This implies a time of probation, beyond which the fruit of the



tree of knowledge may (or may not) have been permitted, just as all the other fruits of the garden were permitted already. Based on the blessing/command of 1:28 to 'fill the earth,' it is reasonable to assume that God's long-range plan was not the permanent residence of all humans in the Garden of Eden. It was a learning place, during a probationary time. Had the first couple waited on God's timing, all would have been well.

## A MAN, A WOMAN, AN ADAM

**Joseph Coleson**

*The phrase ezer cenegdo found in Genesis 2:18 is usually translated 'helper' with the suggestion that the second human was of inferior rank to the first. However, ezer's meaning is 'strength' or 'power' when the initial letter ayin represents an original ghayyin, as in the majority of its occurrences outside Genesis 2. The preposition ce in cenegdo means 'of the same kind.' Neged means 'facing as an equal.' In the creation of a woman God proposed nothing less than another adam. In the naming of the creatures the solitary adam would realize that none was, nor could be its ezer cenegdo. Only the woman could truly be one like himself. The creation of the human species, the adam, was completed only with this final step. While still alone, the adam was truly human, but it was not the completed human species God still was creating. This final step would complete both the man and the woman, individually, as adam/human, as well as complete the creation of the species adam/human. Sexual union is important, in and of itself, but it also lays a foundation for, and symbolizes, the many other profound and complex ways a woman and a man become a unit over a lifetime together, even while remaining at the same time two individuals. 'One flesh' is another way of emphasizing the equality between the genders God intended from the beginning of our creation.*

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In the first of this series, our discussion of this narrative began with a single *adam*, the garden, and the two trees. We move now to the account of God's completion of the *adam*.

### **A Power (ezer)**

Reflecting on the phrase *ezer cenegdo* (Genesis 2:18) for fifteen years now, I am convinced that if the church came to understand and live by *this* creation intention, that one change by itself would be enough to spark a new reformation/renewal so thorough and so profound that the postmillennial hopes of our nineteenth century Wesleyan forebears would be realized in a generation. Hyperbole? If so, I think it is not by much.

'It is not good [for] the *adam* to be by itself' (v 18) introduces the beginning of the preparation for the second and final step in the creation of the *adam*. This was not a case of God setting out to

correct a mistake, as though it just then had occurred to God, seeing the single human standing there alone. God enjoys the fellowship of community within the Triune Godhead; God had created most of the animal species male and female; from the beginning, God designed the *adam* to be male and female, also. However, to value rightly the presence of another human when God should present her, the lone human first needed to discover and to experience its solitude. Thus, God said, 'I will make for it an *ezer cenegdo*.' To understand as we ought God's creative and redemptive intentions for the human race, we must understand this phrase. Before we examine it, one or two reminders are in order, because the evidence presented here, and the conclusions drawn from it, are different from anything most of us have encountered previously.

First, we should note that most observers in the Wesleyan theological tradition have understood the *problem* with the traditional translation for many years. The *solution* presented here is now three decades old, in print. So far as I am aware, R. David Freedman first presented it in a study entitled, 'Woman, A Power Equal to Man,'<sup>75</sup> and this discussion is adapted and expanded from Freedman. For this student, Freedman's solution/translation has been the key to integrating the totality of scriptural teaching on gender and related subjects. This includes interpreting so-called 'problem texts' of the New Testament often brought forward as though they were valid objections to a biblical view of God's intention for human gender equality. Interpreting by the principle of the *analogia fidei* - and *without* violating hermeneutical canons within their own contexts - we now can read these texts as the positive instruction they were intended to be, and not as 'problems.'

Second, it should surprise no one that new discoveries occur from time to time, in various areas of biblical studies. If God's revelation required no study for the plumbing of its depths, the scaling of its heights, if it carried no potential for revealing new understandings and affirmations of its timeless truths, we hardly should regard it as coming from the God of infinite wisdom. Unless God's revelation now and again challenges and refines our finite understandings, even sometimes of important facets of God's eternal redemptive enterprise, we hardly can call it *God's* revelation. We need think only of Luther's rediscovery of the place of grace and faith in God's redemptive economy to know it could happen again. If

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<sup>75</sup> R. David Freedman, 'Woman a Power Equal to Man,' *Biblical Archaeology Review* 9 (Jan-Feb, 1983), 56-58.

Freedman's discovery, with all its proper implications, should gain the recognition and practice in the church that God intended all along for this important teaching in the creation accounts, it will be as transformative as was Luther's breakthrough, both within and outside the church. This is, to be sure, a strong claim, but I ask only that the reader follow with me the biblical evidence itself wherever it leads, to the refining of both our orthodoxy and our orthopraxy.

We begin with the fact that the sixteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *ayin*, represents what once were two separate consonants (phonemes), represented in writing by two separate letters (graphemes). Perhaps around 1200 B.C.E. these two coalesced into one. (Similar changes occur in many languages, e.g. an English phoneme that once could be written with the grapheme 'y,' as in 'ye,' now is written always with the two-letter grapheme 'th,' as in 'the.')

Both the letters we are concerned with here (phonemes and graphemes) still occur in the Arabic alphabet as *ayin* and *ghayyin*. Both occur also in Ugaritic, contemporaneous with early Hebrew. That both letters were present in an early stage of the Hebrew alphabet can be demonstrated in several ways, but our necessary discussion of the two nouns, *ezer*, will suffice. Let us be clear: two words exist and now are recognizable again as two *different* words. They are spelled alike because only the one letter (grapheme) *ayin* now is available to write them. Many languages also exhibit this phenomenon; its common name in English is homonym. For example, 'bear,' the animal, and 'bear,' to carry, are spelled alike now, but are two different words, from two different roots in Middle English.

The spelling *ezer*, in noun form, occurs twenty-one times in the Hebrew Bible. Eight times (six of these in the psalms) it was spelled originally with *ayin*, and means 'saviour/salvation, rescuer/rescue, deliverer/deliverance.' Two familiar instances are together in Psalm 121:1-2, 'From where does my rescue come? My rescue [comes] from Yahweh.' Another occurrence that demonstrates this meaning clearly is Psalm 70:5: 'But as for me, I am afflicted and needy; O God, hurry to me! My rescuer (*ezer*) and my deliverer are you; O Yahweh, do not delay!' The parallelism of 'my rescuer' (*ezer*) and 'my deliverer' (*mephallti*) establishes that the *ezer* spelled originally with *ayin* means 'rescuer, deliverer, saviour.' In Hebrew poetry, the use of two nouns in this kind of parallel construction means they are synonymous, or at least have significantly overlapping semantic

ranges.

In the other eleven occurrences outside Genesis 2, *ezer* was spelled originally with *ghayyin*, and means 'strength,' 'power.' Deuteronomy 33:26 reads: 'There is none like God, O Jeshurun [or 'like the God of Jeshurun'], The One who rides [through] the heavens in his strength (*ezer*), And in his majesty (*gaavah*) [he rides] the clouds.' The chiasmic parallelism makes it clear that *ezer* in the second line lies in the same field of meaning as *gaavah* (majesty) in the third line. The meaning, 'strength,' does; 'help, rescue, deliverance' does not. Moreover, God does not ride the clouds 'in his help' (which makes no sense), but 'in his strength.' If riding *to* the rescue of Jeshurun (a poetic name for Israel) were what the poet had in mind, as some translations have it, we also would expect the Hebrew preposition *le*, rather than *be*, which actually is present.

Deuteronomy 33:29 speaks of God as 'the shield of your [Israel's] strength (*ezer*)' in parallel with 'the sword of your majesty (*gaavah*),' using the same two nouns in the same kind of parallelism as in verse 26. In Psalm 68:34, and also in Psalm 93:1, the Psalmist used the noun *oz* ('strength') in parallel with *gaavah/geut* ('majesty'). Since 'strength' (*oz*) parallels 'majesty' (*gaavah/geut*) in those poetic passages, we would expect the parallel of 'majesty' (*gaavah*) to be 'strength' in its two occurrences in this poetic passage (Deut 33:26, 29), also. In both verses, the parallel noun is *ezer*. That *ezer*, used as a synonym of *oz*, also means strength is, therefore, a solid conclusion. (To render *ezer* as 'helper, rescuer' in any of these contexts would make no sense at all.)

One more piece of evidence may help; this is, after all, a recent discovery in the study of the Hebrew Bible. King Uzziah of Judah reigned from about 792-740 B.C. The English '-iah' at the end of his name represents Hebrew *yah* or *yahu*, short forms of Yahweh that often are used at the end of sentence names. The first part of Uzziah's name is from *oz*, the other noun meaning 'strength,' that we have discussed above. Thus, Uzziah means, 'Yah is my strength.' However, in 2 Kings 14-15 Uzziah is referred to as Azariah. The first noun in this alternate name is *ezer*, the noun we are discussing; thus, Azariah also must mean, 'Yah is my strength.' To posit, 'Yah is my rescuer,' as the meaning of Azariah, when Uzziah means, 'Yah is my strength,' would be puzzling, to say the least. These two names of the same king, with the same meaning, are not necessary to prove our case, but they do constitute further compelling evidence.

With the coalescence of the letter *ghayyin* into *ayin*, i.e., with only one grapheme now available to represent the two different

morphemes, the spelling of one noun *ezer*, meaning 'strength,' now is the same as the spelling of the other noun *ezer*, meaning 'help/helper, rescue/rescuer.' It should not be surprising that the distinction between their meanings also became blurred. (A 'strength' or 'power' who 'rescues' *is* a 'helper' of the one rescued.) Eventually, knowledge of the previous existence in Hebrew of the letter *ghayyin* was forgotten. Exegetes and translators could not know the other noun *ezer*, meaning 'strength,' ever had existed in the language. The natural mistake of translating *all* occurrences of *ezer* as 'help/helper' (or the like) became unavoidable. Furthermore, because they did not know another meaning was possible, they hardly could have been expected to notice the problem in texts where the translation, 'help/helper,' does not fit the context.

We have established that 'strength, power' is the meaning of *ezer* when the initial letter *ayin* represents an original *ghayyin*, as in the majority of its occurrences, eleven of nineteen, outside Genesis 2. How do we know which meaning we should choose for 2:18, 20? Two lines of reasoning will help; one is positive, the other negative. First, the negative; the eight occurrences of *ezer* outside Genesis 2 which mean 'help/helper,' all refer to God as the help/Helper. Since the one who became the *ezer* here was not God, but the woman (Gen 2:21-23), *ezer* cannot mean 'help/helper.' If we argue that humans can and do 'help,' even 'save,' one another, we still are left with the fact that the helper is superior to the one helped. Here, that would mean the female is superior to the male. But matriarchy is no more God's creation plan than is patriarchy. A translation of 'helper' merely substitutes the one problem for the other. Moreover, to try to dress it up by calling it the woman's 'rescue' of the man from his loneliness is, in the end, only condescension toward both the man and the woman. The text does not address the issue of 'loneliness,' but of 'aloneness'; the two are not the same thing.

The positive evidence for 'a strength, a power,' as the correct understanding here is the word that follows *ezer* in our phrase, *ezer cenegdo*. *Cenegdo* is two prepositions and a pronoun, written together as one word. The preposition *ce* means 'like, as, according to, corresponding to, of the same kind.' Here it means that what God purposed to create, and what the solitary *adam* could not find among the other living creatures (v 20), would be of the same kind, or species, as the *adam*; it would correspond to it as equally *adam*, with and as the first was *adam*.

The second preposition is *neged*. As always, context is key; here, inseparably attached as a prefix, *ce* is the context which cannot be ignored. With *ce*, *negd* means 'facing as an equal.' This is confirmed in post-biblical Hebrew, where these two prepositions together regularly mean 'equal.' The final letter of *cenegdo* is a suffix pronoun, third masculine/neuter singular, meaning 'his' or 'its.' As human gender was not identified until after the second step in human creation, we probably should translate 'it' here, though that will change within a few verses.

Altogether, then, *ezer cenegdo* means 'a power/strength like, corresponding to, of the same kind or species, equal to it.' God proposed nothing less than another *adam*. The one *adam* had as yet no way of knowing that, so of course could not yet know what it would mean. For the *adam* to come to that knowledge most vividly and effectively, it (he) first needed to learn what could *not* be *ezer cenegdo* in relation to it, or with respect to it.

### A Naming, and Names (*Shemim*)

Verse 19 simply reports that God brought before the one human, for the human to name, representatives of the previously created larger and more important land creatures, both the wild and the domesticated, and of the larger birds. This 'list' includes only the two broadest possible categories of potential candidates, 'all the living creatures of the field' and 'all the flying creatures of the skies.' We may understand 'all' here to mean 'all those animals and birds the *adam* could have taken as worthy of consideration at first encounter, not yet knowing what an *ezer cenegdo* really would be, or would look like.'

Fred Bush has shown that in biblical Hebrew a formal naming requires three elements: 1) the verb *qara*; 2) the common noun *shem*, 'name'; 3) a proper noun, the personal name (PN) actually bestowed.<sup>76</sup> Here God brought the larger land animals and birds to the *adam* for the *adam* to name - the formal naming of each. The first necessary element is present: the verb *qara* occurs three times (vv 19-20). The second necessary element is present: the common noun *shem* occurs twice. The third necessary element is present by implication, 'So the *adam* gave names to all . . .' (v 20). Obviously, not every name could be included in this brief account. For a

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<sup>76</sup> Coleson and Matthews, *Go to the Land I Will Show You* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 7-9

multiple naming like this, the statement that the *adam* bestowed the names is sufficient.

To name is to claim and to exercise authority over the thing or person named. This is the first exercise of that human stewardship hegemony which God would confer upon the race as a whole, once both its male and its female representative were present. God arranged this anticipatory exercise of authority over the other creatures for a specific purpose. Once the solitary *adam* had observed all the larger birds and land creatures carefully enough to give each a suitable name, the *adam* would realize that none was, nor could be, an *ezer cenegdo* for the *adam*. This was so, even though some of these creatures were remarkably like the *adam*, and all shared with it the essential attributes that make animal life 'animal,' as the narrator reminds the reader by the repetition here (v. 19) of the phrase 'living creature' (*nephesh khayyah*), used of the newly formed *adam* itself in 2:7.

The narrator also had used the verb 'formed' in verse 7. He now repeated it here, too, to emphasize in another way that we share a common sensate life with our fellow creatures, also formed by God. The one difference between these notes here and the account earlier in the chapter is that only the *adam* is said to have received this life through the very breath of God (v 7) into its nostrils. The breath of God and the image of God are the two endowments that separate us from our animal 'cousins.' God already knew all this, of course, but the *adam* needed to discover it for itself, to be properly appreciative of and receptive to the *ezer cenegdo* when God should build her, as the climactic work of God's marvelous earthly creation.

We translate verse 20, 'So the *adam* gave names to all the livestock, and to the flying creatures of the skies, and to all the [wild] creatures of the field.' Here, the list is expanded by one category; it is natural, then, that the category of livestock should be mentioned first. Ancient Israel's first readers and hearers of this account would have had daily contact with these creatures, and both human stewardship and human hegemony over them were givens. Having named the livestock, the *adam* moved on to name the 'flying creatures' and the 'creatures of the field,' listed here in chiastic order from that of verse 19, for purposes of literary variation, and for the artistic touch of placing creatures of the skies between the two groups of land creatures.

The final verb of verse 20 (*matsa*) is an active form. The single



task of the *adam* had a two-fold purpose: to name the other creatures, and to ascertain whether any of them may have been for the *adam* the 'power like it.' The *adam* did succeed in naming the other creatures, 'but as for the *adam* itself, 'it did not find' among them one like itself. Now the solitary *adam* also was ready for the *ezer cenedo* whom the Lord God would provide.

### **A Man and a Woman (*Ish ve-Ishah*)**

With the solitary *adam* now ready, God brought upon it a 'deep sleep' and 'took one of its sides' (v 21). Of the forty occurrences of the noun *tsela* in the Hebrew Scripture, this is the only place it is translated 'rib' by the majority of English versions. Exegetical prudence, then, dictates that we look again at this occurrence. Many have noted that most often this noun refers to the walls or sides: of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness (Exod 26:20, 26-27; 36:25, 31-32); of the Ark of the Covenant (Exod 25:12, 14; 37:3, 5); of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem (1 Kgs 6-7). In 2 Sam 16:13, *tsela* refers to the 'side' or slope of a hill. The Septuagint reinforces this understanding, translating about half these occurrences, including our two here in Gen 2:21-22, as *pleuron/pleura*, 'side.' Considering also that the man would recognize the woman not only as 'bone of my bones,' but also as 'flesh of my flesh' (v 23), we should conclude that 'side' is a better rendering here, as well. God took a sizeable portion of bone, flesh, and perhaps other bodily tissue, from the upper thoracic region of the one human, to make another human. It even may be that we should visualize God dividing the one human into two more or less equal parts. The meaning of the noun would admit of that understanding, and we cannot stress too much that the creation of the human species, the *adam*, was completed *only* with this final step. While still alone, the *adam* truly was *adam*, human, but it was not the completed human species God still was creating. This final step would complete both the man and the woman, individually, as *adam*/human, but it would finish, as well, the creation of the species God named *adam*/human (cf. Gen 5:2).

We probably ought not to think of the single *adam*, before God performed this 'surgery,' as 'male, masculine, man.' Neither is it necessary to think of this solitary human as an androgyne or hermaphrodite, a single individual combining the visible physical characteristics of man and woman in one body - though many, both ancient and modern, have taken this approach. Better is to remind ourselves once again that as long as only one *adam* existed, God's

creation of the *species* named *adam* remained incomplete. The text simply does not address the issue of human gender before creation of the woman. If we would be prudent, we probably ought not to, either. At a minimum, we ought to refrain from labeling speculation on the matter as 'biblical fact.'

We may translate the end of verse 21 either, 'and [God] closed up the flesh in its place,' or, 'and the flesh closed up in its place.' Given that God still was very much the active Agent in this final creative act, the first understanding is preferable. Strictly speaking, this detail is unnecessary; the reader would assume it, even had it not been stated. But including it draws attention to God's tender concern for the individual left sleeping following this drastic 'surgery.' God did not leave his body to suffer, even unconsciously, but made him whole again at once, before turning to the climactic creative act. *Now* we may refer to this one as 'him' and 'man.'

Verse 22 reads, literally, 'Then *Yahweh Elohim* built the side which he had taken from the *adam* into a woman, and brought her to the *adam*.' First, we should note that continued use of *adam* for the one who now clearly also was 'man' does not deny identification and status as *adam* to the woman. It merely affirms for the reader/hearer that the first *adam* still was *adam*, though now there were two of the *adam*, and the first now also was 'man.' The occurrences of *adam* in Genesis 1:26-28 and in this narrative of 2:18-24 should be enough to convince us that *adam* means 'humankind' or 'human being,' depending on whether it is used as a collective or a singular noun. As an added emphasis, we have Genesis 5:2, 'Male and female [God] created them, and he blessed them, and he called their name *adam* in the day of their creation.' In a formal naming, God named *both* of them, male and female, *adam*. God's Hebrew name for the human race - male and female, individually and collectively - is *adam*. That being so, we, as professed followers of God and of God's instruction, should be careful to use the name in God's ways and for God's purposes, with all that implies.

The verb 'built' here indicates the same attentive, loving care in fashioning this second, female *adam* as God had exercised in forming the first. That the author intended this emphasis is clear from the parallel structure of the two statements of God's forming and building:

verse 7: And formed /Yahweh Elohim /the adam /[of] dust /from the ground.

verse 22: And built /Yahweh Elohim /the-side /from the adam/into a woman.

The only variation in the order of the two sentences is that 'into a woman' occurs last in the second sentence, probably for climactic emphasis. The man was formed from the ground; the woman was formed from the man. Neither could claim the supposed independence of self-generation, though their later rebellion would have tempted them to make that claim, had it been possible. All humans are of the same species, because of our common origin in the one flesh become two, and then become one again in each of us, through the act of procreation.

God brought each the gift of the other, the gift of human companionship and physical intimacy, for the sake of which God created us male and female. Even God's pleasure in giving humans these gifts shows through in the literary understatement, '[God] brought her to the man.' To convey the emphasis of the Hebrew text, we translate the man's exclamation (v 23): 'This one, finally, is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh! As for this one, she shall be called woman, for from man was taken this one.'

An important note here is that the feminine singular demonstrative pronoun *zot*, 'this one,' occurs three times: once at the beginning and once at the end of this two-line poem, and once at the beginning of the second line, i.e., in the middle of the poem. All three times, it refers to the woman. In a single syllable poetically employed, the man declared his exuberance and joy that God now had ended the search for an equal partner, the partner the man had not found through all the thought-intensive process of naming the other creatures. 'This one' was the 'power/strength like [him], corresponding to [him], of the same kind or species, equal to him,' whom God had promised (v 18).

Hebraists long have known that *ish* (man) and *ishshah* (woman) are from different roots. Still, they sound related; the folk etymology reflected here is not out of bounds. It is important, too, that the man's statement was *not* a formal naming of the woman. The common noun *shem* (name), necessary in and for a formal naming, does not occur here. Also, *ishshah* is not the proper name of this one woman; rather, it is a common noun, denoting every woman.

The man did not yet assume the authority to name the woman; in this verse, he did *not* name her.

### **Leaving and Cleaving (*Azab ve-Davaq*)**

Verse 24 is not the man's statement; it is the narrator's (or a later copyist's) editorial comment, 'For this reason, a man shall abandon his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.' The first words, 'for this reason,' reflect the man's exclamation of discovery that the woman was 'bone of [his] bones, and flesh of [his] flesh' (v 23), that she was human, just as he was. When a man and a woman decide to marry, their marriage becomes the most important fact of their new life together *for this reason*. The physical and social union of a man and a woman, a woman and a man, is God's intention from the beginning of creation. When agreed to and undertaken, it is to supersede all previous, and all other, relationships.

In ancient Israel, a son usually lived as a subordinate member of his father's household, under his authority, until his father died. When a son married, his wife also became part of his father's household, under the authority of his mother. 'Abandon' (*azab*) is a very strong verb, in Hebrew as well as in English. Later, the prophets used it when they charged Israel and Judah with unfaithfulness to God; they 'abandoned' Yahweh for the worship of other gods (Jer 1:16; Hos 4:10). This text calls on men to leave their parents' authority in every way, and to establish their own households with their own wives.

'Cleave' (*davaq*) also is a very forceful verb. In the context of a rebellion by the northern tribes, the men of Judah continued to 'cleave' to David their king (2 Sam 20:2), even at risk of their lives; Deut 11:22 includes an exhortation for Israel to 'cleave' to Yahweh. Given the overwhelming pressures of ancient Near Eastern culture for a son to cleave to his *father* until his father's death, this call for a man to cleave to his *wife*, instead, was amazingly countercultural. (In much of the world, it is countercultural, still.) Given the strong covenantal associations of these two verbs in later passages - 'abandon' referring to covenant unfaithfulness, and 'cleave,' to covenant faithfulness, the editor here was emphasizing the covenantal aspect of marriage, expecting and rewarding the absolute loyalty (faithfulness) of each to the other.

The first meaning of the phrase, 'one flesh,' is the obvious one. When a man and a woman come together in sexual union, they are 'one flesh' in a very real sense, even if only for the moment. Other meanings also are important, however. Each time it happens, the conjugal union is a reminder that man and woman have a common origin in the single *adam*. The sexual union is important, in and of itself, but it also lays a foundation for, and symbolizes, the many other profound and complex ways a woman and a man become a unit over a lifetime together, even while remaining at the same time two individuals. 'One flesh' is another way of emphasizing the equality between the genders God intended from the beginning of our creation. Finally, two individual parents become, in another sense entirely, 'one flesh' as they produce children with essentially an equal gifting of genetic heritage from each of them.

The nakedness of Eden's new denizens (v 25) is a link to Genesis 3, to which we shall turn in the third installment of this series.

# ***SIN AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO 'TRUE GODLINESS' IN JOHN CALVIN'S INSTITUTES***

***Adam Couchman***

This article has not been peer reviewed but is included as a sample of the work of one of our postgraduate fellows. We encourage other postgraduate students to forward their work for possible publication.

*This article investigates the understanding of the life of 'true godliness' in Calvin's Institutes. Calvin saw the 'image of God' as perfectly present within humanity at creation as a gracious gift of God. However as a result of humanity's fall into sin 'original sin,' as an inherited depravity that affects and infects all of humanity, renders every person guilty of sin and subject to the punishment of God. Given that all of humanity participates in and is guilty of original sin, the question arises whether Christ's humanity is also affected by this universal problem. Calvin sees Christ's humanity as an exception to the general rule and attributes the uniqueness of Christ's holy human nature to the sanctifying work of the Spirit. Since the corruption of original sin remains in believers an internal battle between the old and new life continues throughout life. Though union with God through Christ does bring about a true godliness within the believer, the righteousness of Christ is the origin and cause of this and not the effort or will of the believer. Neither Christ's atonement nor the sanctifying work of the Spirit are sufficient to complete the task of restoring the image of God in the believer in this life and therefore it is left to death itself to bring that task to completion. Nonetheless the believer may exhibit 'true godliness' defined as 'love for God and neighbour.'*

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## **Introduction**

John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*<sup>1</sup> has had a profound and lasting effect upon Christian theology. The Reformer Calvin lived and wrote during a critical time in the history of the Church. The 1536 edition of this text was initially a strong polemic

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<sup>1</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles. Edited by John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), hereinafter referred to simply as *Institutes*. Whilst it is recognised that the modern academic conventions require gender inclusivity, citations from this text will retain their gender exclusive language.

written in support of a persecuted Protestant church. Through various revisions and updates up until its final form in 1559 it became a document designed for catechetical instruction. 'Thus Calvin's book, at first mainly an apologetic treatise...was transformed by skillful expansion into a compendium of scriptural doctrine for student use.'<sup>2</sup> In Calvin's own words, 'It has been my purpose in this labour to prepare and instruct candidates in sacred theology for the reading of the divine Word.'<sup>3</sup> Of particular significance for this essay is Calvin's other stated purpose referred to in the *Prefatory Address to King Francis I of France*; 'My purpose was solely to transmit certain rudiments by which those who are touched with any zeal for religion might be *shaped to true godliness*.'<sup>4</sup> The English word 'godliness' here is the translation of the Latin *pietas*, which appears frequently throughout the *Institutes*. It is also used most frequently to translate the Greek *eusebeia* in the Vulgate (e.g. Acts 3:12, 2 Peter 1:3). In combining these two stated purposes together it may be suggested, therefore, that the overarching purpose of Calvin's *Institutes* is for catechetical instruction in the life of true godliness.

With any investigation into the life of 'true godliness' the problem of sin will need to be addressed at some point. Subsequently, the purpose of this essay is to investigate Calvin's understanding of the life of 'true godliness' and, more specifically, how the problem of sin is stated, addressed, and related to this aim. Given the constraints of this essay the source of Calvin's understanding of this issue will be limited to the *Institutes* alone. Whilst this means that this is not a comprehensive study of Calvin's theology with regard to this particular subject matter it is noted that 'his other writings gravitate and cluster about this work' and therefore it will provide an effective insight into his methodology and task.<sup>5</sup>

The main text of the *Institutes* begins with the words, 'Nearly all the wisdom we possess...consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves.'<sup>6</sup> This theme of *duplex cognitio*<sup>7</sup> pervades the *Institutes*, as demonstrated by the titles of its first two books; *The*

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<sup>2</sup> John T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), 126.

<sup>3</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 9.

<sup>4</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 4. Emphasis added.

<sup>5</sup> McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism*, 128.

<sup>6</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.1.1, see also 1.15.1, 2.1.1.

<sup>7</sup> Ford Lewis Battles, *Interpreting John Calvin*, ed. Robert Benedetto (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 149, 245-46.

*Knowledge of God the Creator* and *The Knowledge of God the Redeemer*. It is significant that the condition of humanity prior to the Fall and unaffected by sin is addressed within Book I in the context of Calvin's discussion outlining the *Knowledge of God*.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, the condition of humanity after the Fall is dealt with, in its most comprehensive form, in the earliest part of Book II while the absolute sovereignty of God is fresh in the reader's mind.<sup>9</sup> In the light of the knowledge of humanity's sinfulness the redeeming work of Christ is then explained. 'Sin is seen in the light of the Gospel.'<sup>10</sup>

For Calvin, 'man never achieves a clear knowledge of himself unless he has first looked upon God's face, and then descends from contemplating him to scrutinise himself.'<sup>11</sup> It is clear from the language of 'descending' and 'scrutinising' employed here that the comparison between the knowledge of 'God' and 'self' will reveal a dramatic difference between the two. This is, in essence, the comparison between the holiness and sovereignty of God and the totally destructive effects of sin upon humanity. Ford Lewis Battles suggests that it is this 'intolerable contrast between God's absolute perfection and man's fallenness that initiated Calvin's religious quest.'<sup>12</sup>

The contrast between God's perfection and humanity's sinfulness is an example of the antithetical structure of the *Institutes*. Donald McKim suggests that this method is 'rooted in the Pauline contrast between truth and falsehood.'<sup>13</sup> The antithetical structure continually contrasts theological polarities, for example, sin and holiness, or the perfection of the pre-Fall condition of humanity and the depths to which it has fallen into sinfulness. It appears both broadly and within individual sections of the text itself.<sup>14</sup> Given the suggestion that Calvin's purpose was for catechetical instruction for the life of true godliness this methodology has been employed to aid Christians to recognise the high expectations of true godliness whilst

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<sup>8</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.15.

<sup>9</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.1 - 2.6.

<sup>10</sup> T. A. Noble, 'The Doctrine of Original Sin in the Evangelical Reformers,' in *European Explorations in Christian Holiness*, ed. Dwight Swanson (Manchester: Nazarene Theological College, 2000), 82.

<sup>11</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.1.2.

<sup>12</sup> Battles, *Interpreting John Calvin*, 294.

<sup>13</sup> Donald K. McKim and Ford Lewis Battles, 'The Calvinian Works of Ford Lewis Battles,' in *Interpreting John Calvin*, ed. Robert Benedetto (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 36.

<sup>14</sup> For a detailed outline of this structure see Battles, *Interpreting John Calvin*, 347-50.



at the same time reveal that, apart from Christ and relying upon their own capabilities, they are completely unable to attain this goal.

### Humanity Prior to the Fall

Calvin recognises that humanity was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), and suggests that the 'proper seat of his image is in the soul.' Furthermore he suggests that this image is a 'spiritual' image.<sup>15</sup> By 'soul' Calvin means humanity's 'immortal yet created essence, which is his nobler part.'<sup>16</sup> In following Plato,<sup>17</sup> Calvin clearly distinguishes the 'body' from the 'soul', referring to the body as the 'prison house' of the soul, yet at the same time he cites 2 Corinthians 7:1 as evidence that sin resides in, and thus needs to be cleansed from, both soul and body.<sup>18</sup>

Calvin relies heavily upon Augustine for much of his theology and turns to him, and other Church Fathers, at many points as an authoritative source.<sup>19</sup> Larry Sharp suggests that 'outside the Bible Augustine was Calvin's greatest source.'<sup>20</sup> However, at this particular point the two part company. Augustine's suggestion that the soul is a reflection of the Trinity is 'by no means sound' according to Calvin.<sup>21</sup> Rather, for Calvin, the soul is comprised of the 'mind, by which to distinguish good from evil, right from wrong; and, with the light of reason as guide, to distinguish what should be followed from what should be avoided.' Joined to the mind is the 'will, under whose control is choice'.<sup>22</sup> In this way, Calvin paints a vivid picture of the perfection of humanity in its pre-Fall state:

Man in his first condition excelled in these pre-eminent endowments, so that his reason, understanding, prudence, and judgement not only sufficed for the direction of his earthly life, but by them men mounted up even to God and eternal bliss...In this integrity man by free will had the power, if he so willed, to attain eternal life.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.15.3.

<sup>16</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.15.2.

<sup>17</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.15.6.

<sup>18</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.15.2.

<sup>19</sup> Anthony N. S. Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999), 3.

<sup>20</sup> Larry D. Sharp, 'The Doctrines of Grace in Calvin and Augustine,' *The Evangelical Quarterly* 52:2 (1980): 84.

<sup>21</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.15.4.

<sup>22</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.15.8.

<sup>23</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.15.8.

Thus for Calvin the 'image of God' was perfectly present within humanity at creation and was a gracious gift of God. Similarly, humanity was perfectly capable of utilising the gifts and abilities provided to it by God, including free will, to live in the presence of God and to attain to eternal life by its own choice. This high understanding of the original condition of humanity contrasts starkly with Calvin's understanding of the condition of humanity after the Fall.

### Humanity after the Fall

From the outset of Book II Calvin echoes again both the famous dictum of the ancient Greeks; 'Know thyself'<sup>24</sup> and the commencement to Book I of the *Institutes*; 'With good reason the ancient proverb strongly recommended knowledge of self to man.' Calvin's main concern for his readers at this point is that if the true state of the Christian is not revealed to them then they risk being 'miserably deceive[d]' and may even 'blind' themselves.<sup>25</sup> 'Christian self-knowledge has another aim and result, to become aware of sin and, therefore, to be despoiled of all moral confidence in order to find salvation outside oneself.'<sup>26</sup> For Calvin, this salvation exists only in Christ and is available only by grace and his outline of the condition of humanity after the fall is designed to cause his readers to come to this conclusion.

The true knowledge of sin should call to mind 'our miserable condition after Adam's fall; the awareness of which, when all our boasting and self-assurance are laid low, should truly humble us and overwhelm us with shame.'<sup>27</sup> As Tom Noble suggests 'only when we see our truly miserable condition can we truly approach the Lord with genuine humility and faith.'<sup>28</sup>

Calvin is clear as to the effects of the fall on all of humanity.

After the heavenly image was obliterated in him, he was not the only one to suffer this punishment - that in place of wisdom, virtue, holiness,

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<sup>24</sup> T. H. L. Parker, *Calvin: An Introduction to His Thought* (London: Continuum, 1995), 50.

<sup>25</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.1.1.

<sup>26</sup> Parker, *Calvin*, 51.

<sup>27</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.1.1.

<sup>28</sup> Noble, 'Sin in the Reformers,' 82.

truth, and justice, with which adornments he had been clad, there came forth the most filthy plagues, blindness, impotence, impurity, vanity, and injustice - but he also entangled and immersed his offspring in the same miseries.<sup>29</sup>

This is the essence of what is known as 'original sin'. He defines this term in the following way:

Original sin, therefore, seems to be a hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature, diffused into all parts of the soul, which first makes us liable to God's wrath, then also brings forth in us those works which Scripture calls 'works of the flesh' [Gal 5:19]. And this is properly what Paul often calls sin.<sup>30</sup>

Thus original sin is a depravity that affects and infects all of humanity. It renders every person guilty of sin and subject to the punishment of God. It also produces acts of sin since the nature is totally affected therefore all acts of the depraved nature are sinful as well. 'The testimony of Scripture obliges us to acknowledge that our reason is disabled, and that our heart is so evil that we cannot do anything else but sin.'<sup>31</sup>

Calvin follows Augustine and uses the term *concupiscentia* to describe original sin; suggesting it is 'an appropriate word.' However, Calvin adds the following qualification; 'whatever is in man, from the understanding to the will, from the soul even to the flesh, has been defiled and crammed with this concupiscence...the whole man is of himself nothing but concupiscence.'<sup>32</sup> This is a significant development of Augustine's doctrine. Sharp summarises Augustine's teaching at this point in the following way:

God in his mercy takes the good that is in us and makes it better, thus healing our sinful infirmities and rewarding us with eternal life. He takes what righteousness we already have and increases it by his healing grace and thereby we are saved.<sup>33</sup>

It is clear that Calvin would consider such an occurrence to be impossible given that the effects of sin are so complete and

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<sup>29</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.1.5.

<sup>30</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.1.8.

<sup>31</sup> François Wendel, *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought* trans. Philip Mairet (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1963), 185.

<sup>32</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.1.8.

<sup>33</sup> Sharp, 'The Doctrines of Grace in Calvin and Augustine,' 88.

devastating that no righteousness remains at all. As a result Calvin has taken Augustine's teaching at this point and developed it to its logical conclusion.

The meaning of *concupiscentia* should not be limited to only sexual sin or lustful desires. 'Concupiscence is what brings forth evil desire itself.'<sup>34</sup> In Calvin's thought it is associated with the Pauline word *sarx* (flesh – e.g. in Romans 8), and so 'our destruction, therefore, comes from the guilt of our flesh.'<sup>35</sup>

Calvin emphasises that whilst original sin is universal, acts of sin still remain 'voluntary.' That is, each individual is guilty because of his or her own acts of sin, which continues to be a 'necessity' because of inherited depravity. 'I therefore deny that sin ought less to be reckoned as sin merely because it is necessary. I deny conversely... that because sin is voluntary it is avoidable.'<sup>36</sup> 'The chief point of this distinction, then, must be that man, as he was corrupted by the Fall, sinned willingly, not unwillingly or by compulsion, by the most eager inclination of his heart; by the prompting of his own lust, not by compulsion from without.'<sup>37</sup> Stated differently, acts of sin voluntarily exist as a result of a person's will, but since that will is totally depraved as a result of the effects of original sin these acts are, by necessity, sinful. Importantly, this means that 'man's ruin is to be ascribed to man alone'. This is significant so that 'we may not accuse God himself' and thus make God the author of sin.<sup>38</sup>

### **How Does the 'First Sin' Become 'Original Sin'?**

Original sin refers to this general principle, but also more specifically to the original act of sin as described in Genesis 3. Calvin, again following Augustine, accepts that 'pride was the beginning of all evils', but seeks a 'fuller definition' of this. Noting that the first humans were led astray and became disobedient to God, Calvin therefore asserts that 'unfaithfulness...was the root of the Fall.'<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1959), 54.

<sup>35</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.1.10.

<sup>36</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.5.1.

<sup>37</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.3.5. See also David L. Smith, *With Willful Intent: A Theology of Sin* (Wheaton: Bridgepoint, 1994), 76-77.

<sup>38</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.1.10.

<sup>39</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.1.4.

For Calvin, this first act of sin affected and infected all of humanity. In the tradition of Augustine, Calvin writes against Pelagianism which suggests that sin is transmitted by 'imitation, not propagation'. For Calvin, original sin is transmitted from parent to child by procreation; 'we are corrupted not by derived wickedness, but...we bear inborn defect from our mother's womb. To deny this was the height of shamelessness.' It is clear that there is no person immune from this 'inherited corruption'; 'Therefore, all of us, who have descended from impure seed are born infected with the contagion of sin. In fact, before we saw the light of this life we were soiled and spotted in God's sight.'<sup>40</sup>

Calvin also cites Romans 5:12 to support his understanding of original sin. No one is immune from its effects or removed from the guilty charge associated with it.

Even infants themselves, while they carry their condemnation along with them from the mother's womb, are guilty not of another's fault but of their own. For, even though the fruits of their iniquity have not yet come forth, they have the seed enclosed within them. Indeed, their whole nature is a seed of sin; hence it can be only hateful and abhorrent to God.<sup>41</sup>

Therefore everyone is guilty, even children, and this from before they were even born.

Calvin's understanding of sin may be summarised in the following way. Sin appeared in its first instance as a direct result of the free will of humanity, and this 'not from creation but from corruption of nature' brought about by 'rebellion.'<sup>42</sup> At the heart of this first act of sin was unfaithfulness to God. Since all of humanity ultimately owes its procreation from these now sinful parents they too shared in the effects as well as the guilt of this sin. The effects of sin are totally devastating. There is not one person unaffected by it, and not one part of the human person that remains without this corruption. So too, from the now corrupt and depraved nature flow only sinful and evil actions, even those which appear to be good. This is *concupiscentia*; the evil desires of the corrupt 'flesh' bringing forth sinful acts. As a result sin is now 'an active and dominating

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<sup>40</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.1.5.

<sup>41</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.1.8.

<sup>42</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.5.1.

force within man'<sup>43</sup> which humanity is unable, by its own capabilities and strength, to overcome.

Through this knowledge of 'self' humanity now sees its true and ugly condition in the light of the holiness of God. Sinners are forced to look outside of themselves for redemption from their dire situation. So how is this situation overcome? How is the person touched by a 'zeal for religion' to be 'shaped by true godliness (*pietas*)'?<sup>44</sup> It is to this that our attention now turns.

### ***Pietas* in Christ Alone**

Calvin asserts strongly that the only hope for humanity is found in Christ alone. This is the reason he goes to such lengths to emphasise the destructive nature of sin within humanity. 'Let the first step toward godliness (*pietas*) be to recognise that God is our Father to watch over us, govern and nourish us, until he gathers us unto the eternal inheritance of his Kingdom...God is comprehended in Christ alone.'<sup>45</sup> Christ achieves this as 'Mediator' between God and humanity. He is one at the same time truly God and truly human and therefore able to both overcome death and provide life.<sup>46</sup> The important question that relates to this particular discussion is, given that all of humanity participates in and is guilty of original sin, is Christ's humanity also affected by this universal problem? If so, how and to what extent? If not, then how did he address the problem of sin? Calvin recognises this dilemma; 'for he could not be exempted from the common rule, which includes under sin all of Adam's offspring without exception.'<sup>47</sup>

Calvin's answer to this very difficult problem suggests that Christ in fact does become an exception to this rule. Citing Romans 8:3-4 as supporting evidence, Calvin suggests that Paul skillfully distinguishes 'Christ from the common lot that he is true man but without fault and corruption.'<sup>48</sup> Importantly, he distances himself from his Catholic counterparts, as well as the results of a narrow definition of *concupiscentia* as sexual sin, by avoiding the suggestion that Christ was somehow different because of his conception by the

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<sup>43</sup> Parker, *Calvin*, 52.

<sup>44</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 9.

<sup>45</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.6.4.

<sup>46</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.8.7-13; 2.8 - 2.9.

<sup>47</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.8.4.

<sup>48</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.8.4.

Holy Spirit. Rather, Calvin attributes the uniqueness of Christ's holy human nature to the sanctifying work of the Spirit.

For we make Christ free of all stain not just because he was begotten of his mother without copulation with man, but because he was sanctified by the Spirit that the generation might be pure and undefiled as would have been true before Adam's fall.<sup>49</sup>

So, Christ's nature is pure and holy, yet it is still a 'true human nature.' As a result of the sanctification of the Spirit 'no infection came to Christ,' and he 'was exempted from common corruption.' Thus for Calvin, Christ's nature was not sinful but rather sanctified, and as a result his human nature was that of humanity in its pre-Fall condition.

A number of questions arise at this point which remain outside the scope of this essay, but are worthy of note. Firstly, in this model at what point is Christ 'sanctified'? Is Christ's human nature at any point 'sinful'? If not, then why does it need 'sanctifying'? If so, then how is the problem raised earlier actually addressed? Secondly, how would Calvin thus interpret passages such as 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Hebrews 2:17 which suggest that he was made 'to be sin' and 'like his brothers and sisters in every respect' (NRSV) in the light of this understanding of his human nature? Finally, what is the relationship, for Calvin, between the Spirit and Christ in the atonement, given that it is the Spirit who addresses this problem of the sinful human nature at this particular point?

The life of true godliness commences through faith in Christ. 'Now, both repentance and forgiveness of sins - that is, newness of life and free reconciliation - are conferred on us by Christ, and both are attained by us through faith.' In the moment of conversion the righteousness of Christ is imputed freely to the sinner, 'in order that the sinner, freed from the tyranny of Satan, the yoke of sin, and the miserable bondage of vices, may cross over into the Kingdom of God.'<sup>50</sup> This occurs so that the Christian may live a life of true godliness, the chief purpose of which is to 'render to God his right and honour, of which he is impiously defrauded when we do not intend to subject ourselves to his control.'<sup>51</sup>

Significant, however, is the way that Calvin understands how sin is treated in conversion, as this directly relates to true godliness. In

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<sup>49</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.8.4.

<sup>50</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.3.1.

<sup>51</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.3.7.

the believer 'sin ceases only to reign; it does not also cease to dwell in them...some vestiges remain; not to rule over them, but to humble them by the consciousness of their own weakness.'<sup>52</sup> Therefore it remains that, for the rest of the believer's life, the depraved but defeated nature must continue to be mortified, whilst the new regenerate life in Christ is vivified. 'We continue to be sinners even while we are being progressively sanctified.'<sup>53</sup> This is the ongoing work of sanctification by the Spirit in the believer.

### **Mortification and Vivification**

Since sin seeks to please the self, and this stems from unfaithfulness to God, the life of true godliness will require ongoing self-denial. 'Self-denial for Calvin means the mortification of our natural concupiscence, and the denial of all the motions and impulses that arise from the 'flesh.'"<sup>54</sup> It is the 'self-centred principle which Paul called the 'flesh' (Romans 7:15ff.)'.<sup>55</sup> This, not the devil, becomes the greatest enemy of the believer. 'It is a very hard and difficult thing to put off ourselves and to depart from our inborn disposition...the first step toward obeying this law is to deny our own nature.'<sup>56</sup> Therefore the old self needs to be mortified and the new life vivified.

Restoration of the 'image of God' in the believer involves this two-fold process of 'mortification' and 'vivification.' Mortification, which includes self-denial as described above;

does not take place in one moment or one day or one year; but through continual and sometimes even slow advances God wipes out in his elect the corruptions of the flesh, cleanses them of guilt, consecrates them to himself as temples renewing all their minds to true purity that they may practice repentance throughout their lives and know that this warfare will end only at death.<sup>57</sup>

Vivification, on the other hand, is the bringing forth of the image of God in the believer. It is 'the desire to live in a holy and devoted manner, a desire arising from rebirth.'<sup>58</sup> Since the corruption of

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<sup>52</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.3.11.

<sup>53</sup> Wendel, *Calvin*, 243.

<sup>54</sup> Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life*, 57.

<sup>55</sup> Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin, Geneva and the Reformation* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1988), 189.

<sup>56</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.3.8.

<sup>57</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.3.8.

<sup>58</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.3.3.



original sin remains, even though the guilt has been taken away, this internal battle between the old and new life continues throughout life. The prime example of the Christian life, therefore, for Calvin was found in Romans 7.<sup>59</sup> Remarkably, this has led to one writer suggesting that 'sinners are not divided against themselves, but believers are.'<sup>60</sup>

### Is True Godliness Possible?

Sharp has suggested that

For Calvin, justification is God's gift of the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. Through this gift of credited or reckoned righteousness we have a new standing before God, namely the same standing or position as that of Christ. This is not at all an infused righteousness, but an extraneous righteousness accomplished by Christ and totally outside ourselves.<sup>61</sup>

However, this does not appear to be an entirely correct summation. Whilst Calvin does speak of the 'free *imputation* of righteousness,'<sup>62</sup> he also speaks of the believer's union with God and reminds the reader that 'holiness must be its bond; not because we come into communion with him by virtue of our holiness! Rather, we ought first to cleave unto him so that, *infused with his holiness*, we may follow whither he calls'.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, Calvin even suggests that godliness 'joins us in true holiness with God when we are separated from the iniquities of the world. When these things are joined together by an inseparable bond, they bring about *complete perfection*.'<sup>64</sup> This suggests that, for Calvin, union with God through Christ did bring about a true godliness within the believer, however the strong emphasis at all times is upon the righteousness of Christ and not the effort or will of the believer as the origin and cause of this.

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<sup>59</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.3.11.

<sup>60</sup> David Steinmetz, *Calvin in Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 111.

<sup>61</sup> Sharp, 'The Doctrines of Grace in Calvin and Augustine,' 88.

<sup>62</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.3.1. Emphasis added.

<sup>63</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.6.2. Emphasis added.

<sup>64</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.7.3. Emphasis added.

## Critique of Calvin's Position

There are a number of observations that arise from Calvin's understanding of sin and its relationship to the life of true godliness. Firstly, it has been demonstrated that Christ avoided a depraved human nature as, at some point, he was sanctified by the Spirit. The assumption must be that his nature was sanctified completely from all traces of sin and all of its effects. However, in the life of the believer it is only guilt that is taken away; sin and its effects remain and are mortified throughout the lifetime of the believer. This seems to suggest that Christ did in fact have a different nature from the rest of humanity and this therefore raises questions regarding the efficacy of the atonement. Similarly, there is a stark difference between the sanctification of Christ and the sanctification of the believer. This raises exegetical questions, particularly with regard to passages such as John 17:17-19 which suggest that the sanctification of Christ is that which is provided for the believer.

Secondly, it has been demonstrated that, for Calvin, the guilt of sin is effectively dealt with by the righteousness of Christ, but sin itself remains within believers throughout their lives. The dual process of mortification and vivification are suggested as the means by which the Spirit restores in the believer the image of God, but still the final perfection of this process remains until death. In this regard Calvin again cites Augustine for authority. 'Sin is dead in that guilt which it held us; and until it be cured by the *perfection of burial*.'<sup>65</sup> This seems to suggest a dangerous conclusion. Namely, that Christ's atonement and the sanctifying work of the Spirit have achieved a lot (for example removing guilt and initiating new life) but both are insufficient to complete the task of restoring the image of God in the believer and therefore it is left to death itself in order to bring that task to completion. This seems to be a major flaw in Calvin's methodology and understanding of the Christian life and actually gives credit to death where it is not due.

Having suggested these difficulties a major point of agreement also needs to be highlighted. It has been suggested that Calvin's purpose in writing the *Institutes* was for catechetical instruction in the life of true godliness. For Calvin, the sum of the life of true godliness is subsumed under the banner of love for God and neighbour.

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<sup>65</sup> Augustine cited in Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.3.13. Emphasis added.

Now the perfection of that holiness comes under the two headings... 'That we should love the Lord God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength', 'and our neighbour as ourselves'. First, indeed, our soul should be entirely filled with the love of God. From this will flow directly the love of neighbour... In other words here is true piety, from which love is derived.<sup>66</sup>

It would be difficult to find any Christian theologian who would disagree with Calvin at this significant point.

### Conclusion

Throughout the course of this essay, Calvin's understanding of sin, its effects upon humanity, and how God through Christ and the Spirit has dealt with this problem have been discussed. It has been shown that Calvin discusses sin in the light of the perfection of God, by means of the antithetical structure of the *Institutes*. The effects of sin upon humanity have led to total corruption of the human nature. No one is devoid of this problem. However, through Christ, God has dealt with the problem and provided a means by which the image of God may be restored in the believer. Christ's human nature was not sinless, but rather sanctified and therefore he was not corrupted by sin, unlike the rest of humanity. Through the gift of Christ's righteousness believers may be united with Christ through the inseparable bond of holiness. This eliminates the guilt of sin, and by the sanctifying work of the Spirit the old corrupted nature is gradually mortified and the new life vivified in the believer. Because of the initiative of God, sin and its effects have been dealt with, the believer is enabled, through Christ and by the Spirit, to live a life of true godliness, which can be summed up in the phrase 'love for God and neighbour.'

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<sup>66</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.8.51.

## ***BOOK REVIEWS***

FRANK MACCHIA, *Justified in the Spirit: Creation, Redemption and the Triune God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010; pp. 345.

For many in the Western churches, Paul's doctrine of justification has been the key category in which Christ's saving love in Jesus Christ has been understood. With the 1999 signing of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, the sixteenth century debates are being put to rest and a whole new generation of reflection, preaching and deepening of our understanding has been begun for the twenty-first century. Renewed biblical, especially Pauline, studies; ecumenical deepening of the Trinitarian framework for understanding what God has done in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit; and a renewed understanding of Trinitarian *koinonia* as a primary category in participatory soteriology, as well as church life, have all pointed to a rich future for the churches' preaching of justification and theologians' explication of its meaning.

This volume is an important contribution to this expansion and deepening, by its thorough review of the best modern biblical research; survey of systematic studies by the likes of Pannenberg, Rahner, Jensen, Volf, Moltmann, Zizioulas, the Barths and others; and a synthetic development in the context of modern ecumenical agreements. The author affirms the reconciliation of forensic and renewal understandings of grace articulated in the *Joint Declaration*. However, he expands and deepens these agreements with a pneumatological perspective which strengthens the Trinitarian understanding and the dynamic character of God's saving action. The author's perspective, relying on biblical and systematic argumentation, is informed by questions raised by his Pentecostal heritage and his reading of a certain pneumatological deficit, especially in the Western tradition in which the Reformation debates were embedded.

The book is divided into three parts of eleven chapters. The first part deals with the conflicted history, with chapters framing the issue of justification and the Holy Spirit, the classical Protestant and Catholic perspectives, and an exploration of the contribution of the Pentecostal metaphor of Baptism in the Holy Spirit. The second section deals with the sources: justification and spirit in the Hebrew Scriptures, the role of the Spirit's indwelling in justification, and

Spirit Baptism as an essential element for understanding God's action in justification.

The last section, entitled *The Eschatological Fulfillment of Justification*, includes sections on participation, noting among other sources the current Finnish Lutheran scholarship; implications of a pneumatological approach to justification for church and sacraments; a chapter where he outlines his Trinitarian proposal for a contemporary theology of justification; and a final reflection emphasizing the ecumenical import of such an understanding of this central soteriological mystery of the faith for the Christian and the churches today.

Throughout the book, informed by the best classical Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox scholarship and the common ecumenical resources, the author also teases out Pentecostal sources that help to understand where the early, pre-systematic, thinking of that movement has informed the understanding of salvation and justification; the relationship of justification, sanctification and Baptism in the Holy Spirit; and the potential contribution of this implicit theology both for Pentecostal systematic and for ecumenical understanding.

We can be appreciative of study as a substantive systematic contribution to our understanding of the Trinity and God's working in the world, to our engagement with the fastest growing Christian community in the world, and to our reconciliation as churches in the grace once given in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and alive in our communities by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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DIANE LECLERC, *Discovering Christian Holiness: The Heart of Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2009.

I am excited about Diane Leclerc's new book. She does a good job of addressing key issues in the postmodern attempt to understand and live holiness. The author writes her new book from the perspective of Wesleyan-Holiness theology and believes this theological tradition offers a distinct perspective that rises from the history of the Christian tradition and Scripture. The audience for the book, however, is our contemporary age.

Early on, Leclerc argues for the relevance of the Wesleyan tradition's understanding of holiness in this postmodern world. She takes her understanding from John and Charles Wesley's argument that salvation is the gospel's primary focus. She believes a Wesleyan approach to holiness can be optimistic: sin needs to reign no longer.

The structure of the book is based on the Wesleyan quadrilateral. As a preliminary, the author argues for the supremacy of love in biblical and historical understandings of holiness. 'Love, for Wesley and his successors, should permeate every fiber of holiness and thus should be understood as the overarching theme of my entire book and not just the concluding chapter.' She also argues that 'entire devotion to God is perhaps the best expression of our love for God and should be seen as a thematic thread.' (30)

We all come to the Bible from a particular perspective and life experience. We all either explicitly or implicitly are convinced some ways of reading the Bible are better than others. Leclerc argues that a Wesleyan way of reading the Bible emphasizes it as our most important lens through which we might see what God is like. The Bible is formative, and we can rely upon it for all things pertaining to salvation. It serves as a source for helping Christians in their devotional life. Wesleyans examine Scripture and pick the grand themes in its pages. Like John Wesley, they affirm that the purpose of Scripture is to reveal the God of love, who out of love saves the world (44).

Leclerc asks a key question early on in the book: 'What does it mean to be holy?'

We affirm that all holy acts come out of a holy heart and that God changes our desires and motivations from within when we fully devote ourselves to following Christ in faith and fellowship. We depend on God's enabling grace everyday in our Christian walk. Holiness means much more than sinlessness. To be holy, we must love. And love is never finished because there are always new opportunities to practice love for God and neighbor. This is the heart of the Wesleyan message. (48)

In her exploration of holiness in the Bible, the author uses the Wesleyan phrase, 'the whole tenor' of Scripture. She argues that holiness is a central theme in the Old and New Testaments. Biblical authors present holiness in a variety of ways. Sometimes Holiness refers to God's incomparability, at other times to God's glory or jealousy. Sometimes Scripture suggests that human holiness is

derived from God. Sometimes to be holy means being entirely devoted to God. Sometimes, holiness refers to a divine-human relationship and at other times to human obedience.

In the New Testament, biblical writers sometimes identify holiness with purity of heart. This purity expresses itself outwardly in actions. We also find biblical passages identifying holiness with the absence of sin, and others identifying it with the presence of good. According to the Bible, holiness is both an individual and corporate calling.

Part Two of the book addresses holiness from an historical perspective. Because she is an historical theologian, it comes as little surprise that the author both appreciates and knows well major figures of the Christian tradition. These chapters provide dozens of sketches of important historical figures both predating John Wesley and following him. I learned some new things in these sections. Part Three is titled, 'Holiness Theology for Today.' Leclerc begins by addressing the complex issues of how we talk about God. She affirms both the transcendence and immanence of God. 'An understanding of God as holy, as transcendent, as immanent, and as relational,' she says, 'finally brings us to the supreme affirmation that God is love.'

This love is what most exactly defines God's holiness and most precisely modifies God's transcendent and immanent relationship with the world. God's holiness as love is not only the height, but also the very depth of all that Wesleyan theology affirms. The love of God expands both far and wide into all that it believes. This does not contradict the suggestion that at the heart of Wesleyan theology is soteriology, for God's love is a love that reaches infinitely towards us in order to save. The ultimate expression of this love comes to us through the incarnation. Christ is love personified. As such, he reveals that the nature of love is an embodied servanthood willing to carry a cross. (142)

A good deal of time is spent exploring Jesus Christ as the revelation of God's love. As the Son, he is the servant, model, saviour, high priest, mediator, and the one whom God has resurrected. 'Christ reveals that God's love toward us is a gift, self giving in nature and soteriological in purpose.' (147)

The Holy Spirit plays an important role in sanctification, according to Leclerc. In this context, she addresses the Wesleyan understanding of prevenient grace. This grace is God's loving presence that comes before, seeking to woo and draw us to God. Matters of the Holy Spirit also lead the author to address briefly the question of how Wesleyans should think about religious pluralism.

Finally, the Holy Spirit regenerates, sanctifies, and comforts individuals and the church.

I think it is important to note that the author decides to talk about God's love before she talks about humans as sinful. This reflects the basis of her Wesleyan optimism that God is greater than sin. But she does not shirk from addressing sin issues. God created humans, but they sinned against God. In fact, they now have a bent toward sin. She steers a path on the question of the original sin between the views of Augustine and Pelagius. The key to this path is the universal prevenient grace of God that provides the possibility for salvation to all by empowering them to respond to God's gift of love.

The final part of these three sections addresses the death of Christ and atonement theories that have emerged in the life of the church. Leclerc argues for full salvation, and this leads naturally to her understanding of sanctification. She makes the following important claims:

Entire sanctification...

1. is subsequent to regeneration.
2. breaks the power of sin.
3. is characterized by entire devotion to God.
4. results in obedience and love.
5. has an element of both taking away and giving to.
6. is through faith (by grace) alone.
7. is (usually) followed by the witness of the Spirit.
8. can be described by several metaphorical phrases.
9. requires subsequent growth, which must be intentionally nurtured.
10. involves growth in Christ-like character.

In this section, the author calls for a balanced interpretation of entire sanctification. This balanced view affirms the best of John Wesley's theology and the best of the American holiness movement. It affirms holiness as both appropriated in a moment and developed over time through growth in grace. She calls for readers to retain the idea of secondness in sanctification, while allowing differences from person to person in how entire sanctification is experienced.

In the final part of the book, 'Holy Living for a New Century,' the author devotes chapters to five aspects of holiness: purity,



perfection, power, character, and love. By purity, she has in mind the issue of morality. Holiness leads the Christian to live a moral life of avoiding sin. Being obedient to the God of love involves fulfilling the call of love. This involves following certain ways of living and rules. It is embodied holiness. The discussion of sexuality is particularly relevant for challenges that twenty-first century Christians face.

In her chapter on perfection, Leclerc argues that we are created to love God with our whole being and our neighbours as ourselves. Perfection does not mean becoming un-human. It does not mean we no longer make mistakes or have weaknesses. Perfection involves living the life of love. Such life includes avoiding sin but also acting in compassion and for social justice. Holiness as perfection entails perfect love.

In her chapter on holiness and power, Diane emphasizes the importance of God working in our lives to provide power for victory over sin. This does not mean that human give up a sense of self. Instead, Christians follow the self-giving love of Jesus Christ who, in kenotic love, lived a life sacrificing his own interests for the good of others. Some of the author's best work resides in this chapter. In it, she considers deeply vital questions of human weakness, brokenness, suffering, and abuse. She concludes, 'Out of our own courage at times to be our own unique selves despite the pain, God is able to lead us to be an instrument of powerful healing in others' lives. God is indeed a redeeming God.' (252)

The chapter on character argues for not only loving in the moment and avoiding particular sins. Holiness also calls for Christians to become people of loving character. The life of Christlikeness develops a particular kind of character in the Christian. Following certain practices - both within the church community and as individuals - is important for developing a Christlike character in a postmodern world.

The final chapter of the book is titled, 'Holiness as Love.' Throughout her book, the author refers often to the central place love plays in a Wesleyan holiness understanding of sanctification. Love is the centre. This means holiness and love cannot be separated. It also means that a strong theology of holiness will care about the head and the heart, the intellect and feelings. Love makes a difference in the way we live our day-to-day lives. Le Clerc makes a special point of talking about our love for God as entire devotion. She says such devotion is the proper and fitting response to God's love for us. It involves complete consecration and surrender.

The conclusion of *Discovering Christian Holiness* is a fitting conclusion to this review:

This then is the essence of holiness, the holiness to which we have been called. To be called unto holiness is to be called to kenotic love. Love at the center of it all. Love at the center of us all. Self-emptying love outpoured into the world: This has been our past; this can be our future. (286)

I recommend Diane Leclerc's new book.

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permission of the author)

KENT BROWER, *Holiness in the Gospels*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2005; pp. 136 + notes and bibliography.

Kent Brower makes an excellent contribution to the much needed project of establishing a solid exegetical base for Wesleyan perspectives on holiness. This book began as the 2000 Collins Holiness Lectures delivered at Canadian Nazarene University College in Calgary, Alberta. It has also been informed, according to the author's Preface by the experience of teaching courses in the MA course in Aspects of Christian Holiness at the Nazarene Theological College Manchester where Dr. Brower is Vice Principal and Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies.

The book has an unusual structure, eschewing the canonical ordering of the books in favour of giving priority (after a helpful chapter on Holiness in the Second Temple Period) to the Gospel of Luke. The author's purpose is Christological, as he purposes to deal first with the humanity of Jesus and then (in John's Gospel) with his divinity. Furthermore, Luke gives special emphasis to the work of the Spirit, a key theme in Wesleyan-holiness thought, and to Jesus' interaction with Pharisaism, itself a kind of first century holiness movement. The chapter on John's Gospel takes a welcome Trinitarian approach. Mark's Gospel is then covered with a focus on discipleship. A series of texts from the Sermon on the Mount forms the centrepiece of the chapter on Matthew's Gospel, appropriately

culminating, given the purpose and intended audience of the book, with a discussion of Matt 5:48 - "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." A final chapter sets out five "Lessons in the Holy Life" - Christian holiness is 1) centred in the Triune God 2) defined by Jesus 3) communal and personal 4) a journey and 5) present life and future goal. David W. Kendall has noted how odd it should be that the holiness movement has paid little attention to the Gospels as an exegetical basis for the doctrine of entire sanctification. Instead the focus has been on Old Testament themes and images, on the Pauline literature, on the Pentecostal motif of the Book of Acts, and on the theme of "perfect love" drawn from 1 John.<sup>1</sup> Yet it is in the Gospels that the call to discipleship is most radically set forth and where the redefinition of holiness in new covenant terms is firmly established. Kent Brower makes a valuable contribution to correcting this balance.

On a minor point, an odd feature of the book, though I'm sure it is an editorial decision and not the author's, is the continuation of numbering in the endnotes. Instead of the numbering restarting with each chapter, it continues through the length of the entire book from footnote 1 to footnote 367. This is a rather untidy arrangement which I hope the Beacon Hill editors will change.

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KEVIN W. MANNOIA and DON THORSEN, eds. *The Holiness Manifesto*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008; pp.249.

This book is the result of considerable consultation among scholars in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition operating first as the Wesleyan-Holiness Study Project and subsequently as the Wesleyan-Holiness Consortium. Member churches included Brethren in Christ, the Church of God, Anderson, the Church of the Nazarene, the Free Methodist Church, and the Salvation Army. There were also a number of lesser-known Holiness bodies represented such as Shield of Faith. I wonder whether either the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel or the Christian and Missionary Alliance can really be said to belong to the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition. Their

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<sup>1</sup> David W. Kendall, 'Jesus and a Gospel of Holiness,' in Kevin W. Mannoia and Don Thorsen, eds. *The Holiness Manifesto* (Grand Rapids, MI and Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2008), 57.

identification as such through their participation in this project is interesting. A more natural participant who would bridge the Holiness and Pentecostal traditions would have been the Church of God, Cleveland, but that church is not represented here.

As for the essays themselves they give us, like all such multi-author collections, a mixed bag in terms of quality. Preliminary material includes an introduction by Kevin Mannoia, a helpful historical overview by Barry Callen which will be helpful for those who may be unfamiliar with this particular theological and ecclesial tradition, the text of the Holiness Manifesto itself (2006) as well as the subsequent 2007 document on living out the Manifesto. The essays are divided into disciplines - biblical studies, historical and theological studies, and ministry. Of the three biblical essays David W. Kendall's treatment of 'Jesus and a Gospel of Holiness' is a standout. It's a pity there could not have been more historical material but Bill Kostlevy's paper on the rejection of lodges and secret societies by radical evangelicals in nineteenth century America is really excellent. The title - 'The Social Vision of the Holiness Movement' - is a little misleading, since the paper is not as broad as the title suggests. His analysis is based largely on gender and race as he demonstrates that the world of the lodge was an exclusively white male domain to which Holiness and other radical evangelicals strongly objected. Associated with this was the perception that radical evangelicalism with its concern for women's rights, antislavery, and perfection reflected the feminisation of evangelicalism during this period. The lodge protected male power, male dominance, and male concerns. The Holiness churches expressed the more feminine qualities of altruism, compassion, perfectionism, and commitment to racial equality. Those in Wesleyan-Holiness denominations today who have wondered why their churches even have statements on lodges and secret societies will be helped to see the social justice origins of this stance.

Of the six essays on ministry, I found James Earl Massey's final essay on 'Preaching as Charisma' the most interesting, though it is only tangentially related to holiness. I find odd the positioning of five appendices (or should that be appendixes?) in which participants each try to define holiness. These would have worked better in the earlier introductory section. Overall I am pleased to see this volume appear and believe it will make a good contribution to reviving interest in the neglected doctrine of holiness. The fact that it is

published by Eerdmans, rather than one of the Wesleyan-Holiness denominational publishers, will help provide a wider audience for what might otherwise have been merely an in-house discussion.

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JOSEPH COLESON, ed. *Be Holy: God's Invitation to Understand, Declare, and Experience Holiness*. Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2008.

This collection of essays gets off to a rather poor start with a chapter from former General Superintendent of the Wesleyan Church, David W. Holdren. His assertion that at salvation Jesus is received as Saviour and only later as Lord (p. 23) is neither biblical nor Wesleyan. To speak of trusting Jesus as Saviour without simultaneously receiving him as Lord is out of step with the New Testament's insistence on uniting the two. This sounds more like something one would hear emanating from Dallas Theological Seminary where 'Lordship salvation' is decried as an awful heresy. And to speak of 'entire sanctification' as 'receiving Jesus as Lord' would certainly seem odd to John Wesley for whom among 'the glorious privileges of those who are born of God' was to be found freedom from all willful sin. Certainly for Wesley, obedience to Jesus Christ and submission to his Lordship (albeit not yet perfected) was a mark of the new birth, not of entire sanctification.

Holdren's essay is not all bad, however. His warnings about the limitations of traditional terms now past their use-by-date is timely (pp. 15-16), and his identification of the shorter, medium, and longer way to holiness (pp. 20-22), borrowed from Chris Bounds of Indiana Wesleyan University, is helpful.

Things definitely improve with the following two essays from Joseph Coleson and Terence Paige on the Old and New Testament materials on holiness. These scholars take complex biblical theology and relate it well to a non-technical audience, the intended readership of this book.

John Tyson provides a good summary essay in chapter 4 on the eighteenth century roots of Holiness teaching and, in keeping with his own research interests, includes Charles Wesley along with his brother John highlighting both convergence and difference between the two.

Clarence Bence gives an excellent historical overview in the fifth chapter, again addressing a non-technical audience and providing a user friendly contribution that is nonetheless well grounded in solid scholarship. Particularly good is his placing of the American holiness movement in the context of three formative influences – Jacksonian democracy, Wesleyan perfectionism and Finney's radical social reforms – and in his discussion of Wesleyanism's ambivalent relationship to fundamentalism. It's a pity, though that the chapter should be focused only on what Bence calls 'American holiness.' The Wesleyan Church (the publisher of this book) is a global church (the International Wesleyan Church), and only one holiness denomination among many spread throughout the world. Broadening this chapter to provide a more internationalist perspective or providing a separate chapter on the wider world presence of the Holiness churches would have added considerably to the value of the book.

Keith Drury is always one to ruffle feathers and shoot from the hip (pardon the oddly mixed metaphor). In his chapter on 'Experiencing the Holy Life' he makes the insightful observation that '[W]hen the Holiness Movement married evangelicalism, we downplayed our own family traditions for the sake of the marriage.' (p. 130) This loss of distinctiveness has brought the Wesleyan-Holiness movement to a crisis of identity.

Judy Huffman, in chapter 9 on 'Practical Holiness' relates her experience of growing up in a Holiness context dominated by rule-based legalism and expresses the debt she owes to contemporary Wesleyan scholars who have helped her understand holiness in a new, more relational way, grounded in social Trinitarianism (pp.135-59). This is all very good but it begs the question of the distinctive nature of Wesleyan discourse about holiness. That the older take on entire sanctification is fading is evidenced by the several places in this book where traditional holiness movement themes are challenged or rejected. For example in chapter 3 Terence Paige states:

In my opinion nowhere does the New Testament explicitly address the question whether sanctification is 'instantaneous' or 'gradual.' That may be a legitimate question to ask today, but I am not sure it was a question Paul or Jesus asked or answered. Rather, sanctification is presented, I believe, as part of the life journey of a disciple. To ask Paul, 'When are we perfectly sanctified?' is like asking 'When have I perfectly loved my

spouse?' The answer is that it is something that happens every day as God works in us and we work with God. (52)

That sanctification is the 'life journey of a disciple' is certainly true. But what Christian, Wesleyan or otherwise, would state anything to the contrary? When there was a clear 'second blessing' message about entire sanctification, the Holiness movement had a distinctive message, even if one that some could not accept. With that emphasis fading what features of Wesleyan teaching about holiness might be said to be distinctive to that tradition?

Rich Eckley helpfully reminds us in chapter 6 that holiness is the concern of all Christians, and Mike Walters in his chapter 7 on 'Preaching Holiness Today' reminds us that holiness 'stands at the beginning and centre of God's call on [all] our lives.' (p. 110) I concur wholeheartedly with this, but is it the case, then, that the Wesleyan contribution is simply to emphasise holiness as something important? Or are there also specific statements that need to be set forth? These are questions of confessional identity that seem to me worth pursuing.

Robert Blacks' chapter on 'Social Holiness' reminds us that the expression as used by Wesley did not primarily have reference to social reform but to the importance of Christian community. Dr. Jo Anne Lyon's chapter on 'Social Justice' picks up the reform agenda admirably, and calls the Wesleyan Church back to its more radical roots. She recalls how Dr. Virgil Mitchell expressed regret late in life that the Wesleyan Church had been largely silent during the great civil rights era of the 1960s. Charles Edwin Jones provides the sobering fact that 'within twenty years of assuming denominational form, holiness churches officially abandoned welfare work.'<sup>2</sup> What had happened to the earlier political radicalism that had been a defining characteristic of the Church's abolitionist ancestors? The election of Jo Anne Lyon to the General Superintendency is one of the most encouraging signs of the Wesleyan Church's recapturing of its original justice ethos and this return is long overdue.

Each chapter ends with 'Action/Reflection Suggestions' that will prove helpful in both small group discussion and personal study. The list of books for further reading is accompanied by helpful synopses of the content of each book. Overall I am pleased that the Wesleyan Church has produced a book such as this and the 'Wesleyan

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<sup>2</sup> Charles Edwin Jones, *Perfectionistic Persuasion* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1974), 177, cited in *Be Holy*, 186.

Theological Perspectives' series to which it belongs is a commendable one, even if the quality of individual essays varies considerably.

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ROBERT GRIBBEN, *Uniting in Thanksgiving: The Great Prayers of Thanksgiving of the Uniting Church in Australia*. Melbourne: Uniting Academic Press, 2008. pp. 222

This book is an extended commentary on the Eucharistic prayers in use in the Uniting Church. Professor Gribben is admirably equipped for this task having been closely involved in the authorship of the prayers themselves as a member of the team that produced *Uniting in Worship*. I am a great admirer of the Uniting Church's liturgy which appeals to those of us who want to do more in worship than mimic Hillsong, recreate a camp meeting atmosphere, or make it up as we go along.

The Uniting Church has Prof. Gribben to thank for such admirable phrases in the Thanksgiving for Creation as, 'In time beyond our dreaming you brought forth light out of darkness' and 'We bless you for this wide, red land, for its rugged beauty, its changing seasons,' words which evoke the Uniting Church's commitment to be an authentically Australian church. The expression in the Narrative of Institution, 'Do this *for* the remembrance of me' rather than the expected '*in* remembrance of me' is something quite unique. It is a well-meaning attempt to capture the meaning of *anamnesis*, which is so much more than just a reflection on a past event, but a lived experience of participation. If the wording is at first a little disarming, this may lead to deeper reflection on its meaning which can only be a good thing.

The book is divided into three sections. First the 'Genealogy' of the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving is given, tracing its historic precedents and giving an idea of its general structure and 'theologic.' Part Two, the lengthiest section of the book, is an extended commentary on each section of the Prayer, and a final third part is a practical commentary on its use. So the reader moves neatly from provenance, to meaning, to rubrics.

The book is a delight to read. Professor Gribben, an



internationally known liturgist and ecumenist, knows his material well and writes in fine, engaging style. In addition to a deep familiarity with the Christian Church's wider liturgical and sacramental theology, being nurtured in the Wesleyan tradition, his appreciation for and knowledge of Methodism is clear throughout, but he is at the same time well informed about the Reformed tradition. The commentary is sprinkled with judicious anecdotes that keep the reader engaged and often shine a light on the theological meaning being considered.

This book certainly deserves to be read by members of the Uniting Church but anyone with an interest in Christian worship will benefit from it. One would hope that it would be used as a text in the training of Ministers of the Word and others responsible for leading worship in the Uniting Church. The provision of such a theologically well grounded liturgy needs to be accompanied by careful instruction regarding its use and this book meets that need admirably. It would be a pity if it were not widely read and used.

A word must also be said for the editors of Uniting Academic Press for the attractive design of the book, the first release from this new publisher. The glossy card insert which reproduces the Prayer itself is a useful tool for use in worship and makes a helpful bookmark, though sadly it has some typographical errors. The book may be ordered from Mosaic Resources:  
<http://www.mosaicresources.com/>

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