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Dissertation:

What does it mean to 'restate and live out the doctrine of holiness' in its political dimensions? This will be answered with reference to the recent actions of The Salvation Army in South Africa and elsewhere.

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Introduction

Recently the findings of the Salvation Army's Spiritual Life Commission were published and several confident declarations and calls were made, among them was the following:

'We call Salvationists worldwide to relate and live out the doctrine of holiness in all its dimensions – personal, relational, social and political – in the context of our cultures and in the idioms of our day while allowing for, and indeed prizing, such diversity of experience and expression as is in accord with the Scriptures.'¹

The title of this essay is taken from this call to 'Salvationists worldwide' and I have narrowed its concern to just the political dimensions of holiness and how they might be lived out. As the call makes clear the doctrine of holiness is the focus. For Salvationists this doctrine pertains to our very identity as a nineteenth century movement inspired by and born into a radicalising emphasis on the life of holiness. This movement of thought and teaching, according to historian David Bebbington, 'shaped the prevailing pattern of Evangelical piety for much of the twentieth century.'²

In this essay I will describe briefly the content of this doctrine of holiness, drawing on the writings of early leaders as well as more recent Salvationist writers, and focussing particularly on anything that describes its political dimension. Following this I will look at how different thinkers have construed the political implications of the Christian life through the ages.

The third section will then examine what such a political ethic should look like, and how the political dimensions of holiness are lived out, with close attention to the work of Oliver O'Donovan. The final section will then deal with the

¹ Street, Robert. *Called to be God's People*, The Salvation Army, UK, 1999, 63.

² Bebbington, D.W. *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, Routledge, London, 1999, 151.

Salvation Army in South Africa and its recent actions there. This will bring into focus the main questions that need to be asked and make a concerted attempt to offer some answers.

Part 1: The Doctrine of Holiness

The doctrine itself expounds the nature and liberty of the Christian life, and is taken in part from 1 Thessalonians 5; it is as follows:

‘We believe that it is the privilege of all believers to be wholly sanctified, and that their whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.’³

The implications of the doctrine for the individual is the power over our tendency to sin, and freedom from our bondage to sinful habits by the grace that has come to us by faith in Jesus Christ. John Larsson describes its history from Wesley who himself ‘followed’ Luther:

‘But while emphasizing the need for holiness, Wesley was careful not to lose sight of Luther’s great doctrine...he took Luther’s doctrine one step further. Where Luther had said, ‘You are saved by faith,’ Wesley said, ‘You are saved and sanctified by faith.’⁴

The grace that comes to us, that brings about in us the life of Jesus himself, is the Holy Spirit and by the Holy Spirit we become less and He [Jesus] becomes more. George Scott Railton said that ‘Holiness is the true culture’⁵, the true life, or as General Coutts said, ‘Christlikeness is holiness’⁶. The doctrine of holiness seeks to describe the possibility of all Christians to be like Jesus, possible because it is he that seeks to live in and through us; it is certainly nothing that we could ever attain of ourselves.

‘He who is the Author of our salvation is also the pattern of all holy living...Jesus makes holiness visible...In Him this doctrine is changed from an abstraction into a living example. The word holiness becomes flesh and dwells among us.’⁷

This holiness was for William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, indispensable. He did not see it as anything new to Christianity, simply an emphasis that he saw mirrored in Scripture and so felt that it stood ‘in the front rank of our doctrines’. Indeed Booth went as far as saying that any who did

³ *Salvation Story: Salvationist Handbook of Doctrine*, The Salvation Army International Headquarters, England, 1998, x.

⁴ Larsson, John. *Wholly Sanctified*, from John D. Waldron’s *The Privilege of all Believers*, The Salvation Army Publishing and Supplies Dept., USA, 1987, 218.

⁵ This was referred to in a seminar by Colonel Phillip Needham at Roots in 1998 but I do not know where he got it from.

⁶ Coutts, Frederick. *The Doctrine of Holiness*, from Waldron, *op cit*.

⁷ Coutts, Frederick. *The Example of Jesus*, from Waldron, *op cit*.

not share these beliefs about holiness were 'out of place amongst us'⁸. We were and are a holiness movement though perhaps we have lost our focus a little, which gave rise to the Spiritual Life Commission being formed by General Rader.⁹ It is out of this history and identity then that we explore the political dimension of this holiness.

What must be said at this point is exactly how there can be a political dimension to holiness. Street's book, due to space I'm sure, does not expand on what this really means in practice and the readers are left to make that jump for themselves. This is unfortunate because it is in this very area that many errors can and do occur. If one is left to suppose the political dimensions of Christian belief it is hard not to be accepting of whatever political climate you happen to exist in (Rom.12: 1, 2), we will look at this later with the example of South Africa.

Simply, as I understand holiness to be no more or less than the life of Jesus Christ emerging in the midst of my own life, so to, any political dimension must have a Christological basis, it must be, Jesus-shaped. As my actions follow from my beliefs, so my ethics, my politics, my table manners, etc. will follow from my commitment to Christ. If integrity is to be valued then serious reflection is required to make sure our politics do follow from our gospel commitments and the next two parts of this paper will endeavour to do just that.

In the Salvation Army itself there is very little on the area of social and political ethics, even less with strong biblical and theological foundations. One item that is directly relevant is an essay by Shaw Clifton in which he, with reference to Bonhoeffer, writes of The Salvation Army offering 'a world-formative Christianity', a Christianity that includes life on every level from the individual to the institutional.¹⁰

Clifton asks some hard questions of the Army's involvement at the political level, the level where preventative action can take place and not leave the Army simply bandaging the wounds of the poor and oppressed. Clifton looks at the early Army attempts at being 'world-formative', the 'Darkest England' scheme being one of the most powerful. He cites a powerful comment by General Albert Osborn, ' "The Founder put a dream on the map and made practical politics of the social implications of Christianity." '¹¹

Though it is stirring to read of such things they are firmly in the past, our recent success is that of protecting our rights to march, but little else, it is hard not to feel that we have forgotten how to fight, or what we really need to fight. In the Spiritual Life Commission's findings Dr Roger Green makes a similar point:

⁸ Booth, William. *Holiness*, from Waldron, *op cit.*

⁹ Street, *op cit.*, vii

¹⁰ Clifton, Shaw. *Modern Social Ethics: The Gospel and Society*, from John D. Waldron's *Creed and Deed*, The Salvation Army, Canada and Bermuda Territory, 1986, 217.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 220.

‘some urgent battles are not being fought – such as, unjust legislation, racism, failure to distribute wealth amongst those who are most in need, remaining silent against the powers who defy the authority of the Church.’

Green and Clifton both raise issues of passivity and compromise, of ‘quiet co-operation’ or ‘non-opposition’ to policies that clearly ‘fly in the face of Christ’s teaching’ for the sake of protecting our work. Here Clifton writes with conviction:

‘It is possible to compromise the Gospel, albeit ever so sincerely, for the sake of our work.’¹²

This vexing issue needs to be addressed and I believe our convictions about holiness give us the resources to do so, but I shall return to that in part four of this essay.

Clifton writes that ‘The Army, in its heart of hearts, does not have sufficient conviction that social structures need to be changed in conformity to Christ’s will.’¹³ Is this necessarily a bad thing? I intend to show in the latter parts of this paper that such a restriction of the gospel is always a bad thing, social structures codify certain human relationships and ideas and then impose them on others, they certainly need redeeming and to an extent directing.

I will look next at the different approaches to ‘politics’ that theologians and traditions have taken as they exactly how they are to follow Christ and live out that holiness which is, as Railton said, the ‘true culture’.

Part 2: Holy Politics through the ages: Augustine – Gutierrez

Taking a brisk walk through fifteen centuries necessitates a slight condensing of the material found, but I hope to be able to draw out any use of biblical texts and compare the legitimacy of their theological ideas. The presentation of their ideas will be fairly crude but clear enough I hope for this essay.

Augustine

‘There is, in fact, one city of men who choose to live by the standards of the flesh, another of those who choose to live by the standard of the spirit.’¹⁴

Augustine viewed reality as two cities, that of the flesh and that of the Spirit. He does not mean two distinct places but two ‘ways of being’ in one place.

¹² *Ibid.* 221.

¹³ *Ibid.* 217.

¹⁴ St. Augustine. *City of God*, edited by David Knowles, translated by Henry Bettenson, Pelican Books, Great Britain, 1976, 547.

He refers to Cain and Abel as illustrating this battle, that the heart of sinful man (Cain) displays the hostility of the earthly city towards the city of God (Abel). They, the two cities, are 'created'; they are founded in the human heart out of two different kinds of love, the former in humankind the latter in God:

'[T]he earthly city was created by self-love reaching the point of contempt for God...The one city loves its own strength shown in its powerful leaders; the other says to its God, 'I will love you, my Lord, my strength.'¹⁵

These cities battle for humanity in the same reality and in the same physical space. Augustine does refer to the actual city (buildings, etc.) when he speaks of the earthly city and the church when he speaks of the 'Heavenly' city, though importantly the latter is in a state of becoming, it has not arrived as the earthly city believes it has.

Augustine places the creation of the earthly city in human pride, noting that Cain created a city whilst Abel remained a pilgrim.¹⁶ This must be read against his view that support of the state is necessary to preserve order and harmony, even to the extent of waging war, which as far as it will succeed in promoting order and harmony it is considered just and right.¹⁷ Indeed Augustine called upon the state to protect the church in controlling pagans and schismatics in his authority as Bishop.

'Thus even the Heavenly City in her pilgrimage here on earth makes use of the earthly peace and defends and seeks the compromise between human wills...so far as may be permitted without detriment to true religion and piety.'¹⁸

It seems that if the church was threatened or the conscience of the Christians outraged by what they saw so as to cause a 'detriment to true religion and piety' then the church would resist the will of the state, and as Augustine firmly states 'prove a burdensome nuisance to them.'¹⁹

The Church here is in a state of dialogue and co-operation with the state; their authorities are clear and separate, from God and from humanity respectively. The Church will resist the state when they are violated otherwise obedience to the state is a given.

John Calvin

In Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, in the last chapter he deals with the issue of 'Civil Government':

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 593.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 596.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 861ff.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 878.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 878.

'In short, it provides that a public manifestation of religion may exist among Christians, and that humanity be maintained among men.'²⁰

Calvin sees the benefit of government in upholding morality, and he refers to Romans 13 in defence of this view, arguing that Paul sees 'power [as] an ordinance of God' and that all power and powers are ordained by him.²¹ In distinction from Augustine there is not a dialogue of relationship here but a single unity. The view of providence Calvin holds perceives all rulers as God's instrument, if they are wicked and unjust they have simply been 'raised up by him to punish the wickedness of the people.'²²

He holds that order and power should be honoured themselves as part of God's design, which is why even foolish rulers should receive reverence and respect. Even if wicked governments arise, Calvin maintains that it 'is not the part of subjects but of God to vindicate the right.'²³ Calvin does allow though that at times God may raise people up 'to punish the wicked government' and help deliver the people from 'miserable calamity'.²⁴

It is in this tiny loophole that Calvin fits in a theology of resistance. The Church may find that God is calling it to be the instrument of his justice against such a 'wicked government' to deliver his people. But, it is only on these grounds that the Church ever disobeys or resists, and also the weight of Calvin's theology seems to envisage persecution not rebellion, so the loophole seems small. He illustrates this well with reference to Daniel's refusal to obey King Darius' edict, ordering the abolition of any kind of prayer for thirty days except that made to the King himself:

'On this consideration, Daniel denies that he has committed any offence against the king when he has not obeyed his impious edict (Dan. 6:22-23). For the king had exceeded his limits, and had not only been a wrong-doer against men, but, in lifting up his horns against God, had himself abrogated his power.'²⁵

So, Calvin places the origin and legitimacy of the state in God's hands, in the confines of providence. The relation of the church to the state is that the church obeys always, except in actions that would disobey Christ. However, in comparison to Augustine on this point, Calvin, in the language he uses (which regards such a resistance to the State as highly exceptional) and space he gives to the topic, narrows perhaps further the possibility of a godly disobedience.

²⁰ Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, edited by John T. McNeil, volumes XX and XXI of *The Library of Christian Classics*, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, USA, 1960, 1488.

²¹ *Ibid.* 1490.

²² *Ibid.* 1512.

²³ *Ibid.* 1516.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 1517.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 1520.

Karl Barth

Standing in the Reformed tradition Barth writes in an era of turmoil and difficulty, particularly for the German Evangelical Church. He was the primary influence in the writing of the Barmen Declaration²⁶ in 1934, and his essay on *Church and State*²⁷ written in 1938 and the Barmen Declaration are the two main sources referred to here.

Barth bemoans the lack of gospel foundation that the church, through its theologians and leaders, has given this issue of Church and State. It needs, maintains Barth, a 'Christological foundation' and it is at this point that they have failed.²⁸ Barth makes clear that he intends to correct this and throughout *Church and State* he does so with close reference to some of the main texts.

He first makes exegetical use of the meeting between Jesus and Pilate. Barth sees this encounter as demonstrating that while the State may have become demonic in Pilate's rule it yet, 'in an outstanding way, may be constrained to do good.'²⁹ It also was not the law that condemned Jesus, but an obvious abuse of that law. Barth maintains that through Pilate the State was not 'true to itself' and so failed in its role as the State.³⁰ This is because Barth locates the origin of the State or 'state authority' in the Greek words also used for angel and authority, these are all divinely ordained, but also, however, capable of becoming demonic:

'in Christ the angelic powers are called to order and, so far as they need it, they are restored to their original order...the State as such, belongs originally and ultimately to Jesus Christ.'³¹

Barth envisages the single unity of Church and State as Calvin did and he also expects that the Christian will obey the State, because 'we are dealing indirectly, but in reality, with the authority of Jesus Christ.'³²

However Barth is keen to detail this relationship further. Christians belong to the heavenly city or State, which is the *telos*, not only of the Church, but of the State as well. In the Jesus and Pilate narratives Barth sees the homelessness of the Church, a sojourning through this present time, witnessing to the kingdom values that *will* be. To this end Barth sees the Church as the prophet to the State.³³

²⁶ Bax, Douglas S. *The Barmen Theological Declaration: A New Translation*, Journal of Theology for South Africa, June 1984 No. 47.

²⁷ Barth, Karl. *Community, State, and Church. Three Essays*, Doubleday & Company Inc., USA, 1968.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 104.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 111.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 113.

³¹ *Ibid.* 117.

³² *Ibid.* 122.

³³ *Ibid.* 123ff.

Barth insists that the 'priestly' function of the Church; to intercede for its rulers and policies, is indivisible from the respect that it should render the State, a service of prayer that it must maintain even if the State should become demonic.³⁴ In the case of this happening it becomes the duty of the Church to 'criticise'. Barth goes as far as to say that the Church would be rendered an enemy of the State if it did not speak out against it under these conditions, even though this may entail persecution.³⁵

The Church, as the Body of Christ, is the only hope of the State, the Church knows the State's final *telos* and its origin, its Lord, its purpose and guides it accordingly:

'the Church is the political continuum. And to be this is the Church's first and fundamental service to the State. The Church need only be truly "Church" and it will inevitably render this service.'³⁶

Barth expands thus on Calvin's theology of resistance, though he balances that with an insistence, and strangely no argument, that a State must be protected by force 'to continue to be a State' and the Christian, or Church, 'must have very grounds for distrusting the State if he is to be entitled to refuse the State his service.'³⁷

One feels that Barth is unsure of his argument here as he asserts an obedience to the State to the point of fighting with little argument as to why this is necessary for the State to be a State. Also conspicuous by its absence is any examination of the lack of violence by Christians in the New Testament, particularly Jesus' teachings on it, which would have great implications for the model he has so far built up. Interestingly this similar inconsistency is highlighted by Richard Hays in a discussion of Barth's treatment of war in his *Church Dogmatics*:

'The freedom of the God who commands (a major emphasis in Barth's theology) must be honoured; in some exceptional cases, God may command killing.'³⁸

Hays, in reviewing Barth's argument that the biblical case is heavily against war, is confused by Barth's 'experientially based conviction that Switzerland's independence ought to be defended', it is hard to classify as 'exceptional cases' military intervention on behalf of a weaker nation, or armed defence of one's own country, these seem more like general rules.³⁹

³⁴ *Ibid.* 128ff.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 139.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 140.

³⁷ *Ibid.* 142.

³⁸ Hays, Richard B. *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*, T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1996, 231.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 234ff.

Though Barth seems fairly eager to defend national sovereignty, he is very aware how easily that can become idolatrous and unjust. Barth's influence with the Barmen Declaration carefully limits the State's involvement in the Church, since around them in Germany, where Barth taught, the Reich Church Administration sought to make the Church a department of the State. They rejected any recognition of any other 'source of its proclamation'⁴⁰, of belonging to any other 'lord'⁴¹, or of being able in any way to give over its 'vocation' and task to the State, 'in the service of self-chosen desires, purposes and plans.'⁴² This very bold declaration is still an inspiration to Church struggles and is, characteristically of Barth, very Christ-centred.

Though the Church relates by obedience to the State, it also, according to Barth, should resist violation by the State and offer a proper criticism and intercession to and for the State. In these Barth has not really departed from Augustine or Calvin. Indeed, the main contribution would seem to be his Christological foundation for what is then an elaboration and expansion of what others have written previously. There is, however, one brief comment at the end of his essay on the political activity of Christians:

'Can we pray that the State shall preserve us, and that it may continue to do so as a just State, or that it will again become a just State, and not at the same time pledge ourselves personally, both in thought and action, in order that this may happen...?'⁴³

In the light of the times in which this quote was written one wonders how far pledging ourselves personally could go. Whether a rebellious political activity is ever justified was a question that a good friend of Barth's also wrestled with, wrote about and died for, and it is to him we turn to next; he is, of course, Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

'Government and Church are bound by the same Lord and are bound together. In their task government and Church are separate, but government and Church have the same field of action, man.'⁴⁴

Bonhoeffer agrees broadly with Barth on these matters of Church and State and their relation. To take up again the question at the end of the last section, as to whether it is ever right to actively work against your government, Bonhoeffer is famous as a martyr who did exactly that.

⁴⁰ Bax, *op cit.*, 23.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 25.

⁴² *Ibid.* 28.

⁴³ Barth, *op cit.*, 145.

⁴⁴ Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Ethics*, edited by Eberhard Bethge, SCM Press Ltd., London, 1955, 315.

In his *Ethics*, which was unfinished due to his imprisonment he rejects any kind of generalizations of governmental disobedience, instead, he writes that:

'Disobedience can never be anything but a concrete decision in a single particular case. Generalizations lead to an apocalyptic diabolization of government.'⁴⁵

John De Gruchy reflects on this, from his position as a South African theologian during Apartheid, regarding that it was only when the State is guilty of 'flagrantly violating the command of God' that there are grounds for 'resistance and civil disobedience'.⁴⁶ Only in those concrete times, which Bonhoeffer called 'boundary situations' for Christian ethics, those times that 'required taking the risk of concrete decision'⁴⁷, such times Bonhoeffer went through and agonised over his actions, feeling that he must be responsible for the future of his country and so must act.

'Bonhoeffer saw it as his responsibility to venture along with others the risk of concrete decision and plot the death of the one whose continued rule meant the death of millions.'⁴⁸

With a community Bonhoeffer plotted, he was not alone in his decision, but even though it is a totally last resort and a 'boundary' situation, this goes further than those we have so far looked at. However, one large problem which boundary situations and last resorts present to us are, how on earth do you know when they have arrived?

Liberation Theology

The Liberation theologians believe in the kind of criticism that Barth spoke of and many of them believe that their particular country is in the kind of boundary situation that Bonhoeffer envisaged which justifies, or at least calls for, revolutionary political action.

There is so much to represent here that I will keep to our main themes, drawing on an introduction by Leonardo and Clodovis Boff⁴⁹ and a compilation of Gustavo Gutierrez's most important writings.⁵⁰

The starting point for liberation theology is well defined by the opening chapter of the Boff brothers' book entitled, *The Basic Question: How to be Christians in a World of Destitution*. In this chapter they outline the horrific statistics of

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 307.

⁴⁶ De Gruchy, John W. *Bonhoeffer and South Africa: Theology In Dialogue*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, USA, 1984, 96.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 97.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 118.

⁴⁹ Leonardo & Clodovis Boff. *Introducing Liberation Theology*, translated from the Portuguese by Paul Burns, Burns & Oates, Great Britain, 1987.

⁵⁰ Gutierrez, Gustavo. *Essential Writings*, edited by James B. Nickoloff, SCM Press, Britain, 1996.

poverty, homelessness, lack of basic medical care, etc.⁵¹ They ask how we cannot be angry at this 'social hell':

'Underlying liberation theology is a prophetic and comradely commitment to the life, cause, and struggle of these millions of debased and marginalized human beings, a commitment to ending this historical-social iniquity.'⁵²

Indeed, liberation theology calls all theology and all Christians to join in the struggle for the liberation of the poor and oppressed. Though as a new expression of theology it has stimulated much enthusiasm its methods have also been heavily criticised. Its use of Marxist concepts especially has been criticised, though the Boff brothers' defend this by claiming that the concepts are critically used by most liberation theologians and have been caricatured by conservative critics.⁵³ But it is very clear that they criticise the state openly and vigorously, from the excess of Molina who claimed divine support for the violent revolution in Honduras to those who are strictly pacifist but oppose the state's currently oppressive policies.

I want to deal with their own understanding of church and state authority before then moving on to critique it as a whole, as there are a number of angles from which it is criticised.

As every other theologian has also expressed, the authority of the church is in the person who called it into being, Jesus Christ. But his example is perhaps taken further in the passionate commitment to a redemptive and incarnational 'Christian poverty':

'Christian poverty, an expression of love, is solidarity with the poor and is a protest against poverty.'⁵⁴

Gutierrez sees such an embracing of poverty as the only way of the church being both 'authentic' and, as such, 'prophetic', and certainly the only way of being listened to by government and society.⁵⁵ Through the understanding of the authority and responsibility of church we can see something of their beliefs about the state.

'God is father of all, but most particularly father and defender of those who are oppressed and treated unjustly. Out of love for them, God takes sides, takes their side against the repressive measures of all the pharaohs.'⁵⁶

In the fairly superficial study of liberation theology I did, this seemed overwhelmingly to be the way in which the state is viewed, which is a dramatic

⁵¹ Boff, *op cit.*, 2.

⁵² *Ibid.* 3.

⁵³ *Ibid.* 27.

⁵⁴ Gutierrez, *op cit.*, 301.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 302.

⁵⁶ Boff, *op cit.*, 51.

departure from others. The state is viewed in its 'demonic' form, there does not seem to be any wider account of authority, origin or purpose. Whether we are to suppose that they generally agree with previous conceptions, or present, say, Roman Catholic conceptions, it is difficult to know, but beyond a response to the prophetic message of the church it is hard to see where it is all going. I will begin with criticisms on this very point.

Oliver O'Donovan defines the problem thus:

'Building itself on an acephalous idea of society, dissolving government in deconstructive scepticism, lacking a point of view which can transcend given matrices of engagement, the Southern School has lacked a concept of authority.'⁵⁷

A society, without a head, without authority, is one that cannot be found in scripture. Therefore, however bad things become we still need to recognise the authority of the State, primarily to redeem it. Liberation theology is totally concerned with the problem of poverty, oppression and liberation and while the context is important it is not all there is to be said, state and church need to be defined, the state will not always be 'demonic'. As Bonhoeffer warned earlier any attempt to make generalisations about resistance or disobedience leads to an 'apocalyptic diabolisation of government'⁵⁸, and unless Liberation theology provides an account of the authority of the state that is what it implies.

'The 'political hermeneutic' is discovered and explored in a particular context of discipleship; yet it does not only belong to that context, nor is it that context that imposes it in the first place. It belongs to the Scriptures and is imposed by the exercise of reading the Scriptures.'⁵⁹

O'Donovan in the above quote includes another often cited criticism, that the context overrides all considerations and provides the 'foundational praxis', an appeal to a kind of response to the environment that precedes any theory of any kind, or it will lead to 'a specifically "political" practice'.⁶⁰

Richard Hays in his reflections on hermeneutics in ethics makes a similar point when he writes that to use 'liberation' as your 'focal image' in your hermeneutics, as most liberation theologians do, was dangerous, as this 'can be easily understood in a purely immanent sense as a political term...'⁶¹. A liberation or salvation can be purely physical or they can be spiritual or both, for the gospel not to be misunderstood it needs to be carefully delineated and expounded. The main thrust of the hermeneutic cannot be solely liberation, it

⁵⁷ O'Donovan, Oliver. *The desire of the nations*, Cambridge University Press, UK, 1996, 16.

⁵⁸ Bonhoeffer, *op cit.*, 307.

⁵⁹ O'Donovan, *op cit.*, 21.

⁶⁰ Millbank, John. *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, Blackwell, UK, 1998, 209.

⁶¹ Hays, *op cit.*, 203ff.

does not tell us enough, just as to reduce God's activity to 'love' is also not enough.⁶²

It strikes me that to follow only initial responses to your environment is not really possible without theory, as our worldviews cannot simply be suspended. Our theology and discipleship is worked out in the dynamic nexus of context, Scripture and the Holy Spirit, though it must be said that both the Boff brothers and Gutierrez seem to emphasize the circularity of the relationship of these three rather than an order of sequence. Many of the criticisms, except concerning state authority, do seem to be overcome in the maturing of Liberation theology as it has responded to such critiques.

For instance, in the Boff brothers' book they have a section called *Temptations Facing Liberation Theology* including the use of Marxist categories, overemphasizing the need for political action and the political aspects of oppression and liberation.⁶³ Furthermore, Catholic theology cherishes Aquinas highly whom depended upon and used the thought of Aristotle and many other philosophers in a critical fashion claimed by the Liberation theologians when they use Marx.⁶⁴

As the movement has grown it has become widely appreciated and admired, as many of its proponents face a serious threat of martyrdom in countries of terrible poverty and oppression. Their challenge to all theologies is for them to be liberative, to insist on its practice and its engagement with the world as its correct expression, that an armchair theology is a false theology.⁶⁵

'Woe to those whom the Lord finds dry-eyed because they could not bring themselves to solidarity with the poor and suffering of this world.'⁶⁶

The different thinkers I have looked at here provide many lines of continuity as they do different approaches. However Barth offers perhaps the most detailed so far and his efforts to ground his theology in the New Testament certainly go further than the others I have examined. Most view the church and the state as sharing co-operatively the same space; while the state provides order the church guides it with, at times, criticism. All will disobey the State to obey Christ, but there are degrees of willingness in interpreting when that time has arrived. Bonhoeffer and the Liberation theologians see a time for revolution by the church, though for the former that only takes place in a 'boundary situation'⁶⁷.

This leaves us at this stage with a fair account of the church and the state, but I will add to this in a final synthesis a fuller scriptural and theological base as well as a further look at how church and state related to each other in

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Boff, *op cit.*, 64.

⁶⁴ This is one of the many helpful responses from Matthew Clifton who reviewed an earlier draft.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 83.

⁶⁶ Gutierrez, *op cit.*, 319.

⁶⁷ Bonhoeffer, *op cit.*, 97.

Christendom (Augustine's time), which lasted from about Constantine – Calvin, a time where they were the closest they have ever been. One question that needs to be answered, though, from this section, as well as a general account of church and state, is whether there can be a 'boundary situation' which justifies actions such as those that Bonhoeffer took, the revolutionary actions many liberation theologians call for today? Can such actions be 'holy politics'?

Part 3: Political theology, political ethics

In introducing his lectures on applied ethics Michael Banner cited Psalm 147:4:

'How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?' (NIV)

Singing his song in a strange land is what we as Christians are called to do. The proclamation of the gospel by those who are citizens of another Kingdom, that is, as Jesus said, 'not of this world'. This song is addressed not only to society, but to government as well; otherwise we will 'cut short the proclamation of God's saving power'.⁶⁸

Indeed, Oliver O'Donovan writes that, 'Theology must be political if it is to be evangelical', and I would add that it must also be political if it is to be holy.⁶⁹

O'Donovan sees the modern separation of politics from theology as being entirely illegitimate and caused by two 'antithetical but complementary' enduring suspicions.⁷⁰ The first being Immanuel Kant's pronouncement that he could not imagine or posit any authority being with the 'political moralist'. By that I mean someone who shapes their 'morality' to suit their own political ends.⁷¹ A distrust of politicians shapes the first suspicion, a distrust of theologians shapes the second as O'Donovan writes:

'The anxiety was: could divine authority intervene in politics in any way without overwhelming the authority of political structures? Revelation seemed to pose a threat to political freedom.'⁷²

Kant's beliefs were extremely influential and became in many ways the structure within which any kind of thinking or speculation took place. Furthermore, Enlightenment thinkers also sought to provide a real human autonomy and so a separation from the authority of revelation was sought on many levels, philosophically and politically especially.

⁶⁸ O'Donovan, *op cit.*, 3.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 3.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 6.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.* 8.

Obviously these 'suspicions' have a far more complex history and expression than I have room to discuss here but this separation is a fairly recent happening which a sound political theology must oppose.

O'Donovan's book *The desire of the nations* plays a focal role in this section as he explores the major issues through scripture, theology and history. His argument is excellent and I found little to criticise but given more time it would be deserving of a deeper analysis.

He sees history as the place, the 'matrix' where 'politics and ethics take form', so that as the Church takes on the prophetic task it must proclaim this as God's purposeful history, and not simply the product of unconscious instincts and desires, which sociologists may claim.⁷³

He describes political authority thus:

'Political authority arises where power, the execution of right and the perpetuation of tradition are assured together in one coordinated agency...That any regime should actually come to hold authority, and should continue to hold it, is a work of divine providence in history...'⁷⁴

Echoes of Calvin's stress on providence can be heard here, but not, I think, to the extent of excluding meaningful human activity, because from here onwards he describes the covenant relationships that God establishes as a 'sharing' of his rule with humankind, which he does by a kind of mediation or representation. This can of course be corrupted by humankind, Pharaoh, Solomon, Ahab, Herod, Hitler, etc, but it can also be successful, Moses, David (at times), Jesus.

O'Donovan addresses his enquiry into the grounds of political authority chronologically, and I shall split them into three parts; the divine rule in O.T, the Kingdom of God in N.T and the Gospel and the Kingdom (pre-Christendom and Christendom itself). Throughout I shall highlight the central questions we have so far explored, arriving at some tentative answers with which to press into the last part of this paper.

The Divine Rule of Yhwh

'The unique covenant of Yhwh and Israel can be seen as a point of disclosure from which the nature of all political authority comes into view.'⁷⁵

⁷³ *Ibid.* 12.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 46.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 45.

The covenant unilaterally imposed by Yhwh in Egypt and Sinai vindicates the righteousness of Israel against their enemies, displayed again and again, but this righteousness, stemming from Yhwh's justice, will also judge a 'faithless nation, though chosen of God'.⁷⁶ O'Donovan separates the divine rule into 'salvation, judgment and possession'⁷⁷, which correspond to the above description of political authority, and explores exactly how Yhwh is King over Israel:

'If there is any figure who is allowed to mediate Yhwh's victories, it is he [the King]...The royal psalms conceive these victories as won by Yhwh and granted by him as a favour to the King.'⁷⁸

The salvation that Yhwh brought was seen dramatically in the Exodus, his judgement in the law given on Sinai and the tradition was founded and shaped throughout the wilderness and into the 'promised land'. In politics up to today we can see similarities as monarchy has offered a sense of 'unbroken tradition'⁷⁹, and 'law' in both communities, Israel and Britain, 'bears an independent witness to the divine command', understanding the state's role as that of exercising and maintaining justice in accordance with the law.⁸⁰

O'Donovan is at pains to show the development of political concepts and that their heritage within the Christian tradition is close indeed. With reference to Israel there came times when the prophets, not the monarchy, represented the true tradition and it is in these times that the church again finds its prophetic vocation:

'The prophet has, in effect, taken over the mediatorial role, a sign that the monarchy, which was to mediate God's rule to his people, has been set aside.'⁸¹

The prophet, the church, is called to speak with 'society's own forgotten voice'⁸², to allow (in the words of Barth) the state to 'be true to itself'⁸³, and enable the state to find within its very authority that 'Yhwh reigns'.⁸⁴ Behind the rule of the people and the total rule of the state is their origin in this united conception of God's rule and our inclusion, and when they work by the happy conjunction of His purposes and our obedience the Kingdom of God is realised.

In reference to the Liberation theologians, we remember their lack of a real concept of state authority, and here we have seen that the origin and inclusion of human authority is the sphere of God's rule. Without an account of this authority there is a serious hole in any theology.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 38.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* 45.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 56.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 61.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 65.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* 77.

⁸² *Ibid.* 80.

⁸³ Barth, *op cit.*, 113.

⁸⁴ O'Donovan, *op cit.*, 81.

The Kingdom of God

In agreement with St. Augustine and his concept of two kingdoms O'Donovan refers to their 'unity' as the 'heart of the Gospel' itself; the place in which the Kingdom of God is realised.⁸⁵ In examining a number of the major prophets O'Donovan finds some answers that link to the question of revolution and resistance that I highlighted at the end of the previous part of this paper.

'Deutero-Isaiah keeps faith with the refusal of Jeremiah and Ezekiel to encourage resistance; Yhwh's sovereign decision to restore Jerusalem has been given through events quite independent of the people's restless machinations.'⁸⁶

Even at this earlier stage, before any possible consideration of, say, the Sermon on the Mount, O'Donovan rules out resistance of the revolutionary kind. Israel, and Christians, are to rely on the sovereign will and purposes of God. The proper response is one of martyrdom not violence; Jesus himself 'chooses the way of suffering obedience instead of the way of violence', and it is in his steps we are called to walk.⁸⁷ Later in his book he writes concerning the church itself:

'There is to be no retaliation for evil received, no seeking of vengeance or vindication...but only love for the enemy, which entrusts the whole of judgement to the decisive act of God.'⁸⁸

He sees in Daniel however a perception that needs to be partnered with the refusal of resistance:

'We can read here a warning against optimism about the compatibility of the two kingdoms, bred, perhaps, by too facile a reading of the stories of Joseph or of Esther. The co-operative relation between Israel and the empire is not a right, and to make a priority of preserving it can lead to fatal compromises.'⁸⁹

As Daniel openly defies the King by praying to God, it becomes 'dangerous' to be one 'city' 'within the other's walls'.⁹⁰ One 'city' cannot be collapsed into the other; they must remain related but distinct, for it is only in the heavenly city that they finally unite. But for those who will be distinct Daniel is a sober reminder of the dangerous nature of this task.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 82.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 84.

⁸⁷ Hays, *op cit.*, 322.

⁸⁸ O'Donovan, *op cit.*, 149.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 87.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

But we must extend our consideration of the two cities/Kingdom of God to Jesus who not only preaches about the Kingdom but also inaugurates it in himself. Interestingly, though both John the Baptist and Jesus preach about the coming Kingdom being 'at hand', there is a change in the tenses that is used of Jesus to express a present as well as a future dimension.

Jesus' acts of power demonstrated the authoritative 'reign of God'⁹¹ and this was seen as a new authority in Israel, unlike any other:

[T]hat new power was directed against the forces which most hindered Israel from living effectively as a community in God's service, the spiritual and natural weaknesses, which drained its energies away. This was not an apolitical gesture, but a statement of true political priorities.⁹²

These exorcisms and healings were not only signs of the Kingdom but they began it, expressed it, realised it and soon this would be left in the regenerate hands of a group of disciples. Throughout Jesus' ministry people responded to these acts as evidence that he was the Messiah-King Israel awaited, this was misunderstood though and Jesus escaped from being forced into this, recognising that God's rule must come 'from above and not from below'⁹³ and that the time was not yet here. But it was not a disinterest in power that Jesus held, it was simply a more theological understanding of power than that of the Zealots:

'The empowerment of Israel was more important than the disempowerment of Rome; for Rome disempowered would not guarantee Israel empowered. The paradigm of the Exodus was, we might say, being read with an emphasis not on the conquest of the Egyptians but on the conquest of the sea.'⁹⁴

What became Israel's freedom also resulted in Egypt's destruction. The Zealot's only saw the need to be rid of the Romans, they were blind to their deeper need for spiritual freedom and salvation.

Until that fulfilling of time Jesus recognised that, as well as learning for themselves, the disciples must also witness to the state and society how to live; not 'lording it' over one another but in service to each other, especially to the weak. In Matt 18:1-6 when Jesus calls a little child to illustrate this, the child represents, in his parable, not only the 'extrinsic' physical need of protection and care, but also the intrinsic model of humility that characterises children and should characterise 'the way authority-holders proceed about their business.'⁹⁵

⁹¹ *Ibid.* 89.

⁹² *Ibid.* 95.

⁹³ *Ibid.* 116.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 95.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* 106.

The Gospel and the Kingdom

I will now consider the time of Christendom when the authorities were perhaps closest to, and most influenced by, the church.

'We distinguish two frontiers within the Gentile mission: the church addressed society, and it addressed rulers. Its success with the first was the basis of its great confidence in confronting the second.'⁹⁶

Seeing the omen of the cross in the sky moments before Constantine engaged in a serious and successful battle led him afterward to make Christianity the state religion, and Christians found their position utterly changed. But far from simply accepting this, the 'missionary imperative' of the church led the church to 'seize the opportunities it offered' and witness more widely, address all levels of society openly including its rulers, and forgive its former persecutors.⁹⁷

O'Donovan cites an incident between the Emperor Theodosius I and Ambrose, who led the church at the time, where a previous policy of non-intervention by the church changed following the massacre at Thessalonica by Roman forces. A line was drawn in the sand and Ambrose sharply rebuked Theodosius who did public penance in repentance of his actions, following that justice was to have a 'new, evangelical content'.⁹⁸

Both here and in later references by Augustine on the witness of the church in such matters the story of the woman caught in adultery becomes paradigmatic; intervening in their legal judgement and punishment of the woman Jesus causes them to withdraw and then shows mercy to the woman (John 8:2-11), the church is there to teach the state the way of mercy in judgement.⁹⁹

O'Donovan disagrees, however, with the further idea of the state defending the church, beyond facilitating its mission the state owes the church nothing, certainly a ruler should not be expected, or called upon, to 'reinforce church discipline'.¹⁰⁰ The church puts its trust in God alone for her security and her life; the existence of any other 'defender' would threaten the church's identity.¹⁰¹ It is the relation of the church to God that keeps these relationships in the right kind of co-ordination and holy order, as O'Donovan writes:

'To the extent that the Christian community is possessed by its Gospel, it will be protected against social conformity.'¹⁰²

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* 193.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* 212ff.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* 201ff.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 202.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* 218.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.* 226.

If the Gospel remains the focus of its mission and God the focus of its life then the church will resist the temptation of 'civil religion'¹⁰³, which the *Barmen Declaration* witnessed against in Germany in the 1930's, and maintain its prophetic voice 'curbing the violence and cruelty of empires'.¹⁰⁴

O'Donovan further reminds the church, and we do need reminding:

'In heeding the church, society heeds a dangerous voice, a voice that is capable of challenging authority effectively, a voice which, when the oppressed have heard it...they cannot remain still.'¹⁰⁵

The church must always be the concrete voice of freedom, to the extremes of martyrdom or the blessedness of friendly dialogue with the state, the church must be able to offer to society and rulers alike the opportunity to receive the 'new disposition of society around its supreme Lord which sets it loose from its traditional lords'.¹⁰⁶

As only the church knows the State's true Lord, origin and final *telos*¹⁰⁷ so the State needs the guidance of the church as O'Donovan writes:

'The church never was, in its true character, merely the temple of the city; it was the promise of the city itself.'¹⁰⁸

Part 4: The 'fruits test'¹⁰⁹ – does the Salvation Army survive?

The 'fruits test' is the final part of a New Testament hermeneutic developed by Richard Hays that asks the question, what will we look like by employing this ethic so far constructed?¹¹⁰ This final part will concern itself with that question slightly changed, to asking what do we look like, what does the Salvation Army present currently as its practiced political theology?

I will compare the model that O'Donovan and others have offered and the one that we see arising from recent and current practice. I will firstly look at the experience of the Army in South Africa which will be the focus of this part, I will also take up some of the foundational problems, a few identified in part one, and explore them with reference to very recent comments and articles by current Army leadership.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* 225.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 212.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* 252.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* 254.

¹⁰⁷ Barth, *op cit.*, 140ff.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* 285.

¹⁰⁹ Hays, *op cit.*, 212ff.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

The Salvation Army: South Africa and Apartheid

The terrible injustice of Apartheid is now universally recognised, but this took a long time to happen and when we examine the involvement of the Salvation Army in this time, there are both bad and good things to say. In this section I rely mostly on Brenda Sterling's paper that well documents and assesses the period.¹¹¹

In assessing the general actions of the time throughout apartheid there were many good things to refer to:

'Practical examples were cited including prison ministry and services to the poor and marginalized people. Without doubt, social concern was evidenced in compassionate action. But was there any spoken challenge of the apartheid regime?'¹¹²

The Army, as it does in so many countries, has a great social ministry in South Africa and corps across the racial spectrum. There were also many times when the Army did go against the grain and mix black and white students at the Training College for instance, but the question I want to focus on is that of 'spoken challenge'.¹¹³

'In its submission to the TRC [Truth and Reconciliation Commission], the Army acknowledged that despite its heritage of 'standing up and being counted' it chose to remain silent – a silence subsequently viewed as a 'sin of omission'...'¹¹⁴

There were individual Salvationists who spoke out 'on the injustices of apartheid', but they were reminded of the Army's 'political neutrality'. Equally there were also 'some white officers' who openly opposed any attempt at unity between the races, and though halls were open to all in terms of policy it often was not like that in practice.¹¹⁵

As the quote above shows, there was in 1997 the TRC to which the Army confessed and sought reconciliation within itself, to other churches and to society. This, in itself, was an, 'unprecedented confession' in terms of Army history and an important turning point on the road to healing and renewal.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ Sterling, Brenda. *The Salvation Army and apartheid: an exploration of The Salvation Army's confession of its 'sin of silence' in 1997, and reflection in the light of the Barmen Declaration of 1934*, MA Dissertation, Kings College London, 2000.

¹¹² *Ibid.* 2.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* 23.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* 2.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* 14ff.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* 50.

But, although the Army finally spoke out, why did it not do so before, when now it views such as ‘dehumanising our people’¹¹⁷ and ‘an affront to God *and* humankind.’¹¹⁸

In answering this question it really comes down to a misperception which not only the Army but many churches carry. It is from the modern separation of politics and theology that our problems stem. Our much-invoked principle of ‘political neutrality’ is an example of this separation as we presume to think that such neutrality is even really possible. Surely every action is both a moral and a political act, though differing in degree of effect naturally, but to claim neutrality is therefore quite dangerous.

If you view your own stance as neutral it probably means that you are simply taking the stance of that which causes no strife or alarm, a stance that ended up being ‘dehumanising’ in the case of South Africa. A ‘neutral’ perspective is easily hijacked because it is perceived as having no content; there are therefore no grounds upon which to refute another position however untenable. We always occupy a moral and a political standpoint, even if we remain silent.

Clifton writes of this concept of political neutrality in wartime as being ‘deeply entrenched’¹¹⁹, and that it was ‘less than self-evident’ in its moral rightness, and even ‘brought about an impression of moral paralysis’.¹²⁰ I think it can be seen that any attempted neutrality often brings about a tendency towards an uncritical obedience.

‘Had the biblical principle of ‘acknowledging government and paying it all proper respect’ (Romans 13:1-7) degenerated into an unquestioning passivity and cooperation that bordered on collaboration?’¹²¹

This neutrality had become very unhealthy and prevented the Army from seeing what was going on. They had withdrawn from the South African Council of Churches of which Desmond Tutu was General Secretary. An anonymous report by the Southern Africa Territory ‘describing the SACC as a ‘pro-revolutionary club, rather than an honest representation of the Christian Churches...’¹²² shows just how far they had gone from any kind of prophetic vocation.

Internationally this was also the case as General Wahlstrom removed the word ‘apartheid’ from all Army periodicals in case its discussion caused ‘division’, ironically the word itself refers to that very reality which already was

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* 12.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* 32.

¹¹⁹ Clifton, Shaw. *The Salvation Army’s actions and attitudes in wartime: 1899-1945*, PhD Thesis, Kings College London, 1988, 521.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* 538.

¹²¹ *Ibid.* 14.

¹²² *Ibid.* 17.

occurring, that of 'apartness' or of being separated, against which nothing was being said.¹²³

The Army was very late in condemning apartheid, but still political neutrality is considered 'an 'enormous advantage'.¹²⁴ Indeed, this was starkly evidenced to me recently when, at a meeting between the General and Cadets at the William Booth College, the General in replying to a question on social action he actually commented positively on the silence of the Army in South Africa, in that, it 'saved our work'. He suggested that speaking out threatens 'our work', implying that our ministry lies separate from political considerations.

This is another point that was raised in part one, but surely we cannot separate our 'work' into a place entirely isolated from its political context. We seem to attempt to confer our political neutrality upon our work as well, but such a view has neither moral integrity nor even pragmatic justification. As even practically speaking the causes of poverty in the long term must be addressed, the patient often needs more than just bandages.

I suggest that it has no moral integrity precisely because it is illegitimate to separate morality and politics as mentioned earlier. There is no such thing as 'political neutrality' and to invoke it does not make it true; it is a moral and political fiction. Often this 'neutrality' is a lack of engagement and moral nerve, a failure admitted on all counts in the TRC:

'The submission [TRC] contained the extraordinary acknowledgement: 'We did not see God's justice as being grounded in God's love' – a theological failure demonstrated in the 'inequitable distribution of resources'.¹²⁵

This quote articulates the very integrity that was previously missing, that justice is vital to love, and holiness, including the holiness of the Salvation Army, is vital to politics whatever the cost might be.

Disquieting trends

In this last section of the paper I will look at more recent trends that possibly point us towards other 'failures' like South Africa, before also highlighting some signs of a better approach.

Firstly, the perspective one gets when reading the account of the Army in South Africa in the latest Salvation Army history book by Henry Gariepy struck me. Having read Sterling's account first there appear to be glaring absences in Gariepy's version; absences that leave the Army in more of an 'heroic' light than that of the truer light of a silent witness.

¹²³ *Ibid.* 18.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* 7.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* 34.

For instance, Garipey clearly and forcefully records the first condemnation of apartheid by General Burrows, following on from which was an equally powerful positional statement that was then published worldwide.¹²⁶ This is fine but Sterling importantly writes:

‘Incongruously, despite its forceful tone, this statement was not published in South Africa...The Salvation Army in South Africa remained silent about apartheid crimes.’¹²⁷

Garipey stands guilty of painting a grossly distorted picture that hides the true reality from many Salvationists, I can only hope that this will be made right in the next volume that will cover the submission to the TRC and that its author will not continue in the Orwellian attitude of its predecessor.

A second trend that deserves expression finds its articulation in a recent article entitled *Idealism without Illusions* in the *American War Cry*.¹²⁸ This particular article relayed a letter that had been signed by the National Commander of the USA along with twenty or so other leaders and is a wonderful example of blinkered, uncritical nationalism, even though criticism is what it tries to impart. Its opening sentence states this perfectly:

‘American world leadership is both an American obligation and an essential condition for a stable, progressive and peaceful 21st century.’¹²⁹

I find myself wondering whether the former would still be true even if the latter was not, probably it would be. The article goes on to list various things that they call on the government to resist or fight against. Those it lists are terrible, but absent is any mention of South America and the ills caused there by American foreign policy.¹³⁰ Instead the ‘extraordinary spread of democracy and free markets’ are praised and advancing these would justify the ‘deployment of troops and the initiation of trade wars’ as long as they are not the ‘most favoured means’!¹³¹

Noam Chomsky comments on South American foreign policy as reflected in *New Republic*, in particular the internal conflict of the USA-supported government against a popular revolution:

‘[I]f the choice for the people of El Salvador is between communism and war, then the American people will choose war. That is legitimate, because the American people have a right to choose for the Salvadoran people since we are

¹²⁶ Garipey, Henry. *Mobilized for God: The History of the Salvation Army, Volume 8 1977-1994*, The Salvation Army USA Southern Territory, Atlanta, USA, 1999, 142ff.

¹²⁷ Sterling, *op cit.*, 25.

¹²⁸ Letter to President Bush from 20 leaders including Commissioner John Busby, National Commander USA, excerpts published in the *War Cry* March 3, 2001, Volume 121 No. 5, USA.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.* 12.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.* 13.

the agents of divine authorities.¹³²

Chomsky in his ironic tone makes an important point, the USA does in its actions towards South America 'impose democracy', the only good thing the article has against the government is to call it away from that imposition generally, but even then it is vague and half-hearted.¹³³

The Boff brothers refer to President Reagan, in the War Cry article pictured in a somewhat heroic manner, but their view is not quite so flattering. They cite the 'Santa Fe Document' that explicitly states the intention of a 'counterattack' against liberation theology, and to implement this the 'Institute for Religion and Democracy' was set up by the government in 1982.¹³⁴

I may not hold totally with all the views of liberation theologians but neither am I interested or supportive of campaigns to undermine and distort it, dialogue is required not subversion. Latin America still struggles with a 'cruel present and a dark tunnel with no apparent end' and the USA, according to many commentators, has much responsibility for this.¹³⁵

The article carries no prophetic edge to it and says nothing that would not agree with the rhetoric that flows from government, and it does not come anywhere near a criticism of the basic ideology. Far from having no illusions, that is all it has.

We have little real dialogue here between church and state and Jim Wallis writes appropriately that, 'Breakfast in the White House can be dangerous to the prophetic vocation', in that with any close governmental partnership, as there is between the Salvation Army and government in the USA, 'social programs' are wanted, but a 'prophetic voice' is not.¹³⁶ Interestingly Wallis quotes President Bush from a recent Presidential Prayer Breakfast that John Busby could well have been at and I hope he, and the rest of the Army, acts upon it soon:

'President Bush quoted Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. as saying, "The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state."¹³⁷

The Army needs to understand itself before it can really begin to understand and help the state, how are we to be the conscience of the state? What will that mean for our mission budgets? We are involved already and called to further participate in God's kingly reign; the church and the state needs us to really think and reflect, but most importantly of all, to act.

¹³² Chomsky, Noam. *Latin America – From colonization to globalisation* Ocean Press, USA, 1999, 24.

¹³³ War Cry, *op cit.*, 13.

¹³⁴ Boff, *op cit.*, 86.

¹³⁵ Gutierrez, *op cit.*, 318.

¹³⁶ Wallis, Jim. *The Conscience of the State* in *Sojourners Magazine*, March-April 2001, Vol. 30 No. 2, Washington DC, USA, 7.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.* 8.

There is a need, as the two examples I have used here show, to be able to know what is going on in the world and also to engage with it faithfully as the Army we are called to be; a holy and, thus, a political Army. After all, being 'alert to the signs of the times is a Gospel requirement, laid upon us as upon Jesus' first hearers' and we must not both as individuals, but more importantly as a movement and a church take our place 'among what P.T. Forsyth called the 'bystanders of history'.¹³⁸

Conclusion

There are though some signs of hope with the recent efforts of the church to engage with the political process. The Evangelical Alliance has recently emphasized this with its determination to become 'a movement for change'.¹³⁹ Following extensive consultation with its member churches it hopes to act as a point of unity and representation for one million evangelicals towards the transformation of society, not simply the survival of evangelicalism. In that commitment it is seeking dialogue with local government, resources for local churches, the networking their members together and a pursuit of an engagement that they perceive as 'prophetic'.¹⁴⁰

The Evangelical Alliance is not alone here; recently the Christian Socialist Movement hosted an inter-faith conference called *faith in politics*, at which the Prime Minister Tony Blair spoke about the openness of his government to working with faith-based groups. The interaction seems to herald a closer relationship than has been known for a long time.

The Army is involved as members and participants in both of the above but at grassroots level it moves forward slowly. The United Kingdom Territory Mission Statement speaks of a strong commitment to social justice, indeed wherever the General goes he speaks of the Worldwide Army's three-pronged mission to 'save souls, grow saints and serve suffering humanity'. However, the rhetoric is not given currency by our actions.

One good example of this is that in the whole of two years of training to be an Officer I have received about three hours of teaching by Captain Bill Cochrane in terms of engaging with any media, local government, MP, or anything that might address the causes of social injustice and engage with political processes. If Officers are politically ignorant it is fairly assured that our members will be.

When I asked the Territorial Commander, in a visit to the Training College, if he could tell me about any moral issues the Army has challenged recently or lobbying it might have done, he threw the question open to all. It took some time until anyone spoke and when they did the only comments were of divisional comments made to press and the editorials in the War Cry on such

¹³⁸ O'Donovan, *op cit.*, 273.

¹³⁹ *Idea November/December 2000*, The Magazine of the Evangelical Alliance, UK Headquarters, London, 15ff.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

issues. These are hardly influencing the politicians of our time and do not constitute a serious commitment to social justice.

In sum, the Army has a long way to go, particularly in other parts of the world, but there are signs of hope as well. We must strive to bring theology and politics together again, both our own and society's, we must re-ignite a tradition that is centuries old. I believe this is possible for the Army and vital for the world, and more importantly I believe this is what God calls us to, as our own empty rhetoric so often records.

I close with the final, inspiring and very telling words of Archbishop Oscar Romero who was martyred for standing up for the poor and oppressed in Latin America; standing up to those in government who were also in their own way in need of God's freedom. His rhetoric was not empty and these following words were spoken only minutes before he was shot, whilst concluding the homily at San Salvador hospital:

"God's reign is already present on our earth in mystery. When the Lord comes, it will be brought to perfection." That is the hope that inspires Christians. We know that every effort to better society, especially when injustice and sin are so ingrained, is an effort that God blesses, that God wants, that God demands of us.'

(March 24, 1980.)¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ Romero, Oscar. *The Violence of Love*, compiled and translated by James R. Brockman, S.J. The Plough Publishing House, UK, 1998, 206.

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COST

“I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing.”

2 Samuel 24:24

The whole idea of cost is interesting. ‘Nothing in life is free.’
In human economy that is often true. Expense exceeds income.

The budget of the Kingdom has a different spreadsheet, it would seem. The free gift of
God is life eternal. Free for us, costly for the Father.
Income exceeds expense.

‘Cheap grace’ results when we forget the cost. Refusing to give to God that which costs
us nothing results when we remember the cost.
With this ledger expense equals income.

**Father God, from the extravagant resources of your self-giving love I have become
rich in Christ. Help me to remember that there is a hidden price tag to my richness.
Prevent me from giving to the Kingdom that which is cheap.**

“You are not your own; you were bought at a price.”

1 Corinthians 6:19,20

There goes the neighbourhood!

*Its not just about **how** we plant churches – but **where***

"The Word became flesh and moved into the neighbourhood." (John 1:14, *The Message*)

* * * * *

Much has been spoken and millions of words written on **how** we should plant our corps. Manuals have been produced and are being produced, seminars attended videos watched and cassettes listened to; the gurus and planters push their models and tell their success stories for us to consider. Resources galore to help us do what we need to do. Curiously though, little is ever said about the **where** of planting. This is because all of the above is predicated from an assumption that all players are working from the same page, that there is consensus and agreement and that it can be taken for granted that we all understand that we plant in those areas that we ourselves feel at home in.

We plant in those areas where we feel most comfortable – among people that look, think, act and talk like ourselves. Staying in one's comfort zone where it is easier to navigate is seen as common sense and even good mission practice. It is effective and after all "one can't argue with success" (another assumption here, by the way, that we all accept the same definitions of success). Thus expediency becomes the bottom line. In a results-oriented, corporate culture driven by consumerism and materialism we define effectiveness by prevailing cultural norms. And in so doing, we have taken a sociological reality and made it a mission strategy. How else to explain the homogeneous principle of church growth, for example? Biblical values are about changing the habits of people and the rules of society and calling us to a better – although more difficult - standard and value system. Just because something works, does not make it right.

Given the fairly consistent and rather unequivocal words of the prophets with regard to social and economic justice (Isaiah 58 for example, "The Charter of The Salvation Army", in Booth's own words). Given the life of Jesus who kicks off his whole active ministry by getting up in a synagogue and reading Isaiah 61:1,2 and then sitting down (thereby basically saying "I've just told you the important stuff about who I am"). Who then goes on for three years to hang out with the working poor, prostitutes, national traitors, unsavoury racial types, religious heretics and terrorists. Given the record of the early church, mainly composed of "the slaves and politically powerless peoples of the first- and second-century Roman Empire, among whom Christianity had its most extensive appeal" (Needham, "Community in Mission", footnote No. 38). Given the history of our movement, the Salvation Army, a working class movement raised up by God as a prophetic voice for the oppressed and excluded. Given all this, it really should

be easy to find us as Salvationists, to know which neighbourhoods we live in and where we 'do church'.

And yet the Salvation Army in Canada & Bermuda territory over the past 10-15 years has strategically targeted middle- to upper-middle class neighbourhoods. Systematically we have withdrawn our worshipping communities from inner-city, multi-ethnic core areas and poorer neighbourhoods and shifted to outlying suburbs (note: this is not a strictly Canadian thing – a friend of mine who is well-known in urban ministry circles throughout the continent lamented the fact that one can drive through downtown Chicago and point to half a dozen sites where “the Salvation Army used to be”). We have left our social service providers in these areas in order to maintain a presence even as the officers in these institutions live in better neighbourhoods, leaving the downtown areas without any incarnational presence.

I reckon that John White said it best almost twenty years ago, in his book, *Flirting with the World*. “Meanwhile our churches, like secular associations, are concerned with fund-raising, beautiful buildings, large numbers, comforting sermons from highly qualified preachers, while they display indifference to the poor, and to the pariahs of society – drunks, whores, homosexuals, the poor, the insane, the lonely. Jesus himself would find no place in our all-too-respectable churches, for he did not come to help the righteous but to bring sinners to repentance. Our churches are not equipped to do that sort of thing.”

One of Jesus' best praxis on mission was slipped in at the beginning of the sermon on the mount. Matthew 5:13-16 introduces the subsequently overused metaphors of salt and light. The Church popularized these images as evangelism taglines to tell us **what** we should be. But the metaphor has as much to say about **where** we should be, as it does about **who** we should be as the people of God.

Where? As “light”, in the darkest places (not much point in lighting a candle either in a well-lit room or in a room where there are other candles already burning) and as “salt”, in those places most in danger of spoiling and going rotten. The kicker at the end about “good deeds”, I understand as a validation of our redemptive theology of salvation and as a confirmation that social action **is** evangelism.

As we strategized and pioneered in Russia, the implications of this led us into some very dark and rotten places, from the drug-infested streets of the southern village of Kuleshovka to the war-torn region of Chechnya. Its not that we had no other choices and not that there were no relatively nice places wanting the Army in Russia. Rather it was that as Salvationist Christians we formulated our mission in the context of who we were called to be in the body of Christ and through our relatively straightforward reading of the Bible. It seemed like a no-brainer at the time. It still does.

So, why the erroneous assumption about the role of place in our planting strategy?

At the end of the day I think there are two reasons, one personal and the other corporate. Personally, I have come to understand that we are unwilling to submit ourselves, our lives, our possessions, our children, our time, to the greater need of a mission imperative. We understand our faith and service as an aspect of our lives and not a whole-life passion; we have decided that accommodation to the prevailing culture is more desirable than counter-cultural, incarnational ministry. Consider it the sacramentalization of our faith (read as reducing a worldview to a ritual).

Put more simply – we do not want to live in those houses in those places, we don't want those people to be our neighbours, we don't want our children to go to those schools. We don't want to lose our lives, so we save them and being saved ourselves, think that this allows us to in turn save others (like us) as we act out mission from our security and strength and talents, instead of out of our weakness and brokenness and powerlessness. And the dominant church culture tells us in no uncertain terms that we can, and even should, do this. That, in fact, it would be counter-productive and ineffective to do otherwise. It would not produce the desired results if we did. We would not be successful and failure is our culture's one unforgiveable sin.

The second reason is corporate and it has to do with money. All roads lead to the money men in today's Army. No argument here, it does take money (and a lot of it) to engage in mission. Saving the world is an expensive proposition. However, once any organization – particularly if that organization is the church – allows their accountants to shape mission policy and control mission strategy, there will be problems. Financial people, by the very nature of their skill-set, are generally conservatives and true mission is a risky business. Any faith institution lives with an inherent tension between the money people who will work to enforce risk-management and the missionaries, usually the risk-takers. This can be a creative tension to ensure wise stewardship of Gd's resources – creative and healthy. But it is the kiss of death when these parts of our structure are allowed in the driver's seat.

It is not financially good sense to open corps in impoverished areas among people with few financial resources. Ghetto churches don't pay for themselves, is what everybody understands – so why go there? It will cost too much, use up too much of our present resources. The returns will be minimal and the success, if it comes at all, too hard won. It is bad business.

I guess the question we have to ask ourselves is if these reasons of ours are good theology or just good sociology. What is a successful church and what price is too high to achieve that success? Where *would* Jesus live in Canada, who would he hang out with, where would he go to church?

What a hope!

by Commissioner Wesley Harris

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WE may be pessimists by nature but we can be optimists by grace! For the Christian the best is always yet to be and we had better believe it!

In a weekly small group I have had the privilege of leading for more than seven years we have recently completed a series of studies on 'Hope' requested by one of our members. We traced the concept of hope through the Old Testament and the New and, course, dwelt particularly upon Christ who is the embodiment and fulfilment of Christian hope. Sometimes we dishonour God when we fail to have hope just as we do when we lack faith or love . Hope is part of our heritage in Christ.

I have lived long enough to have seen various fads and phases in theology. For example, I remember that in the early seventies there was a lot of talk about the 'death of God'. Some of the avant-garde in the Army and elsewhere were talking about the imminent demise of churches. In fact, the Church in the world - including that part of it which is the Army - is now probably larger than ever before.

Throughout history there have been times when pundits have predicted the death of Christianity but such predictions have usually been followed by news of a resurrection!

In 1912 when William Booth was promoted to Glory the editor of the *John Bull* magazine in Britain looked into his witches brew, probably murmured 'double, double, toil and trouble' and then declared that 'the death of William Booth spells the end of The Salvation Army'. Even the more conservative editor of *The Times* ventured to enquire whether the movement had the vitality to carry on without the driving force of its founder and first general. In fact, although God buried his workman he saw to it that the work was carried on.

In 1929 there was a constitutional crisis in the Army but after it was over the saintly Commissioner Samuel Logan Brengle wrote to General Edward Higgins, 'Have faith in God - and the next generation of Salvationists'. His words may still be timely for the gloomy souls in our midst.

For those who would give leadership hope is an indispensable quality. When Alexander the Great crossed into Asia he gave away most of his possessions. When asked what he would keep for himself he replied, 'I keep hope'. Our founders and the early Salvationists were people of a large hope. They had an apostolic optimism that would almost take our breath away. They were a 'save the world' army and were not constrained by small ambitions.

I ask myself and my comrades, 'Have we run out of hope?' Has the malaise of hopelessness laid us low? The French military hero Marshall Foch said, 'There are no hopeless situations: there are only men who have grown hopeless about them'. Is that part of *our* problem.

Henry Lawson is the most celebrated Australian poet and a man who often wandered into Salvation Army meetings in North Sydney. He wrote,

*'Tis the hope of something better than the present or the past,
'Tis the wish for something better strong within us to the last,
'Tis the longing for redemption as our ruined souls descend,
'Tis the hope for something better that will save us in the end.*

It has been said that hope is the music of the future and faith is dancing to that music. Doesn't that capture something of the exuberant spirit of primitive Salvationism? Ours is more than wishful thinking it is a 'sure and certain hope' which comes from a vital relationship with the living God.

Hope is in the very nature of God as Paul realised when he wrote, 'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit' (Rom.15.13).

WORSHIP

(Captain Stephen Poxon)

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Psalm 22:3 (AV) reminds us that God inhabits the praises of his people. Therefore, when we offer praise (one definition of worship), we somehow become involved in a mysterious unity with God whereby he not only receives our praise and worship but actually enters into it. I have no idea how this happens, but am happy to believe the psalmist when he informs me that it does!

That being the case, it stands to reason that the Devil will do all he can to damage or limit the worship we offer. If Satan knows (as he does) that worship brings us into the presence of God in a special way, then he will do everything in his power to wreck such opportunities. Likewise, if he knows God delights in receiving the worship of his people, then he will employ all means to try and deprive God of that pleasure. Essentially, if worship is important to God, and if worship will help us come closer to God, then the Evil One will be out to disrupt it whenever he can, but not always in the most obvious ways, such is his cunning nature.

Sometimes, much as it grieves me to say so, I wonder if we are inadvertently co-operating with the Devil in his spoiling tactics. That is to say, with our seemingly endless squabbles about which songs to use when we sing our worship (and worship, of course, is certainly not confined only to singing), I suspect we might be falling into a very well laid trap.

For example (and here's an old chestnut, if ever there was one!), do we use the Salvation Army Song Book in our meetings, or another, more contemporary collection of songs? To be honest, I am fast reaching the opinion that God...wait for it...doesn't actually care all that much, which we use!

There is a marvellous poem entitled, 'The Singing of the Magnificat' which tells the story of a group of monks who sing worship to God despite the fact "That not a monk in all the house could sing!" In other words, although the monks sang of sincere intent, they weren't always very tuneful in their efforts! As the poem goes on to say, "Was it the damp air...that made their voices, when they sang, as harsh as any frog's that croaks...?"

In an effort to improve their performances, the monks enlist the help of a gifted colleague – the Pavarotti of his day. They "Besought a Brother, skilled in the art of song, to come to them – his cloister far to leave – and sing Magnificat on Christmas Eve". The Brother does indeed sing, and gives a faultless performance; "In perfect cadence, clear as sunlit rain".

Sadly, however, their plan fails. God speaks to the Abbot, through an angel, who visits to say, "Brother...the God we both adore/Has sent me down to ask, is all not right? – Why was Magnificat not sung to-night?"

The point hardly needs explaining. God is not so much interested in how we sing our worship, or which songs we use, as he is in whether or not our worship comes from the heart. The singing of the monks, croaky though it might have been, was perfectly acceptable to God, for it represented their devotion and homage. And for us, today, it can be the oldest song in the Song Book, or the very latest modern offering, and it matters not, so long as it is offered "in spirit and in truth".

There is of course a legitimate desire to be contemporary in our sung worship, so that we might all the better “serve the present age”. In that sense, one could make a strong case for using only modern songs – and how tragic that would be. The church would then be deprived of songs of yesteryear that contain fantastic theology in but a few lines. It would be truly idiotic to throw out songs which teach and edify as they are being sung. Equally, it would be wasteful to ignore the abundance of new songs that can often inspire a greater depth of intimacy between the worshipper and the worshipped.

Perhaps the saddest thing is that we are gradually coming to polarise the two. This is both unnecessary and unhelpful. Worship is worship, per se, and polarisation only serves to divide. When we can acknowledge that songs that might not be to our own particular taste are nevertheless valid as instruments of worship, then we will have made some progress –and perhaps moved an important step away from the Devil’s trap of causing us to fall out and disagree over something that is beautiful and uplifting!

Captain Stephen Poxon,
Harpenden,
June 18, 2001

Biblical Revival and Social Justice

By: Captain Steve Court
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This somewhat lengthy piece by Stephen Court is based on the premise that the face of the earth is changed as the hearts of its people are transformed. It seeks to tie social justice to revival in the Biblical record. It is an excerpt from a forthcoming book called, THE RADICAL ARMY: A Paradigm for End-Time Harvest (coauthored with Wesley Campbell).

Proto-Revival

Job 29-31

A hush swam over the gathered crowd. Each head turned to catch a glimpse. Like the long chase of the setting sun appreciative smiles crossed every face. It was not the rarity of the event but its magnitude that attracted every eye. Waves of people parted in deference. Individual benedictions rolled to individual minds and lips, how this great and good man had rescued that family when the crop failed, how he had taken this one in after his parents died of the plague, how he undertook for that one after her husband died in battle, how he cared for those over there who made a meager living by begging, how he established a home to nurse several who were handicapped and ill, how he broke the fangs of the wicked slimeball intent on robbing this one of his land... Clothed in righteousness, bedecked by justice, the Chief arrived at the Gate (an elaboration of Job 29:7-17).

No one is quite sure when Chief Job lived and ruled in Uz. But this man of integrity left a legacy that continues to shine. Long before God granted us the law on stone, Job manifested the law written on his heart, and in delineating it, he left for us an embryonic code for social justice, a nascent charter for The Radical Army.

At the inception of God's plan for world blessing, during the lifetime of Abraham, an obscure, benevolent man named Job fashioned the charter of The Radical Army. It is the enactment of the revived life. We have the essence of a transformed society.

Most of us know the popular tale of Job. We've heard about the patience of Job. We might know about the suffering of Job.

After disaster strikes Job and his family, he responds: "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). His wife is a little

less magnanimous. Her advice is, "Curse God and die!" (2:9). His friends aren't all that better, and for dozens of chapters we follow their conversation with Job.

Finally Job defends his lifestyle, the enactment of a revived life, and the essence of a transformed society. It is worth reading at length:

If I have denied the desires of the poor or let the eyes of the widow grow weary, if I have kept my bread to myself, not sharing it with the fatherless-- but from my youth I reared him as would a father, and from my birth I guided the widow-- if I have seen anyone perishing for lack of clothing, or a needy man without a garment, and his heart did not bless me for warming him with the fleece from my sheep, if I have raised my hand against the fatherless, knowing that I had influence in court, then let my arm fall from the shoulder, let it be broken off at the joint.

For I dreaded destruction from God, and for fear of his splendor I could not do such things. If I have put my trust in gold or said to pure gold, 'You are my security,' if I have rejoiced over my great wealth, the fortune my hands had gained, if I have regarded the sun in its radiance or the moon moving in splendor, so that my heart was secretly enticed and my hand offered them a kiss of homage, then these also would be sins to be judged, for I would have been unfaithful to God on high. If I have rejoiced at my enemy's misfortune or gloated over the trouble that came to him-- I have not allowed my mouth to sin by invoking a curse against his life-- if the men of my household have never said, 'Who has not had his fill of Job's meat?'-- But no stranger had to spend the night in the street, for my door was always open to the traveler-- if I have concealed my sin as men do, by hiding my guilt in my heart because I so feared the crowd and so dreaded the contempt of the clans that I kept silent and would not go outside ("Oh, that I had someone to hear me! I sign now my defense-- let the Almighty answer me; let my accuser put his indictment in writing. Surely I would wear it on my shoulder, I would put it on like a crown. I would give him an account of my every step; like a prince I would approach him.)-- If my land cries out against me and all its furrows are wet with tears, if I have devoured its yield without payment or broken the spirit of its tenants, then let briars come up instead of wheat and weeds instead of barley. The words of Job are ended. Job 31:16-40

This was the lifestyle of a, "blameless and upright" man, who, "feared God and shunned evil" (Job 1:1). This was a great man, a Chief, whose conduct and behaviour was scrupulous and whose armour was without chink. He was so good a man that God removed all protection from him, making him vulnerable to frontal assaults by satan. But his good works were ingrained within his character. While not boasting, he pointed confidently to the way that he made people people out of invisible people. He factually recounted that he did not deny the desires of the poor, that he did not let the widow's eyes grow weary,

that he reared the fatherless, that he guided the widow, that he fed the hungry, and that he clothed the naked. This activity emerged from within. He explained he dared not turn to materialism or idolatry, that he would not exercise pride or envy.

Blessing accompanied his righteousness and social justice. After his ordeal Job lived 140 years and watched this budding code of social conduct extend to bless his descendants to the fourth generation (Job 42:16). And it laid the groundwork for our understanding of the consequences of revival in terms of social justice. Job made invisible people into people people. He proved our aphorism that the face of the earth changes as the hearts of it people are transformed. Every revival ever since reflects back to the truths God spoke to the heart of the Chief of Uz.

The Egyptian Deliverance:

Exodus 4:29-31

The Egyptian Pharaoh Amenophis IV devoted himself to the sun god Aten, whom he proclaimed the only god (William Sanford LaSor, David Allan Hubbard, Frederic William Bush, OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY. 1982. p118). You'll note that the Egyptian first-born were killed at midnight, and that Moses and the people of God left Egypt at night, when Aten must have been sleeping (Exodus 12:29,31- Seriously, this was a direct power encounter that Yahweh won, 'going away'). Of course, such monotheistic devotion really cut into the Egyptian idol trade, not to mention the priest and priestess professions, and so, sooner that you can say King Tut, the Egyptians returned to their extensive pantheon represented by animals such as the bull, cow, vulture, hawk, crocodile, ape, falcon, frog, serpent, and cat (Henry H. Halley. HALLEY'S BIBLE HANDBOOK, 1965, p111). And, eventually, the Pharaohs were deified as the incarnation of the god, Ra.

It is probably Ramses II, Yul Brynner's half brother of Charlton Heston's Moses, who reigned as Ra-in-the-flesh during the great Egyptian Deliverance. Talk about sibling rivalry! Of course, the revival involved the People of Yahweh, not the Egyptians, and as Hebrew hearts were transformed, you can be sure that the face of the earth (that empire certainly) was changed. Revival revolutionizes society.

About this pharaoh, who is deemed, and whose god is deemed, so insignificant in Scripture as to remain unnamed- his name, extracted from archeology, is a combination of his god Ra and Moses. In Hebrew these two words meant 'evil' and 'to bring forth', so, to the people of Yahweh, pharaoh was, 'he who brings forth evil' (Thomas Cahill, THE GIFTS OF THE JEWS. 1998. p114,115). He was the parallel universe evil counterpart to Moses. Just in case the modern reader overlooks the subtle nuances and dynamics of the interaction, let me spell it out for you: this is God's deliverer, Moses, against Ramses.

And his god was no match for Moses' God. No wonder THE TEN COMMANDMENTS and THE PRINCE OF EGYPT were such enormous theatrical smashes! This episode contains all the intrigue and drama of a 'whodunnit' soap opera, combined with the supernatural mystery of horror and sci-fi genres, laced with the archetypal good v. evil storyline. Moses, the wilderness shepherding leader of the slave revolt takes on his arch nemesis Ramses, ruler of the empire. Mano a mano. God v. god.

Moses, the Egyptianized Hebrew exile, who had settled for an anonymous existence as a shepherd in the desert, returned to his hometown ready to conquer the world. He'd encountered the God-of-the-Burning-Bush, who'd majestically dismissed his excuses against the mission for which he was being commissioned. This God was a potent God, who could burn in your heart and not consume you (Thomas Cahill, *THE GIFTS OF THE JEWS*. 1998. p105ff). This is a God who didn't blink at the power of gods and who was willing to make Moses as a god to pharaoh, to demonstrate His glory through Moses. What a confidence builder!

And, on the way to his destiny, God reveals Himself to Moses as He revealed Himself to Abraham earlier, as the God of Covenant. It took the quick thinking Zipporah, Moses' wife, and an even quicker flint knife to circumcise her son and touch the blood to Moses' uncircumcised 'feet' (Exodus 4:25) and to bring the family into covenant relationship with Yahweh and spare her husband's life.

Such experiences can produce perspective for an ambassador of God! His heart had been transformed, and he went directly for the hearts of his people.

Moses and Aaron brought together all the elders of the Israelites, and Aaron told them everything the LORD had said to Moses. He also performed the signs before the people, and they believed. And when they heard that the LORD was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshipped. (Exodus 4:29-31)

Not to get too technical, but the whole episode breaks down cleanly into components of revival:

1. *Moses encountered a God who saw the misery, heard the cries, and was concerned with the sufferings of His people* (Exodus 3:7). This is a theme for God through to millennium three.
2. *This burning bush encounter burned through Moses' heart.* A personal, life-altering experience with God removes the necessity of leaning only on the faith of our fathers.
3. *Moses became acquainted with God's power.* The God we read about in the Bible comes alive for us, today.
4. *He was commissioned.* There was no questioning, in the words of an old southern preacher man: 'Was you sent, or did you just went?' God's anointing attends God's commission.
5. *And he entered covenant.* God's *modus operandi* seems to include committed relationship.
6. *Obediently, Moses took this revelation to the people, and proclamation was accompanied with demonstration.* God wants to sell us the entire package.
7. *The result is genuflection.* People bend the knee and worship God.

8. *The Egyptian Deliverance revolutionized society. Slaves were freed. Idols were toppled. Evil systems were dismantled. Economic imbalances were corrected (Exodus 12:35,36). Frogs were piled. History was altered. God was glorified.*

Number 8 deserves some elaboration. God not only turned over the Egyptian slave system and freed his people. Very shortly thereafter He blessed them with the written code, the Ten Commandments and the Law. We're talking about a meandering tribe, fresh out of the shackles of bondage, gifting the world with the basis for civil government!

Think about this for a moment. Humans figured that you could work your servant 7 days a week. God said 'six'. In fact, "the reason given in Deuteronomy (5:15) for remembering the Sabbath is that our ancestors in Egypt went 400 years without a vacation" (Eugene Peterson, "The Pastor's Sabbath, " LEADERSHIP. 1985. Spring Quarter. P54). Humans figured that you could hate your enemies. God said, "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). Humans always look to increase their personal pantheon of idols. God said, "have no other gods before Me" (Deuteronomy 5:7). Invisible slaves became people people.

Enthused by God, this puny little people establishes the basis for western civilization! Is it too much to see the partial fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham to bless the nations through him? Is it too much to perceive the Egyptian Deliverance as the prototype of revival? To see in it the plumb line for measuring every revival since? To see it as the root, the archetype of what God will do throughout the rest of history? If it is the root, the radical basis of revival, it becomes a model for understanding societal upheaval in response to the moves of God. This granddaddy of them all becomes a standard for The Radical Army, because, as the Egyptian deliverance attests, the face of the earth is changed as the hearts of its people are transformed.

The Ammonite Uprising:

Judges 10:6ff

It looks as if the chief trade of Israel had been to import deities from all countries. It is hard to say whether it was more impious or impolitic to do this. Matthew Henry

The ministry of deliverance was always birthed out of a womb of social darkness and trauma. Francis Frangipane (delete ref ((PREVAILING PRAYER, 1994. p27)

Though muffled, the ear-rattling cacophony of heavy, rhythmic, thumping, beat time with incessant drumming in my head. Inside, wound in this warm, slightly suffocating womb, darkness was interrupted by the wild flickering of dancing shadows behind sacrificial flames. Sweat mingled with incense, and fear with intrigue. Pungent with the odor of flesh, both living and dying, human heaving punctuated the encompassing symphony. Scattered among writhing bodies jutted ritualistic paraphernalia of all shapes and sizes. Judged by the elders to be old enough to contribute to the encouragement and stimulation of the gods, I stood doubtful after my escort escaped into the dancing shadows. Millennia later, the double-dip Drive-In would offer a much less intimidating sexual introduction. While processing these images and questions against the rumours I'd heard, my temple prostitute swayed into view. Hideous make-up covered her whole body, most of which I could see, even in the eerie light. Virgin fear beat tracks ahead of disgust as I recognized, beneath the layers of body paint, my buddy Yitzak's mother! I changed my mind about helping Baal and Ashtart get together.

Scholars disagree about what actually took place during the ritual sexual acts of the pagan temples in which the Israelites desecrated themselves. But you get the idea.

Put yourself in Israelite shoes (which were forty years old at this point, a quiet, constant reminder of the provision of their covenant God). Imagine a whole generation that had never planted a flower, let alone a crop; that had never worried about the weather, because, odds were, the people were picking up to leave sometime soon, anyway. The wilderness generation of Israelites fed from the gracious hand of God.

This Promised Land deal wasn't all it was cracked up to be. Not only did they have to fight for the land, the Jews had to fight *with* it. The nomads were settling down. And there were decidedly no green thumbs among them.

It was only natural that they would look around to learn how to farm. The Hebrews looked to their neighbours, the Ammonites, Sidonites, Philistines, and Moabites. And they learned that to ensure a good crop, you had to placate the god of the crops. To guarantee a fruitful season, you must mollify the god of fertility. Evidence indicates that not only were the Israelites eager to learn, but that their neighbours were eager to teach them.

These neighbours imagined that their crops flourished when Baal performed sexual intercourse with his consort, Ashtart, or Ashtoreth, the goddess of fertility (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, 1986). So, to encourage the gods along, worshippers engaged in sexual intercourse, the man identifying with Baal, and the woman with Ashtart (Bernard W. Anderson, UNDERSTANDING THE OLD TESTAMENT. 1966, p103).

The Israelites adopted this liturgy. Maybe they were too enthusiastic! Their syncretism was temporary. Quickly it became apparent that the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and the gods of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the Ammonites and the gods of the Philistines could not be served *along with* Yahweh, could not be added to a counsel of gods that *included* Yahweh. They learned, as they abandoned Him, that He is a jealous God. He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and Ammonites.

They were shattered and crushed. For eighteen years they suffered under this oppression, in this sin.

Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD, "We have sinned against you, forsaking our God and serving the Baals" (Judges 10:10). The LORD replied, "Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them save you when you are in trouble!" But the Israelites said to the LORD, "We have sinned. Do with us whatever you think best, but please rescue us now." Then they got rid of the foreign gods among them and served the LORD. And He could bear Israel's misery no longer. (Judges 10:14-16)

Upon their repentance, God sent a deliverer to His people. And in so doing, He offended their primitive religious sensitivities. He sent them a Gentile whose name prophetically promised, "Yahweh will open" (International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, 1996). Modern Jews figure that he was an Ishmaelite (Matthew Henry's Commentary). Jephthah delivered the people of Israel out from under the oppression of the Ammonites, and into a substantial period of peace (see New Unger's Bible Dictionary, 1988, and Judges 12:7-15, which intimates that there was a 31 year generation of peace).

The Anatomy of the Ammonite Uprising.

The watchwords of revival were repentance, solemnity, humility, and peace.

After wandering 18 years in the wilderness of sin and oppression, the Israelites cried out to God in repentance. Their humble confession not only submitted to God's justice ("Do whatever seems best to You" v15) but also appealed to His mercy ("Only deliver us this day, we pray" v15).

The children of Israel met together, probably in a solemn assembly at the door of the tabernacle, received the impressions of the message God had sent them, were not driven by it to despair, though it was very threatening, but resolve to lie at God's feet, and, if they perish, they will perish there. (Matthew Henry's Commentary)

And then God taught them continuing humility, as He devised a rescue plan hinged on the leadership of a Gentile. But the result of repentance, solemnity, and humility, was a period of victorious peace, as three Israelite judges led Israel in succession to Jephthah (Judges 12:7-15).

The Ammonite Uprising is evocative of the various episodes the people of Israel experienced with different judges. Cycles of revival and declension mark the book of Judges. Consider the depth of impact that this revival had on society, though. No longer were the Israelites subject to the whims and whippings of Ammonites and Philistines. They enjoyed a national autonomy in terms of governing and trade, customs and justice. No longer did they have to help the wheat grow. No longer did they import foreign gods. No longer did they toss their babies into idols' mouths. No longer did they suffer under the oppression of a god made in their image. Now they served in the freedom of a God in whose image they were made. Their lives, their families lives, their neighbourhood's lives, their town's lives, their society's lives were freed from religious bondage, political oppression, spiritual shackles, economic superstition, and existential fear.

The Radical Revival returned to Moses's roots of the law. With each successive revival under the Judges, Israel crawled back to the foundation of western civilization. The word of God became, once again, the template for the people of Israel on which to pattern their lives. The law became the arbiter of moral right and wrong, instead of some foreign, fickle, raging idol. And so divine discipline was imposed from above, structuring their lives according to the rhythm of justice, righteousness, and compassion so that revival had hands and feet, and invisible people became people people.

Beyond the period of peace, the cycles are uninteresting. Four hundred years of fluctuation teach us that when everyone does what is right in his own eyes the

result is havoc, but when those same eyes turn toward heaven in humble obedience, blessing will follow. That and,

The face of the earth is changed as the hearts of its people are transformed.

The Mizpah Outpouring: 1 Samuel 7:3ff

From Ihabod to Ebenezer.

It was a revered place with a storied history. After the initial conquest of Canaan, Shiloh became the first permanent home of the tabernacle of God (Joshua 18:1). The Commander Joshua set up the first government there (Joshua 21:1,2). It evolved into the hub of the nascent nation of Israel (Joshua 22:9,12). And it was the seat of the last judge, Eli the priest (1 Samuel 1:3; Unger's Bible Dictionary).

Presumption is the only sin that satan wouldn't dare commit (Charles Spurgeon, SPURGEON'S EXPOSITORY ENCYCLOPEDIA. 1988. v14). But the Israelites weren't as squeamish. Following their leader Eli and his sons, the priests Hophni and Phineas, they presumed upon God's grace.

After a defeat, costing 4,000 soldiers, at the hands of the Philistines, the Hebrews presumed upon God's grace. While licking their wounds and mourning their dead, they figured, "Let us bring the Ark of the Lord's covenant from Shiloh, so that He may go with us and save us from the hand of our enemies" (1 Samuel 4:3). The consequences of this presumption were enormous.

"The Israelites were defeated and every man fled to his tent. The slaughter was very great; Israel lost 30,000 foot soldiers. The ark was captured" (1 Samuel 4:10,11). And the shrine at Shiloh was destroyed (William Sanford LaSor, David Allan Hubbard, Frederic William Bush, OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY. 1982. p232-234). And worst of all, "the glory... departed from Israel" (1 Samuel 4:22).

While the Israelites languished for seven months outside the protection of God, God was demonstrating His sovereignty in neighbouring Philistine, where His ark was stolen. After a comedic series of mishaps during which God punished the Philistine god Dagan, and visited the people with tumors of the groin (1 Samuel 5:9 Septuagint) and an infestation of rats (1 Samuel 5:6 Septuagint) the Ark of the covenant was returned to Israel. But more presumption, and the judgment that accompanies it, was still to follow.

Some of the men who found the Ark presumed to look into it. The consequence of this sin was the death of 50,070 people (1 Samuel 6:19 Septuagint). And the mourning of Israel continued for 20 years (1 Samuel 7:2).

Then,

Samuel said to the whole house of Israel, "If you are returning to the Lord with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the Lord and serve Him only, and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." (1 Samuel 7:3)

In obedient repentance the Israelites smashed their household idols, the local gods, the statues, their high places, and all the pagan paraphernalia they had accumulated, and began to serve Yahweh only.

"All Israel" assembled at Mizpah. Probably thousands of representatives of the people of God made the trip to this town. They traveled light, planning no meals due to the fast they would endure. This solemn assembly featured ritualistic repentance and cleansing. The Israelites poured out water to baptize themselves from their idols (Dr. Lightfoot, in Matthew Henry's Commentary), and to pour out their hearts in repentance before the Lord (Chaldee reading of 1 Samuel 7:6). All day long, through the heat and the dust, the Hebrews cried out to the Lord.

"And the Lord answered" (1 Samuel 9). Israel enjoyed godly leadership from Samuel, a preferred peace with the Philistines and the Ammonites, and the presence of God. Safe borders, secure administration, and true religion, or, in the terms of Canadian pioneers, 'peace, order, and good government', were the social effects of this revival. The people of Israel were prophetically named 'Ichabod', which means, 'the glory has departed'. But by the end of their repentance, they were able to exclaim, 'Ebenezer!' or, thus far has the Lord helped us!

God Splurged!

In fact, the acknowledgement of 'Ebenezer!' inaugurated the Golden Age of Israel. Samuel established the Golden Age. However, like another one calling out in the wilderness, he prepared the way, not for the Son of David, but for David himself. David, the flawed romantic, the man after God's heart, reigned over the halcyon days of the Golden Age. Starting with Psalm 1, David lives a life that epitomizes the virtues of justice, righteousness, and compassion. The revived period of national blessing extended until David's son Solomon's compromising, arrogant sinning squeaked one other pathetic 'Ichabod' between acts of presumption and pretension.

But during David's era and its aftermath, Israel enjoyed unequalled prestige and prosperity. Moses introduced the law. But not since Moses had someone enacted the Law of Moses so heartily as David. In so doing, David created a new template for Biblical revival, a new definition of what it means to be radical,

and new measure *for* The Radical Army, and a new enactment *of* The Radical Army.

The Golden Age of Israel denoted not only the abolition of evil but also the fruition of excellence. And while this excellence included such important facets of society as trade, politics, war, politics, architecture, and the arts, these manifestations were mere splashes from the river of God's grace that was flowing through Israelite society during this period.

And while Samuel set the time and key, David set the tone.

From the wilderness intimacies of youthful shepherd days through the wilderness reliances of exile, David knew God like few before or after him. Yahweh and David enjoyed a friendship, even a camaraderie, that smacks of scandal. David, the dancing man, was the one who not only returned the Ark of the Covenant, the epitome of God's presence, to Israel, but who set up leagues of professional worshippers to dance and genuflect and sing and pray to the God resident there *within the veil*. In fact, there was no veil! That is, there was no separation. Individual scandal of intimacy is macro-sized as legions of 'unordained' saints express their adoration and affection directly to God, not once a year through a priest and an ornate series of rituals, but both systematically and spontaneously right in the face of God! Invisible people danced in God's presence. Just as David's tabernacle became the prophetic model for worship today (Acts 15:17??), so his reign has become the prophetic model for revival today.

But there's more. The tabernacle prepared the way for the temple. David handed off the baton to his son Solomon, who learned, in graphic terms, that where God lands, God expands (2 Chronicles 7:1ff). Where we, in humble obedience, prepare a landing pad for the Holy Spirit, He not only settles down but also spreads around. Where the Godhead congregates, the glory disseminates.

Prayer and worship were the underpinnings of the Golden Age. They buttressed the eternal aphorisms of economic and social justice, righteousness, and compassion that pervade the Book of Proverbs. In fact, like the wisdom of Benjamin Franklin, the Proverbs serve as social commentary on the age in which they originated. The Proverbs establish a radical root for Franklin's adages. Strains of Solomon's proverbs are still heard in sayings such as 'waste not want', 'a stitch in time saves nine', 'early to bed, early to rise', and 'the early bird gets the worm'.

And so the transition from Ichabod to Ebenezer, and the accompanying Golden Age served to rip up tent pegs and reorder boundaries as Israel blossomed from an insignificant tribe to an influential country. In more than one way, the Golden Age enacted further fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham to bless all the nations through him. In a sense, the Mizpah Outpouring and its enormous

repercussions put Yahweh on the map as it solidified Israel as a light to the world. And without doubt,

The face of the earth is changed as the hearts of its people are transformed.

The Asa Awakening:

2 Chronicles 15

From the compromise of comfort to the commitment of covenant.

Crush Cush. Judean battle cry and soft drink slogan.

Two to one odds are pretty daunting- maybe not in tiddlywinks, but certainly in war. Judah's third king, Asa, faced just these odds as his 480,000 soldiers, half armed with large shields and spears, the others equipped with small shields and bows, faced the million-strong army of Cush, led, in person, by General Zerah (2 Chronicles 14:8,9). And they had chariots.

How's this for strategy? Asa prayed:

Lord, there is no one like You to help the powerless against the mighty. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rely on You, and in Your name we have come against this vast army. O Lord, You are our God; do not let man prevail against You. (2 Chronicles 14:11)

The Army of Cush was crushed beyond recovery (2 Chronicles 15:13), and every village around Gerar was sacked and pillaged by the Lord and His forces.

What a blessing! Israel had enjoyed a decade of peace and righteous leadership under Asa, and now the Army had lambasted Cush. The people of God were also living in a period when God manifestly spoke through His prophets. Michael Brown suggests that times of social stability can provide, "fertile ground for revolution, and it is out of such soil that revolutionary movements often grow" (Michael L. Brown, REVOLUTION. 2000, p59,60). Social stability nourished spiritual compromise. And so, though King Asa practised righteousness, many of his people dabbled in idolatry.

It was into this context that Asa marched his army in triumph.

We know nothing about Oded, except that he had a prophetic son named Azariah. Azariah went out from his tent on the morning after the victory. What he encountered was a celebratory parade atmosphere. Cheers and shouts accompanied the songs that the weary but joyful soldiers sang as they skipped and danced and strutted and sauntered in loose formation to the wild

appreciation of the surrounding crowds. The happy pandemonium consisted of a smorgasbord of dusty colours wrapped around gaudy treasures, children playing among Cushite donkeys and sheep, victorious shofar blasts, and the rumbling rhythm of thousands upon thousands of stomping Hebrews, delirious with conquest.

He found the King and prophesied this qualified commendation and cautionary encouragement:

Listen to me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you when you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you, but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you. For a long time Israel was without the true God, without a priest to teach and without the law. But in their distress they turned to the LORD, the God of Israel, and sought Him, and He was found by them. In those days it was not safe to travel about, for all the inhabitants of the lands were in great turmoil. One nation was being crushed by another and one city by another, because God was troubling them with every kind of distress. But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded. (2 Chronicles 15:2-7)

How we respond to the word of the Lord not only says a lot about who we are but also determines who we will become. In the din of his success Asa could easily have shrugged off the warning aspect of this prophecy. He could have complacently basked in the glow of the promise. He could have let it get to his head. He did none of these things.

Instead, Asa took courage. He was spurred on by the word of the Lord to even greater works. He completed his repentance on behalf of Judah, removing all of the detestable idols from whole of the lands under his control. And then he re-established the spiritual priorities of the nation by repairing the altar of the Lord. In doing so, Asa made it possible for the daily sacrifices and offerings to be made, and for the people of God to serve God in obedience.

But Asa did not stop there. He deposed his wicked grandmother Maacah from her position as queen mother, because she was an idol worshipper. He chopped down her repulsive Asherah pole, smashed it up, and had it burned. Here he was purifying himself and his household and ridding himself of pagan, contaminating influence in his counsel.

Asa brought to the temple all the gold and treasure that he and his father had dedicated to the Lord, belatedly honouring his promises to God.

Then King Asa assembled the people of Judah in Jerusalem. In a melee of neighing and 'baah-ing' and spraying blood and glistening swords they sacrificed thousands of animals to the Lord in repentance and acknowledgement of His sovereignty. And all of the people swore and oath to enter a covenant with God

that they would seek Him with all their heart and soul! They also determined to put to death all who would not seek Him with all their heart and soul.

The results were dramatic. Imagine a country wholeheartedly dedicated to serving God! We're talking about social and spiritual revolution- a generation of shalom! The religious hypocritical parody was displaced by the voluntary imposition of the law on what emerged into covenantal community. The Torah not only steers daily life, it pervades it. Diets, relationships, attire, leisure activities, family time, work schedules, reading habits, life ambitions, worldviews, business practices, disposable income, and hobbies are all transformed at the individual and family level (covenant tends to do the same thing today!). The landscape changed as horizons dotted with idolatrous high places were abandoned and dismantled. Even the breezes of the towns wafted with a different aroma, as the exotic incenses of idolatry were superceded by a mingling of the earthy odors of raw, sacrificed meat with the unique scents of Levitical perfume sacrifice. The widow was honoured and cared for. The poor were blessed- in fact, their socioeconomic class was almost eliminated. The orphan was defended. The alien was integrated into community. Invisible people became people people. Everyone committed, heart and soul, to the Lord- we're describing paradise on earth. This Godly utopia is the goal of everyone seeking revival. And so the Asa Awakening is a model for The Radical Army today. The face of the earth is changed as the hearts of its people are transformed.

The country was a shambles. The political posturing and religious opportunism of the leader had bitten him back. His military victories were ruined by genuflecting to the gods he'd just defeated. Besides exercising utter stupidity in such idol worship (2 Chronicles 25:14), King Amaziah showed contempt for his people and their God. His selfishly ambitious challenge to Israel, pouring salt in the wounds of division, was rewarded with death. It was not a honourable death.

Amaziah left a nation in disarray, without a moral compass, and shackled with a 16-year-old heir. It was into this compromising situation, this spiritual malaise, that Uzziah assumed the throne.

Directed by the visionary prophet Zechariah, Uzziah sought the Lord. And as long as he sought the Lord, God prospered him (2 Chronicles 26:5).

Uzziah is an Old Testament type of the New Testament apostle.

Helped by God, Uzziah warred with and defeated the Philistines, the Arabians, the Meunites, and the Ammonites. He tore down their walls and established cities in their midst (2 Chronicles 26:6-8).

And the people of God benefited from his largesse. He properly invested the perks of success in his people.

Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem and buttressed its gates (2 Chronicles 26:9). He invested in the infrastructure of the capital and the protection of the people.

He prophetically built towers in the wilderness (2 Chronicles 26:10). Uzziah determined to do a new thing, to raise up civilization where there was only desolation- streams in the desert, if you will.

He dug a system of reservoirs and wells (2 Chronicles 26:10). He managed agricultural lands, overseeing different kinds of crops and raising livestock (2 Chronicles 26:10). Having invested in the infrastructure of the capital, Uzziah invested in the infrastructure of the countryside. He developed an irrigation system and a series of crop and livestock-based farms, creating employment and provision for his people.

He developed and maintained a standing general army plus an elite army, for which he prepared armour and weapons and invented war machines (2 Chronicles 26:11-15). Uzziah was proactive in his military stance. He invested new weapons of war! This not only created industry to supply the needs he created, but also protected Judah's military position.

This is the textbook for what happens when kings go to war. Revived by God, kings multiply the blessing by generating sources of income, of employment, of provision, of safety, through vision, entrepreneurship, and ingenuity. Construction projects, catalytic inventing, systems of irrigation and agriculture and trade, vision initiatives all blessed the people of God during this time of revival.

Not only was he marvelously helped, but he grew marvelously famous (2 Chronicles 26:15).

Uzziah is a model for Christians today who are blessed with wealth. Unlike some of his predecessors, he didn't blow his wad on extravagantly memorializing himself and searching for materialistic bliss. He was intent on war. And so today's kings, whether they be crowned in small businesses or stock market or corporate leadership or some other area, must choose their lifestyles. If they are seeking God and blessed by Him, they will go to war. And the fruit of their success will be invested in blessing the people. Invisible people will become people people as kings undertake great projects, as they act as catalysts for creativity and mobilization, as they establish systems to serve the poor, as they build cities in the dessert, as they enable, through entrepreneurship and ingenuity, the poor to grow self-sufficient. God bring the individual revival in the hearts of these people that motivate them top go to war as Uzziah. And then, the face of the earth will be changed as the hearts of its people are transformed.

The Mount Carmel Soulquake:

1 Kings 17,18

From Corybantic orgy to Bloody Justice

King Ahab pursued peace with the northern Kingdom because he wisely recognized the political and military threats of the Arameans and the Assyrians. He also forged a relationship with Ben-hadad of Damascus. This is strange, because they'd already fought three times. But they united with other western rulers to thwart a coastward thrust of the Assyrian Shalmaneser III ((William Sanford LaSor, David Allan Hubbard, Frederic William Bush, OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY .1982. p264). The treaty was temporary as Judah's Jehosaphat and Ahab joined to fight Ben-hadad of Armam (1 Kings 22:1-4).

It was into a context of political opportunism and religious pluralism that Ahab's foreign wife Jezebel imported her god Baal Melqart (god of the city) and with it, hundreds of false prophets dedicated to it and to Asherah (1 Kings 18:19). Israelites generally got into the spirit of this exotic religion, adopting cultic worship that allowed them to go whole hog into "riotous drinking and sexual incontinence" that were part and parcel of religious duty to Baal ((William Sanford LaSor, David Allan Hubbard, Frederic William Bush, OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY .1982. p266). By having sex with male and female cultic prostitutes they were apparently encouraging Baal to enjoy intercourse with his consort, and so ensure fertility of the whole land (William Sanford LaSor, David Allan Hubbard, Frederic William Bush, OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY, 1982. p266).

Infant sacrifice was another feature of the worship of Baal and his goddess wife, Ashtoreth. In fact, in Megiddo, the cemetery was conveniently located adjacent to the Ashtoreth Temple, where jars of infant remains have been excavated (Henry H. Halley. HALLEY'S BIBLE HANDBOOK, 1965, p198). "The prophets of Baal and Ashtoreth were the official murderers of little children" (Henry H. Halley. HALLEY'S BIBLE HANDBOOK, 1965, p198).

The law was discarded on the dung heap as the royalty set the precedent for situational ethics, arranging through intrigue for murder and upheaval just to adjust property holdings. Oppression was the order of the day.

The situation was so bad that the most eminent of the prophets concluded that he was the last one left. This is understandable, since the others had to hide for their lives. The righteous power of Elijah was a bane to the royal couple, but they

could relax knowing that the whole country had turned from God to their imported gods.

At this spiritual nadir Elijah challenged King Ahab, his gods, and his 850 pagan prophets to a duel on Mount Carmel. He addressed the people of Israel, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him" (1 Kings 18:21). The people held their hand. They awaited more persuasion.

You'll know the details of the encounter. Ahab's pagan prophets were given opportunity to call fire down from their god to quench their sacrifice. The Biblical account is comical. Hundreds pagan prophets carry on a corybantic orgy, full of feverish dancing, self-mutilation, and stark "raving" madness (1 Kings 18:26-29, NASB). All the while Elijah is sitting by, humoured by the futility of their binge of insanity. Occasionally Elijah couldn't help himself and would interject biting sarcasm. "Try shouting louder! Maybe your god is busy. Or maybe he went away on vacation. Cry out at the top of your lungs! Maybe Baal is in the bathroom!" mocked Elijah. Their response was to increase the intensity of their lunacy, leaping higher, whirling faster, gushing more and more blood from themselves. Baal sent no fire.

When Elijah stepped up to the plate, his first act was to repair the abandoned altar of Yahweh. This was a bold reclaiming of the religious site for the God of Israel (Bernard W. Anderson, 1966, p214). It was like raising your flag in the capital of enemy territory, in the presence of the enemy monarch! Elijah was drawing a line in the sand.

During this drought that he himself had called, Elijah extravagantly poured 16 pitchers of water all over his sacrifice, the altar, and the wood, until the surrounding trench was full. Only then did he pray a faith-filled prayer with the expressed purpose that God turn the people's hearts back to Him (1 Kings 18:37).

The fire of God fell and consumed the sacrifice, licking up even the buckets of water in the trench.

The people of God saw the power of God, fell on their faces, and confessed, "The Lord, He is God; the Lord, He is God!"

Elijah rounded up all the pagan prophets and killed them.

The drought ended.

Did you catch that? Watch again:

- A man of God confronted evil.
- God manifested His presence and power.

- People submitted to Him and acknowledged His sovereignty in their lives.
- They got rid of the sin in their lives.
- The drought ended.

I know that is not supposed to read like a formulaic set of directions to follow. But God demonstrated His sovereignty over the weather! As in Amalonga, Guatemala (CORRECT SPELLING), God changed the weather patterns to the benefit of the populace. For the first time in years, crops were not only planted but also harvested! The black market and grey economy gave way to formal and legitimate forms of trade and employment. People went back to work and regained dignity. Families united and enjoyed deepening community. The blessing of spiritual revival was accompanied by the physical blessing of God.

The episode touched off a series of incidents that culminated in social revolution, as Jehu rode into town, assassinated King Ahaziah and Jezebel, and then wiped out Ahab's progeny (2 Kings 9,10).

The face of the earth is changed as the hearts of its people are transformed.

The Ninevah Revival:

Jonah

The plunge was exhilarating at first. After days of struggling to keep balance and hold down breakfast it was liberating to go with the flow. Thunder and splattering drops on wood were quickly drowned out by gurgling, washing stereo sounds. The scare of seasickness was quickly overcome by a sinking feeling. The emotional anguish of days of disobedience had sucked the fight out of weary arms and sea legs, and after a short round of flailing, the battle was conceded. Both the vision and mind faded inexorably to black. Having never been swallowed whole, it is near impossible to describe what happened next.

Jonah is famous for reasons for which he should be notorious. He is popular because he took on a big fish from the inside out. He spent a long weekend in the stomach of a fish. Of course, this was the immediate result of Jonah's disobedience toward God.

Characteristically, God uses the consequences of Jonah's disobedience for His glory.

God commanded Jonah to preach a message of coming judgment to the prosperous citizens of Ninevah, the capital of Assyria. This was a wicked city (Jonah 1:2), absorbed with evil ways and violence (Jonah 3:8). This was not a pleasant assignment for a Jew. It could have been similar to an Israeli today being sent to Ninevah today (Syria) to preach judgment. Today, although it might be a satisfying message, one might hesitate to obey for fear of his personal safety. Although that may have been a factor for Jonah, he had a baser motivation for disobedience. He disobeyed because he believed that he'd be successful!

In any case, three days of soaking up the inner fluids of a big fish made of Jonah a ghostly apparition that likely struck horror in the hearts of the Ninevites. Not only did word of his miraculous survival for three days in the belly of the fish flabbergast them, but his appearance left them dumbfounded. In this context his message that they were history in 40 days put the fear of God into their hearts.

The Ninevites response was right out of the textbook. “The people of Ninevah believed in God and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them” (Jonah 3:5). Not just the poor people on the wrong side of the tracks, but also the trendy cappuccino drinkers, the power-suited business leaders, the pagan devotees strapped on the coarsest of attire to remind themselves of their sins, and refrained from eating food.

When word reached the King, he traded in his royal robe for scraping sackcloth and his throne for ashes. And he issued a decree that no living thing in the city should eat or drink, that every living thing be covered in sackcloth, that each person call out earnestly to God, and that each person turn from personal wickedness and violence (Jonah 3:7-8).

The King’s hope was that God might withdraw His burning anger and so spare their lives.

“When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented” (Jonah 3:10).

On that day, 600,000 were spared. Each of them had repented and believed in God. They had seen and heard of His power. Their lives were forever changed. The city was transformed and enjoyed the blessing of this revival for a century and more (Spiros Zodhiates, ed. THE HEBREW-GREEK KEY STUDY BIBLE. 1990).

Can you imagine a wholesale repentance of a city the size of on the scale of London England today? Both Nineveh and London are known as great cities, and their relative populations might be similar (in real terms, you need to compare Nineveh with some place like Salem, Oregon). Can you grasp the picture of 600,000 citizens, soccer moms and soccer players, bus riders and bus drivers, plumbers and pluggers, employees and employers, manufacturers and consumers, writers and readers, the high and the low all fasting- that’s no McDonalds, no Krispy Kreme, no anything- discarding the fashions and luxuries of the day- palm pilots and cell phones, internet and cable- to cry out to God in repentance? Hordes of animals on imposed fasts bleating and barking, ribbeting and roaring. We’re talking about the most sensational revival in history!

This was no mere evangelical response to a passionate sermon. This was not just asking Jesus into your heart. This is transformation from pagan evil and violence to God-fearing lifestyle. How does that look? The sway of a wicked king was comprehensive. While he lived an iniquitous lifestyle, his people reveled in it. When he traded depravity for ascetic humility, his people followed suit.

As individuals turned from their sin and wailed to the Lord for mercy, they encountered his love. And it turned their lives upside down. History leaves us

blanks where details of the expunging of paganism and the overthrow of evil would be welcome. For some reason there are no records extant of wholesale transition to Yahweh worship. These records, if they survived, would likely tell the wholesome tale of the adoption of practices foreign to the Assyrians: of protection of the widow and orphan, of defence of the poor and needy, of the adoption of the alien, of the uplift of the poor, as invisible people became people people.

Truly, the face of the earth was changed as the hearts of its people were transformed.

The Revival of Religion:

2 Chronicles 34,35

Josiah was the grandson of the Abomination of Judah, the Doctor of Divination, the Ultimate Evil, the Original Master of Disaster, the perpetrator of the Massacre of Manasseh. His grandfather filled all of Jerusalem with innocent blood (2 Kings 21:16). After Manasseh's death, Josiah's father Amon took over and "multiplied guilt" (2 Chronicles 33:23) for two years, until his own servants killed him.

For 57 years, with a brief repentant blip, Judah had abased herself in all kinds of wickedness. Chaotic cries vied for ascendancy with the crackling sizzle escaping Molech's gaping mouth upon ingesting sacrificed babies. But even this debauchery was exceeded, by the setting up an idol in the temple itself to worship and to which to sacrifice (2 Chronicles 33:7). It was one of the lowest points in Jewish history.

And in the aftermath of Amon's death, the eight year-old boy named Josiah was crowned King of Judah.

What an overwhelming situation! One might accurately describe it as hopeless.

Josiah's is a blessed account of how one person can make an enormous difference for God. After his 16th birthday Josiah began to seek the Lord. By his 20th birthday he was going whole hog after God (that's four years of pressing in). The Chronicler of Scripture needed chapters to outline the aspects of his repentance that set the stage for revival and built on that platform.

Suffice to say, Josiah was ruthless in dealing with wickedness. He pulverized idols. He trashed abominations. He chopped down incense altars. Josiah basically expunged sin from the country. But he exercised even more enthusiasm, if that were possible, in chasing God. When he re-discovered the lost book of the law, he repented and humbled himself before God. Then he covenanted with God to be obedient. He was instrumental in re-establishing the Jewish religion. He celebrated the best Passover since the days of Samuel. No king could match him.

Because Josiah stepped into the gap, God refrained, during Josiah's lifetime, from bringing judgment on His people. Terrifying curses were postponed for nearly two decades. The people of God experienced mercy and peace for 19 years because of their repentance.

God ultimately, within three months of Josiah's death, brought about judgment on the Jews. The geo-political, social, and spiritual aspects of this judgment literally changed the face of the earth. But Yahweh acknowledged their repentance and the covenant made by their leader. And the face of the earth was changed as the hearts of its people were transformed.

The Baptist Revival: Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 3; John 1,3

It is a blindly arrogant religion that had infected Israel. Although having the less than praiseworthy distinction of being conquered by some of the greatest empires of history- Egypt, Babylon, and Rome- its proponents could still insist they'd never been enslaved by anybody! While believing it! And this was while they bent over to Caesar! Lacking the corporate will to submit to the Torah, Israelites settled for the outward trappings of the inward truth. They were sacramentalists of the very worst kind. And their religious traditions accommodated a sinful society.

It was ripe for revival.

This popular revival was prophetic on various levels. The son of Zechariah, who experienced a miraculous birth, led it. His father was made mute following an angelic encounter during his vocational service to the Lord. That angel foretold his birth. During the pregnancy he was filled with the Holy Spirit. From birth he was set apart to a Nazarite lifestyle. His name was also the answer to prophecy- his parents called him John.

John lived in the wilderness in a decidedly counter-cultural style. He seemed a modern-day Elijah. His diet consisted of honey and locusts, and even that was prophetic. He received the sweet things of the Lord, from His word and communion with Him. And he devoured the devourer.

And the revival itself was prophesied by Isaiah.

John preached uncompromising repentance for the Kingdom of God was at hand. And he scandalously insisted that the chosen people be baptized for repentance, maintaining that their Jewish birth did nothing towards their spiritual state. He carried to no one and thought nothing of publicly rebuking the leaders whose lives also needed mending.

By the power of God and the example of an abandoned life, he succeeded in seeing, "all the people of Jerusalem" (Mark 1:5), "and all Judea, and all the district around the Jordan" (Matthew 3:5) actually repent of their sin and publicly acknowledge their need of forgiveness. This, in and of itself, was revolutionary.

It had the power to change relationships as food and clothing re-distribution systems of the heart replaced a self-interested climate.

It had the power to change social structure, as the militia was to refrain from force, abuse, and revolt.

It had the power to transform the financial structures, as tax-collecting arrangements would begin to reflect reality, rather than coercion and manipulation.

It had the power to change the religion of the day, as efficacy was wrestled from the professional religious class and returned to the penitent religious convert.

The revival was really specifically, as Isaiah prophesied and as John himself asserted, a preparation for the Lord's arrival. And fittingly, the climax of the Baptist Revival was the baptism of the One person in history who didn't require this baptism of repentance. Jesus became the Christ at His baptism, going through His own peculiar Christian rite of passage, the Christomorphosis (see Galatians 4:19). And, as He was to do once more, the latter time on a cross and for keeps, He who had no sin identified with a sinful humanity, taking, as it were, the sins of the whole world, on Himself, to death (under the water) and back to life (up out of the water).

And this prophetic event was punctuated by the miraculous, as the first recorded public appearance of the Trinity engaged in multi-sensory manifestation for the astonished crowd. And John actually prepared the way for the Lord.

Once they'd repented, they were softened up for Jesus' ministry to them. And, as well know, this was eternity-change. Who can imagine a world today without the influence of Jesus Christ?

Jesus ushered in the Kingdom of God- the superbowl of revivals.

Jesus brought the Kingdom of God into the banalities of religious parody. What a shock!

Worlds were changed. Eternity was rearranged. And the invisible people received special attention, as Jesus came expressly for the sick. His coming out party was based on Luke 4:18:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor, He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favourable year of the Lord.

And to a degree few could predict, Jesus accomplished these purposes. And at the end of His mission Jesus outlined the standard for judgment. It consisted our revived responses to the invisible people. High marks were graded for feeding

the hungry and thirsty, for showing hospitality to the alien, for clothing the naked, for visiting the sick, and for being with the imprisoned (Matthew 25:35,36). In other words, revival that doesn't turn invisible people into people people, that doesn't turn the tables of social injustice, isn't worth snot. And in magnificent and magnanimous ways, the face of the earth changes as the hearts of its people are transformed.

The Charismatic Deluge:

Acts 2ff

High and holy days were big in Jerusalem. Merely 50 days after Passover, the granddaddy of them all, devout Jews were back at it for the festival of first fruits, the feast of weeks, Pentecost. At least on their good days, it was out of the goodness of their hearts, out of their deep gratitude that they returned their first fruits to God in a great big party.

By the first day of the feast, 120 followers of Jesus had been pressing in for ten days in an upstairs room in obedience to Jesus' instruction before He ascended to heaven.

As you know, the Holy Spirit showed up in a historic way on Pentecost. Tongues of fire, rushing wind, an early morning drunk, and a Babylon of languages all drew a quick crowd of religious observers.

And these 120 pray-ers were not cut from the 'bless me' cloth. The reason they'd cooped up for a week and a half in the first place is because Jesus had commissioned them to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. He told them to stick around until they received power from on high, until the Holy Spirit came down on them all. Well, now that they had received power from on high, now that the Holy Spirit came down on them all, they could start fulfilling their commission to be His witnesses. This crowd was a great start.

Peter stepped up to the mike and preached up a storm. He camped out on the Gospel and their culpability for the death of Jesus. The crowd was cut to the quick by the inspired words, and Peter urged them to repent. Fully 3,000 listeners responded that day by repenting and being baptized!

This was the start of the most famous revival in history, the Charismatic Deluge. The Holy Spirit poured out on these believers and they took the Holy Spirit to the masses.

It was said of those involved in this revival that they turned the world upside down. This episode marked the birth of the Church of Jesus Christ, the one body that most metacized history. Society was transformed. Many Jewish priests converted. Religious ritual was substituted by relationship. Legalism was exchanged the Spirit. Law was supplanted by grace. System was swapped for community. Words were accompanied by power. As the Holy Spirit, for the first time in history, became available to everyone who trusted Jesus, a new term for

victorious living came into vogue- the abundant life. All of this is the result of the Charismatic Deluge.

The revival drew clear lines of demarcation between pre- and post-deluge experiences. This Jesus thing went public. Persecution became an immediate expectation after conversion. No longer could leaders like Joseph of Arimathea follow Jesus in secret. He was outed by the drastic circumstances. No longer could people nurture private sins. The Holy Spirit exposed them, as with Ananias and Sapphira, and the costs were very high. No longer would religious people merely argue subtle complexities of the law. Old opponents like Pharisees and Sadducees could unite against a common foe whose success threatened their influence and lifestyle. No more was Caesar going to be able to count on the obeisance of the Jews. While converts would respect and obey the emperor, he took a back seat to their first and foremost fealty and obedience to their new King Jesus Christ. No longer could casually religious Jews count on their Jewishness to save them. It would take repentance, and a public one at that.

There was a singleness of focus and purpose as disciples of Jesus gave up all to follow. As Ananias and Sapphira died for their sin, the fear of the Lord was on all of the Christians. It seems that whenever God is doing a new thing, He establishes an uncompromising standard for holiness, and the costs of disobedience were high, the consequences of sin are immediate.

- So it was with Moses on the way to Egypt. God was doing a new thing in rescuing His people Israel. He insisted on circumcision of Moses' first-born son as remainder of ownership and covenant. Failure to immediately obey almost cost Moses his life (Exodus 4:25).
- So it was with Uzzah who tried to steady the tottering the ark (2 Samuel 6). The new thing in which God was engaged was the establishment of the ark in Jerusalem. The people had been too familiar and casual with the presence of God, and God was restoring a sense of His holiness. The treatment of Uzzah sets the standard. The other consequence is that the ark went to Obed-Edom's home for a while.
- So it was with Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, who offered strange fire (Leviticus 10). God was doing a new thing with the priesthood prescribed an exclusive perfume for sacrifice. This odor was the olfactory identification of God. Their sin was to offer an imitation perfume to God (the word, 'strange', or 'zuwr' in Hebrew, suggests deviation), and the fire from the altar consumed them. Right after Aaron's sons died God imposes the law of abstinence for priests (10:8,9), suggesting that possibly Nadab and Abihu's judgment was impaired by alcohol.
- So it was with the 50,000 Jews who presumed to look into the ark (1 Samuel 6:19). God's new thing was restoring the ark from Philistine

occupation. Symbolically, God was returning to His people, and the terms were His to establish.

- So it was with Achan, who stretched God's rules and paid for it with his life, the lives of 36 otherwise innocent Israelite soldiers, and the lives of his extended family (Joshua 7). God was doing a new thing, taking His people into the Promised Land. In Joshua, the people of God fought 34 battles and lost only one! This is the one! And yet, God invests two whole chapters articulating the story of Achan (Actually, the inclusion of the defeat at Ai is internal evidence of the veracity of Scripture because contemporary kings never record their defeats). Achan only took a small booty, by booty standards. I mean, he didn't take any slaves. He remained mobile. God's instruction is that He'd fight for them, but He'd get all the spoils.

When God is doing a new thing the consequences of sins are immediate. With revival there is no room for compromise. None. We say that we want God to do a new thing in our midst, in our day. We say we want Him to mobilize an end-time Radical Army. But are we prepared for the immediate consequences of sin, for the uncompromising standards of holiness?

But the positive effects were worth it. Masses were saved and the Army of God began to spread worldwide. The rewards remain worth it today. And the face of the earth changed as the hearts of its people were transformed.

The Holy Spirit Dispersion:

Acts 8:1-25

On the heels of the Charismatic Deluge the disciples of Jesus enjoyed much success. One observer noted that they experienced favour with the people (Acts 2:47). Encounters with the Jesus People resulted in citizens being filled with wonder and amazement (Acts 3:10). The people held them in high esteem (Acts 5:13). People from towns all around brought their sick people to be healed.

In other words, it was growing pretty comfortable to be in The Radical Army.

It may even to have been possible to forget what this was all about in the first place! You'll remember that Jesus told them to wait on the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room until the Holy Spirit came down on them all so that they could be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). They were stuck in Jerusalem.

It is uncanny that the Holy Spirit Dispersion sent them to Judea and Samaria, and, ultimately, to the ends of the earth. God is on message here. He is actually answering His own instruction for prayer. Jesus told the disciples to, "beseech the Lord of the Harvest to send out workers into His harvest" (Matthew 9:37). The idea of 'send' here is to thrust, force these warriors onto the battlefield. And this is exactly what He is doing.

The Holy Spirit allows persecution to oppress the disciples in Jerusalem. And the disciples merely obey Jesus' instruction: "Whenever they persecute you in this city, flee to the next" (Matthew 10:23). They left.

This isn't the most positive angle on the Holy Spirit Dispersion. One early church father offered this contrasting perspective:

These holy fugitives were like so many flaming lamps, lighted by the fire of the Holy Spirit, spreading everywhere the sacred flame by which they themselves had been illuminated. (An early church father, cited in Adam Clarke, Clarke's Commentary, New Testament, volume 5B)

Admittedly, this was the effect, whether it was the intention of the participants or not. And so the Gospel spread beyond the borders of Jerusalem. Christianity grew to more than an exclusive, ethnocentric religion. It reached out to half-brothers, and to enemies.

Granted, the persecution was fierce. Saul began ravaging the church, literally wreaking havoc. Children were left terrorized and at least temporarily orphaned

as, house-by-house, the persecutors dragged mothers and fathers away to prison and worse for maintaining fealty to the King of Kings. Most of the Christians fled. And yet again, they followed Jesus' instruction to the disciples: "As you go, preach, saying, 'the kingdom of heaven is at hand'. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons; freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:7).

Philip, one of the deacons, made it to Samaria and began to so preach. The masses showed up to hear what he had to say. Or, more likely, they came to see what he did, for signs accompanied his preaching. Evil spirits were dislodged from people with screams, paralyzed people walked, and the lame were healed. And all of this made for good crowds, and a joyful city (Acts 8:8).

The last comment may be the most miraculous of all- that the whole city would be rejoicing because of something that came out of Jerusalem!

Samaria proved to be the first beachhead for the invasion of the world by the Radical Army. It was not the beginning of a wonderful manmade plan. It was the result of God demonstrating His interest in His dreams and promises for the world. God is not merely dabbling in humanity. He is intensely committed. He provides a serious punch line to the old joke:

The chicken and the pig loved their farmer and decided to do something special for him on his birthday. The chicken suggested bacon and eggs. The pig responded, 'that's not fair. For you that means only participation; for me it means sacrifice'.

For God, this whole venture of a humanity in fellowship with Himself goes far beyond mere participation to total sacrifice.

This committed God would not sit idly by while His people lost the plot. He literally had to thrust them out of town at the end of a sharp sword to get them to implement His plan to take the world.

And Samaria was the first step. As Jesus' Acts 1:8 prophecy was executed, the Old Testament principles of justice, righteousness, and compassion were pervasively implemented. Contributions were gathered for stricken Jerusalem. Aliens were reconciled with Jews and morphed into the 'new man'. Widows and orphans were cared for. The invisible people became people people (see Philemon). And the concern for social justice in the waves of revival became institutionalized, as Paul, in his meeting with the original apostles, acknowledged that their one condition was that he remember the poor, something dear to his heart (Galatians 2).

Of the Holy Spirit Dispersion it can clearly be asserted that the face of the earth is changed as the hearts of its people are transformed.

Radical Religion for the 21st Century

A Review of Walter Brueggemann's "The Alternative Community of Moses" by: Dani Shaw-Buchholz

The ministry of Moses ... represents a radical break with the social reality of Pharaoh's Egypt.

Israel can only be understood in terms of the new call of God and his assertion of an alternate social reality.

In his book, *The Prophetic Imagination*¹, Walter Brueggemann expresses a rather pessimistic view of the contemporary church, asserting it is so largely enculturated to the American ethos of consumerism that it has little power to believe or to act.² He maintains that the internal cause of such enculturation is our loss of identity through the abandonment of the faith tradition.³ The liberal tendency to reject theology as irrelevant to contemporary society, and the conservative tendency to buy into scientism and Enlightenment thinking without thinking critically about the sociological implications of these, have resulted in a collective amnesia that threaten the Church's life in contemporary society. Brueggemann argues that the contemporary church "has no business more pressing than the reappropriation of its memory in its full power and authenticity."⁴ His book offers a significant challenge to those who wish to take their faith seriously today.

Brueggemann articulates a vision of prophetic ministry that seeks to integrate our perception and understanding of God with the social realities of our lives in community. He maintains that the task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us.⁵ This task is accomplished through the dual functions of criticizing, and ultimately

dismantling, the dominant consciousness around us and energizing people and communities toward new social realities, rooted in our understanding of God.

Holding up Moses as the paradigmatic prophet, Brueggemann maintains that “the shaping of Israel took place from inside its own experience and confession of faith and not through external appropriation from somewhere else.”⁶ Moses sought to evoke in Israel an alternative consciousness through (a) a radical break with the social reality of Pharaoh=s Egypt, which was rooted in the religion of static triumphalism and the politics of oppression and exploitation and (b) the appearance of a new social reality rooted in an understanding of the freedom of God. This was accomplished by criticizing and dismantling the Egyptian empire, showing the power of Pharaoh and his gods to be fraudulent, and by energizing the people of Israel toward a new social reality by recognizing that AGod is for us@ and appropriating the freedom of God as their own. According to Brueggemann, every act of a contemporary prophetic minister ought to be part of a way of evoking, forming and reforming an alternative community.

The notion of evoking alternative communities by criticizing that which exists and moving toward alternative social realities rooted in our understanding of God is an essential element of any meaningful Christian ministry, whether or not it is characterized as prophetic. The balance of this paper will examine ways in which this contention is supported by Scripture, by faith traditions and by other contemporary authors.

Support Found in Scripture

Scripture continuously holds up God and the communities rooted in an understanding of Him as radical alternatives to the religious and social realities around us. Commencing with the Old Testament example of the emergence of Israel and moving into the New Testament call to be born again (John 3:3ff, 1 Pe 1:3), to become new creations (2 Co 5:7, Gal 6:15, Eph 4:23ff), and to live new lives (Ro 6:4), Scripture repeatedly stresses the theme of a radical break with that which existed previously and a new reality rooted in an understanding of God.

As Brueggemann states A[t]he newness and the radical innovativeness of Moses and Israel ... cannot be overstated.⁷ Similarly, the newness and innovativeness of the ministry and message of Jesus Christ should be not underestimated. Christ=s life, death and resurrection may be seen as the ultimate criticism of the dominant consciousness of his time and the establishment of a new and radically innovative way of living in community. Jesus proclaimed liberation from sin and death in the here and now and offered the hope of eternal salvation. He replaced the Kingdom of Satan with the Kingdom of God, showing Satan and his minions to be powerless in the face of an all-powerful God. The good news of the Kingdom of God was not limited to those who traced their heritage to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob but was extended to all who believe. The gospel of Jesus Christ pointed to the powerlessness of the Law of Moses to save and provided new ways of understanding the freedom of God. Applied to communities, the gospel of Jesus Christ offered to break down gender, racial, ethnic and socio-economic barriers (Gal 3:28, 1 Co 12:13, Jas 2:1B7), to provide good news to the poor and healing to the sick (Mt 4:23ff, Mt 8:28-9, Mk 1:29-2:12).

Those who believe that the gospel is relevant today must reflect on Christ's life, death and resurrection and the implications thereof for both the present and the future.

Support Found in Denominational Traditions

The importance of living as alternative communities, rooted in an understanding of the freedom of God is found within denominational traditions. Writing within the context of The Salvation Army, author Phil Needham asserts that the mission of the Church is to give witness to the reality of the new situation in Jesus Christ, the Kingdom which is now reality because of his life, death and resurrection.⁸ He maintains that the Church's mission is fulfilled through the dual functions of evangelism and social action and states:

Without both ways to witness, the proclamation of the gospel is hindered. Evangelism without social action is flight from the world and refusal to accept the reality of the Kingdom's transforming presence in the midst of this world which God loves. Social action without evangelism is flight from the personal depth of the gospel and refusal to take seriously Jesus' unmistakable command to his followers to become >fishers of men.⁹

The Salvationist ecclesiology of which Needham writes contemplates not only a new way of viewing the world, but also a new way of living within it. Transformation and the move to an alternative consciousness happen not only at the individual level, but also at the societal level. In short, the gospel has profound implications for how we live in society.

Support Found in Contemporary Scholarship

The failure to do as Brueggemann suggests and to contemplate how genuinely alternative Yahweh is is a significant, if not fatal, failure in the life of the Church. David Wells, in his book *Losing our Virtue: Why the Church Must Recover its Moral Vision*, shares Brueggemann's view that the contemporary Church is largely enculturated in the dominant

consciousness. He warns that unless it ceases to mimic the dominant consciousness of modernism, the Christian faith will succeed and fail quite quickly. He states:

It will succeed for a while in the churches that have been able to adapt to their modern clientele. It will begin to fail, however, in these same churches because it has stripped itself of answers to modern life by reducing it to being an echo of that modern life. It will be too late for the Pied Pipers of these Anew paradigm@ churches and their followers when reality comes crashing in, as it surely will. The modern world is so painful, so costly, so brutal to life that mimicking its rhythms, rather than providing an alternative to them, will soon be seen to be the hollow charade, the empty mirage, that it is.¹⁰

A failure to appreciate the Aalternativeness@ of God and the implications of that alternativeness for our lives in community has serious implications, not only for the Church, but also for society as a whole. Insofar as the Church is concerned, unquestioned enculturation threatens the Church with extinction. In a pluralistic and post-modern society that provides many options, the failure to present a genuine alternative to the cultural mainstream reduces the Christian faith to one alternative among many. It also undermines the power of God to transform individual lives and communities.

Insofar as society is concerned, the dominant consciousness of modernism cannot do as Yahweh did for the Israelites and see the affliction of the people and hear their cry for help. It is, like the Egyptian religion of static triumphalism, Ainept at listening and indifferent in response.@¹¹ As Wells points out, a church that is largely enculturated in the dominant consciousness is equally unable to act as God=s agent in providing the answers to modern life.

In a world in which the church has become largely enculturated in the dominant culture, it becomes difficult if not implausible to criticize that which exists. Yet, the ability to step back from the dominant culture to ask whether this is the way God intends things to be and to

cry out to God upon concluding it is not are vitally necessary in our time. As Phil Needham states A[m]embers of the Christian family need to hear the gospel again and again, and in all its implications, and given the opportunity continually to be renewed and transformed by it.¹² Only through the telling and retelling of the gospel will we recover the tradition of faith and find the way out of enculturation.

Conclusion

Brueggemann=s model of prophetic ministry, rooted in an understanding of the Old Testament, provides valuable insight for contemporary Christians, including Christian leaders. The notion of recovering the tradition of faith and allowing it to be the way out of enculturation is supported in Scripture, echoed in tradition and is vitally important in the Church today. It is perhaps ironic, if not intentional, that Brueggemann=s article follows his own paradigm of prophetic ministry by providing not only an important criticism of the contemporary church, but also a vision of hope for the future, rooted in an understanding of God and his freedom.

¹ Brueggemann, Walter, *The Prophetic Imagination*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1978)

2. *Ibid.*, at 11.

3. *Ibid.*, at 12.

⁴ *Ibid.*, at 12.

5. *Ibid.*, at 13.

⁶ *Ibid.*, at 15.

7. *Ibid.*, at 15.

8. Phil Needham, *Community in Mission: A Salvationist Ecclesiology*, (Georgia: The General of The Salvation Army, 1987) at 62.

9. *Ibid.*

10. David F. Wells, *Losing Our Virtue: Why the Church Must Recover its Moral Vision* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998) at 8.

11. *Supra*, note 1 at 22.

12. *Supra*, note 6 at 63.

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CHRISTIAN RESPONSES TO GLOBALIZATION

By: Captain John Norton

On September 11, 2001, four hijacked passenger jets were used as vehicles of terror, killing thousands. Now three days later I am aware of the loss and pain being felt by many people, as well as lingering hope for the missing and feared dead.

Although the terrorists and their motives remain unknown, it seems appropriate to wonder what would compel so many to give up their lives and take the lives of many more in the process? I could imagine a situation in which religious belief leads to indignation toward an “immoral Western society”. Economic inequality would be interrelated, in which those who “have” are perceived to take advantage of the “have-nots”. Other social, political and cultural factors could also no doubt be motivators.

These are issues of globalization. With September 11 as the immediate context for writing, I will briefly consider the Church’s response to globalization. I will interact with statements of the Church,¹ consider how it describes and understands “globalization” as well as how globalization speaks to specifically theological language. I will then reflect on Church statements issued in response to the Summit of the Americas, April 2001, and the upcoming World Bank / IMF meetings to be held in Washington, DC, September 29-30, 2001.

GLOBALIZATION AS THE NEW REALITY

The term globalization is elusive in definition but most commonly applied to economics, used in connection with terms like international trade and organizations like the World Bank. It is also part of our understanding of the changes occurring in society, politics, science, culture and the environment. Globalism as a subject is in its infancy, is

¹ The Church of course is not a hegemony. The term “the Church” is used herein to describe the existing plural Christian community. Individual churches and denominations will be referred to by name.

not well-defined, and its effects and consequences are just beginning to be named. Its effects are easier to describe than the concept is to define.

The Church has helped reveal some of the negative effects of globalization. This has been in contrast to official government and multi-national corporations who have attempted to promote globalization's benefits.

"Unaccountable corporate globalism" is seen as "top-down control, damage to the earth, oppression of workers, and destruction of public health and other public services."² The Church sees that globalism tends to hurt the most vulnerable in society: the poor, women, children, workers and the environment. Globalization has been exposed to espouse the values of profit, competition and production, often above the values of compassion and community. It seems to suggest that some voices are more valuable than others. It shows a lack of transparency and public participation in decision making. There is a sense that globalization encourages conformity of elected leaders to market driven forces.

Ironically, the very benefits of globalism made possible the tragedy of September 11, 2001, in New York and Washington. Jetliners filled with unsuspecting passengers became the weapons of choice, while office towers became the targets. Satellite television made it possible to watch the event unfold. Television itself flaunts the wealth of the rich into the homes of the viewing poor, through 'soaps' and other shows that show the decadence of a McDisneyworld lifestyle. The empty values of Western television may have fed the anger burning inside those who this week took out revenge on the unsuspecting of New York and Washington. This week globalism has been self-defeating.

THE SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS, QUEBEC CITY, APRIL 2001

² Shalom Center. *Global Arrogance or Planetary Community? - A Call to Communities of Faith*. <http://www.shalomctr.org/html/justice17.html>

In response to globalization, the voice of the Church is being sounded. That voice is growing in intensity as more and more Christians feel the need to speak out. Yet there are concerns from the marginalized that the Christian community is compromised, especially in the West. There are concerns from the corporate community that the Church has been too simplistic, especially perhaps in its calls for economic reform. Nevertheless, Christians do have something to offer the conversation. My hunch is that we need to get involved more actively than we have been in the past century.

While the globalization of our economies has increased wealth, it has not succeeded in sharing it. This was the message of the Permanent Council of the Canadian Council of Bishops on the occasion of the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City, April 2001. They stated that they were “especially preoccupied with defending the poor.”³ They called upon democratically elected leaders to protect and promote the common good, which they noted is not always the same as unrestricted free trade and capitalism. They defended the right of everyone to have a voice at the Summit, quoting Pope John Paul II who declared, “The goal of the Church is to ensure that no one is excluded.”⁴

The statement of the Catholic Bishops may have been successful for establishing a moral foundation without getting involved in the practical details of how those values need be worked out. The statement gave Summit leaders an excellent summary of their responsibilities. It reminded leaders of the rightness of the common good, of the danger of exclusion, of the increasing disparity between rich and poor, male and female. The statement gave leaders principles for human rights and the protection of the

³ Permanent Council of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Summit of the Americas: That None be Excluded*. Statement on the Occasion of the Summit of the Americas, Quebec City, April 2001. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2001. <http://www.cccb.ca/english/fullpublice.asp?ID=75>

environment. The Catholic Bishops acted as the conscience of the state, a role the Church should fulfil.

Church leaders representing such varied traditions as the Anglican Church of Canada, the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, the Society of Friends (Quakers), the Mennonite Church of Canada, the United Church of Canada, and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, also jointly issued a statement on the occasion of the Summit of the Americas.⁵ They named six critical points needing “urgent attention”:

1. Conform any new agreements to the human rights standards in UN covenants.
2. Protect and promote the inherent rights of Aboriginal peoples in the Americas.
3. Cancel paralysing national debts.
4. Enhance food security and the security of agricultural communities.
5. Preserve the integrity of publicly funded health and education services.
6. Don't let patents, or trade-related intellectual property rights, block access to public goods like life-saving medicines.

While these points are helpful, they do seem to succumb to the criticism that the Church has been too simplistic in its suggestions. These points leave many more questions begging to be asked. They are without explanation and would leave politicians to work out the reality of the conflicts and difficulties inherent in each position. Who would absorb the cancelled debts? How to maintain a high level of service in publicly funded health and education services? How to encourage the development of new medicines if

⁴ John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America*, January 1999.
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_22011999_ecclesia-in-america_en.html

⁵ *Letter from Church Leaders Concerning the Summit of the Americas*, 9 April, 2001.
[http://www.web.net/~ccchurch/english/jp/quebecsummitletter\(Apr01\).htm](http://www.web.net/~ccchurch/english/jp/quebecsummitletter(Apr01).htm)

government restricts the profits once they are developed? The Church needs to develop principles and values to equip the politicians responsible for finding the answers.

WORLD BANK / IMF MEETINGS, WASHINGTON, D.C., SEPTEMBER 2001

The Shalom Center has sought signatures from the various streams of Judaism, Christianity, and other traditions for its multi-faith “Global Arrogance or Planetary Community? – A Call to Communities of Faith.”⁶ Although the intent is good, this document seems filled with anti-establishment rhetoric that would make it offensive to its intended audience of the World Bank and IMF. It describes the World Bank as “unaccountable, undemocratic” inventions of global corporations. It suggests that along with the IMF, the World Bank is the “servant of pyramidal powers of globalization” who are “shattering the lives of children and enslaving workers...” This is hardly the language of cooperation. I assume that the signers of this document would disagree with the World Bank’s claim that “Our Dream is a World Free of Poverty.”⁷ Either the World Bank is malicious, and thus the demands of the Shalom Center are justified, or the World Bank is committed to the end of poverty but is going about it in such a way that people of faith would want to raise some red flags. I assume that it is the latter, which would demand a more conciliatory approach.

Jubilee USA⁸ and Sojourners⁹ are working together for peaceful demonstrations and worship events during the IMF and World Bank meetings. The international Jubilee campaign developed a significant voice in recent years for the cause of social justice. It was an example of how faith-based justice work could successfully span denominational boundaries. Sojourners have over the years made significant contributions to the work of social justice from an evangelical perspective.

⁶ Shalom Center. *Global Arrogance or Planetary Community? – A Call to Communities of Faith*. <http://www.shalomctr.org/html/justice17.html>

⁷ The World Bank Group. <http://www.worldbank.org>

⁸ Jubilee USA Network. <http://www.j2000usa.org/s29-30.htm>

In surveying briefly the work of the Church in combating the negative effects of globalization, there seems to be confusion and disagreement in its role in public life. More thinking needs to be done about the place the Church should occupy in the life of politics and social justice. Uninformed voices will not be listened to, nor will rambling rhetoric. What is needed is clearly an intelligent thought out approach to the contribution of the Church in society.

A good example of what can be accomplished is found in the “Manifesto of the Catholic Associations to the Leaders of the G-8.”¹⁰ The Manifesto provides the foundation for the values and morals that need to support political decisions. The language is inclusive, “We are all persons and human life is a universal value... We do not wish any longer to be the rich who see the poor as objects of help.” It is unafraid to state what is true, “Today in the world the dignity of human life is violated.” It touches human experience to call the reader to action, “We want to realize our dream.” It makes specific requests, such as asking that “the Kyoto Accords be confirmed immediately” and “the cancellation of all debt accumulated up to 1999”. Finally, the document uses theological language as its framework, such as its subtitles “The night ...” and “A light that rises ...” This well thought through document is a support to those in political leadership and will condemn those leaders who do not adhere to its moral voice.

GLOBALIZATION AND TERRORISM

Globalization can bring about feelings of apocalypse. Certainly despair and fear were on the hearts and minds of New Yorkers as they looked into the sky and saw events unfold over the World Trade Center. Globalization can bring great anxiety and real experiences of poverty, injustice, and even death.

⁹ Sojo Net. <http://www.sojo.net/mobilize/index.cfm/action/home.html>

¹⁰ Manifesto of the Catholic Associations to the Leaders of the G-8.
http://www.natcath.com/NCR_Online/documents/MANIFESTO.htm

In light of this tragedy, as a Christian, I reject calls for revenge but accept the call for justice. I support America as it searches for ways to bring those responsible to account for their actions. On the other hand, I would have America know that its capitalism has produced envy and anger generated by global social inequality. This tragedy is symbolic of the dark side of globalization, and worse still, threatens to return us to the ancient cycles of revenge and killing.

Compassion must come before capitalism. Immediately after the disaster of September 11, hundreds of passengers landed unexpectedly in Toronto. Local airport hotels “decided to hike their room rates by as much as \$100 after being informed of the unexpected guests.”¹¹ Hotels cited “supply and demand” as the reason. The Church must be the conscience of the state and the state must be the guardian of the common good.

The language of hope and unity are positive themes that come out of a study of globalization. The Church needs to call for a return to the values of compassion, justice, and community.

¹¹ Brad Mackay and Mary Vallis, National Post, A7, September 13, 2001.