

JOURNAL OF AGGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY

JAC Online

Issue 66, April - May 2010

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Editorial Introduction

by Major Stephen Court

Salvation greetings to you in Jesus' name. Welcome to Journal of Aggressive Christianity issue 66. What a line-up God has blessed us with this time around!

We kick things off with Commissioner Wesley Harris's lecture to FAMOUS LAST WORDS, called 'Holiness and Responsibility'. This is a big-picture talk fed from the lessons Harris learned over 62 years of officership.

Lieut-Colonel Janet Munn contributes her 'Continued Obedient Faith as Holy Witness Through Participation in Small Groups' [aka Wesley's "Class Meetings"] that was delivered in Boston at the 125th anniversary of Commissioner Samuel Logan Brengle's sanctification.

Captain Andrew Clark does some thinking 'Out Loud About Leadership' and comes to a few controversial positions.

Major Kelvin Merrett shares his journal notes on Wesleyan holiness, a wonderful glimpse inside the devotional and theological reflections of a divisional commander.

Anthony Castle, hot of the big success of his first published book (Brave and True – a thoroughly salvo novel for teens), throws us a definition, in 'Salvationism Is...'

Major JoAnn Shade stirs up more controversy in her commentary on 'Affirmative Action'. Really, it must get embarrassing for people like her to continually have to beat this drum. No more excuses, people – untie the right hand from behind The Salvation Army's back (left being the males).

Lieut-Colonel Richard Munn has an interesting piece on our 'Salvationist Ancestor', Zwingli – notable, among other reasons, for its timing, in light of the current article in THE OFFICER magazine by Captain Michael Ramsay on the very same subject.

Cadet Matt Kean wonders if 'Good Works Might Distract Us From Mission'.

Cadet James Thompson makes a 'Call for Decision'.

Major David Laeger contributes 'Kindred of the Word'.

Captain Gordon Goodridge has 'Walking with Christ'.

And there is a short take on a challenging line in the Articles of War undertakings called 'Large Proportions'.

All in all, JAC66 provides more content and intent to stimulate the salvation war. Use it to confirm, challenge, instruct, provoke, and empower. And share it with your friends.

Holiness and Responsibility – Famous Last Words

by Commissioner Wesley Harris

“What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6.8).

ASKED to make a presentation under the title *Famous last words* I doubted whether any words of mine would become famous and also hoped that these particular words would not be my last! There seems to be some fascination about what may have been among people’s last words. Paul said, “I have fought a good fight” which contrasted with the words of his namesake King Saul who could only say, “I have acted like a fool”. Catherine Booth said, “The waters are rising but so am I...” while her husband William could affirm, “The promises of God are sure if you only believe”.

Before I met my wife, the love of my life, I had a brief relationship with another officer whose senior colleague had warned that if she married Wesley he wouldn’t live very long! That official forecast may have arisen from the fact that as an eighteen year old - more than sixty years ago - I had only been accepted for training as a ‘health risk’.

I have been grateful for longevity but have always known that time is short even for the longest life. I have felt driven as well as called and imbued with a desire to ‘seize the day’ and not squander the years and the opportunities which have come my way. Holiness has meant living responsibly.

Mentioning ‘holiness’: at one time the word was often on the lips of Salvationists. We referred to the holiness table, holiness meetings, songs, testimonies, choruses and the like. Now, regrettably, the word seems to have dropped out of the vocabulary of Salvationists at the grass roots. It doesn’t resonate as it did and that is unfortunate.. I certainly regret the dropping of a word which defined us in our early days but it would be much worse if we lost the *meaning* of that word.

I don’t necessarily agree with those who say that we don’t get holiness teaching nowadays. After a lifetime of preaching I have been ‘on the bench’ for a number of years, a member of a congregation. I hope I have looked encouraging and not had a ‘bless me if you can look on my face’ I have been enriched by the careful and prayerful teaching of successive corps officers whether or not they have used the terms familiar in the past – like holiness, for example.

The Bible itself sometimes expresses elements of the meaning of holiness in other words. It urges us to ‘love the Lord with all our hearts’ for example, but now I would refer to Micah 6.8.

“What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God”. Clearly, that teaches that holiness means living responsibly.

Saying that brings up a paradox – an apparent contradiction - which is at the heart of Christian experience. On the one hand, we rightly say that holiness is a blessing from God. Only the Holy Spirit (with capital ‘h’ and ‘s’) can make us holy spirits (with lower case). Salvation is by grace. But we have a part to play. We should not expect God to zap us into perfection without any action on our part. We have to be

responsible and avail ourselves of means of grace such as prayer and Scripture, for instance. Catherine Booth said, "Human effort is indispensable to salvation" We cannot obtain salvation by it but we cannot remain saved without it.

St Paul put the paradox very clearly when he wrote, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Phil.2.12). In other words, we have to work out what God has worked in. Without God we cannot but without us he will not.

The tendency to seek to cop out of responsibility is as old as time. In the Garden of Eden Adam sought to put blame on his wife. And many modern wives could testify that it can still happen! In the Army we like to shift blame. When there is a problem we say that 'they' ought to have done something about it. The Army is to blame! But who or what is the Army? Is it some vague body at Queen Victoria Street in London or Railway Road in Melbourne? Basically the Army is us. I remember a time when as a territorial commander an issue arose and I might have cast about for someone to blame so that *they* could take responsibility. Then I realized that I was *they*; the buck stopped with me! To some extent it always does.

Management manuals often state that people often do what is inspected not what is expected. From the beginning the Army has had 'inspections'. Sometimes the name is now softened to 'consultations' but hopefully the principle of accountability is maintained for it is writ large in the Bible and our regulations.

When things don't go well we may blame our genes or our upbringing and there is no doubt that both factors can make a difference. But what counts most is still what we choose to do with the raw material of our environment or our genetic make-up. Years ago I knew a fine Christian man who had held responsible positions. He was born as a result of his mother being raped but despite that had made his life effective and worthwhile. His worth was not dictated by the circumstances of his birth. He had risen above those circumstances, by the grace of God. Good for him!

Sometimes in a court of law a defence is mounted for someone with mental problems on the grounds of 'diminished responsibility' but generally it is assumed that people can control their actions and are therefore 'response-able'. Part of the glory of being human is that we can act responsibly and evidence of our fallen state lies in the fact that we so often act irresponsibly.

Now in the manner I was taught as a cadet sixty odd years ago I would make three points.

First, under God, holiness means being responsible for ourselves.

We don't honour God by neglecting ourselves or by wasting the powers we have been given. The command to love the Lord our God carries the clear inference that we should also love ourselves in a responsible manner. We are meant to be responsible for ourselves physically. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit and we should treat them with proper respect. We should take care to cultivate our minds. Paul said that whatever things are good and pure we should think on those things. Then we should take care of our souls. Sanctification may be experienced as a crisis but it will also be a process and that means daily cultivation of the fruit of the

Spirit in our lives through prayer and feeding on God's word. We are to be responsible but the gracious Holy Spirit is available to come alongside and help us.

Then holiness means being responsible for others.

There is no such thing as holiness apart from social holiness. The prophet Micah made that clear when he spoke of doing justly and loving mercy and in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus spoke, almost in the same breath, about being pure in heart and also being merciful. Holiness is not piety wrapped up in itself; it is outgoing. It is also very practical. It has to do not only with the way we regard others when we are sitting in the citadel but when we are seated behind the wheel of our car! It has to do with how we treat the environment and how we demonstrate our love for the needy. Holiness unto the Lord should be like a watermark in our tax return as responsible Christians. William Booth encapsulated his message to his followers in the one cabled word, 'Others' and demonstrated it in his life.

Thirdly, holiness means being responsible to God.

The prophet Micah made plain that our ultimate responsibility is to the Lord. We are to walk humbly with him and He is the One to whom we must give account.

In the early days of the Army there was great emphasis on the prospect of a day of judgement and such an emphasis was well supported by Scripture. But when did you last hear a sermon on judgement? Does your memory go back that far? Yet Jesus had plenty to say about it. It has been said that all think all are mortal but themselves but the obvious truth is that we are all in God's waiting room and eventually it will be our turn to meet our Maker. I am not being morbid but only stating the obvious and the implications which need to be faced.

What does the Lord require? Well, be it said, God is not unreasonable. He knows our limitations and the genuine desires of our hearts. He would not make a fool of us by asking for more than we could give with the aid of his Spirit. All we can do is all he requires. Jesus had high commendation for a woman despised by others and probably by herself as well. He said, "She has done what she could" It may not have been what Peter, James or John could have done but she had done that for which she was response-able. With God's help we can do much more than we may think we can although we still have our limitations but if God wants us to do justly and love mercy we can be assured that he will not fail to do the same. The Judge of all the earth will certainly do right.

*And midst the maddening maze of things
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed trust my spirit clings
I know that God is good.*

John Greenleaf Whittier

Continued Obedient Faith as Holy Witness Through Participation in Small Groups [aka Wesley's "Class Meetings"]

by Lieut.-Colonel Janet Munn

*(Presented by Lt. Col. Janet Munn at the "Holiness Ablaze" conference
in Boston, Massachusetts at the 125 anniversary
of the Brengle's sanctification on Boston Common)*

In John Ortberg's, *The Life You've Always Wanted*, is the following description:

Hank – long-time church member, regular church-goer – could not effectively love his wife or his children or people outside his family. He was easily irritated. He had little use for the poor, and a casual contempt for those whose accents or skin pigment differed from his own. Whatever capacity he once might have had for joy or wonder or gratitude atrophied. He critiqued and judged and complained, and his soul got a little smaller each year.

Hank was not changing. He was once a cranky young guy, and he grew up to be a cranky old man. But ever more troubling than his lack of change was the fact that *nobody was surprised by it*. It was as if everyone simply expected that his soul would remain withered and sour year after year, decade after decade. No one seemed bothered by the condition.

The church staff did have some expectations . . . that Hank would affirm certain religious beliefs . . . that he would attend services, read the Bible, support the church financially, pray regularly, and avoid certain sins. But here's what the church leadership did not expect – *We did not expect that Hank would progressively become the way Jesus would be if he were in Hank's place.* (Ortberg, p.29)

This is called by some "Pseudo-transformation"

- Stories like Hank's and countless others raises the question – Are we after MEMBERS/SOLDIERS OR DISCIPLES? ENROLLMENTS OR ENGAGEMENT IN APPRENTICESHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST?
 - Gallup polls re premarital sex, adultery, divorce, bigotry, domestic violence – that there is no statistically significant difference between Christians and non-Christians in these areas of attitude and conduct.
 - John Green, an evangelical pollster, says that about a third of all evangelicals say that premarital sex is okay. And about 15 percent say that adultery is okay.
 - A large study of the Christian Reformed Church, a member of the National Association of Evangelicals, discovered that the frequency of physical and sexual abuse in this evangelical denomination was about the same as in the general population.
 - Six percent of the "born-again" people tithe; nine percent of evangelicals do.

(This data taken from an interview with Ron Sider in Christianity Today April 2005).

Is this what disciples of Jesus Christ look and act like? Is this holiness

Membership or Discipleship

Yet church attendance in US is very high relative to most western nations. The SA nationally is in the midst of a membership campaign – “Come Join Our Army”.

Dr. Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission*, introduction p.x

There is an obvious Great Disparity between, in the one hand, the hope for life expressed in Jesus – found real in the Bible and in many shining examples from among his followers – and on the hand, the actual day-to-day behaviour, inner life, and social presence of most of those who now profess adherence to him.

If the new birth and the power of the Holy Spirit do not result in transformed living by transformed people there are basically 2 possible reasons:

1. God’s provision is inadequate – including perhaps the possibility that what God promised and commanded is completely unrealistic and even impossible, thereby making the Lord out to be a cosmic despot.

Or --

2. We (most Christians) do not give ourselves to [our walk with Christ] in a way that allows our lives to be taken over by it. (Willard. p.x)

Willard adds the following:

- Eternal life . . . is interactive relationship with God and with his special Son, Jesus, within the abiding ambience of the Holy Spirit. p. xiv.
- The Church (the gathered disciples) needs the quality of life [Christ] makes real in the life of his disciples – in order to fulfil Christ’s purposes on the earth for the church.
- Will those who by profession or culture, are identified as Christians (including us) become disciples – students, apprentices, practitioners – of Jesus Christ, steadily learning from him how to life the life of the Kingdom of the Heavens into every corner of human existence.

We are faced with a challenge here.

Colonel Damon Rader (Order of the Founder) – in speaking of the nature of the relationship between the Lord and human beings, said simply:

We can’t do God’s part. He won’t do ours.

There are both divine and human elements of the new birth and the life of holiness, and our doctrines so indicate.

Doctrine 10

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

God's part – giving to us the Sanctifier. Wooing us, calling us, drawing us more deeply into Himself. Creating within the believer a spiritual hunger for more. A longing for a clean heart as well as the provision His divine power to bring it to pass.

²³ *May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

²⁴ *The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it. 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24.*

³ *His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.* ⁴ *Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 2 Peter 2: 3-4.*

Gilbert Thompson, pastor of thriving church in Boston, taught on spiritual warfare at Vision New England a number of year ago, at which I was present. He described his visit to a church as a guest preacher, when he was a young pastor. As he got up to preach he began to cough and was unable to speak. The “mothers” in the congregation began to rebuke and take authority over the unclean spirits behind the cough. In the meantime the elderly senior pastor brought him a cup of water. As the older man gave young pastor Thompson the drink he leaned in said, “Help the prayers son, help the prayers.”

“help the prayers” . . .

We too are responsible to “help the prayers” – to do what we can do to cooperate in the life of holiness.

Doctrine 9

We believe that continuance in a state of salvation depends upon continued obedient faith in Christ.

Colonel Damon Rader (O.F.) – We can't do God's part . . . **He won't do ours.**

Our Part – continued obedient faith.

¹² *Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—**continue to work out your salvation** with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is **God who works in you** to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. Philippians 2: 12-13 (TNIV)*

Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. ¹³ For **God is working in you**, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. Philippians 2: 12-13 (NLT)

My purposes in sharing this paper are:

- To intentionally link Salvation Army doctrines 9 and 10 – (doctrine 9) the need for human cooperation with and responsiveness to (doctrine 10) the

sanctifying grace of God, in order to strengthen and maintain powerful holy witness to this grace, as a Salvationist people.

- To highlight the significance of John Wesley's class meetings (or small group structure) in sustaining lives of continued obedience in the converts of his day.
- To heighten awareness of the contemporary move toward and need of a class meeting structure or method.
- To expose and contradict the "individualistic heresy" of privatized Christianity, so prevalent in the western church – namely that my faith is just between me and God and that it is not your business – that it is *private* rather than *personal*.
- To motivate Salvationists to intentionally seek out relationships, contexts and opportunities with others, (be they small groups, accountability partnerships, discipleship meetings, etc.) that will demonstrate a whole-hearted responsiveness to and cooperation with the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in the individual and in the community.

I want to emphasize the synergy between divine initiative and human response – to commend to you the need for human cooperation in the divine calling to holy living.

Continued Obedient Faith vs. "Disorderly Walkers"

John Wesley, in describing those Christian converts who failed to live a credible holy life, who fell into sin and compromise, or failed to mature, called such "disorderly walkers".

There are many means to help believers continue in obedient faith.

The focus of this paper will be:

THE COMMUNAL ASPECTS OF CONTINUED OBEDIENT FAITH using the template of the Wesleyan quadrilateral – Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience – the view by which Wesley believed sound doctrine could be discerned.

SCRIPTURE

- TRINITY – "LET US . . ." from the earliest chapters of Scripture, where God is revealing Himself to humankind, we read that the very essence of God is community – in the godhead, Father, Son and Spirit share in a perfect, unbroken, self-surrendering community of oneness. This is the very thing Jesus prays for us also (John 17). It's not lonely at the top, within the godhead, and it's not meant to be lonely at the top, so to speak, in Christian leadership! The very nature of the godhead demonstrates this. Christian leaders of any sort – take our example from God in whose image we are made – no matter what our responsibilities or status – God the Most High reveals Himself as living and loving in community.
- IT IS NOT GOOD FOR HUMANS TO BE ALONE – the writer of the creation account in the first chapter of Genesis, punctuates each aspect of God's creation, day by day, with "and God saw that it was good". Light from darkness = good. Land separated from water = good. Sun and moon = good. All various animals, birds, fish = good. Creation of the human, a-dam = good. All that God saw is described as "good". 10 times – God saw that it was

good. Only one exception. The creation of the human as solitary, as alone = **NOT GOOD!** (Genesis 2:18).

- Donahue and Russell describe human beings as having an inbuilt “relational DNA” or a God-given “community gene” that is an essential part of what it is to be human and made in the image of God. Additionally they state that “humans are ravenously relational (24).
- JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES – Jesus’ primary model for disciple-making was that of a small group, the 12. That was the context he used for investing deeply in developing the first generation of Christian disciples. Jesus also brought into his closest confidence the 3 – the INNER CIRCLE, PETER, JAMES, JOHN, for deeper lessons in discipleship. Yes Jesus had alone time, sought out solitude to pray and commune with God, but he developed disciples in community.

From the *Discipleship Journal*:

Consider this: Jesus chose to be a member of a small group. In fact, He was the ultimate small-group leader. He taught thousands on hillsides and was superb in one-on-one situations, but when it came time to pour His life into the people He knew would be the most critical to the spread of the gospel, He chose to invest a huge portion of His time and discipling efforts into the lives of just twelve guys.

And what a motley small group it was: guys who argued with Him and with each other; imperfect human beings who struggled with envy, jealousy, deceit, and lying; men who didn't seem to "get it" most of the time.

That's what growing in Christ is all about: spending time together, studying and learning what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ; lifting others up when the discouragements of life get them down; getting the support you need when those daily struggles descend upon your turf; praying together about earthly and heavenly things; and growing stronger relationally as the body of Christ.

This was the approach Jesus used in establishing the church. We need to deliberately follow his lead.

- In the EARLY CHURCH – ACTS 2ff, devoted themselves to apostles’ teaching, fellowship, breaking bread and to prayer . . . believers continued to meet together, broke bread in homes, ate together with glad and sincere hearts . . . the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. Acts 2: 42-47.
- Lord’s prayer – completely plural language – “our Father”, “give us”, “lead us”, “deliver us”.

TRADITION

- ROMAN CATACOMBS – CHURCH IN PERSECUTION – (as well as the church today in many places including China) – formed itself into small groups for support, for discretion, for safety.
- ZINZENDORF, HERNUTT COMMUNITY -- In the 18th century a Moravian community, under the leadership of Count Zinzendorf, living together, praying together for several generation for more than a hundred years, thereby launching the great missionary thrust of the Reformation. One of their converts was John Wesley, founder of Methodism.
- WESLEY – HOLY CLUB, CLASS MEETINGS . . . **no holiness apart from social holiness – interpersonal relationship and evidence of pursuit of social justice.**
 - John Wesley describes the discipline involved in class meetings as “watching over one another in love.”
 - John Wesley, the founder of Methodism and its descendents (including Salvationists) was so called because of this *method* of class meetings, which he developed for the discipling and maturing of the thousands and thousands of converts under his ministry. This was a means by which Wesley’s converts were able to continue in a life of obedient faith rather than becoming “disorderly walkers”. (John Wesley’s Class Meeting, Henderson)
 - The absence of such a plan – a method, a structure – was, in Wesley’s words, “birthing [the new converts] to the destroyer”. In other words, just as surely as it would be consider the height of irresponsibility and neglect, to bring a baby to physical birth and leave them to their own self-care – so it is with spiritual newborns. Wesley admonished that there was an absolute responsibility to make provision for the care of these recent converts to Christianity. Otherwise we were doing them no good at all to awaken them to the grace and mercy of God, only for them to be devoured by the destroyer, due to lack of discipleship made available by the church.
- George Whitefield (contemporary of John Wesley) whose labours “died with himself” – said, “Brother Wesley acted wisely – the souls that were awakened under his ministry he joined in class [small group for spiritual formation], and thus preserved the fruits of his labours. This I neglected and my people are a rope of sand.”(*The History of Methodism*, Holland M. McTyeire).
- The Wesleyan revolution is an illustration that long-lasting spiritual transformation is not the product of dynamic preaching or of correct doctrine. It comes only through serious disciple-building, in keeping with Christ’s Great Commission . . . The class meeting which Wesley developed was the instrument by which preaching and doctrine were harnessed into spiritual renewal. It carried the revolution. (Henderson, p.31)

- SA – The Salvation Army O & R for Ward and Penitent-Form Sergeants, 1922, USA – reveals a similar strategy in place as that of John Wesley’s Class Meetings – in the SA in the early 20th century.
 - Every soldier and recruit would be part of a Ward.
 - 2 Ward Sergeants per Ward – one woman, one man – should watch over soldiers and recruits within Ward – watch over them spiritually, strive to keep them well-saved, sympathize with, advise them when they come into difficulty, do all possible to promote their happiness, holiness and usefulness in every way.
 - Ward Sergeant will take personal charge of every Convert in his/her Ward from the moment of introduction to Convert.
 - Ward Sergeant will hold an indoor meeting of the Soldiers and Recruits in his/her Ward once every week – to include, prayer, Scripture reading, personal testimony as to spiritual progress.
 - Clearly the early day Salvation Army had a method, a plan to nurture believers (recruits and soldiers alike) in a consistent and systematic way for their spiritual maturation and continued obedient faith.

REASON

- From SOLITARY CONFINEMENT FOR THE INCARCERATED – TIME OUT CHAIR FOR YOUNG CHILDREN – ISOLATION, LACK OF COMMUNITY IS PUNISHMENT, CAN MAKE US DISTRESSED, EVEN ILL.
- “BROCCOLI-IN-THE-TEETH” SYNDROME -- BLIND SPOTS – WHO WILL HELP US? WHO WILL TELL US?
 - If I have broccoli in my teeth those around me are more likely to know it before I do and those who love me will tell me about it.
 - Like wise, for the spiritual life, there are aspects of our lives that those around us are more likely to be aware of than we are ourselves. We call them blind spots.
 - The consistent involvement in small groups and the mutual accountability therein is aimed at preventing self-deception and remaining focused in discipleship under Christ.
- STRENGTHEN US WHEN WE ARE WEAK? ENCOURAGE US? We note that the Armor of God does not cover our backs – perhaps because we are to do that for one another.
- In the business world there are audits and check and balances to help organizations remain honest. How much more do we need an outside perspective to help us remain honest.

From Bill Thrall & Bruce McNichol - *Leadership Catalayst* (2003):

In describing developing integrity in leaders, point out that in order to develop we need environments where we trust and are trusted. They assert:

- *Wearing a mask thwarts my character development.*
- *Whatever I’m hiding makes me vulnerable to sin.*
- *A great gift you can give to a leader is to teach them to hide nothing.*

In a safe place:

- *I can be honest about who I am*
- *You are free to tell me who I am*
- JAMES 5:16 – CONFESS OUR FRAILTIES/WEAKNESSES TO BE HEALED (SINS TO BE FORGIVEN)
- WE NEED SOMEONE TO HELP SPUR US ON? Hebrews 10:24 (Wesley and Booth accountability questions). Try using the questions included at end of article in a small group or with a trusted accountability partner.

EXPERIENCE -- to help one another in continued obedient faith – to be holy.

- CONTEMPORARY – WILLOW CREEK church made a public confession and repentance of the neglect of disciple-making and declared a shift in their structure from a church WITH small groups to a church OF small groups (2007).
- Carl F. George, church growth researcher writes in Prepare Your Church for the Future:
 - “I believe that the smaller group within the whole – called by dozens of terms, including *small groups* or the *cell group* – is a crucial but underdeveloped resource in most churches. It is, I contend, the most strategically significant foundation for spiritual formation and assimilation, for evangelism and leadership development, for the most essential functions that God has called for in the church”.
- Gilbert BILEZEKIAN uses the term “BALD SPOT CHRISTIANITY” (COMMUNITY 101) to describe the inadequacy of simply coming to a church building for an hour a week, sit in straight rows looking at the back of the head of the person seated in the row in front of you. That, Bilezekian says, it not the kind of church experience that results in spiritual growth and Christlike maturity.
 - Bilezikian uses the metaphor of “family” to describe what the church should be – “a group of people, few enough in numbers to sit around in a circle, facing each other and sharing the joy and the benefits of togetherness” (54). Bilezikian states, “Personal growth does not happen in isolation. It is the result of interactive relationships” (54).
- Bilezikian points out that wherever the church is a thriving community, even in the midst of persecution and suffering, it is structured on the basis of small groups (55).
- Schwarz’ research (Natural Church Development) concludes that the *most* important characteristic of healthy communities of faith and therefore people of faith, was the multiplication of small groups that are focused on discipleship (32).

- Northern New England Division Small Groups – Research project for my MA Thesis
 - Every officer in the Northern New England division participated in small groups for spiritual formation throughout the program year. This emphasis was given for a period of six years. During one of those years the participants were asked to describe their experience in the small groups. The officers/leaders participating in small groups throughout the Northern New England division describe their experience in small groups as beneficial to their spiritual formation, to their relationships, particularly with others in the small group. It was also beneficial to their sense of support and connectedness, and therefore their resistance to loneliness and discouragement, to their overall sense of health and wellness and to their own responsibilities in their local corps (church) and communities.
 - Additional descriptions by the officers themselves of the benefits of the small group experience include: a sense of connectedness, accountability, support, and community, as well as equipping for ministry, growth in discipleship and leadership development for the God-given essential functions of the church, and many more (see attached).

- We feel the pain personally when another believer falls from grace, stumbles into sin and moral failure, and even when another Christian demonstrates brokenness, carnality and compromise.

- My spiritual prosperity and strength in Christ are dynamically related to yours and vice versa.

More from the interview with Ron Sider in Christianity today upon the release of his book, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience*.

[Our] culture is radically individualistic and relativistic. Whatever feels right for me is right for me; whatever feels right to you is right for you. That's the dominant value. It's considered outrageous for somebody to say somebody else is wrong. But historic biblical faith understood the church as a new community. The basic New Testament images of the church are of the body of Christ, the people of God, and the family of God. All these stress the fact that we're talking about a new community—a new, visible social order. That new community in the New Testament was living so differently from the world that people would say, "Wow, what's going on here?" Jews were accepting Gentiles. The rich were accepting the poor and sharing with the poor. Men were accepting women as equals. It just astonished people because the church was so different from the world. It was countercultural. Furthermore, [the New Testament church] understood that being a member of the body of Christ meant that you were accountable to each other. If one suffered, you all suffered. If one rejoiced, you all rejoiced.

One of the most important ways we develop mutual accountability in the local congregation is through small groups. It's almost impossible to follow Jesus either in [matters of] sex and marriage or in money and helping the poor by yourself. You

need the strong support of brothers and sisters. While the whole congregation should be like that, we need small groups to struggle with the specifics and talk about our struggles and get encouragement and prayer support. I wish every person in all of our churches . . . members were in a small group. (Sider – interview by Stan Guthrie of Christianity Today, April 2005, “The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience”).

Several of our local corps (churches) are the size of a small group. The issue is intentionality. When people come to The Salvation Army, where are they finding community? Where do they find a loving community to guide them in the spiritual life? Again the issue is intentionality.

From John Wesley to Willow Creek, no body of believers is too small or too large to grow, both qualitatively and quantitatively through spiritual formation small group participation.

The potential within The Salvation Army in the 21st century for a powerful witness to the holy power of God is enormous.

Small groups are a frugal means of developing disciples, offering healing to the broken, and a sense of belonging to the lonely and to us all, and to sustaining lives of continued obedient faith in Christ – lives of holy living.

This is the hour for Salvationists to claim our Wesleyan birthright of heart’s warmed, social holiness, societal transformation – through the method of spiritual formation small groups.

The world is in need of a holy witness of the people calling themselves as Christ’s followers, because without holiness – holiness in the church – no one will see the Lord.

Ephesians

5:

15-17

Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.

In other words – we don’t have time to waste! The stakes are too high.

What Can I Do?

- Work at building communities of trust by being trustworthy.
- Join or start a small group bible study or accountability group.
- Seek out relationships that help you grow deeper in Christ.
- Submit yourself to character examination by another Christian.

To that end let us heed the words of Hebrews 10: 24-25

*24 And **let us** consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 [**let us**] not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

APPENDIX V

ANTICIPATED BENEFITS FROM REVIEW OF LITERATURE

CONNECTEDNESS/ SUPPORT (11)

- connectedness
- mutual accountability
- the joy and the benefits of togetherness
- meaningful community
- lessening of feelings of loneliness
- Opportunity to gain understanding from the insight and input of others
- Supportive fellowship
- authentic relationships are established
- Openness and caring
- readiness to accept help from the outside
- opportunities to experience the grace and love of God through fellow believers

SPIRITUAL GROWTH (11)

- spiritual formation
- grow in discipleship which results in more-effective pastors
- spiritual well-being
- cared for spiritually
- equipped for ministry
- mobilized for preaching the gospel
- evangelism
- spiritual support
- spiritual guidance
- spiritual growth and serious discipleship
- church health

OVERALL HEALTH (7)

- emotional well-being
- support during difficulties and troubles
- personal growth
- releases healing power to the people of God (James 5:16)
- acceptance that helps us repair our wounds
- leadership development for the most essential functions that God has called for in the church
- loved, served, celebrated, and admonished, begin to change

1)
2)

APPENDIX VI

ANTICIPATED BENEFITS – ACTUAL

CONNECTEDNESS/ SUPPORT (71)

- felt accepted
- fellowship is vital
- we are learning how to function in a healthy community
- affirming
- encouraging
- validating
- buildings relationships – teaching us what real relationships are about
- necessary for accountability
- Relational warmth
- Familiarity
- We know each other
- Closeness interpersonally
- Stronger sense of community
- We are relaxed and able to be ourselves
- No hiding who we really are
- Peer, loving care-frontation
- Not surface relationships but we dig deep
- Intimacy
- Commonality, shared work, resource sharing
- Intimate prayer times, non-threatening
- Caring for one another regularly
- We are known and accepted here
- Sense of family
- Relationships primary, curriculum secondary
- It forced me to build relationships
- It kept me from being aloof
- We are so far out this gave us connection
- At bigger divisional events – now we are connected
- Without small groups we would be disconnected
- Last retreat – there was much more openness amongst the officers
- It seems as if there is less competitiveness now
- Officers are more willing to seek prayer – this was not so before
- Small Groups afford me opportunity to know a group of officers
- I realize now we have both similar and dissimilar challenges
- Division wide there is more closeness
- We can share joys and difficulties
- being more connected, less isolated
- Good group dynamics
- Variety of personalities and stages of life
- Group grew as interaction developed
- Continuity of groups is preferred
- Interaction with one another is beneficial
- Once a month is not enough
- we are getting to know each other,
- we enjoyed each other
- intergenerational mix was helpful and positive
- enjoyed fellowship and hospitality in home setting
- knowing we have the support of each other when times are tough and distressing
- This helped us know that someone was there for us both spiritually and physically
- Received encouragement from one another
- Having a “safe” place to share concerns
- Getting to know people
- Freedom to share burdens – privilege of bearing one another’s burdens
- God’s provision to me – to be open and transparent
- Encouragement – this should have been years ago – healthy freedom to share
- Love for each other
- Not isolated – nothing is impossible – fruitful
- People were missed when absent – a sense of connectedness and belonging
- More apt to call others – more at ease – likely to reach out for help when needed
- Newness to group – decision made to trust each other
- Calling each other for support
- peer accountability
- officer fellowship
- Fellowship
- brought a closeness between officers involved
- greater mutual respect, understanding and accountability
- enjoyed fellowship
- sharing is a very important part
- allowed personal growth and enriched peer relationships
- we support and encourage each other
- we are there for each other

SPIRITUAL GROWTH (25)

- beneficial experience for duplicating in local corps ministries
- iron sharpens iron
- We are accountable to one another and the disciplines
- This keeps us moving forward
- Help to attend to God's voice, obedience follows
- High level of spiritual growth and accountability
- Intimate prayer times, non-threatening
- Not building up burdens or bitterness
- Officers are more willing to seek prayer – this was not so before
- we have been forced to stretch in our walk with God and spouse
- being held spiritually accountable is a good thing
- This helped us know that someone was there for us both spiritually and physically
- Curriculum for Bible study helpful
- Helped develop leadership skills in remembering to remove focus from ourselves and place it where it belongs with God
- Yes! (strength given to fellow officers) For instance if one of us is having a hard time, we can work through it in a safe environment and come through the struggle stronger
- We had some really awesome prayer time at the end of the session
- Freeing content – empowering information
- Accountability – awareness therefore of the divisional pulse – it's not just me – these are regional issues
- Heightened awareness of what the enemy and the Lord are doing

- Freedom to share burdens – privilege of bearing one another's burdens
- Shared prayer, strengthening each other
- Depth of sharing – liberating – talk about anything
- This has been a spiritual and emotional bank account to draw on
- Rapid growth – affirmation
- spiritually enriching and challenging

OVERALL HEALTH (33)

- we are learning how to function in a healthy community
- This keeps us moving forward
- Encouragement to keep going
- No hiding who we really are
- Not building up burdens or bitterness
- Safety then to move out
- This has been a good experience
- This has been very beneficial and positive
- It seems as if there is less competitiveness now
- Division wide there is more closeness
- We can share joys and difficulties
- Previously I remember the agony of other officers
- It was much more prevalent during sharing times
- It made us de-motivated to share our successes
- affirming
- encouraging
- validating

- Helped develop leadership skills in remembering to remove focus from ourselves and place it where it belongs with God
- We have learned that authentic community life is hard to come by in this division, but it is wonderful when it does happen
- Yes! (strength given to fellow officers) For instance if one of us is having a hard time, we can work through it in a safe environment and come through the struggle stronger
- Privilege to participate
- Encouragement – this should have been years ago – healthy freedom to share
- God's provision to me – to be open and transparent
- High integrity – trustworthy, maturity
- This has been a spiritual and emotional bank account to draw on
- Rapid growth – affirmation
- Able to dump – empty it out – share – and then move on – don't stay there
- Wellness – I am more well because of this group
-
- effective in knowledge/skill building
- overall health
- It is important to be part of this
- Without . . . the accountability group . . . would not be doing as well
- in the beginning I was dead set against these small groups. I felt uncomfortable and felt I did not have anything to offer . . . but over the last 3-4 years I know I need them. Thank you!

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Thinking Out Loud about Leadership

by Captain Andrew Clark

My Confession

I've been thinking a lot about leadership. More specifically, leadership I've given and leadership that is the current 'flavour' in the Army at the moment. I have a conviction, which may be slightly controversial to some, about how the future of leadership will need to look for the Army. I also have a conviction that our current modes of leadership...i.e., what it has turned into, is currently moving counter to where we need to go.

What I want to do, however, after this brief confession (which will follow shortly) is rather than focus on the negative I see in the current leadership modes and structures; I want to paint what I believe it should be in order to paint a different image. I will then contrast that with what sometimes happen and leave you good folks to make the conclusion.

The confession: although I may have made some good leadership decisions and seen some good things come out of my leadership, I acknowledge and confess that as a whole my leadership has been poor so far in my officership. To be brutally honest, in many senses I feel it should disqualify me from being a leader at all. Am I being overly hard on myself? Perhaps, however I recognise that there are many times where I could have led much, much better and hurt much fewer people in the process.

What have I been doing? Well, I write this here not to make excuses for myself, but to put out one of the main reasons I've discovered I've been leading poorly. I recognised that I have become an institutionalised leader. For so long, the perpetuation of the ministry of The Salvation Army has taken priority over being a catalyst in the Kingdom. I will bring out those contrasts in posts to come. But please hear my confession as brother and sisters.

I have allowed my dependence on The Salvation Army for my living (they house me, clothe me, feed me, transport me, pay me) to shape my identity (and therefore my security and significance as a person) instead of being who I am in Christ. In many circumstances, I've put the Army before Jesus. I've fallen into the trap of perpetuating the Army, bolstering and promoting officership and even officership covenant as a means of ensuring denominational survival in order that my 'profession' is safe and that there is a future rather than for what they can be under God's Kingdom economy.

I have confessed before the Lord the many times that I've put the institution before Him. I've begged that he would forgive my idolatry for allowing something to take his place, and I've asked him to lead me forward. Friends, I don't yet know what that 'forward' looks like. However, here I am seeking to learn from my mistakes. In fact, mistakes only remain mistakes when we don't learn from them.

Institutionalised? You may or may not know that I spend a bit of time in prison as a

chaplain. There, as I've been 'ministering' to the men, I've learned something very important. I've learned from observation, conversation and a good few books that seem to refer to the film, *The Shawshank Redemption*, that the walls of a place can get inside your head. I meet men there so dependent on the prison walls that within an hour or so of being out of prison, they are already planning how to get back in. It's where their identity, security and significance are found. Life is too scary outside the walls.

Inside the Army I may have my own sense of importance, my rank, my role, my position, how people see me. Take me outside the Army, if all I'm relying on is that, I'm literally nothing. I'm unemployable (I have little skills other than constructing a three point sermon) and a bit of a social mis-fit because I have few friends who aren't my friends because I work with them in some capacity. Contrast this institutionalisation with what we have in Jesus. He says that if we know the truth, the truth will set us free. If our identity, significance and security are in Him, we do indeed live a full life which sets us free from the constructs and limitations of the boxes we end up finding ourselves in.

A couple of days ago, I posted the message translation of Paul writing to the Galatians about his own institutional law-bound days. Thing is, there is every likelihood that Paul went on to keep the law as a Jew (many of them did) but in Christ he would have seen the true value in it but yet there he is very careful to point out that to go back to slavery, to miss the point, is almost unthinkable.

For me, my key task in these days is to reinstate Jesus back at the Lordship of my life. That process actually involves laying down a few things. It also involves a shift in priorities and focus. It involves all of me coming in line with all of Him.

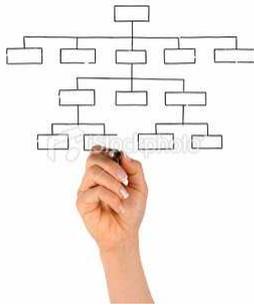
Friends, I want my lesson to be something which maybe you can learn from. It's why I've felt so strongly that I should 'come out of hiding' and share it. Maybe you have found yourself making the same mistakes, whether you are an officer or not. Explore the walls in your life. Look at your heart, 'test yourself and see if you are in the faith' said Paul to the Corinthians (2 Cor 13:5). Take the road to 're-Jesusing' your life...putting him back on the throne to the extent that there is no doubt in your own mind whose you are. As you do that, you'll recognise that to follow Jesus actually means leaving behind everything. Luke reports Jesus saying "²⁶If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. ²⁷And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:26-27). Sounds a bit tough..wife, children, brothers, sisters, mother father? Hate them? Salvation Army? Hate it?

Our love for Jesus and our abandonment to him, in other words, should our love of those other things seem like hatred because he is the Lord. It means he is the point. It also means that everything else takes its place in line behind Jesus and his Lordship.

Shape and Structure

So, having got the confession and the negative out in the open in where I've not been my best as a leader, I want to begin sharing how I see leadership. I will start by stating

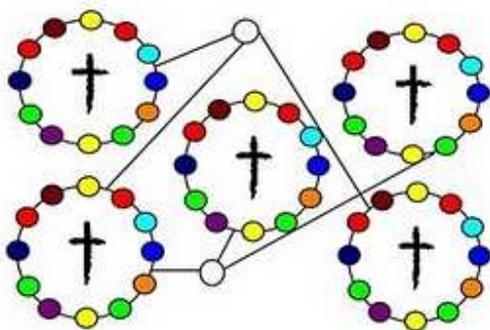
that I'm saying this in response to how I see things taking shape in the world around us and the ways in which I, as a 'leader' need to respond and adjust appropriately. I don't, however, have the full picture. There will be some folks who will see different sides. And, indeed, there will be people in different contexts for whom what I am saying will be a challenge and almost impossible due to the ways we have constructed how we do 'church' in our movement.



First, let me begin with two pictures. The first image is the one you can see on the left, here. It's just a random clip art image from Google images of a typical organisational structure. It would be very easy, using a chart similar to this, to plot out the chain of command in The Salvation Army (or any company with a CEO, for that matter, or any other church by and large). You'll know too that

this chain of command was adopted early on in the movement in our days as a mission. Even before the 'Army thing' came along, Booth was in command and there was something of a structure under him. This was the absolute best way of getting things done in Booths days. All the conquering armies, governments and organisations led by this model.

In fact, there were little other models available apart from the ones which relied on countless committees. I can understand why Booth wanted to minimise these. Booth, utilising this model, charged the Army through the world. It was effective, however I guess it's fair to say there were more than the fair share of casualties (especially amongst his children) for those who wouldn't fall in line. This is the war model. Makes sense for a Salvation Army. OK....I think you get all that. Let me turn to my next picture.



I couldn't really find one to adequately describe what I've picked out from a reading of the New Testament so I pulled this rough picture above together on a simple program. Let me explain.

Imagine each larger circle as a group of believers in a location with Jesus at the centre. The smaller circles are individuals joined together. Jesus is the head of the body, each part of the body relates to him and receives instruction from him and responds together just like our natural bodies receive instructions from our brains. In that sense, Jesus as the head of the body is the leader to whom everyone else responds. In the group, led by Jesus, there are different

individuals with different gifting. Some gifted build the body up by teaching, pastoring, evangelising, and maybe a soul with a prophetic ministry...everyone working to build up each other. We also see from the New Testament those who are among the church, 'overseers' and 'elders,' who are to "keep watch [looking out] over your souls" (Heb 13:17). They are scanning the skies looking for incoming missiles (heresy, false teaching) at the same time looking for ways forward. They are looking out for, not 'lording over.' There is nothing in the scripture to suggest that these functions were hierarchical in nature, just the body functioning together under the head, Jesus.

You will see the white dots floating yet linked to the smaller groups. These are itinerant apostles. The groups look to one or two of these...they may have had a hand in planting the group, will have spent time 'laying the foundation as an expert builder' before moving on. When they come along side the groups, in spite of their apostolic ministry, they don't come alongside as one over and above, but alongside. Some of the churches may have had an apostolic worker left behind by the apostle to continue the building work in some settings until the church is ready to be left alone. Some churches will have apostolic workers (as opposed to apostles) in them for a season in advance of the apostle arriving to lay the foundation 'properly.' (See Paul's relationship to Priscilla and Aquila and then Apollos). The apostle basically establishes the DNA of the body amongst a group gathered around Jesus which is then replicated at each point.

Now, the second is what I am advocating: firstly, because it bears closer resemblance to scripture and secondly, because there is something important about it that people are only starting to realise today.

Decentralised organisations are expanding at a tremendous rate. They tend to be bound together by common values and purpose. They are closer knit and when attacked, they spread out further and become stronger, making it difficult to quash them. They are fluid and mobile. The picture you can use to contrast these models is that of the starfish and the spider.

There is a book which explains this principle better than I can, but here it is in brief. The Spider has a head and 8 legs. If you cut off a spider's leg, providing he doesn't lose too much fluid, he will eventually grow back a leg which is attached to his body and head. If, however, you stand on his head, the whole thing is dead and suffers badly. The first picture about is the spider model.

The starfish, however, is different altogether. There is no head and each 'leg' has the same organs in each, the same parts. When you separate one part, you actually get two starfish because it has everything it needs to be a full entity. I will come back to this in another blog, but the point I am making here is that each leg of the starfish contains all the DNA and information needed to be a starfish where as the spiders leg is just a leg with no heart.

I've heard it said that we need the command (spider) structure in the first picture because we are at war so that there is a clear chain of command. However, I don't think

that is as potent as it may first seem. Rather than point to a modern example of Al Qaeda terrorist cells, let me share another story I picked up from 'The Starfish and the Spider.'

Take the Spanish Army of the 16th century. They conquer the Incas and the Aztecs by marching in, cutting off the big cities and capturing and killing the leaders, Atahualpa and Montezuma respectively. They take down the civilisations in two years.

Then take their assault on the Apache Indians (their next target). Apaches weren't structured the same as the other civilisations. They weren't centralised, didn't build towns and even if they did, they were such that if you took it down, they would just move out and settle somewhere else. They also had a shared political government. The only 'leaders' identifiable were what were called 'Nant'ans' who were cultural and spiritual leaders (Geronimo was one). As soon as the Spanish tried to kill these, others just rose up. They were important to inspire the people, but not indispensable because others could carry the story (the history of the people). If the Apaches decided to attack a Spanish settlement, they only had to talk about it in one place, spread the idea around, and you'd get local initiative acting spontaneously. The Spanish couldn't beat it.

The Apache's held out 200 years against the Spanish and were only conquered when the Spanish gave them cattle and farms. This automatically created a hierarchical structure and they started to fight among themselves which led to their own destruction. Therein lays a tale.

When you consider the early church, we see the effects of this decentralisation. Persecution send the church out, sent them deep. You couldn't kill it, it just grew like virus. Every person carried the story, the virus. The underground church in China is the same. Its outlawed and largely leaderless in the conventional sense yet in spite of that it grows because Jesus is Lord, the body function together and 'pastors' are working in apostolic roles, encouraging the small cells of believers.

Another picture: The institutional structure is like a train travelling on a set of tracks previously laid down but perhaps going a place where no-one wants to go or needs to go, all at great speed. The relational network structure is like a group of people out for a walk. They are ultimately slower, but they are more able to respond to the nuances of the terrain and able to go where the train can't. Picture Jesus wandering around Galilee with a band of twelve! The point is that you gain flexibility and fluidity.

As Christendom crumbles, when the money isn't there to pile into the massive structures we have set up around us (including paid 'clergy', buildings, programmes etc.), we run the risk of collapse and we see this in our Army. If you take lack of money, increasing lack of hierarchical leaders (read officers) the whole structure begins to crack. The way to deal with this is not to stick our heads in the sand and hope that post-Christendom blows over (because it won't). We need to re-evaluate and realign ourselves with a sustainable model which just so happens to find more root in New Testament as opposed to the Christendom clergy model.

The Army needs to be a leaner and meaner movement if it us to navigate the future. Corps need leaders who can help navigate the people through these changes at the level appropriate to the corps. For those of us in situations like mine (almost starting again from scratch), we need to adopt a new model from the start, and build these qualities into the nucleus for effective expansion. We need to prepare for the future now...but can we? More than that, will we?

Non-Clericalised Leadership

Now, having said what I've said in the previous two articles in this series, I now move on to something which sits on the nest of these. I propose to you that the concept of clergy should not exist in The Salvation Army. I want to present the problem and an alternative in this post. I have written some of this before, but it is key to my thinking at this time.

A greater treatment of this subject has been carried out by Major Harold Hill in his book "Officership in the Salvation Army : a Case Study in Clericalisation" and I recommend it to all who see this issue as important, and especially to those who don't see it as an issue.

His thesis attempts an historical review and analysis of Salvation Army ministry in terms of the tension between function and status, between the view that members of the church differ only in that they have distinct roles, and the tradition that some enjoy a particular status, some ontological character, by virtue of their 'ordination' to one of those roles in particular. This dichotomy developed early in the life of the Church (mainly at the beginning of the onslaught of the Romanising of Christianity) and can be traced throughout its history. Jesus and his community appear to have valued equality in contrast to the priestly hierarchies of received religion. There were varieties of function within the early Christian community, but perhaps not at first of status. Over the first two or three centuries the Church developed such distinctions, between those "ordained" to "orders" and the "laity", as it accommodated to Roman society and to traditional religious expectations, and developed structures to defend its doctrinal integrity.

This has happened throughout the Christian church as a part of the Christendom model, and post-Christendom, we find ourselves in an interesting place. Certainly in the Army, there seems to be an adoption of the clergy/laity model.

One of the things I've been struggling with personally recently is to do with my complete angst against clerical and priestly officership. One of the things which have become really apparent in recent years is the heightened sense that people see officers as priests, professional clergy. In Scotland in particular, which has a strong Presbyterian culture, there has been the exultation of the role of the minister which then actually disempowers the 'laity.' I've always been for the restoration of that ministry back to the people.

In many Salvation Army situations the world over, Salvationists have been

fundamentally and systematically raped of their role as the people of God by an over-powering, un-biblical, and un-Salvationist mindset and regime of officer-priests; disempowered to the stage that it is very possible that this generation of Salvationists don't know how to take back the privilege of being co-workers with Christ. The sad thing is that this has often happens under the ministry of godly officers who're trying to follow God's sense of calling to service on their lives. I, as I've already confessed, have been party to this in the past. I've had a vested interest in the survival of this denomination and to the preservation of officership because of what it gives me.

Clerical and priestly officership at its worst removes from the people the mission of the Army and that's which I suggest that a non-clerical officership is the best way forward for our movement. We are an Army run almost entirely by officers, many of whom are godly, hard-working, self-sacrificing people and who do what they do from a deep sense of the call of God on their lives to serve. When soldiery has the concept that the officers role is to perform this priestly ministry, they then become simple recipients of ministry done to them instead of co-missioners. You know, almost every reformation the church has ever had has had anti-clericalism as one of its roots. Every revival of the Christian church has involved the empowerment of the people of God, taking the mission out of the hands of the 'clergy' into the hands of the people as mentioned above.

The Salvation Army system and structure was born in almost complete rebellion against clericalism and the evil division of laity and clergy. In dreaming up the Army, the Founders (I include William, Catherine, Bramwell, Railton etc.), created a system where every soldier was a missionary. This is why when you read something like Os+Rs for Soldiers it's like reading a manual for 'ministers' - because that's almost exactly what it is! Local Officers and Officers were simply appointed as leaders of those soldiers to co-ordinate the battle. It wasn't that William Booth was attempting to 'abolish the clergy' but to abolish the laity and turn every man into a missional person. This is not a far cry from the missional sending of Jesus, sending out the 12, then the 72 then the 120, they every disciple unto the ends of the earth. Jesus fans out this missional living from himself, as true prophet priest and King, into Peter's phrase as a whole nation, royal and priestly. That's you and me.

This pattern of officer-priests where officers do the vast majority of the ministry is not sustainable in mission terms, given the decreasing number of people offering for the priestly officership model that is so predominant in the west. I firmly believe that officership applications will increase significantly when we shake of this idea of 'priestliness'.

I know that you will realise that the word 'laos', from which we get laity, simply refers to the people of God...all of us. When we go down the road of creating laity and clergy, we create a breed of super-Christians, professional Christians. Clergy is a bad word, a swear word...and actually, so is 'laity' when used by someone purporting to be 'clergy.'

I fundamentally believe that officership is more to do with function than it is to do with status/office/position. I believe an officer's role is to lead and co-ordinate the mission

and ministry in a corps. That involves primarily identifying, training and releasing the pastors, teachers, evangelist, apostles and prophets (cf Ephesians 4) to their God-given role in building up the rest of the body. Yes, the officer has his own fight/ministry role too, but his/her main role is to mobilise his fighting force, to act as co-ordinator, mission team leader if you like, alongside the rest of the soldiers. I'm a soldier first.

Even the ministrations of a corps should never be officer-centred. The preaching, the worship leading, the testifying, the bible teaching should be for all and by all. The closest I've come to this in my short officership so far was probably towards the end of our time in Pill with the introduction of the Ward System whereby not only did pastoral and teaching ministry begin to be shared, but where the mission of the Salvation Army corps was basically handed back to the soldiery on a plate. Where the work was needed was in helping folks to then know what to do with the mission of a corps! That's our successors tasks in Pill and I believe they will be doing that well.

If The Salvation Army is to survive, we must get the work of The Salvation Army out of the hands of officers, back into the hands of the soldiers. You must understand that I'm not being anti-officership here, but I am being anti-priest/anti-clerical. I believe that officership can be a powerful thing...so long as it does what it's meant to do.

If you are an officer reading this, can I appeal to you to

- rid yourself of your priestly trappings if you have any;
- refuse to be a priest at every turn, invest your life in giving away leadership and ministry to the people you're called to lead;
- think seriously about whether you're in officership to function as a leader or because you have been misled by a doctrine of unbiblical, unsalvationist and apostate priesthood that takes its cue from Romanism and Old Testament Levitical priesthood models more than it does the model of Jesus and the Apostles.

One of the questions that I am asking now is whether the Salvation Army wants an officer who refuses to be a priest. I still do not know if they really do. I totally reject that my calling is higher than that of any of my soldiers, past or present.

I say this in the context of recent months where official minutes have been issues saying, for example, that only officers can dedicate children and make soldiers in Salvation Army ceremonies. Why? Only commissioned officers can conduct weddings, whereas Envoys are not entitled to do so...not because of any position of the law, because the Army could chose to facilitate that 'status' for envoys which would allow them to function in that way.

This is a life and death issue for The Salvation Army. It's one of those things we need to be hotly getting to grips with both as officers and soldiers. Please forgive me if this post has more destructive than constructive. I now want to carry this idea together in much more positive light as I share a possible model for helpful, biblical and sustainable officership in the future as non-clerical 'catalysts' for mission and ministry.

The officer as the 'apostolic overseer'

I sigh a sigh of relief as I move on from discussion of what I consider to be a devilish doctrine of clericalism to promote and, maybe even to some people, introduce the concept of officership as 'apostolic' in function.

If you follow my picture here to its full conclusion, you will come to the realisation that I am advocating that no corps/Christian community should have full-time paid leadership. New corps and corps that are small enough to adapt quickly to this may be able to adopt early, others may take longer. 'But why', I hear you ask?

Having already said that the presence of clergy is both unbiblical and detrimental, I'd also repeat that its unnecessary if the whole body is functioning under the Lordship of Jesus, facilitated by a full Ephesians 4 ministry within the body, with designated 'overseers' or 'elders' just keeping guard as watchmen on the walls, not over and above, but alongside...potential body guards, if you like.

If the body are meeting as that, and engaging missionally in their contexts, we have a healthy and growing body...maybe even a multiplying body as more of the body are released to establish new nucleus of people to gather under Jesus' name.

Friends, this is where officers should come in. Officers should be able to function over a given geographical area either as apostolic workers (like Pricilla and Aquila) who prepare the ground for the apostle to plant, or as the apostle who plants, stays for a period to equip those who gather in those first stages all the while equipping them to carry on when he has gone.

Think of a catalyst in a chemical reaction. From my limited scientific knowledge from Standard Grade chemistry, a catalyst is something which promotes a reaction between two or more substances without it, itself, being used up. So for all you non-scientific bods out there....it gets the thing going, creates the response but then gets out of the way.

We see this in the New Testament, especially in the apostle Paul but equally in the others. Paul's stays in a place would be as short as maybe a few months and as long as a couple of years. He moved from city to city, establishing 'as an expert builder' and laying the only foundation for the church, which is Jesus Christ. He draws people together, shares the gospel message of the Kingdom, teaches the people how to function and once they're started they are left to it. He then keeps contact with them, sometimes through an appointed local person, writes to them, visits them as needed. That was their role. Paul himself said that he wanted to continue moving on into areas where the gospel had not been preached and established.

Consider too how Paul saw this work to be a success. At one point in his ministry, he was able to say he had completed the work of the gospel in the entire Asia Minor region (modern day Turkey) because he had established a small group (like in the picture above) in every key city. Considered the work done? How on earth? Because he had

left behind the DNA needed for the body to spread out, establishing and carrying the work to the rest.

You will find that the apostles were the only people who received payment for their ministry. Actually...the only others other than the apostles who seemed to be 'paid' were the widows. In order to receive this, they promised to give themselves to prayer, remain unmarried, and be over 60. Getting back to Paul, he would still often forgo this privilege of payment even although he could claim it and instead he still chose to 'work hard amongst them with his own hands.' In other circumstances, we find that he would refuse money from the church he was currently with, but gladly accepted it from other churches who could afford it so as not to be a burden. We find no record until well into the Christendom mode of elders, pastors etc. being paid for their work.

At this juncture, I wish to raise the issue of money...that sacred cow. You will be hard pressed to find much reference to tithing in the New Testament and in the early church. And even if you did, and where you do find reference to giving, it is for a particular purpose. It was to support the itinerant apostle and to feed the poor, orphans and widows. It also made sure that none amongst the early church were in need. Good news to the poor means 'you ain't poor anymore'. It was a relational giving....anything and everything was given not to pay local pastor/preacher/teachers but to support those in need.

Incidentally, with the rise of the Christendom model, and the emergence of large temples and structures and systems, we see the rise of teaching from the Old Testament on tithing in order to support the priesthood (the kind of priesthood I'm suggesting we don't have). I have to confess here too that I've taught and held the opinion that all Salvationists should tithe as a biblical mandate. I here confess that I believe that to have been a wrong understanding of this doctrine and practice. The New Testament doesn't set amounts, it sets the reasons we give...out of love, out of joy and out of gratitude. It sets a destination....the apostles, the poor, widows and orphans. The early church had no cumbersome structure to support. I ask 'have we re-instated the OT tithe because we have replicated the OT priesthood?'

What are the implications of this? I guess you could say that I am advocating that paid officership in every corps be abolished, both because it has little foundation in scripture and because it is not sustainable in the longer term. I am advocating that we should take officers out of the permanent positions of corps work and give those who are gifted in that way apostolic oversight in cities. What about the rest of the officers? If they are pastors, evangelists, teachers then let them function in the body as that. If we insist on still paying them, let us release them into ministries of chaplaincy, community development etc. utilising the giving of the body which has been given for those sort of purposes in a meaningful way. They don't need to be full time in a corps at all, other than to function within their gifting along with the rest.

Friends, I realise how alien all this sounds. I've not even got a clue if any of it makes sense in the way I'm describing it. I believe that what I'm advocating would take much

change, transition and movement. I'm not naive enough at all to believe that very many people would agree with me. I'm not naive enough to believe that it will ever really become a reality off the pages of this blog certainly where the Army is concerned. But surely one can live in hope.

Friends, I love The Salvation Army and I believe in us. But I also believe that The Army may continue to function as a big old institutional machine when all the resources really needed to function as an advancing mission force have become so diminished. A quick look at the stats (it needs to be a quick look before you need to start taking Prozac) shows that the Army in Europe in particular is in massive decline....remember, where Christendom is fading fastest? It's time now to become lighter and leaner for those in the position to do so and to begin the turn-around now for the places where change needs to take place.

But friends, please hear my lack of hope and sense of heartbreak as consider how I fear the Army will not adapt sufficiently at this time. And hey, I'm not just talking what I've outlined here. We don't seem to be adapting sufficiently to the current challenges and we're digging our heads in the sand. It keeps me up at night, breaks my heart and causes me simply to make a plea to you good folks to even just think about what I've written.

I too, need to make my response to this challenge in relation to the Army. My first response is to say 'please, Lord Jesus.' That is also my second, third and fourth response. Join me?

Officer Recruitment

So...in this emerging alternative view of officership, how are officers recruited? What are they recruited for? Answer: they are not recruited.

If we go with officers functioning as apostolic overseers or as apostolic workers, these people would be functioning primarily out of an apostolic gifting, spirit given and spirit anointed. If they've got it, they've got it. These people will emerge from the local context. Study of the scripture suggests that Paul spent a significant amount of time in the church at Antioch in a teaching role (probably unpaid)...maybe as much as 14 years before he set off on his first apostolic journey. In this time, he would have experienced truly organic grass-roots Christian community functioning together as a body. Remember, this was all new to him as a former teacher of the law...having said that, I can hear a good Jewish friend whisper in my ear that it may not have been as alien as you first think because outside of the temple ministrations, Jewish life was centred around the home and the family, so Paul and others would be bringing that dimension into their experience as a new covenant community.

Why did they send Paul out? They simply recognised that Paul had what it took to be an apostolic planter. You see, Paul's credentials as an 'original apostle' was founded upon his having been, seen and met with Jesus....this was a requirement for the initial twelve + Paul. So, as he argues several places, he had a right to be an apostle in that sense

but he rarely appealed to it. He refused to 'lord it over' and spent much time, pleading, urging, and begging with regards to asking people to hear his words and advice. He wanted the people to respond not to the position that had been given institutionally (even if by Jesus himself) but towards their sense of the Spirit speaking in him...his spiritual authority. The question does remain, however, whether it was really just that the twelve+Paul were given that spiritual authority and not that institutional authority anyway (maybe our Christendom minds assume some degree of institutional model?)

Anyway, my point is that Paul spent time in a local expression of the church and he emerged as one who had been equipped to begin function apostolically (as opposed to just 'being' an apostle). The body sense the Spirits equipping of these men for this task and so they laid hands on them and sent them out. This is one of the only places where I see anything akin to 'ordination.' And like I say, it had a different posture, doctrine, outcome and 'fruit' than the model we have today.

How were they trained? They were trained in the body. We have no reason to expect that the early followers of Jesus stopped doing the Luke 10 stuff....you know, going out in twos around the area and seeking out people of peace, eating, remaining, getting to know, sharing the gospel, healing sick, casting out demons etc. They were already planting small churches as a regular part of their discipleship. All that was happening now was that these men were being sent further into uncharted waters, largely. They were being sent beyond their Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria to the ends of the earth and Jesus promised they would. Also, the purpose may have been slightly different. Whereas before they may link people up to the Antioch church, albeit in smaller places, they would still be in the vicinity largely of Antioch doing what Paul then expected the people to do after he had planted small nucleus of people in cities and then considering the work done. He would plant, someone else would water and the growth would come as the disciples spread out organically into the surrounding 'suburbs' and outlying country areas.

This model is a model of growth and multiplication. I'd suggest that recruitment of people for leadership is possibly a method of subtraction, especially in the cases where people are recruited from one part of the kingdom at its expense in favour for another part of it. Ideally, from what we see the scriptural pattern to be, these sorts of things (not just apostles, but any other ministry of the body) arose out of a) necessity (i.e. deacons serving tables etc) or b) need (e.g. 'we need to do this in response to the Holy Spirit. Ministry then came from the sense of what people sensed should happen and if it was a spirit thing, he wouldn't urge a thing that wasn't doable.

Because we feel we need to recruit officers for every corps so that we have our clergy in to manage all the places (without which many places would function extremely poorly...and sometimes even with officers do the same....again, confession mode) we are happy to rip people out of their natural context when actually their pastoral skills, teaching skills, etc belong to the local body. As I say, unless there is an apostolic calling, they should be hanging around contributing to the body, in work in either regular work places or in heading up particular agencies to achieve a certain thing. (An aside,

here, on this point: Paul and his tent making....it's actually suggested that Paul actually made prayer shawls that Jewish people wore to pray. He made tallit...little tents...which were prayer shawls. When Jesus talks about going to your room and closing the door to pray, he is really saying 'get under your prayer shawl and pray! Please, check this out..Google it.)

So, to make it clear, people with ministry gifting would only leave the local when the purpose was apostolic. So, what if the church in the next city needed a pastor because there was no-one gifted? Well, Paul would teach what it was all about (like he does in Ephesians 4), teach them to desire spiritual gifts (like he does in 1 Corinthians) and if there is an issue, he may send in front of him or leave behind other apostolic workers (distinct from apostles) to fill the gap until such times the body was functioning fully. Again, a ministry of multiplication, not subtraction.

So, the officer would learn his theology, ministry and practice in the context of the local corps which is functioning as a body. There would be a sense that he/she/they should be sent out to plant further than their own city. They would be released and supported from the believers who were releasing them for multiplication and from corps they would plant in proportion to what they could give. If you weren't called to function apostolically, basically, officership wasn't for you. As William Booth said, officership is the default call....it's if you're not called to anything else (to stay behind as pastor, teacher, shepherd, evangelist, deacon, elder, local overseer, butcher, baker, hair dresser, bin man, school teacher, prison warden, businessman, newsagent, journalist etc.) then it may just be you're called to do the apostle thing and function as an officer. Good advice.

This does away with the training college where they, in effect, train pastor/teachers and not apostles. Its only necessary to do this because a) we've adopted forms that require an upfront sermon and a pastoral crutch person in a community and b) we have a clerical model that needs a cleric; c) we've contracted out local ministry in all the functions to outside persons we need to pay to come to live with us (current day officers, youth workers, community managers etc.) and so we limit the local body in its function etc. I could go on...but you are intelligent people to work out the other consequences of this thinking.

Make sense? Again, let me just add the disclaimer that I realise that a) I may only be seeing part of the picture and b) it would be highly difficult for the Army to transition to this. What is my response to be in the light of the challenges? Still seeking the Lord.

Authority

Let me preface this by saying that I don't function primarily out of a problem with authority. I will confess, however, that I'm re-evaluating what authority is and where it comes from. I am someone who, like almost everyone else, has been under authority, had authority, shared authority and, on occasions, rebelled against authority! I guess it's one of those things that's part of our lives and we all react differently too it and act differently when we have it. There are, of course, different kinds of authority. I'm sure

you'll recognise these types of authority and may even be able to think of some more.

Positional Authority - where you have been given a position of authority by an organisation.

Moral Authority - authority which comes out of the substance of your life.

Spiritual Authority - when God speaks through you and people recognise it to be God using you.

Special Authority - based on an expert knowledge of something (science, bible, cheese making, law etc)

Relational Authority - where people respect you because of the nature of your close relationship to them.

Now, I ask myself, "as an officer, what type of authority have you exercised?" Probably most of them at one point or other (although I've no idea what I'd be an expert in!) I'd say that many a time, however, I've defaulted to Positional Authority when really I should have been leading from a different place. Is positional authority all bad?? Not entirely sure, but it's certainly a leadership that comes more from what your organisation has given you rather than from who you are as a person. If you only lead like this, it will be poor leadership, I imagine.

Neil Cole contrasts a picture of leadership in the film, *Braveheart*. Where William Wallace is talking to Robert Bruce (the true heir of Scotland's throne) and he encourages Bruce to rise up and lead the people, throwing in that if he did that, then he'd follow him too. The contrast is clear. One man has all the position and title (Bruce) but the other has all the authority (Wallace). Leaning on a title is poor; leading a cause because it has first inspired you is an entirely different thing. This is a good example of relational authority, but when you take it into a Kingdom setting and the better model by far, is spiritual authority.

So, what happens with authority in officership and in organisations like The Salvation Army? I've previously noted the hierarchical structure. You know, we have soldiers, local officers, non-commissioned officers (envoys etc), and officers. In officership, you have Lieutenants, Captains and Majors Etc, but we also have the leadership levels. Corps/social officer, DHQ officers, THQ officers, TCs, Zonal Officers, the Chief of the Staff, and the General. Whatever way you look, you have that triangle.

Let me ask a question. Where does Jesus come on that model? Does he come above the General? Well, of course he comes above the General...he is the Lord. But what I mean is 'is he the next one up the leadership chain?' Well, if he is, then it means that I have a lot of levels to go through before I can understand the will of God and know what he wants of me. Now, of course, we have direct access to Jesus...we are under his authority, aren't we? If we claim that simple statement of Christian doctrine, 'Jesus is Lord', then it truly means that. It's a revolutionary statement. Now, many a time there is no conflict in that with our every day existence as officers. Yet, I dare to suggest that there may be occasions when there is conflict.

Could there ever be the case where the Lord commands me to do something that the Army won't allow? When asking myself that question, I really have to explore my answer. Let's say I say 'no, the Lord would never command me something the Army wouldn't allow.' I could say, if it's the Lord's will for me to be in the Army, he knows I'm in it and he knows I will follow what the Army says, so the logical conclusion of that thinking is that no, the Lord wouldn't command me to do something that the Army won't allow because I'm in the Army. Sound plausible?

But what if I answer yes or even maybe? What if I say that answering 'no' to that key question automatically implies that because our leaders are Christians in authority 'over me' automatically implies that everything they say is directly down the chain (at whatever point the decision is made) is what the Lord would will? Friends, I believe that is wrong and in dangerous ground. We all recognise that men and women make mistakes, poor calls, mis-judgements. In saying this, we are also making the assumption that leaders 'above us' are always in tune with the perfect will of God and that nothing could happen that God wouldn't set in place. Hmm. Frankly, my experience of my own leadership decisions and sometimes the decisions of others lead me to believe that it's not always the case.

I believe this issue most comes into play in the life of an officer when it comes to the appointments system. It is here, in this sphere, that the Army exercise the most authority over the life of the average officer. The decisions made at this level, albeit with a little bit more consultation these days, are decisions which are crucial ones. Sadly, my life in the Army so far has shown me that there are a fair amount of good, but also a fair amount of bad 'moves' made when it comes to this aspect. When they are right, they are great. When they are wrong, they can be devastating not only for the officers and their family, but for the corps.

I'd like to question whether it is right for officers to blindly offer The Army this right to have that kind of authority over the lives of men, women, and families. Even if it's not offered blindly, an officer is still subject to it and there is an air arising certainly in the UK Territory where it's still frowned upon to either a) refuse or b) suggest that the appointment made has not been the right one, for whatever reason. Alongside that, there is also the issue of how the Army responds to consultation processes. It's perfectly possible, having indicated a desire to go to an inner city appointment in a major Scottish city, that you'll be sent to rural Oxfordshire. What then does the officer's sense of calling to an area mean?

Let me give another example...different officer. This one is testing what he senses might be a call to another nation and is pondering whether to go offer to go. He mentions it to leaders locally, and to someone in that territory. A request is made to the TC of the home territory asking if the certain officer could be made available to go to the other territory and the TC says 'sorry, but we need good officers here' without so much as speaking to the officer considering the call. In that scenario, do we assume that the TC is right, even although he has never so much as spoken to the officer concerned? Certainly, if he had spoken to them he might find out that they were still exploring the

possibility and not ready to go. Equally, he may have discovered that the Lord had so laid it on his heart that he was ready and willing to respond. The point is, our system allows for this decision to be made without consulting anyone about it. You'll just have to trust me in assuring you this is a real and recent scenario.

Let me bring it home. Leaving aside everything I've said about how officership might/could function and just looking at the present system, how would I respond if the Army or someone in it was asking me to do something I really felt I couldn't do? And what if I was so convinced that the Lord was leading me in a certain way and the Army said it couldn't happen?

I realise these questions probably raise more questions than offer answers. But think about it this way....how did we get to the place where these things were an issue in the first place? I've already suggested that there is very little evidence and justification for this sort of hierarchical structure in the New Testament. When we look at, say, Peter and Paul....two 'high ranking' apostles we certainly notice that in their relationship there were times when you might have expected Peter to 'pull rank' on Paul where instead they simply go away with a difference of opinion. And there are many times where Paul alludes to his apostolic authority, but claims that he'd rather not use it...in fact he's not really bothered too much about the title anyway...he'd rather lead by example, by persuading, conversing, even pleading and begging the folks around to his way of thinking. When Paul sends a person here or there, I doubt very much if it was ever rooted in simple positional authority as an apostle. Authentic spiritual authority is 'from alongside.' We get this from Jesus, who 'being in the very nature God...' - you know the rest.

You know, Paul said 'follow me as I follow Jesus.' There are some people in my life I'd follow wherever they went...I'd be content to follow them as they follow Jesus. There are many people I'd follow. I've also been privileged to have some people follow me like that...certainly not something I take for granted, but something that is, actually, incredibly humbling and a real blessing.

Just maybe, following Jesus more closely involves sometimes cutting out a middle man here or there. Just maybe, there is something wise about following a Jesus who never really held an institutional position in his life, but yet who lead from the very core of who he was in direct link with the Father through the Spirit. Just maybe.

In conclusion

The best way I can think to sum up what I've been saying here is to point to the model of the body of Christ. We're not made up of individuals, we are in community together. We are supposed to function as a body, as members of each other. I really want to emphasise this in case the only thing that people take from this series is 'he's got a problem with authority.' I can see that happening because to some degree or another, most people reading this will have something of themselves and their lives invested in some kind of leadership, either giving or receiving.

Under Jesus, we have everything we need as community to discern what the Spirit is saying. Under him, our pastors, teachers, apostles, evangelists and prophets will function. Under him authentic spiritual leadership will emerge in the context of community in the same way it does in the trinity, the great Three in One, where they agree together in perfect community. We have the call to be the body on earth...that means to learn the rhythms we see in our Almighty God.

You know, one of the questions I caught myself asking the other night was 'is this Army?' At first, I stopped myself because in a sense I've determined that is not going to be the most important question, so I put it out of my mind. However, my mind then turned to something I've often read before and often shared in preaching and teaching. At the beginning of Catherine Booth's Papers on Aggressive Christianity, she writes this:

I WAS thinking, while I was reading the lesson, that, supposing we could blot out from our minds all knowledge of the history of Christianity from the time of this Inauguration Service--from that Pentecostal Baptism--or, at any rate, from the close of the period described in the Acts of the Apostles, suppose we could detach from our minds all knowledge of the history of Christianity since then, and take the Acts of the Apostles and sit down and calculate what was likely to happen in the world, what different results we should have anticipated, what a different world we should have reckoned upon as the outcome of it all. A system which commenced under such auspices, with such assumptions and professions on the part of its Author (speaking after the manner of men), and producing, as it did, in the first century of its existence, such gigantic and momentous results.

We should have said, if we knew nothing of what has intervened from that time to this, that, no doubt the world where that war commenced, and for which it was organized, would have long since been subjugated to the influence of that system, and brought under the power of its great originator and founder! I say, from reading these Acts, and from observing the spirit which animated the early disciples, and from the way in which everything fell before them, we should have anticipated that ten thousand times greater results would have followed, and, in my judgment, this anticipation would have been perfectly rational and just. We Christians profess to possess in the Gospel of Christ a mighty lever which, rightly and universally applied, would lift the entire burden of sin and misery from the shoulders, that is, from the souls, of our fellow-men--a panacea, we believe it to be, for all the moral and spiritual woes of humanity, and in curing their spiritual plagues we should go far to cure their physical plagues also. We all profess to believe this. Christians have professed to believe this for generations gone by, ever since the time of which we have been reading, and yet look at the world, look at so-called Christian England, in this end of the nineteenth century! The great majority of the nation utterly ignoring God, and not even making any pretence of remembering Him one day in the week. And then look at the rest of the world. I have frequently got so depressed with this view of things that I have felt as if my heart would break. I don't know how other Christians feel, but I can truly say that 'rivers of water do often run down my eyes because men keep not His law,' and because it seems to me that this dispensation, compared with what God intended it to be, has been, and still is, as great

a failure as that which preceded it.

There was a woman firmly embedded in the Christendom model, yet she was able to look with honesty and say - hey, this isn't working. If we had gone on as we started out, we should be in a different place.

Now, I know that it's not as simply as just looking at Acts and mimicking. Yet, the Acts and the letters chart for us how people began to live out the Jesus life. We see a body functioning and spreading the gospel like wild fire around the world. Catherine's response is that it's time for fire.

Early Army documents and history show ingenious adaptation, taking on whatever form would win the world for Jesus. I believe that we need to do the same. I don't imagine for a second that the Booths anticipated a burgeoning clerical Episcopal system, although there is no denying they set in place a hierarchical structure.

But here is another thing I noticed and it's with regards to officership and its progression. Major Harold Hill in his book referred to earlier, charts this well, but we see a dramatic shift in officership. The way I see it at its largest is in something as telling as the length of an officer's stay. Early in the movement we had a whole bunch of itinerant officers, travelling light, staying for short periods of time giving challenge and direction to a particular setting. Officers typically hung around for between two months and two years...something quite similar to Paul's apostolic pattern. Their tasks were to open corps, open outposts, preach the gospel to everyone. Each officer would bring something maybe new, ingenious. Ingenuity was prized in officership. Novelty was prized.

And what happened in corps, leadership wise? Well, the key leaders were the local officers for pretty much every aspect of corps life. If there was no officer, no problem because the locals would continue the mission, plant the corps, hold the open air meetings. They had visitation, pastoral care, training, instruction sown up in the primitive Army system. The officer was simply the one trained and sent along as the cherry on the cake, to inspire the troops in the fight.

Look at where we are now. Somewhere along the line our officers have become the doers of significant amounts of our ministry in the Army, disempowering soldiers and local officers. There are very few corps in the territory that can survive well without officers. We have officers staying longer because the function of the officer has trained from apostle/evangelist to that of primarily pastor/teacher. We have assumed that the main function of leadership, and of officership, is to pastor and to preach/teach. You can get away with that and do little in terms of mission. I wouldn't say I'm a non-caring person, that I don't get involved in people's lives and pastor in that way, but neither do I believe that is should be the primary function of the officer. The Army 'system' of old ensured that all that was taken care of, especially in the Ward System (army's cell system).

Friends, I am arguing that the local corps should function as a body. Officer leadership should function apostolically. I am arguing that leadership should be discerned and identified locally, and that when an officer (apostle) comes along side, he works alongside to inspire, equip, challenge and mobilise the local corps in their mission. I am arguing that we need to think carefully about authority in the context of our structure, especially if it remains as it is and doesn't recognise or ever do anything similar to what I've proposed here (which its unlikely to just on my writing). I am arguing that the current system of officer leadership is not sustainable and we need radical shifts in thinking and acting, not to save the institution, but to realign ourselves with the purposes for which we have been raised up...to be a significant movement for the salvation of the world.

Friends, I firmly believe the hype in that I believe that we have in our DNA, the apostolic genius (which I've written about elsewhere - search this blog for it) but I also believe that certainly in my territory, it lays dormant. And you know what? The lights are going out all over the territory and all over the European area because we are too slow to change. We are dying on our feet. There are, of course, glorious exceptions, but on the whole, it's a bleak picture. We must wake up. We must move and act now. We must show levels of flexibility that we've never shown before because our new 'theatre of war' demands that we become a different machine entirely.

Friends, I plead with you who are still reading and who don't think I've lost the plot entirely, please see the urgency we face. We don't face it alone, the rest of the church that remains unwilling to adapt is suffering the same haemorrhaging.

Einstein said that 'the kind of thinking that cause the problem is unlikely to solve the problem' yet we adopt the position of 'more of the same, but better' and we don't always realise that will never win the day.

Can we at this time wake up and realise the challenge? Will you, any leaders reading, be able to cast aside just for a moment any sense of contempt you may hold for me or what I've said and ask yourselves the questions?

I am considering all these things, reflecting upon officership, my leadership thus far and how it must adapt significantly for the future.

God help us all.

**end note: please feel free to comment or email me for clarification on any point. I've done a lot of referring to scripture without necessarily referencing it. If you can't find it for yourself, please ask and I'll try to help.*

Wesleyan Journal Entries

Major Kelvin Merrett shares his journal notes on Wesleyan holiness.

Friday 4th September, Melbourne

Wesley holiness! It has been a while since I have reflected and rethought my own beliefs (and perhaps bias) towards holiness in The Salvation Army. It will be interesting to see how 26 years of ministry have influenced my thoughts. It will also be interesting to examine what impact holiness has had on my own life and ministry over this period.

Misconceptions of Full Salvation¹:

As I start this journey, have any of the following statements changed for me over the years?

Class Notes	My thoughts...
False Entire sanctification is the destination of the Christian life.	<i>Yes! Although I wonder if sometimes I have forgotten this basic principle. As I have journeyed with people there is a sense that many still want the 'second blessing'. I am reminded of my own experience when as a teenager I went searching for the 'experience' of the second blessing. At an Easter Camp in Victor Harbour I remember "working myself up" to become emotions, so I could "get it" – just when I was nearly there (emotionally) a camp leader came and placed his hand on my shoulder. I remember thinking "you are to early – go away!!!" How we need to guard against wanting to make other people's experiences our own.</i>
False Entire sanctification takes away our ability to sin.	<i>Wouldn't this be nice! However, it does take stop us from "beating ourselves" up when we do sin. It will be interesting to explore this thought in the days ahead. As I reflect on this thought more, what is my response to God when I sin? How do I repent?</i>
False We do not receive the Holy Spirit fully until we are entirely sanctified.	<i>One of the great memories I have is as a youngster talking to God. He was right there beside me; walking with me; no doubts about that. It is amazing that, 45 years later (ouch) I can still recall those times I had with God. He was with me. When I had my "experience" at Victor Harbour I was reminded of my childhood. No need to seek a second blessing experience – because I already had it; but yet to realise.</i>

¹ Class notes presented by Kalie Webb

False : :	Those not entirely sanctified are sinners and second-class citizens.	<i>Some of the great privileges I have had as an officer is to walk along side those who are seeking a deeper experience with God. Their honesty in sharing their journey made them first class citizens.</i>
False : :	Only those who are entirely sanctified go to heaven.	<i>Interesting statement! What about Christians who seem never to grow in their faith. Like to pull people down! I am reminded of Matthew 25:31-46²</i>
False : :	Legalistic self-righteousness is what holiness looks like.	<i>Amen! One of the biggest disappoints and hurts that I have experienced is those who proclaim to be Christian, hold leadership positions, act in this way, but look after there own interests above those of the Kingdom.</i>
False : :	Sinlessness is the goal of the sanctified life.	<i>I am reminded that as a young person, this is the message I have "heard". I even remember it was a visiting Divisional Commander, (McPherson, in Adelaide), "our goal in life is to live a "sinless life". One of the "life commandments" that has stuck with me. Is it wrong to have this as a goal? I often tell people to make sure that use "SMART" goals. Not sure if it would pass the test – but this is still a goal I have in life!!!!</i>
False : :	The entirely sanctified do not face temptation.	<i>Would be nice if this was true!</i>
False : :	Holiness and entire sanctification are synonymous.	<i>This is one I would have said "true" to. But as I reflect further, is entire sanctification something you receive in heaven? I don't think so – will need to explore this one further.</i>
False : :	It is impossible to live up to the expectations of the sanctified life.	<i>What are the expectations? I know there have been those times when I have set the bench mark to hire – yet I also need to be careful not to set it to low!</i>

Upbringing and family influences:

The upbringing of John Wesley and his family environment would have moulded his character and perhaps even his own "experience" of God as a youngster. The family environment continues to be so important in life today. My own faith in God was introduced through the lifestyle of my parents and the local Salvation Army Corps. It was therefore very easy for me to adopt the ways of The Salvation Army along with its

² **Matthew 25:31-46 (NIV)**

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.....

distinctive methods and doctrines. My lifestyle has meant that the Christian way is the “normal” way. Having said that I remember with real clarity my relationship with Jesus as a youngster. Not an imaginary friend but someone who was with in my early days at school, who I could share the day with at night, what went wrong, what was good! The simplicity of child-like faith! Yet, that simple faith – of knowing there is a God who loves me, has remained central to my own faith. There has though been the need to rediscover who God is in the context of my life.

I suspect that Wesley had a similar experience. A life journey – not on discovering God – but discovering who God is!

Legalism

One of the perceptions of a holiness discussion is the tension of living a life that is holy v’s a life that complies with a list of does and don’ts. With the Christian tradition there is a ‘code of conduct’ but that really is no different to many areas that we find ourselves in – the laws of countries, road laws, company laws. Yet, we often have the misconception that the Bible and Christianity is about being “good” by living a “good” life – with holiness the way to live that “good” life. Legalism. No wonder many are not interested!

The context of holiness In Matthew³ has reminded me of the need for context. The Sermon on the Mount being followed by:

Matthew 4:17 (NIV)

17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

Matthew 9:35 (NIV)

35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.

Holiness is not about living a lifestyle, it is about being in oneness with God – an intimate relationship with God, and through that relationship we live a lifestyle that reflects our experience with God. We become more Christlike in our living, our outward expression. *It will be interesting to see if my thoughts change on that over the next few days!*

“The connection between love and holy living is central to the Pauline corpus (and also to the Wesleyan though). Love precludes legalistic holiness, and the expression of love in action arises from holiness in heart.”⁴

³ Geoff Webb with Kalie Webb, *Authentic “fair dinkum” Authentic Holiness for ordinary Christians*, The Salvation Army, Melbourne, 2007, p99f

⁴ Webb, *Authentic “fair dinkum” Authentic Holiness for ordinary Christians*, p115

Saturday 5th September, Ballarat

'Holiness is God's alignment to His purpose.'⁵

This for me is a foundational statement on my understanding of holiness. It has provided a springboard for the development of my own holiness journey and has also helped me to share with others what holiness can mean for them.

It is an important concept for me because it describes holiness as a journey. (The danger of this thought could be that you "never arrive" i.e. you are always trying to achieve the fullness of holiness.) Holiness as a journey paints for me the picture of holiness being a journey with God. I live a life that is empowered by the Holy Spirit, I have this inner source that guides, equips, challenges, chastises me. A Holy Spirit that lives life with me; a partner in life and ministry.

"The church cannot be holy if it focused on private holiness rather than the mission of the Church"⁶

This is thought provoking. It places holiness into context. What is the point of living holy lives, if we are not fulfilling the mission of the Church? It would seem that some of our teaching in The Salvation Army needs to be balanced out here. My impression would be that when we talk/preach about holiness we do so with a focus on ourselves. We talk about "living in the world" but the focus remains on us, and our lifestyle rather than the mission of the Church. Why are we called to be living holy lives? To be his ambassadors...

2 Corinthians 5:20 (NASB95)

20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

The Issue of Eastern influence on Wesley

These five points⁷ resinate with me....

- *The "therapeutic" emphasis v's the "legal" concern.* One of the greatest "hurts" that I often hear about in the Christian faith is the legalistic approach the Church (Army) has often taken in "dealing" with people. How many more would still be in the ranks of The Salvation Army if we had offered the Grace of God. There needs to be these times when we discipline – but to what degree? The offer of a healed and healthy soul is an appeal that is surely attractive to people. It has to be – for it IS God! I like this thought –

⁵ Quote taken from class notes - Webb

⁶ Quote taken from class notes - Webb

⁷ Geoff Webb with Kalie Webb, *Authentic "fair dinkum" Authentic Holiness for ordinary Christians*, The Salvation Army, Melbourne, 2007, p126-127

it gives people hope and encouragement. People need to hear this message. (A topic for a future sermon!)

- *Grace is not impersonal and created – bestowed – but a personal Presence.* This brings me back to the foundations of my belief in God. The scriptures point us to God; inform us about God; they are the living word – but, we cannot discover who God really is, until He becomes a loving reality in our lives. (The step of faith.) Why do I know God is true? Because his spirit witness to me – and lives in me. Basic simple truths that people can easily dismiss, but as I reflect on people that I have “witnessed” to (i.e. established relationships with), has it been anything I have said to them? I don’t think so – the reality is that they see God in me!!! How? I have no charismatic personality, I’m not a humorous person, yet the miracle of God’s grace enables people to see *through me* and see God! Humbling! Scary! How easy it is for our actions to block people from seeing God!
- *No dependence on imputed righteousness.* As I reflect on this thought I cannot help but feel burdened for many people who attend “my” church (The Salvation Army). My intuition tells me that many believe they have the attributes of Christianity (holiness) passed onto them because they belong to the Army. Holiness becomes a “right of passage” by belonging to the Church. Perhaps I am being too critical? A powerful thought here. More preaching material!
- *There is the need for perseverance in faith and obedience.* This is where I have a personal conflict with the “second blessing” been seen as “having arrived” in one’s experience of holiness. “Perseverance in faith and obedience” must also mean continual growth. The second blessing (or entire sanctification) is essential, in that people need to know that when they become a Christian they are also equipped and empowered to live a holy life – but it is still a growing experience. The concept of “born again” Christians has done harm to the church. The argument from “born again” Christians that you were not really saved unless you have the gift of tongues – left many Christians trying to “reconvert” Christians with the gift of tongues – and many Christians left wondering “where they were” in the experience of God and Holiness.⁸ Holiness is a journey – not a journey to attain the ‘second blessing’ – but a journey of growth.
- *Sanctification is not a static state.* I love the thought of holiness being a “dynamic growing process”. This is the thought that we need to connect with our people. Holiness is dynamic, it is not just a process, it is Christianity being lived out in the world. “Grace is the Holy Spirit at work in our life, initiating and sustaining our recovery of Christlikeness.”⁹ The thought here of “recovery” by Maddox is powerful. It reminds us that we are on a journey. Another sermon!

⁸ It is interesting to note that the Assemblies of God have now re-badged themselves as “Australian Christian Churches”. Senior pastors will say this is to distance themselves from the “labelling” they have received.

⁹ Randy Maddox, *Responsible grace: John Wesley’s practical theolog*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1994, p86

Monday 21st September, Melbourne

God

“God enables but does force, human obedience and cooperation. Thus, God’s sovereignty relates to *empowerment* rather than control. “God’s Grace works powerfully, but not irresistibly, in matters of human life and salvation; thereby empowering our *response-ability*, without overriding our *responsibility*.”¹⁰

This is an interesting thought. The God of creation, the omnipotent God, is the God who choses to empower his people rather than rule over them.

Grace

I find myself in agreement with Wesley that God as “divine love” could not create a world in which the majority would find “eternal damnation”¹¹ It brings me back to my belief that God’s divine love is one that will always find forgiveness for ALL those who are genuine in their repentance. There is also the flipside that people can reject the grace of God. I like the summary that has been provided by Collins,¹² in referring to the transitions that occur in our lives:

Ignorance of God	---	Natural state
Fear of God	---	Legal state
Love of God	---	Evangelical state
Leading to the perfection of that Love	---	Entire Sanctification

This of course is no formula. God’s journey with me is individual as it is with everyone else. My movement from ignorance to fear is not recalled but I do recall the traditional holiness interpretation that holiness was the about the way we lived our lives, more of a conforming (Legal State) but was balanced out by knowing and understanding the Love of God. The concept of entire sanctification being a journey comes out here as well. Collins suggesting that entire sanctification is the leading to the perfection of God’s love.

Tuesday 22nd September

Sanctification

It is interesting to note that Wesley kept his daily diaries as a means of keeping himself accountable. (No wonder they were written in code). Journaling is something that I need to reconsider for myself. It has to become a priority again. It forces you to not only

¹⁰ Webb, *Authentic “fair dinkum” Authentic Holiness for ordinary Christians*, p151

¹¹ Class Notes - Webb

¹² Kenneth Collins, *The Scripture way of salvation: the heart pf John’s Wesley’s theology*, Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1997, p69

consider questions – but helps you to formulate answers – or provide a record of answers that have yet to be discovered.

The degrees of faith question arising again, following Wesley's Aldersgate experience. The crisis moment that Wesley speaks of – I like the thought that it is “a God-given sense of assurance.”¹³ We do need to have the assurance. It becomes a foundation upon which we build our journey. Not unlike my call to Officership. No bells sounding, but an assurance that I am called by God, an assurance that keeps me going in times of hardship. (My definition of madness – someone who has become an officer with no calling!)

Degrees of faith – I prefer to think of these as a journey in faith. The journey is sometimes on twisted and winding roads, up high mountains, journeying in dark weather, good weather, back down the mountains again, deciding what direction to take when the journey comes to a fork in the road.

This definition by Collins is helpful to me,

“...the *guilt* of sin is dealt with in justification
its *power* in regeneration
it's *being* in entire sanctification”¹⁴

It reinforces for me what is emerging as a theme; salvation is the beginning of the journey of holiness – not to holiness but of holiness.

Other Sanctification thoughts¹⁵

Reflection on a Wesley song.....¹⁶

¹³ Webb, *Authentic “fair dinkum” Authentic Holiness for ordinary Christians*, p170

¹⁴ Webb, *Authentic “fair dinkum” Authentic Holiness for ordinary Christians*, p 172

¹⁵ Does sanctification change our very nature? How?

Baptised in the Holy Spirit – is this a terminology that we need to reclaim.

Sin is an intruder. Romans 7:20. Romans 7:20 (NIV) 20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

Relation effects -- ... being in relationship to God

Sin is a distortion of these relationships.

Multi crisis experience

2 decisions that are necessary 1. New birth – conversion, 2. When the sin nature is dealt with

Scripture & Understanding & Reason

Experience

ERADICATION: Concept of the house, the spirit being invited in.

SUPPRESSION: Pressure cooker = it can explode, eventually it will

COUNTERACTION/IDENTIFICATION: Counteraction = you identify with Christ and his death on the cross and there is countering of the sin possibilities in our lives

White and black Dog – which one is going to win?

¹⁶ Song book of The Salvation Army – 283

Verse 4 Comments No condemnation now I dread; We stand free in the sense that at our conversion there is the obvious forgiveness of sins, because we are justified. This is a promise that is available to everyone – not just believers Jesus, and all in him, is mine. Full sanctification – We have the possibility of

Wednesday 23rd September

Holiness is power – Phoebe Palmer. The Palmer story is an interesting one. In some ways her “short-cut” mirrors the quick fix that society wants today! All power – now! Having said that I do realise that God is sovereign and omnipotent, and that he treats individuals uniquely. He equips us.

Phoebe’s three-step formula known as “the altar covenant.”

- A seeker of entire sanctification first consecrates all completely to God by placing everything on God’s altar.
- He or she must then have faith that the “altar sanctifies the gift.”
- The individual must testify to the experience.

knowing all of Christ, all there is of him is available to us> How does this fit into Wesley’s thoughts of full sanctification is realised just before death? Alive in him, my living head, Not just an emotional or “heart” experience. And clothed in righteousness divine, We have been made right in Christ – the experience has already happened.

We can have victory Bold I approach the eternal throne We have the assurance of our salvation. Wesley not always bold. What about the doubts that were in his mind and ours? And claim the crown, through Christ, my own. This is an experience that we will have in death – but can claim it now.

1. And can it be that I should gain
An interest in the Saviour’s blood?
Died he for me who caused his pain,
For me who him to death pursued?
Amazing love! how can it be
That thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

2. He left his Father’s throne above,
So free, so infinite his grace,
Emptied himself of all but love
And bled for Adam’s helpless race.
’Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For, O my God, it found out me.

3. Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature’s night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray;
I woke; the dungeon flamed with light.
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.

4. No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in him, is mine.
Alive in him, my living head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne
And claim the crown, through Christ, my own.
Charles Wesley (1707-88)

Developments to the present¹⁷

If you have been told that at conversion you have all you need – and you continue to believe so, where do you go?¹⁸

There is the important need to recognise that just as with the birth of a child there is a need for growth and nourishment, so this is true for the Christian. But the adolescence for the new Christian does not have to be years. The “second blessing” or the awareness that God has created a new self means that as Christians we can live lives that are not weighed down by temptations of life, or by striving to be the better person. We need to recognise the power of the Holy Spirit is with the Christian from salvation and allow Him to work within us.

What the holiness movement has provided for us is an interpretation that allows us to understand we can have a victorious life, where we do not have to live the sin / repent / sin / repent cycle.

“In am not perfect – but at the same time I can testify to being holy”¹⁹

Thursday 24th September, Melbourne

Wesleyan Theology and The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army could be accused of having a simple stance on the doctrine of holiness. When you consider the movement is 120 +- years old, there is not a wealth of books on the subject written by Salvationist for The Salvation Army. Brengle has for many years been seen as the source of the majority of holiness teaching and his strong influence continues to be seen in holiness seminars institutes been named after him. Whilst the teaching that happens in modern day “Brengle” is for more broader than Brengle’s viewpoints, for the average Salvationists I would suggest that when they hear

¹⁷ Developments to the present (From Lecture Notes - Webb)

Calvinist Keswickians, like Wesleyans, emphasized a distinct moment of full consecration, but they differed in their belief that the power of the old nature is countered by the presence of the Holy Spirit, rather than cleansed away. The movement became associated with D. L. Moody and Billy Graham’s revivalism, and institutions such as Moody Bible Institute, Wheaton College, and Dallas Theological Seminary.

In this new American cultural context, Wesley’s doctrine of sanctification was rescripted in several key ways.

- The blend of holiness theology with revivalism was seen clearly in the emphasis on the instantaneousness of entire sanctification.
- The movement also modified Wesley in its adoption of a linkage of entire sanctification with “the baptism of the Holy Spirit.”
- Connecting entire sanctification with the baptism of the Holy Spirit clearly connected the doctrine with the New Testament image of Pentecost.
- Arising out of the utilization of baptism language is the linking of holiness with Pentecostal power.
- Far from being a culmination, as Wesley finally came to conceive it, the 19th-century form of Holiness doctrine stressed entire sanctification as a new beginning.
- The Holiness Movement also made direct connections to social reform: abolition, temperance, suffrage, and female ordination.

¹⁸ Webb Lecture Notes

¹⁹ Webb Lecture Notes

their Corps Officer is going to “Brengele”, they make the assumptions that the teaching is based on Brengele.

Coutts, has made a helpful counter argument to the holiness discussion.²⁰ Modern day Salvation Army scholars are providing a broader framework to consider the doctrine of holiness. The question and challenge remains – how do we move it from the classroom to practical teaching for Salvationists? What can I do?

Friday 25th September, Melbourne

Contemporary Issues and challenges²¹

Coutts comment: “Is holiness going to become a “relic”? - it is up to us!

The Salvation Army has and continues to go through dramatic change. In the last 25 years the local Corps (in the western world) is evolving from Corps that were uniform in looks and programs to Corps that are wanting to engage with their local Community and fulfil the mission of The Salvation Army. With this newfound freedom there is an important need for The Salvation Army to have an understanding of its own theology. We can no longer rely on conformity to be the glue that keeps us together as a movement. We need to have a firm understanding of who we are and what we believe in. This includes our understanding of the Doctrine of Holiness, which is very much a part of who we are. The Salvation Army was known as a Holiness movement. This needs to be reclaimed – but in a way that engages The Salvation Army to fulfil its mission – to be The Salvation Army.

The Journey for me....

It has been helpful for me to again explore the Doctrine of Holiness and to do so in so in the context of Wesleyan Holiness. It has reaffirmed my understanding and my own experience of holiness.

As Wesley noted there is a difference between justification and entire sanctification. At the time of our conversion there is a sanctification process that takes place (Initial sanctification)²² but as we continue to grow in faith there is an entire sanctification that takes place – a realisation that God has not only saved us from sin and the guilt of sin,

²⁰ Brengele and Coutts subject of 2nd assignment by KLM.

²¹ Class Notes: O God grant us –serenity...
Courage to change that, which should be changed
And wisdom to discern one from the other

Relational
Open
Suffering, and
Everywhere active One.... striving for life and wholeness among all peoples.

²² This next generation could in fact “leave” traditions.....
Webb, *Authentic “fair dinkum” Authentic Holiness for ordinary Christians*, p 175

but He also wants us to live a life that is moving towards (journeying to) perfect love, a sinless life.

There is a need for the process of entire sanctification to be realised and there will also be a difference in view as to how this will be experienced. Hopefully today we can approach this realisation in a mature way, in that the “second blessing” does not need to be a crisis involving strong outward emotion, but is a genuine recognising of the work of God within us. There is a need to recognise that there are two acts of God happening – but caution and wisdom is needed so Christians who have not experienced a vivid “second blessing” are left wondering and confused about their won salvation and sanctification. (A similar argument could be used for conversion!)

Entire sanctification does not imply infallibility.²³

In reflection on this journal, one of the key words and themes that has emerged is “journey”. There have been so surprises for me during the course of the intensive – but this does not mean there has not been soul searching and reflection. Holiness is not about lifestyle but about being one with God in a relationship that continues to grow as we journey towards being more Christlike, (and this will result in a lifestyle that mirrors our journey.)

As Wesley suggested following his Aldersgate experience, the second blessing can be described as “a God-given sense of assurance”. It is one that we need to be able to define in our lives, but does not have to be pinpointed to a specific time and place, or experience. As Maddox suggested we are on a journey of recovery – recovering the Christlikeness that was once mankind’s and the Scriptures call us to.

²³ [A plain account of Christian perfection....[□]]

(1766)

- There is such a thing as perfection; for it is again and again mentioned in Scripture.
- It is not so early as justification; for justified persons are to ‘go on unto perfection.’ (Heb. 6:1)[□]
- It is not so late as death; for St. Paul speaks of living men that were perfect. (Phil. 3:15.)
- It is not absolute. Absolute perfection belongs not to man, nor to angels, but to God alone.
- It does not make a man (sic) infallible: None is infallible, while he remains in the body.
- Is it sinless? It is not worth while to contend for a term. It is ‘salvation from sin.’
- It is ‘perfect love.’ (1 John 4:18.) ...
- It is improvable...
- It is ... capable of being lost; of which we have numerous instances...

[□] John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, Webb p 174 .Point 6 was very strong and powerful. This definition will help many Christians.

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Salvationism Is...

by Anthony Castle

Salvationism is...

being kind
buying T-shirts, jeans and sneakers made in ethical conditions
praying
sharing your stuff
caring for the sick
protesting
reading the bible
understanding other faiths and opinions
making lots of music
preaching the good news
enjoying lots of ethical coffee and even more ethical chocolate
studying theology
boycotting corrupt companies
talking with strangers
aggressive recycling
tipping generously
thinking lots and dreaming big
believing in God
harassing lazy politicians
making disciples
reading newspapers and magazines and websites
risking suffering and death in dangerous places serving others
meeting together with other Salvos
giving away your money
wearing a uniform
making noise in the street
making family out of neighbours and making friends out of enemies
debunking lies
feeding the poor
throwing parties and inviting only the strangest people you know
the overcoming and banishing of wickedness from the earth...

Affirmative Action

by Major JoAnn Shade

In Salvation Army circles these days, the development of women leaders is a hot topic. As one who has long advocated for opportunities for women, both married and single, at first glance I'm encouraged by the attention being given to the subject. Even as I write today, there is a conference going on in London with the goal of preparing women for senior leadership. At first I thought, "Good, it's about time," but that reaction was quickly matched by a second – how patronizing to women. Are you telling me that somehow men can figure it out on their own, but women need special conferences in order to "catch up"? It's the old affirmative action argument in a skirt.

Writing for The Officer in *Spousal Syndrome – Delight or Dilemma*, Lt. Colonel Lynda Watt suggests that "when it is time to find the right person to fill a particular leadership position, the officer-wife options often become limited, with few having the necessary exposure or experience." Reaction #1: Hogwash! With the exception of the "women officer hostess class," I had exactly the same training as my husband. By the end of my (our) first corps appointment, I had been involved with business, personnel and program. I had stumbled through a capital campaign and building project, no more or less knowledgeable than my husband.

The Salvation Army women officers I know work as hard as their husbands, are as educated as their husbands, and most share both the pulpit and the parenting. So is it really about exposure or experience? Or is something else at work here?

Reaction #2. Considering that it may be true for some, then why? Might it have anything to do with the fact that in training we were taught to fold napkins and put the jam and jelly in little bowls instead of leaving it in the jars? Might it have anything to do with expectations that the division of labor within the couple will fall along gendered lines? The Salvation Army has sent its cultural messages to its (married) women officers for years, and continues to do so every time the social security statement comes (in the United States) and every time a disposition of forces is printed (at least where I live).

Is it that women can't do the work, or that they're not appointed to the work? At least in my territory, it starts long before senior leadership. Across the board, the husband is the Adult Rehabilitation Center administrator while the wife is the director of program and residential services. The husband is the Kroc Center administrator and wife is the (his?) associate. The husband is the divisional youth secretary and the wife is . . . well, you get my drift.

I recognize that it is a complicated discussion, but I find it hard to believe that out of twenty couples, not one might have gifts that would reverse that designation. But, at least where I sit, it doesn't happen. Why? Culture. History. Tradition. Theological views that fall closer to the complementarian camp than the egalitarian one. Patriarchy.

So what can be done? First, tell the truth. As Watt suggests, “In the structure of The Salvation Army it may be that to give married women equal opportunity to use their skills and abilities would mean far-reaching and difficult complexities that the organization might be unable to overcome.” Perhaps we’ve become conservative enough both in theology and praxis that we must turn our back on Catherine’s teaching and join the Baptists. If that’s so, admit it and get on with the work of the Kingdom. If (hopefully) that description is not accurate, then let’s find some ways to figure this out.

Second, explore further the concept of single spouse officership around the world. When released from the constraints of marital concerns enmeshed in officership, perhaps women who happen to be married could function in the same way that single women have functioned for years – and that women do in countless other denominations. Is anyone looking at the dynamics of this in the territories where it’s in place, or are we more worried about how to move someone if their spouse has an “outside” job?

Third, talk about the marriage dynamics. Make that a part of a shared consultation. How does the marriage function? What would harm it? What would strengthen it? I’m not sure that we’re talking about the wife being the commanding officer and the husband being the associate – simply that it can be possible to find positions of equivalent responsibility and fulfillment.

Fourth, consider models of truly shared leadership. Can it work? Can two people lead together without a culturally imposed division of labor? My son and his wife just had a baby, and it plays out every day for them. I’m seeing shared leadership a lot from my younger officer friends. It’s happened for years in the corps – why couldn’t divisional leadership be fully shared – in function and in title?

But here’s the rub. Don’t promise what you can’t deliver. Don’t dangle the carrot of equal opportunity for leadership in front of women if it is unlikely to happen. As many people are discovering in these tough economic times, advanced job training doesn’t do any good if there aren’t any jobs available. I’m thinking that women on the ground have done as much as they can – now either the doors of opportunity have to swing a bit wider.

Zwingli: Ancestor of The Salvation Army?

by Lieut.-Colonel Richard Munn

Introduction

Does the sacramental theology of The Salvation Army find its roots in Swiss reformer Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531)? Implausible though it may seem, there does seem to be a strong historical and theological connection between Zwingli's belief that physical objects cannot mediate spiritual occurrences and the Salvationist's "experience of mediation of divine grace without symbol or sacrament."

While most surveys of sacramental theology begin their discussion of sacramental controversies with Zwingli, this turbulent man is also part of my personal spiritual journey. I have always had a special regard for Zwingli, from my first discovery of his life and work as a cadet, to my later, chance encounter with his imposing statue in Zurich. His 16th century revolutionary insights influence the way I continue to think today. I trust that the following will also be of value to Salvationists exploring their theological roots, and indeed to all who value sacramental grace.

Zwingli

From his boyhood Zwingli developed a profound care for 'common people.' This was a decisive characteristic and it qualified him, in later years, to enact church reforms with the support of both political leaders and the masses. While serving as a chaplain in the Swiss regiments, Zwingli became famous for his outspoken criticism of the mercenary system and its attendant ills. The military and political elite respected his unabashed patriotism, while the common people supported him because of the pastoral concern he showed for them. It was a rare and highly effective combination. At the same time, his fame as a preacher grew.

Zwingli saw the work of Christ, revealed in the gospels, as the supreme revelation of God's will. In his understanding, Christ annulled ceremonial law without annulling moral law. Christians are therefore liberated from subjection to manmade ordinances.

While serving as a chaplain, Zwingli was killed in military action. His ideas, however, proved influential.

Zwingli's Sacramental Theology

Zwingli maintained that the sacraments are mere signs or seals of divine grace *already given*. For him, the elements do not mediate grace. Just as baptism does not in itself regenerate the individual, the Lord's Supper does not provide grace through the real presence of Christ. Zwingli emphasized fellowship and the spiritual union of the communicants confessing faith together. He saw the Lord's Supper as a "memorial" of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross and a corporate confession of faith.

Zwingli saw the atonement as a grace received only *by faith*; for him, living faith always brings with it the presence of Christ. Hence the real presence of Christ *is* in the

ceremony of the Eucharist, but only in the faith of the communicant, and not in the bread and wine.

The truly distinctive idea — the one that specifically pertains to The Salvation Army— is that the presence of Christ in the sacrament does not depend upon any ceremony.

The Anabaptists

Among the most radical interpreters of Zwingli were the Anabaptists, a multifarious group that originated amidst the political and social unrest of the fifteenth century. However, whereas Zwingli was an ardent patriot and affirmed the strong link between church and state, Anabaptists did not. This difference led to a conflict over baptism

In sacramental terms, however, the link between Zwingli and the Anabaptists— especially with regard to the Eucharist—remained strong. For the Anabaptists, as for Zwingli, the Lord's Supper is merely a remembrance; it is a fellowship meal, signifying union with Christ and the community of faith.

Following the example of Christ, the Anabaptists' celebration of the Eucharist occurred in the evening in the privacy of home, and most certainly not in church, for fear of encouraging false devotion. The Eucharist was now integrated with the common meal. This practice is akin to that of The Salvation Army, which regards as sacramental every meal eaten in remembrance of Christ.

Theological momentum was now underway and through the Anabaptist movement became a powerful creative force, providing theological inspiration for such modern groups as the Independents, the Baptists, and, especially, the Quakers, to whom we now turn.

The Quakers

In a sense, Quakerism was an updated version of Anabaptism. Although the Reformation began as a highly spiritual revolt against old forms and authorities, it quickly developed its own rituals. The reformist leaders were wary of religion defined primarily by the spirit, seeing it as portending anarchy. They therefore tried to crush the Anabaptists, just as the English reformation, in turn, tried to crush the Quakers. If Anabaptism was the radical wing of the European reformation, Quakerism was the radical wing of the English reformation.

For the Quakers, spiritually eating and drinking the body and blood of Christ superseded physically eating and drinking of the bread and wine of communion. In fact, Quaker founder George Fox believed that the latter could become an impediment to "true communion."

Robert Barclay, perhaps the most influential Quaker theologian, added an important original insight: the improbability that Jesus would institute any new ceremony. Barclay found insufficient evidence in the New Testament to substantiate the installation of a

ceremony, and saw the history of ecclesiastical misunderstanding and superstition that accompanied the traditional ceremonial sacraments as reason to omit them.

The Quakers were the first group to abandon the formal ceremony of the Lord's Supper altogether—a practice familiar to Salvationists

The Salvation Army

The affinity between Quakers and Salvationists has been noted since The Salvation Army began. W.T. Stead called William Booth “the George Fox of the nineteenth century,” and General Wilfred Kitching found “sufficient evidence to suggest that in thought and practice there is perhaps a closer unity between The Society of Friends and The Salvation Army than between any other religious movements.”

Salvationists and Quakers both reject the claim that Christ instituted a ceremony at the Last Supper. They both emphasize the unique necessity of inner commitment. Both accept the concept of communion, but regard it as an entirely spiritual affair. Indeed, Quaker ideas, transmitted primarily through Barclay's writings, and expanded upon by Catherine Booth and George Scott Railton, played a decisive role in convincing William Booth to dispense with the observance of the sacraments.

According to Salvationist writer William Metcalf, Booth, like Barclay, found “no place for these sacraments according to the New Testament.” This was a crucial conclusion: it was primarily on this ground that General William Booth ended The Salvation Army's outward observance of the sacraments, a decision he announced to an assembly of officers in January 1883. Once again, an appeal to “the source”—that is, the New Testament—provided the basis for such sacramental theology. In this respect, The Salvation Army extends a line of Eucharistic thinking developed by the Quakers, but originating with Zwingli and the Anabaptists.

Conclusion

I began with a question: Is there a connection between Zwingli's sacramental theology and that of The Salvation Army? It does appear this is indeed the case, as documented from the historical and theological study of Anabaptist, Mennonite and Quaker sacramental thinking.

Among these individual sacramental theologies, there is a common set of ideas—that Christ's presence is spiritual in nature, that nothing else can suffice for this spiritual presence, and that this presence is only mediated through faith. All the leaders we have reviewed, from Zwingli to Booth, appeal specifically to the texts and context of the New Testament to substantiate their position. All the movements we have surveyed reject the authority of tradition, while affirming the authority of scripture and experience.

Thank you, Commissioner Zwingli.

Good Works Might Distract Us from our Mission!

by Cadet Matt Kean

There is an ideology circulating throughout The Salvation Army that requires soldiers and officers alike to seriously consider their calling and purpose. It is a deliberate effort to return The Salvation Army to mission. There are numerous books and articles, sermons and conferences that are intentionally geared toward emphasising the Army's mandate to reach out to the poor and marginalized. This ideology looks good and seems to get off on a right foot (so to speak), but it also might carry a subtle danger. To begin this discussion, it is essential that the reader try to envision the world and perhaps the church through the eyes of our God and Saviour. Although one could argue that this request is too transcendent to expect, I still must insist that it is necessary to attempt to see and think, as best as we are able, in the same way Jesus did. The reason for this is because I believe that the concept of MISSION for the Christian is one that cannot be separated from the thoughts, convictions, and even compulsions of our Lord. Basically, I believe that mission, both its purpose and its priority, is nothing different than the function and role of Jesus as the Messiah.

Having said this, we must consider what exactly was the mission of Christ and what this means for all who inherit his life. For the purpose of this essay, I will use as a preface of mission the words of Christ spoken in the gospel of Luke. In chapter 19, verse 10, I believe there is a clear mandate for Christ as Saviour and herein also ought the church to find its mission: *"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost."* There is no doubt that Jesus' intention was to redeem humanity in every sense of the word. He wanted to shift the social paradigm and create a world that was fair and equal. Oppression and injustice had to be remedied and it could not happen without the intervention of His divinity. But it must be agreed upon that Christ was meant for much more than to aid humanity in its ascent to the peak of this physical existence. He came as well, some might argue perhaps even more importantly, to offer all people a way to be rightly related to God. In other words, the mission of Jesus was foremost to save us from an eternal separation from the Father.

The church of God, of which the head is Christ, is subject to the mandate of its Master. Paul wrote in his first letter to the Corinthians: "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings." (9:22-23). This was his pronouncement of his mission as a loyal herald of Christ's message. Those who are ignorant to the knowledge that salvation is offered in Jesus alone must be permitted to choose Him. Understanding this is the first step to realizing our appointed mission.²⁴ Every person has been given free-will, the ability to make a choice in regards to their eternity, and unless the church carries the invitation to those who are lost they are being robbed of their choice.

If the mission of Jesus was to confront human beings with an option other than sin and death, that option being Himself, the salvation offered by God, then isn't it only reasonable to assume that his co-heirs (i.e. Christians) would also offer that same

²⁴ Knaggs and Court, *One Thing*, (Salvo Publishing – AUS Territory, 2008) p. 63-64

option to their lost siblings? Surely there cannot be much dispute in this matter – I only hope! Consider the words of God Himself, quoted by the priest Ezekiel: “I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that they would turn to me and live.” (33:11). There is so much love burning within the great heart of God for those who are perishing that his own flesh was stapled to a tree in order to lift the oppression of their sinful nature. The church ought to be so consumed with this same love that it is driven into the world by the same compulsion as Christ was. It is simply astounding that anything other than the desire to see the world eternally redeemed could become an issue of mission! All other efforts should merely be a result of our trying to reach this great summit.

Since, then, the efforts of ministry ought to be a result of the Christian’s desire to see the lost brought into union with God, it only seems fitting to incorporate any means for this end. In other words, any method by which the good news of Jesus Christ reaches those dying in sin should be welcomed within His church. Providing such methods meet the standards of Christian character, and display the fruit of the Spirit, there is really no limit to how the church can accomplish the mission of Christ.²⁵ There are several things that might affect one’s initiatives in sending out the message of Christ that whosoever will may be saved. The costs must be weighed as to how the church is being challenged and called to begin specific endeavours, but largely the greatest consideration ought always be “Is this an effective way of bringing people to Jesus?”²⁶

Within many Christian efforts toward mission accomplishment there often comes a deliberate need for focus. Things come from all sides that are worthy and important, but ultimately can be distractions from the desired end. The reason for this is simple: Christians who are so concerned about the gospel of Christ as to make it their personal mission can be prone to see everything as mission-worthy. It’s a strange problem to have within the church, but nonetheless it certainly does exist. Although it can be easily argued that there are less Christians seriously engaging in Christ’s mission of saving the lost in the present-day church²⁷, it still remains apparent that those who are engaging in the mission can become distracted by humanitarian works. In other words, doing good deeds can sometimes replace Christ’s agenda of reaching the lost with His truth and love.²⁸

When the priority of the church is to see the lost children of our Heavenly Father returned to his loving family, experiencing all His grace and mercy, all His forgiveness and redemption, she then holds the limitlessness of the mission. There is a constant freshness that comes with this far superior ambition. As the angels in heaven rejoice and celebrate at the home-coming of one lost lamb (see Luke 15:7), so too the church will always be sure of its purpose and value if it remains fixed on this end.²⁹ Along with knowing her own desired goal is good and right, the church can also be confident that her reason for existence is the bringing about of the Lord’s desired goal. What need is

²⁵ Kirk, J. Andrew, *What is Mission? Theological Explorations*, (Darton, Longman & Todd, 1999) p. 92

²⁶ Kirk, J. Andrew, *What is Mission? Theological Explorations*, (Darton, Longman & Todd, 1999) p. 60-61

²⁷ Bessenecker, Scott A., *The New Friars*, (Inter-Varsity Press, 2006) p. 155

²⁸ Booth, William, *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, (Charles Knight & Co. Ltd, 1970) p. 283

²⁹ Booth, Bramwell, *Our Master: Thoughts for Salvationists about their Lord*, (The Salvation Army, 1908) p. 55

there to be concerned with smaller, trivial matters? If the mission of Christ to save the lost remains at the forefront of all endeavours then concern for finances, statistics, methodology, music, and liturgy would drift into a distance.

Think for a moment how the church would look if our absolute preoccupation was Christ's mission to 'seek and save that which was lost.' Everything we do would be shaped by this great mandate. There would be a dramatic shift in the emphasis placed on evangelism and outreach. The location of our church plants would be governed very differently. Instead of planting churches where we know people will attend, we would plant them where we were certain people wouldn't even think of church. Our efforts would be for those who were completely without any knowledge or experience of the gospel at all. Those who were living in the darkest, most sin-ridden holes would be our targets.³⁰ Imagine what the church would look like if her only ambition was to save the eternally lost! A church such as that could only be made up of a band of radical, passionate, unwavering fanatics who are so in love with their God that they are burdened just as He is with a love for His children.

I am utterly convinced that the solution to the church's postmodern problems is a re-establishment of the mission of Christ. It is necessary that we again begin to think spiritually and eternally when considering the world with its issues. We need to revisit questions that convicted our fathers and drove them to such extremes as martyrdom. Do we love others with the burning heart of our God? Do we desire a Christ that requires no self-sacrifice? Are we reluctant to be fools for our Lord? These questions and others are heart-piercing and answering them would insist upon ruthless introspection.

Perhaps the reason today's church has placed 'mission-looking works' above the mission of Christ to save the eternally lost is because the former costs much less. A Church (specifically a congregation) could not express itself to be a body focused on the world's salvation if it was not seeing itself be a part of that salvation. In other words, if a group of believers claim that their mission was solely to bring the message of Christ's love to those who were gripped by the devil's hand, then it could not logically face such issues as stagnancy until the world was entirely redeemed. It would have to function differently than many of today's western churches. It could not remain in a centralized location for starters. It would be obligated to break apart and expand fluidly. There could be no plans to build bigger buildings, or parking lots, simply because doing so would contradict the mission of Christ to *seek* that which was lost. Bigger buildings are for the purpose of holding large numbers of worshippers, whereas the church who is consumed with a desire to see lost sinners saved must want large numbers of worshippers to be dispersed.

It seems to me that the best example of a church that held tightly to the mission of Christ is the early Salvation Army. It functioned for the purpose of reaching those who seemed to live deepest in sin. Their agenda was only to offer the love and tenderness of God and present the redeeming power of Christ Jesus. William Booth, the founder,

³⁰ Bessenecker, Scott A., *The New Friars*, (Inter-Varsity Press, 2006) p. 13-14

was absolutely convinced that the solution to every problem, whether of this world or the next, was to be found in Christ alone.³¹ All their efforts were the result of their understanding of this great mission to 'seek and to save that which was lost'.

³¹ Booth, William, *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, (Charles Knight & Co. Ltd, 1970) p. 2

The Call for Decision by Cadet James Thompson

Have you ever read about the drunks kneeling down at the mercy seat and getting up sober never to touch the drink again? Have you heard about the drug addicts who are freed in a moment by Jesus Christ? What about those who were once trapped in depression but got completely freed because they have come to understand and believe that Jesus loves them and accepts them? I know I have.

Jesus not only wants us to go to heaven but He wants us to be freed here on Earth. In fact He taught us to pray that His Kingdom would come, and that His will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven! How good is that? Do you think people will be addicted in Heaven? Mentally ill in heaven? Sick in Heaven? Sad, bitter and twisted in Heaven? No way! In fact Revelation 21 says, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." So, when Jesus says His will be done on Earth as it is in heaven what do you think that means?

It means Heaven on Earth.

This has massive implications for evangelism. Many evangelists have been torn to shreds in the past few decades because they "push for a decision." In turn many have thought this was because of some peoples emphasis on "the prayer." You know the one that you get saved by, the one that if you pray you go to Heaven? But this is an unfair objection to bring up against evangelists in general.

The evangelists I know have other motivations other than notches on a belt. And you may be surprised that some of these are to do with the here and now.

Firstly we would be unkind and evil if we allowed people to go to hell without a fight. The Bible is super clear that 1) Hell is real and 2) People need to repent and believe if they don't want to go there. Calling for a decision so they don't go to hell is compassionate and more than reasonable. Full Stop.

However, as an evangelist I push for a decision for another reason as well. My motivation comes because I know the difference God can make in ones life right now. In fact, the more I lead people to Christ the more my faith builds that when a person repents and believes Jesus will actually make them a new person! (Hmm, didn't I read that in the Bible somewhere?) He will change their heart on the spot! I've seen it way too many times for it to be untrue.

I've seen people who have never heard of Jesus let alone read the Bible start quoting Scripture to me once we have prayed together. I have seen people healed, I have seen people set free, all because they have made a decision to follow Jesus and accept His forgiveness.

However, if an evangelist claims they have lead someone to Christ many people will quickly dismiss this conversion and quickly call for discipleship. Some seem to have no place for celebration in between Salvation and Christian maturity. This is completely different to Jesus' teaching that at repentance Heaven explodes into a party! (Check out Luke 15) Of course there is discipleship to come, but conversion is a real and special event. In fact, by moving salvation from conversion to maturity and a good death we are actually moving Salvation from something we experience now to a future event that we can only be sure of once we die.

For some the assurance of Salvation comes only once we are a good disciple, after reading the Bible and believing what other people tell us, then being involved in some sort of ministry. But true assurance of Salvation comes from the Holy Spirit and can be experienced at conversion! We cannot diminish the assurance of salvation just because we may not know what their discipleship will or will not look like.

Of course discipleship is important and necessary too. Paul says, "It is for freedom that you have been set free!" Jackie Pullinger speaks about addicts being set free by the baptism in the Holy Spirit. But she quickly learnt that even though the drug lost its grip the newly freed people had to learn to live in their freedom. Discipleship is teaching people how to live in the freedom that they now have. It is for freedom that we have been set free.

This means that before people can live in freedom they need to be freed. So how do we do that? At the end of the gospel of Mark Jesus promises us that He will confirm His message with signs and wonders. If we preach Jesus heals, God will confirm this message by healing. If we preach that Jesus Frees, then God will confirm His message by freeing those in bondage. If we preach that Jesus saves than God will confirm His message by saving people!

Therefore if we have a compassionate bone in our body and believe that Jesus will confirm His message like this then we will not be able to help but preach for decision. We will be so aware of the goodness of God that we will want everyone to experience it right now.

Therefore, as the people of God, we all need to remember that a passionate call for decision is necessary. It is necessary because we don't want people to go to hell, and we don't want people to be trapped in bondage and living in sickness while here on Earth. The reason we preach for decision is because we believe Jesus will set people free now so that they can live a life of freedom.

Kindred of the Word

by David Laeger

God the Father is the Source of the Word,
God the Son is the Subject of the Word,
God the Holy Spirit is the Superintendent of the Word,
Creation is the script of the Word,

Knowledge is the Linguist of the Word,
Wisdom is the Interpreter of the Word,
Understanding is the Facilitator of the Word,
Prudence is the Conservator of the Word,

Life is the Generator of the Word,
Law is the Legislator of the Word,
Righteousness is the Principal of the Word,
Holiness is the Magnifier of the Word,

Love is the Conductor of the Word,
Joy is the Energizer of the Word,
Peace is the Mediator of the Word,
Discipline is the Sculptor of the Word,

Temperament is the Sensor of the Word,
Emotion is the Artist of the Word,
Reason is the Scientist of the Word,
Will is the Affirmer of the Word,

Liberty is the Sovereign of the Word,
Faithfulness is the Sentry of the Word,
Faith is the Doer of the Word,
Grace is the Giver of the Word,

Conscience is the Jury of the Word,
Consolation is the Defender of the Word,
Condemnation is the Prosecutor of the Word,
Condition is the Justice of the Word,

The human soul is a creation of the Word,
The human spirit is an inspiration of the Word,
The human heart is a harmonization of the Word,
The human body is an expression of the Word,

Eternity is the throne of the Word,
Earth is the footstool of the Word,
Hell is the rejection of the Word,
Heaven is the reward of the Word,

*begetting its Eternality
expressing its Essence
inspiring its Effectiveness
reflecting its Excellence*

*stating its facts
clarifying its knowledge
assuring its logic
reserving its expression*

*verifying its presence
certifying its truth
enforcing its standards
personalizing its holism*

*intoning its quality
glorifying its content
sensitizing its reception
engraving its recipient*

*evaluating its reception
revealing its dynamics
examining its logic
establishing its validity*

*defining its parameters
guarding its parameters
believing its activity
desiring its bestowal*

*deliberating its relevance
addressing its acquittal
avenging its offence
deciding its jurisdiction*

*replicating its image
realizing its mind
discerning its choices
actuating its evidences*

*asserting its infinity
showing its superiority
terrifying its lawbreakers
glorifying its keepers*

Walking with Christ
by Captain Gordon Goodridge (R)

Phil. 2:1-11 WALKING WITH CHRIST

WALKING AS A SERVANT

What is your definition of a true Christian servant? Are you that person? And if you do not completely measure up to those standards

– are you willing to?

Serving is one of the greatest challenges in the life of discipleship. Everyone enjoys being served – but few make an effort to serve others.

Some people don't mind serving but resent being called one – but they do also resent being treated like one! However the mature Christian is marked by what he is willing to do for others without expecting anything in return. No matter how he is treated. Without a murmur.

The greatest example we have of a Christian Servant is Jesus – Mark 10:45 – “For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

He showed this in many ways:

– Matthew 9:35 – “And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.” ALSO

- John 13:3-5: “Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciple's feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.”

The Son of God became the servant of God on order to fulfill the mission of God.

In Phil 2: verses 5-8 we have some very terrific thoughts to ponder: - for instance – verse 5 – “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

What position did Christ take in all this? Verse 7 – “But made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made into the likeness of men.”

How did He demonstrate His servanthood?

Verse 8 – “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.”

We often sing the chorus that refers to our hands – I lift them up Lord, I lift them up –
BUT –

how willing are we to have them soiled and filled with a wandering child cold and hungry; with a running nose and filthy clothing? With the vomit of an alcoholic that your hands picked up from the gutter? Or hands covered in blood from an unwed mother who attempted suicide by slashing her wrists and aborting her child?

Lifting our hands in praise to God is wonderful – but is – lifting our hands in service to God a different matter? God help us if we think so!

A very practical application of what our serving God should be all about is found in Phil 2:3,4 –

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

Peter’s mother-in-law

CHRIST’S DESIRE FOR YOU:

Mark 1:31 – “And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her and she ministered unto them.” After healing Peter’s mother-in-law – what was her first response – to serve them – to prepare dinner for them. And why did she do this – out of gratitude.

Taking this story as our example

– In what ways has Christ helped you? What has been your response? She responded by serving - - -.

Jesus said: John 12:26

– “If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.”

Two boys in a boarding school were assigned similar menial duties, such as clearing the tables, mopping floors, and so on. One of the boys was very unhappy at this type of work and would skim through his duties very unsatisfactorily and skip away to play. The other boy, observing this, would very unobtusively put the finishing touches on his pal’s work, and he kept it up for quite some time. Ultimately it was brought to the attention of the faculty and they asked the diligent boy why he was finishing up the other boy’s work. “Was it because you

felt indebted to him in some way?" "No," said the worker, "you see, the Bible says that 'whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant,' and I want to be great, so I thought I would try it the Lord's way!"

Even Christ had his problems with his disciples – Luke 22:24 – 27 – Verse 24 - "And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest." But how did Jesus handle this touchy subject – Verse 27 – "For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? Is he not that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as he that serveth." Sure put them in their place didn't he.

How should we, who profess to be Christ's followers, conduct ourselves: - Verse 26 – "But ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve."

Friends may we understand one very important fact: - Christians have been set free in Christ – not to do whatever they please – but to be given the privilege to serve. Believers have been set free from sin to serve righteousness (Rom. 6:18,19) – Set free from satan to serve God (1 Pet. 2:16) – Set free from self to serve others (Gal 5:13). Christians are no longer under obligation to serve the things of the old life, but free to serve voluntarily the things of the new life.

Free from the old
– now – free for the new.

Even Paul commented in this way
– 2 Cor. 4:5 – "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." And in 2 Cor.12:15 – "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." Since Christ desires all Christians to serve others, the believer must die to "self" (become as nothing) in order to live for others.

KEYS TO BECOMING A SERVANT:

Being humble Jon 13:13,16

– "Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him." Luke 17:10 –

"So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

ANOTHER KEY

Observing and Meeting Needs of Others: Prov. 3:27

Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it." Don't put off until tomorrow – what God has called you to do today!

1 John 3:17 – “But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother hath need and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”
Unless I am moved with compassion how dwelleth the spirit in me!

Questions to ponder:

When was the last time you genuinely served another person with no thought of yourself?

When was the last time that you failed to help someone although you were aware of their need? And capable to help?

In your opinion – why did you serve one time and not the other?

Luke 16:10

– “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.”

2 Cor. 8:9

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”

2 Cor 9:8 – “And God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, always having sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.”

ROWBOAT 4 TIMES

CHRIST has set the example

– what are our rewards if we would dare to do the same? Luke 6:38 – “Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.” “But my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 4:19)

Or – be stingy and you will be treated stingy.

2 Cor. 15:5

– “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”

Martha in the kitchen, serving with her hands;
Occupied for Jesus, with her pots and pans.
Loving Him, yet fevered, burdened to the brim, -
Careful, troubled, occupied for Him.
Mary on the footstool, eyes upon her Lord;
Occupied with Jesus, drinking in His word.

This the one thing needful, all else strangely dim:
Loving, resting Mary, occupied with Him.
When it comes, we're ready, spirit, will, and nerve;
Mary's heart to worship, Martha's hands to serve;
This is the rightful order, as our lamps we trim, -
Occupied with Jesus then occupied for Him!

The son of man became the servant of man in order to fulfill the mission of God. Can you say – I became the servant of Christ in order to fulfill the mission of Christ? Can we afford not to – dare we even try? For even the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for all.

Thou art worthy.

Large Proportions by Major Stephen Court

"I will be actively involved, as I am able, in the life, work, worship and witness of the corps, giving as large a proportion of my income as possible to support its ministries and the worldwide work of The Army." (Articles of War)

1. What does 'as I am able' mean?

Now, 'as I am able' relates to physical conditions that might keep you or me from fulfilling the rest of the promise. But it is an unfortunate phrase because it opens up an excuse for backsliders. They can just say, "I'm not able." 'Able' is a tricky word in this context. It could mean, "I'm not able to worship at holiness meetings because I take my boat out on Sundays." But that abuses the intention of the declaration.

2. What about money?

We promise to fire as large a cartridge as possible. This is Luke 6:38 (NLT) today: Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.

How much do we all fail on this one? I mean, largest possible? Government welfare in Australia provides \$800 (or so) a month. In some cases this includes all of expenses, from room to board. That's \$200/week. So, theoretically, a single person making much more than that, say \$1,000/week after taxes, could fire a cartridge of \$800/week. Nice. Granted, things get a little more complicated when you add children to the equation.

Now, we're not advocating that everyone lives on this much money (although if anyone in the developing world gets hold of this book I suspect they'd jump at \$200/week). We're just throwing it out there because we promised to give, "as large a proportion of (our) income as possible." How much is possible? You and God decide.

3. What is the argument against this proposition?

Again, you can interpret 'possible' softly like this- as large as possible:

1. within my lifestyle;
2. and still go away on an annual cruise;
3. and keep my home entertainment system up-to-date;
4. and save up for my kid's college education;
5. and save a little crazy money;
6. and see at least a movie a month;
7. and stack up my retirement savings plans to the max;
8. and put aside some cash for the kids; etc.

4. Is that a legitimate perspective?

There is no way around this as a shockingly high expectation. It is one that should challenge us daily as we make financial decisions. The problem is that it probably doesn't really challenge too many of us, very often. This is a call to simplicity and kingdom investment. Not one or the other. We don't live simply and give cash to lost

pets or whale saving ventures. We live simply and invest the cash into the Kingdom. Neither do we make our cash and fire our tenth. That's not even close to what is happening here. No. Most of us will be positioned to follow Wesley's advice: Make all you can; save all you can; give all you have.^[i]

Questions

What is most offensive about this section?

When were you last challenged as to the size of your cartridge? Discuss.

What about that person from the developing world getting his or her hands on this article? What claim has s/he on our understanding of the words 'able' and 'possible'?

^[i] We're aware that the third point ended, 'give all you can' but we've read that when he actually preached it, Wesley got so stirred up he went for everything, thus, 'all you have'.