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Editorial Introduction

By Major Stephen Court, editor

Greetings in Jesus' name. Mercy and peace to you from God our Father. Welcome to the 141st edition of Journal of Aggressive Christianity – JAC141. '141 might have a slightly edgier feel than more recent JACs. We're contending, comrades – after all, this is the Journal of AGGRESSIVE Christianity. So, with that in mind, we'll salute our contributors:

Major Don Grad (Canada) offers a commonwealth perspective on the funeral and faith of Queen Elizabeth.

We continue with a JAC-exclusive, an interview with long-time JAC contributor, author Major Michael Ramsay, whose new book *Salvogesis Guidebook To Romans Road* is now available. Older Christians may have guessed that this is a book on evangelism. And...

Major Curtiss Hartley, Muncie, Indiana writes about the priorities of serving and saving and the motivations of our service in his piece, 'It Matters Why We Serve'.

Major Wayne Ennis, in Melbourne Australia riffs on doctrine one and deconstruction and how much we can get away with, in, 'Doctrine One And Hermeneutical Integrity'. Major Ennis continues this JAC doctrinal miniseries with 'At The Crossroads' (Doctrines 2 &3). Ennis brings a check to latitudinarianism in, 'Repentance' (Doctrine 7). And he wraps up this miniseries with an argument in favour of 'Symbols And Rituals' during the 'relevancy' debate.

In 'The Future Of Apologetics' Steve Bussey argues for the right roles of truth and holiness.

And your editor takes a look at cessationism in 'Stop That Right Now!'

And that's your JAC141. Read, share, consider, pray, apply. May God use the content to help us stay close to Jesus. Much grace.

The Christian Faith of Queen Elizabeth II

Major Don Grad

In the language of The Salvation Army, Queen Elizabeth II was Promoted to Glory on September 8, 2022. She was a lady of deep faith and trust in Jesus.

**THROUGHOUT MY LIFE,
THE MESSAGE AND
TEACHINGS OF
CHRIST HAVE BEEN
MY GUIDE AND IN
THEM I FIND HOPE.**

QUEEN ELIZABETH II
3RD AUGUST 2022



If you have been on Facebook in the last few weeks, you likely have seen a photo of Queen Elizabeth with the quote, *“Throughout my life, the message and teachings of Christ have been my guide and in them I find hope”*. This quote was part of a message sent to the Lambeth Conference in London, which was held from July 26 to August 8, 2022.

In another part of her message to the Lambeth Conference she said, *“As we all emerge from the pandemic, I know that the Conference is taking place at a time of great need for the love of God — both in Word and deed”*.

In 1 Cor. 12:20, Paul writes of how *“...there are many parts, but one body.”* Each individual Christian has a unique

role to fulfill in the body of Christ. Perhaps like me you have been fascinated to see how these roles have been evidenced in the lives of people you know. The Queen gave us an wonderful example of how she lived her ‘part’ of the body of Christ, as she let the principles of God guide her, in what was a very public position.

A common word used to describe the life of the Queen, was that of ‘service’. Paul in many of his letters used the description of how he was “a servant of Christ Jesus” (Romans 1:1). Unlike the apostle Paul, the Queen was not an ‘evangelist’, but was more subtle in her references to faith. “The teachings of Christ” were still an ever present part of the background that guided her life of service. Of course, the Queen like any Christian was not perfect, but she was a soul forgiven by Christ Jesus.

My wife and I set our alarm, so we could watch the funeral of the Queen ‘live’ (4 am in Saskatchewan). Yes, we could have set our PVR, and watched the funeral later, but this was an event like the moon landing that we wanted to watch ‘live’. (yes, I watched the moon landing ‘live’, on a black & white TV, in my parents home)

What caught my attention about the funeral at Westminster Abbey, and the committal in St. George’s Chapel, was the powerful passages of scripture used; the deep theology of the songs sung; as well as the direct words used by the Archbishop of Canterbury, in describing the living faith of Queen Elizabeth. As many news outlets would report, the Queen was directly involved in many elements of her funeral, and in particular the church services.

The Bible readings in the funeral service included, 1 Corinthians 15: 20–26, 53–58; Psalm 42: 1–7; and John 14: 1–9a.

In the sermon, the Archbishop encouraged those in attendance (which included many world leaders) to follow the queen's example of servant leadership. He said, *"The pattern for many leaders is to be exalted in life and forgotten after death,"* and how *"Her late majesty's example was not set through her position or her ambition but through whom (Christ) she followed."*

If a person listened to words of the service, there could be no doubt about the message of salvation, and that the Queen was now with her Lord. Watching the service, my brain was thinking 'Hallelujah!', this is good stuff! My prayer is that of the millions (billions?) who watched the services, that the Word of God would touch souls unto salvation.

If the reader would like to view the official orders of service, they are provided via these links. [<State Funeral of Queen Elizabeth II>](#) [<Committal Service of Queen Elizabeth II>](#)

In a Christian Post article of August 5, 2022, they described something of the Queen's faith:

"Over the years, Queen Elizabeth has not refrained from highlighting her Christian faith. In her Royal Christmas Message in 2018, the monarch declared that Jesus Christ's message of "peace on Earth and good will toward all" is "never out of date" and "needed as much as ever." ... In 2016, the queen called Jesus Christ "the King she serves." ... Her late husband, Prince Philip, who died in 2021, was attributed with having "persuaded" her to talk more about her Christian faith during her broadcasts. ...

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Queen Elizabeth gave her first-ever Easter address. In that 2020 Easter address, the Queen spoke of how "The discovery of the risen Christ on the first Easter Day gave his followers new hope and fresh purpose, and we can all take heart from this. We know that coronavirus will not overcome us," she said at the time. "As dark as death can be — particularly for those suffering with grief — light and life are greater. May the living flame of the Easter hope be a steady guide as we face the future." [<link to article>](#)

Over the years, when I (& my wife also) have sung "God save the Queen..." it has been as much a prayer, as a song. The prayer was that God would be the guide and strength to the many aspects of a monarch's life. In the funeral sermon, the Archbishop said that King Charles III, "shares the same faith and hope in Jesus Christ as his mother, the same sense of service and duty." Now as I sing "God save the King..." my prayer is for King Charles III, that God would be his guide and strength.

Salvogesis Guidebook

JAC Interview with Major Michael Ramsay

Major Michael Ramsay has published a book on evangelism that is now available across the territory. JAC interviews the Major on this new resource.

JAC: Major, tell us about your new book, please.

MR: I am so thankful that Salvogesis Guidebook to Romans Road is now available. The Salvogesis Guidebook to Romans Road. This is not your typical Guidebook. Romans Road leads to God's Eternal Kingdom. While this book is a useful guide if you are a tourist and have never walked down Romans Road yourself, it is intended to help you as you become a guide yourself.

Many of us who guide people down Romans Road have found that the only resources readily available are tiny tracts published as recently as the 1970s or 1980s. While they have served their purpose well, it is time for the guidebooks to be updated and explored in more detail. That is what this book is: the Salvogesis GUIDEBOOK to ROMANS ROAD will give you great information about each of the stops along the way. Whether or not you have previously led people on a tour of the Romans Road, this is the book for you.

Lt.-Col. Jaimie Braund puts it this way:

“Michael gives an interesting and thorough review of the ‘Romans Road’ referring to a tract often used in the 1980’s for evangelistic outreach purposes. This tract was a simplistic guide through a number of verses from Paul’s letter to the Romans. Having fallen out of use, Michael reminds us of the original intent – the use of Scripture to reveal truth to people who are searching for answers. This book takes us through these Romans verses once again reminding of us God’s intent for His people to come to know Him in a personal and powerful way. The focus is on the Bible verses and yet is also personal and interesting as Michael relates the telling of Scripture to both history and his own life and journey. This book is a great way to be reminded of the message of and the need for salvation, with the convincing left to God’s Word.”

And Major Stephen Court writes this:

“Salvogesis’ Guide To The Romans Road is a Biblical sight-seeing tour providing background context and applicable tips to timeless and transferable truths. This book walks you through the significant salvation signposts of Paul’s letter to the Romans on the Road to reconciliation with God. It’s by far the most consequential trip anyone can ever take. And Michael Ramsay is a trustworthy guide. He’s travelled this way many times, first, himself, finding Jesus for his own salvation, and subsequently with others in cities across Canada, guiding them to meet the Christ and submit to His Lordship and follow Jesus. As you pray your way through these pages, may God instruct your mind and inspire your heart to enable and empower you to be a worthy guide for many others to meet Jesus.”

JAC: What sets it apart from other books of the genre?

MR: I am not entirely sure there are many books in this genre really. This is not a 'how to' book. This is not a commentary. It is an encouragement. This book looks a little bit at some of the verses to which we often refer when we formally introduce people to Christ. It offers us confidence and encouragement to introduce others to our Lord. I have already heard from others that it is indeed being used for that purpose. Hearing that is such a blessing to me because empowering us to invite others to experience the love of God for now and forever so vitally important.

JAC: What similarities does it have with your previous writing, and where does it go beyond that?

MR: My previous book that was published by the Salvation Army, Praise the Lord for Covenants, is written in a similar style, drawing on testimonies, stories, and analogies. Like most things I write, I have refined it over the years. Versions of many of the chapters have appeared as articles in publications such as JAC or in sermons or public addresses over the years. I do very much value the input and feedback that I gain from having so many opportunities for God to speak to me through others feedback even prior to the book being published.

JAC: what inspired you to write it?

MR: What can be more important than Salvation? We can begin our walk with God today that will continue on for eternity. Just think: whatever you are going through right now, you don't need to go through it alone; you can begin your walk with the Lord right now experiencing all His love, support, and strength and this walk can continue on forever.

JAC: can you share an idea of what potential readers will learn? How will it help Salvationists across the territory and beyond?

MR: We will learn more about the stops along Romans Road, what the scriptures are speaking about, and be encouraged to share the Good News of Salvation for now and forever with our friends, colleagues and acquaintances.

JAC: How can readers get the book?

MR: Online at www.facebook.com/RomansGuideBook [<order link>](#), by e-mail at michael.ramsay@salvationarmy.ca [<email link>](#), at the Salvation Army Thrift Stores in Port Alberni and Swift Current, or ask your local Salvation Army Officer how to get in touch with The Salvation Army Alberni Valley Ministries.

JAC: What tips do you have for evangelism in the 2020s? What advice do you have for LTWS readers when it comes to evangelism?

MR: Just do it. Tell people how God helps you. Tell people what He does daily in your life. Ask people when (not if) they have previously encountered God. Ask them what (not if) God has said to them previously. It is my experience that most people know that God is / has reached out to them and they will tell you about that if reminded of that in a kindly and genuinely. From there just offer to pray with people making the formal introductions to our Lord.

It Matters Why We Serve

Major Curtiss Hartley

I'd like to propose a change to the long-held perception about the "S" worn on the Salvationists uniform. Though I've heard a couple of variations, the one most often is "Saved to Serve." Perhaps we could flip the script on that one; what if we saw it as "Serving to Save?"

Now, before the clamor of, "We don't do the saving! That's what Jesus does," please allow me a bit of latitude as I define for you how I see the difference.

Does anyone remember the classic poster from the early days of The Salvation Army with the title "Salvation Army Social Campaign?" It depicts the farm colony and all the many services offered by Salvationists to help struggling people. At the bottom of the poster is a scene reminiscent of Michelangelo's "The Last Judgement." But in Booth's vision uniformed Salvationists are seen pulling the throngs from the raging sea and offering them safety from certain death by drowning in life's tragedies. Centered in the background is a lighthouse with the words: "Hope for all."

It seems right to put our salvation first in that motto, doesn't it? After all, it's why we do what we do. Yet I wonder if in placing the serving part second, we subconsciously view our work as Salvationists as being to just serve suffering humanity, offering food, shelter, clothing, rehabilitation, counseling, and more. We've become quite proficient at those things, I would say; quite professional in our delivery of them.

After all, we're saved to serve, aren't we? It's what we do.

Does that not, however, unintentionally skew our vision of our mission? of the purpose for which we were made? If I'm to be a good Salvationist, I'm to put on the uniform, march under the banner, and serve suffering humanity without discrimination. That's what the Bible calls us to. We're to be ministers of justice and mercy. We're saved, and so we serve others.

You see where I'm going with this, don't you! If instead we look at serving, so that we can save others – from the troubles of this world, for sure – but to offer them eternal salvation from sin separating them from their maker, then don't we fulfill a greater purpose? Isn't that what Jesus Christ called us to when he said, "Go and make disciples?"

What if we served others, so that we could share with them the great message of salvation: that Jesus died to save them, and that He lives to lead them to eternal salvation.

When you put on the uniform, or see someone else with those "S"s on their lapels, I hope it reminds you that you're to serve others, not for justice, not for statistics, not for moral integrity, but for the sake of saving their souls.

Doctrine One and Hermeneutical Integrity

Major Wayne Ennis

We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and that they only constitute the Divine rule of Christian faith and practice. - Doctrine 1

The TSA Doctrine Book states that “Our first doctrine establishes the Bible as definitive for Christian faith and practice. The inspiration of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21) requires that its authority supersedes all other sources of revelation as the primary source of Christian revelation (Psalm 119:105-112). Its unique authority reveals the thoughts and actions of God. The authority of the Bible tests all other authorities. It is therefore described as a ‘sufficient authority’. If we think for a moment what we are actually saying in the doctrine when we use the phrase ‘authority of scripture’, we must surely acknowledge that what we saying is that, though all authority belongs to God, God has somehow invested this authority in scripture.

The Bible is different to every other book because it is ‘inspired by God’ and is therefore true and trust worthy., which means if this is a book written by men inspired by the Holy Spirit then the ‘Divine rule of Christian faith and practice’ and its warning and reprimands concern sin do not fit into applied categories of cultural obsessions. If God is good then his goodness is unrestrained by time on the one hand which also means the admonitions against sin are followed by offers of grace (Exodus 33:19 and following). The God of the Bible deals differently with God when people deal differently with him. To most people this is nothing more than an oddity and can simply be ignored.

If, as the doctrine states, God is the Creator of all things and if the Bible is the word God and therefore has the authoritative seal of Truth and power it has the right to interrogate our lives and culture and not the other way around. When it comes to authority in our post-modern world seeks to deny any higher authority other than the authentic self.

Because the post-modern world along with post-modern Christian (an oxymoron) have a problem with authority they are only too willing to apply a hermeneutic of suspicion and convivence when it comes to the biblical text and the question as to how the Bible can be such an authoritative book let alone agree to proposition that it actually exercises authority over our Christian faith and practices.

When we go down this stream, we wind up belittling both the Bible and the doctrines. Such a position goes even further by inferring that God has, after all, given us the wrong sort of book by implying that the real place where God has revealed himself—the real locus of authority and revelation—is, in fact, somewhere else, and it is our job to turn it into the right sort of book by engaging in these hermeneutical dishonest moves, translation procedures or whatever.

Some even want to go so far as to say the Old Testament with its sexual morality can be safely denied, even abandoned. By doing so basically means we have become Gnostic Marcionite heretics. I for one don’t want to swim in that river.

The Scripture of both Testaments have a unique job to do, as the doctrine states. A reader, regardless of whether we believe it or not, is called upon to respect the text and faithfully deal with them with a hermeneutic of integrity.

Worldviews are basic stuff of human existence, the lens through which we see the world, the blueprint for how we should live in it, and the sense of identity and place which enables us to be what we are. Worldviews seek to answer four questions that have to do with; who are we? Where are we? What is wrong? What is the solution?

The problem we face today is the world's worldview can no longer agree on what the important questions are let alone truthful answers to such questions as:

Is there any such thing as knowable truth? Are people accountable to truth even though they believe, or feel it or not?

Is our personal identity subject to any external objective truth or is it all solely subjective? Are feelings more important than facts?

This, then, brings us back to the Scriptures and where we actually stand in relation to them and their authority and the 'we believe'.

Do we believe that both the Old and New Testaments firstly, tells a story and they both seeks to articulate that story truthfully coherently, and secondly do we believe that this story is fundamentally an articulation of God's worldview and that they do in fact provide a set of answers to the four questions all worldviews seek to answer?

Do we really 'believe', do we want to understand God's worldview from God's point of view, or are we only interested in arguing with him about his word's truth claims and his lines and boundaries? Welcome to the worldviews war.

Sitting comfortably living within the world's worldview and taking pride in living independently of God's authority makes sense to way too many who fail to see that by doing so results in the whole structure of the doctrine, the 'I believe' and their faith deconstruct before their very eyes. Having deconstructed the doctrine and degraded its and the Scriptures authority they feel emboldened to cross biblical lines and boundaries with apparent impunity. I do believe that Genesis 3 puts paid to that idea.

At The Crossroads

Major Wayne Ennis

We believe that there is only one God, who is infinitely perfect, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things, and who is the only proper object of religious worship. - Doctrine 2

We believe that there are three persons in the Godhead - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, undivided in essence and co-equal in power and glory. - Doctrine 3

C. S. Lewis famously penned the phrase 'God in the Dock' and proposed that there was a 'great divide' between ancient and modern humans, in that our ancestors would have rightly seen themselves 'in the dock' before God, while we moderns have placed God there before us. Not only has God been put in the dock but also the Bible and the gospel and their way of Christian life and faith as well. They are now seen by many as though they too are not good--even for the church. As a consequence, in far too many ways this has ruined our relationships with God, with our own selves, with one another, and even with the natural world itself.

Just as the 2nd century saw the church standing at the crossroads facing issues that would go on to shape the future church and its survival. Now, in the 21st century we too are at a cross road facing issues that are seeking to shape the beliefs, values and lives of each of us who claim to belong to The Salvation Army. How we respond will ultimately determine our survival.

What time is it? It is a dangerous time, a time of cultural captivity of The Salvation Army particularly in Western Territories. What time is it? It's a time of near capitulation to Babylon's imagination, symbols, practices, and worldview that is blatantly pagan and deals only in death.

It's time we put an end to and free ourselves from what has become a fatal surrendering to an idolatrous cultural experiment. In order to do this will require an embracing, a reimagining of the God of our doctrinal statement, and the liberating narrative of his Gospel, his Word, and living free in his Kingdom in dangerous times.

This will take courage as we relearn what it means to live before the God we say we believe in the two doctrines mentioned, and to live according to his Word as claimed in doctrine one. Unless we understand this and recognise the ways in which the world is insinuating its corrupting tentacles into the very heart and soul of The Army and think we don't have to do something about it, then we are living in a fool's paradise.

If there is to be any hope of living faithfully in this post-Truth culture there will be the need to be filled, renewed, transformed, enlightened, and filled with God the Holy Spirit. And such renewal and transformation and leading cannot occur apart from a profound grasp of and being grasped by the biblical worldview.

This is what we would rightly call a spiritually renewed imagination that is enlightened by the Word of God. The light of the Word of God is none other than the one said 'I am the light of the world'.

Rome was a military, economic, and very religious empire and like Ancient Israel in exile in Babylon, was a dangerous and hostile environment for the early church, both physically and spiritually. The 2nd and on into the 3rd centuries put the early church at the crossroads as to whether it would surrender and assimilate as the culture demanded.

It was during this period that the church needed to develop and settle the core beliefs that were to be held by orthodox Christianity in the face of Rome's pressure to assimilate or die on the one hand and the ongoing campaigns by those within the church who were willing to assimilate and those who wanted an alternative gospel, Jesus, orthodoxy, and means of salvation.

Out of the turmoils of the period came a core set of beliefs that unified the church and enabled it to continue to grow and flourish even in the midst of punishing persecution. Their and now our core beliefs are:

Creation: Who created the world, was it created good, and how many gods were there.

Scripture: What is the nature of the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and are they authoritative for Christians everywhere and always.

Salvation: What are we being saved from, our own sins or the trappings of the physical world? Is faith in Jesus enough to be saved, or do we need to keep the Mosaic law?

The Trinity: Is Jesus divine and part of the Godhead? Is the Spirit?

Jesus Christ: Was Jesus merely human, was he so divine that he was not human, or was he a mixture of both?

The Rule of Faith: Provided the necessary theological boundaries and the proper narrative framework within which the church's theological development could take place. The Apostles Creed is the earliest example of such a Rule of Faith and as Irenaeus noted, 'Christians must always ground their theological commitments in the fixed, unchanging tradition of the Apostles, as summarised in the rule of faith'. This all means that these beliefs have an ancient pedigree that needs to be seen and understood.

Where do we find ourselves today? We are living in a hostile culture that sees our core beliefs as dangerously oppressive and are only too willing to attack those of us who are not willing to change them or give them up. Sadly, as in the early church, there are those who have been willing to assimilate and seek to operate from a very different canon, and to make life difficult for those who are not willing to fall into line.

It seems to me that what is going on is nothing less than the abandonment by many of a biblical worldview and an enculturation of The Salvation Army in Australia that is

the makings of a spiritual catastrophe. What is at stake here is our fundamental allegiance - whether to Jesus or to different gods.

If our presence in a culture that is fundamentally at odds with the Kingdom of God is to be biblically faithful, we must recognise, with the help of biblically informed insights, just how at odds our cultural milieu is. This means we cannot allow the culture's worldview to define reality for us, nor what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, nor what it means to be obedient to Him.

C. S Lewis warned 'No generation can bequeath to its successors what it has not got.' (C.S. Lewis). What it has not got. The question as to why it has not got it is, obviously, too complex for me to answer. Nevertheless, having spent a number of years in classrooms with prospective Officers and watched what is now happening I can see that much of the ignorance today is rightly attributed by Lewis to 'the liberal writers who are continually accommodating and whittling down the truth of the Gospel. We are to defend Christianity itself - the faith preached by the Apostles, attested by the Martyrs, embodied in the Creeds, expounded by the Fathers. In other words, we are not free to consider ourselves free to alter the faith whenever the faith looks perplexing or repellent to either ourselves or the culture around us.

Repentance

Major Wayne Ennis

We believe that repentance toward God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit are necessary to salvation. - Doctrine 7.

I have made the observation (see other entries in JAC) that any encounter with Jesus was, and is, an invitation to experience the divine benevolence (grace) as found in the call to repentance, faith, and being transformed by the power of grace. Jesus encounters have a goal that leaves no one left unchallenged or unchanged. Where does this come from, it might be asked? The answer is from Jesus himself.

Mark's Gospel tells us that when Jesus came out of the desert and began his ministry it was a time of fulfillment, 'Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the good news of God and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'" (Mark 1:14-15). Luke reminds us that when challenged by the Pharisees as to why Jesus was doing what he was doing his reply was, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician but those who are sick; I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.' (Luke 5:31-32). Did any of this cause offence, well I guess it did, did it stop Jesus proclaiming the need to repent and return to God? No.

The Apostle Paul proclaimed the 'faith' he once persecuted that had for him now become nothing less than the message of salvation through repentance in Jesus as the risen Messiah and Lord.

In the Revelation the risen and glorified Jesus is portrayed as being among the churches so as to transform them with the love of God. Six times in the letter the word 'repent' is used, not in the Greek sense of 'change one's mind' but in the Hebrew sense of 'turn around or return'.

The Scriptures we claim to believe in resonate in their insistence that faith, what we believe, is inseparable from faithfulness, actions that are consistent with what we profess. And, seeing that in the book of Revelation shows Jesus firstly taking notice of the behaviour of those in the churches that are being written to, perhaps we ought to put 'right practice' and the same level as 'right belief'.

There was a time when doctrine 7 formed the basis for what was proclaimed in the Army's open-air meetings in our streets and towns. It was also a time when we were confident in our understanding of the doctrine and would boldly call out 'repent and believe the gospel'. It was a time when listeners would probably think they knew what was being said: 'give up your sins and become a Christian'. We now live in a day when most of this has disappeared and we no longer have confidence in the message that calls for repentance, and its subsequent radical transformation.

It now seems that in some quarters the very idea that God requires confession and a turning away (repentance) from evil and a turn toward the good is being contested and is even being seen as offensive. In order not to cause offense there has been a call by some for what can be seen as 'latitude' in how we interpret and apply the doctrines in general and doctrine 7 in particular. Whatever else might be said about

the Soldiers Covenant with its confessions around doctrine and the outworking of their standards of behaviour, latitude is not the first word that comes to mind. Yet, our 'latitudinarians' continue to demand changes that are undermining the very vows and standards of belief and behaviour that enables anyone to respond to the grace offered in Jesus's call for repentance that leads to life and transformation.

The price of such latitude and a commitment to sound doctrine and a biblically defined mission will be high, higher than The Salvation Army can afford. If we do not will to be faithful to the biblical faith as found in The Salvation Army's doctrines, symbols, and principles and are willing to enact being The Salvation Army, there will be no Salvation Army in the West.

The question is: Will you be, first of all, a faithful, obedient disciple of Jesus Christ, and faithful to the vows you made on that day you made before God and your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ?

Symbols & Rituals

Major Wayne Ennis

It seems to me there is a serious problem within our ranks and the question is just how serious is the problem and is it fixable? Has The Salvation Army in Australia lost its way or is it just floundering and in an age of unrest? Has it become adoptive and adaptive rather than transformative? To be in the midst of such a quandary is disconcerting particularly when one is in their senior years.

The last eighteen months has meant watching Sunday TSA meetings online either at our home Corps or elsewhere in the world. While watching some of these meetings I have noticed just how they have changed and how many are no longer recognisably Salvation Army. This can be seen in the decline in what would rightly be called TSA symbols and rituals.

It seems many are unaware that symbols and rituals have meaning and have an important place in what it means to be Christian and TSA. The decline in symbol and ritual is seen in the increasing lack of importance in many of today's Corps via an increasingly casualized uniform, the Crest being replaced by the Red Shield, all in the push to be relevant to a secular culture. In our worship in many places the Song Book is no longer used, which means we symbolically no longer sing what we believe as Salvationists; instead, we sing somebody else's beliefs and theology. Without its symbols there is a paucity of what it means to be The Salvation Army and without its symbols and rituals there is no longer a The Salvation Army community.

Maintaining a clear understanding of symbols and rituals is critical to teaching sound faith as well as what it means to belong to TSA. Why, you might well ask? It is because symbols integrated together as rituals allow learning to occur within a framework that has already been accepted, and to build upon symbolic and ritualistic knowledge that has already been assimilated into our belief system. Changing symbols not only changes who we are, it also changes the message, which means we need to seriously consider what is being done and why we want to do away with our symbols and rituals and thereby disrupt who the Army is before substituting them for something foreign that will harm the long-term wellbeing of The Salvation Army as a community of God's people.

It is true to say that the thing we fear most as an organisation is to be seen to be old fashioned and therefore irrelevant to our secular culture. It seems that within the current Army there are those who are willing to continue down the road of adaptivity to Post-modernity in order to appear 'relevant' in the hope that we and our message will appear acceptable to our Post-Christian culture.

For the most part leaders who have done away with Christian and in our case The Salvation Army symbols and rituals have done and continue to do so under the guise of making things 'relevant'. The term however is all too often used as cover for doing things that subvert not only the integrity of the church, but the Gospel as well. The downgrading and eventual loss of our symbols and rituals may sound like a good idea at the time but trying to be relevant to a secular culture does far more harm than good.

Does casual uniform make the Gospel more relevant? What makes worship relevant? In our rush to be relevant, especially in the area of social justice and inclusivity, are we allowing the issues of the day to transform the Gospel rather than allowing the Gospel to transform the issues of the day?

'Relevancy', if we must use the word, has to do with the ability to bring one's past into the present with meaning for the future. In order to do this, we cannot simply throw out the past, nor ignore what our conscious mind has deposited in our inner spirit from earlier days. In order to do this, we need a bridge that enables us to bring the past into the present, and on into the future. Our symbols and rituals are the means of building that bridge.

Christian as well as The Salvation Army symbols have, believe it or not, stood the test of time, even through the darkest days of Christianity, which I would say makes them more relevant than ever.

The Future Of Apologetics

Steve Bussey

I believe the future of apologetics is about the defense of truth that aligns the head (orthodoxy), hand (orthopraxy), and heart (orthopathy).

If I can logically state truth, but am a “sociopath” who can defend Scripture but do so without care or compassion, I practically contradict the logic of that truth (study the Church of Ephesus in Revelation).

Likewise, if I say I truly love people, but contradict or twist what is sound doctrine, my love is hypocritical as I end up lying to those I say I love - leading them astray (study the Church of Thyatira in Revelation).

Finally, if I believe the truth and say I love people but sit on my hands, remain silent, and never do something about it, I am complicit in my silence, indifference and inaction. The truth reminds us that I will be held accountable if I am asleep when I should be awake and engaged (study the Church of Sardis in Revelation).

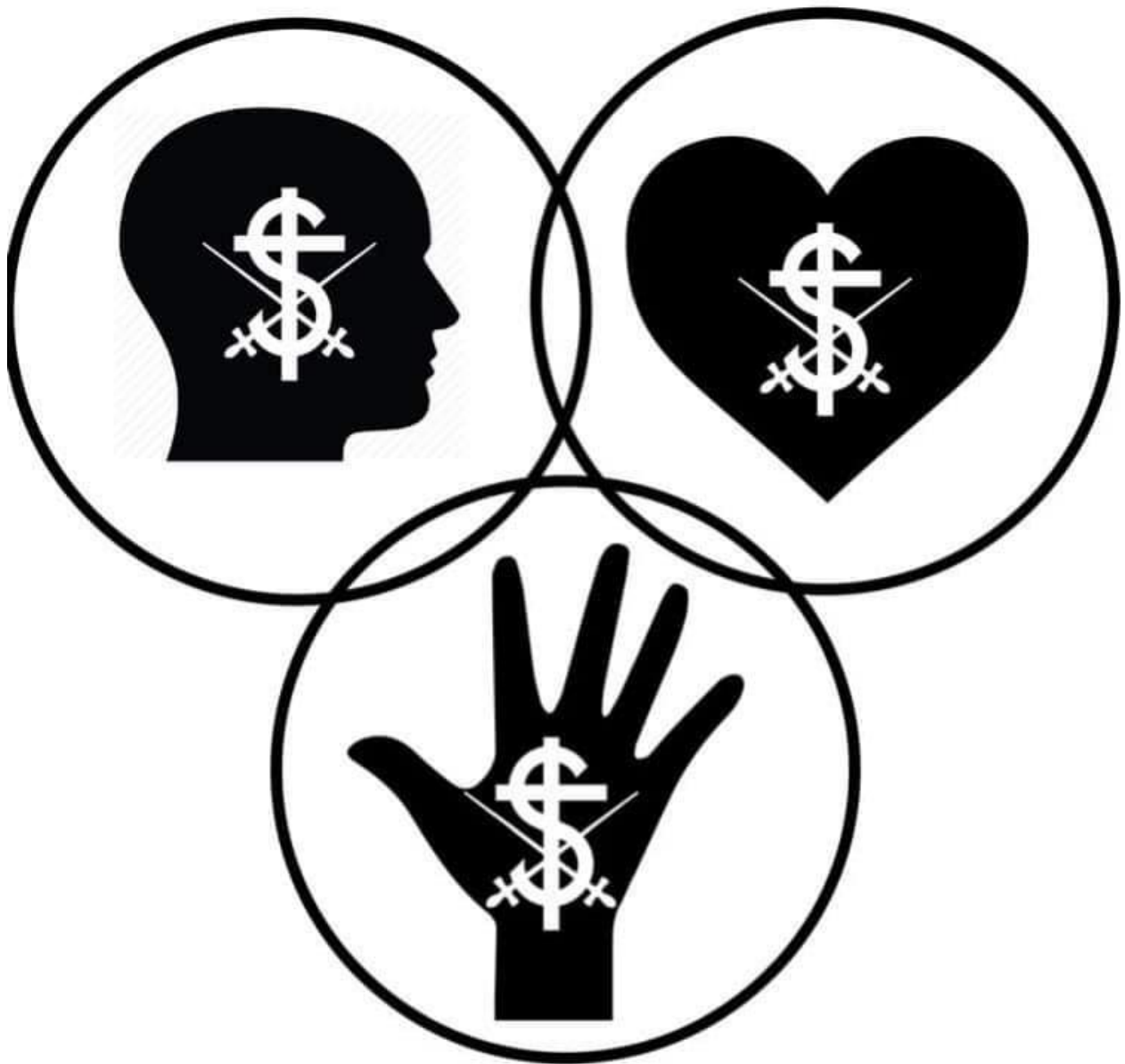
As Catherine Booth shared, If I know people are sleeping and their house is on fire, if I truly love them, I will not be silent. I will do whatever I can to communicate the truth and to rescue those who are perishing. Why? It is BECAUSE I love them. I could philosophically debate whether they are at risk, that they are responsible to save themselves, that they aren't in need of my help... but such inaction and indifference would not excuse my liability - that I chose to morally ignore the threat.

Today, we see things that are wrong done in the name of truth and we see things that are wrong done in the name of love, but if we simply remain silent - how are we any better? To walk away with indifference for fear of reputation or because to do so would be inconvenient and costly- how does that reflect Christ to our world? Does this not lead to a lukewarm faith (study the Church of Laodicea in Revelation)?

John Wesley was an Oxford scholar with a very sharp mind. His head was filled with truth, but this was not effective until his heart was “strangely warmed” at Aldersgate. When his head and heart were aligned, he set his hand to spiritual acts of piety and social acts of mercy while building a methodological organizational system to welcome others to join him. Even secular historians today consider the Wesleyan revivals to have been the single greatest cause for why England did not follow France's path to revolution... their revolution was to rediscover a truly loving and truly lived-out faith. It is no coincidence that Catherine and William Booth were born out of this movement and sought to amplify this vision through The Salvation Army.

Here we see the model of true apologetics which utilizes sound orthodoxy, orthopraxy, and orthopathy. I believe this is the best way to demonstrate and defend “real Christianity” - with sound doctrine communicated through holy hearts on our sleeves - rolled up in practical religion. It might mean that we are not as popular - and this might even lead to suffering (physically, economically, reputationally), but as the early church father Tertullian reminds us, “the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church” (study the Church of Philadelphia and Smyrna in Revelation).

If we have drifted in any way (and I know I am guilty), then maybe it is time for us to humble ourselves, pray, and seek God's face. I can see the blind spots in others VERY clearly, but my own hubris often makes me blind to the inconsistencies in my own life - hubris limits humility which compromises our holiness. Maybe it is time to truly repent and ask the Spirit to regenerate our heads, hands, and hearts to be in a state of continuous obedience and faith... (study the Church of Pergamum in Revelation).



Stop That Right Now!

Major Stephen Court

“Of the extraordinary gifts, they were given in order to the founding and establishing of the church in the world, but since the canon of the Scriptures has been completed, and the Christian church fully founded and established, these extraordinary gifts have ceased.” Jonathan Edwards, Christian Love And Its Fruit. p14

Stop That Right Now! That’s a crude rendering of the cessationist argument about miraculous ‘spiritual gifts’ in the post-New Testament Christian community. Those who hold to a cessationist point of view, like the famous American revivalist Jonathan Edwards we quote above, believe that, Cessationism means (in the formation of Tim Challies), “the Spirit no longer gives believers miraculous spiritual gifts as a normative Christian experience as it was for the apostles.”^[1]

To be clear, the moderate posture of cessationism still celebrates Holy Spirit’s working in our lives, including the crucial work of Holy Spirit in the miracle of conversion in every Christian’s life.

Here are seven biblical arguments made by Cessationists^[2]:

a. *Miracles have a unique role of establishing credibility of the word of God (and appear primarily in three biblical periods: Moses, Elijah and Elisha, and Jesus and apostles);*

b. *“The end of the gift of apostleship. In two places in the New Testament Paul refers to the apostles as one of the gifts Christ gave his church (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4).” (“Although not all spiritual gifts are offices, all offices are gifts to the church”)*

c. *The New Testament apostles and prophets are identified as the foundation of the church in Ephesians 2:20-22.*

d. *The nature of the New Testament miraculous gifts was both more intense and accurate than today.*

e. *The testimony of church history is one of apostolic gifts declining in the New Testament and ceasing afterwards.*

f. *Scripture is sufficient. “The Spirit speaks only in and through the inspired Word.”*

g. *The New Testament “governed the miraculous gifts.” “Whenever the New Testament gifts of tongues was to be practiced, there were specific rules that were to be followed. There was to be order and structure, as well as an interpreter. Paul also lays down rules for prophets and prophecy.”*

That’s a basic argument for us all to ‘Stop That Right Now’. And since we’re contending that this is an outrageous misconception, it’s essential that we address each point.

Now, look, from the outset, let's clarify some things. We're not suggesting that if you are a cessationist, you are a bad person. Many of the outstanding Christian figures in history were cessationists. Chrysostom,^[3] Martin Luther,^[4] George Whitefield,^[5] and others align with this camp.

But if this is an outrageous misconception, there has to be some reason for it. And there is:

Experience.

When you initially read the New Testament one thing you notice is the ubiquity of signs and wonders. There are scores of miracles – all shapes and sizes.^[6] There are more miracles than you can shake a stick at!

Now, when as a young disciple serious reading the Bible for myself I stumbled upon miraculous power in the Gospels and Acts, I ran smack dab into what some might call cognitive dissonance. My life contained no noticeable signs and wonders and yet the Bible was full of them.

Have you bumped into a challenge like that? Something has got to change. Subject or object (subject – the person doing the reading, in my case; object – thing having 'something done to it'; in my case, the New Testament [being read by me]).

In my case, the effect was conviction and pursuit of holiness.^[7]

Do you get where we're heading with this? Jack Deere asserts, "The doctrine of cessationism did not originate from a careful study of the Scriptures. The doctrine of cessationism originated in *experience*."^[8]

Remember, when experience bumps into text, something has to change – either subject or object. I've tried to change subject – myself and my experience. Other sincere Christians have tried to change the object – the understanding of Scripture.

In other words, when your miracle-free Christian life is confronted by a miraculous New Testament, either you seek to change your experience or you change your understanding of the New Testament.

With that in mind, let's look at the seven biblical bases for cessationism that we outlined above.

Cessationist argument A: Miracles have a unique role of establishing credibility of the word of God.

Consideration: The point made is that for only three periods in biblical history are there a concentration of miracles: Moses, Elijah and Elisha, and Jesus and the apostles, to establish the credibility of the word of God.

The connection of Moses with 'the word of God' seems clear, not only the prophetic word ('let My people go') but also the Ten Commandments. And Jesus and some of His apostles performed miracles as they Gospelised a 'new' 'word of God'. But

Elijah and Elisha are not associated with a significant new ‘word of God’ any more than any of the Old Testament prophets or New Testament writers who lack recorded signs and wonders themselves (Mark, Luke, Jude, Hebrews’ author? – if miracles uniquely establish the credibility of the ‘word of God’ – and know that cessationists mean the Bible with that phrase – then by their measure Mark, Luke, and Jude must be cut from the canon!).

Do you get it? If you say that the performance of miracles by Elijah was required to support the ‘word of God’, then you’d expect that Jeremiah and Isaiah and Ezekiel and the other Old Testament prophets must have had miracle-heavy experiences (not to mention Jude, Mark, etc. in the New Testament).

However, in that Jeremiah and Isaiah and Ezekiel did not have miracle-heavy experiences while delivering the ‘word of God’ in at least as significant content as Elijah and Elisha (we’re trying to be modest here), by the measures of the cessationists, it follows that the miracle-heavy experience of Elijah and Elisha is not essential to their ‘word of God’.

So, the credibility of the word of God can be established without miracles.

So far, so good, for those of us who live miracle-free experiences. We can still evangelise effectively!

But the flipside of the equation is also true.

Not only can the credibility of the word of God be established without miracles, but, unmoored from each other, miracles can be present without uniquely establishing the credibility of the ‘word of God’.

Why is this important? Because cessationists understand ‘establish the credibility of the word of God’ to be necessary only until the New Testament ended. The first argument they propose ends up undermining their position.

Cessationist Argument B: “The end of the gift of apostleship. In two places in the New Testament Paul refers to the apostles as one of the gifts Christ gave His church (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4).”

Consideration: This is 1 Corinthians 12:28: “And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues” (NIV).

Just a quick observation, here – there’s nothing yet about apostles ‘end’ing, any more than there is of ‘teachers’ ceasing...

The pertinent Ephesians 4 verses (11-13): “So Christ Himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip His people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (NIV).

Another quick observation, here – apostles and the others are meant to equip the saints until we attain ‘to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ’ in ‘unity in the faith’. This manifestly has not happened yet, so apostles and the others are still required.

The underlying argument is on three qualifications of an apostle: i. eye-witness of Jesus’ life and resurrection; ii. Personal appointment by Jesus; iii. Able to work miracles.

The implication here is somewhat circular:

Problem: ‘We experience no miracles’.

Justification: ‘Only apostles perform miracles’;

Reasoning: ‘apostles must have seen Jesus’;

Conclusion: ‘Therefore miracles have ceased’.

(to clarify, we disagree with the premise, the justification, the reasoning, and the conclusion!)

Somehow, this is based on Matthew 10:1-2 regarding the qualifications of apostles:

“Jesus called His twelve disciples to Him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and His brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John...” (NIV) (they omit verses 3 and 4- “Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him”)

Here are better verses for each point:

i. Acts 1:21-22: “Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection” (NIV).

Note that after Judas fell, they wanted to replace him among ‘the twelve’ and among those who had been with them ‘the whole time’ drew lots. This is before Pentecost, before Holy Spirit comes on them all. And this is the last time in Acts that you hear anything about lots in the Acts of the Apostles. And this was a specific condition to replace Judas among ‘the twelve’

(if you’re trying to argue that ‘the twelve’ constitute all of the biblical apostles, then you write off Paul (!) (Galatians 1:1; Acts 14:14), Barnabas (1 Corinthians 9:5-6; Acts 14:14), James (Jesus’ brother – Galatians 1:19), Junia (Romans 16:7), Apollos (2 Corinthians 4:6-9), Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25), Andronicus (Romans 16:7), Timothy (1 Thessalonians 1:1;2:6), Silas (1 Thessalonians 1:1;2:6)...)^[9]

ii. Acts 10:42-43. “He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead. 42 He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that He is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.” (NIV).

Note ‘witnesses’, ‘chosen’, and ‘commanded us’. Do also note, though, that if this verse is meant to outline qualifications of apostleship, they must include those ‘who ate and drank with Him’. That excludes Paul and Stephen and (see the list following part i)...

iii. 2 Corinthians 12:12 (NRSV): “The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, signs and wonders and mighty works.”

Note that the context of this verse is Paul’s testimony of visions and great suffering. The intent of verse 12 would then be that Paul’s mark of apostleship – visions and suffering – were accompanied by patience, signs and wonders, and mighty works.

Here are more examples of Paul’s testimony of suffering as authentication of his apostleship: 2 Corinthians 11:16-33; Galatians 6:17; 1 Corinthians 4:9-13; 2 Corinthians 6:3-10).^[10] And there are many apostles (including some we’ve listed above) who haven’t performed recorded miracles. So, miracles are not the confirming mark of apostleship. But suffering can be.

Cessationist argument C: “The foundational nature of the New Testament apostles and prophets. The New Testament identifies the apostles and prophets as the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:20-22).”

Consideration: Here’s Ephesians 2:20 (NIV)- “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.”

I don’t think it says what cessationists think it says. They seem to think that now that God’s household has been established, then the apostles and prophets cease. But if that’s what it means, it also means that Christ Jesus ceases. And we’re confident that cessationists don’t believe that.

In fact, you might be so bold as to conclude the opposite: just as Christ Jesus persists beyond the foundation laying of God’s household, it makes logical sense from the verse that so do apostles and prophets.

Cessationist argument D: “The nature of the New Testament miraculous gifts.”

Consideration: the argument is that New Testament miraculous gifts were more intense and accurate than today.

Even if we accept the premise (that today’s miraculous gifts are less intense and less accurate), this is an argument from experience: ‘our experience is less intense and less accurate than in the New Testament; therefore, it isn’t biblical that there should be miraculous gifts today’.

We've addressed the error of this approach already. Having done that, we'll take a quick swipe at the premise of superior New Testament intensity and accuracy.

The miracles of Moses are debatably 'greater' than those of the New Testament. The ten plagues are accompanied by the parting of the Red Sea, pillar of cloud by day, pillar of fire by night, bitter water made sweet, daily manna, water from a rock, quail, the ground opens and swallows Korah, the budding of Aaron's staff, bronze snake on a pole, crossing of the Jordan...^[11]

Here's the point: maybe New Testament miracles aren't even as 'great' as Old Testament miracles. Does that render the message inferior? (according to cessationist line of thinking, it apparently would)

Jesus heals sick, raises dead, gives sight to blind, gives great haul of fish, turns water into wine, feeds thousands, expels demons, make deaf hear, cures woman with issue of blood, stills a storm, heals paralytic, heals lepers...^[12]

Now, whether you score Moses higher than Jesus on comparative 'greatness' of miracles (and it might come down to how you grade the ground opening up and swallowing Korah), here's the kicker in John 14:12 (NIV):

"Very truly I tell you, *whoever* believes in Me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even *greater things* than these, because I am going to the Father."

Now, if we haven't done greater things than Jesus, then there are two possibilities:

- a. we've experienced less than we're supposed to have experienced (that's the nicest way we figure we could say that we've disobeyed Jesus); or,
- b. Jesus was wrong and the New Testament is wrong.

We're going with 'a'.

Cessationists argue themselves into a corner. They assert that today's miraculous gifts are less intense and accurate than in the New Testament, based, we suppose, on experience, and that this reality proves that New Testament gifts are not 'for today' ('Stop Right Now!'). But Jesus states that all who believe in Him will do even greater things than He did.

Cessationist argument E: The testimony of church history.

Consideration: 'because there are fewer and fewer reports of miraculous gifts as we grow further and further from the New Testament, therefore there are today not meant to be miraculous gifts as in the New Testament.'

Again, this is an argument from experience. And, we'll only note but not argue here that it isn't the experience of many Christians in many parts of the world where dead raising and healing and blind seeing and deaf hearing and command over nature

and power encounters and so on underline the truth of Jesus' prophecy that we will do even greater things.^[13] Hallelujah.

We must choose if we should lower our understanding of Scriptural norms or raise our experience to meet them. We choose the latter.

Cessationist argument F: "The sufficiency of Scripture. The Spirit speaks only in and through the inspired Word."

Consideration: To clarify, by 'the inspired Word', the Bible is intended. So, the assertion is that Holy Spirit speaks only in and through the Bible. There is no Biblical basis for such a claim. It seems patently ridiculous on its face. In fact, the first Biblical text that comes to mind in relation with it is John 21:25 (NIV):

"Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written."

In the same way, Holy Spirit said many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.^[14]

Cessationist argument G: "The New Testament governed the miraculous gifts. Whenever the New Testament gifts of tongues was to be practiced, there were specific rules that were to be followed. There was to be order and structure, as well as an interpreter. Paul also lays down rules for prophets and prophecy. Tragically most charismatic practice today clearly disregards these commands. The result is not a work of the spirit but of the flesh."

Consideration:

Cessationist formula

Cessationist Premise: There are guidelines for tongues.

Cessationist Premise: Some don't follow the guidelines for tongues.

Cessationist Conclusion: Their tongue-speaking must be of the flesh – reject them out of hand.

Alternative formula?

Premise: There are guidelines for tongues.

Premise: Some don't follow the guidelines for tongues.

Conclusion: Let's correct those who don't follow the guidelines for tongues in their tongue-speaking.

Though it speaks for itself, let's consider a Biblical case, that of Apollos (Acts 18:24-25; NIV): "Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John."

Applying the Cessationist logic, we'd process as follows:

Premise: We should preach the whole counsel of God accurately;

Premise: Apollos knew only John's baptism (he was ignorant of Holy Spirit baptism);

Conclusion: His teaching must be of the flesh – reject him out of hand.

Is that what happened in the Bible? Of course not. Here's verse 26 (NIV):

"He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately."

Or, as our alternative formula suggests:

Premise: We should preach the whole counsel of God accurately;

Premise: Apollos knew only John's baptism (he was ignorant of Holy Spirit baptism);

Conclusion: Let's correct Apollos so he can teach the way of God more adequately.

This isn't aimed at people. We all know and admire Cessationists. We learn from them.^[15] And the dirty little secret? Most of the rest of us Christians end up living as practical cessationists as well. We live as if Holy Spirit doesn't normally intervene in our lives with signs and wonders and miracles and healing and deliverance...

And the point of this exercise is the mission – God's mission – His purposes and our responses to them. So, this isn't about constructing and then destroying a straw man for the sake of 'hurrahs' from the amen corner. It's to clarify that there are no good reasons that Holy Spirit be limited in any way in and through our lives today. There is no way that we should 'Stop That Right Now' ('Can't Stop Me Now!' is the winning approach ^[16]). Clearly signs and wonders are not the goal. However, they help us achieve the mission. They 'confirm', 'testify', and 'accredit', and to authenticate the character of Jesus.^[17] They are meant to accelerate the advance of the salvation war to win the world for Jesus.

NOTES

[1] Tim Challies. "Strange Fire Conference: A case for cessationism." October 17, 2013. <https://www.challies.com/liveblogging/strange-fire-conference-a-case-for-cessationism/>

[2] Same source as previous note.

[3] Spencer D. Gear, "Cessationists through history." June 20, 2010. <https://truthchallenge.one/blog/2010/06/20/cessationism-through-church-history/>

[4] Dave Swavely, “Martin Luther: 16th century cessationist.” September 29, 2017. <http://www.thewaywithwords.net/2017/09/martin-luther-16th-century-cessationist.html>

[5] Thomas Kidd, “A Short History of Cessationism.” October 3, 2017. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/evangelical-history/brief-history-cessationism/>

[6] “How many miracles are there in the Bible?” Spirit of Life Church. February 28, 2019. (they count in excess of 80) <https://www.spiritoflifeag.com/how-many-miracles-are-there-in-the-bible/>

[7] I know, you’re not supposed to tell stories in which you are the hero of the story. Sorry. It’s a rare occasion. That said, and to balance things out... Some years later my buddy and I were at an early leaders meeting during the Toronto Blessing (history’s first commuter revival?). They lined up everyone in the room to receive prayer. After several prayers had attended to us, and a fair bit of time had passed, I opened my eyes and looked around. In the whole room (hundreds of people), everyone was lying on the floor. My buddy and I were the last ones standing. Cognitive dissonance! As we got into the car to head home, I acknowledged to Kevin, “either we have something they don’t have, or they have something we don’t have! Let’s come back tonight!”

[8] Jack Deere. SURPRISED BY THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT. Zondervan. 19XX.

[9] “How many apostles are mentioned in the Bible?” Peace Apostolic Ministries. <https://www.peace.org.au/apostolic/the-apostolic-revelation/how-many-apostles-are-mentioned-in-the-bible>

[10] We lifted this list from Jack Deere. SURPRISED BY THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT. Zondervan.

[11] For all of the Bible references, see <https://www.simplybible.com/f40c-bilis-miracles-in-the-wilderness.htm>

[12] For a list of the Bible references, see <https://www.christianity.com/jesus/life-of-jesus/miracles/what-miracles-did-jesus-perform.html>

[13] For some juicy stories, see James Thompson et al. GREATER THINGS: 41 days of miracles.

[14] And what about this promise in John 16:13 (NIV): “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come.”

Jesus says this the week of His crucifixion and resurrection. Cessationists have to argue that this promise has a ‘best before’ or ‘use by’ date – it runs out when the apostle John dies.

[15] Notably, in September 2022, one of the most influential Christian writers of our era, Max Lucado, indicated that, concerning tongues, “I had been taught those languages were discontinued.” “1 Corinthians 14:1 says, “eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit,” so Lucado prayed, “Lord, is there any other gift you desire for me?” After praying that prayer every day for several weeks, one morning Lucado began praying in a “heavenly language.” In ‘Speaking in Tongues Is Now Part of Max Lucado’s Regular Prayer Time’. <https://churchleaders.com/news/433857-speaking-in-tongues-max-lucado-prayer-time.html?fbclid=IwAR2mrY5QIQ0qXIWMq2d2kv2GVhZqcx-DyKMfb6fGX2YwcAMvYr4X9P7PJQ4>

[16] Alluding to the popular 1978 song by the band ‘Queen’.

[17] Confirm (Mark 16:20), Testify (John 5:36), Accredit (Acts 2:22) (from Jack Deere). Jack Deere explains: “One clear purpose of miracles was to authenticate the character of Jesus and His relationship with His heavenly Father. In this regard, miracles demonstrate the following: God is with Jesus (John 3:2); Jesus is from God (John 3:2; 9:32-33); God has sent Jesus (John 5:36); Jesus has authority on earth to forgive sins (Mark 2:10-11; Matthew 9:6-7; Luke 5:24-25); Jesus is approved by God (Acts 2:22); the Father is in Jesus and Jesus is in the Father (John 10:37-38; 14:11); in Jesus the Kingdom of God has come (Matthew 12:28; Luke 11:20); and Jesus is the Messiah (Matthew 11:1-6; Luke 7:18-23) and the Son of God (Matthew 14:25-33).”

Deere continues: “A second purpose of miracles was to authenticate the message about Jesus. This was the major function of the miracles as far as the ministry of the apostles was concerned. Mark says that the Lord ‘confirmed His word’ [that the apostles preached] by the signs that accompanied it’ (Mark 16:20). When Luke was describing the ministry of Paul and Barnabas at Iconium, he said that the Lord ‘confirmed the message of His grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders’ (Acts 14:3).” Jack Deere. SURPRISED BY THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT. Zondervan. 2010.