

JOURNAL OF AGGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY

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Editorial Introduction

by Captain Stephen Court

Greetings in the name of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The war wages around the world, and emotions are torn as one hears bad news and good news competing nearly every day. It is true even in our Army. Reports of officer shortages in one part of the world are balanced by explosions in lieutenantancy in others. A situation of moral breakdown is pushed from our focus by scores of children's homes being committed by youth. It is neither all good, nor all bad. We rejoice in the good. We grieve the bad. Whoever bought into a stoic religion got taken for a ride.

Through it all, there are two constants, Jesus and JAC.

This issue of Journal of Aggressive Christianity goes back to the roots with the first sermon in Paper on Aggressive Christianity by General Catherine Booth, edited in language by Cory Harrison. But it fast forwards to today with another batch of articles intended to edify and challenge, stimulate and encourage.

We're grateful for our regular contributors, but we also welcome a couple of newcomers to JAC! We hope to see more of you in the future.

As you may know, JAC is a treasure chest of incendiary material, going back several years in complete archival form, all available from this site for free. If you've read everything, going all the way back to the nineties, then I suggest you check out the armybarmy blog at armybarmy.com for your daily fix of propaganda.

Speaking of propaganda, we're excited to announce the release of resources intended to help you win the Salvation War. Here they are:

BOUNDLESS volume 1- a quality compilation CD of SA worship leaders from ten cities.

BE A HERO: The Battle For Mercy And Social Justice- a 304 page revolutionary document. The authors "team up to combine a heart-felt pain at the tragedies in our world with an inspired idea to end them" (General Eva Burrows).

PROVERBIAL LEADERSHIP: Ancient Wisdom for Tomorrow's Endeavours- "I recommend this book to all who care about leadership" says Major Chick Yuill (book co-authored by Commissioner Wesley Harris).

All of these, by the way, make excellent Christmas gifts to family, staff, kettle volunteers, hamper packers, etc.

Enjoy this issue. May God abundantly bless you through this issue.

Aggressive Christianity – a modern rendition of a revolutionary document

by Cory Harrison

MARK 16:15--Then he said, "Go into the world. Go everywhere and announce the Message of God's good news to one and all.

ACTS 26:15-18--"I said, "Who are you, Master?" "The voice answered, "I am Jesus, the One you're hunting down like an animal. But now, up on your feet--I have a job for you. I've handpicked you to be a servant and witness to what's happened today, and to what I am going to show you. "I'm sending you off to open the eyes of the outsiders so they can see the difference between dark and light, and choose light, see the difference between Satan and God, and choose God. I'm sending you off to present my offer of sins forgiven, and a place in the family, inviting them into the company of those who begin real living by believing in me."

I was thinking, while reading these words, what if we could remove from out of our heads and out of our minds all the things we have known about Christianity. I'm talking all the way from that upper room where the Pentecostal Baptism began, or at least from the final word in the book of Acts. Just try and detach from your understanding all history of Christianity as we know it today. Suppose we have no other books of the Bible after Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts. Have you ever thought about it? Now try and write the rest of the story. What a dissimilar ending you would have written than what we have today. What a different world you would have imagined after the outcome of what you had just read in the Acts. The first century, produced gigantic results! You should have said, if we knew nothing of what has happened from that time until now, that, no doubt the world where this was all happening, and by the way the world for which it was created to happen, would long before now have come under the influence of the Maker of these events. And I say, from reading the Gospels and the book of Acts, and from seeing the courage that filled the early disciples, and from the way in which everything happened you could have assumed 10,000 times greater the results that should have followed. And in my opinion, your assumption would have been perfectly correct.

We who call ourselves Christians claim to have this huge power within us, if rightfully used would remove all sin and shame and misery off of the peoples' shoulders, minds, and hearts. This power would not only heal their spiritual needs but their physical ones also. If you are a Christian you have to believe this. As Christians we have believed for generation after generation, and yet, look at the world, look at so-called Christian parts of the world. Most of the nations are ignoring God, and not even trying to give Him a Sunday. That's only one day a week! Not just our country but look at all the world. My heart has been so hurt over the state of the world that I think it might actually break. I don't know how other Christians feel but I can agree with the author of the book of Lamentations when he said, "Streams of tears flow from my eyes because of the destruction of my people." It seems to me that what the world has become today compared to what God intended it to be, has been and still is the biggest failure in history.

So how can this be?

I don't for a second think that this is how God wants it. Some people have a very convenient way of hiding behind God's purposes, and saying, 'Hey, God will do His own thing.'

I wish He would!

People say, 'You know, God's will is always done.'

I wish it were!

God's word says it is not done, and over and over again He grieves at the fact that it is not done. He wants it to be done, but it is NOT DONE! I know some of you don't like to here that but it is useless for us to stand up and speak things that are contrary to the truth. There has been too much of this going on and it's having a dangerous effect. The world is in the condition that it is, there was so much hope, so much promise, so much to look forward to, and yet hundreds years have gone by and here we are. Little has been done compared to what we would have expected. What change can be noticed in the words and actions of people today?

Now I know some of you are out there saying, "Hey, why are you being so critical, a lot is being done in the world today.' I say thank God for that. It would be pathetic if nothing was being done; but it looks like a single drop of rain in the ocean compared to what should have been done by now. Furthermore, I will reject any suggestion that looks at the love and goodness of God and makes Him to blame for the lack of production of Christianity. Let it be known that as much as my influence stretches, I will not allow the blame and responsibility to be thrown on God, who loved the world so much that He gave His only Son to be slaughtered in order to save it. I don't believe it for a second! I'll tell you what I believe. I believe that satan himself has done in our day just what he has done in that past—he has used artful maneuvering to get around the purposes of God. He has succeeded so far in bringing the world to the state that it's in. He has slowed down the endeavors of God by keeping the world under his own power and influence. I believe that he has succeeded in doing this, as he has in the past, by **DECEIVING GOD'S OWN PEOPLE**. He has always done it like this. He always giving a counterfeit of God's real thing, and the more he can get his thing to look like Gods thing the better. Let me tell you two ways that he has succeeded in deceiving God's people:

First—HAS TO DO WITH THE STANDARDS OF THEIR OWN RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS.

And **Secondly**, he has succeeded in deceiving them **IN REGARDS TO THEIR REPSPONSIBILITY TO THE WORLD.**

Let me begin with his first deception in regards to the standards of their relationship with Jesus. He has gotten the church, almost as a whole, to adopt what I call an, 'it's all about me religion!' He has gotten them to lower the standard which Jesus Christ Himself established in the Bible—a standard that we should not only try to reach but

one that should be attained. This standard involves victory over sin, the world, the flesh, and the devil. **This is real, living reigning, powerful, Christianity!** Satan knew what the secret of success was for those early disciples. It was their sold-out devotion, their passionate love of Christ, their outright denial of the way of the world. It was their entire lives abandoned to fight for the salvation of others for the glory of their God. It was an enthusiastic relationship with Jesus that swallowed them up, and made them willing to become wanderers and beggars on the face of this earth—all for Him they would live in caves and mountains, be torn to pieces, and even victimized and killed in every way.

And satan looked at this level of devotion and said, 'I've got no chance against these people. These people will take over the world.'

This amount of love and passion that these early disciple displayed is not in our human nature. It is not normal for us to have this sort of eagerness. And if Christians would have only gone on like they started we wouldn't be waiting for that prophecy that says, 'The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ' to come true. It would have passed already.

So satan started scheming, saying, 'what can I do? I am going to end up beat by these guys. They are going to snatch the authority of this world right out of my hands. I can't let that happen but what can I do? It makes no sense to use my worst people, they'll never buy it. Wait a minute, I know what I can do, I get a hold of a couple of those so-called good Christians, I'll creep in, unaware to them of course, and I'll insert a false doctrine here and there thus deceiving the elect!' **And he did it.** He accomplished his plan. He slowly but surely lowered the standards of our Christian covenant. He lowered the standards of our life and character. Sure through every revival God has raised them back up to a certain extent, but we have never gotten back fully to the simplicity, and purity, and passion that we read about in the book of Acts and in the books after it. And in every generation since then, satan has gotten somebody to stand up and say that the standard is too high for us humans, it's too hard, too unrealistic to expect so much. He has gotten the church into an 'it's all about me religion.' To be honest with you, he has gotten the Church into a condition that makes people not even want to hear a Christian talk let alone be one. There are great, intelligent, wise, people being driven from this type of Christianity. You know what, it would have driven me off too if I had not known the power of His fullness. I believe that this kind of Christianity has made more non-believers than all of the non-Christian books ever written.

Satan knew that he had to get these fired-up Christians turned off of the whole-hearted dedication they had for God. He knew that unless he tempted them down from their advantage of lofty position that he would have no chance. So that's what he did, he began to spread false doctrines that would counteract what John wrote about. You see, John saw what was coming. He sounded the alarm and wrote, 'So, my dear children don't let anyone divert you from the truth. It's the person who acts right that is right, just as we see it lived out in our righteous Messiah. Those who make practice of sin are straight from the devil, the pioneer in the practice of sin. The

Son of God entered the scene to abolish the devils ways.’ Come on, Lord, bring that word back to life! Help us to be the ones who are performing the CPR on Christianity today.

The big evil we have going on today is the Christians, because they make a practice of sin and then feel condemned, are lowering the standard for the rest of us to join their pitiful experience. I said it when I was young and I say it even louder now, if it sends me to Hell I will never water down the standards of God. I wish you felt like I do. We have an amazing standard put before us. The power is extended to you, the conditions have been laid out for us, and we **CAN** all grab a hold of it, if we want. If you don't want to raise your life to the standard of this righteousness fine, but for the sake of the children, and for the children not yet even born, don't drag it down and try to make God's standards meet your little, insignificant, confined experience.

LET'S KEEP IT UP!

Do you want to know how to win the world for Jesus? Show people a real, living, self-sacrificing, hard-working, sweating, victorious religion, and the people will be influenced and changed by it; but anything that falls short of that they will turn around and spit on.

Now the **second** way the enemy has deceived God's people. He has taken those whom he could not get to lower the standard of their lives and tricked them in regards to their responsibility to the world. I have been noticing lately as I read through the New Testament and taking special observation of their aggressive spirit of Primitive Christianity. It's amazing what God will reveal to you if you open up your Bible and read and study some topic that is on your heart and mind. When God sees that you are looking for some revelation on a subject so that you can use it for good, **He pours it on you**. Some people say that they don't see this or that in the Bible and I think it is because they don't want to see it. They don't get it because they don't walk in it. If you are willing to obey then God gives you all the revelation you can handle.

It seems to me that we have come immeasurably short of any realistic or rational idea of the aggressive spirit that they had in the New Testament. Satan has got us Christians to accept what I call a namby-pamby, little kid boxing glove kind of way of presenting the Gospel to people. We hand out tracts or books or sermons without even saying a word about Jesus. This is the half-scared, fearful way of putting the truth of Jesus before the uncommitted people. We think that this is the way to talk to them about their souls. It would seem to me that this makes the early saints vomit when they see it. They took seriously the words of Jesus, 'Go into the world. Go everywhere and announce the message of God's good news to one and to all,' and again the same idea—'I'm sending you off.' Look at what Jesus is saying here. I will go as far as to say that no one in the history of man has even gotten close to fathoming the meaning of these two commissions. I believe that we of The Salvation Army have come closer than any others. But we are straying. What? Do you think that these words from Jesus ever meant, 'go and build chapels and churches and invite the people to come one or two days a week and if they don't leave them alone?' **'YOU GO!'** Imagine you were running a business and asked a staff member

to do something for you, something that required some meetings and paperwork and some travel and time, definitely hard work, something that was within their job description and contract with you. They are employed by you to do this business, and you commissioned them to go and do it. How would you feel if he just went to his office and said, 'Maybe I will go out once or twice but I don't want to bother these folks. I know, I will just wait here in my office and if they want our business they will come to us.' He may be out of a job for not doing what you asked of him.

'YOU GO' Go where? Go everywhere to everyone! You get them **WHERE THEY ARE**. 'Everyone!' There is the extent of your command from God. Seek them out, chase after them, wherever it is that they are. 'Everyone!' Wherever you find them and they have a soul, announce the message of God's good news. If I understand it correctly, that is the meaning and the heart behind the commission.

Jesus wasn't the only one giving out the commission. Paul says, 'I'm sending you off to open the eyes of the outsiders so they can see the difference between dark and light, and choose light, see the difference between satan and God, and choose God.' They are asleep—go and wake them up. They don't see the danger that they are in. If they saw it they wouldn't need you to run after them. The problem is they are preoccupied. Open their eyes, and turn them around by your desperation and forceful care. It makes my body feel like an earthquake when I think of what one could do for another if they will just go! Turn them from one direction to another from dark to light from satan to God. How, you may ask? Paul said, 'We plead our case.' Do not be satisfied with just throwing around a good word about Jesus. Do not be content with gentle invitations and then prayerfully leaving them alone. Jesus wasn't! He ran after them and pulled them out of the Hell they were heading to. Take the blinders off their eyes, the ones satan put there, push and hammer and burn your way in, with the fire of the Holy Ghost, burn your words into the poor, hardened, blackened hearts, until they begin to realize that they are in some **SERIOUS TROUBLE!** Go after them! Like I said before, if I understand it correctly, that is the spirit of the Apostles and of the early Christians. Even when they were being dismantled by all the persecution, they 'went **everywhere**, preaching the Word.' Listen, this doesn't mean that they just went to scheduled meetings at church each week but that they went after men and women and children trying to win them for Jesus.

Some people think that only the Apostles started new churches. They are actually mistaken. Churches popped-up everywhere including places where the Apostles had never been. Those guys went to visit and bring organization to them after they had already started, as a result of people like you and me going everywhere and preaching Jesus. Jesus, do it again today!

Start new Corps this way again today! We have built some churches and chapels, we have invited the people to them; but do you think it is consistent with the two commissions, and with a number of other commissions, that we should lay our head down at night and rest peacefully at all the work we have done when three quarters of the worlds population just ignore and laugh at our invitations and could care less about our buildings, services, and programs? **They will not come to us.** This is an

established fact. So what should we do? What can be done? They have souls that will live forever in one of two places. Where are they going? What can be done? Jesus says, 'Go after them.' When all the well-mannered methods have failed; when the gentle invitations fall, 'Go after them.' When they say like the parable says, 'I have gotten married and another says he has bought some new cattle, and another a piece of land—does Jesus say, 'crazy ungrateful people, leave them alone?' No. He says, '...Go to the country roads. Whoever you find, drag them in. I want my house full!' I want guests, and if you can't get them by civil measures, then use the military measures. Go and **'drag them in.'** This is the kind of aggressive spirit that we need today. If you are right with God then get a shot of this spirit and share it with your fellow-men.

I can already hear some people whining and saying, you must be careful, we don't want to push them away. You don't want to wear religion on your sleeve or thrust it down some one's throat. Well, I say if you don't thrust it down it won't ever go down. Come on! Do you expect me to wait until the uncommitted, godless person wants to be saved before I try to save them? He's not going to want to get saved until he's on his death bed. Come on! Do you expect me to wait until my unsaved friends and acquaintances drift off towards hell, and never tell them about the state of their lives, until they say, 'Friend, could you preach to me?' Does this look or sound anything like the spirit of the early Christians we just read about? No. We have to make them look at the light, take off their blinders, open their eyes to make them suffer through it, and if they run away from us the first time then we find them and do it all over the next time. We don't let them have any peace until they get right with God and get their souls saved. This is what Christianity ought to be doing right here, right now. There are plenty of us to do it. We might give the world such an intense time that people would get saved just out of self defense. If only we were up and doing something, determined not to let people have peace in their sins. Where is your zeal for the Lord? We talk about the Old Testament saint and I wish we were all like David. He cried rivers of tears because his people would not obey the laws of God. He wept at the injustice. You do not have to be a pastor of a church to do this, better if you're not, actually. Hang out with friends, share it with them. **ONLY DO IT.** Don't let your family, and friends, and acquaintances die, and their blood be on you hands!!!

I'll never forget the pain and sadness on the face of a young lady that came to see me. My heart broke for her. She told me her story. She said, 'I had a proud, ungodly father, and the Lord saved me three years before his death, and, from the very day I gave my life to Jesus, I felt that I should talk to him, and plead, and pray with him about where he would spend eternity, but I was a wimp and could not find the courage to do it. I wanted to and kept telling myself I would, and then he got sick. His sickness was sudden and serious. He lost his mind, and died unsaved,' and she said, 'I haven't smiled since, and I can't imagine that I will ever smile again.' Don't let this happen to you. Talk to them quietly or in private if you have to, but do it, and do it as if you feel for their value to God, and as if you would make the decision for them yourself if it was in your power. Get it done!

I was in a city in the west part of England and speaking on this same subject, the responsibility of Christians to save souls. The man that I was staying with cringed a little under what is obviously truth. Instead of reflecting on his life and applying the word to heart, he complained and said to me, 'I thought you were a rather hard on us this morning.' I said, 'you did? I promise you that I was no harder on you than Jesus would have been.' He said to me, 'You're an extremist. You push things to the edge. You're talking about saving souls and making sacrifices. We have built chapels and churches, we pay our pastors, and if people do not want to follow Jesus, that's not our fault.' (This man had given a lot of money to build a new church in his town.) So I said to him, 'I'll grant you the fact that this is an act of stupidity on their part but don't worry, it is only temporary. Think about it like this. Imagine that someone had discovered the cure for AIDS, cancer, or some other deadly disease. So the Board of Health and the government make a national announcement that they were dedicating every hospital and public building that they could free up just for the purpose of treating this disease. And so they go on television and radio and billboards and any other avenues of announcement and say whoever comes to these buildings will get free treatment. Now imagine that the people have had the disease so long and were so busy with other things that they refused to come, and because of that they were spreading the disease to thousands of others. What would you do? Would you say, 'Hey, the government and the Board of Health have done what they could, if the people don't want the cure and don't want to be healed, leave them alone and let them die.' Of course you wouldn't do that. You would realize that the people are either dumb or didn't get the message. You understand what is going on, you understand the cure and are responsible for getting them to it. What in the world would you do? Let the disease spread throughout the whole world? NO! If the people won't come and get the shot that will cure them, then you would take it to them. You would force it upon them and insist that this be done so that the plague doesn't spread. Needless to say I did not have to explain to this man what the illustration meant. He understood it, and I believe he did something about it.

People in this world are so busy about needless stuff that they do not realize the need for Jesus. It is our job to go and bring it to their attention. Remember, you can do it. There may be that one person that you have a huge influence over more than anybody else does, maybe even more than one. Are you doing all you can to get them saved? Friends and family you have to rescue them from Hell. Don't get me wrong, I thank God for the thousands that we are already saving throughout the world. Talk to them, hear their stories and use them as an inspiration to go to your friends and family with great determination and desperation. Grab them by the shirt and say, 'Listen, I have never been so serious about something in my life, I have not talked to you yet about whether you are going to heaven or hell.' Let them see you weep and cry, or if you can't weep, let them hear the tears in your voice, and let them know that you feel their coming danger. **God will use this and they will be saved.**

One of the revelations of both of these Scriptures is that He implies that will need Him along the way. That is why He says, 'I will always be with you, even to the end of the earth.' It is almost like he is saying, 'You are going to need my presence. This kind of aggressive and determined warfare is going to bring all on earth and in Hell

against you.’ He even says to Paul, ‘I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them.’ Why would Paul need this rescuing? The reason is because the Gentiles would soon be coming against him—and they certainly did.

Opposition! This is what we stray away from so much today. Opposition! Well I say it is a bad sign for Christianity today if it only brings a little opposition. That’s my test of knowing that your Christianity is a fraud, if it only has a little opposition. When the Christians and the World can walk hand in hand together, there has got to be something wrong. The world hasn’t changed. The world is the same as it always has been, and if Christians had that same unchanging faithfulness and devotion to the Lord, living separate from the world, living so their lives told the world where to go, the world would hate you as much as it hated Paul. It is the Christians that have altered, not the world. I can hear your question to me, ‘Should we be getting into endless battles?’ And I answer, “Yes!” Remember the words of Jesus, ‘I came not to bring peace but a sword.’ There would be a chaos. Yes; and the stories of the Apostles are full of chaos. One uproar was so huge that the Chief Captain had to flip Paul up over the shoulders of the crowd otherwise he was going to be torn apart. ‘What a mess!’ you say. Yes; and, praise God, if we had that same chaos today we would see thousands of uncommitted saved.

‘But,’ you say, ‘God is a God of order not chaos. We don’t want to undignify the Gospel.’ I guess that just depends on your definition of dignity and order. You say, ‘if we were always in opposition then the Gospel wouldn’t go forward and we would be in unpleasant circumstances as a result.’ Sure, my friends, there have always be unpleasant circumstances when people were following the will of God. And maybe you think this sort of chaos would be inconsistent with the dignity of the Gospel. I guess it just depends on what standpoint you look at it from. What is dignity to God? Is what you call dignity and order what God calls dignity and order? Is your view of it human or is it Divine? Is it earthly or is it Heavenly? It seems to be to very undignified to die on the cross between two thieves. In fact, that could be the most undignified thing ever done in this world, and yet, look at it from a Heavenly altitude and it becomes the most spectacular thing ever done on earth and in Heaven. I even think that those in Heaven stood still and looked over the scene of that day, look over our Sufferer has He hung there between Heaven and earth. The Pharisees, I know, spit on Him, shook their fingers and head and said, ‘He saved others, Himself He cannot save.’ Oh! But we know that His intent was on saving others. That was the dignity of Heavenly strength partnering with human weakness, in order to raise it. This was the dignity of eternal wisdom lining up with human ignorance, in order to enlighten it. This was the dignity of everlasting love going naked and suffering for rebellious men. This was an incarnate God standing in the place of the condemned—the dignity of love! **Love! LOVE!**

Jesus, save us from smearing Your Gospel and Your name by putting over it our worthless opinions of what dignity is and by doing that forgetting the dignity that You had in hanging on a cross. This kind of love and sacrifice is the dignity for us, and it will never suffer by anyone carrying it into the slums or back alleys of any

neighborhood in which they live. This dignity will never suffer by any employer who looks at an employee, with tears in their eyes, and tries to bring them to Jesus. This dignity will never suffer even if you have to be dragged through the streets by a mob of angry people, like Jesus was, if you went into those streets for the souls of people. You may be tied to a stake, just like the martyrs of the early days, and surrounded by laughing and taunting people—this dignity will be crowned in Heaven with a great glory. If I understand it correctly, that is the dignity of the Gospel—the dignity of love. I don't want anything. I don't desire anything except this type of dignity and love.

Friends, will you get baptized in this love? If you do, you will be like the Apostles, willing to put yourself in a basket, and be let down over a wall, if it needed to be done, or suffer a shipwreck, hunger, troubles, nakedness, fire, sword, or be killed yourself, if it would extend His Kingdom and win the souls for which He died. Jesus fill us with this love and baptize us with this fire, and then the Gospel will rise up and fill the earth, and people will believe in us and in it. They will feel its power, and they will go under it by the thousands. By the grace of God make it happen!

The Tip of the Sword

by Timothy Morrison

The battle lines have been drawn, and all of hell is cringing at the warriors that are preparing for the battle. We are living in one of the most dangerous times in history, and the Christian faith is about to be put to the test. The Salvation Army is preparing to be the first in to the spiritual war that has been ignored for far too long. We who are called to lead in the battle, and save as many of the lost as we can; are being called to active duty.

The Shawnee Corps of The Salvation Army has heard this call, and are preparing to be the tip of the sword. Since Captains Carlyle and Charlotte Gargis were appointed to the Shawnee corps they had a much bigger vision for this corps and God's plans here than had ever been thought conceivable before. They knew that God had great plans for His work in the Shawnee community, and they were prepared to lead His troops into the battle of their lives. As ROOTS 2004 approached the Gargis' prepared their soldiery to attend this wonderful event and encouraged them to clothe themselves in the full armor of God. The delegates that attended ROOTS were amazed at what they saw, hundreds of their fellow believers in an amazing atmosphere of worshipfulness waiting to receive the orders from their Commanding officer the Lord God Almighty.

The classes that were presented helped all of the delegates at the conference to learn more about the battle they were going to be facing when they returned to their homes, and armed them with a new arsenal of holy weapons to fight the forces of evil. The conference also prepared everyone's heart to worship their God in an amazing way, one that truly honored our God and put Him as the focus of our heart, mind, and soul. Those that attended met God there, and knew He would never leave nor forsake them.

After returning from the ROOTS 2004 trip the Shawnee corps felt an insurgence of God's power, the feeling is that of an electric current pulsating throughout the corps. The weekend after returning the Corps hosted Battle School II, and was again met by God in a Holy worshipful atmosphere. Battle School II was the second installation in a program that started in 2002, a program focused on preparing God's troops for a spiritual battle. Guest speaker Captain Roni Robbins of Atlanta Georgia led the Shawnee Corps in a weekend of focused preparation for the Spiritual battles they will face in their life. Encouraging them to lead truly spiritual life, and to listen to the call God puts on their lives. She taught them leadership skills including keeping in their personal daily bible study times, and not using their Sunday School preparation time as their study time. To feel the power of the holy spirit indwelling in them, and trust in God to guide them.

During Battle School II Corps member Patricia Knott, who encouraged participants to take their prayer life seriously, also led the corps in a section on prayer. God will speak to those who are willing to listen, and will answer the pleas of His people with a

loving heart. Mission Specialist Timothy Morrison led a segment on evangelism, and the power it can have in their spiritual arsenal. Timothy demonstrated different evangelism techniques to help encourage the participants to reach out and witness to the lost souls in the community, and to help better equip them for the trouble they may have while spreading the word of God to the entire world.

The Shawnee corps has taken a very serious focus on the call to the war of winning lost souls for Christ, and they are now more prepared than ever to head in to this battle. Through an ever-expanding source of ministers who are heading into numerous fields of ministry they are reaching out to those who are lost and dying, to those who are dying to hear about someone who loves them. They are being obedient to the call of Christ and sacrificing their own personal lives to serve the one who has given everything for them. The battle is raging the warriors have being chosen, which side of the line will you serve? Will you be like the tip of the sword, and be the first in to the battle?

Dual Citizenship

by Commissioner Wesley Harris

I have dual citizenship with passports from the United Kingdom – the country of my birth which happens to pay my pension and Australia – the country of my choice where I pay my taxes and enjoy many amenities.

But there is another sense in which I have dual obligations as did the apostle Paul. He spoke of being a citizen of Heaven (Philippians 3.20 NIV) but that didn't mean that his feet were not on the ground or that he was so heavenly minded as to be no earthly use! He who was a citizen of Heaven was also a citizen of Rome and, as he liked to make clear (Rom.1.4), was obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks. He was able to identify with all kinds and conditions of people but he didn't lose his spiritual identity card or forget that his primary point of reference was 'out of this world'.

The Moffatt translation of Philippians 3.20 is, 'We are a colony of Heaven' and we note the use of the plural 'we'. Holiness is not just private and personal; it involves 'togetherness'. As John Wesley said, 'There is no such thing as holiness apart from social holiness'.

When Paul wrote of citizenship and being part of a colony his words would have resonated with readers because Philippi was a Roman colony. Such colonies were set up throughout the empire at strategic points and were largely populated with ex-servicemen who had completed the required twenty one years in the army. The colonies were microcosms of Rome. The customs, the clothes and the language were all as in Rome. But we may be sure that the colonists still had to relate and do business with people in surrounding communities. To that extent they had to live in two worlds.

It is the same for us as Christians. Many of the problems which Paul faced had to do with the Church in the world and the world in the Church, the need to identify with all kinds of people and yet keep a distinct Christian identity.

In the New Testament the word 'world' is used in different ways. It can describe the world of people which God so loved that he sent his Son as a Saviour. But the same word can also describe society organised apart from God, the creation subject to evil. The challenge was and is how to be in the world without becoming worldly in the bad sense of the term.

Early Salvationists were very conscious of this challenge. On the one hand they were outgoing, encouraged to get into bad company, for God's sake! At the same time they were urged to be separate from the world as good citizens of Heaven.

The need to identify with the local community and yet maintain Christian identity was brought home to me when my wife and I were appointed to a city centre corps. My

friend and predecessor had been impressed by the example of a priest in Naples who, in order to identify with street kids had been ready to break the law and do just about anything they did, moral or otherwise.

My predecessor had recruited some fine young people to do something similar with youth in the red light district around the corps and unfortunately there had been casualties. I had only been in the appointment a couple of weeks when a government social worker certainly not known for being narrow minded said, 'Major Harris, I never thought I would see the day when The Salvation Army would be publishing pornography!' Ouch!

Without my knowledge printed material had been produced couched in a way that could have brought us into conflict with the law apart from anything else. Identification had gone too far and at the expense of Christian identity.

At the time much was being made of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's plea for identification with the world with perhaps too little attention to his balancing teaching about the importance of maintaining what he called 'the inward discipline'.

In the J. B. Phillips paraphrase of Romans 12 we read, 'Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould'. We mustn't forget who we are and whose we are. The challenge is to be different and yet not indifferent – not always easy!

A parallel may be found in the role of the physician who needs to identify with his patients. Reaching out to them with empathy is vital. Yet, if he or she is to go on helping them, the doctor must not succumb to their sickness.

When I was a young Salvationist we were often warned about the spiritual perils of worldliness and hedged in with many prohibitions. Worldliness was sometimes epitomised by the words pipe, pint or pictures. The rule was that we were not to go to a football match for which there was an admission charge. In this connection a former chief secretary told me of an occasion when a bandsman in one city was suspended for paying to go to a match while one in another place was not suspended because he climbed over the fence and didn't pay!

We may smile indulgently but have we really got a handle on the problem of worldliness in these more permissive days. Is there little difference between us and the person next door who professes nothing and certainly wouldn't have a clue about what it means to be 'a citizen of Heaven'?

Of course, many of the old prohibitions have been short-circuited by TV. We may not go to places of worldly amusement but they may come to us and may erode us spiritually. Bad language and false values invade our space and can leave us soiled and sullied almost without our realising it.

The challenge is for us to be insulated but not isolated in order that God's power may work through us. In this our example must be Jesus himself. He was the friend of publicans and sinners and yet he was without sin. He was holiness personified. He never forgot that he was in transit. He came from God and he was going to God; His citizenship was in Heaven. With all his community service he guarded his times of communion with God.

We need to avoid being legalistic or judgemental of others but that doesn't mean that so far as we are concerned anything goes. As the song goes, 'In a world of changing values there are standards that remain'.

The Army began as a holiness movement. William Booth gave more sermons on holiness than on any other subject. So have we lost the plot? Hopefully not.

While we consider moral and ethical issues in the community at large we mustn't forget the fundamental need to maintain our own personal standards as 'citizens of Heaven' and I direct that challenge to my own heart first of all.

The great Scottish preacher, Robert Murray M'Cheyne was asked the greatest need of the people who looked to him as their pastor. He replied, 'The greatest need of my congregation is my personal holiness'.

The same goes for us.

Commissioner Wesley Harris

The World for God

by Drew Forster

I met them as I was walking back from late night coffee with an old college friend I hadn't seen in years. Going over in my mind the conversation we had just shared while shutting down a Starbucks in Grand Central Station, I was concerned that I had pushed my faith too hard on him. I had no intention of doing so. I really wasn't looking upon this as some sort of evangelistic conquest waiting to happen.

Most of it was innocuous enough—simply two old friends who had been accustomed to seeing each other daily, catching up on 10 years of mostly lost time. It was our last exchange that had me most concerned. He spoke of all the good-looking women rushing past him as we exited the terminal and mourned the fact that there was no good way for a single guy to flag them down and begin some meaningful conversation or at least get an email address from them. That's when I plunged overboard accidentally. I told him that the good-looking women hang out at church and don't rush off. Before I knew it I was inviting him and working out the logistics of him staying at our place on a Saturday night so he wouldn't have to get up early and commute to our worship service. He stopped me in my tracks, reminding me that he was still holding out for a nice Jewish girl with whom he could settle down.

An abrupt goodbye and a wave of self-doubt.

And so it was that I got off at my subway stop, wandered north a couple blocks in the opposite direction of home to look for some members of our congregation who told me they were sleeping opposite the nearest Catholic Church to our corps. I didn't find them, but did meet three new faces – C, a tall gaunt man with a black head wrap, Rock, the suspicious one of the bunch who did not offer his hand to shake mine back and Matt, the social butterfly of the crowd, barrel chest and bald head to look the part. Antonio, a regular was sleeping on some cardboard behind them. We spoke for a moment, I told them about our services. They asked if the meal on Sundays was any good. Rock was specific about wanting my opinion, not Antonio's and we parted ways.

Close to midnight, I was ready to call it a night when the Spirit spoke and told me to take yet another long way home. Staying two blocks north and not at all sure if this was just me, just my imagination or the leading of the Spirit, I walked on. I prayed that the Lord would reveal the specific people he was urging me on about. The first couple of fellow pedestrians might have made me out for half a crazy person as I stared at them in hopes that the Spirit would do his thing and let me know. Then I spotted them. Across the street, two Asian men, one well dressed in black, one with the ubiquitous urban black canvas cap with a short bill, a straggly goatee and some piercings. Both were smoking and leaning up against a closed Chinese food restaurant. I crossed the street close to where they loitered. I walked past them at first hoping the Spirit would give up on this urging. But he nagged at me and I've regretted being disobedient to the leading of the Spirit in the past, so I turned around.

I slowly, cautiously approached them hoping the voice would call me off at the last second. It didn't.

It wasn't until I got close that I noticed the telltale earpiece planted in the ear of the well-dressed one. It was very similar to the ones worn by the street scouts for the Japanese brothel on my block. I had no idea what to say, so I stumbled out with:

"You guys work around here?"

Nods of the head.

"I work near here too. Where do you guys work?"

Well-dressed pointed over his shoulder, up the steps of the brownstone next to the Chinese place. "Right up there."

"Oh. I work at The Salvation Army over on 52nd."

"The what? Say the name again"

"The Salvation Army at 52nd" (you know, right down from the other brothel?)

"52nd and ...?"

"3rd, right next to 875, the big building."

"Yeah, yeah, I know it."

Long pause. What to say now?

Stumble on.

"I think we're in very different lines of work."

Well-dressed and smiling wryly, "Different cultures!"

"Yeah, different cultures. Well, my name's Drew. What are yours?"

Well-dressed. "I'm Nao."

Scraggly goat. "I'm Kaz."

"Taz?"

"Kaz."

“Nice to meet you.”

Enter friends of Nao and Kaz. “Well, I won’t keep you from your friends. Have a nice night.”

So, three groups: an old college friend; a trio of men who make up the hearty band of the hardcore homeless of New York City; two guys who work for a brothel in midtown.

Evangelism? I don’t think so. Obedience? Most of the way, I hope. Education? Always in this city. Kingdom business? God only knows.

An Overwhelming Minority

by Commissioner Wesley Harris

THE threat of terrorism has the nerves of the world on edge. Horrendous scenes of carnage shown on television, heavy security at airports and the thought of possible horrors to come have become part of life in the twenty first century.

But the threat which troubles nations large and small is not from any massed armies but from a relatively small number of desperately dedicated and determined people. And a point to ponder is that if a minority bent on mayhem can fearfully affect the whole world so too may a dedicated band completely dedicated to the establishment of the kingdom of God and the reign of peace.

A cynical view is that God is on the side of the big battalions but Scripture would hardly back that contention. The Old Testament story of Gideon testifies that God may rather be on the side of an overwhelming minority of real warriors.

When our Lord declared that the gates of hell would not prevail against the Church his followers were few. Christians could have been regarded as an insignificant, sect of no account compared with the might of imperial Rome. But a small number of people empowered by the Holy Spirit proved that they could turn the world upside down!

The beginnings of The Salvation Army were also inauspicious. William Booth is reported to have remarked that when he began the only band he had was the one around his hat. We think of our first meetings held in a tatty tent pitched on a disused burial ground. Small stuff indeed! But God has a system of measurement which is sometimes very different from ours. Out of what we may consider small he can bring something big – and conversely out of what we see as big there may sometimes be little to show. Strange as it may seem to us, God's strength is sometimes made perfect in weakness.

As General Albert Orsborn put it,
*We were that foolish thing
Unversed in worldly ways,
Which thou did'st chose and use
Unto thy greater praise,
Called and commissioned from afar
To bring to naught the things that are.*

Church Growth gurus often hold up mega churches as models and I do not necessarily quarrel with that. I have spent a lifetime trying to enlarge our borders and recruit more people to join the Army of the Lord. But we need a passion for people and not just a love of crowds. And perhaps God's will for The Salvation Army is that it should largely consist of a multitude of effective minorities infiltrating the community and working like yeast to raise society to a level that God would desire.

Of course we should think big. World conquest is our aim and in a time we may not live to see there may even be other worlds to conquer! But in the mean time we should not despise the day of small things or underestimate what God can do with dedicated minorities. In fact, it has been remarked that even one with God is in the majority!

Holiness is the Solution

by Captain Stephen Court

No holiness but social holiness. John Wesley

I had often felt God speaking to me about girls who were being forced to the Ganta streets to earn money for food. Now here was Naomi, desperate and reaching out. She was 15 years old and had never been to school. She told me that she has nowhere to live but had been sleeping, blanketless, on a cold concrete hallway floor.

She was crying out... we had to do something. To turn her away would be like turning away Jesus himself (read Mathew 25). I prayed "God, grant wisdom; Please, Father, we don't want short-term solutions." As He always does... God heard.

I gave her some money (equivalent of \$1 USD) so she didn't have to find a man that night, made her promise not to go on the street that night, prayed with her and told her to come back tomorrow. As she walked off I desperately began to think of the best way to help her. We could give money for food today but she would just have to find more money tomorrow and would be tempted to go back to the street to find a John. I could rent her a room, but that would just give here a potential place of operation for "business" and leave her open to harassment by men as no one would be there to watch out for her. The more I pondered it became less clear what the right solution was. (Faytene Kryskow, missionary newsletter, Liberia)

Holiness is the solution to every problem? Is this a fantasy panacea served up in evangelical conviction terms to a disinterested postmodern culture?

Who is naïve enough to suggest *any* solution to the world's ills, manifold as they are?

We are. The Salvation Army will preach it until the world both hears *and* listens.

Before pulling out your various arguments against, settle in with an open Bible and an open heart, and consider the truth.

DIRT UNDER YOUR FINGERNAILS

This isn't just some good idea. Neither is it specifically the mission. But holiness applied outwardly to a hurting world is both a supernatural expression of compassion and a means of accomplishing our noble goal to 'tear hell's throne to pieces and win the world for Jesus' (William Pearson, SASB 800).

What God Commands, God Enables

First, let's confirm that God is good. By that, we understand that God is not mean-spirited, commanding the impossible from His subjects. We know that God *is* good and that what God commands, God enables.

So, when He commands that we be holy as He is holy, as He does in a few places in scripture, He does it with the expectation of obedience and the expectation of punishment in the case of disobedience. When He commands us to be perfect, as Jesus does in the Mountain Sermon, He actually provides the means for us to be perfect, complete, lacking in nothing. “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3 NIV).

There are two common mistakes regarding personal holiness: 1. The bar is too low; 2. The bar is too high.

1. We can equate holiness with being filled with the Spirit, in Paul’s use of the term. However, many Christians testify to being ‘Spirit-filled’ while at the same time insisting that they sin every day. Impossible! Paul, explaining holiness from another perspective, depicts the sinful nature, our natural inclination to do what is selfish, being crucified and done away with. One margin note suggests that he intended that this natural inclination is ‘neutralized’. Now, if your sinful nature is neutralized and the Holy Spirit is filling you, you do not sin every day. In fact, sin is a rare exception to the rule of a godly life for which Jesus’ divine power provides. So, usually by not thinking or understanding Scripture, people set the bar too low for Scriptural holiness and neither experience it nor understand its world-changing power.

2. Some people set the bar too high. These people approach the issue of holiness from the perspective of sin, noting that we all fall short of God’s glory. Because falling short is one of sin’s definitions, they conclude that holiness is impossible in this lifetime and is reserved exclusively for heaven. While starting with a correct presumption, they make two serious errors as they careen to this God-insulting conclusion. One, they cast God as mean-spirited, in that He has commanded the impossible- to be holy- and so will judge and punish us for something for which we are not culpable. Two, they make death out to be more powerful than God inasmuch as they ascribe to it the authority they assert God lacks, the ability to wholly sanctify us.

There is a *via media*, a way down the middle that possesses the truth. This way holds God up to be good, and understands His word to be true. John Wesley explained this way when he distinguished between blamelessness and faultlessness. The issue revolves around intention. Based on our understanding of the two common New Testament types of sins, we conclude that while unintentional sins put us at fault, intentional sins result in both fault and blame. In other words, there are sins of falling short, unintentional sins, of which we are all guilty but are not culpable. Scriptural holiness is freedom from intentional sins, and the promise is that we can be preserved blameless.

Holy How?

Now that we're agreed that scriptural holiness is both expected and enabled, how do we get there? Other chapters will explain this more profoundly, but here is a thumbnail sketch for you: Repent, believe, and receive.

The Dirt On Holiness?

John Wesley, grandfather of Salvationism, believed that you cannot be authentically holy unless that experience plays itself out among the poor.

This conviction was Biblically grounded, starting with Jesus' instruction to address God the Father as 'Our Father'. The fatherhood of God implied the brotherhood of men and women. Wesley's favorite epistle challenged him, "whoever loves God must also love his brother" (1 John 4:21 NIV). Wesley's comment on this verse carefully defined "brother" as "everyone, whatever his opinions or mode of worship be, purely because he is the child and bears the image of God (Frank Baker, 'Wesley's Principals for Social Action', in *Good News*, January/February 1985).

The dual command to love the Lord and to love your neighbor, the latter broadly defined by Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan, aborted Wesley's flirtation with a separate Christian community. In one of his sermons on the Sermon on the Mount, he asserted, "Christianity is essentially a social religion, and that to turn it into a solitary religion is indeed to destroy it" (Frank Baker, 'Wesley's Principals for Social Action', *Good News*, January 1985).

He funded several initiatives toward the poor on faith, although he did make appeals for support, one of which invited, "Join hands with God to make a poor man live" (Frank Baker, 'Wesley's Principals for Social Action', in *Good News*, January/February 1985).

And he put his own money where his mouth was. One year he made the equivalent of \$1.4 millions and gave 98% to the Kingdom ("Thinking Drafts," Keith Drury -- <http://www.indwes.edu/tuesday>). In his lifetime he made what would be equal today to \$30 millions, yet at his death he left a few books, a few coins and a spoon! The Wesleyan Quadrilateral is a famous measure for all good Wesleyans today, but the Wesleyan Trilateral is less well-known (Quadrilateral sets up four checks for Christian life: Bible, experience, reason, tradition). It concerns money. Wesley taught us to 'make all you can, save all you can, and give all you can'. The only problem was, by the time he got to the end of his sermon, his third point went from 'give all you can' to 'give all you have'. And he lived it.

Wesley's social justice burden was birthed in the Holy Club of Oxford, in 1729. Holy Club social action focused on two Oxford prisons, poor families, the workhouse, and a school for underprivileged children (Craven E. Williams, 'Origins: Social Holiness', <http://www.gborocollege.edu/prescorner/holiness.html>).

As early as 1740, Methodist collections fed nearly 150 unemployed people each day. Wesley looked upon this effort as, "redemption of society by economic means" (Craven E. Williams, 'Origins: Social Holiness', <http://www.gborocollege.edu/prescorner/holiness.html>). He initiated London's first financial institution to make interest-free loans to the poor. He followed that up with a free medical dispensary. He founded schools. As a champion of prison reform, he often skipped meals so he could help prisoner pay off debts (Carolyn Moore. 'The Dirt On Holiness', Athens Banner-Herald, March 2, 2002.).

Many argue that it was a letter from John to William Wilberforce that led to the end of slavery in England (Carolyn Moore. 'The Dirt On Holiness', Athens Banner-Herald, March 2, 2002.).

He vowed never to spend more than was absolutely necessary to live. He even wrote his brother Samuel that by letting his hair grow unfashionably long he was able to save a bit of money for the poor (Letter to brother Samuel, Nov. 17, 1731).

Impact Through Contact

John Wesley believed that visiting the poor, establishing first hand contact with them, was in itself a means of grace. After all, it is difficult to influence someone if you can't reach out to touch them. He preached that it is better to *take* food to the poor than to *send* it (Sermon "On Zeal", cited in Craven E. Williams, 'Origins: Social Holiness', <http://www.gborocollege.edu/prescorner/holiness.html>). Opines General John Gowans :

Nothing can be done at arms length. We must get alongside the impoverished whatever form their poverty takes. The old time slum sisters not only worked in their districts but they lived in them. They did not live at a distance and drive in every day. Is nobody called to this kind of dedication any more? (General John Gowans, 'Poverty and The Salvation Army - The Call to the Excluded', Keynote Address for The Salvation Army's International Summit on Poverty)

Wesley had a three-part plan for addressing the needs of the poor:

Meet the needs yourself.

Solicit resources for the poor

Become an advocate for the poor.

(Craven E. Williams, 'Origins: Social Holiness', <http://www.gborocollege.edu/prescorner/holiness.html>)

Inside-Out Christianity

This is an inside-out Christianity; one that starts in the heart and ends somewhere over the horizon. It starts by doing all in our own power to meet the needs ourselves. That means emptying our closet for a coat before sending them down to the Thrift Store.

And from our closet and wallet it goes to others' closets and others' wallets. And finally, as we see below, we become advocates for the poor, the excluded, the marginalized.

Of course, Wesley isn't the only one to wed holiness with social justice.

The people called Salvationists 'wedded' themselves to the excluded. They dedicated their lives to the business of raising the 'submerged tenth' by God's help and offering them salvation both physical and spiritual. They were fanatics but they were holy fanatics. They were determined to include the excluded or die in the attempt. (General John Gowans, 'Poverty and The Salvation Army - The Call to the Excluded', Keynote Address for The Salvation Army's International Summit on Poverty)

Throughout history the saints have found that an authentic experience of one supernaturally leads to supernatural impact in the other. General William Booth testified as much:

As in those days St. Francis of Assisi and the heroic band of saints who gathered under his orders were wont to go and lodge with the lepers at the city gates, so the devoted souls who have enlisted in the Salvation Army take up their quarters in the heart of the worst slums... They live the life of the Crucified for the sake of the men and women for whom He lived and died. (William Booth, IN DARKEST ENGLAND AND THE WAY OUT)

The Slum Sisters of The Salvation Army lived out this holiness that found solutions to every problem. They set a heroic example to all of us today. Booth described them:

They go forth in Apostolic fashion, two-and-two living in a couple of the same kind of dens or rooms as are occupied by the people themselves, differing only in the cleanliness and order... they live all the year round, visiting the sick, looking after the children, showing the women how to keep themselves and their homes decent, often discharging the sick mother's duties themselves; cultivating peace, advocating temperance, counselling in temporalities, and ceaselessly preaching the religion of Jesus Christ to the Outcasts of Society. (William Booth, IN DARKEST ENGLAND AND THE WAY OUT)

Slum Brothers and Sisters of every era deserve our honour and imitation as we seek the authentic experience promised in scripture. What does this mean as far as a minimum reaction by us today? Carolyn Moore concludes:

Wesley said so himself: "There is no such thing as social holiness without personal holiness, nor personal holiness without social holiness." In other words, it is a risky thing... to raise your hands in praise if you do not have the dirt of service under your fingernails. (Carolyn Moore. 'The Dirt On Holiness', Athens Banner-Herald, March 2, 2002)

EVERY PROBLEM?

But the third of Wesley's instructions is to become an advocate for the poor. And holiness, when deeply and widely experienced, transforms society on a macro level. We suggested that holiness is an inside-out type of Christianity. Well, once it gets outside of a lot of people, you call it revival. I use this line to explain the power of prayer: Prayer brings revival that lack of prayer makes necessary. It is similarly true of holiness. Consecration brings holiness that that lack of consecration makes necessary. And revival impacts society.

With the possible exception of the commuter revivals (e.g. Toronto Blessing, Pensacola Outpouring) in which people travel from all around the world to be impacted, the face of the earth changes as the hearts of its people are transformed.

'Revival' is a term of questionable value to us these days. It means different things to different people. Like 'baptism of the Spirit' it is difficult to use efficaciously in conversation today.

Anyway, 'revival' means dramatically different things to different people. We have friends who organize and throw 'revivals' a couple of times a year. Along this historic vein I have a book on my shelf, by evangelist R.A.Torrey, called **HOW TO PROMOTE AND CONDUCT A SUCCESSFUL REVIVAL**.

At the other end of the spectrum are those scandalized by the affront to God's sovereignty caused by the first group, who insist that we cannot do anything to bring about revival, that it is entirely up to God. This school holds the sway in much of the Body of Christ today.

As if often the case I am playing hooky from both schools. I side with one of my heroes, Charles Finney, who argued that just as you follow certain laws to get a crop of wheat, so you can follow several rules to get a revival. To get a crop of wheat you have to break up the fallow ground, plant, water, weed, and harvest. For revival you need to break up the fallow ground, plant, water, weed, and harvest. Contagious holiness becomes revival.

If we are His people, if we are called by His name, if we humble ourselves, if we pray, if we seek His face, and if we turn from our wicked ways, He WILL hear from heaven, He WILL hear our prayers, and He WILL heal our land. If we follow the divine rules He WILL give revival.

Contamination v. Defilement

This outward impact of corporate holiness is best illustrated by what I call the Contamination/Defilement Theory of Holiness in the Old Testament. There are two kinds of holiness in the Old Testament. One type of holiness gets easily defiled by the world. So there are all kinds of warnings and rules to protect this holiness from defilement. The other doesn't get defiled by contact with the world. The opposite occurs. It actually contaminates the world with the essence of holiness (examples abound: Exodus 29:37; 30:29; 2 Chronicles 8:11; Leviticus 6:27, etc.). In other words, the world gets holy when it comes into contact with someone who is holy! That's my kind of holiness!

In the Church we're too often living in a Defilement Holiness mindset. Whatever extent of holiness we think we have, we try to protect by walling things off from the world, building barriers to interaction. Instead, we need to be living boldly with Contaminating Holiness, the kind that makes other people and other things and even other systems holy when we come into contact with them.

This is more than mere theory. Watch how this has worked in history.

THE ASA AWAKENING: 2 Chronicles 15

From the compromise of comfort to the commitment of covenant.

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

How's this for strategy? Asa prayed:

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

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

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

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

We know nothing about Oded, except that he had a prophetic son named Azariah. Azariah went out from his tent on the morning after the victory. What he encountered was a celebratory parade atmosphere. Cheers and shouts accompanied the songs that the weary but joyful soldiers sang as they skipped and danced and strutted and sauntered in loose formation to the wild appreciation of the surrounding crowds. The happy pandemonium consisted of a smorgasbord of dusty colours wrapped around gaudy treasures, children playing among Cushite donkeys and sheep, victorious shofar blasts, and the rumbling rhythm of thousands upon thousands of stomping Hebrews, delirious with conquest.

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

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

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

Instead, Asa took courage. The Lord's word spurred him to even great works. He made identificational repentance on behalf of Judah, removing all of the detestable idols from his lands. He re-established the spiritual priorities of the nation by repairing the altar of the Lord. In doing so, Asa made possible daily sacrifices and offerings and service.

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

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

Outright, Contaminating Holiness

Then, in an act of outright contaminating holiness, King Asa assembled the people of Judah in Jerusalem. In a melee of neighing and 'baah-ing' and spraying blood and glistening swords they sacrificed thousands of animals to the Lord in repentance and acknowledgement of His sovereignty. All of the people swore and oath to enter a covenant with God that they would seek Him with all their heart and soul! They also determined to put to death all who would not seek Him with all their heart and soul.

So, they all determined to get holy. And the corporate holiness becomes revival that transforms society.

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

STILL TODAY?

However, there should be no poor among you, for in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess as your inheritance, he will richly bless you, if only you fully obey the LORD your God and are careful to follow all these commands I am giving you today. Deuteronomy 15:4-5

Sure, God's Contaminating Holiness transformed countries thousands years ago. But today's problems are overwhelming. AIDS is pandemic. Religious persecution created more martyrs in the last century than in all of the others combined. Half the world's population lives on less than \$2/day (The Officer Magazine, April 2000). One tenth of that number are children in chains, slaves or exploited workers as young as four years old. As many children are fighting in wars right now in 32 countries. One third of that number of children are homeless.

Can we seriously claim that Contaminating Holiness can solve all of these problems?

Yes, on a larger scale. If contaminating holiness spreads through a people and revival transforms a city or a country, as we've seen, and if that process is multiplied across the globe, holiness will prove to be the solution to every problem.

If Iraqi's civil servant (in the fallen regime), whose position is called Women's Honour Violator, and whose responsibility is to go around raping women, complete with ID card, pension, and benefits, gets saved and sanctified, he stops raping women.

If a tin pot dictator, who oppresses his people and siphons billions of dollars from humanitarian aid, gets saved and sanctified, he will start to bless his people with food and the Gospel.

If wealthy Christians, that is, those of us in the first world, who normally extravagantly exhaust energy and food, get sanctified, that holiness can play itself out into our lifestyles and pocketbooks and overflow blessing to starving people of this world with their share of the world's food.

If we build courage to go with our convictions, if we start sponsoring third world children, if we support relief and development agencies, if we lobby for law and policy changes, if we pray for leaders to be saved, if we support evangelisation of non-Christian territories, if we help generate micro-enterprise in the third world, if we get a contaminating holiness, we will see whole inequitable systems and governments and policies changed.

That sort of big picture stuff can tend to immobilize. After all, who are we, as individuals? Faytene, our missionary friend with a problem, allowed her contaminating holiness to change Naomi's world:

I continued to think and consulted another missionary for advice. We concluded that Naomi could be started in a small business to help support her but that she would need a mentor to walk along side her to keep her accountable.

We talked with Naomi and confronted her with difficult questions regarding whether or not she was sincerely willing to leave the "quick buck" lifestyle of the streets. She said she was. Said our mentor, "Well, if you are willing to change, there is a room near where I live we can rent..."

By God's grace we were able to set the girls up with a peanut, rice, and egg selling business. To this day they have been working hard at their business... not at the street, and Amelia is keeping a close eye on their activity. I am so proud of them and so thankful to God. He truly is the God that lifts the needy from the ash heap (Ps 113). Praise be to God! (Faytene Kryskow, missionary newsletter, Liberia)

Prayer: Christ of compassion grant the people called Salvationists a fresh baptism of compassionate, contaminating holiness. Make us genuine 'carers' for the

impoverished. Help Your Salvation Army everywhere to recapture a passion for the poor and the determination to integrate the excluded in Your Name (adapted from General John Gowans, International Conference on Poverty).

A Walk in the Park

by Cadet Stephen Bell

I've spent a huge chunk of my life in Kingston, on many occasions spending time in rough sports. I thought I knew what "having it bad" was; but I learned over the last couple of days that even the hard places of Kingston seem like Disney compared to the East Side of Vancouver. The corner of Main and Hastings (colourfully referred to as "Pain and Wastings") has literally been named the "the worst block in North America". I've never seen a place like this before; suffice to say that the city might as well just put a sign reading: "Abandon all hope ye who enter." This people here have been forgotten. The rest of the city only walks through here if they have to, and when they do...they walk at a very, very quick pace. There is no peace here. There is no rest.

On the day I arrived here in Vancouver I went for a walk.

Over the course of an hour I was offered:

Crack eight times.

Downers twice.

Uppers once.

Crystal once

And weed numerous times.

Women, both very young and very young old were offering their bodies at bargain basement prices: "Just enough for a fix..." one of them told me. I asked someone later how much a fix was, only to discover that it cost between \$15-20.

My supper cost more than that.

As I was walking all I could smell was urine, which I found rather fitting: one could easily compare these few blocks to a proverbial colostomy bag, continually discharging panic, hate, neglect, abuse and misery. People were lying in pools of their own excrement...refusing to mind anymore. They littered the streets, not caring about where they were, what they were doing or who saw them. Most of the hope these people started with was gone.

But through it all, God has provided the Salvation Army.

I honestly believe that many here see us as their only real hope. One of the guys who was offering me pot took notice of my 614 shirt as I was walking away and yelled: "Hey, 614!" He ran to catch up to me with a huge smile on his face...

We didn't stop talking for half an hour.

His name was Ruben. He told me about the good things the Army does and that we are the only ones who are willing to actually live with them, eat with them, shake hands with them and hang out with them. He told me about the 614 in Regent Park

Toronto, how much it helped him and how he was so glad that there was another one here when he came out here. To Ruben, the Salvation Army was a piece of home. The Salvation Army took the time to care about him. The Salvation Army brought him hope.

Girls and guys, if any of you want to be a part of a meaningful ministry and you live in the Vancouver or Toronto areas, don't hesitate to check out 614. It might just be what you are looking for. Jesus said once while he was preaching, "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28). Do you have the guts to call the weary towards the arms of Jesus? Do you have the guts to come out with the Army and proclaim the name of Christ to the down-spirited and forgotten? If you think so, give us a call.

Come walk the streets with us.

Devotional Study - Angels

by Patricia King

STUDY INCLUDES:

- A. Prophetic Encouragement
- B. Devotional Teaching
- C. Weekly Scripture Meditation
- D. Prayer Directives
- E. Personal Application
- F. Resource Corner

A. PROPHETIC ENCOURAGEMENT

Angelic visitations shall increase more and more. Warring angels, communication angels, angels assigned to media, children, the church, and to the harvest will be loosed into their assignments in multiplied measure in these days. The Watchers that are mentioned in the book of Daniel are also being dispatched. They are being sent to watch over the Word of the Lord to perform it. Angels will be loosed to carry out assignments of God's blessings and protection as well as judgments and purging in the earth. I see angels assigned over earthquakes and hurricanes and other natural phenomena.

Many of God's people will experience an increase of discernment and will sense the presence of the angels and will cooperate with their assignments. The Lord will also teach His people to dispatch the angels to their God-given assignments in the earth. I see believers dispatching angels to unsaved loved ones. Many prodigals will come back to the Lord due to angelic visitation .

B. DEVOTIONAL TEACHING

God has created angelic beings that serve Him and His purposes (see Hebrews 1:14). These angelic majesties are sent to minister to believers. Throughout the Bible, you will find a great deal of teaching about angels and the way they interface with man.

Prior to any Kingdom event, you will often find the increased appearance of angels. All believers have the ability to see angels through the eye of their spirit. We have been given the gift of the discerning of spirits so that we may discern the presence of God, angels, and demonic spirits. Our discernment can increase through prayer and drawing close to the Holy Spirit. He will teach us through the use of the gift of the discerning of spirits.

Angels minister in the heavens and in the earth. Their functions are many. There are many different kinds of angels with various appearances. They have been standing in the presence of the Lord for thousands of years and therefore transmit His holy presence. I highly recommend the Glory School teaching for more information. (see Resource Section at the end of this study) .

C. SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

1. Week One: Hebrews 1
2. Week Two: Isaiah 6:1-7; Ezekiel 1:5-28

3. Week Three: Revelation 4, 5
4. Week Four: Revelation 12:7-9; Daniel 10:12,13

D. PRAYER DIRECTIVES

1. Pray for fresh focus on Jesus Christ, the Exalted One.
2. Pray for the gift of the discerning of spirits to be stirred within your heart..
3. Pray for the Body to receive understanding concerning the presence of the angels and their activity.
4. Pray for the angels to be dispatched to the unsaved to help them come to faith.

E. PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Spend time worshipping Jesus Christ. Declare that He is the most Exalted One in your heart and life.
2. Confess your sins and invite the Holy Spirit to forgive you and cleanse you from all unrighteousness. In particular, ask the Lord to convict you of things you have allowed into your thoughts, hearing, and sight that is not of Him. Compromise in these areas will cloud your ability to receive accurate discernment and vision.
3. Invite the Holy Spirit to fill you with a new understanding of God's invisible Kingdom. Ask Him to teach and instruct you.
4. Set apart time to meditate on the scriptures in the Bible about angels and ask Him for personal insight and visitation. Study good Bible teachings about the subject. Make sure the sources are credible.

F. RESOURCE CORNER.

For fuller teachings on Angels, the following resources of Patricia King will help you:

- a. The Glory School -- 16 tape or CD series. To view,
<http://www.crownproductions.com/content/ShopProduct.phtml?30/0/359>
- b. Angels and their assignments – a 2 tape series on angels and their ministry. To view,
<http://www.crownproductions.com/content/ShopProduct.phtml?999999/0/205>
- c. The Heavenly City – a book on the Heavenly realm for children (and for the child in heart). To view,
http://www.extremeprophetic.com/images/ads/printerfriendly2004/Devotions2004_08_August04_printerfriendly.htm

These resource items and more can be purchased online at www.extremeprophetic.com

And Remember

God loves you with an everlasting love!

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An Army of Covenanted Warriors

by John McAlister

What are we calling our people to?

Fifteen years ago I covenanted with God and The Salvation Army to be a soldier of Jesus Christ. When I put on my fancy blue tunic (a few sizes too large) for the first time, I felt an incredible desire to rush out and win the world for Jesus. Well, I definitely wanted to get to my seat in the senior band.

In my teen years I didn't think much about my salvation, and I thought even less about the salvation of the rest of the world. Soldiership was all about belonging to a club—much like cub scouts or sea cadets when I was younger. It was a rite of passage.

I had many uniforms then. There were my prep boy styles during the week, my football, rugby and basketball gear depending on season, and, of course, my Sunday outfit. I needed the first uniform to pick up chicks, the second to play sports and the third to go to church. The first two made sense; the third got in the way of the first.

Years passed and while I didn't really grow into my uniform, I thankfully matured into my covenant. I think it's because I joined a new club. It has the same name and outfit as the last one, but its clubhouse isn't as pretty. To be honest, it's filthy at times.

My club, The Salvation Army Corps 614 in Regent Park, Toronto, wants to see its community rebuilt, restored and renewed by God (see Isaiah 61:4). It wants each of its neighbours to embrace God's plan to give them hope and a future (see Jeremiah 29:11).

The leaders of the corps, Captains Geoff and Sandra Ryan, take this vision and mission very seriously. They're in a fierce battle, and they need committed soldiers they can count on to fight alongside them as they wage war against the pain and destruction so prevalent in Regent Park.

When the corps launched over three years ago, soldiers on the leadership team were asked to recite the Doctrines of The Salvation Army. Few of us could remember more than, we believe in one God ... and the Scriptures are perfect ... and something about the endless punishment of the wicked. Whew! Satan, look out. Here comes a bunch of sissy warriors.

So we were retrained. We learned and memorized our doctrines and, more importantly, discovered why they were so relevant to our lives and the mission of the corps. It's about living holy and pleasing lives before God so that He can utilize us to our fullest potential. It's about knowing Him intimately so that we can better know His heart and His passion. When all that matters to you is yourself, this may not seem important. But in the face of broken families, addiction and abused children, you need

all of God's grace and mercy that you can get. We are not the saviours of the world; God is. But He wants to use us as His Army of salvation, and we need to be prepared for the battle.

When our remedial soldier classes were finished, we attended a covenant service where we were invited to renew our covenants. Some of us brought in our original Articles of War; others signed a fresh copy. As each of us approached the holiness table, we knelt before God in prayer. We were joined there by at least one other Christian who promised to uphold us in prayer over the promises we had made. As we signed, our covenants were blessed by one of our corps officers. It wasn't easy for all. Many of us understood that we were making a serious commitment to God and to The Salvation Army. We recognized what this might cost. It was a powerful scene of surrender.

Since then, our soldiers have had the opportunity to renew our covenants each year. In addition, a ministry covenant—outlining our ministry to the corps—is signed and renewed annually as well. Sissy warriors no more—we are truly an Army of covenanted warriors. We are expected to honour the promises we made to God and The Salvation Army. But we are also given the support, accountability and relevance we need to passionately live them out.

While it's important for the Army to hold its soldiers accountable to the Articles of War, it also needs to fulfil its role in the covenant. What are we, as The Salvation Army, calling our people to? What is our mission and vision? How do we want our soldiers to live that out?

I believe it all comes down to identity. The Articles of War are relevant to soldiers fighting in God's mission of peace and restoration. If we are just a church that exists for the needs of our congregation, then the relevancy and importance of our soldier's covenant will continue to be debated and watered down. But if we truly see ourselves as a Movement committed to winning the world for Jesus, then we need an Army of covenanted warriors. Let's start communicating this vision to the young and old in our Army, and call our people to something greater.

Devotional Study – The Consecrated Life

by Patricia King

STUDY INCLUDES:

- A. Prophetic Encouragement
- B. Devotional Teaching
- C. Weekly Scripture Meditation
- D. Prayer Directives
- E. Personal Application
- F. Resource Corner

A. PROPHETIC ENCOURAGEMENT

As My people set themselves apart for My purposes, they will see the power and glory of God. A divided heart is a heart in danger for you cannot serve two masters. You will love one and hate the other. Many of you will set special times apart to spend with Me in this next while. As you spend time in undivided focus, you will find refreshment and strengthening. You will receive new empowerment and as you abide in Me, you will bear much fruit and prove to be My disciples. There are many things that will attempt to distract you but you will overcome and you will experience deepened levels of consecration which will open the door to things that you have not yet dreamed of – things that Wisdom will unfold.

B. DEVOTIONAL TEACHING

Consecration means to be set apart for God's holy purposes. Other words in the Bible that mean the same thing are "sanctification" and "holiness." In the Old Testament when things were consecrated for God's purposes, they were no longer to be used for the mundane. This is a picture of our New Testament lives. When we are consecrated vessels, then we are always considering God. Our lives, activities, and belongings are centered around His will. Galatians 2:20 refers to this as being crucified with Christ. In other words we are dead to our own desires and alive to His. In everything we do, we think of Him when we are living a consecrated life. Colossians 3:1 refers to having a mind that is set on the things above where Christ is seated and not on the things of the world. This is consecration.

When we live a set-apart life for God, we come under His showers of blessings. Why not commit to Him each day all that you are and all that you have and watch the heavens open. Make this your lifestyle!

C. SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

1. Week One: Proverbs 3:5,6; Psalm 37:5,6; Joshua 3:5
2. Week Two: 2 Timothy 2:15-21
3. Week Three: 1 Peter 2:4-12
4. Week Four: Phil 3:7-21

D. PRAYER DIRECTIVES

1. Pray for increased levels of consecration in the Body of Christ.

2. Pray for believers to receive renewed conviction regarding sin, righteousness and judgment.
3. Pray for the Body to have an undivided focus towards the Lord, His Kingdom and His righteousness.
4. Pray for the fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit to fill those hearts that are set apart for Him.

E. PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Allow the Holy Spirit to search your own heart for any area that is divided or has given over to compromise.
2. Confess your sins and invite the Holy Spirit to forgive you and cleanse you from all unrighteousness.
3. Invite the Holy Spirit to fill you with a new level of consecration in your life.
4. Set apart special personal times to be with the Lord and then think on Jesus throughout your day. Remind yourself that you are set apart for His holy purposes in all that you do. Keep a close watch over your heart.

F. RESOURCE CORNER.

For fuller teachings on The Consecrated Life, the following resources of Patricia King will help you:

- a. The Careless Priesthood – a single tape. To view,
<http://www.crownproductions.com/content/ShopProduct.phtml?999999/0/74>
- b. School of Personal Ministry – a 16 tape series on personal revival and cleansing, to view,
<http://www.crownproductions.com/content/ShopProduct.phtml?999999/0/147>
- c. Eyes That See -- a booklet. to view,
<http://www.crownproductions.com/content/ShopProduct.phtml?18/0/120>

These resource items and more can be purchased online at www.extremeprophetic.com

And Remember

God loves you with an everlasting love!

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Inner City Parables

by Aaron White

I. History Began With, Once Upon a Time

I am a storyteller.

I simply cannot help myself. Stories move me to tears, laughter, compassion, anger, thought, and action. A good story will hold my attention and allegiance more readily than any well-reasoned (but dry) syllogism. So I am impelled to share whenever I encounter a powerful story.

Creation itself is the most powerful story of all. As soon as we hear the words In the Beginning or their equivalent, we are caught up into the grand narrative of the Universe. Humanity's story within that narrative is simply its attempt to understand its world, its creator, and itself. Each of us has a story that forms a part of that overarching human narrative, our own worldview as a lens through which we perceive and interpret external events. This is our way of understanding events and investing them with meaning, making patterns out of apparent chaos. Stories are not mere illustrations, secondary to abstracts or hard facts. As author N.T. Wright has it, "human life can be seen as grounded in and constituted by the implicit or explicit stories which humans tell themselves and one another."

When a certain narrative has become ensconced as the status quo in a community, it takes on the alluring power of myth. But stories can also challenge established myths, issue in new paradigms and turn the world on its head. These stories are called parables. Parables gain access to our raw emotions and ask us to experience, empathize and find ourselves within the story. They force us to hear with our whole selves. Parables have the ability to bypass our defenses of cynicism and caution, and to engage our imaginations, hopes and dreams. Therein lies their potency and their danger. A virulent opinion may not on its own have any contagious power, but wrap it loud with a stirring story and you have the potential for mass infection. In the same way a beneficent message will spread far more quickly and effectively if people can picture themselves inside its story.

I want to speak to you in parables. I have three stories to tell, stories that challenge prevailing myths about what makes for a purposeful life and about who is capable of enjoying such a life. They are tales from my own experiences. Through each one I learned to see the world through a different light. I would dare say a brighter light.

II. My friend, the prostitute - Finding purpose in community.

I am not a prostitute.

I did not have much occasion to interact with prostitutes during my formative years either. Still, in the course of growing up I learned from various sources the

appropriate attitude towards these women: distanced pity from my faith community; complete avoidance from my parents; lust and scorn from my teenaged friends. I distinctly remember school buddies touring the downtown in their car with a video camera, spotlight, and water gun, harassing the girls working the corners.

I now have a friend who is, or was, a prostitute.

It was the opening Sunday of a new inner city church. After some upbeat singing, the leader invited us to turn and ask our neighbours and ask why they had come that day. I was not entirely sure myself why I was there, other than having some big notions that an inner city church may be a little more raw, more real, more immediate in the application of Gospel love than what I had previously experienced. I turned to my neighbour, a young woman with badly dyed hair and cracked nails. Her name was Tracy. "So, why did you come to church today?" I asked. "Well, I'm a prostitute and I'm addicted to crack. I need to get out of that life. I've been hearing a little about Jesus and thought maybe going to church could help.

On the surface I remained stoically unmoved. But my inner jaw hit the floor. This was most certainly not an expected revelation even considering the neighbourhood in which we were gathering. I was unused to that kind of honesty, particularly in the church. Experience had taught that the worship service was not generally a setting that encouraged honesty about life's difficulties. But this young woman had no practice putting on her best defensive smile along with her best clothes when she made ready for church. It was refreshing.

Tracy became part of our small group and would contribute vigorously to our discussions. Naturally she had no theological training, but more than made up for it with her intensity and compassion. She was excited about the faith she was coming into and wanted to know how it could be lived out in her situation. I did not know what faith lived out in her context could even look like, to be honest.

This is not a Hollywood story. Tracy would disappear every so often, lured back to the promise of fast money and faster highs. We would pray for her protection, scour the streets for her, and welcome her back unreservedly when she returned, which she always did. Every time she came back to our community there was really no way for her to conceal the hurt in her life. The bruises and needle marks were out in the open for all to see. But Tracy had learned that here was a group of people who loved her for who she was; who recognized that she had weaknesses but still saw her as a beautiful child of God. In this place she was not a prostitute, but a person who was worthy of love.

Once Tracy disappeared for a long time. When she finally resurfaced we discovered that she had very nearly been murdered during a bad date. Two men had picked her up, taken her to the back of a van, and assaulted her so violently that Tracy did not want anyone to see how brutally she had been beaten and cut. During the assault one of the men had put his knife to her throat and told her she was going to die.

(Later she discovered the threat was quite real, as other girls had been killed in that area in the same way.) She had given up hope, and resigned herself to a meaningless death. But then she remembered her community, her small group at our little church. In that moment she knew that she was loved, that there was a place where she was valued for more than her body. In that same moment, the man with the knife inexplicably drew back, opened the van door, and let her go free. She credited our prayers for her salvation.

Tracy is able to experience community in more depth than I have ever been able to. This is because she comes into the community hiding nothing, and her acceptance is therefore total. Community for her is a matter of life or death, not just a pleasant Sunday morning activity. The kind of transparency and vulnerability that is forced upon her is something to which I think I should aspire. Tracy's wounds are on display for all to see. My wounds are on the inside, carefully hidden and nurtured. They never become too obvious, but neither are they ever truly healed. How can I then be forgiven and accepted if I do not let anyone know who I really am? Can I be truly loved if I refuse to allow myself to be truly known?

If we want to create purposeful communities where love is above and before all, do we not need to encourage the kind of interaction that allows pain and weakness to be out in the open? Jean Vanier, who founded the L'Arche communities for individuals with mental and physical disabilities, affirms this: Community is a place of pain, of the death of ego. Authentic community, he says, is the place of purification and support that will lead us to a deeper love and liberation, a place where cleansed of our egocentric attitudes we will be able to give new life to others. This type of transparency, modeled in Alcoholics Anonymous communities, prompted one member to suggest, Maybe God is calling us alcoholics to teach the saints what it means to be dependent on him and on his community on earth.

Through the recognition of our wounds perhaps we can help each other find healing and purpose. This entails risk, obviously, but then all relationships entail risk. We risk opening ourselves up to someone else, showing them our weak spots, giving them the opportunity to hurt and take advantage of us. Sometimes we get burned, and that is devastating. It causes us to never want to open up again. But sometimes, just sometimes, we let people in, they see who we really are, and they love us just the same. They do not just tolerate our existence, they actively love us. That is powerful. That is a power that can change lives, change communities. That is a power that brings meaning and purpose where before there was isolation and despair. Do we dare risk it?

Unlike my friend Tracy, I have the option of choosing to hide, choosing to keep things in the dark, choosing to appear as if I have it all together. This option encourages and is encouraged by the shallow relationships that often exist in faith communities and elsewhere. I wonder what our world would look like if, when we asked each other how are you doing? our answers were as brutally honest as my friend's answers

were? Life would be a lot riskier, but the possibility of the real relationships that could result would, I believe, be worth the risk.

III. My friend the criminal - Finding purpose in trust.

I am not a crook.

I have met more than a few prisoners in my time, however. My job has allowed me to descend into cells to help prisoners awaiting trial. For those who have not had the fortune of visiting a jail, let me tell you what you are missing. It stinks. It smells terribly of unwashed feet and bad gas and sweat and cold metal and antiseptic and fear. There are too many people in too small a space. Everyone is nervous, even if they are pretending to be cool and calm. It is not a place I would choose to spend my quality time.

There are certain prisoners who have been through the system often and know what to expect. Then there are those who are seeing life from behind the bars for the first time, and they are in a state of near panic. For them it is hell. The other prisoners are mean, the guards are mean, even the walls look mean. The criminal behind bars feels very vulnerable, very alone, and very hopeless.

While working at a halfway house, I learned that bars are not required in order to make someone feel like a criminal. When I started there the other workers informed me that I could never trust the men living in the house. They were criminals, and would always be criminals, which is to say less than human. One front desk worker had two names for all our residents: the polite name was 'dirt bag'.

I would read the residents rap sheets, and they certainly bore out the workers assertions. Murderers, cheats, thieves, dealers, rapists, child molesters; every vile sin was represented in this community. Few had done anything to warrant a second chance.

When men were sent to the halfway house, they had to undergo an entrance interview. One of the questions asked was, 'What do you need from us?' The answers were numerous and varied, but one stands out in my mind. John, later to become my friend, simply said, 'I need you to trust me.'

John's former profession was a drug runner, a 'mule'. He would be given a package to transport from one place to the other, and would be paid in money and drugs to feed his habit. It was a despicable job, and he knew it. But he could not find a way out because of his addictions. John was a criminal, no doubt about it, but once caught he had managed to sober up and begin a new life. That was his story when he came to us: a criminal and a drug runner, just asking to be trusted.

The story of Jesus is also that of a criminal. He was arrested, tried by the legal system of the day, deemed guilty by a small selection of his peers, punished and

executed by the state authority. Whether or not he was innocent and the victim of injustice does not change the fact that he was, in his time, a convicted criminal. He suffered a criminal's death between two thieves. One of the criminals was promised a place with him in paradise.

I am not sure how deeply it has hit home that Jesus actually chose to identify fully with the criminal, the prisoner. We talk of the incarnation of Jesus, of his putting on human flesh, and we are all generally familiar with the story of his death. I wonder, though, if repetition has dulled its brutal shock. The one whom Christians revere as the King of Kings did not just descend to earth to live a normal, respectable human life. The story is that he descended and became a criminal - a rejected, humiliated, beaten, imprisoned and killed criminal. And he chose that way, so that no one could ever scream out, 'God doesn't understand!'

Jesus went through the worst and identified with those the rest of the world considered good enough only to spit on. Jesus said that whenever we see a prisoner, we see him. According to this particular story, whenever we visit someone in prison, we are in fact visiting the Son of God. Through those bars, in that halfway house, in the face of the frightened, the convicted, the untrustworthy, we are somehow meant to see the face of Jesus. This is a powerful grace.

Whenever we speak of grace, we must speak of risk. In my friend John's case, we granted him the trust he desired, and he repaid us with faithfulness. He found employment, joined our Church (and our baseball team!), and began to help young offenders avoid the mistakes he had made. It easily could have gone another way - and often has. We have to be extremely wise and discerning with the trust we measure out, prepared always to protect those who are vulnerable and in our care. It may be, however, that we need more often to err on the side of grace, and to risk giving meaning to the lives of those who have lost all trust. It may be that we need to learn to identify with the criminal.

Jesus story did not stop at the entrance of the prison cell. Where are the boundaries of our stories?

IV. My friend, the mother - Finding purpose in forgiveness.

I am not a mother.

I have a friend, Susan, who is mother seven times over. She has not had an easy life, and has made many poor decisions. Often this has lead to tragedy. Though she is only in her early forties, she appears twenty years older at least. None of the seven children she has birthed are in her care. I had the great misfortune of being present when her last child was taken from her.

I was at my pastor's house when Susan's husband arrived at the door late one night, distraught. He shared with us how he and Susan had been fighting and how things

had spiraled out of control. Susan had fallen back into the grips of her personal demon, alcohol, and was taking her six-month-old baby out to pubs. Staying away from the drink was an absolute condition for Susan to keep the baby, so we knew this was dangerous news. Worse still, before her husband had left, Susan had threatened to harm both herself and her infant daughter. Susan loved her daughter, but addiction has a way of demanding top priority.

My pastor and I drove quickly over to the apartment. We could not gain access, and fearing the worst called the police to break down the door. When they did, we found an apartment in a state of utter disarray, but no mother and child.

We began a search of seedy dives and filthy motel rooms, hoping to find Susan and the baby before the police did. We were not certain what we would do once we found her. On a tip from another friend we finally tracked her down to a slum apartment, arriving at the same time as the authorities. They kindly let us approach first, but there was little doubt the baby would be taken.

It was not a happy meeting. The man she was with in the dingy room clearly wanted no part of the drama, and he parted the scene post haste. Susan, intoxicated as she was, immediately grabbed her daughter protectively, screaming that we could not take her baby from her. For whatever reason, she directed her wrath squarely at me, possibly because she knew I had a little baby of my own, and another on the way. I stood still, stunned, as she cursed me by name and called me a hypocrite. Slurring invectives she finally collapsed on the bed in a fit of wailing.

We did our best to calm her and reason with her, but when the police stepped in she became completely hysterical. Eventually the child was removed, and Susan was taken to the hospital and sedated. Witnessing this scene was among the worst moments of my life.

The next day was Sunday, and my family and I went off to church. I was exhausted from the night before, but craved community more than ever. Halfway through the service Susan walked in. She looked terrible, ten years older. I did not know what to expect, and my heart sank as she made straight towards me. Would she continue on from the night before, hurling abuse in the middle of the worship? Would she physically attack me as she had done to the police officer? The worst perhaps would be if she said nothing, but let me know with a look that she felt I was responsible in some way for the loss of her baby.

None of those things happened. Instead, she took me aside, tears in her eyes, and said: 'I'm so sorry. I should not have spoken to you as I did last night. It was killing me all night that I called you those names. I need to make things right between us. Please forgive me.'

And then she hugged me. We stood at the back of the room, hugging and weeping like crazy. No sermon on repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation or love could ever

equal that hug. Here was a woman who only twelve hours before had lost, probably forever, the last of her children. She had spent the night in hospital under heavy sedation and supervision. Her life had, once again, crumbled around her. And yet her primary concern at that moment was making things right with a person she believed she had wronged. I did not even blame her for the way she reacted towards me that night. I would have been frantic and hysterical in that situation as well. But she was sorrowfully concerned about the hurt that lay between us, and wanted to be reconciled.

Her actions challenged me to the core. How willing am I to admit my wrongs, to repent, to humble myself and make things right, to find purpose in forgiveness and reconciliation? When it comes to my time of trial, how prepared am I to forsake my selfishness and consider how I am affecting others? Perhaps Susan is not fit to be a mother, but she was more than fit to teach me a deeper meaning of the word grace. I want to live my life according to the grace Susan displayed towards me.

V. Will History End With, 'Happily Ever After'

I am a realist.

Which stories help us find purpose and meaning in this life? The stories I have told here are stories of vulnerable relationship, of trust and faith, of forgiveness and reconciliation. Each runs from despair to hope, from pain to healing, from death to life. But there are stories of the other kind, and they are all too frequently lived out in our world. I am aware that for every story of grace I tell, there are countless stories of disgrace left untold. Yet I have to believe that grace, faith, hope and love are stronger, and that they define humanity's story of purpose. That may be naive, but it is my story, and I am sticking to it.

I am hopeful.

'The World for God'

IHQ declaration

International conference of leaders speaks to Salvationists of the world

(note- although this came out a few months ago, some salvationists still have not read it. So we're running it below)

AFTER eight days of intense listening, worshipping and talking, 126 international, territorial and command leaders of The Salvation Army signed their names to a declaration to be issued to Salvationists worldwide. The signatories had gathered at the Hamilton Park Conference Center in New Jersey, USA, for the triennial International Conference of Leaders, presided over by General John Larsson and the Chief of the Staff, Commissioner Israel L. Gaither.

On the first day of the conference the General had appointed a drafting committee to prepare a statement that would embody the passions and heart concerns of the conference delegates as these arose and were confirmed during the daily devotional and business sessions. In a final meeting, this statement, which had been discussed and approved at two plenary sessions, was read to the conference by Commissioner Lawrence R. Moretz, chairman of the drafting committee.

The General then read out the verses of a song that, right from the public welcome at the commencement of the conference, had provided the devotional theme running through each session: General Evangeline Booth's great testimony of faith,
The world for God! The world for God!
There's nothing else will meet the hunger of my soul

and the leaders sang, as they had done many times in the previous days, the chorus of affirmation, which includes the words:
I give my heart! I'll do my part!

During the singing of other songs and in moments of quiet meditation, the Army's leaders then moved forward and signed their names to the conference declaration, before each confirmed to the General his or her determination to continue to 'do my part' in the evangelisation and salvation of the world.

The final conference statement, to provide direction and inspiration to all Salvationists wherever they might be carrying on the Army's God-given mission, stands as follows:

**Towards 2010
A Declaration of Renewal
29 April - 7 May 2004**

The Salvation Army International Conference of Leaders convened under the theme **"Renewal - See I am doing a new thing"**.

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it is springing up, do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:18-19)

In his keynote address, General John Larsson affirmed: "God is doing a new thing in the Army right now and right here. It is my hope that, as we share together these days around the theme of 'renewal', we will be reassured that God is indeed doing this new thing".

We, the leaders together in conference in New Jersey USA, waited for God to show us the new thing that he is doing with The Salvation Army in the world today.

We recognize that the action-oriented nature of the movement has sometimes caused us not to await God's direction.

In the spirit of repentance we humbly respond to God and obediently accept the call to prayer and the seeking of his will. "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." II Chronicles 7:14 NIV

We embrace the future, desiring to know our potential as God sees it.

We affirm that the essence of Salvationism is the love of Jesus Christ that knows no boundaries, calling us especially to the lost, the marginalized, the exploited and the neglected.

It is this love which:

must burn in the heart of every Salvationist and leader;
calls us to a renewed commitment to listen to God in prayer;
engages us with the world in the integrated mission of soul saving, discipling, serving humanity and transforming society;
compels us to actively engage in Kingdom growth;
provokes our concern for the unevangelized peoples of the world;
leads us to mutual respect in strengthening teams and mission partnerships;
requires us to give liberally in support of the mission of The Salvation Army.

We confirm:

that we are a world movement committed to world evangelization - to all people and to the whole person - recognizing the Holy Spirit's gracious direction to the unreached, including children and youth.

that the truth of the Gospel must not only be declared but also be evident in the life of every Salvationist.

that the participation of all in mission and ministry is vital to reach the whole world for God.

our interdependence and global connectedness as partners in mission and celebrate our God-given unity in diversity as part of the body of Christ.
the necessity to develop mission strategies for world evangelization, holistic ministry, social transformation and financial stability in every territory and command.
the importance of identifying and developing spiritual leaders to meet tomorrow's missional challenges.

We declare our personal commitment to God and to discover those new things that he wants us to do.

We are confident in God that The Salvation Army remains part of his plan as we submit to him under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11 NIV.

As a Great Commission Army called to "Go and make disciples" (Matthew 28:19 NIV), we joyfully accept the General's challenges:

to discover our identity as a people renewed in Christ.

to regard every Army unit as a "mission team."

to attain, world wide, 2 million soldiers, junior soldiers and adherent members by 2010.

to combat the evil of human trafficking for sexual exploitation.

to uphold the principle of self-denial in the renamed international self-denial world mission fund.

The world for God!

I give my heart, I will do my part.

The declaration was signed by (in order of seniority):

General John Larsson, Commissioner Freda Larsson (International Headquarters), Commissioner Israel L. Gaither (Chief of the Staff), Commissioner Eva D. Gaither (IHQ), Commissioner Paul du Plessis (IHQ), Commissioner Margaret du Plessis (IHQ), Commissioner B. Donald Odegaard (Norway, Iceland and The Færoes), Commissioner Berit Odegaard (Norway, Iceland and The Færoes), Commissioner Mohan Masih (India Western), Commissioner Swarni Masih (India Western), Commissioner Alex Hughes (United Kingdom), Commissioner Ingeborg Hughes (United Kingdom), Commissioner Brian Taylor (IHQ), Commissioner Margaret Taylor (IHQ), Commissioner Johannes Watilete (Indonesia), Commissioner Augstina Watilete (Indonesia), Commissioner Rolf Roos (Sweden and Latvia), Commissioner Majvor Roos (Sweden and Latvia), Commissioner Thorleif Gulliksen (IHQ), Commissioner Olaug Gulliksen (IHQ), Commissioner William Mabena (Southern Africa), Commissioner Lydia Mabena (Southern Africa), Commissioner Lawrence R. Moretz (USA Eastern), Commissioner Nancy A. Moretz (USA Eastern), Commissioner Nozomi Harita (Japan), Commissioner Kazuko Harita (Japan), Commissioner Tadeous Shipe (Zambia), Commissioner Nikiwe Shipe (Zambia),

Commissioner Hasse Kjellgren (Switzerland, Austria and Hungary), Commissioner Christina Kjellgren (Switzerland, Austria and Hungary), Commissioner Shaw Clifton (New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga), Commissioner Helen Clifton (New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga), Commissioner Kang, Sung-hwan (Korea), Commissioner Lee, Jung-ok (Korea), Commissioner W. Todd Bassett (USA National Headquarters), Commissioner Carol A. Bassett (USA National Headquarters), Commissioner Werner Frei (Germany), Commissioner Paula Frei (Germany), Commissioner Amos Makina (Zimbabwe), Commissioner Rosemary Makina (Zimbabwe), Commissioner Robin Dunster (The Philippines), Commissioner Lalkiamlova (IHQ), Commissioner Lalhlimpuii (IHQ), Commissioner P.D. Krupa Das (India South Eastern), Commissioner P. Mary Rajakumari (India South Eastern), Commissioner Hezekiel Anzeze (East Africa), Commissioner Clerah Anzeze (East Africa), Commissioner Philip Needham (USA Southern), Commissioner Keitha Needham (USA Southern), Commissioner Linda Bond (USA Western), Commissioner Margaret Sutherland (IHQ), Commissioner Ivan Lang (Australia Southern), Commissioner Heather Lang (Australia Southern), Commissioner Willem van der Harst (The Netherlands and Czech Republic), Commissioner Netty van der Harst (The Netherlands and Czech Republic), Commissioner Keith Banks (IHQ), Commissioner Pauline Banks (IHQ), Commissioner Kenneth Baillie (USA Central), Commissioner Joy Baillie (USA Central), Commissioner Raymond A. Houghton (IHQ), Commissioner Judith Houghton (IHQ), Commissioner Jean B. Ludiazo (Congo (Kinshasa)), Commissioner Veronique Ludiazo (Congo (Kinshasa)), Commissioner Paulo Rangel (Brazil), Commissioner Yoshiko Rangel (Brazil), Commissioner Leslie Strong (Australia Eastern), Commissioner Coral Strong (Australia Eastern), Commissioner William W. Francis (IHQ), Commissioner Marilyn D. Francis (IHQ), Commissioner M. Christine MacMillan (Canada and Bermuda), Commissioner Paulose Yohannan (India Northern), Commissioner Kunjamma Yohannan (India Northern), Commissioner Gulzar Patras (Pakistan), Commissioner Sheila Gulzar (Pakistan), Commissioner Hugo Pintos (South America West), Commissioner Julia Pintos (South America West), Commissioner Makoto Yoshida (IHQ), Commissioner Kaoru Yoshida (IHQ), Colonel Carl Lydholm (Finland), Colonel Gudrun Lydholm (Finland), Colonel John Matear (Caribbean), Colonel Elizabeth Matear (Caribbean), Colonel Olin O. Hogan (Mexico), Colonel Dianne Hogan (Mexico), Colonel William A. Roberts (South America East), Colonel Nancy Roberts (South America East), Colonel Edouard Braun (France), Colonel Francoise Braun (France), Colonel Chimanbhai Waghela (India South Western), Colonel Rahelbai Waghela (India South Western), Colonel Graeme Harding (Ghana), Colonel Anne Harding (Ghana), Colonel Trevor M. Tuck (Papua New Guinea), Colonel Memory Tuck (Papua New Guinea), Colonel Stuart Mungate (Nigeria), Colonel Hope Mungate (Nigeria), Colonel Prathipaty Devavaram (India Eastern), Colonel P. Victoria Devavaram (India Eastern), Colonel M. C. James (India Central), Colonel L. Susamma James (India Central), Colonel Mfon J. Akpan (Congo (Brazzaville)), Colonel Ime M. Akpan (Congo (Brazzaville)), Colonel Jorge Ferreira (Latin America North), Colonel Adelina Ferreira (Latin America North), Colonel Roy Frans (Sri Lanka), Colonel Arda Frans (Sri Lanka), Lieut-Colonel David Bringans (Singapore, Malaysia and Myanmar), Lieut-Colonel Grace Bringans (Singapore, Malaysia and Myanmar), Lieut-Colonel Barry R. Pobjie (Eastern Europe),

Lieut-Colonel Raemor Pobjie (Eastern Europe), Lieut-Colonel Tan Thean Seng (Hong Kong and Macau), Lieut-Colonel Tan Loo Lay Saik (Hong Kong and Macau), Lieut-Colonel David J. Burrows (Tanzania), Lieut-Colonel Jean Burrows (Tanzania), Lieut-Colonel Ethne Flintoff (Bangladesh), Lieut-Colonel Lynette Green (Portugal), Lieut-Colonel Brian Knightley (Liberia), Lieut-Colonel Dorothy Knightley (Liberia), Lieut-Colonel Dirk J. Krommenhoek (Denmark), Lieut-Colonel Vibeke Krommenhoek (Denmark), Major Christian Exbrayat (Belgium), Major Joelle Exbrayat (Belgium), Major Malcolm Forster (Malawi), Major Valerie Forster (Malawi), Major Massimo Paone (Italy), Major Jane Paone (Italy), Major Federico L. Larrinaga (Spain), Major Marie C. Larrinaga (Spain).

Colonel Mfon J. Akpan (Congo (Brazzaville)) and Colonel Ime M. Akpan (Congo (Brazzaville)) were unable to attend.

The League of Champions page 26

by Zoe Fay

Corps 614, 9th Sept 2004

Have you ever had hunger pains but unable to discern what will satisfy the hunger? You have options, but none of them will cure the aching. I am hungry for more of Christ. I have this unquenchable thirst, full of visions, longings, and these desires have driven my actions and decisions. I have a desire to know Christ intimately so I spend time with Him, listening to Him, and reading His words.

There is another cry of my heart, a desire that leaves me wondering, where is the rest of my generation? I look around me and I see that my generation has been attacked on all sides – attacked in our minds, hearts and bodies. A significant number of our generation has been wiped out by abortion rates, from 1970-2000 Canadian Statistics record that 2,375,388 of my generation in Canada alone have been denied the opportunity to live. Attacked by readily available addictive substances, attacked by a lack of discipleship, continually bombarded at every turn by the media, who tell us everything is OK. The media portrays the idea that it is ok to have sex before marriage causing us to vulnerably expose our emotions and physical nature to those that have no covenant with us. The media tells us that it is ok to keep buying stuff to fill the empty gaps, to entertain ourselves to death. Tell a lie big enough and bold enough and people will believe it and unfortunately my generation has. What is it about my generation that we are attacked to the point of emotional, intellectual and bodily wipe out?

Millions die all over the world every day, due to war, famine, unjust governments and we worry about Nike trainers. WHY? Why are our hearts so hard, our eyes and ears so closed? Because I believe we are the generation that God has designed to bring His restoration through, to be active in His commands, to go and make disciples, and if necessary use words. We are the generation designed to be significant, to be unstoppable evangelists and yet we have been kidnapped and chained in our hearts, minds, souls and bodies by the influences of the un-Godly world around us.

When I ask people my age what they have been doing with their time, they simply say “nothing” and as a result the world is allowed to spiral in to an unrelenting chaos. There are times when I think Satan gets the false belief that he may have won, he certainly has been winning a lot of the battles, but the final war is already won by the Saviours blood. Satan’s temporary victories are so subtle but all encompassing that we just shrug our shoulders and say OK. We have become the nothing generation. God’s view of us is different, His Word is for all generations and He speaks truth over us. The truth that we are called to go and make disciples Matthew 28:19-20, and to love God with all you have Matthew 22:37-39. To have a Holy impact Matthew 5:13-16, to be anointed Isaiah 61:1-4, to dwell amongst the lost John 1:14, to awaken and rise up Isaiah 52, we are promised that young men and women will be given dreams, visions and prophesy. What was once devastated shall be restored, see the prophetic

book of Joel, when the great destruction of locusts devours the land but God brings His restoration without fail.

I live in a chaotic and devastated world with a pretty veneer that no longer fools me. I have heard it said that Christ longs to return and I believe it. There is a day where Jesus will come again and it will come like a thief, people will be in the thick of their personal ambitions unable to recognise that the time is now. This is what I am sure of, this world is in need of a Saviour and there is only one God, all the others are false idols. God wants to transform this world through redemption, reconciliation, justice, to comfort those who mourn and to set the captives free.

In 1885 Booth wrote a letter to Salvationists that rings true for today, entitled “ A Vision for Those Who Care”. He describes a vicious and stormy sea, heavy with clouds and thunders. In the sea are “myriads of poor human beings, plunging, floating and shouting.” On the shore he sees many who have been rescued out of the sea and some of them “jumped in regardless of the consequences in their eagerness to save”. And in doing so lived to save, which is an integral value of the Salvation Army encompassed in our uniform epaulettes “Saved to Save”. However, in Booth’s vision there are those on the shore who “were engaged in different pursuits... amusing themselves with growing flowers on the side of the rock, others in painting pieces of cloth, or in performing music, or in dressing themselves in different ways and walking about to be admired”, he talks of those amusing themselves to the point where they are distracted from the real picture of what is taking place, these are words straight from Booth.

I want to see my generation AWAKE, rise up and change the world. Too big a task you say? Booth did not think so. The truth is harrowing and if this truth does not move us to tears, the fact that the girl on the street will die hungry, cold, abused, without care and spend an eternity in Hell, then we have become hard hearted. She is someone’s child, God’s child. To deny her is to deny Christ and I do not want to be remembered for that, Ezekiel 9:4 tells us that those who weep over the injustice and devastation carry the mark of our Lord. The grass of the field dies and withers our lives last but a moment in time, Psalm 103:15-16, and I choose to live it well. This is an awakening call for my generation to stand up and say YES to a God who wants to use us to transform this world. We are His hands, His voice, His ears, His feet, we are His body. The road is costly; at times it will mean sacrifice, Luke 14:27-34. Each disciple will have to count the cost.

During Territorial 2004 we heard the siren call of a dangerous God, to awake, and be hero’s of the faith. Champions that share the gospel without tiring, to love God and the world as He loves, to be in the world but not of it. Out of this desire the first members of the League of Champions were formed. Who are they? They are the generation that says yes to God and puts their own selfish ambitions to death. We wish to be “the change that we want to see.” We choose to dedicate ourselves to make a Holy impact, and we invite you to share the vision with us, we invite you into the conversation. Are you ready to be the army God designed you to be? full of His

love, His words, His revolution. How's it going to happen? The League of Champions is dedicated to bring our generation together, through e-mails, the web, localised gatherings and cross-territorial gatherings. To disciple, train, encourage and equip. If you want in, if you share this passion and desire let us know by e-mailing Major David Ivany, the Territorial Youth Secretary and say "YES, I want to join the League of Champions" giving your name, e-mail, address, local corps and wait further details of how you can get involved. The best days are ahead of us. I dare to believe it.

*Zoë Fay, 614 Toronto, a Champion in Training
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