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UNIVERSAL ATONEMENT OR ONGOING INCARNATION? COMPARING THE MISSIONAL THEOLOGIES OF WILLIAM BOOTH AND ISAAC HECKER

by

James E. Pedlar

William Booth (1829-1912) and Isaac Hecker (1819-1888) are remembered as the founders of two nineteenth century missionary bodies —The Salvation Army and The Paulist Fathers. Neither man was a theological heavyweight, and yet there are many reasons why their missional theologies are worthy of comparison and consideration. First, the two men were contemporaries, born ten years apart, and as such they provide an interesting reference point for comparing Wesleyan-Holiness and Catholic understandings of mission in the late-nineteenth century. Second, both had Methodist backgrounds, although Hecker never explicitly embraced a Methodist perspective in the way that Booth did, and he would later go on to become an ardent Roman Catholic. Third, both men were revivalists. While Booth's revivalist credentials are obvious, Hecker is an example of what historian Jay Dolan calls "Catholic Revivalism," a movement among Catholic evangelists in America that made use of many Protestant revivalist techniques.[1] Both men began their careers as evangelists serving with established ecclesial bodies, but after conflicts each went on to found a missionary movement of their own. Booth served with multiple Wesleyan denominational bodies, and as an independent evangelist, before founding The Salvation Army in East London in 1865. Hecker was originally ordained as a Redemptorist Priest, but was expelled from that congregation for wanting to establish a distinctly American community of Redemptorists. He was then given permission, along with four other American converts to Catholicism, to found The Paulist Pathers in 1858. Pourth, both men also became possessed by expansive and comprehensive visions of worldwide reform and renewal in their

[1]See Jay Dolan, *Catholic Revivalism: The American Experience, 1830-1900* (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978).

later years, each of which went beyond merely "spiritual" and personal concerns, and addressed larger social challenges. Finally, both Booth and Hecker believed that the movements they founded were perfectly positioned to be used by God to usher in this great coming renewal.

Thus far I have been stressing the similarities between Booth and Hecker, but obviously there were significant differences, given the fact that Booth was a Wesleyan evangelical and Hecker was a Roman Catholic. Their differences are illustrative of the divergences that existed between Catholics and Wesleyans in the nineteenth century. While Booth's grand missiological vision was built upon the universality of the atonement, Hecker's view was built upon the foundation of the Church as the continuation of the incarnation in human history. These differing foundations funded very different understandings of the work of the Spirit, the place of the Church in God's mission, and the relationship between missionary bodies and the broader Church.

BOUNDLESS SALVATION: THE ATONEMENT IN BOOTH'S MISSIONAL THEOLOGY

Although he was baptized in the Church of England shortly after his birth, William Booth was converted under the influence of some Wesleyan Methodists as an adolescent, with a decisive turning point in his life occurring when American Methodist revivalist James Caughey held a campaign in Nottingham in 1846.[2] He became very involved in the Broad Street Wesleyan Chapel and was made a local preacher at the age of seventeen. Booth would later remark that as a young man he had believed that "there was one God, and John Wesley was his prophet."[3] Though he was firmly Wesleyan, during the early period of his life Booth struggled to find a denominational home. Surprisingly, he briefly found his way into the circles of the Congregational Union in 1852, but it was their Calvinist soteriology that became a stumbling block for Booth. After giving Calvinist teaching due consideration, Booth decided he "would rather starve than preach such doctrine."[4] After other similar false starts with various denominations, Booth was ordained in the Methodist New Con-

[2]For details of William Booth's life, see the most important recent treatment: Roger J. Green, *The Life and Ministry of William Booth: Founder of the Salvation Army* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005).

[3]Quoted in Frederick St. George de Latour Booth-Tucker, *The Life of Catherine Booth* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1892), I: 74.

[4]George Scott Railton, *The Authoritative Life of General William Booth, Founder of The Salvation Army* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912), 31.

nection in 1858.[5] He would part ways with the New Connexion in 1861, but his Wesleyan theological commitments remained strong throughout his life. It is not surprising then that the universality of Christ's atoning work was a central facet of Booth's own theological perspective.

Booth's adherence to a universal atonement is encapsulated in his most famous song, which became known as "The Founder's Song" in Salvation Army circles: "O boundless salvation! deep ocean of love, / O fullness of mercy, Christ brought from above, / The whole world redeeming, so rich and so free, / Now flowing for all men, come, roll over me."[6] The importance of the universality of the atonement in Booth's thinking is further underlined by the fact that he included it in his fledgling movements official articles of faith. His intention was that his missionary organization would be a "big tent," with a very sparse set of doctrines, so as to avoid doctrinal controversy and "sectarianism," as much as this was possible. Yet in the several iterations of the movement's articles of faith during its formative years, an article on the universal atonement was always included.[7] William Booth did not enter into extended arguments about theories of the atonement, but it is clear that Catherine Booth favoured the Governmental view,[8] and an early edition of the Salvation Army's doctrine handbook, which was prepared by Booth for the training of his officers, also clearly leans in this direction.[9] The handbook also later

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[5]On this period, see Green, *Life and Ministry of William Booth*, 51–74.

[6]*The Songbook of The Salvation Army*, American Edition (Verona, NJ: The Salvation Army, 1987), #298.

[7]Article Five of the first set of doctrines (1867), which numbered only seven, states, "We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has, by His suffering and death made an atonement for the whole world, so that whosoever will may be saved." This article remained, unaltered, throughout later revisions, and remains in the current set of 11 Salvation Army doctrines. The other articles affirm the inspiration of scripture (1), the Trinity (2), the Incarnation (3), total depravity (4), repentance, faith, and regeneration as necessary to salvation (6), and final judgment to eternal happiness or punishment (7). See Appendix 3 in Glenn K. Horridge, *The Salvation Army, Origins and Early Years: 1865-1900* (Godalming, UK: Ammonite Books, 1993), 253; also Appendix F in Robert Sandall, *The History of The Salvation Army* (London: The Salvation Army, 1947), I: 262–263.

[8]On this point, see John Read, *Catherine Booth: Laying the Theological Foundations of a Radical Movement* (Eugene, Oregon: Fickwick Publications, 2013), 29–39.

[9]In explaining the atonement, the doctrinal handbook states in part: "Jesus Christ, though the only Son of the Father, came, and suffered as a sacrifice for us, and so magnified the importance of the law we had broken, and, at the same time, made a way for our deliverance from its penalty." William Booth, *The*

explicitly rejects a penal substitutionary argument for the atonement, on the grounds that it must lead either to unconditional election or universalism.[10] The greatest emphasis in early Salvation Army teaching on the atonement, however, was focused on its *extent*, and the doctrine handbook strongly asserted that the extent of the benefits of Christ's atoning work "were obtained, and are intended for the whole world; that is, for all who have lived in the past, for all who live now, and for all who will live hereafter."[11] In addition to defending this position with a plethora of scriptural arguments, the handbook also argued that the universality of the atonement is theologically necessary in order for Christians to obey Christ's call to preach salvation to all, and for us to act mercifully towards all.[12]

Thus, the universality of the atonement was very intimately tied up with Booth's understanding of Christian mission, and it was this sense of the immensity of the salvation which was provided in Christ that led to Booth taking up a calling to be "an apostle for the heathen of East London."[13] Booth believed that these poor people of East London were not being reached by the churches, and so he felt compelled to preach the

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Doctrines of The Salvation Army, Prepared for the Training Homes (Toronto: The Salvation Army Territorial Headquarters, 1892), 16. This governmental emphasis is not surprising, as it reflects the thinking of some of the Booth's formative Wesleyan and Revivalist influences. See John Read's discussion of how Catherine Booth's view the atonement was shaped by her reading of Richard Watson and Charles Finney, among others. Read, *Catherine Booth*, 32–39.

[10]The book identifies the "finished work of Christ" as a phrase which means that "Christ put Himself in the place of the sinner and bore the *exact amount of punishment* which he deserved, thus actually *paying the debt* that the sinner owed to Divine justice." This is then rejected: "If it were so, of Christ did literally pay the sinner's debts, in this sense, God cannot justly demand payment *twice* and consequently *no one will be sent to Hell*, and *all* will be saved." Further, the only way to support, this view, then, is "by rejecting the glorious truth that Christ died for *all*." Booth, *The Doctrines of The Salvation Army, Prepared for the Training Homes*, 23–24.

[11]Ibid., 20.

[12] ". . . if Christ did not die for all, how could we urge all sinners to believe he died for them? Unless he died for all, no man could be sure He died for him. . . . The Bible says we are to offer mercy to all; but how can we do so and tell every man he can have salvation if Christ only died for a portion of the race?" Ibid., 21–22.

[13]William Booth, "How We Began," in *Boundless Salvation: The Shorter Writings of William Booth*, ed. Andrew M. Eason and Roger J. Green (New York: Feter Lang, 2012), 36.

gospel to them, because they too should be offered the free grace of salvation which was bought with the blood of Christ. As Catherine Booth said of her husband's original motivation to begin a mission in East London: "He believed that there had been an ATONEMENT made, sufficient for every sinner, and that by true repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the very worst might enter upon a new life."[14]

It was Booth's reflection on the extent of the atonement that also eventually led to his broadening his vision of salvation to include temporal as well as spiritual restoration. The younger Booth had engaged in various forms of social relief only as a means to the greater end of evangelization.[15] However, as time when on, and Booth spent more and more time among the "neglected masses," he changed his mind.

> I discovered that the miseries from which I sought to save man in the next world were substantially the same as those from which I found him suffering in this, and that they proceeded from the same cause—that is, from his alienation from, and his rebellion against God, and then from his own disordered dispositions and appetites.[16]

Booth came to the realization that he had "two gospels of deliverance to preach—one for each world, or rather, one gospel which applied alike to both."[17] Thus, the "boundless salvation" which Christ offers, for Booth, extended to temporal matters as well as spiritual matters. Relief from temporal misery was indeed part of "the work that Jesus Christ came to accomplish," for he came "to dispossess all these fiends of evil for the souls of men, to destroy the works of the devil in the present time, and to set up in the soul the kingdom of heaven instead."[18]

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[14]Catherine Mumford Booth, *Life and Death: Being Reports of Addresses Delivered in London* (London: The Salvation Army, 1890), 203.

[15]"The Bible and my own observation concurred in showing me that the highest service I could render to man was to rescue him from this position of antagonism to the Divine Government. Alongside this aspect of his condition, any temporal modification of his lot appeared trivial – nay, almost contemptible. What were any of the sorrows of the earth when compared with everlasting damnation – let men interpret that terrible doom however they would?" William Booth, "Salvation for Both Worlds," in *Boundless Salvation: The Shorter Writings of William Booth*, ed. Andrew M. Eason and Roger J. Green (New York: Peter Lang, 2012), 52.

[16]Ibid., 53.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid., 54.

In 1890, Booth published his most well-known book, *In Darkest England and the Way Out*. This book outlined Booth's ambitious "Scheme of Social Salvation," which offered a variety of programs and social service projects, all aimed at improving social conditions.[19] While much of the book laid out the details of his social agenda, Booth was also keen to offer a theological justification for this expansion of The Salvation Army's mission, in order to defend against his many critics. In doing so, he turned explicitly to the doctrine of the atonement:

> The Scheme of Social Salvation is not worth discussion which is not as wide as the Scheme of Eternal Salvation set forth in the Gospel. The Glad Tidings must be to every creature, not merely to an elect few who are to be saved while the mass of their fellows are predestined to a temporal damnation. We have had this doctrine of an inhuman cast-iron pseudo-political economy too long enthroned amongst us. It is now time to fling down the false idol, and proclaim a Temporal Salvation as full, free, and universal, and with no other limitations that the "Whosoever will," of the Gospel.[20]

Roger Green writes the following regarding this shift in Booth's mature theology of redemption: ". . . just as there was the possibility of universal spiritual salvation (i.e., salvation was not limited to the elect), so there was the possibility of universal social redemption."[21] In making this argument, Booth believed he could say that the roots of his scheme for "Social Salvation" were "in the very heart of God Himself."[22] His statements were not always as clear as they might have been regarding the relationship between social and spiritual redemption, and Booth vacillated somewhat, sometimes portraying them as equally important, and at other times presenting social redemption as a less-important stage on the way to per-

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[19]The projects were described under three headings: the "City Colony," the "Farm Colony," and the "Over-Sea Colony." For a brief overview see William Booth, *In Darkest England, and the Way Out* (London: Funk & Wagnalls, 1890), 91–93. See also Norman Murdoch, *Origins of The Salvation Army* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 161–163; Horridge, *The Salvation Army*, 119–121; Green, *Life and Ministry of William Booth*, 177–178.

[20]Booth, *Darkest England*, 36.

[21]Roger J. Green, *War on Two Fronts: The Redemptive Theology of William Booth* (Atlanta: Salvation Army Supplies, 1989), 88.

[22]Booth, *Darkest England*, 270.

sonal redemption.[23] In spite of these ambiguities, it is clear that Booth's expanded understanding of salvation in his later years was firmly grounded in the universal atonement of Christ.

Although the universality of the atonement was therefore foundational to Booth's theology of mission, he also asserted that Spirit-empowered human agents had been given a great deal of responsibility as co-workers in Christ's work of universal redemption. While he would certainly affirm that the atonement is the work of Christ *alone*, he nevertheless believed that the effective participation of human persons in the benefits of the atonement depended upon the missionary activity of believers. Standing the in revivalist tradition of Charles Finney and James Caughey,[24] Booth energetically employed a variety of "new measures" in order to awaken sinners of their need for a Saviour. The goal was to save souls, and he believed that the Spirit would use and bless the efforts of his Spirit-empowered Army to bring people to salvation.

Booth's heavy emphasis on the empowering work of the Spirit was, of course, related to a strong doctrine of entire sanctification, but it was also related to his view the millennium, and it was his millennial expectancy which really gave urgency and importance to the activity of believers. Like many in his day, Booth was a post-millennialist, meaning that he believed that the millennial reign of Christ would precede Christ's second coming, and would take the form of a golden age of the Church, where the gospel would hold sway over the world. Booth believed that this millennial reign would be "preceded by further and mightier outpourings of the Holy Ghost than yet known," and that these outpourings would mean that the salvation "war" would "be carried on with greater

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[23]As Green summarizes, "There were times when his whole redemptive picture included social redemption and personal redemption—side by side. Social and personal redemption were two sides of the same coin. Social redemption was an equal and natural part of the whole redemptive picture, and it would ultimately help God redeem this world and establish a physical kingdom on earth.... At other times the imagery of redemption is different, and Booth goes to great lengths to explain that social salvation is not an end in itself, and that the work of The Salvation Army in the social realm was not an end in itself. Here Booth attempted to explain a natural order of redemption as he believed God had ordained it and as he understood it. The work of physical or social redemption was preparatory, necessarily, to the work of spiritual or personal redemption." Green, *War on Two Fronts*, 94.

[24]Por a discussion of the influence of Caughey, Pinney, and Phoebe Palmer on the Booths, see Murdoch, *Origins of The Salvation Army*, 5–20.

vigor, although, in substance, on the same lines as those on which the apostles fought and died."[25] In other words, the millennial kingdom could and would be established through the work of Spirit-empowered individuals using the same methods that the Church has always used to spread the gospel. The gospel could truly conquer the world, without the cataclysmic intervention of the personal return of Christ.

Booth believed this was possible because he believed that the millennial kingdom, which he called "the Good Time Coming," would be established through the "throne of righteousness" being "set up in the hearts of men" when "the power and operation of the Holy Spirit" made them entirely sanctified.[26] And he believed that a people thus made righteous would govern themselves righteously. The many miseries which presently abound in the sinful world would be removed, and human happiness would be advanced through the reign of love, justice, and mercy.[27] "Just in proportion as these principles triumph in the hearts and consciences of men will millennial blessedness prevail."[28] Booth's assertion was that these very principles which he believed would establish the millennium were the very principles which The Salvation Army set out to propagate.[29] So he would claim, "A genuine Salvationist is a true reformer of men . . . because is the advocate of the only principles by which the reformation of society can be effected," namely, "that millennial kingdom which God has already established in his own heart."[30]

This brings us to the ambiguity in Booth's thinking and practice as it relates to the place of the Church in Christian mission. While he sees an essential role for Spirit-empowered human agents in bringing about the millennial kingdom, he does not leave any role for the Church *per se*. The individualized account of how the Spirit will establish the kingdom by reigning in individual hearts reflects what David Rightmire has rightly

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[25]William Booth, "The Millennium; Or, the Ultimate Triumph of Salvation Army Principles," in *Boundless Salvation: The Shorter Writings of William Booth*, ed. Andrew M. Eason and Roger J. Green (New York: Peter Lang, 2012), 60. This echoes Wesley's late statements in Sermon 63, "The General Spread of the Gospel," §16ff, in Albert C. Outler, ed., *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 2 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 492ff.

[26]Booth, "The Millennium; Or, the Ultimate Triumph of Salvation Army Principles," 61–62.

[27]Ibid., 64–66.

[28]Ibid., 69.

[29]"THE PRACTICE AND PROPOGATION OF THESE PRINCIPLES IS THE WORK OF THE SALVATION ARMY." Ibid., 70, capitals in original.

[30]Ibid., 71.

identified as a "pneumatological priority" in the thinking of many holiness movement revivalists. This pneumatological priority led to the subordination of ecclesiological and sacramental concerns in favour of attention to the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers.[31] For Booth, this meant that the Church became basically superfluous in his theology of mission. The superfluity of the Church can be seen in two ways. The first is his well-known decision in 1883 to discontinue the practice of the sacraments.[32] For Booth, it was baptism in the Spirit, and spiritual communion with Christ, which were the substance of the Church's historic sacramental practice, and he believed both of these to be available without the actual observance of the sacraments. He was also concerned about the divisive debates which surrounded sacramental observance, and naively hoped to avoid controversy by doing away with them altogether. He justified his position in part by stressing that his Army was "not professing to be a church, nor aiming at being one," but was "simply a force for aggressive salvation purposes."[33] That brings us to the second way in which the superfluity of the Church is evident in Booth's thinking: the ambiguous ecclesiological status of The Salvation Army itself. Booth and the other early Salvationists were insistent that the Army was not a church or a "sect" in the terminology of their day. "We are not and will not be made a Church," Booth insisted. "There are plenty for anyone who wishes to join them, to vote and rest."[34] He insisted that they were a missionary body, seeking only to save those who were not being reached by the churches. While the idea of a missionary society within the Church is a common one, normally the members of a missionary society would also be members of churches, where they would find Christian nurture, instruction, fellowship, and sacramental observance. Booth declared that

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[31]R. David Rightmire, "Subordination of Ecclesiology and Sacramental Theology to Pneumatology in the Nineteenth-Century Holiness Movement," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 47, no. 2 (2012): 27–35.

[32]An excellent historical overview of this decision is found in Andrew M. Eason, "The Salvation Army and the Sacraments in Victorian Britain: Retracing the Steps to Non-Observance," *Fides et historia* 41, no. 2 (Summer-Fall 2009): 51-71. The most substantive theological treatment is R. David Rightmire, *Sacraments and the Salvation Army: Pneumatological Foundations* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1990).

[33]William Booth, "The General's New Year Address to Officers," in *Boundless Salvation: The Shorter Writings of William Booth*, ed. Roger J. Green and Andrew M. Eason (New York: Peter Lang, 2012), 192.

[34]William Booth, *Orders and Regulations for The Salvation Army* (London: Headquarters of The Salvation Army, 1878), 4.

this was his original intention with The Salvation Army, and that his movement was "a continuation of the work of Mr. Wesley."[35] But from an early stage, probably within the first two or three years of its existence, the Army began to function as a church home for its members.[36] Unlike the early Methodists, Salvationists were not encouraged to attend churches to receive the Lord's Supper—or for any other reason. The standard narrative in Salvationist history is that Booth's ruffian converts were not welcome in established churches, and had no desire to go to established churches.[37] What is strange is that, even after failing to integrate his converts into other churches, and realizing that his mission would be the only spiritual home these people experienced, Booth continued to do all he could to maintain his Army's un-churchly status. He further heightened the ambiguity by periodically making statements claiming that The Salvation Army was equal in every way to the other churches, and that its officers, though not ordained, were equal in every way to ordained ministers.[38] Booth maintained that the Army was a part of "the Church," but was not "a church"; it was, rather, something akin to an evangelical order within the Church, though one without any formal ties to any other church body.[39] Thus, Salvationists were in the strange position of having no church membership, but considering themselves to be part of the universal Church.

THE HAND OF GOD: THE CHURCH IN HECKER'S MISSIONAL THEOLOGY

Hecker's theology of mission takes its starting point, not from the universality of the atonement, but from the universality of the Catholic

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[35]William Booth, "Wesleyan Methodist Conference," in *Boundless Salvation: The Shorter Writings of William Booth*, ed. Andrew M. Eason and Roger J. Green (New York: Peter Lang, 2012), 173.

[36]See the discussion in Harold Hill, *Leadership in the Salvation Army: A Case Study in Clericalisation* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2006), 44-46.

[37]Booth, "How We Began," 24.

[38]See Booth's statement from 1894: "The Salvation Army is not inferior in spiritual character to any Christian organization in existence. We are in no wise dependent on the Church. . . .We are, I consider, equal every way and everywhere to any other Christian organization on the face of the earth (i) in spiritual authority, (ii) in spiritual intelligence, (iii) in spiritual functions. We hold 'the keys' as truly as any Church in existence." Bramwell Booth, *Echoes and Memories* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1925), 68.

[39]On the idea of The Salvation Army as an order, see Harold Hill, "Four Anchors from the Stern," *The Practical Theologian* 5, no. 1 (2007): 26-41.

Church as the ongoing presence of Christ in the world. Indeed, it was this conviction regarding the Church's status that ended Hecker's long and varied spiritual quest and led to his becoming a Catholic. Hecker's parents were German immigrants to New York who had been married in a Dutch Reformed Church. However, his Mother became involved with the Forsythe Street Methodist Church soon after, and remained a member of that church throughout her life.[40] Hecker was exposed to Methodism as a child, but as an adolescent he decided that Methodism was not the answer to his spiritual needs. He first turned to political activity, then to involvement in Transcendentalist communities, before finding his way back to Christianity, and eventually to Catholicism.[41] It was his understanding of the Church as mediator between God and humanity that played a decisive role in leading him to Catholicism. A little over a year before he was baptized and entered the Catholic Church, Hecker wrote in his diary that he had come to see the Church as "the channel through which [Christ's] life has been continued through the past into our present time."[42] At this time he was still unsure as to *which* church should be considered to be God's "channel" in the world, and so he continued searching for the true Church for some months, believing that "the life of Jesus has perpetuated in a body called the Church and that this life is the true life & light of fallen and depraved Man."[43] On August 1, 1844, after being urged in a letter from his mentor Orestes Brownson to either become Catholic or choose no church at all, Hecker was baptized as a Catholic.[44]

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[40]See the discussion of Caroline Hecker's involvement in the Forsythe Street Church in chapter 2 of John Farina, *An American Experience of God: The Spirituality of Isaac Hecker* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981).

[41]The most complete biography of Hecker to date is David I O'Brien, *Isaac Hecker: An American Catholic* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992). O'Brien deals with this period of Hecker's life in 77-81. Also of interest is Hecker's diary, which has been published in critical edition, and covers this same period. See Isaac Thomas Hecker, *Isaac T Hecker, The Diary: Romantic Religion in Ante-Bellum America.*, ed. John Farina (New York: Paulist Press, 1988).

[42]May 10, 1843, in Hecker, *Diary*, 103.

[43]May 10, 1844, in ibid., 180. All irregular punctuation and spelling is reproduced as it stands in the published edition of Hecker's diary, following the precedent of the editor, John Farina.

[44]The letter reads, in part, "You cannot be an Anglican, you must be a Catholic, or a mystic. If you enter the Church at all, it must be the Catholic. There is nothing else." Brownson to Hecker, June 6, 1844, in Orestes Brownson and Isaac Thomas Hecker, *The Brownson-Hecker Correspondence*, ed. Joseph F. Gower and Richard M. Leliaert (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), 103–104.

Hecker had now come to believe that the Church was God's chosen means to extend the presence of Christ throughout history, and all throughout the world. He thus identified God's agency in a very direct way with the activity of the Church. Hecker argued that, in order for Christ to truly be Saviour of the world for all time, he must have left "a substitute or representative of himself, which should answer to all the wants of man for all generations."[45] These wants, Hecker argued, were that the human person should have authoritative guidance concerning their eternal destiny, and access to the means through which they might achieve this destiny. Christ had therefore left the Church as his representative to act on his behalf after his ascension.

> He came to save all men to the end of time, and when he left the earth, he did not withdraw the powers he exercised and the gifts he brought, but communicated them to men, his chosen representatives, to be employed by them, as they had been by him, until the consummation of the world. The Church of Christ, therefore, must possess all powers and gifts, and among others, that of pardoning the sinner and reconciling him to God.[46]

Protestantism was rejected by Hecker, because, he argued, it elevated private judgement over the authority of the Church, which he believed was necessary to answer humanity's need for divine guidance.[47]

In his book, *The Church and the Age*, which represents Hecker's mature vision for world-wide renewal, Hecker wrote, "The Church is God acting through a visible organization directly on men, and, through men, on society."[48] Those who wanted God's guidance should seek it, therefore, in the Church: "To be guided by God's Church is to be guided by God. It is in vain to look elsewhere. . . . The hand of God is the Church. It is this

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[45]Isaac Thomas Hecker, *Questions of the Soul* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1855), 112.

[46]Ibid., 120.

[47]"How does Protestantism meet the want of a divine and unerring authority in matters of religion? In the question of man's destiny and true guidance? Is not the simple raising of the question of an unerring authority a patent condemnation of Protestantism? Does not the fundamental principle of Protestantism, the supremacy of private judgment, exclude all idea of an unerring authority in religion?" Ibid., 128–129.

[48]Isaac Thomas Hecker, *The Church and the Age: An Exposition of the Catholic Church in View of the Needs and Aspirations of the Present Age* (New York: Office of the Catholic World, 1887), 22.

hand He is extending, in a more distinctive and attractive form, to this present generation."[49]

Hecker's views on the Church as the "hand of God" were supported by his typical Catholic understanding of the relationship between nature and grace. Hecker saw nature and grace as synthetically related to one another, arguing, "Their connection is intimate, their relation is primary, they are, in essence, one."[50] This meant that he had a positive view of reason, human nature, and the best of human desires, believing that they did not need to be cast aside, but rather taken up, elevated by grace, and directed toward divinely ordained ends. Of course, for Hecker the only place where this could truly take place was in the Catholic Church. He had a strong belief that the best of all human desires, thoughts, and culture should be taken up and synthesized in the Catholic Church. This meant not only that the Church was "the practical means of establishing the complete reign of the Holy Spirit in the soul,"[51] but that though the renewal of individual persons, the Church would also be God's means for renewing society as a whole. "The Church is the sum of all problems, and the most potent force in the whole wide universe. It is therefore illogical to look elsewhere for the radical remedy of all our evils."[52]

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[49]Ibid., 61.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Ibid., 50.

[52]Ibid., 22. This is the view Hecker had held since at least 1858. In a statement he prepared for his Vatican superiors while seeking approval for the founding of the Paulist Pathers, Hecker narrated how he had come to this conclusion about the connection between personal, social, and religious reform: "Several years' study and effort in the way of political reform made it evident that the evils of society were not so much political as social, and that not much was to be hoped from political action, as politicians were governed more by selfishness and a thirst for power than by patriotism and the desire of doing good to their fellow-citizens. Hence a social reform was called for, and this led me into the examination of the social evils of the present state of society. . . . The desire of bringing these opinions to bear upon society led me to seek and inquire among several social institutions which were then inaugurated and professing similar aims. A couple of years were spent among them in this inquiry, when it became clear to me that the evils of society were not so much social as personal, and it was not by a social reform they would be remedied, but by a personal one. This turned my attention to religion which has for its aim the conversion and reformation of the soul." Pound in *The Paulist Vocation*, Revised and Expanded. (New York: Paulist Press, 2000), 51–52. On similar grounds, Hecker argued that all other religions, "as far as they contain truth . . . find their common centre in the Catholic Church." Hecker, *The Church and the Age*, 38.

This led to his most distinctive idea about God's providential shaping of history and the role of the Catholic Church in renewing worldwide society. Hecker speculated about what he called "the providential mission of the races,"[53] and believed that the Catholic Church was God's instrument to synthesize all aspects of the good, true, and beautiful which could be found in different "races." By "races" Hecker meant different European ethnic groups, which he divided into four: Latins, Celts, Greeks, and Saxons, with "mixed Saxons" forming a further sub-division of Saxons. His understanding of these "races" drew upon common Romantic ideas regarding the nature of "genius" and how this related to particular destinies for various nations and peoples.[54] He laid out arguments that spoke of how each of these races had characteristic "gifts" which needed to be taken up and perfected by integration into the Church. This was built upon the assumption that God had created each of these "races" and gifted them, not so that that would impose their cultural traits on the Church, but so that these "races" would find their highest development in the Church.

> It would also be a grave mistake, in speaking of the providential mission of the races, to suppose that they imposed their characteristics on religion, Christianity, or the Church; whereas, on the contrary, it is their Author who has employed in the Church their several gifts for the expression and development of those truths for which He specially created them. The Church is God acting through the different races of men for their highest development, together with their present and future greatest happiness and His own greatest glory.[55]

Thus, Hecker argues, for example, that the "Latin-Celtic races are characterized by hierarchical, traditional, and emotional tendencies," and that "These were the human elements which furnished the Church with the means of developing and completing her supreme authority, her divine and ecclesiastical traditions, her discipline, her devotions, and her aesthetics."[56] On the other hand, the Saxons "wrongly identified the excesses

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[53]Hecker, *The Church and the Age*, 41.

[54]On the background for these ideas, see William L Portier, *Isaac Hecker and the First Vatican Council* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1985), 156.

[55]Hecker, *The Church and the Age*, 41.

[56]Ibid., 43.

of those races [meaning the Latin-Celts] with the Church of God,"[57] leading to the conflict of the Reformation.[58] Hecker held out hope, however, that the Saxon "races" would return to the Church, not by altering Catholic doctrine, but by presenting them the truth of Catholic doctrine so that they could recognize it as the truth.[59] The "penetrating intelligence" and "energetic individuality" which he considered typical of the Saxon races, would find in the Catholic Church an "elevation to a divine manhood."[60] This is the culmination of his vision of renewal: with the "different races of Europe and the United States," united and directed towards their proper end in the one Church, Catholics, "with their varied capacities and the great agencies at their disposal, would be the providential means of rapidly spreading the light of faith over the whole world, and of constituting a more Christian state of society."[61]

What is surprising, and somewhat unusual for a Catholic of his time, is that in addition to his high view of the Church, Hecker also placed great emphasis on the direct working of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual. Indeed, Hecker believed that the solution to all social prob-

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[57]He continues, They failed to taken in to sufficient consideration the great and constant efforts the Church had made, in her national and general councils, to correct the abuses and extirpate the vices which formed the staple of their complaints." Ibid., 44.

[58]"It was precisely the importance given to the external constitution and to the accessories of the Church which excited those antipathies of the Saxons which culminated in the so-called Reformation. For the Saxon races and the mixed Saxons, the English and their descendants, predominate in the rational element, in an energetic individuality, and in great practical activity in the material order." Ibid., 43. These misunderstandings, then, "led thousands and millions of Saxons and Anglo-Saxons to resistance, hatred, and finally open revolt against the authority of the Church." Ibid., 45.

[59]"The return, therefore, of the Saxon races to the Church is to be hoped for, not by trimming divine truth, nor by altering the constitution of the Church, nor by what are called concessions. Their return is to be hoped for by so presenting the divine truth to their minds that they can see that it is divine truth...This will open their way to the Church in harmony with their genuine instincts, and in her bosom they will find the realization of that career which their true aspirations point out for them. For the Holy Spirit, of which the Church is the .organ and expression, places every soul, and therefore all nations and races, in the immediate and perfect relation with their supreme end, God, in whom they obtain their highest development, happiness, and glory, both in this life and in the hfe to come." Hecker, *The Church and the Age*, 48–49.

[60]Ibid., 53.

[61]Ibid., 62.

lems would come from "a greater effusion of the Holy Spirit," which in turn would depend upon human persons "giving increased attention to his movements and inspirations in the soul."[62] He believed he was living on the edge of a new Pentecost,[63] in which the "increased action of the Holy Spirit, with a more vigorous co-operation on the part of the faithful," would "elevate the human personality to an intensity of force and grandeur productive of a new era to the Church and to society"[64] Thus, he argued that the "radical and adequate remedy for all the evils of our age, and the source of all true progress, consist in increased attention and fidelity to the action of the Holy Spirit in the soul."[65] This drew criticism from more conservative Catholic sources, who saw Hecker as a crypto-Protestant.[66] However, those critics clearly failed to understand that Hecker saw the Spirit as acting in a two-fold manner—both "embodied visibly in the authority of the Church," and "dwelling invisibly in the soul."[67] Hecker saw these two types of pneumatological action as forming "one inseparable synthesis," and he saw any attempt to undo this synthesis as leading to the destruction of the Church.[68] Of course, in practice, there are times when this two-fold action seems to lead to tensions—when individual discernment of the Spirit's leading comes into conflict with the discernment of those in authority. Hecker, as a faithful Catholic, would resolve this difficulty by saying that the authority of the Church must be the final arbiter of all disputes.[69] Hecker lived out this conflict in his own life, making many compromises regarding the focus of the Paulist Fathers in order to gain the approval of his episcopal overseers. The primary compromise was that the Paulist Fathers were forced to take on responsi-

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[62]Ibid., 26.

[63]"Are not all these but so many preparatory steps to a Pentecostal effusion of the Holy Spirit on the Church, an effusion, if not equal in intensity to that of apostolic days, at least greater than it in universality?" Ibid., 31.

[64]Ibid., 39–40.

[65]Ibid., 26.

[66]Xavier Dufrense wrote to Hecker on March 31, 1875, that many "good Catholics" were dismissing his arguments as "nothing but mysticism and illuminism" and "a Protestant theory." Cited in Farina, *An American Experience of God*, 156.

[67]Hecker, *The Church and the Age*, 33.

[68]Ibid.

[69]"In case of obscurity or doubt concerning what is the divinely revealed truth, or whether what prompts the soul is or is not an inspiration of the Holy Spirit, recourse must be had to the divine teacher or criterion, the authority of the Church." Ibid., 35.

bility for a parish, rather than remaining a community of purely missionary priests, as Hecker wanted.[70] This seriously inhibited their missional effectiveness, because they were a small community with precious little resources, and much of their time was taken up with the establishment and ongoing oversight of St. Paul the Apostle Church in New York City.[71]

As for his own community of missionary priests, Hecker envisioned that the Paulists would be "men of the age," who, in their total availability to the Spirit's leading, would be used by God to bring about the great universal synthesis of the best of all cultures in the Catholic Church. They would be those "who have that universal synthesis of truth which will solve the problems, eliminate the antagonisms, and meet the great needs of the age."[72] The Paulists were envisioned as "a movement springing from the synthesis of the most exalted faith with all the good and true in the elements now placed in antagonism to the Church."[73] In writing about "elements" that were "in antagonism to the Church," Hecker meant aspects of the culture, such as American individualism and democratic values, which seemed to be at odds with Catholic theology and practice. As a proud and patriotic American, Hecker could not accept (as some conservative European Catholics would argue) that these aspects of American culture were truly opposed to the truth of the gospel, and so he held out hope that these, too, would be integrated into the great synthesis of the Catholic faith. Thus, he closed his book, *Questions of the Soul*, with a call to his American brothers to find their true destiny in Catholic religious orders.[74] Hecker truly believed that, in a community like the Paulist

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[70]Hecker, writing to his fellow founding Paulist priests from Rome on March 27, 1858 had warned that parish duties would "prove the grave of our little bands and the death of our hopes." Quoted in John Farina, "Isaac Hecker's Vision for the Paulists: Hopes and Realities," in *Hecker Studies: Essays on the Thought of Isaac Hecker*, ed. John Farina, (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 192. However, the only diocese that was willing to give episcopal support to the Paulists without requiring them to take a parish was Cleveland, and Hecker wanted his community to be based in one of the major American cities on the Eastern seaboard. Thus he settled on New York. O'Brien, *Isaac Hecker*, 174–175.

[71]This compromise and its effect on the fledgling Paulist movement is well summarized in Farina, "Isaac Hecker's Vision for the Paulists."

[72]*The Paulist Vocation*, 147.

[73]Ibid.

[74]"What was attempted by those engaged in such movements as Brook Farm, Fruitlands, and other places of similar character, the religious orders in the Catholic Church have always realized. Their most brilliant dreams do not present a fair picture of religious life in the Catholic Church. Their hopes and highest

Fathers, one could find "true greatness," and real heroism, for "the Catholic Church," he wrote, "is the mother of great men, the nurse of heroes, and of an unfailing succession of saints and martyrs."[75] In contrast to Booth's ecclesiological ambiguities, Hecker's view of the Church is rather triumphalistic.

WESLEYAN AMBIGUITY AND CATHOLIC TRIUMPHALISM

While their theologies of mission are built upon the contrasting foundations of the universal atonement and the Church as Christ's substitutional representative, both Hecker and Booth have strong views of the work of the Holy Spirit, and both see the transformation of individual persons by the power of the Spirit as the key to worldwide renewal and reform. Booth magnifies the work of the Spirit in individual lives to the extent that the Spirit's corporate work in the Church and ecclesial practices is completely overlooked. Indeed, Booth's account has nothing to say about the Spirit's corporate work in the whole people of God, and leaves one with no tools for resolving potential conflicts between individuals and Church authorities in regards to the discernment of the Spirit. Hecker, on the other hand, desires to affirm *both* the "internal" and "external" work of the Spirit. However, in authentically Catholic fashion, Hecker in fact ends up subordinating the personal work of the Spirit to the Spirit's work in the structures of the Church. In conflicts between a believer or group of believers and Church authorities, the authorities are always presumed to be correct.

In relation to the role of the Church in mission, both men had a high view of human agency in bringing about God's purposes for humanity. In Booth's case, however, the Church was largely superfluous, as seen in his movement's lack of ecclesiological grounding and accountability, and his cessation of sacramental observance. Hecker's view, on the other hand, was highly triumphalistic, with the Church serving quite literally as Christ's substitutionary representative, and God's agency identified in a very intimate way with the agency of the Church. This also affected the way each man understood his movement's relationship to the Church.

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aims were but glimmerings of the reality existing in her bosom, and that for ages. It is a happy moment, indeed, when we find that the inmost sentiments of our hearts, the lovely dreams of our youth, the desire of our manhood for self-sacrifice and heroism, are not only understood, but fully appreciated, and all the means to their fulfillment are offered to us in abundance." Hecker, *Questions of the Soul*, 275–276.

[75]Ibid., 276–277.

Booth insisted his movement was not a church, but also ensured that it remained completely autonomous and free of any formal ties to established churches. He did not require Salvationists to be members of a church, even as he claimed they were, corporately and individually, a part of the universal Church. For Hecker, as a Catholic, subordination of the Paulist Fathers to Catholic Church structures was a non-negotiable, to the point that, as noted above, he was willing to sacrifice important aspects of his vision for the community in order to ensure episcopal approval.

I have suggested that these two figures illustrate tendencies in nineteenth-century Catholic and Wesleyan-Holiness theology. Both sides have modified their theological perspectives significantly in the time that has passed since then. Generally speaking, contemporary Wesleyans are much more (small-c) "catholic" than Booth, and contemporary Catholics are more "evangelical" than Hecker in their understanding of the Church. Nevertheless, the examples of Booth and Hecker are worthy of continuing attention, because we may indeed recognize the shadows of these historical tendencies in our contemporary thinking and ecclesial practices. Wesleyans, especially of the Holiness tradition, may still be prone to ecclesiological ambiguity (though not so radical as Booth's), and Catholics are still prone to ecclesial triumphalism (though not so radical as Hecker's). Thus, in spite of their many admirable qualities, Booth and Hecker illustrate some of the potential pitfalls that have manifested themselves in the history of our respective traditions.