

# **JOURNAL OF AGGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY**

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## **Editorial Introduction**

by Major Stephen Court

Welcome to the sixty-seventh issue of the Journal of Aggressive Christianity. As always, God provides and surprises. This June/July 2010 edition offers us a wonderful mix of edification and instruction and revelation and inspiration and challenge.

From James Pedlar we get BEING FAITHFUL WITH DISHONEST WEALTH. James teaches important lessons from a difficult parable.

From Major JoAnn Shade we sit AT THE TABLE. She tells us about competencies and training for officers.

From Major Amy Reardon we get a contrarian look at YOUTH CULTURE, one with which, if you read armybarmy blog, you will know that we are sympathetic.

From Lieut-Colonel Richard Munn we are invited into immensely practical CIRCLES OF INFLUENCE that could jolt your prayer life (from the forthcoming ARMY ON ITS KNEES).

From Captain Danielle Strickland we get a combination of two related but too-often-divorced subjects in JUST HOLY.

From Cadet James Thompson we get a head-shaking reintroduction to a famous saint, in SAINT FRANCIS: THE WILD SIDE OF MISSION.

From Cadet Matthew Kean we get the argument that the Gospel in a postmodern context is SO EXCLUSIVE IT'S OFFENSIVE!

From Lieut-Colonel Miriam Gluyas we get answers to FIVE QUESTIONS on officership in an excerpt from the forthcoming book, MIGHTY WARRIORS: OFFICERSHIP AS VOCATIONAL EXTREMISM.

From Captain Michael Ramsay we get the exhortation, DON'T BE A McCHICKEN!, another take on covenant by the author of a forthcoming book on it.

From Commissioner Wesley Harris we get THE BOOTHS, a newsy take on some history you may not yet know.

When you finish the issue, share it with your friends. And then dig into the 66 previous issues, chock full of orthodox edification and provocation, all for the glory of God and the salvation of the world.

## **Being Faithful with Dishonest Wealth: Stewardship in the Face of Global Poverty**

by James Pedlar

It is easy to become overwhelmed when we consider the immense nature of global economic inequality. The disparities are so great that one cannot help but be repulsed, and, as with anything which is repulsing, we are tempted to simply turn away and focus on more “pleasant” considerations. It is certain that the global capitalist economic system is the source of much of this inequality, or at least seems to amplify and perpetuate existing inequalities. What is more, Christians who live in the West are implicated in this process, simply by virtue of participating in the economic life of their own societal setting. Even those of us who make efforts to buy ethically and use fair trade products as much as possible cannot completely remove ourselves from the system which produces great excess for some and great suffering for others. If you were born in the West, you were born into privilege at the expense of others. How should the church respond to this situation? What are we to do in the face of an economic system which is built on exploitation? Should we focus our efforts on *systemic* and *revolutionary change*, or work “*within the system*”?

There is a notoriously difficult parable in Luke’s gospel that may have something to contribute to this issue. It is usually known as the parable of the “shrewd manager” (Luke 16:1-13). The manager in the parable is commended by his master for using tactics that many of us would consider shady. Space does not permit a detailed treatment of all the problems that arise in attempting to interpret this parable, however, Jesus own’ words at the end of the parable give us some direction as to the message he is trying to get across:

“Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own?” (Luke 16:10-12)

The force of the passage seems to be that we should use even wealth, though it is corrupt and “dishonest,” in a way that is faithful to the call of Jesus Christ upon our lives. The parable is not urging us to use corrupt means to attain wealth, of course. Rather, it is saying that we need to be faithful with the corrupt wealth we’ve been given.

It is notable that it is in this context that Luke includes Jesus’ saying about the impossibility of serving God and wealth (16:13). We are not to become slaves to wealth. Such a thing as money, which is corrupt, must be handled in a way that is faithful to our call as Christ’s disciples. In serving him in a context where we cannot help but participate on some level in the exploitative structures of global capitalism, we need to incorporate our dealings with such “dishonest wealth” into this life of service and discipleship. We have been given an abundance of wealth. If we are not faithful with something which is so corrupt, how can we deal with truly valuable things such as the preaching of the gospel? Our dealings with money are part of our stewardship of the things with which we have been entrusted.

In a sermon based on this passage, John Wesley came up with his famous three point plan for stewardship among the early Methodists: *Gain* all you can, *save* all you can, and *give* all you can (see [Sermon 50, "The Use of Money."](#)). Methodists proved very proficient at points 1 and 2, but their efforts at *giving* were a disappointment to Wesley. Gaining and saving all you can is simply the way of the world – it is in the giving that Christian stewardship emerges.

But let not any man imagine that he has done anything, barely by going thus far, by "gaining and saving all he can," if he were to stop here. All this is nothing, if a man go not forward, if he does not point all this at a farther end. Nor, indeed, can a man properly be said to save anything, if he only lays it up. You may as well throw your money into the sea, as bury it in the earth. And you may as well bury it in the earth, as in your chest, or in the Bank of England. Not to use, is effectually to throw it away. If, therefore, you would indeed "make yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness," add the Third rule to the two preceding. Having, First, gained all you can, and, Secondly saved all you can, Then "give all you can." ([Sermon 50, "The Use of Money,"](#) §III.1)

Giving "all you can" meant that whatever is left once you've provided for the basic needs of yourself and your household - that is, "food to eat, raiment to put on, whatever nature moderately requires for preserving the body in health and strength," §III.3 - the rest is to be made available for helping others, beginning with the church and moving outward to the whole world. Wesley wanted to do away with all surplus accumulation, which he viewed as tantamount to robbing the poor of their basic needs.

In spite of the failings of early Methodists to enact Wesley's vision (and putting aside the debatable details of what "provision" for one's family today might require), I would suggest that the best course of action for Christians in the West is to *mobilize the resources we are able to gain through the capitalist system in order to do what we can to alleviate poverty*. While it is important for Christians to lobby governments for systemic reform, this goal should not take precedence over the *immediate demand* of alleviating the needs of others through the means at our disposal under the current system.

There is great potential for relieving poverty through the current system. The individual Western Christian has a relatively large amount of disposable income. Ron Sider, in a 1998 article in *Christianity Today*, noted that Christians at that time had a total income of \$10 trillion dollars. This figure would be even greater today. Given this fact, it is simply the most obvious course of action to use these resources for the alleviation of global poverty. Though this great wealth is obtained, partly at least, through the exploitation of labour in the developing world, the fact that so much of this excess makes its way into the hands of Christians means that we are obligated to use it to relieve what needs we can. Western Christians, whether we realize it or not, are stewards of this multi-trillion dollar fortune. This places an immediate ethical demand upon us as Christians.

By using the wealth that we have, we can subvert the exploitation of the developing world by means of turning those exploitative profits back to the ones who are themselves being exploited. The tendency of capitalism to generate incredible

amounts of excess can be, in a sense, “exploited” by Christians for the immediate relief of those who are disadvantaged by it. While the exploitation of labour itself is to be condemned, and the church can by no means endorse this kind of mistreatment of other human beings, we are bound, given the wealth we do possess, to use it for good.

Of course this leaves whole host of theological problems unanswered. Why is it that Western Christians have been born into such affluence and excess, while others have been born in deplorable conditions? This is indeed a difficult question, to which we are not likely to find an answer, apart from the conviction that the world in which we live is profoundly broken by the corruption of sin. What we *can* know is that it is *not* God’s intention that human beings should be so devalued as to die of hunger while many of us have more food than we can stuff down our throats. Our inability to answer the questions about how this is allowed to occur under God’s providence should not prevent us from making use of the “dishonest wealth” with which we have been entrusted, in order to better the lives of others.

Does this leave no room for Christians to work towards systemic change which will counteract the exploitative nature of consumer capitalism? Of course, we must also speak out and lobby governments to enact regulations which will protect the livelihood of all people. To exclude such action would implicitly condone the systems which create this problem in the first place. It would be to only treat the symptom without attacking the disease. To ignore systemic problems would be foolish, and it is not what I am proposing. Rather, I am proposing that, as the disease itself is not likely to be cured in the near future, our current obligation is primarily to use what we have and seek to relieve the plight of the poor.

It is true that Christians have been on the forefront of some of the most important social reforms in the past few centuries. However, we should guard against utopian visions of a world in which total equality is brought about by human social reforms. The profound brokenness of sin affects all of creation, including all social structures and relationships. While we can work for systemic improvements, we will not see complete equality in this current age. We will not see an end to suffering, strife, and exploitation. Human effort, which is always hampered by the effects of sin, is not sufficient to totally rid the world of so great a problem, and surely we are all aware that state regulation and provision cannot solve these issues. It is only when God intervenes in a decisive way at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ that we will see God’s vision for justice and peace realized in its fullness. The complete eradication of poverty is a part of God’s plan, for he has “made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ” (Ephesians 1:9-10). Surely economic disparity is one of those things “on earth” which, when gathered under the headship of Christ, will be made right. While we await this coming reign expectantly, we can participate in God’s transforming action by living in obedience to his call to care for the poor. Our grace-enabled response to these challenges can be a sign, instrument, and foretaste of the coming Kingdom.

## At the Table

by Major JoAnn Shade

With a strong sense of a calling to serve the poor in the name of Christ, I enrolled in the Salvation Army's training program for its officers at age twenty-one. We studied theology, church history, homiletics and Bible in preparation for our roles as pastors. But those who designed the training curriculum knew that we needed hard skills along with those theological underpinnings, as our roles would also involve administering this hybrid of church and social service agency. So we also had crash courses in bookkeeping, social services, management and Christian education, as well as classes that taught the men to fix a boiler, and showed the women how to set an attractive table, with the admonition to never put the ketchup bottle on the table – use a pretty dish instead.

While I strongly protested against “The Woman Officer as Hostess” class because of its arbitrary assignment of gender roles (and cheered when that class was finally eliminated), the issue it raised remains pertinent within theological education: those preparing for Christian leadership, whether in the pastorate, the academy, or the counseling center, must be able to perform the tasks that are needed within their areas of responsibility. Those in charge of that training curriculum felt that female Salvation Army officers would need to serve as a gracious hostess, so those skills were taught in that framework. In that sense, seminary education must do more than develop character, encourage the uncovering of a core identity, and confirm a spiritual calling. It must also equip its students for the work they will do in the ministry.

If employed at the local Burger King, the skill set is defined: learn the register, master the drive-through microphone, and don't over-salt the fries. Do those tasks well, and you'll be successful on the front-lines of the fast food industry. But for those of us who find employment as a local pastor, the skill set is more complicated than flipping burgers, as the pastor is expected to perform the following five actions:

- worship and preaching
- pastoral care, counseling, and rites of passage
- teaching
- prophetic witness, including community and denominational service
- congregational administration

While these actions may vary in form and in priority from one pastorate to another, they serve as a starting point to explore the work of a pastor.

The Salvation Army (my denomination) attempted to articulate the competencies needed by its officers (pastors) through a task force in 2001, considering the subject through three broad lenses: those of being, knowing and doing. The Salvation Army officer's being (character) is to be Christlike, self-disciplined, committed to his work, and people-oriented. Her knowledge must be biblically sound, with a solid understanding of homiletics, the church, culture and society, as well as the intricacies (their term) and idiosyncrasies (my addition) of the Salvation Army.

An officer should also be skilled at evangelism, discipling, shepherding, pastoring and counseling, all in the context of servant leadership. They are also expected to

communicate clearly, manage resources well, and respond to community needs through service and advocacy. By the time I finished this seven page report, I realized that the competent Salvation officer would need the fire of Billy Graham, the compassion of Mother Teresa, the intellect of Albert Einstein, and the energy of the ever-ready bunny.

So, I wondered, how does my work day fit in with these descriptions? This week, I wrestled with Excel as I worked on the annual budget, attended a job meeting for the construction of our new facility, and participated in a community focus group on strategic planning for our schools. I had a staff meeting, ironed out a conflict between two people, counseled with a woman who recently gifted her newborn to an adoptive family, and met with our advisory board. I preached a sermon (God is able to keep us from falling), played the piano for worship, prepared a session on Hagar for a women's retreat, and spoke on behalf of the poor at a community forum on predatory lending. And yes, I also oversaw four meals this week (soup kitchen twice, family night and board meeting), and did put the ketchup bottle on the table – with no guilt!

There they were: worship, pastoral care, teaching, prophetic witness, and congregational administration – but what I realized is that they are much more intermingled than I would have suspected, woven through a life that is lived from a core identity of faith, a healthy and holy calling to service (most days), and my desire for a Christlike character. I could see the being, knowing and doing, as they truly did flow together as I walked through my week of ministry. Indeed, in him I live and move and have my being (Acts. 17:28).

A disclaimer: I may sound like a Renaissance woman, but I also I depend on those I work with, including my clergy husband, to fill in the gaps of competencies where I'm lacking, and on my willingness to tackle new tasks with an open mind. It is quite apparent that the Holy Spirit provides a sense of competence when I've done the work of preparation of heart and mind. I've also discovered over the years that sometimes, you just have to do what you have to do, competent or not.

A book on my shelf asks, "But Can She Type?" If that's a question women have faced as they've entered the corporate workplace, I wonder what the pastoral question might be, male or female. "But can she preach? But can he lead? But can she grow the congregation?" We can improve our skills at three points and a poem, become a master storyteller, and pick up management tips from time to time, but the ultimate competency question remains the same one that Jesus asked Peter: "But can you love?" Can the pastor love God and those in his or her care? That, for me, is the ultimate question of competency.



## **Culture of Youth** by Major Amy Reardon

A sixteen-year-old girl sang Canada's national anthem at the opening of the winter Olympics. That would have been fine, had she been one of the country's most gifted vocalists. But though the girl's singing was pleasant, it was far short of spectacular, and quite out of step with the rest of the breathtaking show.

I couldn't help but feel that the reason this singer was featured had something to do with her age. More and more, children with talent are being thrust center stage. Everywhere you look, the message our society sends is that the young do it better, whatever "it" might be. In fact, however, the standard for excellence is sometimes lowered, because these young talents haven't had full opportunity to develop their gifts. In addition, those performers with a few more miles on them, who have spent many years honing their skills, are sacrificed on the altar of youth. Their talents are invalid because their bodies are older; never mind the benefits of education, experience, etc.

My eleven-year-old son recently moaned that he will never be a celebrity because he's almost twelve and isn't a star yet. (A moment of fantasy, I suppose. He doesn't take acting lessons or have an agent, or anything of the kind.) He's also worried that he may not publish his first book before he is 18. Young actors, singers, poets and even authors have been paraded before us with such regularity that even a boy just shy of his twelfth birthday feels he's too late. This is a rather sad commentary on contemporary Western society.

Even in the Church, we've got thoughtless young people, who feel that persons over the age of forty ought to do the respectable thing and turn invisible, sometimes flinging I Timothy 4:12 at us as proof that they have the right to take the helm. (Two things here strike me as strange: first, that it doesn't occur to these young people that their fortieth birthday will come some day and they will still deem themselves as viable human beings; second, that they miss the point of I Timothy 4:12. The verse is not meant for brow-beating older people into submission. It is meant to admonish young people to behave in a mature way, despite their age, so that they will earn the respect of those older than themselves.)

Sometimes one even encounters middle-aged people who endorse the view that only the young people in the church have anything to offer. The only culture we need reach is the culture of youth, because the rest of us don't matter any more. Those of us who have lost the bloom of youth should just subdue ourselves.

The world worships youthfulness, and the Church, in many arenas, has followed suit.

I demand a revolt.

Okay, not really a revolt. But I do wish the Church would give serious thought to this subject, and consider the direction it has been taking.

Christianity has always been counter-culture. Christ's Kingdom has longed been referred to the "upside down kingdom" – those who want to be great must be

servants, the last shall be first, etc. However, we move in sync with the culture as we give primary place to youth. Our worship styles and teaching styles, and often our ministry priorities, are determined by the tastes of teens and young adults. We often represent ourselves at various functions, within and outside the borders of the Church, with those who are young and hip, overlooking those who may be sage and knowledgeable. Experience, life's greatest teacher, has is being met with disregard. But worse than that, as people meet middle age, they are often treated as if they are no longer of relevance to this world. We'll take their money – sure – but not their ideas.

I began to tremble recently when someone referred to a 50-year-old corps officer as an "older officer." It only takes one hand for me to count the years until I reach 50. Frankly, I don't feel old or out-of-touch. Years of working with youth in this Army have kept me apace with trends and developments. There are certain things that date me, however. I would far rather hold a newspaper in my hands than read my news online. Though I certainly have age-mates who prefer the computer screen, my comfort with paper over screen can be used to identify me with my generation—that is to say, it is more typical of people my age than those who are younger. But there are lots of us out here. There are many other people on the planet who are old like me—who don't have their cell phone on their person every moment of the day, who occasionally still listen to an actual CD, and who may not even have TiVo. Such persons still need to be considered in church matters. Those who don't download sermons onto iPods still deserve and need to receive ministry.

I digress. My real point is that passing the age of 40 doesn't make a person less useful. In fact, from a biblical standpoint (and here's the good news), people often became more useful as they grew older! Moses was not young when he led the Israelites out of Egypt. Indeed, he had lived fully 80 years by that time! He died at age 120, so well more than half of his life had been lived when he began his famous trek. Sarah gave birth to Isaac so late in life that she found the very notion ludicrous, which is how he wound up with a name that means "laughter." Zechariah and Elizabeth were also quite old when John (the Baptist) was born.

Of course, one can easily point to numerous young people in the Bible whom God used. I need not defend the strength or mental sharpness of the young. What I seek to defend is the purposefulness of the less-than-young. I don't see God giving instruction for those past their youth to pack it in. Our culture may tell us that by middle age you are on your way out, but the Bible always stares down culture and declares, "I've got more for you."

God is no respecter of persons, even when it comes to their age. The Scriptures seem to demonstrate that as long as we are lucid we are of use to God. (And perhaps even those who have lost lucidity are of use. Many of us have examples of those whose minds aren't properly functioning but are still a great blessing.)

Acts 2:17 says: "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams." As I read this, I am reminded that everyone who has dedicated himself to God and God's purposes is functional in the Kingdom.

I know of a corps where the bandmaster is in her nineties. She has been the bandmaster for fifty years or so. I think of all of the young people who could have learned the skill of conducting and done their own service as bandmaster, if only they'd been given a chance. It is just as wrong to greedily hang on to your rights because of your tenure as it is to be deposed because of your wrinkles. While aging doesn't mean you should be tucked into a corner, it could mean you bring mentoring to its fruition by letting someone replace you in a current task. Then you find something else to do. Something new that God has for you. Let him teach an old(er) dog a new trick.

The occasional grey hair now appears upon my head. I reminisce often. I have my own personal history, and I have personal perspective on a little chunk of world history. And you know what? I like it. But I don't want to be put out to pasture yet, nor do I think that God would appreciate such a thing. And so, I make these pleas:

I plead with the young: please don't treat the rest of us as though we've nothing to offer. Remember, you stand on the shoulders of those who have come before. And while you may understand that the bulk of the world's culture revolves around you, we are still here. We still have work to do and wisdom to contribute.

I plead with the middle-aged and older: remember that it is not God's idea for us to seek perpetual youth, it is the world's. Embrace your age and sagacity, and give to the church community out of your wealth of experience. Don't think you've earned the chance to sit back, either. You may need to relinquish one of your Kingdom tasks to someone new, someone younger. But there is plenty more for you to do.

I plead with myself: don't believe that you've missed all your chances. God has many more tasks in mind. Fight on until you die.

**Circles of Influence**  
*A Creative Template for Prayer*  
by Lieut.-Colonel Richard Munn

God seems to work in certain discernable and recognizable patterns. From the stunning cadence of the seasons to the remarkable biological similarities in His creatures, yes, our God is a God of aesthetic stencil and order.

This also appears to be so in the meta-narrative of Scripture. For instance, He seems to delight in revealing His power in the motif of death and resurrection – the Valley of Dry Bones, Lazarus and supremely in Jesus. He communicates His essence in Light – the opening act of Creation, His guidance in the wilderness, and most sharply in Jesus, the Light of the World.

One of these divine patterns appears to be expanding circles. The overall sweep through scriptures moves from the solitary family of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to the people of Israel to all people of the world. Jesus also applies the pattern working with a centrifugal force from the inner circle of Peter, James and John to the central 12 disciples to the greater 72 disciples. (Luke 10)

I believe this can provide you and me with a pattern for prayer.

Not that long ago the Lord worked on me for several successive months with beautiful and forceful grace, calling me to become more creative and more disciplined in prayer. One of these outcomes was a template for prayer – **Circles of Influence**. It is precious to me, and may be catalytic for you.

While the mould is objective, the pattern is yours – intensely so. If you're even moderately intrigued, complete the following inventory, and see how the final silhouette emerges.

Let's start smack-dab in the middle.

**Personal Prayers** – You have a personal relationship with God so it's a natural place to pivot. This is central to the whole pattern. Even Jesus starts the expanding circle of His classic High Priestly Prayer (John 17) with prayers for himself.

What does God continually seem to be revealing to you?

What grace energizes you?

What injustice grieves you?

What scriptures resonate with you?

What divine insight has stirred you recently?

What are the deep, immovable desires of your heart?

There is value to repetition, so form these responses into a sacred mantra. For instance, God once gave me a simple – yet powerful – prayer: 'Increase my capacity to love.' I say that many times a day; it does me good.

**Prayers for Family** – You have a primary area of influence with your family. It is likely that you have a more naturally intense bond of love and conviction with this group of people than any other.

It is here that we can start beginning to use an important principle to add bold brush strokes to your pattern – the concept of authority. In Matthew 8 Jesus remarks on the muscular faith of the Roman centurion, who stuns Jesus with this perceptive observation:

‘Just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and that one, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.’

A helpful way of phrasing this in prayer might be ‘By the authority given to me under Christ I extend my faith on behalf of ....’

You have unusual and singular authority as a family-member to bring your kin to the throne of Christ. This is yours to be used. It is a sacred trust and should not be ignored or discarded or treated casually. My delight is to pray protective prayers for my wife and children; and prayers of honour for my parents.

Name your spouse – call her blessed (PR 31); call him righteous (PS 112)

Name your Children – Deuteronomy 6

Name your Parents – 10 Commandments

Name your Siblings

Name your In-laws

Name your Nieces and Nephews

Name your Cousins

Name your Patchwork Family

Wow! I suspect you have quite a list.

**Prayers for Leaders** – You and I may have authority, but you know we are also under authority. ‘You gotta serve somebody’ sang Bob Dylan, with sharp insight. So, it does us good to bless those who shoulder leadership, and, of course, it will likely grace them. Besides that, the gospel injunction is to pray for our leaders.

Naming our leaders in prayer is a gift of respect and support, it keeps us humble, is a reminder that our leaders are human and is a balm during times of testing and disagreement.

Who are your leaders? Who do you serve under?

Political and national

Denominational and church

Employment

Mentors

**Prayers for Colleagues** – We also have influence with people right alongside us, those we likely interact with many times in any given week. Such prayers can almost be quasi-clandestine; camouflaged agents of grace. Here we tap into the principles

of mutuality and synergy. We energize the graces of unity and harmony. Romans 12 provides a good couple of sacred contours: 'In honour preferring one another' and 'Not thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought.' Hmm ... those two sentences alone add bracing dimensions.

Name your work colleagues  
Name your corps colleagues  
Name your ideological colleagues

**Prayers for Friends** – *Phileo* love is a rich Biblical principle. Jesus himself remarkably says 'I have called you friends,' and John powerfully taps into the concept where he repeatedly writes: 'Dear friends ...' (1JN 4)

Our friends are God's gift to us; they mediate His love. Candidly, those of us who find comfort in our self-constructed portable walls should probably be especially grateful that we are 'befriended.'

Name your friends

**Prayers for Areas of Ministry Influence** – You probably have an area of designated influence, even authority, in ministry. It is likely a formal assignment. This is yours to exert with great care, humility and confidence. For instance, if you are a Youth Worker, nobody can quite pray with the zeal, knowledge and insight for those kids than you. If you are a musical leader, you know the members of that ensemble like nobody else and can pray for their effectiveness and well-being with unusual clarity. The same goes for nursery class teacher, Corps Cadet Leader, Home League Secretary, Corps Officer, Divisional Commander etc and etc.

You were likely given that sacred task in a rite-of-passage, before a community of faith. As a consequence you have immense capacity for influence in prayer; second to none, sacred authority in ministry. Please, do not leave this authority lying about for any competing entity to pick up, because pick it up they will.

What are your specific ministry assignments?  
Name your community of faith.  
Who is in your Small Group?  
What councils, teams, boards or committees are you on?

**Prayers for Geographic Regions** – You and I are inhabitants of a simultaneously dark and beautiful world, and that can mean a global influence in prayer. Jesus said it – we would be his witnesses 'to the ends of the earth.'

Certain regions, cities and towns are undoubtedly especially near and dear to us. We have inherent passion and 'authority' as a consequence. Try this for a marker:

Name your turf – the land of your birth, the rock from which you are cut  
Outline your geographic life history – your 'boundary lines' (Psalm 16)  
What are your 'special places?' – Neighbourhood, city or region  
Where are your supernatural burdens and/or passion?  
Do you have any specific callings? ie. a country wracked with conflict

Name the regions that break your heart?

**Final Thoughts** – Craft your own style here, your imprint or logo, so-to-speak, on this rippling template. Here are mine:

I pray for young leaders – the Timothy's who will one day lead us  
I love to pray for those I have had the privilege to lead to Christ  
I pray for the appointments we have served over the years  
I pray for ministry assignments before us

This is a continually evolving assignment – it is never truly completed. This gives extra vibrancy to such praying. Sometimes the Lord will even give release from certain assignments, a 'mission accomplished' seal.

So, go to it prayer warriors! Spread out and make a splash!

## Just Holy

by Captain Danielle Strickland

*Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. Psalm 97:2  
But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream! Amos 5:24*

There's been a bold surge in the social justice space in the last decade. New emerging campaigns have been spreading the truth about the desperate need of many global issues that are worthy of paying attention too and lending a helping hand.

Far from a new idea, the global church has a great Christian tradition, a long ancient track record of social reform. Exposing the evils of the slave trade, and helping to end it, campaigning for equality and women's rights, health and welfare reform, the care of prisoners and the reforming of prison systems around the world, education and employment options, the support of unions and workers rights. On and on goes the list of Christians who with a strong understanding of biblical theology embraced lives of social justice. Far from being separate from purity and holiness movements, many of them were fueled by the fire of holiness preachers and revivals. Jim Wallace suggests that those same hungers that fueled the revival fires of past great awakenings are alive and well today, "Two of the great hungers in our world today are the hunger for spirituality and the hunger for social justice. The connection between the two is the one the world is waiting for, especially the new generation. And the first hunger will empower the second."<sup>1</sup>

Alongside our glorious past though, we also have shameful traditions. Exploitation of the poor, shaming the sinner, colonial support, power bases that relied on Christian ethics of submission to government authorities to continue their oppressive regimes, support of slavery and the inequality of women and minorities still happening within the Christian church at large. The strength and weaknesses of our Christian tradition has its place for a discussion around holiness. Proponents of holiness would suggest it's the answer to any problem and supporters of justice would suggest it has come woefully short in changing the world. Is holiness simply the establishing of a 'christian culture' a 'holy club' that not only segregates itself from the world but maintains the exploitation of the poor?

The outcome and history of spiritual awakenings and revivals throughout history paint a different picture. Far from polarized, righteousness and justice are like twins, inseparable and from the same source. Psalm 97 suggests that both (together) are the foundation of God's presence in the world. [Isaiah 9:7](#) speaks prophetically of Jesus, "Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with **justice** and **righteousness** from that time on and forever."

[Isaiah 16:5](#) describes Christ's reign, "In love a throne will be established; in faithfulness a man will sit on it— one from the house of David— one who in judging seeks **justice** and speeds the cause of **righteousness**."

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<sup>1</sup> (Jim Wallace in Seven Ways To change the World)



In Matthew 12:18 God the Father declares His delight in Jesus and the fulfillment of His purpose on earth, "Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim **justice** to the nations."

Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology explains the intimate connection between righteousness and justice by breaking down the root of righteousness in the Bible, "The appropriate background to bear in mind for understanding the teaching of both John the Baptist and Jesus the Christ on righteousness/justice are two of the dominant ideas of the Old Testament. When we translate the Greek words based on the stem *dikai-* into English we make use of two sets of words based on the stems, just and right. So we have **just**, justice, justify and **right**, righteous, righteousness, rightwise (old English)."<sup>2</sup>

Jesus suggests that his coming and the announcement of his kingdom would be like yeast, something that would work its way inside and then force it's way out. This has been demonstrated in personal salvation, holiness and in the consequential social impacts.

John Wesley is the founder of Methodism and the leader of a great awakening. He is the father of holiness and many holiness traditions to this day consider John Wesley the authority on holiness doctrine.

The last letter that John Wesley wrote was to William Wilberforce, a man who had been converted under Wesley's ministry and who was a member of Parliament. The letter concerns his [opposition to slavery](#) and encouragement for Wilberforce to take action for change. (*Parliament finally outlawed England's participation in the slave trade in 1807. The year 2007 marked the 200th anniversary of the abolition of British-US slave trade.*)<sup>1)</sup>

Balam, February 24, 1791

Dear Sir:

Unless the divine power has raised you up to be as *Athanasius contra mundum*,<sup>2</sup> I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise in opposing that execrable villainy which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils.

But if God before you, who can be against you? Are all of them together stronger than God? O be not weary of well doing! Go on, in the name of God and in the power of his might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before it.

Reading this morning a tract wrote by a poor African, I was particularly struck by that circumstance that a man who has a black skin, being wronged or outraged by a white man, can have no redress; it being a "law" in our colonies that the *oath* of a black against a white goes for nothing. What villainy is this?

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<sup>2</sup><http://biblestudy.crosswalk.com/mybst/default.aspx?type=library&contentid=87937&category=REF>

That he who has guided you from youth up may continue to strengthen you in this and all things, is the prayer of, dear sir,

*Your affectionate servant,*

*John Wesley*<sup>3</sup>

### **The Best Tradition**

In the best traditions of holiness revivals and movements, 'holiness of heart' means a changed *inward* reality resulting in changed *outward* behaviour. The implication is that the world will be changed as a direct result of our experience of holiness. The process of holiness working its way from inside-out turns greed to generosity, selfishness to community and conceit to charity and then as a direct result, turns society upside down. "There have been other periods in history when faith tangibly changed things. Often called 'Great Awakenings', they are times when the 'revival' of faith alters societies. In fact, the historians say that spiritual activity isn't called revival until it changes something, not just in people's inner lives but in society."<sup>4</sup>

Even the earliest church holiness teacher, the Apostle Paul understood that effective church planting and kingdom building meant caring for the poor (Gal. 2:10), abolishing poverty (re-distribution) and celebrating equality (Philemon, Galatians, Ephesians). All of this contributes to a rich history of social justice within the Christian witness over the centuries.

### **QUESTIONS:**

Is social justice an outworking or an evidence of holiness?

Is personal holiness a barrier to engagement with the world?

Is social justice holiness expressed in the word?

A famous Jazz singer says that justice is love in public... so if holiness is perfect love than isn't it evidenced by justice?

### **Why Are We Divided?**

Why then is the church, indeed even The Salvation Army divided about holiness? On one hand there are those who suggest that holiness must be personal, individual – that it is, above all other things, a blessing of the heart that leads to purity within. It is an experience of divine cleansing and freedom from sin. Others suggest, almost on the contrary that holiness is only made complete within the fight for social justice. Reforming society is about holiness expressed through solidarity with the poor, outspoken prophetic, anti-religious behaviour that hopes to ignite and offend in anticipation of God's kingdom come. These campaigners use John the Baptist and

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3 1. Charles Yrigoyen, Jr. John Wesley: Holiness of Heart and Life, p. 56. •2. "Athanasius arrayed against the world."

The graphic of John Wesley writing his letter to William Wilberforce was scanned from A. B. Hyde, The Story of Methodism Throughout the World (Springfield, MA: Willey & Co., 1889), p. 237. and is in the public domain.

Source: <http://new.gbmg-umc.org/umhistory/wesley/wilberforce/>

4 (pg. 1 Seven Ways To change The World by Jim Wallace)

Jesus as examples of non-conformists (even to religious standards) to say that personal-based holiness movements are pharisaical. And they may be right.

Critics of personal holiness without social impact are quick to point out the preachers and advocates of personal holiness movements who live in expensive homes and run state of the art programs but neglect the poor.

Holiness movements in the Western world during the last half of the century have largely catered to a prosperity theme and a theology that like the Pharisees in Jesus' day equate personal moral behaviour with acceptance and prosperity by God. Not only that, but they've also compiled a list of moral sins that are damnable and exclusionary – homosexuality and abortion are at the top of the list while systemic systems of injustice like apartheid, inequality and extreme poverty go unaddressed.

Those outside of the prosperity bubble of God's favour have been accused of not living up to a moral code of holiness. Holiness, as one advocate puts it – is the solution to every problem. But is it? Is holiness the solution to a child born to parents so poor that they cannot sustain themselves with enough nutrition to make it through their early years? Is holiness the solution to the farmer who is exploited on a regular basis, kept from providing a decent wage for his children to go to school? Is holiness the solution for women trapped in illegal brothels, drugged and exploited, and sexually abused?

Social justice advocates say these are not holiness issues – they are justice issues. Those women don't need more personal piety – that child doesn't need to pray more often or with more faith – that worker doesn't need anymore hymns singing him into submission – they need rights, advocacy, reform, rescue and avenues of fighting a systemic evil and bringing God's justice to bear.

On the other hand, those holiness representatives are quick to point out the shortcomings of social reform without inward change. Not only of the reform campaign ideals, but of the reformers themselves. How can love be championed by a man who commits adultery they say about Martin Luther King Jr.? How can God's kingdom be advancing through Bono's proclamation of the gospel to the poor when he uses swear words on T.V.? Billions of dollars and a generation of people committed to helping the world's poor dismissed by the external impurity of language and moral purity codes broken.

Harsh assessments of one another and 'camps' of holiness that celebrate specific facets of holiness but may miss the bigger picture are not helpful to our mission of winning the world. Holiness, much like Salvation is much bigger than we can perhaps ever know, but if the foundation of God's throne is righteousness and justice like the Bible suggests then perhaps we ought to discover the way to make ready for Christ's sovereign presence in the world. Perhaps righteousness and justice are not sequential or competing ideas but expressions of the same love. I remember someone once suggesting that righteousness is the first commandment and justice is the second. The two hinges of God's presence in the world. Perhaps the argument is mute if we understand more completely what holiness means.

Dr. Purkiser from The Wesley Center for Applied Theology explores the issue of holiness and social impact: "What we need to recover is the insight that "personal

gospel” and “social gospel” are both perversions of the New Testament. There is only one Gospel. To split it is to destroy it. We cannot choose between doctrine and ethics, between creed and life, between inner experience and outer conduct, between individual salvation and social action. Both are in the New Testament and are not divided. What God has joined together, let not man put asunder.”<sup>5</sup>

E. Stanley Jones said it well: The clash between the individual gospel and the social gospel leaves me cold. An individual gospel without a social gospel is a soul without a body, and a social gospel without an individual gospel is a body without a soul. One is a ghost and the other a corpse. Put the two together, and you have a living person. I want and need one gospel — a gospel that lays its hand on the individual and says, ‘Repent, be converted,’ that lays its hand on the corporate will and says, ‘Repent, be converted’—one gospel, two applications.<sup>6</sup>

Tom Sine in *The New Conspirators* describes a generation of believers who are starting to grasp the essence of holiness as the embrace of both righteousness and justice. He speaks passionately about world poverty, “The only way poverty will become history is for those of us whom God has entrusted with God’s generous resources to critically evaluate our own lives and priorities. It is estimated that today over 200 million Christians live in dire poverty. Isn’t there something terribly wrong, in the international body of Christ, when some of us live palatially and other Christians can’t keep their kids fed? Isn’t it past time to recognize that we live in an interconnected global village in which there is no longer such a thing as a ‘private’ lifestyle choice?”<sup>7</sup>

The Manual of the Church of the Nazarene states; “We understand Christian holiness to be inseparable from ministry to the poor in that it drives the Christian beyond his or her own individual perfection and toward the creation of a more just and equitable society and world. Holiness, far from distancing believers from the desperate economic needs of people in our world, motivates us to place our means in the service of alleviating such need and to adjust our wants in accordance with the needs of others.”<sup>8</sup>

Holiness cannot be about my own personal relationship with God. To make it that small of an experience is to miss the meaning of shalom and the fullness of the ‘blessing’. Both its message and its power is rooted in how we live in holiness and how we live out our holiness in the here and now. Holiness as John Wesley has suggested, is social. It is about an internal revolution that reflects a counter cultural message lived not just in theory, but in the hearts of people. This in turn overthrows ‘superpowers’ with the power of the gospel. It is John Wesley’s heart ‘strangely warmed’, it is Oscar Romero, shot while administering the sacrament to the poor, it is

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([http://74.125.155.132/search?q=cache:g9yUljz6rW8J:wesley.nnu.edu/holiness\\_tradition/purkiser/purkiser\\_ch5.htm+hypocrisy+in+the+holiness+movement&cd=7&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us&client=safari](http://74.125.155.132/search?q=cache:g9yUljz6rW8J:wesley.nnu.edu/holiness_tradition/purkiser/purkiser_ch5.htm+hypocrisy+in+the+holiness+movement&cd=7&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us&client=safari))

6 [A Song of Ascents: A Spiritual Autobiography (Nash-ville: Abingdon Press, 1968), p. 151.]

7 Tom Sine, pg. 210 *The New Conspirators*.

8 Manual of the Church of the Nazarene 2001 – 2005 Paragraph 904.5 -

<http://66.102.1.104/scholar?q=cache:xAXm8Hx8B34J:scholar.google.com/+holiness+and+poverty&hl=en>

William marching on white horses straight to parliament and Catherine preaching up a storm to crowds from the rich side of town; it is Wilberforce, sleeping in a coffin the same size as slave ship hold to identify with the poor and working at great expense for his entire life for the abolition of the slave trade; it is Finney's evangelical campaigns marked by his parallel fight for women's equality and civil rights in America, it is Martin Luther King Jr. declaring a prophetic picture of how things can be when love comes to town.

Holiness is the manifestation of righteousness and justice from the inside-out. So, let's be Just Holy.

## St. Francis: The Wild Side of Mission

by Cadet James Thompson

St Francis is a colourful figure of church history; perhaps we could call him a wild spirit. He was a party boy growing up. He was the son of a rich man, and therefore lacked nothing. He would drink, eat, sleep and meet with women. Even his conversion was wild. He threw off his clothes and did a nudie run! Then as he matured his life continued to become more wild and bizarre with ecstatic experiences in the presence of God, miracles and wacky behaviour. The Franciscan movement was wild as well as it spread uncontrollably. This is the wild side of mission.

St Francis has often been upheld for his peace towards all men and animals, and a large portion of his wild life has been glossed over. Pope Benedict XVI has commented that, "The saint should be remembered for rejecting his early days as a "playboy" as much as his later days as a nature-loving pacifist."<sup>9</sup> That's right, St Francis needs a makeover. As we look deeper into who St Francis was and what made him tick we will discover some amazing mission lessons that are still applicable to us today.

To begin this makeover we need to go to the wild side of St Francis spirituality. St Francis has a long history of supernatural spiritual encounters. Lifting people off the ground with his breath, talking with the apostles Paul, John and Peter, even John the Baptist and the virgin Mary, meeting with God face to face, talking to animals who would then obey him, healing, deliverance and all sorts of signs and wonders, and perhaps his most noted sign, the stigmata. But what do these supernatural encounters have to do with the mission of St Francis?

These experiences remind us that true mission comes from a relationship with God. This cannot be understated; so much mission comes about because we think it is a good thing to do. However, St Francis mission came from a real life encounter with a living God. The church has trouble mobilising people for mission and often turns to guilt trips and rosters in order to get people on board. However, the principle we are taught here has little to do with such superficial expectations and turns wholeheartedly towards a true experience of God. Therefore, mission starts with an encounter with the living God.

*"Most High and Glorious God,  
lighten the darkness of my heart  
and give me sound faith,  
firm hope  
and perfect love.  
Let me, Lord, have the right feelings  
And knowledge,  
Properly to carry out  
The task you have given me."<sup>10</sup>*

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<sup>9</sup> Sweas, M. (2006). 'Extreme Makover.' [U.S. Catholic](#). Chicago: [Nov 2006](#). Vol. 71, Iss. 11; pg. 10, 1 pgs

<sup>10</sup> Bader, W. (1988). 'The Prayers of St Francis.' New York. New City Press.. St Francis, Before the crucifix in San Damiano

This may seem simple and it is. However it has a huge range of implications that impacts upon the structure of missional movements, our engagement with the world, and our own character formation. All of a sudden the pastor of a church has lost his/her role. No longer is it up to the priesthood to do everything, it now turns to everyone living a specific lifestyle.

### **Structure of Missional Movements**

The first place we must look at is leadership. Who is in charge, who keeps an eye on what is happening, and who is leading the way? These days we are taught to take control of where we are going and make sure we get there. However, St Francis had a very different style of leadership, it was wild, the movement was free to go where it wished. Southern comments that Francis had very little idea about leadership or organisation, he just went with the flow!<sup>11</sup>

Can you imagine how this would scare Francis' superiors? The hierarchy would certainly want control of their own church. St Francis was loyal to his superiors yet at the same time he was a little bit wild, a loose cannon perhaps. Take this example, "We ought also to deny ourselves and to put our bodies beneath the yoke of servitude and holy obedience as each one has promised to the Lord. And let no man be bound by obedience to obey any one in that where sin or offence is committed."<sup>12</sup> Although there is submission to authority there is also a chance of rebellion if we believe God is telling us to do something different...

However the St Francis and the Franciscans had an ability to settle down within the framework of an ecclesiastical organization and as they preached they insisted upon obedience to the Pope and Bishops.<sup>13</sup>

However, the Holy Spirit was their leader. In fact, for the Franciscans, "The path they wished to follow could only be followed instinctively. As soon as it was thought about and pursued in an organised way it raised problems of insuperable difficulty."<sup>14</sup>

Whenever the move of God was attempted to be controlled by the people, it failed. The Dominicans were around the same time as the Franciscans, they were almost the opposite. They were well organised, they had higher standards, and had a careful campaign planned out for the Christianisation of Europe. However the people found the Franciscans far more appealing, and the Franciscans grew far more rapidly than the Dominicans.

This wildness of this organisation continued, the Franciscans had lower educational standards. Yet they had immense success and universal appeal. It was a nightmare to the rich if you want to be a Franciscan but to the poor it was a haven as they received a place and purpose within community!<sup>15</sup> Not only that but Francis and his people had to rely on people for everything. They had no money or possessions.

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<sup>11</sup> McManners. (1990). 'The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity.' Oxford. University Press. 282

<sup>12</sup> Letters to the Faithful, St Francis

<sup>13</sup> McManners. (1990). 'The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity.' Oxford. University Press. 214

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*, 288

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*, 292

“Their whole way of life depended on their association with the town, and this determined the direction of their later development.”<sup>16</sup>

What amazing principles we can learn from St Francis the leader! Here we learn that true mission is directed by the Holy Spirit and as a result mission can be messy and can seem out of control. However we learn that submission to authority is essential but at the same time only if it is inline with Gods will. He also teaches us that our own plans and ideas are not always in line with God plans. Above all St Francis teaches us that a relationship with God, where we hear from God and then obey is essential if we want to get mission right. But beware, if we follow this teaching our mission will be wild.

### **Engagement with the World**

*“He would encourage them to despise the world and with serious words urge them to the love of God.”<sup>17</sup>*

St Francis teaches us how to engage in the world today. In his time monks were known for despising the world and therefore left to seek solitude in deserts, caves and generally away from people. However St Francis was a social butterfly! Although he urged his followers to despise the world, his approach was not removal but engagement. He urged his people to engage with people by loving them. On top of this we also know that he is the patron saint for nature.

What did he mean by despise the world then? To St Francis to despise the world meant to despise the worldly passions that wage war against our soul. Here St Francis teaches us that we must aggressively guard our heart against worldly passions for power and wealth, instead lower yourself, live simply, sacrificially and in poverty. Deny yourself. St Francis teaches us that true holiness does not mean removal, but engagement through love.

Another important teaching is how St Francis preached the gospel. Many people have attributed the saying, “Preach the gospel at all times, if necessary use words,” to St Francis. However there is no evidence that suggests he did say this.<sup>18</sup> However it is true, St Francis always preached with his actions. However, his preaching with his words often is overlooked.

St Francis was a wild preacher, he preached everywhere and to anyone. He preached in streets, castles and in the forest. He preached to the young, the old, the rich and the poor, even the opposing Sultan in the fifth crusade! Not only that but he preached to wolves and birds! We are taught that we must preach with power and boldness without forgetting that we are preaching the gospel of peace.<sup>19</sup>

Check out this wild testimony of the power of his preaching; “At the prompting of the Holy Spirit preached so miraculously and amazingly that he seemed not a man but

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<sup>16</sup> *ibid*, 287

<sup>17</sup> E.M Blaiklock & A.C. Keys. (1985). *The Little Flowers.* London. Hodder and Stoughton., p102

<sup>18</sup> McCloskey, P. ‘Great Saying but Tough to Trace.’

[www.americancatholic.org/Messenger/Oct2001/Wiseman.asp](http://www.americancatholic.org/Messenger/Oct2001/Wiseman.asp)

<sup>19</sup> Moses, P. (2009). *Mission Improbable: St. Francis & the Sultan.* [Commonwealth](http://Commonwealth.org). New York. Vol. 136, Iss. 16; pg. 11, 6 pgs.



an angel. For his heavenly words seemed to shoot like sharp arrows from the bow of divine wisdom; they penetrated the hearts of all so effectively that he converted a mighty crowd of men and women from a state of sin to tears of repentance.”<sup>20</sup>

Again we see that St Francis mission begins and ends with a relationship with God. This power was not his own, but came from spending time in the presence of God. We would do well to remember this and do likewise!

### **Character Formation**

The way Francis lived his life, modelled after Christ, seems ridiculously impossible for Christians today.<sup>21</sup> Can you imagine living in extreme poverty, owning nothing, begging for all your food, meeting with angels, dead men and God Himself in dreams, visions and totally whacked out experiences? It all seems too much to handle, its too wild...

However, St Francis is not a prophet of doom, rather he shows us what a Spirit filled life looks like. Here we remember that true mission starts at conversion and if we want to know God better we must spend time in the ‘secret place’ allowing God to transform us with His presence.

There are so many stories that highlights how valuable St Francis saw spending time with God. One time St Francis was staying at a Friary, a young boy knowing that St Francis would leave in the middle of the night to speak to God, tied a cord to him so that when he awoke he would too. The boy secretly followed St Francis into the woods and when he got there he heard a number of voices speaking to St Francis. Upon this the boy fell into ecstasy and had a glory fit, when St Francis returned home he had to carry the young boy home!

This story is just one example of the prayer time that he would have. There are numerous more that teach us about meditation, repentance, and supernatural encounters. Nothing could be more wild than speaking with angels, dead men and God Himself. However, this teaching does not tell us to search for such manifestations, rather it speaks to us of intimacy with God. It speaks to us of communication with God. And as we spend time with God we too will have our character transformed by the presence of God. And as this happens, mission will naturally flow from our renewed selves.

### **Conclusion**

Thus concludes our make over of St Francis. By looking at his life and leadership we learn valuable lessons about mission. We learn that mission begins with a relationship with God, and that this relationship with God directs where we go and what we do. Such a wild agenda means trouble for the hierarchy as they soon discover that they are no longer in control. Instead we learn that the Holy Spirit is our leader. We learnt that every time someone tried to control the movement they failed. The educational standards were lower, but the movement grew stronger and more quickly as people did not rely on their abilities but on God. We were taught how to

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<sup>20</sup> E.M Blaiklock & A.C. Keys. (1985). *The Little Flowers.* London. Hodder and Stoughton., p101

<sup>21</sup> Sweeney, J. (2008). ‘A Mended and Broken Heart: A Life and Love of Francis of Assisi. Conversations with *St. Francis.*’ [The Christian Century](#). Chicago: Vol. 125, Iss. 23; pg. 37, 3 pgs

engage with the world, to despise it, not to remove our selves from it, but in engage in it with it love for others. This love for others manifest itself by a lifestyle of constant preaching with our words and actions, both in the power of the Holy Spirit which we get from deep intimate times with God. And so we complete a full circle and come back to the first lesson we learnt from him, mission begins and ends with a relationship with God. Such a simple message, but will we take heed?

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## **So Exclusive, It's Offensive!**

by Cadet Matthew Kean

Since the beginning of the postmodern era, with its central philosophy intent on rebelling against the ways of its predecessor, modernism, there has risen within the Christian church a strong desire to alter our mediums, our methods, and our message. At first, it would seem that this decision to “swing the pendulum” from the legal mindset that was so prevalent within the Modern age to one that allowed more fluidity and freedom was beneficial and perhaps necessary. However, it didn't take too long before this want of a longer leash in exploring within the realm of theology and ecclesiology began to dramatically affect our understanding of certain non-negotiable truths.

In all honesty, I have seen within today's church (The Salvation Army included) a rebellion against the New Testament's description of saving faith that is so blatant it baffles me as to why it is still able to be labelled Christian at all. Although originally the desire for freedom was purposeful, somehow from it there has come a zealous attack on any kind of restraint in regards to the governance of that freedom. We no longer allow anyone or anything to tell us when our philosophical or theological theories cannot be raised to the pedestal of belief. In other words, the present-day Christian church seems to be so opposed to any authority over the capacity of human thought that it has almost completely rejected the fundamentals by which Christianity is defined.

Often these rejections of non-negotiable truths come subtly under the guise of positive, forward thinking. Terms get thrown around and re-invented in order to shift emphasis from one truth to another and in turn cleverly redefine major pillars of the faith. It is noteworthy that these ‘shifts’ in emphasis within doctrine and belief never happen blatantly, but they certainly happen intentionally. It is the result of a desire to lower the bar, so to speak, that Christ so clearly lifted for those who dare to follow Him. Often, this lower standard tends to be portrayed as compassion or sympathy for those who it inevitably excludes, but it is nonetheless a farce.

As a result of this easy willingness to negotiate with certainties and soften hard bedrock there has risen a severe compromise within Christ's bride that has tainted and smeared our robe of white. It frequently gets called the “inclusive gospel” or “gospel of grace”. Whatever its name, the truth of the matter is that it is a heresy that invests itself into the corruption of what is perhaps the greatest truth presented within the gospel of Christ. That truth, of course, is that there are two kinds of people in this world: the once-born and the twice-born. Jesus presented the world with this hard case when he spoke to the great teacher of Israel, Nicodemus... “That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

It is an indisputable fact that those who are born of God are called to be separate from the world. One need only read the Master's prayer in John 17 to reach this conclusion, or, if it continues to be argued, read the latter part of John 15 where Jesus speaks of the world hating all who receive His word. This attempt within the church to merge worldlings with the redeemed is utterly futile! They are forced apart by a chaotic clash between wickedness and righteousness. Any Christian who acts

out of sympathy and empathy with those who refuse to bend the knee in submission to the Lordship of King Jesus is foolishly substituting grace for personal preference. We ought not to be trying to taking emphasis away from the wretchedness of a sinful heart, but we should be deliberately illuminating it with the only true Light. In other words, trying to make the reality of the sinner who is outside the salvation of God more comfortable by equating their state with that of the saint redeemed is counter-productive to the gospel's agenda. The gospel does not allow for anyone who will not surrender to be included within the Holy family. In fact, the once and twice-born create such a division within this world, and Jesus Christ so consistently points out this divisive truth, that the gospel of His salvation is very exclusive – so exclusive it's offensive. It insists that anyone who will not give themselves to the authority of Christ remains excluded and therefore separate from His church.

How have we allowed ourselves to remove this important distinction from our idea of church, and even the gospel? We constantly speak of harmony and equality, not merely amongst those within the family of God, but also between the church and the world. If a preacher was to profess from his pulpit that there is a heaven for those who believed, perhaps not much would be said. But, if that same preacher said there was a hell for those will not believe, he would be ridiculed for being insensitive to people's feelings. The preacher's ridicule would not be because he mentioned hell, but because he implied that people are going there. Nothing is more offensive than to draw attention to the distinction that separates people eternally!

In the gospel of Matthew, the 19th chapter, we are told that Jesus is approached by a young man who is very wealthy. Right now there is no reason to spend time on the young man's financial situation, but the point to be realised lies in the fact that his conversation with Jesus ends with his great disappointment. He came to the Lord asking how to attain eternal life. Jesus presented him with ultimately one solution to his query: "Come, follow me." However, this young man was unwilling to give his life to the offer Christ gave. He wanted the benefits of Christ's righteousness, but he refused to submit all that defined him to His way and authority. As a result, this man left Jesus with a heart filled with sadness. Why? Because he remained outside the family of God; he remained separated from the life of the Spirit; he remained among the once-born – and therefore excluded from sainthood.

This must be realised again by the church of God. Misunderstanding, or dismissing, the severe truth that a relationship with Jesus Christ severs the world from the redeemed inevitably forces both parties into a place of false hope. It numbs the sinners' heart to the seriousness of their unsaved state and it deceives the Christian so that he/she begins to believe the gospel's agenda is not so urgent. The once-born are rotting in sin, surrounded by the stench of death, and the twice-born must show them this is so. Look at the great divide! How vast it is! But the gospel that excludes their wickedness is their only way to life!

## Five Questions

(excerpt from the forthcoming: *MIGHTY WARRIORS: Officership as vocational extremism*)  
by Lieut.-Colonel Miriam Gluyas

### 1. What is the best thing about being a Salvation Army officer?

I feel like I was born to be a Salvation Army officer. I love the fact that I get to be in relationship with Jesus, that I get to spend time with Him every day, and that I get to partner up with Him in seeing His Kingdom come and His will be done. There's nothing better than that.

For me, the best things about being a Salvation Army officer are:

- a. Seeing God at work; and,
- b. People

When I was stationed at Auburn Corps, a lady came to welfare. The person ministering to her that day recognised that she needed more than a food parcel. Because of the difficulties in her life, and the life of her daughter who lived with her, the Department of Community Services was about to move in and take the children from her and her daughter.

The welfare worker asked a group of our young adults, who were keen about doing "acts of kindness", to help this family. That group of passionate young Christians went around to the house; cleaned up, painted, mowed the lawns, and did everything they could to sort that place. At the end of the day that lady said, "If that's what your Jesus is like, I want to get to know him." The issue of the children needed to be dealt with and we needed a solicitor to help out. One of the young adults asked a favour of a friend who was a pretty cluey solicitor. Luke turned up and represented the family. We asked him to come along to church and celebrated him ... and asked him to help us with another case. Luke and the lady kept on coming. Both became passionate about Jesus. Luke then felt that God was telling him to start up what is now known as "Courtyard Legal". Every Monday night he would come to Auburn and serve those in the community who couldn't afford legal help, but who desperately needed it. He brought with him many solicitors and lawyers, who did pro bono work. In five years, over a thousand people have been served. The success rate, in cases which now total 325, is 97%. Refugee families have been reunited, people's lives have been transformed, the voiceless have had a voice.

Last year, Luke felt a definite calling to do this full-time. He left a partnership in a firm to work full-time for the Salvos. God has given him so many dreams, and I believe that they will become realities. There is a strong calling on his life. He lives to serve those who need help and need Jesus.

One of the delights of officership is seeing people rise up and shine, seeing people's lives transformed by Jesus, and seeing them partner up with Him to see this world changed. To have any part in that is an incredible privilege.

What if we hadn't trained up our people for mission? What if the lady doing welfare that day hadn't recognised a deeper need? What if young people weren't passionate about "acts of kindness" and sharing Jesus?

What if we hadn't invited a young solicitor to help us, celebrated him and invited him back?

What if lives were not transformed by Jesus? No "what ifs" in this story. God did an amazing work, in and through His people. And ... that continues on. What a privilege.

## **2. What keeps you in officership when things are tough?**

There is no doubt that things get tough in officership. I would say that my best and worst times have been had while I've been an officer. We're in a battle. The devil hates it when God's at work. I expect the battle. But, I know who has already won the victory! That makes a difference.

I would say that there are three key things that keep me in officership when things get tough:

1. calling
2. there's nothing that I would rather do
3. believing that we are in urgent and exciting days. I wasn't someone who struggled with a call to officership. God called me, and I knew that that was what I was to do with my life. I had plans to be a sports teacher and professional golfer. God had plans for me to be a Salvation Army officer, and I have no regrets at all. There have been many difficult times in officership, but very few times when I have seriously considered giving up. Once or twice, when I've been frustrated and annoyed, it's probably crossed my mind: "God, are you sure you don't want me to serve in another ministry?" and the answer has come immediately, "No, you will stay, and you will change things". Nice! I'm called. I'm called to The Salvation Army ... and that calling keeps me. Also, there is nothing that I would rather do. No one has to tell me to get up every day and go to work. I know how God has wired me, and what He has wired me for.

I am passionate about ...

- Him
- seeing His Kingdom grow
- seeing The Salvation Army grow
- seeing leaders develop
- justice
- the next generation
- multi-cultural ministry.

That never changes. The list grows. The passion also grows. I have annoying days and frustrating days, but the call of God is very real, and I'm passionate about Him and his Kingdom. Also, I believe absolutely that we are in urgent and exciting days. Australia needs Jesus. The world needs Jesus. I walk the streets of Sydney most days and think, "How can we see all Australians enjoy this magnificent relationship with Jesus? How do we become part of people's lives? How do we touch lives for Him?" I'm not content with the way things are, and that's a good thing. We're also in

exciting days. God is changing lives, He is touching lives. He still has a place for His Salvation Army.

So ... who would want to miss out on that?

### **3. What is the greatest move of God you have experienced in an appointment?**

There are two great moves of God that I have experienced in my life, and they came, I believe, because of a very defining day in my life. I had just moved into my new appointment at Eastlakes, a church plant in Newcastle. Very clearly God said to me, "So are you going to do it your way or my way this time?" Pretty rude, I thought! But I knew what God was saying. I had done things very much in my own strength before this. It was now a new day.

I would start each day saying, "God, I can't but you can." At Eastlakes:

- We saw God grow a Corps from nothing, to a thriving healthy Corps
- We saw miracles
- We saw people saved most weeks
- We didn't have money for a men's pastor, and needed around \$17,000 to make that happen. Someone came to see me one day to give me some money. He didn't know we were praying for this, but guess how much he gave us? \$17,000. That's just one of many stories like that.
- God provided leaders for us
- We fasted and prayed and saw so many answers to prayer
- People got saved and couldn't wait to tell their friends and family about Jesus. Our church grew through friendship evangelism

God then sent me from a new plant to a Corps that was 110 years old. Before I went there, he gave me a vision of what might be, and the unfolding of that vision continues today, and will for years and years to come.

Auburn was a lovely Corps, a Corps with every generation, a Corps with incredibly kind and good people, a very Anglo Corps, sitting in the middle of one of the most multi-cultural areas of Sydney. Central to that area is a huge mosque.

We started to see things with the eyes of Jesus. We workshopped who we were, what we wanted to be, what God was saying, how we would get there.

We prayed and believed, and partnered up with God where He was at work.

- We ran English conversation classes
- We held Kids club in the local park, played soccer, served halal sausages, and shared Jesus
- We had a drop-in centre for the community
- Our people would do homework groups with refugee children
- People would advocate for those who were treated unfairly
- We welcomed refugees at the airport, gave them food parcels, taught them the basics of life in Australia
- Courtyard Legal started. We saw the voiceless gain a voice, we saw refugee families reunited, we saw people in trouble with the law served beautifully
- We learned to love our church and love our community.



- We saw God transforming us, transforming our community and transforming our entire church.

God brought the nations to us. Each time another person would come, we would put their national flag up in the hall. Today there are people from 26 nations around the world, and 26 flags. People were saved most weeks. The community was served. There was favour in many, many ways.

We simply partnered up with God, prayed, tried to see where He was at work, tried to see our community through His eyes, and people who are good, kind, and love Jesus have seen a community transformed.

#### **4. What's the best innovation you've helped to create or extend?**

God is incredibly creative. He's always at work. We really do need to seek Him and see what it is that He wants to do. You see, Auburn and Eastlakes were totally different places. Eastlakes is near Newcastle, north of Sydney. At the time that I was there, it was about 96% Anglo-Saxon. Auburn was in the middle of a very multi-cultural community. But what I love is that God had, and still has, his plan for both of those places. Both grew incredibly. In both places we saw so many salvations, so many lives transformed, so many people loved and served, the community impacted by Jesus. And it continues on. Very different plans for the two places, but He is key, and transformation is key. So, I constantly ask Him, "What's next?" I love that part of officership. I love that part of life. I've never felt like the Army has stopped me from doing anything. Some people may have been nervous at times, but I always want to be careful that anything new is very much of Him.

#### **5. What's the best means of influence and how have you used it?**

Leadership is certainly about influence. It's certainly about having followers. It's certainly about investing in the lives of people. A lot of my time is spent one-on-one with people. I believe very strongly in raising leaders, and coaching and mentoring. God has put something in me to be a "potential see-er". He shows me people that He wants to use, and asks me to see the best in them, see what they could become, and help them to get there. It's really a matter of "raise them up and let them shine". I have around a dozen people that I catch up with on a monthly basis, for an hour a month, and I work with them in the areas of mentoring and coaching.

Having sought God, I speak into people the best that I see for them. If God talks to me about their future, I'll talk to them about that, always being careful that they have others praying and confirming things for them.

I also believe that we work best in the body of Christ when we work as teams, and that we put the best people around us, and let them shine. There is no place for being "threatened" by others. When I went to Auburn, I also had another role in the Territory, so I needed a young couple. I knew that Nesan and Cheryl Kistan had gifts that I would never have, and gifts that would be valuable for the Kingdom. (They are still at Auburn and I'm rapt about that.) We gathered a team around us, who had all kinds of different personalities and giftings that we needed in that place. We sowed

into them, gave them the resources that they needed, and let them shine. Now that's a great delight.

I also believe strongly in the power of vision. People will sign up to a big vision. They want to be part of something that is bigger than them. They also need the chance to dream, to express that dream and have it taken seriously. If a vision is of God then it's bigger than us. It must be of Him. We need Him to see it become a reality. I believe that God draws the right people to us, but we need to be able to be trusted with them. Raise them up and let them shine. These are exciting days! We have a magnificent God. We have some wonderful people. Believing that His Kingdom will come and that His will will be done!

**Don't be a McChicken**  
**Covenant and Galatians 3:19-25**  
by Captain Michael Ramsay

One day at the McDonald farm there is a rumbling in the air; something is a foot. In the chicken coop something isn't just quite right. The old farmer walks all around the chicken wire fence. It seems to be in tact. The barbed wire along the perimeter looks undisturbed. Everything looks fine as he locks up the hens for the night. But inside the henhouse on the top rung, something is stirring...it is Henrietta the poultry hen.

Now, as soon as Farmer McDonald closes the door to the coop, Henrietta the hen, speaks up: "It's time." Quickly Henrietta, Polly, Mick, and all the chickens on the top rung run to the southeast corner of the coop. They peck and they peck the ground in the corner like never before. Last night they had almost made it. Tonight would be the night. Finally – breakthrough! Henrietta and the other chickens are free. They are free from the farmer's coop. They are free from the barbed wire and the chicken wire; they are free from the tedious ritual and routine. They are free!

They spend the next morning roaming around the yard, exploring the whole farm. They eat what they want, when then want. They can be near or wander far away. They talk. They talk and they talk some more: it's a hen's life. They spend that whole day walking around eating what and when they want and really enjoying the full freedom from the yard. At the end of the day, they perch on a branch of tree across the road from the farm and cuddle up for the night. It is good.

They have a nice rest but in the morning when they wake up, they notice something on the road: it is Mick the chicken crossing the road. They wonder. Why did the chicken cross the road? Mick is walking back towards the farm.

Mick is walking back to the coop. She goes across the road, to the fence and through the same crack under the chicken wire fence. She walks around the corner and up the walkway onto her old bar in the farmer's small, confining chicken coop. The farmer then notices the crack in the fence and repairs it quickly. Mick is trapped.

Henrietta can't believe it. She sees the whole thing where she is sitting, still free, looking on from her perch on other side of the road. She sees Mick, of her own accord, trapped all over again on the farm.

Mick was free and then she just goes back to be trapped all over again and it is even worse then she thought at first. As Henrietta scans the farm and hears the noises: here a cluck, there a cluck everywhere a cluck, cluck. She remembers, Mick the Chicken is on McDonald's farm. The Mick Chicken is back at MacDonald's! And you know what happens to McChickens at McDonald's.[1] They get eaten. Mick is trapped.

And this is just like the Galatians to whom Paul writes his letter: the Galatians have become just as trapped by the Law of the Old Covenant as Mick the chicken is by McDonalds. And Paul is quite concerned. After all as we read in Galatians 3, where Paul repeatedly calls the Galatians 'foolish', he says in verse 10, "All who rely on the

law are under a curse; for it is written ‘cursed is anyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law (cf. Gal 3:10; Deut 27:26).’ And it seems no one can do that.

Paul is then rightly quite concerned because it appears that there are some ‘false believers’ (Gal 2:4) who actually want the Galatians to be trapped by the Law.[2] It appears that there are some here, in the Galatian churches, who are walking away from their freedom and in the process even walking away from the Gospel of Christ.

Rather than relying on Jesus, they prefer to return to the rules, regulations, feasts, celebrations and the Law (cf. Gal 4:9,10) as if that can save anyone from our sins: the Law has been fulfilled (Matt 5:17-48; cf. Heb 8:13). None of us who are grafted into the promise offered to Abraham (Gen 12:3) and David (2 Sam 7), none of us can possibly do anything to merit salvation and the resurrection – its not possible: All who rely on the Law are under a curse because they do not and will not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the Law (cf. Gal 3:10, Deut 27:26).

The people in Galatia here are at risk now of being trapped by the Law. Paul is desperately, in this letter, trying to point them to freedom again.[3] He is trying to stop Mick the Galatian chicken from returning to the confines of the Law of the Old Covenant (Gal 3:4, 4:9).

This raises a question though: If the Law is something that traps us, if the Law is something that curses us, why did God give humanity the Law in the first place? Why did God write the Ten Commandments and hand deliver them to Moses? Did God want to trap us? Really, if the Law is so terrible, why were God’s own people expected to follow it for so long – hundreds of years before it was fulfilled (Exod 20, 34; Deut 5, 10; cf. Matt 5:17; Rom 2: 12-29, 9:30-10:4; Heb 8:13). Why?[4]

For me, as I was reading and re-reading Galatians, this was a pivotal question that kept coming to my mind. If the Law of the Old Covenant is so bad, why did God give it to his ‘chosen people’? And you’ll notice in the passage, Galatians 3:19-25, that Paul considers this as well.

Paul speaks of people as being imprisoned and guarded by the Law in verse 23. He says that the Law –depending upon your translation -was our guard, our disciplinarian, our custodian, or some translations even say our schoolmaster in verses 24 and 25. This is interesting because the word in verses 24 and 25 that is translated these so many different ways probably could best be rendered ‘tutor’ and tutors –unlike guards or disciplinarians- were generally not considered bad people in first century Galatia.[5] They were the good guys: servants protecting and helping the children.

I look at the historical role of the Law like this:[6] The Law is sort of like a storm cellar. Remember the Wizard of Oz? It is a place to hide when the storm kicks up, a place of refuge. When humankind started sinning (vs. 19), sin entered the world like a tornado bringing death and destruction to everything in its path. It is recorded in Galatians 3:19 that the Law was given to us as a result of our transgressions (Cf. Ro 5:20).

There is this storm of sin and death kicking up out there. People are dying and so God builds this storm cellar in the form of the Decalogue (the Ten Commandments) and the Law for our own protection. God builds the Law as a shelter from this storm of sin and death and He gives it to Moses and says to him, “Here, in there, take everyone in with you. Quick. Hurry!”

Moses does and the people remain in this safe, albeit somewhat cramped and confining, shelter for a long time and then something happens...Jesus, through His death and resurrection, defeats sin. Jesus calms the storm. It is over. As Jesus said on the cross, “It is finished.”

So now the storm is over. It is finished and Jesus, through His death and resurrection, has freed us from the storm cellar as the storm is finished. We no longer need to remain in the storm cellar of the Law. It kept us safe for a while but it is of no use to us now, sin and death – the storm – has been defeated.

So, while the storm is whipping around outside we are all very grateful if we can find shelter in the Law of the Old Covenant but who of us, after the tornado had passed wants to continue to live in a hole in the ground? No one. No one in her right mind anyway.

This is exactly what Paul is talking about here in Chapter 3. And in Chapter 4, he goes on explaining the Law as if it were this servant guardian tutor of a small child. The guardian only has any authority until the child is grown, then the child has authority over the slave. We are no longer servants to the Law, customs and ceremonies. While we are grateful for the shelter God provided through the Law. We are especially thankful now that He has freed us from that hole in the ground.

But I have a question for us. Are their times when, like Mick the Galatian Chicken, we are tempted to return to the confines of the Law or of a new law or some other trap? Are there ways in which, even though life is carrying on outside the storm cellar, we refuse to walk around in the freedom of Christ? What are some of the rules, special days, and traditions that can cut us off from our freedom in Christ (Gal 4:10)?

I remember one incident at a youth group activity many years ago, Janet, one of the girls at the church, invited a group of her Christian friends to a youth event and at break time these kids –who she knew were smokers- step outside for a cigarette. They have their cigarettes and start roughhousing a little bit. Janet is devastated; she cries. It didn't make any sense to her. A Christian couldn't do those things. There are rules to follow. There are things YOU HAVE to do. So while it would serve us all well to never have a cigarette, of course, and we should all be on the road to holiness, sanctification, which ends in glorification, here is the problem: like Janet and like Mick the Galatian chicken, we can become trapped by our own rules, our own laws. We can start to believe that these rules are the means to our Salvation or, just as bad, someone else's.

Have you ever thought, “Does he really need that piece of chocolate cake? He's already 800 pounds.[7] How can she really call herself a Christian? She stays up all night playing video games[8] and she doesn't clean up after herself or help out

around here at all. Look at that kid. He's got his nose, ears, eyebrows and probably other parts pierced. I'm a good solid Christian though. I don't smoke. I go to church and Bible study. I never eat too much. I always give my tithe. When I get to heaven, I'll get a big house – not like those people who just get in by the skin of their teeth.

Don't we sometimes get trapped by believing that if we never speed and always declare all our income on our income tax; if we never lie, obey all the commandments and the Golden Rule, we'll get into heaven? Aren't there things that tempt us to hide in the security of the storm cellar of legalism rather than experiencing the freedom of Christ. What are the things that trap us? Is there anything that is impeding our relationship with Christ? Are there any chains that are holding us back, stopping us from experiencing the full freedom in Christ. Is there anything at all that causes us to hide in a storm cellar of legalism?

Remember Christ died freeing us from the storm cellar. Christ died on the cross so we don't need to be trapped by our traditions. Christ died so we don't need to be trapped by our prejudices. Christ died so we don't need to be trapped by the Law. Christ died so we don't need to be trapped by, as Paul says in Galatians 4:10, observing special days, months, seasons, and years. Christ died. Christ died defeating the storm of Sin and Death and freeing us from all this and then He rose from the dead. Jesus rose from the dead. So for those of us who are still trapped beneath ground in the storm cellar of legalism, for those of us who are still underground, let's rise with Christ. Let's not remain in the ground. Let us let Him break those chains that bind us and let us experience the full freedom of a wholly sanctified life with Christ.

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[1] Based on: 'Mickey the Hen' from the sermon, Free as a Bird: Galatians 5:1-15. by Michael Ramsay

[2] Richard B. Hays, Galatians. (NIB: XI. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 2000), 314. The NIB calls them 'Missionaries'

[3] It appears that many of the Galatians were originally Gentiles and thus not subject previously. This then would be particularly irritating to the apostle, Paul. Cf. also Richard N. Longenecker, Galatians. (WBC: 41. Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1990), 227.

[4] Cf. Ramsay, Michael. Paul's Understanding of the Role of Law as Reflected in Romans 2:12-16, 17-24, and 25-29. Available on-line at: [www.sheepspeak.com/NT\\_Michael\\_Ramsay.htm](http://www.sheepspeak.com/NT_Michael_Ramsay.htm)

[5] Cf. Cousar, Charles B., Galatians. (Interpretation. Louisville, USA: John Knox Press, 1982), 79.

[6] Cf. for a good discussion of the role, function, and traditional understanding of the Law, NT Wright, "The Law in Romans 2," Paul and the Mosaic Law, ed. James D. G. Dunn (WUNT 89; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1996), republished with English translations of German essays (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001).

[7] Intentional example since "Experts estimate that 10 to 25% of all teenagers and 20 to 50% of all adults have a weight problem". Obesity Canada. n.p. [cited 09 04 2006] On-line: <http://www.obesitycanada.com/>

[8] 80% of BC Teens play video games regularly. Media Analysis Laboratory Simon Fraser University, Burnaby B.C. "Video Game Culture: Leisure and Play Preferences of B.C. Teens." Simon Fraser University (October, 1998): 5.

## The Booths

by Commissioner Wesley Harris

In a modest house in Nottingham, England, William Booth was born in 1829. He was not the first to bear the name for his father, Samuel Booth, married twice and by his first wife had a son called William who died at 24. Then the same name was given to our William, the third of five children by second wife, the former Mary Moss.

The family was not wealthy despite some pretensions. Samuel Booth was variously described as a nailer (that is, a maker of nails) an architect and a builder. But he may have been largely illiterate and almost certainly without professional qualifications. Our founder thought his father had come down in the world economically and lost his wealth, but riches could have been more in his imagination than in any bank. His son thought that his father was a 'grab and get' merchant but when he died his total assets were worth less than a hundred pounds.

It has been suggested that the founder's mother may have been of Jewish extraction but apart from her long nose, which her son inherited, and her Jewish maiden name there is no further evidence of this. From age six to 13 William attended a 'school' run by a Methodist minister. Then, with Samuel Booth's death the family's financial problems cut short his formal education and left him with an academic lack of which he became very conscious. However, he learnt much in the 'university of experience' when apprenticed to a pawn broker and had contact with many of the poorest of the poor.

At 15 William Booth knelt in the schoolroom of the Broad Street Methodist Church in Nottingham and was truly converted. Many years later, when asked the secret of his success he replied, "I decided as a boy of 15 that God should have all there was of William Booth" \* \* \* \* \*

The remarkable woman who became William Booth's wife and co-founder of the Army was Catherine Mumford. She was born at Ashbourne in Derbyshire later moving with her family to Boston in Lincolnshire and then to South London. Born in the same year as William she too was one of five children three of whom died in infancy as was not uncommon at the time. Her earliest recollection was of being taken to see her dead brother. Another brother eventually moved to America and so Catherine grew up like an only child and very much under the influence of her mother.

Mrs Sarah Mumford was a puritanical and probably somewhat neurotic woman. She was Catherine's mentor in everything and especially in religious matters. But despite the extreme narrowness of her views Catherine loved her dearly and, in fact, replicated many of her mother's methods in bringing up her own children.

Catherine's father, John Mumford, was a coach builder by trade and had a somewhat broader view of life. He and Catherine had some spirited debates on political and other matters. At one stage he was a speaker at temperance meetings but later took to drink much to the sorrow of his wife and daughter.

Catherine was a great lover of animals and a rift came between father and daughter over a pet dog to which Catherine was much attached. The dog was waiting outside a door when Catherine on the inside struck her foot against something. She cried out in pain whereupon the dog rushed to its mistress crashing through a glass window in the process. For this John Mumford had the dog shot and almost broke his daughter's heart. As a child Catherine was precocious. She could read at three and had read the Bible through eight times before she was 12. Although for a time Catherine attended a school directed by a friend of her mother, much of her education took place at home. A sickly child with a vivid imagination, she believed that God might throw her into hell if she played with her dolls on a Sunday. She was very compassionate particularly toward the poor and needy.

At 16 and after a time of torment about her state of soul she received assurance of salvation through the lines of a hymn by Charles Wesley:

My God I am Thine, what a comfort divine!  
What a blessing to know that Jesus is mine!

Following his apprenticeship as a pawnbroker William Booth was unemployed for a year. He would have understood the politics of indignation and desires to improve the material conditions of the poor. He kept busy with preaching and other church activities but desperately needed employment in order to support his widowed mother and his two sisters

Eventually he went to London for work and managed to get employment in pawn broking, but his heart was not in it. Evangelism drew him. He considered travelling to Australia as a chaplain on a convict ship and it is interesting to wonder how his life might have turned out had he done that. Providentially, his preaching attracted the attention of a wealthy boot manufacturer, Edward Harris Rabbits, who suggested that he should give himself full-time to evangelism and offered to fund him at a pound a week for three months. Even more importantly, he introduced William to Catherine.

William was invited to a meeting organized by the Methodist Reformers. Catherine was there too but didn't feel well enough to stay to the end. William was asked to take her home in a cab which apparently did wonders for her health! Animated conversation in the cab continued until they got to the Mumford home. Thereafter they met nearly every day until after a few weeks they knelt together in prayer and pledged themselves to each other and to God.

Even before she met William Catherine had written down her requirements concerning the man she would marry. Firstly, his religious views had to coincide with her own. Secondly, he had to be a man of sense for she wouldn't respect a fool or one much weaker mentally than herself. Thirdly, she was emphatic about his being accepting of the position of women as God intended it to be. Fourthly, he had to be a total abstainer. At the time William was inclined to take a port or a brandy but Catherine quickly put him right on that point!

The love letters exchanged during their courtship were unique. There was an unusual mixture of passionate endearments, practical advice and theological



exchange. Catherine was certainly intent on helping William realize his full potential. She wrote, "God is glorified in the full consecration of what we have...All we have is all he wants...Be not anxious that you have not as much talent as this man or that but only to have what you have fully sanctified". Wise words!

Catherine was a natural student but William was not. He was undecided as to what should be his denominational allegiance but eventually he undertook studies under Dr. William Cooke and entered the ministry of the Methodist New Connection Church engaging in notably successful circuit ministry and in the conducting of very successful evangelistic campaigns.

In 1855 William and Catherine were married in the Congregational Stockwell New Chapel where apart from the officiating minister only two others were present as witnesses – William's sister Emma and Catherine's father. The event was a hinge on which swung a huge door of complementary ministry.

In 1861 the Conference of the New Connection denomination, understandably perhaps, decided that it could not go along with William's desire to engage in revival campaigns rather than being confined to a particular district. From the gallery Catherine called 'Never!' A resignation was submitted and the young couple stepped on an unknown way.

Most church pulpits were closed to them but regardless they conducted campaigns in Cornwall, Wales and elsewhere and were a very effective 'duo'. Catherine came out as a preacher in her own right – something very unusual for a woman at the time, She was able to draw great crowds and later there were business men who would have erected a church building comparable to the huge Spurgeon's Tabernacle in London if she would become the minister.

She refused the offer feeling that she should support her husband in ministry and for thirty years, she not only defied convention by preaching but bore eight children and adopted a ninth. She published many books and pamphlets and helped in the formation of the Christian Mission and later The Salvation Army. Unlike all her children she never had a military style rank. She was simply known as the Army mother.

In the village of Ninfield in Sussex, England I photographed outside a Methodist Church where once stood a Christian Mission Station a plaque dated 1871. It declared that the stone was laid by Mrs Booth assisted by the Rev. William Booth co-founders of The Christian Mission. So her role as a founder is set in stone!