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Editorial Introduction

by Captain Stephen Court

Welcome to JAC57! This is a great issue! It is our Five Books Redux. But it is much more than that.

Back in JAC26 (2003 - available for free download on this page) we featured Five Books That Shaped My Life - hearing from outstanding Salvo names such as Clifton, Harris, Phillips, Munn, and Strickland about books that were important in making them who they are. Well, we're coming back at you, five years later, with more outstanding Salvationists and their takes on this very issue.

Commissioner Doug Davis (Rtd), Commissioner Joe Noland (Rtd), Major Willis Howell (TP USS), Captain Amy Reardon (Editor, YS), and Captain Genevieve Peterson (CO Reservoir) all weigh in. It is an intriguing mix. You'll love it.

But that's not all.

Major Brendan Nottle sets the Welcome Table for us. Captain Andrew Bale writes on Christian Perfection. Past, Present, and Future. It is election season in two western countries right now and Captain Michael Ramsay advocates that we Vote For Jesus. Major Alan Harley - great holiness expositor, offers us A Christocentric Perspective. And Captain Genevieve Peterson tells us about Growing a Mini-Army.

Thanks to all of the contributors. We welcome contributions from you in time for the next issue (to revolution @ mmccxx.net).

This will be a much referred-to issue in years to come. Be sure to bookmark it and share it with ten friends.

God bless The Salvation Army.

Five books that shaped my life

by Commissioner Douglas Davis

With the proviso that the Song Book of the Salvation Army may be allowed special mention, as in a category of devotional resource that is second only to the Bible, I list the following five books that have changed my life in terms of my spiritual formation and ministry:

THE CRAFT OF THE SERMON W.E. SANGSTER

As a young accepted candidate I sat in the corps band next to the late Brigadier Victor Pedersen OF. Vic was a passionate evangelist whose fervent allegiance to the Christian Scriptures and their exposition was a consistent mark of his 'flying padre' ministry in Australia's remote north – Crocodile Dundee country. During 1958 the Pedersen family came south to Melbourne for a respite appointment of 12 months duration before returning to the tropical Northern Territory where their hearts lay in outreach to the people on cattle stations and in establishing a corps in Darwin.

Vic loaned me his copy of Sangster's book which I read avidly but with little sense, at that time, of its true value. In truth, at first, I was mentally challenged by the author's systematic analysis of various homiletical styles and structures. His treatment of the place and use of sermon illustrations spoke to me but even at that the author's scholarly approach seemed over-cerebral to my embryonic preacher's heart.

But, as a newly commissioned corps officer facing the steep mountain climb of sermon preparation, relying on little more than my field training outlines from College, I readily purchased my copy of Sangster's book which I still cherish. I discovered that the THQ Education Department provided a correspondence course, with the book as its recommended text, so that was my next step towards a better understanding of sermon making and preaching.

A quarter of a century later General Frederick Coutts' No Continuing City revealed that he assessed his first sermons as of the skim milk variety having noted that 'the richer the thought the greater the need for orderly expression'. By that stage of my officership journey I had fully embraced Sangster's endorsement of Bernard Manning's sense of preaching as 'a manifestation of the Incarnate Word, from the Written Word, by the spoken word'.

THE CALL TO HOLINESS FREDERICK L. COUTTS

Early in 1959 my wife and I entered the Melbourne training college and at our divisional farewell meeting we were presented with this precious, life changing book. My copy still has taped to the front fly-leaf the typed presentation card which expresses a prayer for

God's blessing on my life's work – the book largely contributed to the achievement of that very prayer.

In those formative years of my spirituality I experienced a healthy hunger and thirst for righteousness which readily responded to Coutts' treatment of Doctrine Ten. His lucid exposition of selected New Testament references illuminated the holiness experience for me in a compelling way. In quoting Brengle – 'There is no such thing as holiness apart from "Christ in you"' Coutts provided a bridge between my Brengle books and my then growing experience.

Early in the 1960s when Coutts was leader of the Australia Eastern territory he led a series of congress gatherings in Melbourne in one of which he took I Tim. 6:17 (AV) as his text – (He) giveth us richly all things to enjoy – to which he added the suffix, even holiness.

Later I gratefully sat under his teaching at the ICO rejoicing to own an ever deepening sense of the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit in my heart and life.

THE LIFE AND TEACHING OF JESUS CHRIST J.S. STEWART

This book was the required text for my first year of regulation post commissioning correspondence studies. I treasure it to this day and have frequently returned to it for snippets to add luster to my teaching and preaching ministry. My well loved copy is thumb marked, substantially notated – first with fountain pen, latterly with ball point pen – and supported by my own topical index to aid the location of those many valued insights I was able to glean from its pages.

Stewart entitles his chapter 16 The Gathering Storm and shows us a Jesus who steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, fully aware of the redeeming work he was to accomplish at Calvary. That chapter refers to a Holman Hunt painting, The Shadow of Death. It depicts Jesus, the young carpenter, standing in the Nazareth workshop as the setting sun captures his form and projects the shadow of a cross on a nearby wall.

My heart leaps to associate that image with this personal confession of faith:
All the way to Calvary He went for me, And now He sets me free.

Recently, using the internet, I downloaded the Holman Hunt painting and married it to a recording of Dean Goffin's brass band selection The Shadow of the Cross – a companion piece to his The Light of the World. It blesses, humbles and inspires me as the image and the music wash over my soul.

Thank you, J.S. Stewart, Holman Hunt and Dean Goffin.

WHAT SHALL THIS MAN DO?
WATCHMAN NEE

A gift from the training principal when I farewelled from college staff, this book is treasured because of the giver, the late Commissioner Geoffrey Dalziel, and also because it influenced me to learn to appreciate the rich variety of personalities amongst we Christians who form the Body of Christ in his earthly Kingdom.

Nee To-Sheng, known to his world wide readership as Watchman Nee, came from South China and following conversion in 1920 emerged as a strong evangelical leader in his homeland. The military and political turmoil that afflicted 20th century China caught up Nee in its wake and submerged him in adversity for the sake of the gospel. His personal story enhances his writing.

The author compares and contrasts Peter the fisherman, Paul the tentmaker and John the mender of nets to show how their inherent, redeemed talents were taken hold of by the Holy Spirit to build the New Testament Church. Nee suggests that the secular occupations of the three named apostles point to ministries required in the Church of today – the ingathering of souls, wise building according to the heavenly vision and, if setbacks demand, a work of mending and renewing.

It helped me to identify my gifts and strengths and to appreciate those of my comrade Salvationists who could, by God's good grace, supply what I lack. Further, I was assured that God did not expect me to be omni-competent but that, as members of his family, my sisters and brothers in the faith could contribute what I lack and for the good of all. I found, and still find that to be a liberating truth.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS GIFTS J. OSWALD SANDERS

During 1987 I transferred to New Zealand to serve as the training principal. I took this book with me after carefully choosing which items of my personal library to leave in store in Australia in order to meet the limit placed upon movement of our personal effects. Sanders, a New Zealander, was for a time the leader of the NZ Bible Institute before moving to the South Pacific region of China Inland Mission and later to the Overseas Missionary Fellowship. His passionate evangelical heart and mind is clearly reflected in his writings, especially in this book.

Having had advance notification of the transfer to NZ I sought to prepare myself as best I could for the move. What I did not discover until I arrived, however, was that the Salvation Army in the 'land of the long white cloud' was caught up in a ferment of charismatic renewal. Strong renewal tides were creating cross currents that clashed with an equally strong reaction in favour of maintaining traditional Salvationist theology and practice. The then territorial commander, Commissioner Wesley Harris, appointed me to chair a working party to present recommendations to reconcile the various factions and to wed the hopes and dreams of both camps as may have been pleasing to God. Those appointed to serve on the working party represented all aspects of the

issue and were, in reality, a microcosm of the territory itself. At the end of many hours and months of heart searching, prayerful deliberation a consensus emerged that gave rise to our final report that was presented, on a memorable Saturday morning, to a gathering of THQ heads of department. The debate that ensued was more unforgettable than memorable! Our wise, courageous territorial commander, using the report as chart and compass, steered the territory to a safe haven where the waves were eventually less threatening.

My debt to Sanders' book during that time was considerable. God caused me to bring my own life under his kind but searching eye as I chaired the working party; for me it was far from an academic exercise. Sanders' teaching on the gifts, the fruit and the infilling of the Holy Spirit enlightened my mind and stirred my heart. That I could offer our New Zealand working party such sound teaching from so revered an evangelical countryman was an asset not to be under-valued. Of course the added benefit was the enrichment of my ministry to the cadets.

God knew what awaited me when he led me to carry the book across the ocean in preparation for another life changing challenge.

Five books that shaped my life

by Major Willis Howell

Hmmm... Five books that have helped to shape my life?! Five books that have in some way contributed to and impacted who I am, how I think, how I minister, how I view God, people, situations, and all life that goes on around me. Five books that have contributed to where I am, how I am at my core. How on earth do you settle on **only** five books? Five **authors** might be an easier task, but I admit, only slightly easier.

Have you ever seen one of those candy stores that makes fudge right in front of everyone who passes by their shop window? You usually find them in tourist towns. If you have, you'll probably be familiar with their practice of being very willing, in fact *eager* to give you a small sample of the still-warm fudge they've just made. And of course you know why: They hope that the small sample will entice you to go in for a whole box of fudge.

In the same way, as I list out a few titles of what have been life-shaping books for me (not in any order of significance or preference, I might add), I thought I'd offer you a small "taste" from each of them. Who knows, maybe the fudge maker's technique will work here, too!

Here we go...

"What's So Amazing About Grace?" by Philip Yancey

For you long-time JAC readers, you'll recognize that this book was cited by some contributors the last time JAC ran this feature (Issue #26 – August/September 2003). I desperately wanted to offer some fresh titles and perspectives to this discussion, but for all my consideration of the books that have impacted my life's "shape", I simply can't keep this title off my list. *What's So Amazing About Grace* was as transformational to my views of the law and grace as when Dorothy walks out of her black-and-white, Kansas farmhouse life into the technicolor wonder of the Land of Oz. In a nutshell, this book absolutely revolutionized my understanding of the incredible gift of *grace* in a way I've never recovered from.

Here's just a sample...

- *During a British conference on comparative religions, experts from around the world debated what, if any, belief was unique to the Christian faith. They began elimination possibilities. Incarnation? Other religions had different versions of gods appearing in human form. Resurrection? Again, other religions had accounts of return from death. The debate went on for some time until C.S. Lewis wandered into the room. "What's the rumpus about?" he asked, and heard in reply that his colleagues were discussing Christianity's unique contribution among world religions. Lewis responded, "Oh, that's easy. It's grace."*

After some discussion, the conferees had to agree. The notion of God's love coming to us free of charge, no strings attached, seems to go against every instinct of humanity. The Buddhist eight-fold path, the Hindu doctrine of karma, the Jewish covenant, and Muslim code of law – each of these offers a way to earn approval. Only Christianity dares to make God's love unconditional.

Philip Yancey, *What's So Amazing About Grace?*, (Page 45)

- *A phrase used by both Peter and Paul has become one of my favorite images from the New Testament. We are to administer or "dispense" God's grace, say the two apostles. The image brings to mind one of the old-fashioned "atomizers" women used before the perfection of spray technology. Squeeze a rubber bulb, and droplets of perfume come shooting out of the fine holes at the other end. A few drops suffice for a whole body; a few pumps change the atmosphere in a room. That is how grace should work, I think. It does not convert the entire world or an entire society, but it does enrich the atmosphere.*

Now I worry that the prevailing image of Christians has changed from that of a perfume atomizer to a different spray apparatus: the kind used by insect exterminators. There's a roach! Pump, spray, pump, spray. There's a spot of evil! Pump, spray, pump, spray. Some Christians I know have taken on the task of "moral exterminator" for the evil-infested society around them.

I share a deep concern for our society. I am struck, though, by the alternative power of mercy as demonstrated by Jesus, who came for the sick and not the well, for the sinners and not the righteous. Jesus never countenanced evil, but he did stand ready to forgive it. Somehow, he gained the reputation as a lover of sinners, a reputation that his followers are in danger of losing today. As Dorothy Day put it, "I really only love God as much as I love the person I love the least."

Philip Yancey, *What's So Amazing About Grace?*, (Page 158)

OK, before I quote the entire book to you and violate every copyright law ever created, just go out, buy the book for yourself and read it!

"Into the Depths of God" by Calvin Miller

I really enjoy reading authors who choose their words carefully, calculatedly, and intentionally in order to bring the reader to a precise understanding or particular insight in a way that maximizes the message. For my tastes, Calvin Miller is a skilled master of this sort of word-crafting.

Into the Depths of God, was instrumental in leading me, well, *deeper* into the mystery and wonder of the love **of** God in such a way as to impact my love **for** Him. It helped to draw me away from the shallow, frothy, splashy, program-driven busyness that easily passes for spiritual substance, and brought about a holy hunger to discover what God

has for me – and others – far below the surface of things. “It’s the difference between water skiing and scuba diving,” as a friend of mine puts it.

Note that what I share below from the book doesn’t even go beyond the introduction(!).

- *Most of us dress our Christian faith in an ill-fitting discipleship that, like a cheap suit, leaves us uncomfortable most of our lives. Among our friends at church we struggle to keep our reputation for godliness bannered forth. We would like to appear to be like Jesus without the discipline of really being like him. Reading several dozen fill-in-the-blanks self-help manuals, we talk ourselves into a spiritual reputation we have never really earned. We continue to live on the surface, only talking of the deeper life.*

Calvin Miller, *Into the Depths of God*, (Introduction, pg. 13)

- *In some ways it seems to me that much of Christianity is a conversation of snorklers talking to each other of scuba experiences. If mere conversation or study groups were the path to depth experience, the church would be deep indeed. But it is those who read and pray, not those who philosophize and chatter, who arrive at lives of real power.*

Calvin Miller, *Into the Depths of God*, (Introduction, pg. 16)

- *In the depths we meet our smallness, our powerlessness, our need. On the positive side, we discover the folly of trying to find our satisfaction in surface relationships. We learn to credit that God hides neither his greatness nor our self-understanding in three hurried minutes of Bible reading a day. We suddenly know that the immensity of God never comes wrapped in contrived public prayers, where many – either consciously or unconsciously – are prone to approve themselves to their merely human auditors.*

Calvin Miller, *Into the Depths of God*, (Introduction, pg. 17)

- *We are stopped short of the deep hunger to know him by our contentment to play in the shallows of our little “askings.”*

Calvin Miller, *Into the Depths of God*, (Introduction, pg. 17)

“How Now Shall We Live?” by Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey

I’ve shared how I enjoy authors who have a gift with words. I also enjoy writers who challenge my comfort and cause me to think. That brings me to this selection.

Before reading *How Now Shall We Live?*, I’m embarrassed to say that I had never really given a serious thought to the concept of a “worldview,” biblical or otherwise. I was generally content to live and operate within the familiar confines of my Christian bubble – surrounded by folks who looked like me, thought like me, behaved like me – insulated

from the changing culture around me. The culture beyond my familiar, comfortable, self-imposed boundaries gave me plenty to preach about, but beyond that it wasn't something for **me** to address, let alone engage or change. Then, along came Chuck Colson and this book, and pop! – there went my bubble. Through what I read, I saw that when you're talking about a worldview (literally, how you view what has and does go on **in** the world), where you stand and what you understand, accept, and apply has a HUGE impact on your perspective (go figure...)! This book helped to awaken my awareness and to shape the opinions I hold about engaging culture from a biblical position.

Please know that from time to time you do have to sidestep Colson's reformed theology. But that shouldn't keep you from this book. The core message of the book has the potential to open your eyes and revolutionize your thinking – and in turn, your **actions** – in important ways.

Here're a few samples...

- *If the church turns inward now, if we focus only on our own needs, we will miss the opportunity to provide answers at a time when people are sensing a deep longing for meaning and order. It is not enough to focus exclusively on the spiritual, on Bible studies and evangelistic campaigns, while turning a blind eye to the distinctive tensions of contemporary life. We must show the world that Christianity is more than a private belief, more than personal salvation. We must show that it is a comprehensive life system that answers all of humanity's age-old questions: Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? Does life have any meaning and purpose?*

As we will argue in these pages, Christianity offers the only viable, rationally defensible answers to these questions. Only Christianity offers a way to understand both the physical and the moral order. Only Christianity offers a comprehensive worldview that covers all areas of life and thought, every aspect of creation. Only Christianity offers a way to live in line with the real world.

Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, **How Now Shall We Live?**, (Introduction, pg. xi)

- *A debilitating weakness in modern evangelicalism is that we've been fighting cultural skirmishes on all sides without knowing what the war itself is about. We have not identified the worldviews that lie at the root of cultural conflict – and this ignorance dooms our best efforts... The real war is a cosmic struggle between worldviews – between the Christian worldview and the various secular and spiritual worldviews arrayed against it.*

Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, **How Now Shall We Live?**, (Page 17)

- *...if we are to restore our world, we first have to shake off the comfortable notion that Christianity is merely a personal experience, applying only to one's private life. No man is an island, wrote the Christian poet John Donne. Yet one of the*

*great myths of our day is that we **are** islands – that our decisions are personal and that no one has a right to tell us what to do in our private lives. We easily forget that every private decision contributes to the moral and cultural climate in which we live, rippling out in ever widening circles – first in our personal and family lives, and then in the broader society.*

Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live?*, (Page 294)

Commissioner Brengle's Books

OK, I have to ask you for just a bit of latitude here as I'm trying to pass off an eight-book collection (nine, if you include his biography) as a single work. Believe me – I really tried to settle on just one of the Brengle series. It's just that I kept coming back to looking at them as a whole work. Please understand it's not that I see them as necessarily building on each other, or progressing the Commissioner's thought from one book to the next. Rather, I find that they echo, compliment and reinforce each other (does that make sense to you?). Taken as a whole I think they offer a broader, more complete insight into the heart and mind of Brengle, his experience and his message. Not only that, but I also see my Brengle collection as a whole because that's how I first read them – one after another. So from that perspective, I have to include Brengle's collected works to this listing because together they meet the criteria this feature is focusing on, "...books that have helped to shape my life."

Simply put, the reading of Brengle's works led to my sanctification (how's **that** for life-shaping?!). As I read, the Spirit stirred. I was drawn to the idea of a life of perfect love. Could it **really** be possible? I had talked with enough folks who actually knew Brengle to know that the life he lived was consistent with the experience he described in his books. So one Sunday in 1983, as Lt. Colonel Ernest Miller preached an incredible message on Philippians 3, I went for it. And what do you know – it's **true!!** So these books more than qualify as life-shapers for me.

Now if you've read Brengle's books you know that he speaks on other subjects besides holiness. He also covers topics such as preaching, evangelism, Bible study, etc. Beyond those subjects, and the many more he addresses, I also believe that the Lord gave him a prophetic word of warning for the Army. While the lines below were written during the first part of the 20th century, the dangers he described are frighteningly real for Salvationists in the 21st century. See what **you** think...

- *...it is this Holiness – the doctrine, the experience, the action – that we Salvationists must maintain, otherwise we shall betray our trust; we shall lose our birthright; we shall cease to be a spiritual power in the earth; we shall have a name to live, and yet be dead; our glory will depart; and we, like Samson shorn of his locks, shall become as other men; the souls with whom we are entrusted will grope in darkness or go elsewhere for soul-nourishment and guidance; and while we may still have titles and ranks, which will have become vainglorious, to bestow upon our children, we shall have no heritage to bequeath them of martyr-*

like sacrifice, or spiritual power, or dare-devil faith, of pure, deep joy, of burning love, of holy triumph.

Commissioner Samuel Logan Brengle, **Love Slaves**

- *The Army is so thoroughly organized and disciplined, so wrought into the life of nations, so fortified with valuable properties, and on such a sound financial basis, that it is not likely to perish as an organization, but it will become a spiritually dead thing if love leaks out. Love is the life of The Army. “If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us.” But if love leaks out we shall lose our crown, we shall have a name to live and yet be dead. We may still house the homeless, dole out food to the hungry, punctiliously perform our routine work, but the mighty ministry of the Spirit will no longer be our glory. Our musicians will play meticulously, our Songsters will revel in the artistry of song that tickles the ear, but leaves the heart cold and hard. Our Officers will make broad their phylacteries and hob-nob with mayors and councilmen and be greeted in the marketplace, but God will not be among us. We shall still recruit our ranks and supply our Training Garrisons with Cadets from among our own Young People, but we shall cease to be saviors of the lost sheep that have no shepherd.*

In so far as this spirit rules in our hearts God can work with us and bless us, and the spiritual triumphs and glory of The Army for the future are assured. But in so far as these graces of the Spirit in us fail, so far will The Army as a spiritual power in the earth fail.

Commissioner Samuel Logan Brengle, **Ancient Prophets and Modern Problems**

Since I’ve already taken liberties with the number of books I’ve included on my list of five, let me wrap it up by offering my final entry. Let’s see...should it be Erwin McManus’ **The Barbarian Way** (Wow! What a red-hot passionate read that was!), or Reggie McNeal’s **The Present Future** (talk about a timely wake-up call for the Church...!), or Andy Stanley’s **The Next Generation Leader** (now there’s a great, short book on Christian leadership)...? What should I choose?

Let’s go with this...

“Growing True Disciples” by George Barna

Actually, this would represent one of the newest life-shaping books on my personal favorites list. In fact it made such an impact on my life and ministry, I used it for the course textbook in the Discipleship class taught here at the USA South Training School. What’s more, is that we have incorporated actual “discipleship” – the act of, not just the study of – into our curriculum. Our cadets are being actively and intentionally *disciplined*, not simply taught the “theory” of discipleship.

You see, while I would love to be proven wrong, my observation as a life-long Salvationist, having lived in all four of the U.S. Territories at one time or another, is that the Army has all but deserted the field when it comes to actually **making** disciples. It's not that we're against it. We simply don't **do** it (maybe it's different where you live. If so, praise God!!). While we've more or less held on to a desire to evangelize, the "infant mortality rate" among those who **do** become "born again" as a result of some form of contact with the Army is staggering.

True to the form in most of his books, *Growing True Disciples* includes a number of statistics based on his fairly extensive research (NOTE: *The statistics quoted and the disturbing picture they help paint relate to the practices and views of Christians here in America. Hopefully the situation in your country is far more positive!*).

Barna fills the book with his passion until it absolutely overflows, as you can see from the excerpts below:

- *Discipleship...is about being and reproducing spiritually mature zealots for Christ. (I LOVE that definition! –WH)*

*I believe the intensity conveyed by the word **zealot** is important for us to associate with discipleship. Most Christians lack a true understanding of the context within which Jesus' disciples were developed. As a result, we tend to minimize the investment required to be a follower of Jesus Christ. When we hear that the apostles were followers of Jesus, the image that comes to mind is of people who tagged along after the Lord on His walks through the hot, dusty towns of Judea. The followers were there to listen, to watch, and to be amazed at what the Son of God did in their presence...*

Unfortunately, the twenty-first century church has many "followers" of Christ in the sense that I follow the Yankees (an American baseball team): We dabble in Christianity. That's not what Jesus had in mind when He called us to be His disciples. He is seeking people who are absolutely serious about becoming new creations in Him – individuals who are fanatics, zealots, mesmerized, passionate about the cause, completely devoted to mimicking their model down to the last nuance.

George Barna, ***Making True Disciples***, (pages 18-19)

- *The true disciple of Jesus Christ is someone who is completely sold out to Christianity. To determine whether you really are a disciple, the relevant question concerns your level of commitment: **To what are you absolutely, fanatically devoted?** Jesus did not minister, die, and rise from the dead merely to enlist fans. He gave everything He had to create a community of uncompromising zealots – raving, unequivocal, undeterable, no-holds-barred spiritual revolutionaries. He has no room for lukewarm followers. He is not interested in those who have titles, prestige, and self-sufficiency. He is searching for the broken, hopeless, helpless, spiritually dependant individuals who readily*

acknowledge that they cannot make any headway without a total and absolute dependence upon Him. He is seeking the hearts of those who are willing to surrender everything for the blessed privilege of suffering for Him, just as He suffered for us. He wants people who are dedicated to getting beyond the offer of mere salvation to those who are willing to do what it takes to complete a personal transformation.

George Barna, ***Making True Disciples***, (pages 98-99)

Man, that fires me up! This guy has the passion of a Salvationist!! He may belong to some other denomination, but I'm telling you that there's Blood and Fire in his heart!

Well there you have it. Those are some of the books that have left their indelible marks on my heart, my attitude, and my behaviors. I hope that through the little tastes that have accompanied my list – which have also made my portion of this feature r-e-a-l-l-y long – that you've read something that sparked a thought, or better still, lit a flame. If so, take care of it. Nurture it. Develop it. Feed it. Don't let it go out – it's from God!

Leviticus 6:13 (NLT)

Remember, the fire must be kept burning on the altar at all times. It must never go out.

Five books that shaped my life

By Captain Amy Reardon

Though a great many books have built into my character, my perception, my vantage point of the world, there are a few which stand out in my personal formation. Let me pay tribute to those great works here.

Helps to Holiness, Samuel Logan Brengle. I first read this book when I was about 16. It made me so angry, I actually threw it against the wall. “No one can live like this!” I thought. Brengle indeed makes extreme assertions about the ability of a Christian to live a pure life. But the reason this book was so important in my life is that it sent me on a lifelong spiritual and educational pursuit. I have been trying to understand personal holiness from a biblical perspective since the day I first picked up that book. I have read dozens of books on the subject. I have prayed, wept, searched and searched the Scriptures and even studied the original biblical languages – all in pursuit of knowing what it is to be holy-**for God’s glory**-and how I can get there. Although that subject is no longer such an all-consuming passion (there are other theological matters which also require deep reflection!), it is safe to say that that little book set the course of my life.

The Great Divorce, C.S. Lewis. As a young person, I was terrified at the thought of eternal life. Trying to cope with the idea was – and I kid you not – mental anguish for me. I was quite tormented by it. Then I read *The Great Divorce*. Lewis’s charming journey into the next life for a Christian brought me genuine peace. And his allegorical tale of the fate of those who rejected the Gospel was extraordinary. Few writers can engage the Christian imagination the way Lewis could. I wish every Christian would read this book.

The Curate’s Awakening and *Sir Gibbie* (two separate books), George MacDonald. I don’t remember how I originally stumbled upon this 19th century storyteller, but when I learned that C.S. Lewis considered him his “master” in the craft, his greatness was confirmed! I don’t read much fiction, but these and other novels by George MacDonald have meant as much to my spiritual growth as any of the theology books I cherish. The spiritual journey of the curate is as real to any Christian today as it was 130 years ago. The example of Christlikeness of some of the humblest characters-Sir Gibbie, for example-is enough to make a person seriously evaluate her own life and her own reflection of the Savior. I would never have believed that a work of fiction could be such a tool in the Holy Spirit’s hand. One may pick up MacDonald for the great story, and put it down feeling quite changed.

For the record, MacDonald is also known for allegorical fantasy; I have never read any of those works.

A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew, C.L. Seow. Placing this on my list may raise some eyebrows. I cannot deny it, and I cannot fully explain it: studying the Hebrew language changed my life. I don’t know if it is my love of a good challenge, my passion for words, or my penchant for study. Perhaps it is the combination of those aspects of my

personality that have made me fall in love with the study of Hebrew. Though my skills are quite limited (please never put me on the spot!), digging in with the study of this language has deepened my understanding of the Old Testament and even the New. I have learned that there is a great fullness to certain words that can be lost in translation. I know that there are books in which people can look up these things without learning Hebrew. But for me, somehow, studying the language was important. In my journey, it has brought me closer to God.

Most Moved Mover, Clark Pinnock. There are those within the evangelical community that consider this book heretical. Most of the theologians who feel that way are of the Reformed persuasion. The understanding of God within the pages of this book is the natural outgrowth of Arminianism – the doctrine we claim. This book so deeply resonated with me I shouted with glee and wept with relief. It takes courage for me to put this book on my list because of some people's strong reaction against it. I suspect those people, especially if they are Wesleyan/Arminian, simply haven't read it. I was afraid of it and assumed Pinnock a great heretic. Finally I decided it wasn't fair to draw such conclusions without having read it for myself. I'm so glad I did!

Five books that shaped my life

By Captain Genevieve Peterson

The Holy Bible, God: Ok, this is a given...but it did shape my life! I became a Christian when I was eighteen and I just couldn't get enough of the Gospels. I felt like Jesus was sitting with me in my little caravan (that was my bedroom in our backyard...big family) and personally teaching me all I had missed in my life. I was transformed a little more each time I read.

Satan Seller, Mike Warnke? I do not recommend anyone read this book! It was given to me by a youth leader as I had spoken to him of my brief history with the occult prior to becoming a Christian. To this day I do not know what he was thinking and have a giggle about it from time to time. It is basically about a guy who gets caught up in the Satanic church and then converts to Christianity. Good story of victory...however $\frac{3}{4}$ of the book is filled with hideous recounts of satanic practice and consequences of disobedience to Satan. From my little caravan I would read this book, too scared to turn the pages, and then pray desperately that Jesus really would protect me. I think I slept with the light on, clinging to my Bible for three weeks before I started to feel safe! But because of this experience, I certainly have taken spiritual warfare more seriously which has been invaluable in my shaping. This was further encouraged later in life by 'Intercessory Prayer' which totally changed my strategy but which has been named many times by others as a favourite book, and I don't want Dutch to lose his humility by naming it once more.

A Cry in the Wilderness, Keith Green: Ah Keith, one of my heroes. This book basically gives a chapter by chapter run down of what you need to know in order to be a disciple. It is simple, but very firm and for a new Christian, it was exactly what I needed to shape me. It is filled with classic Keith quotes like "the Holy Spirit doesn't want the flesh for a room mate" and "God, why not teach me how to be a gracious and humble rich person instead?" and "prayer is the gas in out gas tank." I don't want to overstate it, but this book is possibly the most radical and hard core book I have ever read! I highly recommend this book to new Christians and tragically it tends to be received more positively than his music!

I'll fight, Phil Wall: This was the first Salvo book I read and gave me a taste of the real Army. I was pumped! Till this point, I really had no idea of the extreme and militant nature of our early days and while I was aware of a calling to the poor, I had no idea it extended into a complete life of sacrifice and covenant of its soldiers. It certainly confirmed the calling I had to serve within The Salvation Army and led to me read a bunch of other books that have pushed me further and further into the type of life I hope resembles the warriors of our beginnings.

He chose the nails, Max Lucado: This book strongly impacted my life, not so much for its content but more for its application. It so clearly articulated the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross that I found it to be a great evangelism tool. I gave it to one young girl a centre I was working in, and we discussed a few chapters over her stay. After a

couple of days off, I came on for my night shift, and I went to find her to check on her progress. Not in her room or anywhere else I could see I began to grow concerned. I did find her eventually. She was hanging from the back of a toilet door. We managed to revive her, but it occurred to me afterward just how broken and hurting this world really was. This I would say was a catalyst for my journey toward Officership, though I surely didn't know it at the time. While on the one hand, I wanted to run away and hide from the people who could cause me such sorrow and disappointment, the deeper part of me realized it was going to be my life work. So I guess you could say that this book was my first attempt to do ministry to 'real' people and led to an attempted suicide, however I prefer to see it as a symbol of my journey away from the protection of middle-class ministry and into the minefield of mission to the poor.

You are Special, Max Lucado...again!: It's such a simple children's book that tells the story of sad and lonely boy who discovers he has been made and is loved by his Maker. I have used this book countless times and find that it is the easiest way to introduce children to God. Many of the children I work with fail to see any purpose in life, and cannot compute the concept of a God who loves them. They don't know love and they don't know God. And yet after this story, they begin to see the possibility of fullness and hope, and are open to finding out more about their maker. It's an invaluable tool and I highly recommend you use it to grow your children's work.

Well, most of those books came early in my Christian journey. I promise I have read other books since then! But these are the books that started the shaping...

Five books that shaped my life

by Commissioner Joe Noland

The Power of Positive Thinking, Norman Vincent Peale.

I have always had a tendency toward pessimism and cynicism. Whether hereditary or conditional, I don't know, but an educated guess leads me to believe it to be a combination of both. Thus early on, during a searching, dark period of my young life, I discovered this book, read it, reread parts of it many times and practiced religiously the recommended exercises following each chapter. This book helped shape my outlook on life, catapulting me forward as a possibility thinker.

Move Ahead With Possibility Thinking, Robert Schuller.

This book served as reinforcement to Peale's teachings later on in my Salvation Army career. Having been the corps officer at Santa Ana and Orange County coordinator for eight years, we observed closely the visionary accomplishments of this man, becoming acquainted with him and his ministry up close and personal. His writings helped to expand within me an already burgeoning vision and fertile imagination.

Self-Renewal: The Individual and the Innovative Society, John W. Gardner.

This book was required reading whilst working on my Master's Degree. I was Territorial Youth and Candidate's Secretary at the time, literally being beaten up by the bureaucratic machinery, so much so that I was beginning to think there was something wrong with me. This research and these writings reinforced my own self innovative worth, so much so that I purchased a copy and sent it to every top Salvation Army administrative leader nationally. This was one of those "Wow!" books for me. In fact, it is now dog eared, falling apart with underlining galore and the word, "Wow!" written on the side of almost every column.

A New Call to Holiness: A Restudy and Restatement of New Testament Teaching concerning Christian Sanctification, J. Sidlow Baxter.

As a maturing Salvation Army officer, I struggled with Samuel Logan Brengle's teachings on holiness because my inherited disposition seemingly didn't match his; we were not two peas in a pod. This book was a God send answering all of the doubts and questions plaguing me at the time. A moment of enlightenment came when I realized that Brengle was right and so was I, just coming at it from different dispositional perspectives. These writings were to shape my teaching and preaching in the years to come.

Orbiting the Giant Hairball: A Corporate Fool's Guide to Surviving with Grace, Gordon MacKenzie.

At the beginning of my tenure as Territorial Commander, this book miraculously arrived on my desk, the gift a fellow other ministry cohort. I gobbled the contents up immediately and still it left me wanting for more, I just couldn't get enough of it. Its message was so creative and so powerful that I purchased a copy for every officer in the territory. These writings became foundational to everything that followed and is still a companion piece during these very active retiring years, pushing me on creatively. It is the most innovative book I have ever read, both in content and style, the kind I wish I had written.

Five books that shaped my life

by Captain Stephen Court

As editor of Journal of Aggressive Christianity, I've been blessed by the contributions of many great Salvationists over the years. In one feature, leaders such as Clifton, Harris, Phillips, Munn, and Strickland described five books that shaped their lives. It has become a classic issue, not just because one of the contributors became General.

One of the joys of being editor is being able to succumb to the temptation to jump into the fray with my own two cents' worth! After reading the submissions, I couldn't resist.

I've read a bunch of the books included by these greathearts commended above. But I am happy to say that I've got a fresh list! While I've benefited by 20th century writers (such as Ravi Zacharias, Commissioner Ed Read, Peter Wagner, Jack Deere, and Charles Colson), I've chosen books by my heroes.

In 1777, John Wesley wrote an apologetic of his doctrine of holiness called **A PLAIN ACCOUNT OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION**. He took the high road in the extremely charged debate of the day, allowing John Fletcher to scale the polemical heights in his **CHECKS TO ANTINOMIANISM**. His simple 'question and answer' format was imitated by General William Booth in Booth's potent little 1903 book, **THE DOCTRINES OF THE SALVATION ARMY** (subtitled, "Prepared for the use of Cadets in Training For Officership"). Wesley patiently answered every critic's question, every skeptic's doubt, and every cynic's disparagement with historically documented explanation of this Biblical doctrine. Now, **A PLAIN ACCOUNT** stands in for Fletcher's **CHECKS**, and for Samuel Logan Brengle's practical guides, especially **HELPS TO HOLINESS** (a book I carried along with my Bible on a bicycle to our neighbourhood park, where I sat, determined not to leave until I experienced the holiness described therein). **A PLAIN ACCOUNT** is precious not only as a defence but as a promise of what is possible.

The year after Wesley was promoted to Glory was born a man who would walk in his huge shoes. Across the ocean, Charles Finney stoked the fires of revival through the eastern United States. His preaching was so hardcore and so manifestly accompanied by the power of God that multitudes were transformed and cities were turned upside down. His **LECTURES ON REVIVALS OF RELIGION** (1835) is an account of the preaching that changed a nation. The sister volume is the stubbornly named, **AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY BY THE REVEREND CHARLES G. FINNEY, 1792-1875** (1876). Together they tell a divine story that rips the placid satisfaction right out of you.

It wasn't two years after Finney was promoted to Glory that Catherine and William Booth made a name change that has changed the world. While John Wesley was the grandfather of The Salvation Army and Finney was dubbed 'the Presbyterian Salvationist' by the Booths themselves, my next choice, **PAPERS ON AGGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY**, was by the Army Mother herself (I'm hesitant to use that term, as she was the General and the Founder, too, but she *is* the only one who was the Mother). I could have chosen any of a few books by Booth. They are merely collections of her

preaching. They are merely fire on paper! Flames flick from her words off the page to practically lick your clothes. Each sermon oozes spiritual authority. Almost every paragraph shouts out to you with the urgency of the war.

This hero makes no concessions, no compromises, and no political 'correctitudes'. She put (and continues to put) a holy fear in me of the kind that doesn't cause cowering and retreat but impels total exertion to spread the dread. This helped shaped my life- I named a cyber journal after it (JAC) and an annual conference (ACC- Aggressive Christianity Councils).

Catherine Booth was promoted to Glory in 1890. Not coincidentally, Commissioner George Scott Railton was excommunicated from the halls of primitive Salvationist power in the same year (was it coincidental that this was the year of the death of primitive salvationism?). While not famous as an author, GSR battled as effectively with the pen as he did with the Bible. Backing up every page of **HEATHEN ENGLAND** was a life of unleashed resolve that GSR modeled for the world. My buddy called me this winter from training college to get suggestions for references. I recommended **HEATHEN ENGLAND** and **TWENTY-ONE YEARS' SALVATION ARMY**. He emailed a week later noting that my name was the last one written in the CFOT borrowing cards (And I've been an officer for ten years!). And that is tragic, because the book is literally revolutionary, recounting, as it does, contemporary history of the primitive salvationist war. The stuff he was writing was happening outside his window. The heroics that lace these pages are enough to gouge a hole in your casual, comfortable Christianity and leave in its place a wrenching hunger for the guts to live and fight for death and glory as our 19th century comrades did, and for the God of Railton to show up again today.

Railton outlived William Booth by a year. Booth has yet to get his due as an author. He wrote some unknown classics such as **SERGEANT-MAJOR DO-YOUR-BEST**, **SEVEN SPIRITS: Or, What I Tell My Officers**, **HOW TO PREACH**, **PURITY OF HEART**, all less famous than **IN DARKEST ENGLAND AND THE WAY OUT**. But my last choice is **VISIONS**. It is a collection of visions Booth had, the most renowned being 'Who Cares?' Not only is **VISIONS** eloquent, it persuasively depicts the divine. Booth doesn't settle with capturing your imagination- he grips it with a stranglehold.

The undercurrent is that Booth is all about the prophetic. He hears from God and conveys the message to us. Many of us have neglected this reality in our salvationism (Catherine prophesied that this movement shall inaugurate the great final conquest of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ). We can more easily marginalize modern classics by Rick Joyner like **FINAL QUEST** and **THE CALL**. But Joyner lines up right behind Booth's **VISIONS** for prophetic impact. And while I love the visions and the writing, I embrace the Army's experience and calling with the prophetic.

General Brown called **VISIONS**, "Booth at his best." This is ironic because Booth at his best was Booth stepping out of the way and conveying God's message faithfully to the world. I'm interested to hear about five books that have shaped your life. If The Officer doesn't have space for all of them, feel free to fire your list to revolution@mmccxx.net.

Meanwhile, join me in stepping out of the way and conveying God's message faithfully to the world.

The Welcome Table

by Major Brendan Nottle

Bono, the lead singer of U2, tells this story, "Before I had kids, I visited an Ethiopian camp/feeding station. A man came up to me with his little boy, a beautiful boy, and proud of his son, the man begged me to take his son home and through the translator he just repeated over and over, 'You take him with you. If he stays here, he will surely die'. The rules of the camp are that you can't take children home with you, you can't adopt them. But in some strange way that day, I did take that little boy home with me. That interface with extreme poverty that day has driven me to call people of influence, power and wealth to account for what they are doing, or not doing for their poor brothers and sisters around the world".

Here is a parable of the Kingdom of God:

"One time when Jesus went for a Sabbath meal with one of the top leaders of the Pharisees (Religious Leaders), all the guests had their eyes on him, watching his every move. Then Jesus turned to the host. "The next time you put on a dinner, don't just invite your friends and family and rich neighbours, the kind of people who will return the favour. Invite some people who never get invited out, the misfits from the wrong side of the tracks. You'll be – and experience – a blessing. They won't be able to return the favour, but the favour will be returned – Oh, how it will be returned! – at the resurrection of God's people."

(Luke 14:1, 12-14 The Message)

The issues of poverty and marginalisation are often debated in terms of what are the causes, are the poor themselves to blame for their condition, or can we do something to or for them to help improve their plight? God's response to the poor and marginalised is to bring them in. God wants us to bring them to the table, to invite them into relationship, to get to know who they are and what's going on in their lives (that's what happens when you have people around for a meal). This actually helps lay the foundations for developing a healthy community where everyone gets changed.

A famous African American Spiritual entitled "The Welcome Table", says this:

"We're gonna sit at the welcome table,

We're gonna sit at the welcome table one of these days, Hallelujah!...

All God's children around that table...

No more fightin' or grabbin' at the table...

I'm gonna walk the streets of glory...

I'm gonna get my civil rights...

We're gonna sit at the welcome table on these days."

The welcome table metaphor, when actually lived out, changes us and our approach to the poor. It helps us understand who the poor really are, what they need, and how the rest of us (and our values, our programs, our bureaucracy and our systems) need to change. The poor no longer remain at arms length, living in isolation, when we join

together at the welcome table, when they are truly invited to join us in our families and communities, together we find solutions to our problems.

When we join together at the welcome table, when we listen to understand and speak to be understood, a deep sense of compassion will be stirred within us, but compassion is only the doorway to change. Feeling and seeing what life is truly like for others is the beginning of change.

Some will cry out, in the words of the Beatles, "Love is all you need... love is the answer." The love of God is meant to be taken to the streets and tested on the streets. In so doing, we will soon realize that compassion is nice, but it isn't enough! We then need to heed the call for social justice. In the words of Jim Wallis, in his new book, "Seven ways to change the world", "Feeding hungry people is helpful, but it isn't enough. Asking why so many people are hungry is the justice question. Working in a homeless shelter or helping find someone accommodation is inspiring at times, but it isn't enough. Asking why there isn't more affordable housing available, or why home ownership is only the domain of the middle class is the justice question."

But even in calling for social justice, there is still the possibility of keeping a safe distance from the poor themselves, still the temptation to see problems to be fixed as concerning "them" and not "us". The third step is into solidarity or community or interdependence with the poor. It is at this point that we come to believe that we need one another, no matter what our background, and that everybody has things to give and to receive.

When we all gather at the welcome table, no matter what our background, we become filled with compassion, motivated to do justice, willing to live and work in healthy community. It is then that the image portrayed in U2's song, "Crumbs from your table", will hopefully become a fading reality, "...Where you live should not decide whether you live or die, Three to a bed – Sister Ann, she says, 'Dignity passes by'. And you speak of signs and wonders, Well I need something other, I would believe if I was able, But I'm waiting on the crumbs from your table".

Major Brendan Nottle

Vote for Jesus

by Captain Michael Ramsay
www.sheepspeak.com

Vote for Jesus: a look at 1 Corinthians 15:1-34

In Canada we have an election coming up again – the third in four years. All the 'experts' admit without a doubt that this one will be... a 'waste of taxpayer money'. Even our Prime Minister, who wants the election, admits that it won't change the working dynamics of parliament but it's a contest; a game like any other and the competitors want to win it.

I have gotten to know a number of politicians around here lately and as I was listening to one speech from a recently elected MLA, it reminded me of 1 Corinthians 15:20ff. Here is a paraphrase of that passage as if by a contemporary provincial politician:

"Our party's leader has indeed been raised high. He is first of a new breed of Premier. You see devastation came to this province from the previous government but the resurrection of the economy comes through our new government. For as with the old leader all of us were as good as dead, so with our new leader all will be made alive.

But each in his own turn: first the Premier, then his party members and supporters, then, by the time of the next election, the whole province that belongs to him. Then the time will come for the next election when, of course, his majority will be so big that it is like he will be handing over the province of Saskatchewan to God himself.

For our leader will by that time have destroyed all dominion, authority, power of the former regime: indeed there will be no more problems in this province at all. And we'll re-elect our leader, our government, and our party again and again, for he will reign forever in order to put all our troubles and crush all our enemies under his feet..."

It is amazing how political speeches have started to sound like scripture or sermons these days. The more I listen to political speeches and the more I watch the news, the more I realise that the world really is crying out for a messiah. The USA – which is also in the midst of an election campaign - every 4 years parades out at least one possible new messiah. Look at how people talk about Obama (particularly before McCain announced his running mate); there is no mention of his past failures, only an almost messianic hope for a bright new future as if he is the One.

For all its strengths, this is one of the main downfalls of western democracies. Every election people are mistakenly looking to parties, politicians, ideologies, platitudes, and other such nonsense to solve our problems - as if that is where our salvation comes from.

You know what? If Obama or McCain wins the next US election, he is not going to withdraw their troops from the more than 100 countries that they are in. He is not going

to beat their swords in the ploughshares (Isaiah 2:4, Micah 4:3). He will not be the 'Prince of Peace' (Isa 9:6). He will not end poverty (Matt 26:11, Mark 14:7). None of the presidential candidates can walk on water (Matt 14, Mark 6, John 6). Not one of them has been raised from the dead.

Likewise in Canada, regardless of who is elected, services will not improve so much that the blind will see and the lame will walk (Matt 15:31, Lk 7:22). A majority government by the Conservatives, Liberals, NDP, or even the Greens, is not going to solve all of our problems. Not one of our federal leaders can walk on water – no matter what their ads tell us – not one of them has been raised from the dead.

There is a leader though who has and he's not running in the election. There is a leader who has done all that and he lived 2000 years ago. This leader did all these things and more. He even preached good news to the poor and meant it and they believed him and then, like all great leaders, he died. Jesus died but it didn't end there and this is important. The Apostle Paul says:

"Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the good news (gospel) I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this good news (gospel) you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...(1 Corinthians 15: 1-4)"

This is the most important part of the Christian faith: Paul says that it is because of the good news (gospel) that Christ died for our sins, was buried and raised from the dead that we can be saved. It was in this that He actually won the eternal election.

It is only because Jesus did win that election; it is only because of His death and resurrection that we have any hope at all because if Christ wasn't raised from the dead then what is the point of 'being a Christian'? If Jesus just died and, without defeating death, moved on to whatever is next, what's the big deal? Why then would he be different from Martin Luther King Jr., Gandhi, Tommy Douglas, Mother Theresa, name your person... Why would he be so special? He wouldn't; he would just be another person.

"But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him (1 Corinthians 15:20-23)." We will all be resurrected so we can all be saved if we turn to or – drawing on our analogy of the election – if we vote for Christ.

Being born and raised on the west coast of Canada, I can remember watching the election returns on election night and it is always exciting but I can never remember a time when the election wasn't over before the polls were even closed on Vancouver

Island. The Prime Minister's party had always already won the election before we even finished voting out west. He had already defeated his foe. This is the same with Christ. Even though we each have until the last polls close (until we breathe our last breath) to cast our vote, Christ has already won the election. The only question we have is whether we want to join Him in His victory party or not. The election results were counted on the cross and announced at the empty tomb. Christ has won the victory.

Christ has already been resurrected and he is coming back to celebrate his victory and when the eternal polls close we will be resurrected too; we will all be raised (cf. Doctrine 11) and at that point some of us will be raised to eternal salvation and some of us – those who reject the opportunity – will be outside where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (cf. Matthew 8:12, 22:13). But it is our choice. The victory has already been won. We have all already been invited to the victory party.

Salvation is there for any of us who want it and this is important: there is the resurrection, there is the judgement at the end of the day and any of us who call on the name of the Lord at anytime before our polls close here can be saved! Jesus died and rose again so that whosoever may, will be saved!

Christ is our salvation. We should remember this as we cast our votes very soon (in our temporal elections) that there really is no other name by which we may truly be saved. Christ is the leader who deserves our full support. He is both liberal in His love and conservative in His steadfastness. He is neither a small 'd' democrat nor a small 'r' republican. He is a capital 'M' Monarchist – He is a King and He is the Son of the King. Unlike all the others who are trying to get us to turn to them for our salvation, He has actually run the race and won the election already. We are just waiting for the polls to close, so if you haven't done so already then go out and vote for Christ today: there is no other name by which we may be saved. The Lord raises up mere earthly governments and He topples them but when the eternal polls close and he does come back, make sure that He has your vote so that we will all be a part of His victory party at the resurrection of the just.

Our salvation comes from Christ alone.

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The Doctrine of Holiness – a Christocentric Perspective

by Major Alan Harley

The Doctrine of Holiness: A Christocentric Perspective

Alan Harley

Synopsis

Holiness of life cannot be divorced from the Person and Work of Christ.

To do so is to create a dualism¹ in our understanding of salvation whereas the New Testament sets forth a ‘full salvation’.

Christ taught that his followers were to lead holy lives

He himself lived such a life in a human body and with an authentic human nature

His redemptive work was focussed on a ‘full salvation’

He modelled holiness and by his abiding presence in the Spirit enables his followers to live in a sanctifying relationship with himself.

Introduction

Most Christians believe that they should have a code of conduct which reflects their belief in Christ. For some this amounts to pursuing good works and religious activities. For others it is an attempt to ‘imitate Christ’. For a significant number, whose company – sometimes small - can be traced in unbroken lineage through the centuries back to New Testament times, the special mark of Christ’s people is holiness of life.

This company can be found in all of the church’s historic traditions – Eastern, Roman, Lutheran, Reformed, Puritan, Pietist and Wesleyan. Most would agree with John Calvin: “We cannot be justified freely by grace alone, if we do not at the same time live in holiness.”²

This study will use the incarnation, teachings, example and redemptive work of Jesus Christ as its basis. It will endeavour to relate this Christological framework to subsequent teaching on the subject.

¹ “Dualism connotes the division of reality into two incompatible or independent domains” - Elmer Colyer, *How To Read T. F. Torrance*, IVP Downers Grove, 2001 p. 58

² Quoted by Donald Bloesch in *Jesus Christ Saviour and Lord*, IVP, 1997, p. 193

It has been common practice amongst teachers of the holy life to speak of ‘the blessing of holiness’ or ‘the blessing of a clean heart.’³ Holiness of life *is indeed* a blessing. But it needs to be noted that in Scripture all Christian experience is derivative – it comes directly from the living Christ by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Further, it is relational – it is the result of living in union with the Holy One.

Thus in this study we are looking not at an abstract ‘blessing’, even though there is no greater blessing or privilege than to ‘participate in the divine nature (2 Pet.1:4). Rather, as suggested above, we shall consider the Christological basis⁴ for the living of a holy life. Jesus lived a holy life, he taught his disciples that they (and we) should be holy, and he made provision for those who follow him to share his holiness.

Jesus the Teacher of Holiness

The teachings of Jesus as found in all four Gospels set forth a quality of life which is not only different in general from that of most people, but in particular of the overtly religious. He laid stress on a righteousness which exceeded ‘that of the Scribes and the Pharisees’ (Matt. 5:20). These words, contained in the Sermon on the Mount, follow his beatitudes (3-12) and his teaching on being the world’s salt and light (13-14). But not only in the Sermon, but throughout his teachings, he is setting forth a standard for his disciples which is in reality that of a holy life. It is marked by

- Purity (Matt. 5:8; Matt.23:26; 6:22)
- Love (Matt. 5:43 – 47; Mk. 12: 28 – 34; John 13:34, 35). Note: it is in the context of the Sermon on the Mount and its teaching on love that Jesus says “You must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt. 5:44 - 48)
- Obedience (John 14:15)
- The Spirit’s Empowering Presence (John 7:38; Acts 1:8)

A century ago Professor J. G. Tasker summarised what Jesus taught regarding the sanctification of his disciples:

³ It is also worthy of note that those same teachers tended to treat sin as a substance that could be removed or, as they term it, ‘eradicated’. Today the tendency is to see sin as more subtle and nuanced.

⁴ This endeavour is reflected at a wider level in the theological method of Torrance F. Torrance who speaks of his attempt to “cut a swath through the prevailing confusion about the nature of theological and biblical interpretation of divine revelation, so that Christ clothed with his gospel may be allowed to occupy the controlling center of the church’s life, thought, and mission in the world today. That is what evangelical theology is about, in its ontological commitment to the incarnate presence and activity of God in Jesus Christ within the objectivities and intelligibilities of our human existence (cont. next page) in space and time. Evangelical theology serves both the reality of God’s articulate self-revelation to mankind and the reality of the creaturely world in which we belong, in the integrity and wholeness of the life, teaching, and activity of the historical and risen Jesus Christ.” (*Reality and Evangelical Theology*, IVP Downers Grove, 1999, p.9).

It need occasion no surprise that even to His disciples our Lord should not speak directly concerning holiness until His farewell prayer. He asked that the men called to continue His mission might share His consecration. The reason for His reticence is that 'in Him, and for them, imported (*i.e.* 'signified) something – far more and other than it did in the religion of the day....Only as they saw the Lord devote His person in the consummating sacrifice would they be prepared to realise what their Christian consecration involved' (Findlay, *Expositor*, VI, [1901] iv.5). It is also significant that the prayer for His disciples' holiness should immediately follow the discourse in which our Lord expounds in welcome detail what is involved in the promise of the Spirit whose gracious indwelling is the secret of holiness.

The Gospels are The supreme revelation of holiness. The imitation of Christ is the royal road to holiness; His teaching concerning union with Himself and the bestowment of the Holy Spirit reveals the secret of holiness. The writers of the Epistles, under the guidance of their promised Teacher, unfolded the implications of their own experience and the purpose of the Incarnation, the Passion, the abiding Priesthood of the Son of God.

The stress laid on the positive idea, which is probably the primary conception of holiness, may serve to guard Christians against the error of supposing that holiness may be acquired by withdrawals and negations or by compliance with external regulations. Holiness means the attainment of the Divine Likeness, and this consists in moral qualities which are all comprised in holy love. The motive to holiness increases in strength as God is more perfectly known. In proportion as the Holy Father is known as He is, will be the gladness of our response to His claims, and the ardour of our desire to be like Him in this world. Into the world Christ sent the men for whose consecration He prayed, and His promise, "Ye shall know that ye are in me" (John 14:20), conveyed to them His assurance that 'in the world' they should attain to holiness. Life in Christ is holiness.⁵

Jesus – the Incarnation – and Holiness

a. The Paradox of Incarnation

The Christian faith is founded on Jesus Christ, described by John in the prologue to his Gospel as "the Word who was God and who was made flesh and dwelt among us." This remarkable statement affirms at one and the same time: Jesus Christ is God; God was made flesh." From Bible times to the present "God" and "flesh" have for many devout souls been seen as mutually exclusive terms. God is holy. Flesh is sinful. Holiness and 'the flesh' have nothing in common and indeed can never have any point of contact. But the New Testament writers persisted with this revolutionary (and for many, blasphemous) idea.

Faced with the paradox of the Incarnation the author of the Pastoral Epistles exclaimed, "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16). Paul says that God sent "his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom.8:3). The writer to

⁵ *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, ed. J. Hastings, Vol. 1, T. & T. Clark 1906, p.730

the Hebrews says that Christ “partook of the same nature” as those whom he came to save (Heb. 2:14). And prior to his birth it was said to Mary, “the child to be born will be called holy, and the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). He would ‘be born’, i.e. he would be truly human, and he would be truly ‘holy’.

b. The Purposes of Incarnation

To Reveal God’s Holiness to Humankind

T. F. Torrance observes

It is only by keeping close to Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Offspring of the Father’s Nature, that we may in some measure know and speak of God in accordance with what he is in his Nature in a way that is both godly and accurate.⁶

In Jesus we encounter God. He is the final Revelation of God (Heb. 1:1,2). Thus we are in error if we seek that revelation outside of Christ. Even God’s handiwork in creation cannot provide it to us. Thus we must not look outside of Christ to understand the holiness of God. At times that holiness, as revealed in Jesus, elicited much the same response as when it was encountered in Old Testament times (compare Isa.6:5 “..I am a man of unclean lips, for my eyes have seen the Lord” with Luke 5:8 “depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord”).

To Build a Bridge between God and Humankind

Karl Barth says

Certainly in *Jesus Christ*, as He is attested in Holy Scripture, we are not dealing with man in the abstract: not with the man who is able with his modicum of religion and religious morality to be sufficient unto himself without God and thus himself to be God. But neither are we dealing with God in the abstract: not with one who in His deity exists only separated from man, distant and strange and thus a non-human if not indeed an inhuman God. In Jesus Christ there is no isolation of man from God or of God from man. Rather, in Him we encounter the history, the dialogue, in which God and man meet together and are together, the reality of the covenant *mutually* contracted, preserved, and fulfilled by them. Jesus Christ is in His one Person, as true *God*, *man’s* loyal partner, and as true *man*, *God’s*. He is the Lord humbled for communion with man and likewise the Servant exalted to communion with God. He is the Word spoken from the loftiest, most luminous transcendence and likewise the Word heard in the deepest, darkest immanence. He is both, without their being confused but also without their being divided; He is wholly the one and wholly the other. Thus in this oneness Jesus Christ is the Mediator, the Reconciler, between God and man. Thus He comes forward to *man* on behalf of *God* calling and awakening faith, love, and hope, and to *God* on behalf of *man*, representing *man*, making satisfaction and interceding. Thus He attests and guarantees to man God’s

⁶ T. F. Torrance, *Trinitarian Perspectives*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1999 p.134

free *grace* and at the same time attests and guarantees to God man's free *gratitude*.⁷

To Provide a 'full' Salvation

God, in Christ, was "made flesh" in order to accomplish his redemptive purposes. The early church Fathers understand this when they affirmed "that which is unassumed is unhealed."

But in addition to this remarkable truth there is something more. "*God was manifest in the flesh*" (1 Tim.3:16). It was *God himself* who appeared 'in the flesh'. This is the God of absolute holiness (Isa. 6).

Such holiness is not merely an attribute of God. God's very nature is holiness. God does not 'possess' holiness; He *is* holy. Thus there was a time when true, perfect, ultimate holiness, was seen here on earth. And it was not seen by the repudiation of the 'flesh' but in and through that flesh.

This is the starting point for our understanding of the life of holiness. In the context of an authentic human life, one which was "at all points tempted as we are" (Heb. 4:15), perfect holiness was 'fleshed out'. The great paradox of the Incarnation is that Jesus Christ was and is "truly and properly God and truly and properly man."

As a man he experienced suffering, sorrow, joy, disappointment, temptations, peace, anger, joy, loneliness and all the other emotions and life experiences that are known to us.

At the same time he lived a consistently holy life so that those who looked at one who was "made flesh" and who "dwelt among" them could say that as they observed his life they "beheld his glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:1-14).

The incarnation says, holiness and 'the flesh' are compatible. It says that a human being can be holy. It says that holy living is for this life as well as the next.

Because of this Jesus is rightly seen as our example (John 13:15; 1 Pet. 2:21; 1 John 2:6).

Jesus – Redemption – and Holiness

The Cross, and Cleansing

⁷ Karl Barth, *The Humanity of God*, John Knox, Virginia, 1960 pp. 46, 47

Since the dawn of Christianity good people have asked, “Why did Christ die?”. Numerous theories of the atonement have been advanced. Some have risen to the ascendancy and have gained general support of some denominations and theological systems. None has been universally endorsed as the one ‘official’ position of the Church.

Suffice for our purposes to affirm that in his life, death and resurrection Jesus accomplished something that has forever changed our relationship with God. This atoning and redeeming work, brought into focus in the cross, makes possible our reconciliation with God, the forgiveness of our sins, our admission into God’s family, and the assurance of eternal life.

But a fact frequently overlooked is that, at the heart of the work of atonement is God’s plan to so bring us into vital fellowship with himself that we might be enabled to lead lives marked by holiness. As P. T. Forsyth has written, “The same holiness which satisfies God, sanctifies us.”⁸

This is taught in numerous biblical passages, e.g. Titus 2:11-14. In this passage Paul makes it clear that God’s saving grace, which brings salvation to *all*, has as its direct objective the raising up of a people who are not only ‘redeemed’ from their past sins, but further ‘purified’ with a view to renouncing ‘impiety and worldly passions’ and leading ‘lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly’ and who are ‘zealous for good deeds.’

Here then are two sides of the atonement – redemption and purification. When an earlier generation of teachers within the Wesleyan tradition spoke of a ‘second blessing’ they were on to something. The New Testament sets forth Christ’s saving work in terms of two dimensions, that which delivers us from our past guilt and stain, and that which enables us to lead lives marked by godliness. Salvation is more than ‘imputed righteousness.’ It is to be infused with the very life of God.

This deeper dimension of the atonement is spoken of in Eph. 5:25 – 27 where Christ’s redeeming work is linked to the purifying of the Church so that she might be “holy and without blemish.” Some argued that this passage is of eschatological significant (as also 1 Thess. 5:23). It would, however, seem that this redemptive purpose finds at least partial fulfilment in this life. Jesus uses similar language to that found in the Ephesian passage when he tells his disciples that they are made ‘clean through the word’ he has spoken (John 15:3). He then prays for their sanctification, linking it to his own (John 17:17).

A similar emphasis is to be found in Colossians 1:21-23 where we are told that “God has now reconciled (you) in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and irreproachable and blameless before him – provided that you continue securely established in the faith

Constant Cleansing

⁸ P. T. Forsyth, *The Work of Christ*, Independent Press, London, p. 222

John tells his readers that “the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin” ((1 John 1:7). “The blood” could be John’s way of speaking of Christ’s atoning work. The cleansing is seen by some to refer to our justification, but this explanation does not seem to fit the context as well as the one which sees it as referring to the actual cleansing of sin in the lives of believers. On this verse, and with particular reference to the term ‘cleanse’, Anglican scholar Alfred Plummer says

Note the present tense of what goes on continually, that constant cleansing which even the holiest Christians need. One who lives in the light knows his own frailty and is continually availing himself of the purifying power of Christ’s sacrificial death Note also the ‘all’; .there is no limit to its cleansing power; even grievous sinners can be restored to the likeness of God, in whom is no darkness at all.⁹

The Ephesian passage (5:25-27) is, of course, concerned with the Church – not primarily individual believers. Nevertheless, the state of the Church cannot be divorced from that of its members. Thus Paul applies the same thought to the spiritual state of the Church’s members (Titus 2:14). In its context this verse reflects the apostle’s vision of a purified people and the surrounding verses refer to the spiritual state of ‘older men’ (2), ‘older women’ (3a), ‘young women’ ((4), and ‘young men’ (6). These verses all speak of the present life, not the eschatological goal.

Salvation – Past, present, Future

In the Titus passage Paul says that Jesus died both to redeem us and purify us. In fact the atoning work of Christ has to do with the sins of our past lives, cleansing and victory in the present, and our final redemption when we enter heaven.

He died that we might be forgiven (*justification*)
 He died to make us good (*sanctification*)
 That we might go at last to heaven (*glorification*)
 Saved by his precious blood.

This understanding of the atonement, in which the whole of our Christian life and experience are purchased by Christ’s death, is absent from many theological writings and teachings. Instead a dualism is presented which separates the work of Christ on the cross from the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost.

The grand work of redemption involves justification, regeneration, conversion, adoption, sanctification and final glorification. But many (particularly in ‘Holiness’ circles’) have reduced it to two experiences: The ‘Calvary’ work of “getting saved”, and the subsequent ‘Pentecost’ work of “getting sanctified.”

Holistic Salvation

⁹ Alfred Plummer, *The Epistles of St John*, Baker, Grand Raids 1980, p. 28

The believers of the Reformation understood salvation from this ‘holistic’ perspective. They affirmed

They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are farther sanctified really and personally, through the virtue of Christ’s death and resurrection, by his word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.¹⁰

Jesus – Human Nature – and Holiness

A Patristic Understanding

“That which is unassumed is unhealed”. This principle was the basis for the early church’s understanding of atonement. Jesus is able to save us because he is one of us and one with us. The Incarnation is concerned with the healing of human nature.

Paul uses a ‘healing’ word in 1 Thess. 5:23, where he speaks of believers being “sanctified wholly” (*holokleros*). The only other place where this word appears is in Acts 3:16 in which it is said of the man healed at the Beautiful Gate, “the faith which is through Jesus has given the man .. perfect health (*holoklerian*).”

Jesus – Authentic Humanity

He is “truly man”. Jesus assumed human nature as it truly was; human nature scarred by the Fall. He lived a holy life in the truest sense of the term but he nevertheless “humbled himself and (was) born in the (authentic) likeness” of humankind (Phil. 2:7). He was truly one of us. “the Word, though remaining what it was, became what it was not.”¹¹ Why was this? He became a partaker of our human nature (Heb. 2:14) that we might become partakers of his divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). He became like us so that we might become like him.

By assuming human flesh Jesus sanctified it, i.e. he set it apart as a worthy vessel for God’s holiness to find expression. It is thus quite wrong to view the flesh with disdain as have some devout people in every age. Such a view drove many to mutilate the body, reject marriage, view sexual activity as intrinsically sinful, and see the human body as an evil thing to be subjugated and as a prison house from which an early release would be most desirable.

The Fathers of the Eastern Church spoke of the Christian’s ‘divinisation’ or *theosis*. Most Protestants have recoiled from such an idea. Among the few who haven’t was Charles Wesley. He kept alive a view which was part of the spiritual heritage of the

¹⁰ *Westminster Confession of Faith* and *Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order*, Chap. XIII.

¹¹ St Theophilus of Bulgaria (12th century)

English church, that of participation in God.¹² In a great hymn on the Incarnation “Let earth and heaven combine”, he wrote

He deigns in flesh to appear,
widest extremes to join;
To bring our vileness near,
and make us all divine;
And we the life of God shall know,
for God is manifest below.

He appears in flesh to make us divine! That is precisely what the early Fathers taught. This, they believed, is what it means to be a partaker (lit. a ‘sharer-in’) of the divine nature. And of all the positions regarding sanctification and Christian living, the one that comes the closest to that of the Fathers and the Eastern Church is that of the Wesleys. A. M. Allchin says “In such a hymn we see how the doctrine of the incarnation carries with it as a direct consequence the doctrine of man’s deification.”¹³

The Wesleyan understanding of holiness of life has since the late 19th century been popularised by such writers and preachers as Congregationalist Daniel Steele, Church of the Nazarene teacher A. M. Hills, Salvationist S. L. Brengle, Methodist W. E. Sangster and Baptist Oswald Chambers. Designated by Wesley as ‘Christian *Perfection*’ and ‘*Perfect Love*’ it has been linked to the teaching of ‘*entire sanctification*’.

The Wesleys and the Early Church Fathers

In these teachings Christians are called to experience entire sanctification, a ‘crisis’ which enables them to lead a life of Christian perfection. Terms such as these come very close to the *theosis* of Eastern Church teaching. Unlike John and Charles Wesley, few of the popularisers of this doctrine have appreciated their indebtedness to the Eastern Fathers and the Orthodox tradition. Indeed, it was not until when, in the 1970’s, American Methodist scholar Albert Outler and others recognised the link between Wesleyan and Patristic¹⁴ theology that view gained acceptance among Wesleyan scholars.

Wesley’s contact with the Fathers of the Eastern church can be traced at least to his journey to Georgia on board the *S. S. Simmonds*, in 1735. During the trip he encountered two spiritual forces which were to have a profound influence on his thinking in later years. The first was that of the Moravian brethren on board ship, under the leadership of Augustus Spangenberg. These earnest Christians introduced him to experiential religion, evangelical faith, and warm-hearted pietism. Each of these would become a part of what is now termed Wesleyanism. The second was much older. He

¹² For an elaboration of this idea see the work by Anglican writer Canon A. M. Allchin, cited below

¹³ A. M. Allchin, *Participation in God*, Darton, Longman and Todd, London 1988, p. 28

¹⁴ “Patristic’ refers in this study to the writings of the Fathers or leaders of the Christian church from the end of the first century to the fifty century. These are generally classified as the western Fathers of whom Augustine is representative, and eastern, represented by Athanasius.

spent many profitable hours reading, studying and translating the writings of Macarius of Egypt, a fourth century monk. This voice from the ancient east was to have a profound influence on Wesley's understanding of the holy life. Much of his subsequent writing on the subject reflected that influence. For example, Macarius wrote

As iron, or lead, or gold, or silver, when cast into the fire is freed from that hard consistency which is natural to it, being changed into softness, and so long as it continues in the fire, is still dissolved from its native hardness – after the same manner the soul that has renounced the world, and has received the heavenly fire of the Godhead, and of the love of the Spirit, is disentangled from all the love of the world, and set free from all the corruptions and affections; It turns all things out of itself, and is changed from the hardness of sin, and melted down in a fervent and unspeakable love for the Heavenly Bridegroom.¹⁵

A Wesleyan Understanding

Lack of interest in the Church Fathers and the faith of the Post-Apostolic Church on the part of evangelical Christians has cut them off from their true roots. Wesleyan believers have at least since the mid-19th century, embraced a hermeneutic which has in recent decades questioned by scholars both in other traditions and their own. For example, the popular use of 'Pentecost' language to describe the experience of entire sanctification, e.g. 'baptism of the Spirit', has been seen by many Wesleyan scholars as inappropriate. It was certainly discouraged by Wesley himself.¹⁶ So also the building of dogma on metaphor ('baptism', 'roots of bitterness', *et al*). Likewise the heaping up of proof texts which contain aorist tense verbs- said always to refer to a 'crisis' moment (!) - and which call Christians to make a specific response, lumping them together and declaring that herein lies the basis for a second work of grace.

Rediscovering our Roots

With many questions raised concerning the teaching and few clear answers forthcoming, there has been a substantial decline in the emphasis on holiness of life within movements whose official doctrines affirm the possibility of such a life. To now call for a return to pristine Wesleyan thought with its roots in the ancient and historic church (including the concepts set forth in liturgical form in the *Book of Common Prayer*) and based on serious exegesis of the scriptures, is to call for a paradigm shift in our thinking. Happily, there is amongst evangelicals an *ad fontes* quest which seeks to build

¹⁵ Macarius of Egypt, *Homily Three*

¹⁶ Wesleyan scholar Robert Lyons states: "From Pentecost on, all believers received at conversion the Holy Spirit as promised – in His fullness. No biblical basis exists for a distinction between receiving the Spirit and being baptized in, or filled with, the Spirit. The Acts of the Apostles shows *au contraire* that they are interchangeable expressions. All references involving the language of baptism reinforce this conclusion. For they are all-inclusive as descriptive of every believer. These, in turn, are further reinforced by various Pauline and Johannine themes in which the indicative descriptions of the basic experience of being apprehended by Christ are the bases for all-encompassing commands for holy living" *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, Volume 14, 1979, p. 24

the faith and life of the 'emerging church' on ancient traditions and teachings and by linking them to the present and the future.¹⁷

A return to authentic Wesleyan thought is as much a return to the beliefs of Charles Wesley as to those of his more celebrated brother. Charles Wesley's hymn, referred to previously, reflects Patristic thought in linking a 'deifying' work of grace with the incarnation. As suggested, Christ's willingness "in flesh to appear" was God's way of sanctifying it and making it an appropriate vessel for his holiness. T. F. Torrance writes

From his birth to his death and resurrection on our behalf he sanctified what he assumed through his own self-consecration as incarnate Son to the Father, and in sanctifying it brought the divine judgement to bear directly upon our human nature both in the holy life he lived and in the holy death he died in atoning and reconciling sacrifice before God. That was a vicarious activity which was brought to its triumphant fulfilment and which received the verdict of the Father's complete approval in the resurrection of Jesus as God's beloved Son from the dead and the rebirth of our humanity in him."¹⁸

A Patristic-Wesleyan Synthesis

Torrance holds that through his hypostatic union¹⁹ with the Father and by his vicarious humanity as well as his atoning death Christ gives to us both his negative righteousness (forgiveness and remission of sins), and his positive righteousness. The latter was expressed by Christ in terms of total obedience, perfect love for humankind, and unbroken fellowship with his Father.

The Nicene Fathers taught that Christ, the Father and the Spirit share the same nature (*homoousios*). By becoming human, Jesus is also of the same nature (*homousios*) as ourselves. He thus has an ontological relationship with all of humankind, and a saving with "to as many as receive him" (John 1:12).

Christ has lived a truly holy life in the flesh. He was "made our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). We are called to share in his nature (2 Pet. 1:4) and in so doing we share in the very life of the one who said "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified in the truth" (John 17:19).

He assumed our human nature in order to heal it. The purpose of this healing work was that the image and likeness of God, defaced by sin, might be restored by grace (Rom. 8:29; Col. 3:10).

¹⁷ Cf. the writings by Robert Webber regarding what he calls 'the Younger Evangelicals', especially his book bearing that title.

¹⁸ T. F. Torrance, *The Mediation of Christ*, Edinburgh, T & T Clarke, 1992, pp. 50 - 51

¹⁹ The term *hypostatic* is from the Greek *hupostasis*, usually translated 'person'.

Jesus Christ is himself that image (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3) and by participation in his life we “are changed into the same image” (2 Cor. 3:18). Fallen humanity comes into vital contact with perfect humanity and healing takes place.

Some Biblical Perspectives

God in Christ came to make us ‘whole’. This was no new thing. In the Old Testament God reveals himself as *Yahweh Mekaddishkem* – the God who sanctifies (Ex.31:13; Lev. 20:8; 21:8, 15, 23; 22:9, 16, 32; Ezek. 20:12; 37:28). Jesus, in turn, in bodily form reveals God to us (Col. 15, 19; 2:9, 10). As such, he is the revelation of the God who sanctifies. He is also the one demonstration of a human being who in every sense was *entirely* sanctified. He is thus both the sanctified and the sanctifier and those who are in fellowship with him share *his* sanctification.

God’s holiness is a treasure in human ‘containers’. All glory goes to God the sanctifier, not the person being sanctified (2 Cor. 4:7). Thus the holiness to which we testify is his, not ours. It is the result of a relationship. It is the fruit of the indwelling life of Christ by his Spirit. Nazarene scholar Mildred Bangs Wynkoop writes

Holiness is the moment-by moment impartation of the life of Christ to the human heart. In Him, not us, is holiness. This treasure is in earthen vessels – “pots of clay.” In this, Wesley concurred. The humanness of men is not the real handicap, nor a matter for apology. Certainly it is not something to be discarded, either in this life or in the next. It is the human which is the basis for fellowship, the means for communication, the arena for displaying the reflection of the glory of God. Jesus was man, God incarnate, the *ideal* man, not the *idealised* man. In his own person he brought God and man together and showed us what man ought to be and can be by the grace of God.²⁰

Jesus – the Model of Holiness

Samuel Brengle wrote

The Bible teaches that we can be like Jesus.

We are to like Him in our separation from the world. In purity, in love, and in the fullness of the Spirit. This is holiness....

All that God asks is that the heart should be cleansed from sin, and full of love. Whether it be the tender heart of the little child, with feeble powers of loving, or of the full-grown man, or of the flaming archangel before the Throne. This is holiness, and this only. It is nothing less and it can be nothing more.²¹

Holiness as Holy Love

²⁰ Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love – The Dynamic of Wesleyanism*. Beacon Hill, Missouri, 1972, p. 86.

²¹ S. L. Brengle, *The Way of Holiness*, pp. 6, 11

Wesley's doctrine of holiness has been misunderstood by some of his most devout followers. For him holiness was perfect love. He inscribed "God is love" on his coat-of-arms. His favourite book was 1 John with its call to be "made perfect in love". He consistently defined holiness and entire sanctification in terms of "pure love – love expelling sin and governing the heart and mind of the child of God.'

Holiness is not Legalism²²

This is where some in the Wesleyan, pietistic and puritan traditions got it wrong. Love gave way to moralism. True holiness, which is true love, cannot drive Christians away from sinful people; it must drive them to embrace such people and share with them the Good News. True love cannot be judgmental and critical of others. It is, in all its dealings, a reflection of 1 Corinthians 13. It is Christ-like. Jesus crossed the accepted boundaries and befriended those considered to be beneath contempt by the religious crowd.

'Holiness' people who claim much in terms of God's holiness but display little in terms of his holy love fail to recognise sin in their own lives. Sin is more than failure to observe a known law (as Wesley once defined it). It is failure in holy love. The moralists and the legalists have settled for external issues as did many of the Pharisees, whilst failing to observe 'the weightier matters' (Matt. 23:23). They are not bad people; they are people impaired by 'blind spots'. They just cannot see the beam in their own eye. W. E. Sangster writes

If the critics of this doctrine have exaggerated the danger, and fastened their attention on the sad and rare calamities rather than on the blameless and lovely lives of those who have adorned the doctrine, it still remains true that the danger is there, that sin is peculiarly horrible in those who claim perfection, and that it is not to be set down simply to the common frailty of men. There is a particular *reason* for this particular phenomenon.

If a man is convinced that he is free from all sin: if, moreover, by some freak of faith he is convinced also that to doubt his freedom from sin is dishonouring to God and tantamount to disbelieving the Bible, he will necessarily be less likely to recognise the presence of sin when it rises in his soul. With his own hands he has built a wall between himself and self-knowledge. He puts a bandage around his eyes whenever he looks inwards, though when he looks outwards on others it often appears that his eyes are not only unbandaged but sharp with censoriousness.²³

Holiness is not Libertinism²⁴

²² The term legalism is used here, not a 'salvation by works of law', but a Christian life which is bound by 'man-made laws' and which sees these laws as the path to true holiness.

²³ W. E. Sangster, *The Path To Perfection*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1943, p. 165

²⁴ This way of life is sometimes referred to as 'libertarianism'. However, because that term actually refers to a political philosophy, it seems more precise to use a term which speaks of indulgence and the rejection of constraints upon one's life.

Reaction often produces error. This is never more so than when people react against spurious holiness, the type produced by rigid observance of regulations. Many of the Pharisees and others during 'the days of his flesh' fell into the snare of legalism as have many more since that time.

The extreme opposite of this is seen in Paul's words regarding continuing 'in sin that grace may abound' (Rom. 6:1). The writer of Ephesians may have had this in mind when he spoke of 'true righteousness and holiness' (Eph. 4:24), with its implication that there must be a 'false holiness'. Indeed, the verse speaks of being 'created after the likeness of God' – something quite different from either a law-bound or a law-less life. Neither legalism nor libertinism describe the nature of God. God is *Agape* – holy love.

The love (*Agape*) which epitomises the spirit of holiness is that of 1 Corinthians 13, which reflects a lifestyle quite different from that of the antinomian person who equates liberty in Christ with libertinism.

Holiness as Holy Living

The answer to such distortions is to understand both that the Incarnation made possible the living of a holy life 'in the flesh' and that Jesus Christ, in his incarnate state, gave us an example of what it is to be holy. The Gospels leave us in no doubt as to the disparity between 'Christ-likeness' and the harsh, legalistic and often joyless religion evidenced by those to whom Sangster refers. "In the days of his flesh" Christ is depicted as evidencing not only total obedience to the Father and utter purity of life but also

- Self-Denial and Humility (Phil. 2:1-8)
- A Servant Heart (Matt. 20:28; Mk. 10:45; John 13:1-15)
- Compassion for People in need – both spiritual and physical need (Matt.9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34; Mk. 6:34; 8:2, etc.)
- Peace and Joy (John 14:25; 15:11)
- A Genuine Capacity to Befriend People, including children, the irreligious, society's 'rejects' (Matt. 11:19; Mk. 10:14; Lk. 7:34; 18:16; 19:2f, etc.)

Holiness as Relationship with Jesus (and others)

Union

As we see in the verses cited above, the holiness of Jesus was a holiness measured in terms of

- a. its relation to God (obedience and purity)
- b. its relation to others (compassion and service).

This was stressed in early Methodism both in its emphasis on small groups for nurture in holy living and service to others both as an expression of the Spirit's presence and as a means of grace to one's own soul.

c. its relationship to one's self (peace and joy)

Paul links these three concepts in Romans 14:17, 18, a passage frequently set forth by John Wesley as his understanding of holiness of life.

Samuel Brengle said,

There is a union with Jesus as intimate as that of the branch and the vine, or as that of the various members of the body with the head, or as that between Jesus and the Father. This is shown by such scriptures as that in which Jesus said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches," and in His great intercessory prayer, where He prays, "that they all may be one in Us." This union is, of course, not physical, but spiritual, and can be known to the one who has entered into it by the direct witness of the Spirit; but it can be known to others only by its effects and fruits in the life.²⁵

Participation

Jesus Christ, God incarnate, invites us into such a 'participation' (John 15). He has sanctified human flesh and human nature so that they may 'contain' God's holiness as a treasure in a vessel of clay (2 Cor.4:7). In that 'participation' the fruits of holiness spring forth (Jn. 15:2; Rom. 6:21; Gal. 5:22,23; Eph. 5:9; Phil.1:11; Jas. 3:18). Thus once more God's holiness is "made flesh", making it possible for people of every age to say, as they observe the lives of Christ's followers, "and we beheld *his* glory full of grace and truth."

Thus Paul counsels his Roman readers, "Clothe yourselves with Jesus Christ" (Rom. 13:14, NIV). He tells his readers in Galatia that he is "in travail until Christ be formed" in them (Gal. 4:19). And he tells them of his own experience: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." Indeed, at the heart of Paul's teaching is the recurring term "in Christ" and its cognates. All of the components of the Christian life are "in him" (1 Cor.1.30).

Transformation

The New Testament teaches that the believer may live in such a relationship with the Lord as to reflect his likeness (*eikona*), and be increasingly and gloriously transformed (*metamorphoumetha*) by the power of the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18).

Russian Archbishop Anthony writes

²⁵ S.L.Brengle, *Heart Talks on Holiness*, London, p. 61

...just as God became man, just as His holiness was present in the flesh in our midst, living, acting and saving, so now, through the mystery of the Incarnation, the Church participates in the eternity, in the holiness of God, and at the same time in the salvation of the world. The holiness of the Church must find its place in the world in an act of crucified love, in an active and living presence. But essentially, it is the holiness, the presence of God, that we should manifest in the world. This is our vocation. This is what we are for.²⁶

Holiness is nothing more than this. And, dare we say it? It is nothing less. Brengle wrote

The whole earth is waiting for the unveiling, the revealing, 'the manifestation of the sons of God', waiting for men and women, the boys and girls, who live in Christ and in whom Christ lives. When the world is filled with such men or controlled by them, then, and only then, will strikes and wars, and bitter rivalries and insane hatreds, and disgusting and hellish evils cease, and the promise and purpose of Christ's coming be fulfilled.²⁷

²⁶ Metropolitan Anthony, *God and Man*, Hodder and Stoughton, London 1974, p.85f

²⁷ S. L. Brengle, *Love-slaves*, Atlanta 1960, p. 17

Past, Present, Perfect?

by Captain Andrew Bale

Matthew 5:48 "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

If I were not called to be a Salvation Army Officer I think I would have like to have been a field archaeologist. I've always been a little bit obsessed with the past and it never ceases to amaze me just how much archaeologists can deduce from the minimum amount of visible evidence. A few lumps and bumps on the landscape, some geometrical scorch marks on the grass or the smallest shard of pottery can reveal an enormous amount to the trained eye.

There is a popular television programme in the UK called 'Time Team' in which a group of specialist archaeologists have just three days to discover as much as they can about the past of a particular area. A location is chosen, usually because of previous archaeological finds or maybe because of an unusual place name. The possibility of a dramatic discovery together with the threat of potential disappointment makes an entertaining mix.

Even back in the nineteenth century when the term 'Christian Perfection' was on the lips of many believers the topic still managed to cause a great deal of confusion, controversy and fierce debate. Today, if we are going to understand what Christ meant when he commanded us to be 'perfect' then we are going to have dig around the text with a great deal of optimistic care. Care, lest we fall into the various pitfalls that surround this doctrine and optimism because like the archaeologist our digging must be motivated by a belief that something lies beneath the surface.

Charles Finney, whenever he approached a text like this, began by saying what the text did not mean. Indeed in his 'Lectures to Professing Christians', in the chapter that deals with 'Christian Perfection', he does just that. He points out that Christ did not mean that we should possess the divine powers of God – his omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence but that we should (and could, if we desired it) possess his moral nature – that is his love. Finney also underlines the fact that although 'Christian Perfection' can deliver us from sin it will never deliver us from temptation and the possibility of sin.

By changing the emphasis of the commandments from 'thou shalt not' to 'thou shalt' Jesus was able to reduce a complex and confusing legal system down to just two commands. If we obey the 'first and greatest commandment' and love God with everything we have then we shall naturally obey the 'second' and love our neighbour as we love ourselves and thereby fulfil all the requirements of the 'law and the prophets'.

The word love, like its counterpart hate, has been watered down so much in contemporary parlance that these words have lost a lot of their original passion and fervour. People 'love' chocolate or ice cream while they 'hate' Manchester United or marzipan. Love is not simply a more intense way of saying 'like', love is an all encompassing passion that controls and motivates the individual it affects. The idea that

God is love and that holiness happens when we reflect that love has over the years lost some of its appeal simply because our definition of love has been emasculated.

Fighting for social justice, feeding the hungry, freeing the captives – even dying a martyr's death might all seem more exciting and dramatic to us than simply reflecting God's love, yet any or all of these heroic acts mean nothing unless they are motivated and sustained by God's love.

Paul makes it quite clear when he writes to the Corinthians that it is indeed possible to live what appears to be the most radical of Christian lives and yet in God's eyes achieve nothing. In Matthew 7:21-23 Jesus pre-empts Paul's teaching when he points out that an apparently anointed ministry is not enough to disguise our potential allegiance with evil.

The truth is that we dismiss the importance of love at our eternal peril. Unless we settle this issue in our hearts we settle nothing, this is the stumbling block that all believers must circumnavigate if they wish to maximise their usefulness to God and make their way to heaven.

The problem is how does the 'Christian' who can preach and pray with the 'tongues of angels', who has 'given up all they have to feed the poor', who preaches and casts out demons 'in the name of Jesus' and who is quite prepared to die for the cause of Christ – ensure that their actions are motivated only by love?

The bible teaches that God is love and therefore any consecration that we make must be made in response to the divine love that we experience. A life of apparent action that has no consistent corresponding experience of intimacy with the Holy Spirit is a worthless life when measured against the benchmark set by Christ.

J.B. Philips calls us to true holiness beautifully when he puts the following words into the mouth of Paul in Romans 12 – 'With eyes wide open to the mercies of God I plead with your brothers to offer up your lives as living sacrifices'. It is our appreciation and intimate experience of God's love that must inspire and sustain any sacrifice we make if we are to be certain that our consecration receives divine approval – anything less as Paul told the Corinthians amounts to 'nothing'.

'Christian perfection' happens when Christians experience and respond to the love of God. This response must be what Finney calls 'disinterested benevolence' – that is love which is naturally given with no thought about what it costs us or what potential blessing it might deliver. This is proper Christian love, it is a life naturally focussed on God and his desires without room for any other consideration. It is only love like this that can enable us to give up all that is 'sinful and doubtful' and devote all that remains to God.

There is a struggle associated with the attainment of holiness, as Matthew 11:12 reminds us 'since the days of John the Baptist' it is 'forceful' believers who 'lay hold' of 'the kingdom of heaven'. However this fight should not be with the minutiae of our

consecration – holiness doesn't begin with a comprehensive list of those things we must give up. Our struggle must be the same struggle that Christ encountered in Gethsemane. This battle must centre on our will and the will of our Father in heaven.

The ultimate question every believer must answer is who am I going to serve? Who am I going to obey? This is the issue that determined whether Calvary went ahead or not and this is the issue that Paul devotes so much time to in his letter to the Romans –

“Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?” (Romans 6:16)

This was the 'truth' that Jesus told the Pharisees could set them free in John chapter 8. This is the 'fruit' that 'proves our repentance' and it is the same today as it was 2000 years ago. It is when we 'do the things that Abraham' did – or for the Christian, the things that Jesus did that we can rest assured that we are God's children. If we need further scriptural encouragement we need look no further than 1 John 3:10 “This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.”

What then does God expect of us? What standard of behaviour is he hoping to see in our lives? 'If you love me' says Jesus 'you will obey my commandments'. It is loving that matters most, love involves the heart and it is within our hearts that our motives and desires are born – “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.”

How do we know if our love is genuine? The answer is simple - If we obey then we love, love and obedience are inextricably linked. Where can we find such love? The answer must always be in our own Gethsemane. Seekers after holiness are still required to go 'beyond the brook'; for it is only here that 'the whole of love's demands' can be resolved. The question is a relatively simple one – 'who are we going to obey'? If we cannot bring ourselves to obey God then we do not love God and we do not love God because we have not truly settled this question. It is Gethsemane, quickly followed by Calvary that alone leads to resurrection – there is no other way.

Some Christians refuse to enter Gethsemane altogether, some make their homes there – the bible tells us that a few find and successfully traverse 'the narrow way' that is the only honourable exit. Where do we find ourselves? Are we waiting outside in fear? Are we dwelling within in indecision? Or are we faithfully, obediently and most important of all – lovingly – 'denying ourselves', taking up our cross and following Christ.

Until we resolve this question we will look for Christ both within ourselves and our Corps in vain for 'without holiness none shall see the Lord'.

I am here Lord in that garden fair

Where you struggled hard to conquer your will,
And the trees that shade
Heard the prayers that you prayed
And their leaves gently whisper it still,
"Must I go still further, climbing the distant hill?"

I am here Lord and the flowers bright
Write your answer with their glorious hue,
And the birds that wing
Overhead also sing
Of the things that a saviour must do,
"See he goes still further, climbing the distant hill!"

You are here Lord in the garden fair
Where for many years I've struggled to pray.
And the master's shout
Tells my soul to come out.
For you've come here to take me away,
And you lead still further, climbing the distant hill.

Growing a mini Army by Captain Genevieve Peterson

In 2003, I started my first appointment as a children's minister in Reservoir. I had many outrageous dreams and plans of transformation for this marginalized community whose children roamed the streets and whose parents struggled to keep track of life. I soon learnt the harsh reality of starting a ministry from scratch in a community that had laid spiritually and financially desolate for several generations. The ministry started with outreach work within the local Primary School. The purpose of the ministry has always been clear. Transform lives from spiritual and physical desolation into fullness of life. For this reason the ministry has offered a range of educational and social programs, intense pastoral care and mentoring at times, and fun squads and camps that introduce the children to Jesus. However until this year, Reservoir has been fairly lax in its attempt to encourage these children to make formal commitments to The Salvation Army. Let me stress, we have not been liberal in our approach to salvation, and have regularly sought confirmations from the children on the state of their faith. However when it came to formalizing this process there was a reluctance to do so. Why? Mostly, it was felt that there was no need. Essentially, our efforts went into the day-to-day ministry and felt the children would have no need or interest in becoming Jr. Soldiers.

So why the change of heart? Well, I was challenged on the issue for possibly the first time in 2007. It sparked a protective reaction in me; a defense of a position that seemed so important. I did not want my children to be taken advantage of. I did not want to place a 'tradition' on them that would not be edifying just for the sake of continuing a Salvation Army tradition. I felt the benefits of Soldiership were already being received by the children, and that they very much felt a membership and accountability to our Corps. It was not until a friend of mine put it in this way...

You may not feel that enrolling Jr Soldiers is part of the Shop-16 ethos. (There are others who) obviously like the traditional model, but you may not feel it appropriate to what we do in Ressie. On the other hand, (they) make what is perhaps a valid point that the covenant of soldiership/junior soldiership could be important as a commitment that could be more enduring than even the individual relationships formed at Shop-16'

And it hit me, The Salvation army is a world wide family, connected by kingdom values and unified by mission. If my kids were not ushered into this movement by way of public declaration and covenant, they would likely be lost from our family forever.

And so it began, the preparation toward a Junior Soldier covenant. It would have been relatively easy to enrol them the next day. However we felt it was essential to prepare them properly, and as such we spent four months running classes. The offer was given to all children, and many accepted. Gaining parental consent became a challenge. Many parents were wary of their child committing themselves to God, and others were simply forbidden. This is an ongoing prayer request for our Corps.

Initially, one Junior Soldier was enrolled, a seventeen year-old girl who led the way for many of the teens and adults to explore their faith and commitment levels. A few weeks later, fifteen Junior Soldiers were enrolled in a special Wednesday night covenant meeting. 74 people in all crammed into Shop 16 (we only have 32 seats!) to witness this historic occasion. It was heart warming to hear first generation Salvationists pledge and testify their love for God, their desire to follow Jesus and their excitement about becoming Junior Soldiers of The Salvation Army.

Since the enrollment, amazing transformation has occurred in the individual lives of the children, as well as the children's work at Reservoir on the whole. There is one child whose mother came to me and asked me quite seriously for help. She said 'you have got to get her to stop talking about Jesus. She does it to everyone! And I have to read the Bible to her every night! Each time her father lights a cigarette she rabbits on about living a life that is clean!' I kindly explained to the mother that I would never tell her daughter to stop. Another child came to Sunday school with her journal and showed me pages and pages of notes she had written on the first seven chapters of Matthew. She was writing her own exegesis! Many of the children refuse to take off their Junior Soldier badge, and wear them every day to school.

One child was forbidden from becoming a Junior Soldier in the first covenant service. She was not allowed to have a Bible, and has always been prohibited from bringing worksheets home from Squads. Her father does not allow God to enter the house. The mother, seeing how desperate her daughter was to become a Junior Soldier stood firmly against husband on the issue. Some tension followed, but after much prayer and convincing, the daughter was granted permission and she, her brother, and three others were enrolled the following Sunday!

The final Junior Soldier to be enrolled was another teen who confirmed her intention to be enrolled after a prayer shift. During the prayer time she wrote the following testimony. "Coming to the Shop for the last couple of years has helped shape how I want to grow up. It helped me realize, even when you feel unloved, God loves you so you are always loved. That gave me a boost and this helped me with my social life and gave me confidence. We all make mistakes, but when you ask for forgiveness, He forgives you. Although I am not perfect and I could improve, I feel that I am getting better every day. God put me here for a reason, so because he blessed me with life, I will love and obey Him until I am dead. Jesus is the one person that will save you from yourself. He will give you a second chance, because he loves you. Thanks Shop 16 because you made me believe in not only myself, but Jesus and God, and I will never forget you." This is a child who has experienced more lose, abuse and sadness than many of the kids in my area and to see her striving to live her life for God is miraculous.

Having experienced the journey of enrolling 22 Junior Soldiers, I now have a passion for seeing children make covenant and partake in our mission. William Booth wrote, "You must make the children understand that God expects them to do their share of the fighting, and encourage them to do it". We read 1Timothy 4:12 and we assume this means we should give children respect and not overlook them. But our founder expects

more than 'respect' he expects we equip them and send them out to battle now and not for some distant time in the future. I agree and am sold, and committed to the cause of building the faith and commitment of children, and intend to raise, not the profile, but the magnitude of the Junior Soldier covenant. Our goal is 48 Junior Soldiers for the year. Ambitious? Yes, but I had no expectation we would enroll 22! And these 22 children put many Senior Soldiers to shame and the war advances because of them. They show a passion and a commitment fueled by the Holy Spirit and I will do everything in my power to support and develop them, as well as produce more just like them.

Junior Soldiers is not some quaint 'program' in our Corps. Children are not fodder for you to place on the platform for your amusement at anniversary. And we are not in the business of 'occupying' children in the Corps until they are old enough to experience God and begin their ministry. Children are ready for God's war NOW. So in the words of the founder, "Let us make haste to be the means of converting, teaching, watching over, drilling and using the children, and it may yet be said not only of individuals, but of the nations, "a little child shall lead them."