

***Suffering for and to Christ in William Booth's
Eschatological Ecclesiology***

On a given Sunday, a visitor might walk into a Salvation Army worship service and hear the congregation confidently singing one of its battle choruses to the accompaniment of brass band:

*I'll go in the strength of the Lord
To conflicts which faith will require,
His grace as my shield and reward,
My courage and zeal shall inspire.
Since he gives the word of command.
To meet and encounter the foe,
With his sword of truth in my hand.
To suffer and triumph I'll go.*

This song reflects the ecclesiological self-understanding of Salvationists who, as members of the universal church, are actively involved in the mission of God. Proclaiming this dangerously boisterous message is the heritage of the Salvation Army. The early Army and its leader, William Booth, embraced an end-times-flavored (eschatological) ecclesiology that specifically called its soldiers to be prepared to suffer in the dire districts of life as soldiers of the cross. William Booth explained that Jesus Christ's missional mandate to go into all the world meant suffering for and to Christ.

Though it is not likely that Salvationists around the world are explicitly concerned with the study of ecclesiology (church composition and identity), following its founder the Salvation Army is implicitly acting on its mission-rooted doctrine of the church. Consequently, the Army must always consider missional aspects when evaluating its ecclesiology.

Systematic theologian Jürgen Moltmann dramatically suggests, "What we have to learn from them [missional movements] is not that the church 'has' a mission, but the very reverse: that the mission of Christ creates its own church. Mission does not come from the church; it is

from mission and in the light of mission that the church has to be understood” (*The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 1975).

It is this missional direction which unites Booth’s bold “bass drum” ecclesiology with his eschatology, because “marching to war” for the “salvation of the world” is seen in the context of the holistic and universal mission of God. The influence of eschatology on ecclesiology is pivotal for how we understand the mission of William Booth and for how that mission can be interpreted today. How one views the end dramatically informs the way one theologically understands the church and its missional relationship to that end.

William Booth’s Eschatological Ecclesiology

The particular approach toward ecclesiology that William Booth demonstrated in his theological practice necessarily mingled with his personal and universal eschatology. He fervently desired the eternal salvation of souls and of the world, represented in his millennialism. (“Millennialism” is the belief that there will be a thousand-year period during which Christ will reign on Earth prior to the final judgment, as described in Revelation chapter 20.) To say that William Booth had an eschatological ecclesiology is to state that his ecclesiology is chiefly based on his desire to redeem individual persons and the world for eternity, whatever the cost.

In order to discuss the ecclesiology observed in William Booth’s theology, we must ask whether an ecclesiology can exist implicitly. Can there be a *doctrine* of the church if the church *itself* is not explicitly, officially articulated? If an ecclesiology is unmistakably developed theologically, is it more faithful than an implied ecclesiology? Such systems are so active in “being the church” that they take no time to formulate an official ecclesiology. Throughout church history, unspoken ecclesiological systems have often changed the direction of the church

more than ones that were explicitly classified, like Pietism, Moravianism and early Methodism, along with Salvationism.

Every ecclesiology is at least partially prompted by its eschatology. This statement assumes that the church is living in response to the way it understands the end. The church is the visible sign of the present and coming kingdom of God. When eschatology is connected to ecclesiology, the church can see the future victory of God as a reality that impacts the here and now.

During the Salvation Army's formative years, its ecclesiology was (as most areas of its development) extremely practical. Salvation Army theologian R. David Rightmire explains, "Booth had a functional ecclesiology, conceiving the church as 'act' rather than 'substance'" (*Sacraments and the Salvation Army*, 1990). The importance of personal eschatology, expressed in Booth's desire to save souls, was lodged within the concept of the Army's universal mission to save the world. This mission was the "greatest good" of Booth's utilitarian-like ethic.

"The good time coming" was the way that William Booth often referred to the approaching millennial kingdom, a kingdom for which the Salvation Army was pragmatically and theologically established. William Booth was, in today's terminology, a "postmillennialist." His eschatological views of the kingdom of God were never more clearly stated than in the title of his August 1890 article, "The Millennium; or, The Ultimate Triumph of Salvation Army Principles." In this article, Booth asserts that "a genuine Salvationist is a true reformer of men. He alone is a real socialist, because he is the advocate of the only true principles by which the reformation of society can be effected. His confidence for the future is not based alone on the theories he holds...but in that Millennial heaven...to him, the millennium is already in a measure, an accomplished fact."

William Booth was working to realize the kingdom of God on earth and was motivated by the possibility of the redemption of the world. This motivation was largely based on his understanding of eschatology, which to him was measured on a global scale with a global mandate. When defining Salvationist self-understanding and its millennial task, he explained, “Salvationism means simply the overcoming and banishing from the earth of wickedness, inward and outward, from the heart and life of man, and the establishment of the principles of purity and goodness instead” (“Fight!” 1885).

William Booth understood the millennium in terms of global harmony; the means of arriving at such a state was through the agency of soldiers in the great salvation war. Booth commanded, “Soldiers! You are to do this! [fulfill the prophecies that will bring universal peace]...there is but one way to reach this millennium of peace and good will...there is but one way to the world’s deliverance, and that is by fighting” (“Universal Peace,” 1881). Fighting for Booth clearly meant human agents escorting the millennium into reality.

As the Salvation Army grew, so did the need for the institutionalization of its mission and practices. Hence, the Army eventually became its own ecclesial body—but one in which the core missional direction still reigned.

Suffering and the Army

The ecclesiology of the early Salvation Army is one that called its soldiers to the world and to a fight against the evil therein. “Suffering” can be defined as undergoing pain, distress, injury, or loss—something that happens beyond the norm of human comfort. It is not a surprise, then, that William Booth called his Army to suffer for the expansion of Christ’s kingdom. This theme of suffering is uniquely tied to the Salvation Army’s Wesleyan understanding of holiness.

When Metaphor Becomes Reality

In 1865, William Booth found his destiny while preaching in London's East End, when he formed The East London Christian Revival Society. Later known as the Christian Mission, this group was motivated to preach the gospel to the poor of London's East End, a segment of the population that was generally neglected by the Church in the Victorian era. During these thirteen years, the Christian Mission grew to include 75 preaching stations and 120 evangelists throughout Britain.

In 1878, the Christian Mission changed its name to the Salvation Army. This change of identity is the first clear indication of a shift in William Booth's personal theology, which adjusted from personal redemptive categories to institutional redemptive categories. This is to say that Booth now viewed the Army as institutionally sanctified to bring redemption to the world, as (according to Roger J. Green) "a renewal...of the Church of the New Testament, the early Church, the Reformation Church, and the Wesleyan revival" (*War on Two Fronts*, 1989).

This new theology is made clear in a popular (and often quoted) article by William Booth, entitled "Our New Name—The Salvationist" in *The Salvationist* (written upon the publication's change in name from *The Christian Mission Magazine*) from January 1, 1879:

We are a salvation people—this is our specialty...Our work is salvation. We believe in salvation and we have salvation...We aim at salvation. We want this and nothing short of this and we want this right off. My brethren, my comrades, soul saving is our avocation, the great purpose and business of our lives. Let us seek first the Kingdom of God, let us be Salvationist indeed.

The alteration is most obviously seen in the transformation of the Christian Mission to assume the military structure of the Salvation Army. Once the military metaphor was adopted, every area of Booth's movement was affected: preaching stations became "corps," evangelists became "corps officers," members became "soldiers," and its leader became the "General." An

autocratic form of leadership emerged, and like a conquering Army, the fingers of the Salvation Army were stretched around the world.

Green explains that at this time, Booth's theology began to move from individual categories to institutional categories. It is at this juncture that the universal eschatology of William Booth sharpened into focus. His Salvation Army was, in his mind, the vehicle that would facilitate the coming millennium.

Within eight years of the 1878 name change, the Salvation Army exploded to include 1,749 corps and 4,129 officers. Indicative of this time is Booth's commissioning of a corporate eschatological task: "Go to them all. The whole fourteen hundred millions [sic]. Don't despair. *It can be done*. It SHALL BE DONE. God has sent The Salvation Army on the task. If every saint on earth would do his duty, it *could* be done effectually in the next ten years. If the Salvation Army will be true to God, it *will* be done during the next fifty" ("Go!" 1884 [emphasis Booth's]).

Battle images were rigorously employed as the Salvation Army sought to identify along its new military lines. The Salvation Army was, as one author has said, a group of "soldiers without swords," whose mission had a singular focus of winning the world for Christ.

Did the military metaphor create its own reality as a result of the way that its adherents adopted its mission? Booth and his Army saw themselves in a fight with a supreme purpose. Within the realm of historical theology, we can easily conclude that the Salvation Army's militarism developed an eschatological ecclesiology that rearticulated what God's people were to be about in this world. The metaphor of an Army "marching through the land" created new ways to express the mission of God. William Booth could challenge his troops the same way a military General would. Concepts such as suffering could be explored within the military metaphor in a way that traditional churches could not.

Calling its members to risk their lives for the gospel of Jesus Christ could be swallowed within the metaphoric Army. For Booth, joining the Army as a soldier meant a risk; it meant that in the great salvation war one might sacrifice his or her own self interest for the greatest good of winning the world for Christ. In an article titled “The War Spirit,” Booth challenged his soldiers to consider “the destiny of millions...[that] is hanging in the balance—depending to an awful extent on the enthusiastic, skilful, and self-sacrificing, [sic] conduct, and maintenance of this war...Let us go back to the example of our Great *Commander-in-Chief*...and follow him...Yours for the thick of the fight, William Booth.”

Around such battle cries of its General, the Army went to war. Suffering in the battle was further understood in light of heavenly rewards. References to suffering are often accompanied by themes of eternal victory. An example of this is the song quoted earlier, which proclaims that the soldier is go “to suffer *and triumph*” (emphasis mine).

Suffering for Christ

Booth often described the activity and mission of the Army, and implicitly its rich ecclesiological tradition, as “the fight.” What did Booth mean by fighting? He explained, “A good soldier is always a fighting man...Fighting means hardship and labour, and hunger, and wounds, and suffering, and life-sorrow and death” (*Salvation Soldiery*, 1889).

The suffering in the throws of the fight is, for the Salvationist, “for” Christ. The “fight” was a service for the Lord, and for early Salvationists anything done on behalf of Christ’s kingdom was worth earthly pain. William Booth was very clear about the perils involved in the salvation war. In his article titled “The Risks,” he challenges soldiers to “Come out and place yourselves [sic], with every power you possess for doing or suffering at the Master’s feet.”

This statement shows that suffering is done for Christ; suffering is something sacrificed for Jesus Christ himself. Booth, along with other early Army writers, often compared suffering for Christ to the sufferings of Christ on the cross. George Scott Railton, an early Army leader who officially led its expansion to the United States, challenged, “Let cowards seek an easier way/And win the praise of men;/Cross bearing, dying day by day,/Is still the Master’s plan.”

William Booth’s son-in-law, Fredrick Booth-Tucker, wrote a hymn published in the *War Cry* on August 14, 1897 that is still sung today when new officers are commissioned:

They say the fighting is too hard,
My strength of small avail,
When foes beset and friends are fled,
My faith must surely fail.
But, O how can I quit my post
While millions sin-bound lie?
I cannot leave the dear old flag,
'Twere better far to die.

Suffering for Christ also had an evangelistic aim. The risks of suffering in the fight can help to achieve the goal of others being drawn to the Gospel. Booth explained, “Whenever men suffer for Christ’s sake, not only does God draw near to bless, but men draw near to enquire” (*Salvation Soldierly*). The eschatological focus of William Booth’s theology was accompanied by his understanding that Christians should give of themselves (i.e. suffer) to bring the world to Jesus Christ.

When comparing the relationship of suffering to the eschatological task, Booth explained, “Suffering and saving are terms of almost the same significance in the Christian’s career. If he suffers for Christ he saves, and if he saves he suffers. These men [the apostles] suffered for Christ, and saved with a vengeance. If they had dodged the suffering they would have never saved at all” (*The General’s Letters*).

Suffering to Christ

William Booth articulated a theology of suffering in 1884, in an article simply titled “Go!” This article appeared in the Salvation Army’s international publication *All the World*. In this article, Booth explained that it is the task of all Christians, as expressed in Mark 16:15, to “Go into all the world.” He explains that “Going meant suffering to Christ: it meant this to the Apostles. They went to the world: this meant going to scorn, poverty, stripes, imprisonment, death—cruel deaths. If you go you will have to suffer; there is no other way of going.”

What is implied by the three words “suffering to Christ”? The use of this preposition seems out of place, some critics might see it as a mistake, but William Booth had, it seems, a much deeper meaning in mind when he described Christian suffering as “to Christ.”

In this quote, William Booth explained that intrinsic to Christian life is suffering. One way to understand Booth’s words here is by considering that when Christ called his follower to “go,” he expected that they would suffer because of their going. Hence, Jesus thought going into the world meant suffering for the person who answered the call. Just as going meant suffering to the disciples, going meant suffering to Jesus. Booth demonstrated how the apostles followed this call and how Salvationists should expect to find the same suffering along their way. The metaphor of a Salvation Army enabled the reader to understand the seriousness of Jesus’ call.

Another way to understand William Booth’s challenge in this article is through Booth’s social theology that valued all of humanity as created in the image of God. “Going” then means serving Christ in the form of hurting individuals. If the Spirit of Christ resides in individual Salvationists, then Christ suffers with these individuals. Conversely, if the people the Army serves in the “slums” cause soldiers to suffer, then their suffering is to Christ.

Though “incarnational ministry” has become an evangelical buzzword, William Booth did see his service not only “for” Christ, but “to” Christ as well. When Christian soldiers are

serving their neighbors, they are serving Christ. For such a mandate, consider Jesus' words in Matthew 25:40: "Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (NRSV).

Catherine Booth, who has been called the "co-founder" of the Salvation Army, also recognized the significance of suffering with the poor: "Oh, for grace always to see Him where He is to be seen, for verily, flesh and blood doth not reveal this unto us! Well...I keep seeing Him risen again in the forms of drunkards and ruffians of all descriptions" (*These Fifty Years*, 1929).

In the same way, Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37) redefines the way that humanity looks at "neighbors." William Booth recognized the importance of this passage for early Salvation Army hospitality ministries as he framed this pericope in sacramental terms (which is somewhat ironic for a non-practicing-sacramental denomination), by urging soldiers "to observe continually the sacrament of the Good Samaritan."

Such an incarnational perspective shaped a distinct missional ecclesiology. Similarly, Bramwell Booth illustrated:

When I see the poor, shivering creatures gathered in the warmth and comfort of our Shelters, and the famished ones in the Food Depots, and the workless hard at work, and the lost and lonely in the bright hopefulness of the Women's and Children Homes, and the prisoners—set in happy families in our Harbours of Refuge, my heart sings for joy, and I say, "*Is not this the Christ come again?*" If he came now to London and Boston and New York and Melbourne and Tokio [sic], as He came to Jerusalem and Nazareth and Caesarea, would He not want to do exactly this? I believe He would! (*Papers on Life and Religion*, 1920)

"Suffering to Christ" is a theme that encapsulates William Booth's ecclesiology in a unique and powerful way. Suffering was an intrinsic aspect of the identity of Salvationists. William Booth saw this as a call of Christ, and his incarnational Army saw the need of seeing Christ in those whom they served. If one was merely called to suffer "for" Christ, then obligation

might overcast a call that is vital to the Salvationist's identity. Instead, Salvationists suffered because they were Christians; they suffered because they served others as if they were Christ himself.

Suffering Salvationists

The stark changes in the lives of sinners who joined the ranks of the Salvation Army had social and economic impacts on their respective areas. The business of bars and pubs dropped drastically with the absence of their best customers who were now abstaining soldiers. There are many incidents in the Army's history of mobs forming to combat the open-air meetings of the Salvation Army. In the 1880s, opposition groups were organized and often called *Skeleton Armies*. Often the *Skeleton* constituents were the bar managers and brewers of a given town. In one case, the *Skeletons* were a full-fledged copy of the Salvation Army soldiers, with their own uniforms, flags, and bass drums. In 1882, at the height of the Army's expansion, the Army officially noted that 669 soldiers and officers had been "knocked down, kicked, or otherwise brutally assaulted," forty percent of these people being women and children.

The salvation war produced two persons promoted to glory, or two martyrs: Captain Sarah Broadbent and Captain Susan Beaty. In 1884, while serving in Worthing, Broadbent decided to hold a prayer meeting instead of an open-air meeting, since the open airs had caused pandemonium in her town. That evening, the mobs were surprised not to find the local corps in the streets. Sandall described tragic events that followed: "[The opposition group] marched to Showham [the location of the corps in the town], smashed all the windows of the corps hall there, and in the course of the rioting the officer in charge (Captain Sarah J. Broadbent) received her death-blow from a flying stone."

Beaty's promotion was more gradual. In the midst of a mob attack in Hastings, she was repeatedly kicked; her death in 1889 was said to have been caused by internal injuries from the incident.

Since the Army's inception, Salvationists have sustained multiple injuries in the heat of the battle—from Samuel Logan Brengle, who was sidelined for being hit in the head by a brick, to Major Euguen Nsingaini, who in 1998 was gunned down in the Congo because of his participation in a peace initiative.

If there is any theological way of understanding this commitment to the battle, it is through the Salvation Army's Wesleyan roots. The passionate way that Salvationists lived and proclaimed the doctrine of holiness sustained them during the fight. The Army took the torch from John Wesley, who understood that holiness was both social and personal. Totally loving God and neighbor was possible only through the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit.

Brengle appropriately underscored the Salvation Army ecclesiology of suffering when he said the Lord's "greatest servants have often been the greatest sufferers. They have gathered up in themselves and endured all the pains and woes, sorrows and agonies, fierce and cruel martyrdoms of humanity, and so have been able to minister to all its vast and pitiful needs, and comfort its voiceless sorrow" (quoted by Sally Chesham: *Peace Like a River*, 1981).

Evaluating the Army's Ecclesiology

William Booth's ecclesiology was one that dramatically challenged the Church to consider its call to mission and to expect to suffer while going about that mission. Such an ecclesiological understanding developed as the eschatologically focused Army understood itself to be in a battle to save the world. The kingdom of Christ and the gospel of that kingdom found a new expression in Booth's Salvation Army.

When looking critically at the life of William Booth, it is easy to see that he was an imperfect man. His autocratic leadership was a weakness that expressed itself in poor relationships with three of his children, who left the ministry of the Salvation Army. Another weakness is that at times his eschatology verged on viewing the Army as the sole agent for bringing in the millennium. Theologically, there are many ways that he was “rough around the edges.”

One area in which William Booth was theologically on target, however, was his ecclesiology. His doctrine of the church incorporated the place of the Church as a restoring agent in the world. That is the restoration of personal and social evil. This eschatologically motivated ecclesiology, which called people to suffer for Christ, is a rich theological heritage that the contemporary Army has inherited.

Evaluating William Booth’s ecclesiology today is a task that is of great significance for the contemporary Salvation Army as it seeks a historically informed mission. Often, scholars of the Salvation Army assume that because Booth’s ecclesiology was conditioned by his eschatology, his ecclesiology was hence insufficient. This study is a call to revise the Salvation Army’s historiography regarding William Booth’s ecclesiology.

Assessing Green’s Evaluation

Contemporary scholars do not always view the impact of William Booth’s eschatology in a positive light. Some assume that Booth’s eschatology, particularly his understanding of the millennium, created a deficient ecclesiology. Such a position is taken by Salvation Army scholar Roger Green, who in his article “Facing History: Our Way Ahead for a Salvationist Theology” concludes that the contemporary Salvation Army has inherited a “weak ecclesiology.”

Green asserts that Booth's ecclesiology was weak for two reasons: his postmillennialism and the distancing of the Army from the institutional church after the failed merger with the Church of England. The latter claim is not being challenged in this paper; rather, the question is Green's claim that Booth's postmillennialism contributed to a weak ecclesiology. Green states, "Postmillennial theology does not comport well with a strong ecclesiology, especially when one's doctrine of the Church is seen primarily through Army lenses."

Green's argument that the contemporary Army has inherited a weak ecclesiology seems to have two points of contention: that postmillennialism does not create a lasting ecclesiology because it supposedly did not plan for the future, and that Booth was ecclesiastically inconsistent in his definitions of the Army's reason for existence. Green's second claim demands a distinction between ecclesiastical structures and ecclesiology.

William Booth was inconsistent when speaking ecclesiastically. *Ecclesiological* and *ecclesiastical* are, however, different terms. Booth's unpredictable ecclesiastic language refers more to the organization of the movement, whereas suggesting that Booth possessed a "weak ecclesiology" is proposing that he had an incomplete doctrine of the church.

Green's final point of argument is that Booth's ecclesiology is weak because it de-emphasized ecclesiastical structures. On the contrary, Booth was proposing an alternative structure that was far more effective than the ecclesiastical structures of his day.

The pragmatically-minded William Booth saw a great eschatological goal: saving the world. Despite Green's claim that postmillennialism does not comport very well with a sturdy ecclesiology, the opposite can be seen in the denominations that were birthed as a result of the nineteenth-century holiness revival—for instance, the Wesleyan and Free Methodist churches,

which were born out of desire to see ecclesiology matched with mission in the world. These denominations are noted for their stands against slavery.

William Booth was continually defining the early Army, his letters and sermons giving regular emphasis (sometimes *overemphasis*) to what it meant to be a Salvationist. This provided an ecclesial self-understanding for the young Army. An implicit ecclesiology that was developed unconventionally is not necessarily a “weak” ecclesiology. Booth’s writings are saturated with ecclesiological statements concerning the mission and aims of the Salvation Army. What is implicit is direct theological definition about ecclesiology. His inconsistent ecclesiastical jargon does not negate the content and missional purpose of those statements.

Sociologically, this creates difficulties in identifying the Salvation Army as a “church” or “sect” along the lines of the typology of Ernst Troeltsch and others. Sociological difficulties do not, however, necessitate theological deficiency. At the forefront of Roger Green’s argument about Booth’s “weak” ecclesiology is his desire to see the Army move toward church-like categories. Green notes, “I have long been convinced that the only way to approach a correct historical analysis that leads to a truthful institutional self-understanding is to impose the sect/church distinctions developed in the discipline of sociology upon ourselves.” He then encourages Salvationist to accept the “historical fact” that the Army has moved from being a sect to a church and should hence evaluate what sectarian distinctions should be maintained.

Missionally-directed movements are not governed by sociology; they are motivated by God’s word, which challenges them to be an active body “preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ and meeting human needs in his name without discrimination” (*Salvation Army 2004 Year Book*). When mission directs the church, it forms an alternative ecclesiology that is often more in tune with Scripture than the sociologically classified “church” or “denomination.”

To criticize William Booth's ecclesiology as "weak" is to force his missionally-directed movement into a box of intellectual abstractions. William Booth's ecclesiology was missional. He was unconcerned with theological abstractions and discussions. Philip Needham's book *Community in Mission* rightly places Salvationist ecclesiology in the context of mission. The ecclesiological thesis of this work is that "a Salvationist ecclesiology stands as a reminder to the Church that its mission in the world is primary and that the life of the Church ought largely to be shaped by a basic commitment to mission." A missional ecclesiology is exactly where the Army should be if it is to be at all true to its historical and theological heritage.

Because Green uses the comparative term "weak," it is difficult to distinguish what ecclesiology he is assuming to be adequate for the contemporary Salvation Army. He maintains that the Salvation Army must embrace a view of history that is different from the Booth's postmillennialism. He proposes that the Army shed any trace of postmillennialism and proposes that Salvationists embrace the biblical language of the Kingdom of God when looking at history. This proposal is warmly welcomed, for such language is indeed something that the contemporary Army should embrace, but the spirit of William Booth's millennialism is not juxtaposed to this language.

When moving toward the future, the Army must evaluate its heritage in order to progress with historically directed confidence. It seems that the ecclesiological heritage that William Booth fashioned for his Army is something that should be maintained. Why? Because this ecclesiology keeps the Salvation Army focused on mission, this ecclesiology keeps the interrelated themes of suffering and holiness alive.

Conclusion

William Booth's functional, biblically based, missional ecclesiology was formed alongside the metaphor of an Army. This metaphor created new ways for the mission of God to be expressed in the world, particularly as it related to suffering. Booth called the Salvation Army to suffer as it lived out its ecclesiology; suffering went hand-in-hand with being a soldier. The pulse of this ecclesiology was William Booth's eschatology. His impassioned desire to win the world for Jesus produced a missional ecclesiology.

Booth saw the church as necessarily active. He commented on this purpose, "...there can be no question that it is of God that those who are on the Lord's side should aim at this great and godlike purpose [defeating the devil and delivering souls from hell], and direct and devote all their energies to its accomplishment."

The question is not whether the Army has a "weak" or "strong" ecclesiology, but whether it is faithful to Jesus and the gospel of his kingdom and whether it is functional today. The contemporary Salvation Army has inherited an ecclesiology from William Booth that is faithful in these things, and this legacy is worthy of the Army's time and celebration.

Postlude: The 'elephant-in-the room' is the question, "is suffering intrinsic to a Salvationist lifestyle today?" I was sitting at dinner last night with a THQ department head who described in glowing terms Officers Councils on a Cruise Boat (never mind perception and suffering), and having people take photos with the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders as a fundraiser at NAOC (never mind the connection to sexual trafficking). It is easy to scream, "No! We are not suffering today," but how can we implement an ecclesiological understanding today that has room for suffering?

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