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Building Pyramids in the New Millennium

by John Norton

The new millennium is upon us. Yeah, yeah, I know you are tired of Y2K articles. So let me start by saying that this is NOT another Y2K article. I will be the first to admit that others have thoroughly (and I mean thoroughly!) reported on that issue. Nevertheless... a new millennium is here. And don't give me that stuff about the new millennium not really starting until 2001 or that the whole thing is just an arbitrary mark of the passage of endless time. Celebrations are being planned all around the world for December 31 of this year. The point is this: The whole world is excited about the dawning of the new millennium! I believe the millennium craze is part of the human search for meaning. We long to know why we are here, the purpose of life, and whether death is the final end or not.

Last week I was in Egypt where I stood in awe before the Sphinx and great pyramids of Giza. It was noted by my Egyptian guide that on January 1 these granite monuments of human achievement will gaze out upon their sixth millennia. What struck me as most remarkable, beyond the sheer size and magnitude of the pyramids themselves, was that such an ancient civilization was involved in the same search for meaning and purpose in life as people today. They were certainly like us in that they longed to conquer death. The pyramids were their answer to these most human of all questions. The pyramids are the greatest of all burial chambers. These pharaohs spent most of their entire lives constructing these pyramids to ensure their place in the next life. A great many hundreds, and now even thousands of years, have passed since humankind began its quest for knowledge of life after death.

The Bible of course presents a view of the afterlife unknown to the ancient Egyptians. The pyramids were probably built a full thousand years before God revealed himself to Moses. At Sinai God called out the Hebrew people and through one of them, Jesus Christ, made a way for all to have eternal life. Life then in Jesus Christ has meaning and through him we find death conquered. The great quest of humanity is answered, definitively and decisively.

It appears then that the real problem is not in finding the answer to life but in getting people to believe in it! The Bible says that believers of Christ are to go out and make disciples of Jesus everywhere. We need to tell and show people the meaning of life.

Correct me if I am wrong here but it seems to me that evangelism (telling and showing people the meaning of life, which is a relationship with Jesus Christ) is the mission of every believer's life.

As Christians then everything must submit to that purpose - our family, our Salvation Army, our work, our personal lives. If this is true, why are so many

Christian families inward focused? Why are so many programs of the Salvation Army measured by their ability to look good in the eyes of the donating masses? Why do so many Christians spend so much of their productive work years in the pursuit of wealth? Why do we spend so much of our personal time in the pursuit of pleasure? We Christians are a sinful and wicked people. May God forgive us and help us to repent.

The two questions then for the next millennium are this:

1. Will non-Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life?

2. Will Christians be holy? (and thus evangelists)

My great fear is that until we can say yes to the latter question we will never be able to say yes to the former. Holiness (God empowered Christ-likeness) will make us better evangelists because as a side-effect we will become singular in our purpose.

The early Salvation Army knew of the need for holiness in the making of effective evangelists. "Every Officer should personally seek and save sinners..." was coupled with the order that every "Officer should be holy" (Orders and Regulations for Officers, 1925).

Just as the pyramids were built by a people long ago who did not know better, today great monuments are being built by those who dedicate themselves to wrong things. The pyramids in Egypt have no power or influence on eternity. And neither do the modern pyramids of Fame, Power, Pleasure, Fortune, and Humanity. Unfortunately it is not just the non-believers involved in such human endeavours.

In this next millennium let us quit trying to build our own meaning in life. Are we holy enough to have one singular purpose?

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Who Cares?

Some people care. You'll see them in the strangest places, struggling to rescue the drowning victims. They're in the coffee shops and malls. They're in factories and gyms. They're in pubs and clubs. And they're straining and striving, selling out without concern for their health, wealth or reputation.

On the surface, they're a lot like you and me. Beyond that, they're fairly easy to distinguish. They've got bright, intent eyes. There is purpose in their stride and fire in their heart. They could care less what people think of them. They'd rather be people of great ends than of great means. They'd rather be well known in heaven than to be well known on earth. They're not as interested in making history as they are in making eternity.

Their lives are both a rebuke and a challenge to us. They are extreme while we remain moderate. They are fanatical while we are conservative. They are driven while we coast. They are heroes and we are spectators. What a rebuke!

And yet, what a challenge! For the most part they are no more intelligent, no better looking, no better educated or trained, no more adept, no more blessed with skills or opportunity or advantage.

All of these factors shout out to us this essential revelation: We can do this too! We can successfully put the boots to the enemy! We can rescue eternal souls from the gaping jaws of hell! We can live out the holy life of Kingdom of God Christianity! How?

"We must do more praying. I can see easily how, in the rush of all this mighty sweeping work we can be taken off from God. The great problem we have to solve is to keep equally a hold of God and (people), trusting Jehovah, and yet using every human method that is possible to be devised" (William Booth). In other words, keep our eyes on Jesus, hold on tight to Abba, and fight like maniacs, doing whatever it takes to achieve results.

Or, as Paul put it,

I didn't take on their way of life. I kept my bearings on Christ. I entered their world and tried to experience things from their point of view. I've become just about every sort of servant there is in my attempts to lead those I meet into a God-saved life. I do all this because of the Message. I didn't just want to talk about it. I wanted to be in on it (1 Cor. 9:21-23, The Message).

"I am determined to be more faithful- more personal than I have been. To this end I must have more of the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit. It is God the world wants... The Salvation Army will only be a blessing as it carries God to the heart of (people). That's our business. To baptise with Fire" (William Booth). Here is the acknowledged need to be more faithful, more personal with Jesus and with people who don't know Jesus yet, and a desire for Holy Spirit power and wisdom (both gift and anointing) so that the baptism of Fire can be transferred. General Booth wants more of the anointing (2 Cor. 1:21) to accelerate the fulfillment of Jesus' world winning prophesy (Acts 1:8).

"No (one) could do the works that are being done in your midst except God was with them. All glory to Jesus. He is enabling you to give proof of your heavenly calling. But how much more might be done had you all received this pentecostal baptism in all its fullness? If every soul was inflamed, and every lip touched, and every mind illuminated, and every heart purified by a hallowed flame" (William Booth). Here there is not only a proclamation of the Gospel but also a demonstration of the Gospel all in the power of the Spirit. The description is almost like Chadwick's translation of Judges 6:34, The Holy Spirit clothed Himself with Gideon. Souls, lips, minds, and hearts all ignited by the supernatural flame of the Holy Spirit can actually do much more.

Let's pull this discussion out of theory and rhetoric to wrap it up. As one of General Booth's acquaintances, Sir Winston Churchill, used to ask his generals, 'What have you done to help win the war today?'

S.C

Who Cares?

William Booth

On one of my recent journeys, as I gazed from the coach window, I was led into a train of thought concerning the condition of the multitudes around me. They were living carelessly in the most open and shameless rebellion against God, without a thought for their eternal welfare. As I looked out of the window, I seemed to see them all . . . millions of people all around me given up to their drink and their pleasure, their dancing and their music, their business and their anxieties, their politics and their troubles. Ignorant - willfully ignorant in many cases - and in other instances knowing all about the truth and not caring at all. But all of them, the whole mass of them, sweeping on and up in their blasphemies and devilries to the Throne of God. While my mind was thus engaged, I had a vision.

I saw a dark and stormy ocean. Over it the black clouds hung heavily; through them every now and then vivid lightening flashed and loud thunder rolled, while the winds moaned, and the waves rose and foamed, towered and broke, only to rise and foam, tower and break again.

In that ocean I thought I saw myriads of poor human beings plunging and floating, shouting and shrieking, cursing and struggling and drowning; and as they cursed and screamed they rose and shrieked again, and then somesank to rise no more.

And I saw out of this dark angry ocean, a mighty rock that rose up with it's summit towering high above the black clouds that overhung the stormy sea. And all around the base of this great rock I saw a vast platform. Onto this platform, I saw with delight a number of the poor struggling, drowning wretches continually climbing out of the angry ocean. And I saw that a few of those who were already safe on the platform were helping the poor creatures still in the angry waters to reach the place of safety.

On looking more closely I found a number of those who had been rescued, industriously working and scheming by ladders, ropes, boats and other means more effective, to deliver the poor strugglers out of the sea. Here and there were some who actually jumped into the water, regardless of the consequences in their passion to "rescue the perishing." And I hardly know which gladdened me the most - the sight of the poor drowning people climbing onto the rocks reaching a place of safety, or the devotion and self-sacrifice of those whose whole being was wrapped up in the effort for their deliverance.

As I looked on, I saw that the occupants of that platform were quite a mixed company. That is, they were divided into different "sets" or classes, and they

occupied themselves with different pleasures and employments. But only a very few of them seemed to make it their business to get the people out of the sea.

But what puzzled me most was the fact that though all of them had been rescued at one time or another from the ocean, nearly everyone seemed to have forgotten all about it. Anyway, it seemed the memory of its darkness and danger no longer troubled them at all. And what seemed equally strange and perplexing to me was that these people did not even seem to have any care - that is any agonizing care- about the poor perishing ones who were struggling and drowning right before their very eyes . . . many of whom were their own husbands and wives, brothers and sisters and even their own children.

Now this astonishing unconcern could not have been the result of ignorance or lack of knowledge, because they lived right there in full sight of it all and even talked about it sometimes. Many even went regularly to hear lectures and sermons in which the awful state of these poor drowning creatures was described.

I have always said that the occupants of this platform were engaged in different pursuits and pastimes. Some of them were absorbed day and night in trading and business in order to make gain, storing up their savings in boxes, safes and the like.

Many spent their time in amusing themselves with growing flowers on the side of the rock, others in painting pieces of cloth or in playing music, or in dressing themselves up in different styles and walking about to be admired. Some occupied themselves chiefly in eating and drinking, others were taken up with arguing about the poor drowning creatures that had already been rescued.

But the thing to me that seemed the most amazing was that those on the platform to whom He called, who heard His voice and felt that they ought to obey it - at least they said they did - those who confessed to love Him much were in full sympathy with Him in the task He had undertaken - who worshipped Him or who professed to do so - were so taken up with their trades and professions, their money saving and pleasures, their families and circles, their religions and arguments about it, and their preparation for going to the mainland, that they did not listen to the cry that came to them from this Wonderful Being who had Himself gone down into the sea. Anyway, if they heard it they did not heed it. They did not care. And so the multitude went on right before them struggling and shrieking and drowning in the darkness.

And then I saw something that seemed to me even more strange than anything that had gone on before in this strange vision. I saw that some of these people on the platform whom this Wonderful Being had called to, wanting them to come and help Him in His difficult task of saving these perishing creatures, were always praying and crying out to Him to come to them!

Some wanted Him to come and stay with them, and spend His time and strength in making them happier. Others wanted Him to come and take away various doubts and misgivings they had concerning the truth of some letters He had written them. Some wanted Him to come and make them feel more secure on the rock - so secure that they would be quite sure that they should never slip off again into the ocean. Numbers of others wanted Him to make them feel quite

certain that they would really get off the rock and onto the mainland someday: because as a matter of fact, it was well known that some had walked so carelessly as to lose their footing, and had fallen back again into the stormy waters.

So these people used to meet and get up as high on the rock as they could, and looking towards the mainland (where they thought the Great Being was) they would cry out, "Come to us! Come and help us!" And all the while He was down (by His Spirit) among the poor struggling, drowning creatures in the angry deep, with His arms around them trying to drag them out, and looking up - oh! so longingly but all in vain - to those on the rock, crying to them with His voice all hoarse from calling, "Come to Me! Come, and help Me!"

And then I understood it all. It was plain enough. The sea was the ocean of life - the sea of real, actual human existence. That lightning was the gleaming of piercing truth coming from Jehovah's Throne. That thunder was the distant echoing of the wrath of God. Those multitudes of people shrieking, struggling and agonizing in the stormy sea, was the thousands and thousands of poor harlots and harlot-makers, of drunkards and drunkard makers, of thieves, liars, blasphemers and ungodly people of every kindred, tongue and nation.

Oh what a black sea it was! And oh, what multitudes of rich and poor, ignorant and educated were there. They were all so unlike in their outward circumstances and conditions, yet all alike in one thing- all sinners before God - all held by, and holding onto, some iniquity, fascinated by some idol, the slaves of some devilish lust, and ruled by the foul fiend from the bottomless pit!

"All alike in one thing?" No, all alike in two things - not only the same in their wickedness but, unless rescued, the same in their sinking, sinking . . . down, down, down . . . to the same terrible doom. That great sheltering rock represented Calvary, the place where Jesus had died for them. And the people on it were those who had been rescued. The way they used their energies, gifts and time represented the occupations and amusements of those who professed to be saved from sin and hell - followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. The handful of fierce, determined ones, who were risking their own lives in saving the perishing were true soldiers of the cross of Jesus. That Mighty Being who was calling to them from the midst of the angry waters was the Son of God, "the same yesterday, today and forever" who is still struggling and interceding to save the dying multitudes about us from this terrible doom of damnation, and whose voice can be heard above the music, machinery, and noise of life, calling on the rescued to come and help Him save the world.

My friends in Christ, you are rescued from the waters, you are on the rock, He is in the dark sea calling on you to come to Him and help Him. Will you go? Look for yourselves. The surging sea of life, crowded with perishing multitudes rolls up to the very spot on which you stand. Leaving the vision, I now come to speak of the fact - a fact that is as real as the Bible, as real as the Christ who hung upon the cross, as real as the judgment day will be, and as real as the heaven and hell that will follow it.

Look! Don't be deceived by appearances - men and things are not what they seem. All who are not on the rock are in the sea! Look at them from the

standpoint of the great White Throne, and what a sight you have! Jesus Christ, the Son of God is, through His Spirit, in the midst of this dying multitude, struggling to save them. And He is calling on you to jump into the sea - to go right away to His side and help Him in the holy strife. Will you jump? That is, will you go to His feet and place yourself absolutely at His disposal?

A young Christian once came to me, and told me that for some time she had been giving the Lord her profession and prayers and money, but now she wanted to give Him her life. She wanted to go right into the fight. In other words, she wanted to go to His assistance in the sea. As when a man from the shore, seeing another struggling in the water, takes off those outer garments that would hinder his efforts and leaps to the rescue, so will you who still linger on the bank, thinking and singing and praying about the poor perishing souls, lay aside your shame, your pride, your cares about other people's opinions, your love of ease and all the selfish loves that have kept you back for so long, and rush to the rescue of this multitude of dying men and women.

Does the surging sea look dark and dangerous? Unquestionably it is so. There is no doubt that the leap for you, as for everyone who takes it, means difficulty and scorn and suffering. For you it may mean more than this. It may mean death. He who beckons you from the sea however, knows what it will mean - and knowing, He still calls to you and bids to you to come.

You must do it! You cannot hold back. You have enjoyed yourself in Christianity long enough. You have had pleasant feelings, pleasant songs, pleasant meetings, pleasant prospects. There has been much of human happiness, much clapping of hands and shouting of praises - very much of heaven on earth.

Now then, go to God and tell Him you are prepared as much as necessary to turn your back upon it all, and that you are willing to spend the rest of your days struggling in the midst of these perishing multitudes, whatever it may cost you.

You must do it. With the light that is now broken in upon your mind and the call that is now sounding in your ears, and the beckoning hands that are now before your eyes, you have no alternative. To go down among the perishing crowds is your duty. Your happiness from now on will consist in sharing their misery, your ease in sharing their pain, your crown in helping them to bear their cross, and your heaven in going into the very jaws of hell to rescue them.

Now what will you do?

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Cross-Cultural Mission

Geoff Ryan

"Man is an animal suspended in webs of significance that he himself has spun. I take culture to be those webs and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning." (Clifford Geertz)

"Own only what you can always carry with you: know languages, know countries, know people. Let your memory be your travel bag." (Alexander Solzhenitsyn)

"In Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, I once met an 87-year-old man. He told me that he had lived his entire life in the same place, yet at the same time he had lived in seven different countries." (Javier Solana, Secretary General of NATO in TIME magazine, 1998)

The problem with "conventional wisdom" is that it is usually more parts convention than wisdom. As evangelicals, we are particularly given to accepting conventional wisdom. An idea is birthed, a fresh term coined, a new paradigm offered up on the bookstands and the speaking circuit and we, in our ceaseless quest for formulas, accept as truth the conventional wisdom rarely challenging it thereafter or subjecting it to critical assessment.

One negative result is that we often can become captives of definitions that we ourselves have put in place and rarely even consider the need to step outside the boundaries of those categories we believe to be true and fixed. We become prisoners of paradigms created by ourselves and accepted from others.

Hence my challenge of the evangelical paradigm of "cross-cultural missions" - a term (and an understanding) that essentially defines cross-cultural as the crossing of one, at the most two, boundaries. Those of culture and/or language. Certainly these are valid boundaries but I contend that they are not as definitive as we think - there are others that are rarely, if ever, considered. We allow these to remain intact in our lives as untouched and uncrossed as distant frontier posts. I think we need to "push the envelope" a bit.

Let me posit the thought that the normal Christian life is one of constant and continuous cross-cultural tension in which the Christian - the serious, mission-minded believer - is seeking not only to cross boundaries wherever he may find them, but who does his utmost to reject any boundaries and in the course of so doing, lives the majority of his life outside of his "culture", like a soldier behind enemy lines.

As Salvationists we undertake a similar journey in our theological understanding of the sacraments, as an example: *"... the philosophical framework of the Salvationist interpretation is a sacramental worldview...they take so seriously the*

idea that ours is a sacramental universe...they cannot limit the notion to a particular ceremony..." (Beacon Dictionary of Theology). I am likewise broadening the definition of cross-cultural to an all-encompassing worldview that assumes a centrality in our thinking of mission, rather than one periphery aspect of mission as it is generally now defined. In this understanding virtually every encounter, every day, becomes an opportunity for "cross-cultural" engagement and becomes a choice for the missionary to either stay within, or to step out of, preconfigured boundaries.

The normal (ideal) Christian life is one of pilgrimage and of a light hold on the world and its treasures and values. We are to live in a holy tension with all that surrounds us, never leaving yet never cleaving (John 17:15-18). Eternal strangers, yet everywhere at home, citizens of a different reality with only the Lord and his Kingdom claiming our ultimate allegiance and loyalty. Like spies we should be able to move easily and smoothly in and out of the cultural pools, provincial prejudices and comfort zones erected by the nations and the tribes, including our own.

Indeed our hymnology and is rife with such understanding. Historical precedent abounds. *"Every land is my Fatherland - because every land in my Father's"*, claimed Bramwell Booth. The mission strategy at the outset of the Army's war was distinctly incarnational as illustrates the following circular memo sent out in the summer of 1882, prior to the Army's advance in India:

"Remember that you are likely to be absolutely alone - it may be for months together...in the villages the men must expect to have no furniture at all, except some mats, and must learn to sit on the ground like a tailor...you will have to learn to cook just as Indians do and to wash your clothes at the stream with them...You must make up your mind to leave entirely forever and behind you all your English ideas and habits..." (The General Next to God, Richard Collier)

Booth's parting words to Booth-Tucker as he left London to head the team were: *"Get into their skins, Tucker!"* As so he did.

"It came home to Tucker that The Army's greatest problem was the rigid stratification of caste - and the souls he sought were those of India's sixty million outcastes."

"Tucker now took an epoch-making decision: to win these people, his soldiers, now reinforced from England, must embrace the life the outcastes lived. He pared his party's subsistence allowance down to 3s. 6d. a week. English boots were out-of-place; from now on they went barefoot, like mendicant friars. Only later, after some had contracted sunstroke through the soles of the feet, did Tucker relent and allow weaker spirits to don sandals. Their clothing was the Indian fakir's saffron robes of renunciation.

Along with English clothing, the sloughed off English names. William Stevens, a former jeweller from Worthing, Sussex, who paid for his training by melting and selling the gold in shop aptly became Yesu Ratnam (Jewel of Jesus). Clara Case, a wealthy farmer's daughter, was now Nurani (Shining Light); Tucker himself was Fakir Singh, the Lion of God. Others took names translating as Messenger of Truth and Lion of Comfort.

For Tucker's force, soon to total 479 officers, no sacrifice was too great if it meant winning souls. To reach the Tamils of Southern India, the men shaved their heads Tamil-fashion, leaving only a round patch of hair coiled in a queue, at the crown and back of the head. Their foreheads bore a patented Salvation Army castemark - red, yellow and blue. To win the Bheels, a stocky diminutive warrior tribe in the jungles of Bombay Presidency, Ensign Carl Winge, the Swede assigned to them, adopted the tribal bow and arrow and brass earrings. For women officers the brass anklets of Bheel wives became regulation. And the Bheels, who had no elaborate religion like the Hindus, proved worth the winning: four hundred of them enrolled under Booth's banner. In time Winge brought them to love God as an embodiment of perfection, to look on prayer as a communion with all that was ultimate, beautiful and everlasting.

As true Salvationists, Tucker's troops took pride in Indianisation. They cleaned their teeth with charcoal, like all peasants did, washing from a brass bowl; their simple meals of curry and water were eaten cross-legged on the floor. They came to budget like misers: language lessons were given in the sand to avoid wasting paper. "Hallelujah!" one new arrival exulted in a letter home, "I haven't been in a bed since coming here but sleep on the ground ... my feet are swollen and ulcerated with the first week's work and visiting ... but to see the happy faces of the converts makes up for everything."

So warmly did they welcome this nomad hardness that one group of officers, offered money, refused it point-blank. They still had a spare rupee whose use defeated them until they decided to save it for stamps."

Apparently to our forebears, any border was transient, and any frontier crossable, any boundary breakable. We have become cautious with age, however. The radicality of The Salvation Army's understanding of "cross-cultural" was explosively revolutionary in the culture of Victorian England and the British Empire. Booth-Tucker and his team met opposition not so much from the Indians as from the British ruling establishment. But, they had the blessing and full support of the Army's leaders. Is there any THQ in the world today that would countenance such an approach, regardless of the cost?

Commissioner George Scott Railton penned the following words in song 362 in the Salvation Army Songbook:

*No home on earth have I,
No nation owns my soul,
My dwelling place is the Most High,
I'm under his control.
O'er all the earth alike,
My Father's grand domain,
Each land and sea with him alike
O'er all he yet shall reign.
No place on earth I own,
No field, no house be mine;
Myself, my all I still disown,
My God, let all be thine.*

*Into they gracious hands
My life is ever placed;
To die fulfilling they commands,
I march with bounding haste.
With thee, my God, is home;
With thee is endless joy;
With thee in ceaseless rest I roam;
With thee, can death destroy?
With thee, the east, the west,
The north, the south are one;
The battle's front I love the best,
And yet; they will be done.*

We may applaud the sentiments of Railton, but conventional wisdom tells us that it is impractical and unnecessary. Should not the man and woman of God avoid all extremes, as the Scriptures counsel? Surely Railton is expressing an extreme! Or could it actually be the norm, the ideal?

No. Not for most of us. We pledge allegiance to certain flags and will not let go, each time undermining in various degrees our ability to be truly cross-cultural. If our first allegiance is to the Kingdom of God and all other allegiances - ranging from that of the nuclear family unit to that our national orientation - are to be subject to this, this means that for the sake of the lost, we "unhinder" ourselves of all that would slow us down, blunt our edge, dull our senses and render us ineffective.

As Paul points out: *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles..."*: (Hebrews 12:1). If I can posit our Salvationist forebears as such witnesses, how do we fare in the light of their scrutiny? William Booth' maxim was: *"Will the adoption of this idea or the abandonment of that method, help or hinder the salvation war."* Can we claim such clarity of focus and commitment to mission?

In the book Community in Mission, Phil Needham highlights this vital, yet oft-neglected side, of the Christian identity:

"Pilgrims are literally people who journey, often in foreign lands. The image of the Church as a band of pilgrims embodies three key aspects of the Church's life in the world. First, it defines the Church as a people on the move. Second, it articulates the tentativeness of the Church's relationship to the social structures and behavioural patterns of contemporary society. And third, it suggests a Church which is moving towards the future..."(Chapter Three, "Called to a Journey: The Pilgrim People")

Are we tentative in our relationships to social structures and behavioural patterns of society and culture? Are we "unhindered" for mission? It is not something to comes to us naturally, but like an spiritual discipline, needs to be worked at, practiced and crafted. If we are committed to mission then we will learn to "unhinder".

I would like to briefly identify three boundaries that hinder us and that need to be considered and dealt with for the sake of effective mission.

1) Patriotism (Culture). Patriotism is the acceptable face of nationalism and yet, the concept of patriotism, (*"patriot: a person who vigorously supports his country and its way of life"*, Collins Concise Dictionary) finds no Scriptural justification. Of course it is not a bad thing in most cases, for the average person. But for the missionary it is one of the main hindrances to living truly "cross-culturally".

Once any culture, country, language group, form of government becomes the standard by which we evaluate and judge others, that is when we start to lose Kingdom perspective. Allegiance to Christ and citizenship in the Kingdom of God should be the only point of reference for such evaluations (Colossians 3:11). The mission the only defining factor. The more we become "culture-bound" and hindered with patriotism, the less easily we can move amongst the "tribes and nations".

"As we become more self-centred and more individualistic we enter into other cultures with greater difficulty...what is called for from us is a self-denials that is completely against the grain of our culture." (Paul Dekar)

How many of would willingly heed the instructions of that memo of 1882 regarding the mission strategy for India: *"You must make up your mind to leave entirely forever behind you all your English ideas and habits..."?*

2) Materialism. The fact is that most of us in the West simply do not want to give up our toys. We develop a theology wherein "wants" subtly become "needs", "luxuries" become "ministry tools" and "comforts" are in reality "God's blessings" and thereby de facto approval of our mission. Thus hindered, we stagger across boundaries, barely able to lift our legs over the barriers, overweight and dressed all wrong. Rather than jettisoning such trinkets prior to mission, we justify retaining such by attempting to bring these dubious blessings to the people to who we wish to engage in mission. Whether they need them whether they want them, whether they will "help or hinder", we do not ask. We will not give them up so we accommodate our strategy to include them.

3) Religion (Traditionalism). More often than we are probably aware, and more often than we like to admit, it is our religion that creates one of the biggest barriers to mission and to crossing boundaries. The prophets were killed over religion. All of Jesus' disputes with the Pharisees and Sadducees were over religious picayune. Take any bad example from the history of the church starting with the Crusades or the Spanish Inquisition right to your own home corps and the wearisome bickering over brass banding and traditional hymns as opposed to worship bands and praise choruses. The problem is the same - religion as traditionalism.

Cross-culturally it seems to be the rule to mix our religion (our "extra-biblical codexs of salvation" as someone aptly termed it) and our faith and offer the rather confusing result as the truth, the gospel - we confuse people. And we are willing to fight for our religion and defend it biblically if necessary. Booth was willing to tinker with his religion to get at the sinners. We have allowed our rich traditions to fossilize into traditionalism, and mission effectiveness is always the first to suffer in such circumstances.

This is a big issue and I would suggest anyone missionary who wants to get a handle on it to read Christianity Rediscovered by Vincent J. Donovan (see reading list). Can we deconstructive our religion and forgo our traditions enough to allow the Gospel message to blaze brightly and in power?

So what is to be done? Firstly, we need to deconstruct the "cross-cultural" paradigm and realize that that minute one seriously commits to be becoming a follower of Christ and decides to engage in mission, one automatically makes a decision to become a cultural orphan. We are adopted by God as his children but we abandon our "parent" culture. This is more of a process than a crises and only as we mature and are able to keep our mission focus true and firm do we develop the ability to identify and discern barriers to mission that we need to removed. We must resist the urge to settle down and stake a claim in a particular place or people. This is very hard and everything within us fights against it - few of us are naturally pilgrims, we all long for a home, for a sense of security and the familiar. It is something learned, something fought and sacrificed for. The cost is tremendous.

Picture if you can, a man bound by hundreds of barely visibly strings, wrapped tightly around his body, pinning his arms to his sides and his feet together. Many of these he does not he notice and many he sees but does not recognize. As each of these strings is broken, greater freedom of movement is allowed - the maximum freedom and mobility occurs when all the strings have been broken.

Thus it is with the confines of culture that we inherit and assume as part of the trappings of growing up where we grew up and with whom we grew up. Many we willing wrap around ourselves, (materialism) many we are taught are good and necessary (patriotism), some we are instructed in even by the church (religion, tradition), some result from societal sins (racism, sexism).

Behavioural norms, cultural mores, respectability, acceptability - barriers exist in various forms both inside the community of believers and outside in the world at large. Sociologists claim that such define and hold together society and in many ways they do. Ultimately, however, they stem from sin and are evidence of the separation and alienation of man from God and subsequently man from man. As such, they need to be viewed from a Kingdom perspective that acknowledges them as realities but treats them as more hindrance than help with regard to mission.

As always, true freedom is much too terrifying a concept for most people and for any institution so we buy into existing boundaries and even create our own. The alternative is to throw off the traces and step out into uncharted territory, it is to risk and maybe lose. Forsaking country and culture, comforts and our religious identities if necessary, to run unhindered with the Spirit. No safety net, no guarantees but that God is smiling on us and that, for most of us, is a bad bargain.

So we set the boundaries of what we are willing to do, where we are willing to go and how far. We predestine our mission effectiveness and live content within such limitations. But what if they are false - paper tigers of our own creation? Our worse - the devils, in order to render is ineffectual in the war, in order to hinder us?

How far are you willing to go for the sake of the mission, for the sake of the lost?
"Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some." (1 Corinthians 9:19-23)

This is Paul at his most radical, though I fear that familiarity with the text has dulled its edge for most of us. This is the definitive statement in "cross-cultural" mission. This is Paul the pragmatist, the realist - hot-tempered and impatient - yet a brilliant tactician, as he rages against the petty confines of safe faith and measured, risk-free mission. This is Paul saying that he will venture into bandit-infested hinterlands, brave raging seas, suffer the wrath of religious fanatics, the might of the Roman Empire, the prejudice of the Greek intellectual community. He will go anywhere, do anything, be anyone and lose his life if necessary (and it was) to cross any barrier - geographical, cultural, social, religious for the sake of the mission, for the sake of the lost.

So what is the call? For stateless, rootless, internationalists, owing no particular allegiance to any one country or culture? Willing to give up all, from family to material comforts to life itself for the cause? For God-fearing nomads, gypsy missionaries, spies and secret agents who can cross frontiers in the dark of night, change identities at the drop of a hat, sleep in a palace and a pig-sty and converse with both king and commoner? Is that what we are talking about?

Is it achievable? Is it desirable? Is it necessary?

It is the gospel, I am afraid. The doctrine of the incarnation is God's cornerstone for the whole salvation story and on this hinged the redemption of the nations in Jesus. It hinges on this today as we, following the example laid down for us by Christ, seek to incarnate this same gospel that recognizes neither *"Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, male nor female"* (Colossians 3:11 and Galatians 3:26). As we embody this message, as we incarnate it in our world it is only to the degree that we are successful in doing so that the kingdom will come.

"Of the 360 million people in the European Union alone, nearly a quarter are between 15 and 29 years old. Despite popular notions of "union", they have little sense of shared identity. They are living within the context of no context. The fragmented politics - of gender, race, religion and sexual preference - that characterize the waning years of the 20th century serve only to splinter the youth further..." ("The New Youth" by Elizabeth Gleick, Time Magazine, 1998)

"La generation salle d'attente" - the waiting room generation. Waiting for what? Waiting for whom? In the midst of such a splintering of identities and loyalties, in a world literally torn apart by nationalism and religio-ethnic conflicts and where it seems that the horrors of the twentieth-century are but a practice run for what awaits us in the millenium. - what brings reconciliation? In a world where the map is not only being redrawn but quickly discarded as countries as entities lose their

prominence and the coming generation will more naturally turn on MTV than stand for their national anthem - who will have credibility?

The *what* remains the same - the gospel good news.

The *who* is the question.

"When we have really understood the actual plight of our contemporaries, when we have heard their cry of anguish and when we have understood why they won't have anything to do with our disembodied Gospel, when we have shared their sufferings, both physical and spiritual, in their despair and their desolation, when we have become one with the people of all nations and of the universal church, as Moses and Jeremiah were one with their own people, as Jesus identified himself with the wandering crowds, "sheep without a shepherd," then we will be able to proclaim the word of God - but not until then!" (Jacques Ellul)

Suggested reading list:

Wild Hope, Tom Sine, Monarch Publications Limited, 1991.

A Wake-up Call to the challenges and opportunities of the 21st Century. Dr. Sine is a Christian and a consultant in futures research for both Christian and secular organizations

Rediscovering Christianity, Vincent J. Donovan, Orbis Books, 1978.

Father Donovan is a Catholic priest who wrote this book after 17 years of mission work in Tanzania. A fascinating account of the true meaning of missionary work and what the gospel truly is when stripped of its cultural accretions from the West.

Community in Mission, Phil Needham, SA IHQ, 1987.

The only Salvationist ecclesiology ever written - as far as I am aware. This book paints a picture of the ideal Salvation Army as a missionary Church. Every salvationist should read it annually.

Seven Pillars of Wisdom, T.E. Lawrence, Penguin Books, 1926.

T.E. Lawrence (better known as Lawrence of Arabia) was not a Christian. Yet this classic military chronicle of the desert war in Arabia during World War I serves as the best manual for cross-cultural adaptation ever written.

Captain Richard Francis Burton, Edward Rice, HarperCollins, 1991.

One of the most fascinating figures of Victorian England, Burton was not a Christian and lived a life in many ways contrary to the Gospel. His ability to live cross-culturally was legendary however, and sets a standard that has likely never been matched - in or out of the church.

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Lieutenant Robert Marshall is, with his wife, Donna, the Corps Officer of the growing Compton Corps in southern California. He is a powerful preacher, who has been heard internationally, in person and via armybarmy.com.

S.C

A Call For Sobriety: an essay on Amos 4

Robert Marshall

As I reflect on the message of Amos chapter 4, three statements made by my wise grandmother, (Big Mama) ring with truth in my ears. She often said that, *"Fat meat is sho'nuf greasy," "you can always come home,"* and *"never git too big for your britches."*

The message Amos puts forth is this: God is faithful to His covenant and to His holy law, and Israel is strictly accountable to a practical observance of their covenant obligations. Whether God is to bless or judge Israel, solely depends on Israel's obedience or disobedience to the commands, laws, and statutes given by God.

"Fat meat is sho'nuf greasy."

When big mama made this statement, we understood her to mean that, unfortunately, some people will only accept the truth by experiencing its harsh reality. Moreover, this definition aptly characterises the attitude of the children of Israel, based on Amos 4. Under King Jeroboam II, God demonstrated His faithfulness to Israel. He showered them with the blessings He promised in the covenant. (Lev 26: 3-11)

Moreover, Israel had re-established the northern kingdom and was very successful in war. Hence, Israel accumulated mounds of wealth. Notwithstanding, this new wealth created a problem. Israel became comfortable in its ease. As a result, they also became lax in their worship and devotion to God. As driver points out in Vs 5, Israel participated in "The ritual calf worship at both Bethel and Gilgal." (3:15) This was a practice expressly forbidden by the Levitical covenant with God. (Lev 26:1) Yet, Israel failed to understand that "Fat meat is sho'nuf greasy." Like one caught in an addiction, and who are in denial of that addiction, Israel continued in their ungodly wickedness. Moreover, because Israel had been intoxicated by the benefits of the covenant, they attempted to manipulate God by reminding Him that they were His chosen people. (3:1-2)

How could God possibly judge Israel, right? The women in Israel influenced the men to sin, Vs 1, and they were oppressing and afflicting the poor Vs 1. However, when Israel was summonsed to court by the prophet of God; (4:1-3) A

chilling judgement was dealt against Israel. God had clearly made a statement to His people: "Chosen", doesn't mean exempt from the consequences for sin. Thus, God demonstrated his faithfulness to His covenant by enforcing the statutes of the covenant, which Israel had broken. Israel's sentence was a violent exile, in which there would be no escape. God swore to this fact by his holiness. Vs. 2, and so it was, Israel learned that "fat meat is sho'nuf greasy."

"You can always come home."

Could God's judgement against Israel have been avoided? One certainly can learn from Amos 4, that anything short of obedience to God, amounts to no less than a relapse into one's sinful ways of the past. However, one thing Amos makes abundantly clear, is that God is willing to give His people the opportunity to repent. Five times in the chapter, Israel is given the open invitation for repentance. Vs 6,8,9,10, and 11. Yet, five times the same result is recorded. "Yet you did not return to me. Big Mama settled in our minds that "you can always come home."

A far gone conclusion that she intended for us to know was that, once you realize your error and come to your senses you will remember just how good you've had it. I am convinced that's Israel's problem and therefore, lack of repentance is two fold.

a) Israel failed to realize that their sin was the pride of power. According to W.R. Harper:

"The effect of degenerating influence upon Hebrew society began to be felt in the corruption of justice, in wilful and luxurious living of the upper class, and in the general decay of social unity. The rich manifested no sense of responsibility toward the poor; and instead of relieving their economic distress, they seemed bent on depriving them of all of their property." (147)

This, coupled with a brand of worship which had nothing in common with Israel's tradition, signalled that Israel was lost in their apostasy. They, in fact had taken leave of their senses; but the people of Israel didn't realize this to be true. They thought they were still doing everything required of them in worship to God but in reality they worshipped (idols). Moreover, in their mind, they were going beyond what God required of them. After all, they gave sacrifices of thanks and free will offerings which were not required! Vs. 4-5. "Israel's worship was superficial and perfunctory" according to (Dillard 382). Unwilling to realize their sins and repent, Israel could not return home or be obedient to the covenant. As a result, (Lev 26 :15-19) illuminates for us that Israel's apostasy was due in part to their pride of power.

The historical background reveals a second condition, that made Israel's repentance problematic: the abuse of alcohol. We first notice that this vice was with the women. Vs.1. "Who say to their husbands, bring that we may drink!" Not only did the women have a drinking problem, it was made worse because they sought the opportunity to get drunk. Additional, they had the means to fulfil their sensual desires.

Second, the nation suffered from an addiction to alcohol. We know this to be true, because Israel's worship began to mirror that of the Canaanites. One of the Canaanite festival observances according to W.R. Harper was drunkenness

(146). The sad footnote attached here by Amos in vs. 5, is that this is what Israel loved to do.

The continued state of intoxication made it impossible for Israel to properly respond to God's relentless attempts to help Israel regain their faculties and return to him. This was made clear through the historical recollection by God of Israel's past. (Vs. 6,7,8,9,10,11) God was willing to accept Israel back and then restore them. (Lev. 26: 40-42) This proves that "you can always return home." However, you must realize your error and come to your senses.

"Never git too big for your britches."

Perhaps of all of Big Mama's pearls of wisdom, this one is arguably the most important. For through this saying, she taught us that "No matter how great you think your are or how great you become, there is still someone greater than you." No doubt, Israel had forgotten this truth, for their God was greater than all other gods, and He required their strict fidelity. (Lev. 26:1)

Without question, a sober mind is essential to be able to grasp the truth of God's sovereign authority over all!

When King Jeroboam II skyrocketed to power it was done by God's sovereignty, this enabled the Northern Kingdom to be re-established, Israel to become a military power, and ultimately, it secured Israel's wealth. Therefore, Israel enjoyed the benefits of their covenant with God because God was faithful to keep His covenant. Indeed, God's sovereignty was apparent both in the land and over Israel's enemies. Lev. 26:3-13. However, it was at this point of enjoyed blessings that Israel lost sight of how they got those blessed; and worse, they forgot from whom the blessing came. The indulgences of Chapter 4, drive this point home. (1-5) However, it was the fact that they wilfully refused to return to God 6-11, tells us that their power and greatness in the land, which was bestowed on them through God's authority, had all gone to their heads—this was more intoxicating than their love for alcohol.

Israel began to believe that their protection came from their position in the mountains of Samaria rather than from their position in God. Vs. 1 They trusted in their power to manipulate the legal, social and religious climate of their day vs. 1-5, rather than trusting and obeying God. Certainly, Israel had become too big for their britches! Hence the haughty heart and mind set invoked God ire. This ire is noticed in the chapter's key verse, vs. 12. This verse is also a part of a covenant lawsuit; and Israel would have understood the phrase "I will do this to you" to refer back to the original covenant of Lev. 26; and particularly vs. 16, where God outlines his judgement on Israel.

Israel would be violently taken as prisoners of exile! This was made possible because God gave Israel over to their enemies. (Lev. 26:21-39)

Perhaps the most intriguing element of Amos 4, is found in vs. 13. There, the writer punctuates what Big Mama taught us: "There is still someone greater than you." He does this through the use of metaphors. He uses the mountains, wind, thoughts, morning and darkness along with the high places to say that he, in fact, is sovereign over the earth, the heavens, communication, life and death, and even other gods! He alone is Lord and sovereign over everything!

Conclusion

The message of Amos Chapter 4 must serve as a warning to those of us who enjoy the blessing of God's bounty and affluence. It is through our obedience to a covenant keeping God that He makes possible the blessing in our life. Moreover, God's blessing carries with it the obligation for us to demonstrate mercy to the poor and grace to the oppressed. We must remain on guard to all forms of pride therefore, it is imperative that we all have sober minds in order to benefit from the covenant. We must strive to remember what that Big Mama always said: "fat meat is sho'nuf greasy," "you can always come home," and "never git too big for your britches."

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Doing the Right Thing

Stephen Court

A recent international Salvation Army publication recently sensitively addressed the touchy issue of pastoral care in instances of abortion. In it the writer quotes a lady who looked at her deformed baby whom she had just aborted to include, "I needed to know that I had done the right thing."

Besides our obligation not to allow that kind of statement go unchallenged, we might profitably ask ourselves, as The Salvation Army, on this whole abortion issue, whether or not we have done the right thing.

Our official position in Canada and Bermuda is that, "Termination of a pregnancy may be justified," in some instances, including rape, incest, physical threat to the pregnant woman, expectation of 'fetal anomaly' (my dictionary defines anomaly as deviation from the natural order), or when there is absence of cognitive function.

Have we done the right thing?

FIRST THINGS JOURNAL (March 1999) reports that Peter Singer, an Australian philosopher, was recently appointed to a professorship of Bioethics at Princeton University's Center for Human Values. His main claim is basically, "Some members of our species are persons; some members of our species are not."

He goes farther to offer a suggested list of those humans who are not people. They include the unborn, the newborn, old people with Alzheimer's, the mentally retarded, and the 'defective'. Professor George McKenna, of the City College of New York, argues that Singer has done us a great service in stretching the logical ramifications of the current abortion system. McKenna writes: "If we can kill the ones inside, we can kill the ones outside... With murderous logic, Singer has ripped away all the respectable drapery from the culture of death; he has given us a frontal look at it in all its nakedness, without a fig leaf, the full monty."

If you can kill the unborn, the next step is the newborn. Singer even advises a 28 day trial period during which parents can decide whether or not this baby deserves to live. Let's hope the baby's not colicky! Along this line of argument, all kinds of reasons would be legitimate to kill the baby, from Down syndrome to haemophilia, some examples of 'fetal anomaly'.

But why stop there? If you can cut them off at the front end of life, how about the back end? And from there it's a small step to lethally injecting all sorts of 'people' who don't meet our criteria.

The problem with Singer's position, one which we all instinctively sense, is that he considers human life to have no inherent value. This is contrary to the Christian perspective. And yet The Salvation Army is already beyond his position in that we endorse abortions in any of the situations we can find on our shopping

list of exceptions to the sanctity of human life. This is not only wrong on the abortion issue but it is also wrong in its value of human life; a sad reflection on our perspective of God. We must choose whether we will be obedient to God or compromise for the sake of favour, sentimentalism, or lack of courage.

It seems that The Salvation Army has decided, along with Singer, in the wrong. Shall we admit our sin and repent?

(with notes from THE OFFICER, 1999, and FIRST THINGS, March, 1999)

SA POSITIONAL STATEMENT (Canada and Bermuda Territory)

Abortion

The Salvation Army believes in the sanctity of all human life. It considers each person to be of infinite value, and each life a gift from God to be cherished, nurtured and preserved.

The Salvation Army supports efforts to protect and promote the welfare of the weak and defenceless, including the unborn. It takes seriously the rights and needs of both the fetus and the mother.

The Salvation Army holds to the Christian ideals of chastity before marriage and fidelity within the marriage relationship and encourages everyone to be consistent with these ideals. The Army supports measures necessary to prevent any crisis pregnancy but is opposed to abortion on demand or as a means of birth control.

Termination of a pregnancy may be justified in those rare instances where, in the judgement of competent medical and allied staff, the pregnancy poses a serious threat to the life of the mother or could result in serious physical injury to the mother? and in those instances of proven rape or legally defined incest or where reliable diagnostic procedures determine that a fetal anomaly is present which is incompatible with post natal survival or where there is total or virtual absence of cognitive function.

When an unwanted pregnancy occurs, The Salvation Army counsels that the situation be accepted and that the fetus be carried to term and that supportive help and assistance with the planning be offered.

In situations where our counsel has not been accepted and an abortion has taken place, The Salvation Army will continue to show love and compassion and to offer its services and fellowship to those involved.

A serious commitment to the protection and care of the unborn calls us equally to a commitment to the promotion of societal systems that are conducive to wholeness, a reasonable quality of life and the fullest possible development of the potential of all person of all ages.

The Salvation Army, Canada and Bermuda, 1990

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Major Rudy Hedgren is the Territorial Youth Secretary in the USA Western Territory. He is recognized widely for his ability to inspire and develop youth leadership. The Major was a guest speaker at the "Burning Hearts" youth and mission event held in August 1999 in Russia.

Interview: Rudy Hedgren

J.A.C: Tell us about your background, how you came to know Jesus, and how you came to know The Salvation Army.

Rudy:

I grew up in a home where my Father was Protestant (had attended the Army in his teens) and my Mother who was Catholic. So, at birth I was baptized in the Catholic Church and once I was old enough to go to church, some Sundays I would go with my Father to a Nazarene church and some Sundays I would go to the Catholic church with my Mother. When, I was eleven my Uncle Bob, who attended the Army invited me to go to a Salvation Army Music Camp My Grandfather lived with my family and had taught me how to play a cornet. So, I attend the music camp and at the Sunday morning Worship Service I accepted Christ as my Saviour. When I returned home, I indicated to my Father that I would like to attend the local Salvation Army, so the next Sunday my Father, Grandfather, myself and my three younger brothers attended the local Corps. Within a couple of months my Father and Grandfather re-committed their lives to the Lord and my brothers accepted Christ into their lives for the first time. One year later, my Mother attend a revival meeting with the Cadets at our Corps and she accepted Christ for the first time into her life. Praise the Lord for a faithful Uncle Bob and The Salvation Army Music Camp, where I accepted the Lord into my life and then was a part of bringing my whole family to the Lord.

J.A.C: What is the most significant part of your ministry today?

Rudy:

I feel the most significant part of my ministry as the Territorial Youth & Candidates' Secretary is to win young people to the Lord and then make sure that they are Discipled in the Faith. We continually encourage and train our Divisional Youth & Candidates' Secretaries, Corps Officers and Youth Leaders to Evangelize and Disciple young people to Christ.

J.A.C: What are your dreams for the Salvation Army?

Rudy:

My dreams and desires for The Salvation Army is to stay true to it's mission, which is to win the lost to Jesus Christ, disciple them in the Faith and empower

them to fulfil the Great Commission and to build a relevant and vibrant Army of God.

J.A.C: Who has been most influential in shaping you into who you are today?

Rudy:

The most influential persons in my Christian walk has been my Jr. High Sunday School teacher (who was a ARC Officer and my first Corps Officer, Major John MacLean, who has gone to be with the Lord. My Sunday School teacher taught me the word of God and was a tremendous role model and my Corps Officer was a Godly man who faithfully preached the word and loved his people. These men helped me to see God's plan for my life and challenged me to become all that God wanted me to be.

J.A.C: What is the best sermon or book you have ever heard/read?

Rudy:

The most important book in my life is the Bible and the Sermon on the Mount preached by Jesus in Matthew 5 is the best sermon I have ever heard or read. I strive daily to do as Jesus instructed all Christians to live in this sermon. I constantly ask the question "What would Jesus have me do?"

J.A.C: What is God teaching you these days?

Rudy:

I just finished reading a book my Steve Farrar called "Finishing Strong." I am striving to find the power to go the distance and finish strong by spending quality time in the word and in prayer and getting back to the basics of what God called me to ministry for and that is; "to win the lost to Jesus and disciple them in the Faith."

J.A.C: Who are your heroes?

Rudy:

My greatest hero is Jesus Christ by Saviour and Lord. Then my other heroes have been Daniel (OT), Timothy (NT), Major James MacLean (first CO) and Brigadier John Potts (SS teacher). These Godly men have been my role models, a great inspiration to me and have encourage and challenged me in the Faith.

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Journal of Aggressive Christianity
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Major Chick Yuill is a Divisional Commander in the U.K. Territory and frequently in demand as an author and speaker.

Daniel: Dead Meat or Dead Right

Part 2: Daniel 6

Chick Yuill

The best known story in the OT. Kids love it! Artists have drawn or painted it a thousand times. We can all visualize it. It appeals to the imagination. But we don't always realize how relevant it is to our own situation; The truth is that everyone who tries to serve the Lord will one day be in Daniel's situation - facing lions:

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

1Peter 5: 8,9

And we don't always realize how rich it is in the details.

So let's unpack it.

The danger of public life

It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel.

The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss.

Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

At this the administrators and satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent.

Finally these men said, We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his god.

So the administrators and the satraps went as a group to the king and said, O King, live for ever. The royal administrators, prefects, satraps and advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or man over the next thirty days, except to you, O King, shall be thrown into the lions den.

Daniel 6:1-7

Now when we read this story we think of the danger of the lions. But Daniel spent only one night among lions. He spent a lifetime - from his teens to his eighties - in far greater danger. Daniel is playing with the big boys. And it is dangerous! The worst the lions could do is eat his body. This could destroy his soul

Dishonesty

The satraps accountable to the three administrators 'so that the king might not suffer loss' these guys were on the make.

Advert for cellphone

Golf clubs - I'm out of the office sick

Cell phone - call me at home

The guy with two price lists

Jealousy

Daniel is outstanding in his ability and his application.

And others get jealousy

A terrible disease

Not only in the world

You find it in the church

Treachery

Tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel...

Plotting against each other

It happens:

Groups and cliques

O for men and women who deal straightforwardly

Flattery

O king, live for ever...who prays to any god or man except to you, O king...

Darius, by all accounts, a decent king

But vulnerable to flattery?

Beware it like the plague

We all love it.

Encouragement is good

Flattery is dangerous

It stops us from seeing straight

Clouds our judgement of people and events

Integrity

And in the middle of it all is Daniel. And he is in danger. Not from what they can do to him but that he might become like them. And here is the greatest compliment:

We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God.

Eric Liddell

by Sally Magnusson his biographer

Conspicuous goodness tends to bother our sceptical generation, and I started to search for Eric Liddell a little warily. There was surely a pair of clay feet there to be revealed; a few weaknesses to be exposed; perhaps in such a strong-minded man, a streak of spiritual pride, a holier-than-thou attitude. 'But was he really that

good?' I would ask people. The answer was invariably the same - sometimes apologetic, sometimes pained, sometimes indignant, but always the same: Yes he was.

I thought I had found something when I happened on a disillusioning eyewitness account of the behaviour of some of the missionaries in the Japanese internment camp where Liddell spent the last months of his life. I read of tempers lost and heavy moralizing, of exclusiveness and selfishness. The author scarcely had a good word for anyone, but least of all for Protestant Christians. Then I turned a page and found this:

'It is rare indeed when anyone has the good fortune to meet a saint, but he comes as close to it as anyone I have ever known.'

Of course, he was talking about Eric Liddell.

The discipline of private prayer

Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened towards Jerusalem.

Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.

Daniel 6:10

This is one of the most illuminating, most instructive verses in the Bible. This is the secret of Daniel's ability to stay spiritually whole in a dangerous world.

It tells me something about his home

Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home...

There are a lot of nice houses in southern California. But how many are real homes?

Thousands of gadgets. How much God-space?

Endless entertainment at the touch of a button. How much stillness?

We want more and bigger.

Richard A. Swenson MD

The Overload Syndrome

Florida attorney, Stacey Giuliani is a case in point.

I've got a 61 inch TV which diagonally is one inch bigger than my own mother, the 29 year old lawyer said. I've got an 11 speaker surround sound system. I've got oversized plush couches and a monster size kitchen with a huge bread-maker and a commercial size mixer. And I've got a large master bedroom with a walk in closet that is the size of my bedroom in my old house.

He has a soaking tub. Twelve foot cathedral ceilings, and an enormous Infiniti 4x4 truck that they never drive off road.

Life is messy, he points out, and it's nice when you're done with your day to be able to come home and soak in the big tub, grill in your big backyard, and watch your 61 inch TV. It allows you to escape the daily stress. You work hard and you want to enjoy your comforts.

I wonder!

Daniel had none of this - but a home where he could be with God.

What kind of home do you want to make?

It tells me something about his heart

...where the windows opened towards Jerusalem...

Now we might think this is a little primitive
And we can, of course, point to the NT where Jesus said that we worship and
spirit and in truth and that the place is not the important thing.

That's right.

But in this case we'd miss the point.

Daniel never returned to his native land Daniel lived and worked in a pagan
environment. He worked hard and distinguished himself. He received many
honors but his heart remained with God and his people.

He longed for the day when God would restore his people to the promised land.

Now where is your heart fixed?

Jesus said, "Don't lay up treasure on earth, but be rich in spiritual things,
heavenly values. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

What do you lie awake at night praying for?

What is the deepest desire of your heart?

It tells me something about the harmony in his life

...he got down on his knees and prayed...

Prayer is not just a spiritual thing it involves all that we are it involves us
spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically your heart and mind, your body
and spirit have to pray together. And Daniel knelt at his window, praying towards
Jerusalem.

That's why prayer walking is so effective. It is spiritual and physical. That's why
it is helpful to speak your prayers aloud. It's spiritual and physical. That's why
kneeling, or walking round the room, or lying prostrate on the floor, or bowing
your head to the ground are all helpful. It's spiritual and physical. That's why
prayer partnerships are so helpful. They are spiritual and physical.

It tells me something about his habits

Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to
his upstairs room where the windows opened towards Jerusalem.

Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his
God, just as he had done before.

Daniel 6:10

We misunderstand this passage. We think Daniel did this as an act of defiance.
Wrong!

The room had been chosen because the windows faced Jerusalem. He prayed
on his knees three times a day. He gave thanks to God. That alone would tell us
that this was not a panic prayer.

And the key phrase ...just as he had done before...this is the secret disciplined
prayer was his life's habit. It's where so many of us fall down. I recall being in
South Africa during Ramadan, the Muslim festival the call to prayer sounded
every day at the same time. These Muslims were disciplined in prayer.

I don't want to create a new justification by works -the idea that God only loves
you if you pray. But I want to develop the habit of praying like brushing your
teeth or running several times a week. Those who seek God's presence enjoy
his protection

The deliverance of the persecuted believer

Now we come to the climax of the story

The anxiety of the king

When the king heard this he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him...vs 14

The king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep. At the first light of dawn the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to save you?...vs 18,19

There are people who are downright wicked they are opposed to the gospel, a lot of the satraps came under that category. But there are also people who are weak they lack the courage to stand up, King Darius came under that category. There are thousands of people around us who are weak and just waiting to see if we have the courage to stand for Christ. They may be in seemingly powerful positions but they are weak and anxious and they can be won for Christ in a moment if they see us do what is right.

They are racked with guilt longing to know there is a God in heaven who can change people, transform seemingly hopeless situations and so to the moment of truth...

The angel of the Lord

Daniel answered, O king, live for ever. My God sent his angel and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king.

Daniel 6:21,22

The angel of the Lord delivers Daniel.

There is a whole army of heavenly beings for our protection.

Billy Graham in his book on angels cites the experience of Corrie Ten Boom Together we entered the terrifying building. At a table were women who took away our possessions. Everyone had to undress completely and then go to a room where her hair was checked. I asked a woman who was busy checking the possessions of the new arrivals if I might use the toilet. She pointed to a door and I discovered that the convenience was nothing more than a hole in the shower room floor. Betsie stayed close beside me all the time. Suddenly I had an inspiration.

Quick, take off your woolen underwear I whispered to her. I rolled it up with mine and laid the bundle in a corner with my little Bible. The spot was alive with cockroaches but I didn't worry about that. I felt wonderfully relieved and happy. The Lord is busy answering our prayers, I whispered. We shall not have to make the sacrifice of all our clothes.

We hurried back to the row of women waiting to be undressed. A little later after we had our showers and put on our shabby dresses, I hid the roll of underwear and my Bible under my dress; But I prayer, "lord, cause now thine angels to surround me; and let them not be transparent today, for the guards must not see me.' I felt perfectly at ease. Calmly I passed the guards. Everyone was checked, from the front, the sides, the back. Not a bulge escaped the eyes of the guard.

The woman just in front of me had hidden a woolen vest under her dress; it was taken from her. They let me pass, for they did not see me. Betsie, right behind me, was searched.

But outside awaited another danger. On each side of the door were women who looked everyone over a second time. They felt over the body of each one who passed. I knew they would not see me, for the angels were still surrounding me. I was not even surprised when they passed me by; but within me rose the jubilant cry, 'O Lord, if thou dost so answer prayer, I can face even Ravensbruck unafraid.'

We are protected more than we realize it. Those times when we think we were lucky, every time we drive on the freeway God surrounds us with his angels. If we were not so earthbound in our thinking we would begin to appreciate it. And those who most seek His presence are most likely to know his protection.

The advance of the gospel

The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

Then king Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language throughout the land.

I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel...for he is the living God...he rescues and he saves...

Here is the ultimate lesson of Daniel's life God was honored by his living. The truth was demonstrated by his faithfulness. The message of the living God was validated by his fearless testimony.

Conclusion

Phil Wall in a plane sat next to woman who said she was writing a book on angels.

The angel Michael told me to write it! What do you think of that?

Phil thought hard:

Well, if you've met the archangel Michael, you'd better get to know his boss!

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Alex Putkari: My Story

by Alex Putkari and John Norton

Salvation soldier Alex Putkari and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin share something in common. Both were born in the southern caucusus, in Georgia. However they struggled for different causes. Stalin was a communist dictator who oppressed millions of his countrymen and led the Soviet Union to victory in the Second World War. Putkari, now an American citizen of 46 years, has on the other hand spent most of his life serving Christ and has now returned to live permanently back in his homeland in the republic of Georgia. This is Alex's story.

Alex Putkari says that he has often had explain to people that Georgia, which is located to the East of the Black Sea and north-west of Armenia, is a distinct country from Russia with its own history and language. The American judge that granted Putkari his U.S. citizenship in the 1950's wanted to write "Russian" on Alex's forms under the column of nationality/race. Alex says "You should have seen the faces of the people in the room when I spoke up to the judge and told him that unless he recognized me as a Georgian, and took away any reference to being Russian, I would prefer not to become an American citizen." Alex says that this was followed by an argument with the judge over whether the Georgian people are in fact distinct from the Russians. However, in the end, Alex made his point and received his American citizenship as desired. Alex says, "I love America. But Georgia is my homeland. God has called me home to my people."

Now, in this former Republic of the Soviet Union, where Stalin once forced the teaching of communism's atheism, Alex has returned with his own teaching of the saving love of God through Jesus Christ. Putkari says, "These generations were born without knowing God. It has always been my dream since I was born-again in 1969 to return to Georgia to present the Gospel to my people." Now as a Salvation Army Envoy, Alex is realizing his dream by taking responsibility for a new outpost church in the city of Rustavi (population 175, 000), where besides the Army there is no other evangelical church as a result of it being built on Stalin's orders at the end of WWII as one of the "New cities free of the burden of religion."

It has been a long difficult road that has brought Putkari back to Georgia. After a forced absence of many decades only now is Putkari safe to return. His story is one of tragedy yet ultimate victory in Christ. He says he feels strongly that the hand of God has been working throughout the incredible story of his life to bring him to where he is now.

Alex was born in 1921 in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi. A few years later, his fellow countryman Stalin emerged from Georgia to the Kremlin in Moscow as the entrenched leader of the new Soviet Union. Stalin was just beginning his massive

campaign of oppression, that resulted in the imprisonment and death of millions of innocent people, when Alex was learning prayers from his saintly grandmother. Alex should have grown up without knowing anything about religion but God had other plans. He remembers one incident in particular as an eight year old, when after stealing money from a village church, his grandmother marched him three times around the sacred building in penance. She later stayed up all night praying for him when he took ill with fever. Although his communist father tried to teach the boy atheistic philosophy, the influence of his grandmother remained. "I didn't know it then but that is how the seed was planted in my heart."

When Hitler launched his surprise invasion of Russia in 1939 Putkari just happened to find himself at home on holidays after spending two years in Siberia studying. Alex was drafted into the Soviet army and sent by train to the defense of Sevastopol, Crimea, in south Ukraine. There the Germans surrounded the city and "bombed us every hour of every day for a month." Putkari and other Soviet soldiers found themselves trapped against the sea to the south and the advancing German army to the north. "We were starving and had no bullets for our guns." Not surprisingly the city fell and Alex, along with thousands of other ill-equipped Soviet soldiers, were taken prisoner.

Stalin had given orders that no Soviet soldier was to be taken prisoner. Rather every man loyal to the Soviet Union was to commit suicide rather than surrender. This condemnation would come back later to play a major part in Alex's life. However, in the meantime he and thousands of other prisoners were forced to march from the Black Sea to Germany. Alex walked this long way in bare feet as a German soldier had taken his boots. He recalls that every day they were given the option of either marching or dying. There was little to be done but try to go on. Food was so scarce that some ate the flesh of their counterparts who fell and died along the way. On seeing this Alex wondered to himself about his purpose in life and began questioning all he had been led to think was right. God had a plan for his life.

After three terrible years in a German prison camp the war finally ended. Alex was liberated by British soldiers and then sent to Italy. There he was turned over to the Russians, along with thousands of other former Soviet soldiers, and ended up again marching the same roads of eastern Europe towards home. In a "protection" camp in Hungary these former prisoners were told that they would be returned shortly to their homes in the Soviet Union where they would be free. One afternoon, however, while Alex was playing on an old accordion and singing as entertainment for soldiers, he interspersed a few Georgian national songs along with the expected Russian ones. He was overheard by their Commander resting in his room above the mess hall. This General, who was also Georgian, and surprised to hear the tunes of his homeland among that Russian Army, summoned the musician to his private quarters. There in conversation he revealed to Alex the truth about what would be waiting him at home. Alex understood that his return to Georgia would mean twenty years harsh labor in prison camps. Whereas prisoners of war returning home to Western countries were welcomed as heroes, the Soviet Union labelled their own as traitors for not

obeying Stalin's orders to kill themselves. Alex took the opportunity afforded by the General, and although he realized he might not ever have contact with his family again, abandoned his friends and escaped over a wall and out into the countryside. While thousands of ex-prisoners returned to the Soviet Union to be tried for treason, God had a different plan for Putkari.

Running by night and sleeping by day, Alex again made his way across Europe by foot. One year later, cold and starving, he made his way to Munich, back in Germany, and was given an opportunity to work for a dance company that performed for American GI's. His success and popularity at his new profession brought him many American contacts and soon the opportunity to emigrate to the United States. Again, Alex believes that God was guiding his every step towards the day he would learn of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Arriving in New York in 1950, Alex for three years washed dishes all night in restaurants and watched movies all day in the theaters. Although he was fluent in five different languages by this time he had to master English before he could get a decent job. In 1953 he drove to Los Angeles later settling with his young family in Santa Rosa. It was not until 1966 that he arranged a short and potentially dangerous visit, under an alias name, back to Soviet Georgia to let his parents know that he was safe and alive. Finally, he says, "After all the experiences and difficulties of life I was ready to know God. I was over-ripe like a piece of fruit hanging off a tree just needing a gentle breeze to blow it off." In a local community Church Alex responded to the invitation to accept Christ as Saviour. He realized at that time that the Christian faith of his grandparents and Georgian ancestors was right after all.

Alex is known by his friends as a man blessed with a kind and compassionate heart. "We are trying to reach the people by first meeting their physical needs which are very great. There are so many hungry people and it is difficult to tell them about Christ without first helping them with what little we have to share." Among many of his duties as a corps officer, Alex goes out each Wednesday evening carrying much needed soup to elderly shut-ins. His partner, carrying the other handle of their large thermos, is veteran Irakly who served fifteen years hard labor in a Soviet work camp. His crime? Being liberated, as had Alex, from a German prisoner of war camp in 1945. Now both are able to share and laugh together as evidence of a sovereign God.

Now at 75 Putkari is using the years normally reserved for rest and relaxation to fight in a different Army against the poverty and godlessness left by Stalin in their homeland of Georgia. "In the Salvation Army I have found the opportunity to bring the Gospel to the people. " Life has never been easy for Putkari or those of his generation and Alex finds ministry in Georgia a challenge. "It is difficult for me because we live without water or electricity or all the conveniences I had back in the States. More than material things however I miss most of all my two daughters, son-in-law, and three grandchildren back in California. But I want to use my last breath to talk to my people here in Georgia about Jesus Christ. My life has been so happy and wonderful since I found Christ and I want to share this with everyone. It is difficult though because we face opposition from those who do not understand us. My grandparents really knew Christ. But over these

70 years we have lost that here. Now the people think they are Christians only because they are practicing the old traditions. My people are blind. They need to have their eyes opened to know the truth.”

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The House that Jack Built

Phil Wall

Much has been said in recent days, and no doubt much more will be said, as to what kind of house it was that Bill (& Catherine obviously) actually built.

There is always a danger in looking back to either sentimentalise what has happened historically or to read that history through the lenses of our own cultural context. Yet when thinking about this key issue i.e. what are really the roots of our movement, we must look deeper than our own contexts, influences and prejudices.

Our task is to look beyond the form and seek out the substance/essence of what it was they sought to build and that I believe has far less to do with a military metaphor, socio-political programme or brass bands marching than it does how our forebearers actually discovered the gospel. I wish to suggest in this article, as purported by Colonel Philip Needham, that it was the nature of the true gospel of Jesus Christ that was actually distinct about the Army and consequently was the rationale for all that subsequently emerged. That gospel looks something like this.

Firstly, it was to be a Universal Gospel. They realised that the horrible gospel for the "who could afford it" of the middle class was not the true gospel for the whosoever "Jesus inaugurated". They understood that scripture did not teach "for God so loved the church so much that he gave...." but rather "for God so loved the world that he gave...". By definition this meant that their gospel was something that had to touch every corner of this earth, hence Bramwell's affirmation that "every land is my father land for all lands belong to my father". Nothing could be allowed to stop this gospel getting out and the Army outraged much of the conservative religious establishment of their day by many of their practices and activities. That which was offended most was a conservative, irrelevant and pharasaical religiosity that protected outdated forms of church worship, faith and practice to the exclusion of the masses. I fear that if the Army faces a challenge in our country it will end up doing that very thing which caused our emergence in the first place. To be a valid and authentic expression of Salvationism, every Corps must be willing to lay aside any of their religious practices or likes if they in any way inhibit this universal gospel getting out.

Secondly, they understood the gospel to be one of transformation. This was transformation on two levels. Firstly that of personal. Emerging out of the holiness movement as we did we have a very strong and I would say healthy commitment, to a holiness theology that articulated the need for inward transformation by a process of sanctification. There was an expectation that once someone had committed themselves to follow Jesus there should be an initial,

then continuing change in the behaviour, values and world view of the person concerned. This process leading them more and more into being transformed into the likeness of Jesus. This in itself was again part of the testimony towards winning the lost. The second aspect of this is that which emerges as the fruit of the former. This was societal and sociological change. William Booth developed his "War On Two Fronts" theology, recognising the need for both spiritual and socio-economic transformation as an expression of the gospel. Out of this theology came his famous Cab Horse Charter and In Darkest England and the Way Out treatise. These became a catalyst for numerous transformations of social degradation as well as providing a platform for our own welfare state. Further more with the intrepid help of William Stead the Army was able to expose the heinous practice relating to child prostitution that later raised the age of consent from 12-16 all around the world.

The house that 'Bill' built was one committed to dual transformation of both the spirit and consequently society. The gospel truly was good news in the fullest sense. If we are known for anything today it is for this dual ministry and the challenge for us all is to see this reflected in our own lives as well as in our local Corps and centres. Once again I believe we should be lifting a prophetic voice within the nation to challenge injustice, speak for those who can not speak for themselves and shape the ethical, social and moral fibre of this nation. This will only be done in and through the transformed ones who are moving towards reflecting this likeness of Jesus.

Finally, they understood the gospel as something intensely Militant. With the mixture of a dynamic holiness doctrine and the military metaphor, the Army emerged as a truly militant organisation that made a significant impact upon it's world. This manifested in some of the most extreme forms of service and sacrifice seen within the contemporary scene. Whether it was confronting the challenge of the skeleton Army, sacrificially giving of resources to the prosecution of the salvation war, being arrested by the authorities for illegal public processions or even living a lifestyle of harsh asceticism through extreme fasting and the like, early Salvationists marked out their territory as a truly radical, impassioned group of people. It was this no retreat, no surrender mentality that was to establish The Salvation Army onto the world scene. The opening of 1000 centres in 8 years was just one sign of this level of commitment. Battle scars of any kind were seen and worn as medals, as there could be nothing that could be allowed to stop this great gospel message getting out to the lost and marginalised of the world. This possibly provides the greatest challenge for our contemporary Army where in many places conservatism and the maintaining of the status quo has become the norm.

Once again this understanding of our gospel as something universal, transformation and militant must grip our hearts and ignite our imaginations so that we might be authentic inheritors of The Salvation Army legacy of seeing this world won for God.

The World for God! The World for God!
For this, dear Lord, give to my soul consuming fire.
Give fire that makes men heroes, turns weakness into might,
The fire that gives the courage to suffer for the fight,
The fire that changes fearing to pentecostal daring,
The fire that makes me willing for Christ to live or die:
For behold! On a hill, Calvary! Calvary!
The world for God! The world for God!
I give my heart! I'll do my part!
The world for God! The world for God!
I give my heart! I'll do my part!

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