

JOURNAL OF AGGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY

JAC Online

Issue 74, August - September 2011

Copyright © 2011 Journal of Aggressive Christianity

In This Issue

JOURNAL OF AGGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY

Issue 74, August - September 2011

Editorial Introduction page 3

Major Stephen Court

Accountability and Ethnicity in a Religious Setting page 4

Vassili Joannides

Fatalist Rant page 5

Major Danielle Strickland

We Preach page 8

Lieut.-Colonel Richard Munn

Lame Offerings page 12

Captain Michael Ramsay

A Holy Mission: Mission in Social Holiness page 17

Lieutenant Xander Coleman

Playing at Army page 25

Commissioner Wesley Harris

Songs of Holiness – Part 4 page 26

Major Melvyn Jones

Trinity: Unity Without Conformity page 28

Cadet Dawn Marie Paulson

Blood and Fire Under Fire page 32

Major Stephen Court

Editorial Introduction

by Major Stephen Court

Welcome to JAC74. The 74th edition of Journal of Aggressive Christianity comes with the usual endorsements and recommendations for application of contents for provocation, stimulation, and inspiration for the salvation war on your front.

JAC breaks new ground in this issue, with our first multilingual contribution. This is a doctoral thesis from Universite Paris Dauphine by Vassili Joannides called 'Accountability And Ethnicity In A Religious Setting: The Salvation Army In France, Switzerland, The United Kingdom And Sweden.' His testimony is included in the thesis. It is an insightful and detailed study into the practice of Salvationism in those varied theatres of war. His analysis measures actions of Salvationists against the articles of war covenant in a manner that may prove convicting to Salvationist readers, both English and French.

Canadian Major Danielle Strickland goes on a 'Fatalist Rant', bluntly attacking creeping heresies that have worked their way into Christian practice and vocabulary.

'We Preach' is not only the name of ICO principal Lieut-Colonel Richard Munn's commencement address to the Ambassadors of Holiness in the USA Western Territory. It is the point in his preach that the hair rises on the back of your neck. As least it did when we listened to it live last month in California.

Canadian Captain Michael Ramsay, the Army's resident covenant expert, teaches about 'Lame Offerings' in Malachi 1:8. Dig in, and if it whets your appetite, read his past contributions to JAC or his book, Praise The Lord For Covenants.

'A Holy Mission: Mission as Social Holiness' is UK Lieutenant Xander Coleman's take on reconciling practical breaches in Salvo praxis and infusing service with holy zeal.

From Australia comes Welsh Commissioner Wesley Harris's stab at 'Playing At Army'. He reminds us to keep the Saviour central in The Salvation Army.

Moving the Holy Spirit away from holiness? That is the scenario British Major Melvyn Jones addresses in part four of his five part series on Songs of Holiness. You'll enjoy it.

American Cadet Dawn Marie Paulson celebrates the Trinity in 'Unity Without Uniformity', a helpful piece that aims to explain that aspect of the Godhead.

Finally, 'Blood and Fire Under Fire' exposes attack under which The Salvation Army is suffering and suggests a counter-attack to win the edge.

As usual, read it prayerfully, share it liberally, apply it zealously. And if there isn't enough to keep you engaged for the full two months, either read the 73 previous issues in the archives or pray up a submission for the next issue.

Stay close to Jesus. Much grace.

Accountability and Ethnicity in a Religious Setting

by Vassili Joannides

This is a doctoral thesis from Universite Paris Dauphine by Vassili Joannides called 'Accountability And Ethnicity In A Religious Setting: The Salvation Army In France, Switzerland, The United Kingdom And Sweden.' His testimony is included in the thesis. It is an insightful and detailed study into the practice of Salvationism in those varied theatres of war. His analysis measures actions of Salvationists against the articles of war covenant in a manner that may prove convicting to Salvationist readers, both English and French.

Aims of the dissertation

The topic of the dissertation is ***Accountability and ethnicity in a religious setting: the Salvation Army in France, in Switzerland, in the United Kingdom and in Sweden***. In fact, given the intrinsic tensions between the three terms of the topic, it purports to address ***how everyday (religious) conduct reflects the influences of ethnicity on accountability practices***. In addition, the dissertation aims at framing accountability. Therefore, its core is located in the interplay between religious doctrines, religious conduct and accountability practices. The worldwide scattering of God's people suggests that conduct and practices might vary. To some extent, this can inform on human nature, which is not the central concern of this doctoral research.

>> download the complete thesis in PDF file named 'JAC 74b – Thesis'

Fatalist Rant

by Major Danielle Strickland

My rant, I hope, if God wills it and I deserve it.

There is a saying in my family, 'luck is for pagans'. My nine year-old son grew up saying it and it strikes us all as hilarious most of the time – awkward at some others. The most striking thing about his response is in realizing how much we use the term. It seems superstition laced with fatalism is running rampant in the world – even in the Christian community.

I was speaking to a lovely Christian woman the other day who said in response to some trying circumstance, 'oh well, whatever will be, will be.' I thought really? That's the best we've got?

The other string of fatalism that runs rampant and I'm getting a little sick of hearing is the idea that God wanted us to go through every difficult situation for some cosmic reckoning. I was speaking to a recovering drug addict the other day who has been horribly abused by nearly every male figure in her life etc... she said she just knows that God allowed it all to happen for a reason. Really?? God allowed her to be abused for a reason? What reason would God have to allow one of His children to be abused? Now, don't get me wrong. I believe with my whole heart that God will USE absolutely everything, even things the enemy intended for our death – and redeem it all for His glory. But God never allows horrible things to happen for some kind of divine reason. Horrible things happen to us for many reasons. Among them are sin, death, evil, the enemy who seeks to kill, steal and destroy... not to mention the natural bent of the universe towards injustice since sin bent its direction. Life isn't fair – but that is never how God intended it to be. And to be honest, I'm getting tired of fatalism, and superstition and theology akin to Buddhism and Hinduism – with hints of Karma slinking into my Christian faith. So I want to state some things bluntly – just to set the record straight.

1. Luck is for pagans. This is the truth. Pagans are simply the thing people are when they worship things other than the one true living God – Jesus. Paganism is when people put all their faith into things to save them. It's hoping a rabbits foot will bring you luck, or if you throw salt over your shoulder it will protect your family, or if you get your baby 'christened' they will go to heaven, or well, you get the idea. It's lucky shmucky and it has nothing to do with a living faith in a living God who directs my path and lights my every way.

2. 'Whatever will be' is not a Christian philosophy, it's not even the best song. One of the most exciting things about the Christian faith is the idea that God invites us into a partnership. This is the thing that keeps me going when times are difficult. God invites me to partner with Him in bringing redemption to the whole earth. That's my calling and my job – to co-operate with God in the bringing about of God's Kingdom come. Fatalism is not a luxury we can afford. And by 'we' I mean the entire human race.

Enslaved women and children cannot wait on the whim of fatalism anymore than someone who hasn't even heard there are options out of their superstitious laced life.

3. U2 has a song called Grace. One of my favourite lines in it is this, 'she's outside of Karma'. It's a small line but a big idea – the circle of payback that goes round and round and fills the world with a fatalism that prevents any change (let alone justice) from going anywhere is broken by a thing called Grace. Now the most radical notion of Karma is in the caste system in India – which so many people have challenged and suggested is an evil core of identity that keeps the injustice cycle of so called 'karma' alive and well for the world's most populous county – even to this day. But the reality is that the caste system is alive and well in every country – it runs through every human heart as a deep temptation to resist Grace's call. I'm amazed by how often we agree with the world that change is impossible and people are inevitably stuck in cycles of abuse and violence – the way people just blindly accept people's lives as 'fate' is well, frankly – frightening.

God stopped the cycle of sin and invites us to be sin-stoppers as well, and this is radical truth. I don't need to wait to see what God might do – I need to jump in and do my best to co-operate with what I know to be His will. Love, life and more life is His will. Wholeness, fullness, peace! Hope, healing, joy and faith-filled lives etc.. I don't have to leave my life, or my future to chance – I can trust God and work with Him in building the best character out of the worst of circumstances in order that He might be seen in me. This is the will of God.

My parents are probably to blame for this kind of short-tempered response to fatalism and all his friends. They are both supposed to be statistics that reflect the worlds worst caste system. Both of them are discarded children – my Dad abandoned and my mother a casualty of addiction and violence – a ward of the court at 10 years old. In adoption circles she is a hard case – the kind people talk about with raised eyebrows... everyone knowing that the chances of her wholeness are almost nil because what life has dealt her is hard – and whatever will be, will be and that means that her luck has run out and that's the way God must have intended it to be.

But my God intervened. Through some obedient folks who defied the 'odds' and took a divine gamble on the down and out – a few good Salvation Army soldiers scoured the poorest communities for kids everyone else had given up on to offer up some good old-fashioned hope and hard work. A kids club for my mother and a junior band for my dad were enough to offer a glimpse of grace. And grace was enough to stop statistical analysis in its tracks. Both of them received this beautiful thing of life anew and went on to live lives that were not only meaningful and abundant in their own family but impacted hundreds of others along the journey. They are still hopelessly committed to grace-filled living. They are a shocking display of my Christian faith – radical and beautiful, and every-time I'm with them I remember what my faith is all about and I long to go around shouting at every street corner in poor neighbourhoods everywhere – God is here. God is here. He loves you. It's not too late. You can change. Life is stronger than death. Love wins. And other things – loud things. You can change the world. You were born good. God loves you. There is a better way. You can change. And even more things.

You are beautiful. You were born to be whole. Healing is possible. Your life has meaning. It's not too late. It's not too late. It's not too late. It's not too late.

I've decided that's not a bad way to spend my life. Offering the good news of radical redemption to people trapped by a fatalism and superstition in a luckless world. Care to join me?

We Preach

by Lieut.-Colonel Richard Munn

The Salvation Army - USA Western Territory
College For Officer Training
Commencement Address to 'Ambassadors of Holiness'
June 10th 2011

Title: 'Ambassadors and Heralds'
Text: 2 Corinthians 4:4 - 16
Aim: To exhort the cadets and encourage the congregation to esteem the ministry of preaching
Proposition: The weekly proclamation of the gospel affords a unique, God-ordained privilege to speak divine life into people. Its simplicity can move mountains.

Introduction

For a number of years it was my pleasant routine, representing The Salvation Army, to regularly attend Rotary Club. I enjoyed the easy-going camaraderie, the ready laughter, the clipped, disciplined programme, and the immediately conferred, tacit chaplain role. For an international organization with the time-tested motto 'Service above Self,' it's easy to see why Rotary and The Salvation Army are perfect together.

We met weekly, sang songs, opened in prayer, raised money, served local and global needs, warmly greeted visitors, elected local officers, paid dues, highlighted a weekly 15 minute speaker and had numerous opportunities to recreate together. It was absolutely expected that you would serve on a committee and that you would recruit new members. During one season we even had weekly testimonies from Rotarians on 'the difference Rotary has made in my life.' For some of my long-standing fellow Rotarians this regimen was a sheer delight, and they exhibited a religious devotion.

At one point in this season, I began to privately wonder what distinguished Rotary Club from the Corps, my community of faith?

Almost as quickly as I asked myself the question it dawned on me – we never 'worshipped' at Rotary; we never had the public reading of scripture. Those two actions, quite possibly brief in duration, distinguish a community of faith from a service club and make all the difference in the world. Remove the weekly rhythm of worship and the public reading of scripture, and the community has simply another service club.

It is into such a cadence that our esteemed cadets are about to march. Indeed, they will be expected set the pace and gauge the tempo. It will on occasion feel like the hotel porter who greeted the incoming guests, 'Follow me, I'm right behind you.' Though,

perhaps more cogent is the image of the servant, the one who goes before to light the way.

A key part of that weekly worship-scripture tandem is preaching. What an electric moment, standing in the pulpit, notes at the ready, fleeting silence, eye-ball to eye-ball with the assembly of the saints.

Frederick Beuchner uses the picture of a casino:

“In the front pews the old ladies turn up their hearing aids, and a young lady slips her six year old a Lifesaver and a Magic Marker. A college sophomore home for vacation, who is there because he was dragged there, slumps forward with his chin in his hand. The vice-president of a bank, who twice that week has seriously contemplated suicide, places his hymnal in the rack. A pregnant girl feels the life stir inside her. A high-school math teacher, who for twenty years has managed to keep his homosexuality a secret for the most part even from himself, creases his order of service down the center with his thumbnail and tucks it under his knee.... The preacher pulls the little cord that turns on the lectern light and deals out his note cards like a riverboat gambler. The stakes have never been higher.”

Scripture

The tension of the moment is contained in our Corinthian passage. We begin with the ‘god of this age’ who ‘blinds the minds of unbelievers.’ And, we conclude with the ‘God who shines light out of darkness.’

Here are two massive cosmic forces – one which blinds, one which illuminates. And that very same tension is present in the weekly gathering of a congregation. Assembled are people consistently assaulted by the ‘god of this age’ through powerful secular forces that batter away at their imprinted image of God. Ethical compromise, private secrecy, abusive power, benign neglect, erotomania, libertine hedonism ... well, the list could go on. Whether in the corporate board room, the college dorm, the factory floor or the household kitchen, these forces assail. And yet, this stubborn, humble gathering, containing the magnificently disciplined and the momentarily inquisitive, is convinced that ‘divine light’ can indeed illuminate this world. Like Zacchaeus in the tree, the message from the itinerant preacher from Galilee stirs something within. They come. They loiter.

And it’s the little hillock in-between these two mountains, stunningly, that can make all the difference ... ‘we preach.’

We preach! From the pulpits of the ones whose study and training we celebrate today, will soon come forth the very words of life. In those short moments, sometimes eloquent, more often than not less than we would hope for, will come words that crack open dark vaults, and illumine with divine light. Indeed, the image is almost beyond powerful. The very light that blazed into primordial darkness, the empty morass at the

very beginning of time; the holy light, that burst forth creation, is the self-same light that brings a person into new life in Christ.

‘God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.’

It was in such a setting that I came to living faith in Christ. In the relative earthiness of a summer camp staff Sunday morning worship, amidst the stuffy summer heat of a wooden chapel, sitting on a metal folding chair, that I heard the preacher of the day string together a phrase that would topple me into the Kingdom – ‘A life without Christ is life without purpose.’ My cleverly erected defenses collapsed. John Wesley described it, ‘my heart was strangely warmed; Charles Wesley set it song, ‘my chains fell off, I rose went forth and followed thee.’ Martin Luther nailed it – ‘one little word shall fell him.’

And so, this is a plea – to cadet, officer, soldier and church-attender alike - to treasure, nurture and esteem the regular proclamation of the gospel from pulpit, lectern and music stand. Whether with carpeted, stained-glassed, mahogany surroundings; or, as more likely, within linoleum, cinder-block, all-purpose rooms, anticipate with eager expectation the weekly exposition of the word.

It is a double-edged sword that cuts through the murky fog of the week. It is a light that illumines the path ahead. It is a seed that even dormant for eons, can one day burst into life, bearing fruit that remains. It is honey, sweet to the taste and packed with natural goodness. It is bread for the hungry, bread that satisfies. It is a hammer that smashes idols.

Like the unnamed disciples excitedly recalling their walk to Emmaus with the risen Christ, may your congregations say over Sunday dinner: ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he opened the Scriptures to us?’

‘Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction.’ (2 Tim 4:2)

And, may the ‘Lord anoint you to preach good news to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.’ (Is 61:1)

And so beloved, from Alaska to Hawaii; from Arizona to Wyoming, communities of faith and pulpits of all shapes and sizes await you.

“Think yourself empty; read yourself full; write yourself clear; pray yourself keen; then into the pulpit, and let yourself go!”

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:4-6

4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Lame Offerings

by Captain Michael Ramsay

A look at Malachi 1:8

It doesn't pay to try to steal from the Lord. That is what Malachi 1:6-14 is about. Malachi 1:8 is about stealing from God. It reads, "When you offer blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice lame or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the LORD Almighty."

The world at the time of Malachi: We don't have an exact date for the book of Malachi but it was probably written around 430 BCE.[2] Persia was the regional superpower at that time (cf. Ezra-Nehemiah). Persia militarily occupied Palestine and they did grant Judah a somewhat privileged place among the occupied Palestinian nations (cf. Ezra 1:2-4, 6:1-12, 7:11-28; Nehemiah). Persia eventually lost control of Palestine to the Greeks who after conquering it (or 'liberating' it in today's vernacular) traded it among themselves for a century or two – with a brief period of self-governance - before the Romans took over and ruled Judea for a few hundred more years. Before the Persians occupied Palestine, we remember from Scriptures that the Babylonians ruled the area for quite a while (cf. Daniel 1-5, Esther, 2 Chronicles 36). An independent Palestinian state, be it Judean, Israelite, Edomite, Moabite, Phoenician, or whatever is neither in the memory nor in the cards for the future of anyone alive at this time. Judah is firmly embedded in the Persian Empire and it appears that at this time they are for the most part relatively happy to be there (Cf. Daniel 6-11; Esther 8-10; Ezra 1).[3]

The Temple in Jerusalem that was destroyed by the Babylonians had been rebuilt under the Persians and the Levitical High Priest Zerubbabel (Ezra 2). Jewish religious traditions were tolerated and even accepted at the time of Malachi (cf. Ezra 1:2; cf. also Daniel 6-11; Esther 8-10). Dramatic, political things were for the most part nonexistent; national life was uneventful.[4] There were no great revolts. Conquering armies weren't walking back and forth across the ancient land bridge that is Canaan. Their goal of semi-independence and their hope of religious liberty had been realized.[5] Things aren't perfect but things aren't that bad in Judah.

Have you ever noticed that in our own lives when things are going better than they have been that that is when we can tend to drift away from the Lord until He finally relents and lets us suffer the consequences of our actions? And have you noticed that it is not until we suffer these natural and logical consequences from being separated from God that we do actually return to Him (cf. The book of Judges and TSA docs. 9&10)? Malachi knows this and he is delivering the Lord's warning to God's people not to continue down this road of apathy and self-indulgence. The people, sadly, are starting to put themselves before God.[6]

Malachi 1:8: "When you offer blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice lame or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your

governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the LORD Almighty."

We know that, as recorded throughout the Old Testament, people brought sacrifices to the temple priests for them to sacrifice to God on their behalf (cf. Exodus 12:5; Leviticus 1:3, 10, 22:18–25, Deuteronomy 15:21). In Malachi's time people were still giving God their tithes and offerings but they were starting to skimp a little bit and the priests were guilty of letting them get away with it and so they too were responsible for the people's sin. This is serious (Leviticus 22:18–25, Deuteronomy 15:21).

What would happen is that because of ritual, legal, religious requirements, and/or social pressure, the people would be obligated to continue to bring their sacrifices to the Lord but they would skimp a bit. Instead of bringing a healthy animal that they would miss, they would bring sick, crippled or blind animals that they couldn't use anyway. They figured, I imagine, "Well, I can't really sell or use this animal anyway so why not give it to God and the Temple priests; no point in wasting a perfectly good animal that we could sell or otherwise use for ourselves."

It reminds me of the person who has to pay significant parking fines or income tax and then brings bags full of pennies and dumps them all over the office floor. Sure they pay their dues but it does not go over so well – and I believe that it is actually not technically legal to do that either. Or another example is the child who is forced to attend an event that they don't want to attend and so make the whole experience miserable for everyone. Actually I seem to remember doing this myself even as an adult in college. I was required to take a particular course that I really didn't want to take and I fear that I was so distracting that many people wished with me that I wasn't forced to take the class. Yes I did what I was told but there was no blessing in my compromised pseudo-obedience (which is really disobedience) for anybody.

I remember at church group as a teenager, speaking about disregarding the spirit of the law. We would often have these big events where there would be dozens or even more than 100 kids and it would be night and we would be playing a game of flashlight tag. We would be given instructions to try to get from the university to the church first without being spotted by someone and 'tagged' with a flashlight. The people who won would be the ones who got from the university to the church first without having someone shine the flashlight on them. Well, one time myself and my friends who were on the non-flashlight team smuggled in our own flashlights and turned them on as soon as we were out of sight and then kept them on so that the people trying to catch the non-flashlight people by tagging us with their lights assumed that since we had flashlights we were one of them and thus they neglected to tag us and we made it back to the church before anyone else. This brilliant ploy didn't stop us from being disqualified.

Another time playing this game, we car-pooled to the church and we left a friend of mine's car at the church and then after they checked us to make sure that we did not have any flashlights on us, they loaded us all in a bus and brought us to the university. Then, as soon as they said we could start, this time we walked not towards the church -

which was our destination- but we walked two blocks in the opposite direction. Remember, we brought my friend's car to the church. When we walked two blocks in the opposite direction from the church we walked to where we had left my car. We all hopped in a drove to the church. We thought we were pretty smart but this brilliance didn't stop us from being disqualified either. It is the same with the Israelite, the Judean offerings here. Sure they make the sacrifice but the literally lame and blind sacrifices that they offer are not what God wants and these lame sacrifices get them disqualified from the LORD's blessing and not only them but also the priests who accepted their sneaky and corrupted offerings as well (Malachi 1: 6-14; cf. Malachi 3:8-12, Leviticus 1:3, 10, 22:18-25, Deuteronomy 15:21). God was not happy with them.

Malachi 3:8-10 asks:

"Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me.

"But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?'

"In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty...

By not giving their full tithes to the LORD -Malachi 3:10- by giving lame offerings to the LORD -Malachi 1:8- they are robbing him. By not giving our full tithes to the Lord, by giving lame offerings to our Lord, we are robbing him.

Malachi 1:8: "When you offer blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice lame or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the LORD Almighty."

How about us? What are the ways that we commit the sin of Malachi 1:8 of offering blind animals and sacrificing lame or diseased animals? Is there anyway that we rob God? I think so. I think any time that we don't offer God our tithes first before we spend money on ourselves we are doing just that (Malachi 3:8). Malachi 3:9 records that if we do this we are under a curse. I think that when we spend more money on cable television, Dairy Queen, McDonalds, or movies; I think if we spend more money on fast food, recreation, or other self indulgences than we do on God then we are in effect taking the good animal for ourselves and giving the lame animal to Christ.

For those of us that do not tithe at all but rather spend the money first on our own lives, Malachi has a question for us. He asks, 'would we do this to the government (Malachi 1:8)?' If Revenue Canada asked us to pay XYZ dollars in income tax would we say, 'okay but only if I have enough money left after I make my mortgage payment, pay for my kid to play soccer, and have an ice-cream cone at the DQ, then and only if I have the left over money will I pay my taxes'. It doesn't work that way. Do you think that Revenue Canada would go for that...No! If the government asks for our money we pay them what we owe them so why do some of us sometimes cheat God by only giving him our leftovers, our lame animals. Is it because we don't care about paying our dues to God as much as we care about paying our dues to the government? Is that why we pay

our taxes more religiously than our tithes? Do we really love politicians that much more than we love God? I hope not. If you are waiting for an elected official to save you from anything, I'm afraid you'll have a long wait. They are not messiahs. They are not saviours.

But maybe there are other reasons why we withhold God's offerings from Him. If loving or fearing the government more than God isn't why some of us can be tempted not to FIRST offer our time and money to God, do we spend it on other items before we spend it on God because we don't trust God? Is that why we can be tempted not to offer Him our first fruits? Do we not trust God to take care of our needs? Malachi 3:10-11 records, "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse...[don't withhold any of it!] Test me in this,' says the LORD Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,' says the LORD Almighty." God will provide. We just need to actually trust Him. We just need to actually put our faith in God. He will provide!

Offering God blind and lame sacrifices and not giving Him the tithes and offerings that are due Him is indicative of not putting our faith in Him. Really if we do spend money first on frivolity – or even necessity for that matter – if we do spend money on ourselves before we give our offerings to God then we are declaring that it is we who are our first priority and not God. We have all heard the cliché that if the Lord is not Lord of all than he is not Lord at all. Well, this is true.

The 20th Century poet/songwriter Bob Dylan tells us that no matter who you are
You're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed
You're gonna have to serve somebody,
Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord
But you're gonna have to serve somebody.[7]

And what we do with our time and money, what kind of offering of our time and money that we give to the Lord really does tell who we serve. If we keep the best for ourselves and only give God our lame offerings (of what's left over) then that shows what is the priority in our lives. I am going to leave us all today with this challenge or two, should we choose to accept it. Keep an envelope or a pencil case in your car and every time you go to buy something at McDonalds or a movie; every time you go to spend money on a self indulgence; take that same amount of money and put it in the envelope and bring it to the corps or your church next week over and above your weekly tithe. See if you can do that on top of your regular offerings. At the very least I would ask this of everyone: I challenge each of us to first set aside our money for God - even if we think we can only afford a tithe. Let us first set aside at the very least that 10% and leave the leftovers for ourselves, instead of the other way around.

Captain Michael Ramsay's book, 'Praise The Lord For Covenants', is available from Canadian Supplies and Purchasing and on-line at www.sheepspeak.com

[1]Cf. Joyce G. Baldwin: Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary. Downers Grove, IL : InterVarsity Press, 1972 (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries 28), S. 226

[2] Cf. John Schultz, Commentary to Malachi © 2004 E-sst LLC All Rights Reserved. Published by Bible-Commentaries.com. Available on-line at http://bible-commentaries.com/?page_id=7

[3] It is not that they didn't have problems. They did have problems but they did have some special privileges and they not blame their Persian rulers for the difficulties (Nehemiah 5:14-19). Cf. John H. Tullock and Mark McEntire, 'The Old Testament Story' (Pearson Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, NJ: 1992), 320.

[4] Joyce G. Baldwin: Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary. Downers Grove, IL : InterVarsity Press, 1972 (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries 28), S. 226

[5] Robert L. Alden, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Pradis CD-ROM:Malachi/Introduction to Malachi/Occasion of Malachi, Book Version: 4.0.2

[6] cf. Paul L. Redditt, 'Themes in Haggai -- Zechariah -- Malachi' in Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology 61 no 2 April 2007, p 184-197.

[7] Bob Dylan, 'Gotta Serve Somebody', copyright © 1979 by Special Rider Music.

A Holy Mission: Mission in Social Holiness

by Lieutenant Xander Coleman

It sometimes seems that when we start to talk about the things of God, words fail us. The differences in meaning between technical theological words break down because the fullest meaning of each word is wrapped up in the meaning of others. Often that means that in articulating our belief we grasp at words like ropes of sand, knowing that they are inadequate, yet somehow we are able to navigate through them to get to the heart of who God is and what he is like. This has been my experience with the word 'mission' for some time now. Perhaps this reveals the theological lens through which I interpret the world, but every time I hear about this aspect of mission, or this theme or key to mission, my head screams out, 'is that not just social holiness?!' In exploring the links and overlaps between social holiness and mission, this paper will consider the biblical idea of *shalom* as the 'end result' of mission and the definition of true social holiness.

What is mission?

David Bosch, that eminent missiologist, concedes that 'ultimately, mission remains undefinable'.¹ That notwithstanding, he argues that Christianity is inherently missional,² because God is inherently missional.³ God's mission (*missio Dei*) is 'God's self-revelation as the One who loves the world, God's involvement in and with the world, the nature and activity of God, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church is privileged to participate'.⁴ This definition is almost too broad to be useful, that mission is anything that God is doing in the world that the church may or may not be involved with. The role of the church, as the community of God's people, in God's mission is perhaps easier to nail down. One understanding of the church's mission is 'to give visible evidence of the kingdom and its ethics within its own community and in its ministry to the world'⁵. Here, the church exists to make the kingdom of God known – to establish the reign of God – in the world and, interestingly, 'within its own community'. This points to the church not as a static organisation but as an organism in the process of becoming. In that regard, it might be argued, even discipleship of Christians within the church towards holiness of life is one aspect of mission. And so we come to a point where the definition of mission is so broad that everything is 'mission', and the word loses its usefulness in communicating. Chilcote is perhaps a little more helpful in offering that 'mission, on its most basic level, is nothing more or less than offering Christ to others through concrete actions'.⁶ There is of course the tension between evangelistic actions of mission, which seek to introduce people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, and ministries of justice and compassion, which seek to alleviate suffering and meet human need in a display and foretaste of the kingdom. Bosch warns against separating 'the spiritual or personal sphere from the material and

1 Bosch, 1992: 9

2 Ibid: 9

3 Ibid: 10

4 Ibid: 10

5 Assemblies of God Brussels Statement (AOGBS), 1999: 115

6 Chilcote, 2011,

the social' in missional activity.⁷ People are whole, and a whole-person or holistic approach to mission needs to be taken. Both aspects of mission arise out of God's love for humanity in general and individuals in particular, because 'love is the law of the kingdom of God'.⁸ John 3:16 denotes the source of mission as God's love for the world through Jesus Christ. It is this same love injected by the church into the world through concrete acts which constitutes mission.

The end result of mission: *Shalom*

If missional activity is a signpost to the kingdom of God, then that kingdom is the end result of mission. It is very infrequently that missiologists will discuss what the end result of mission is – what mission hope ultimately to achieve – and how the church will know when she gets there. This may be largely due to differing eschatological perspectives, and it is beyond the scope of this essay to explore the links between eschatology and mission. Nevertheless it maybe helpful to have an image of what the kingdom of God – for which we work and pray and watch – looks like. I argue that the Old Testament picture of *shalom* is such an image, illustrating what the kingdom of God is like. *Shalom* is translated in most English bibles as 'peace', which is accurate enough, but the Hebrew understanding of that word goes far deeper than the English word 'peace' gives it credit for. Brueggemann argues that *shalom* embraces ideas of 'love, loyalty, truth, grace, salvation, justice, blessing, righteousness' and resists 'tendencies to division, hostility, fear, drivenness, and misery'.⁹ For Brueggemann, '*shalom* is the substance of the biblical vision of one community embracing all creation,' referring to 'all those resources and factors which make communal harmony joyous and effective'.¹⁰

This beautiful Hebrew word (from a verb “to bring to completeness”, “to make whole”) speaks of a totally integrated life with health of body, heart and mind, attuned to nature, open to others, in joy with God; of sharing, mutuality and love; of justice, freedom, interdependence, reciprocity. (Punton, 1975)

Shalom is, quite literally, life in fullness – the abundant life which Jesus promises in John 10:10. Thus, if interpreted messianically, the prophecy in Isaiah 9 takes on a strong missional flavour: 'Of the increase of his government (reign) and peace (*shalom*, fullness) there will be no end' (Isaiah 9:7, TNIV). In that short sentence, God's reign and *shalom* are inaugurated by Jesus and established in ever-increasing measure. *Shalom* is 'the goal of His mission'.¹¹

As well as being intrinsically linked to the aim of mission, Chilcote writes of an 'understanding of *social holiness* as our calling to be “servants of *shalom* in the world”'.¹² In the Old Testament, the aim of the law was that the holiness of the community of Israel would lead to the experience of *shalom*. Israel was to be different

7 Bosch, 1992: 10
 8 AOGBS, 1999: 115
 9 Brueggemann, 1990: 16
 10 Ibid: 16
 11 Punton, 1975
 12 Chilcote, 2011 (emphasis mine)

from the nations surrounding it, exhibiting the reign of YHWH. The entire thrust of the Old Testament, argues Christopher Wright, is a message about 'social and economic justice, about personal and political integrity, about practical compassion for the needy', and there is no biblical evidence that this thrust is 'in any sense provisional or dispensable' under the New Covenant.¹³ Holiness of life under the Old Covenant led to *shalom*, but Mike Riddell suggests that 'there is a qualitative change in the concept of holiness from the Old Testament to the New.'¹⁴ This seems to come from a two-dimensional understanding of Old Testament holiness as ritualistic and removed from relational accountability. Yet, argues Wright, 'Jesus endorsed the moral principles of the Old Testament and thereby the Scripture-based missional priorities of God's people'.¹⁵ Chilcote argues, 'Jesus' mission was characterized by healing those who were sick, liberating those who were oppressed, empowering those who stood on the margins of life, and caring for the poor. In all of these he incarnated *shalom*, God's vision of peace, justice, and well-being for all'.¹⁶ Ultimately, *shalom* speaks of a community exercising love towards one another. In commanding his disciples to 'love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind' and to 'love your neighbour as yourself' (Matthew 22:37, 39, NRSV) Jesus stipulated the conditions of the reign of God and imparted how his *shalom* could be established. This greatest of commandments - love for God and love for neighbour – forms the sum and substance of what holiness is. The social part of that – love for neighbour – is what is referred to as social holiness.

Social Holiness

'The church has for much of its history accepted uncritically the separatist approach to holiness', accuses Riddell in a challenge to traditional holiness teaching.¹⁷ This statement is simply untrue – it has been the pietist and holiness movements over the last four centuries that have been at the vanguard of holistic missional engagement with the poor, as I will demonstrate below. Riddell is correct in stating that 'separation and mission are not easily compatible',¹⁸ but his claim that holiness thinking is obsessed with purity and separateness and therefore detrimental to mission is inaccurate. He reduces the rich theology of those movements to this statement: 'When followers of Christ regard daily life as a minefield which threatens their purity, it is only to be suspected that they will be fearful and recalcitrant in their dealings with "outsiders"'.¹⁹ Rather than legalistically pursuing external righteousness and avoiding contamination from 'sinners', as Riddell portrays holiness to be, holiness as expressed by John Wesley is described as 'perfect love'.²⁰ There has been a great missional thrust of the holiness movement which was motivated by love for neighbour. Though misguided in setting up such a straw-man argument against traditional holiness teaching, Riddell nevertheless

13 Wright, 2006: 305

14 Riddell, 1998: 73

15 Wright, 2006: 306

16 Chilcote, 2011

17 Riddell, 1998: 74

18 Ibid, 1998: 74

19 Ibid: 77

20 Maddox, 2001: 32

correctly concludes that 'True holiness will not keep us from the world, but drive us into it in faith'.²¹

This engagement rather than separation is what Wesley referred to as 'social holiness'. Wesley famously wrote, 'the gospel of Christ known no religion but social; no holiness but social holiness'.²² In context, Wesley was railing against the separatist brand of 'holiness' that Riddell lambasted. 'To Wesley, "Holy solitaries" were no more likely to exist than holy adulterers'.²³ Holiness is perfect love, and love must be expressed in the context of community. 'While the original meaning had to do more with the importance of accountability groups,' contemporary interpretations have 'developed to do with ministries of social justice and works of mercy'.²⁴ While personal holiness was an essential experience for every believer, for Wesley the purpose of that personal holiness was a social holiness that would transform the world and ring in God's reign. American holiness movement leader Phoebe Palmer insisted that 'holiness made one a servant',²⁵ and there is a clear link in holiness teaching between holiness and mission. In the current Salvation Army Song Book, under the heading, 'The life of holiness' is found the subsection 'Consecration and service'.²⁶ These two ideas – dedicating one's life to God unto holiness and serving him as an agent of mission in his world – are inseparable in the sung theology of a holiness movement that has consistently sought to deliver holistic mission throughout its history. The chorus of a classic Salvationist prays,
*For thy mission make me holy,
 For thy glory make me thine,
 Sanctify each moment fully,
 Fill my life with love divine.* (SASB 463)²⁷

Here, God's mission is empowered by a holiness that endows the seeker with divine love for the world. 'Contrary to the stereotype' perpetuated by the likes of Riddell, 'the joy of the holiness life often spilled over into social ministry'.²⁸ Indeed, the experience of 'sanctification by faith freed enormous energies for the service of others'.²⁹

Social Holiness and the Holiness Movement

This 'understanding of social holiness' as a 'calling to be "servants of *shalom* in the world"³⁰ was amply demonstrated in the holiness revivals of the nineteenth century. An example of this holistic approach to mission is Phoebe Palmer, a holiness pioneer who sought to bring renewed emphasis to the doctrine of sanctification in American Methodism. Palmer 'merged the personal piety of a second work of grace...with an

21 Riddell, 1998: 81

22 Drury, 2010

23 Ibid

24 Chilcote, 2011

25 Kostlevy, 2004: 29

26 The Song Book of The Salvation Army, 1986

27 Brindley Boon, The Song Book of The Salvation Army, 1986

28 Kostlevy, 2004: 28

29 White, 2004: 21

30 Chilcote, 2011

active approach to social action'.³¹ If a person need not wait for heaven to experience Christian perfection, she reasoned, why should society need to wait? Could *shalom*, like entire sanctification, not be experienced here and now? 'As holiness missionaries saw individual lives transformed, they believed social transformation was a distinct possibility.'³² Bringing about the sanctification – perfection of love – of both individuals and society became the driving force for holistic mission for Palmer's disciples. Palmer opened a mission house in the Five Points district of New York City, which was a 'frightening warren of brothels, low-grade dives, decayed tenements, street gangs'.³³ It was not enough to parachute in from the middle-class suburbs: holiness missionaries sought to express God's love by engaging incarnationally with the community. 'The mission house at Five Points incarnated God's love by allowing workers to live among the poor and by giving the poor a place to live as they took their first step out of poverty'.³⁴ From the Five Points mission food was distributed to the starving, clothing to the cold and naked, medical supplies to those who could not afford them.³⁵ It also provided employment and transitional accommodation for up to 500 poor women and their children.³⁶ Kostlevy posits that 'the Five Points work became the model for later Protestant institutional missions in American cities,³⁷ and continues to influence how inner-city mission is done around the world. The growth of similar holiness missions in urban centres across North America was such that Drury can assert, 'social action was as much a part of the American holiness movement as was personal holiness'.³⁸ As late as 1924, a homelessness study in San Francisco discovered that almost all services to the homeless that city 'were being provided by holiness-inspired urban ministries, such as the Peniel Mission, the Volunteers of America, and the Salvation Army'.³⁹

Drawing the parallels

Far from separating themselves from society, the holiness movement engaged the world in which they existed to challenge its evils and to love it with the love of God. 'Social holiness, in this sense, therefore, has everything to do with mission'.⁴⁰ In seeking to bring about the perfection of society according to the divine law of love, holiness missionaries demonstrated the kingdom of God and displayed a movement towards *shalom*. 'There is great missional and evangelistic power,' observes Wright, 'in lives shaped by the standards of biblical holiness and goodness'.⁴¹ Indeed, the Assemblies of God Brussels Statement goes further by claiming that holiness of life itself demonstrates the kingdom and is thus mission:

-
- 31 Drury, 2008
 - 32 Kostlevy, 2004: 30
 - 33 Paul Boyer, cited in White, 2004: 20
 - 34 White, 2004: 20
 - 35 Drury, 2008
 - 36 Kostlevy, 2004: 28
 - 37 Ibid: 28
 - 38 Drury, 2008
 - 39 Kostlevy, 2004: 29
 - 40 Chilcote, 2011
 - 41 Wright, 2006: 390

*The transforming impact of this reconciliation on all dimensions of the lives of those who are part of God's redeemed community provides an observable signpost to the reign of God... and is a powerful witness to the world of the redemptive mission of God.*⁴²

Personal holiness, even apart from social holiness (absurd though that concept is) is missional in that the beauty of holiness is provocative, according to the Brussels Statement.

Ultimately, in talking about mission and *shalom* and social holiness we get down to semantics. But semantics are important in conveying attitudes and values and in communicating using helpful language. What the liberal Christian refers to as holistic mission demonstrating and establishing the reign of God, the Old Testament scholar or Messianic Jew would describe as ushering in YHWH's kingdom of *shalom*, and the Christian in the holiness tradition would speak of as perfect love in action bringing about corporate, social holiness. The Salvation Army comes undeniably out of the holiness tradition and for many Salvationists describing mission in terms of agitating for social and societal holiness would be helpful to engage them in a theologically familiar way. Certainly, as a holiness movement we must ensure that we maintain our tradition of a holiness that is not separatist, but engages with the world. 'True holiness will not keep us from the world, but drive us into it in faith'.⁴³ As God enables us to express perfect love for our brothers and sisters through missional holiness, we will see the *shalom* of God hinted at, signposted, revealed and established in our midst. The holiness that we are called to is one that will quite literally win the world for Jesus.

42 AOGBS, 1999: 116

43 Riddell, 1998: 81

Bibliography

- 2007 *New Revised Standard Version Bible Anglicized Edition*. London, HarperCollins
- 2005 *The Holy Bible, Today's New International Version*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan
- Assemblies of God Brussels Statement (AOGBS)
1999 'Pentecostal Mission and Social Concern'. In *Mission as Transformation*. 1999. Eds. Vinay Samuel & Chris Sugden. Oxford: Regnum Books.
112-117
- Bosch, David J.
1992 *Transforming Mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books
- Brueggemann, Walter
1990 *Living Toward a Vision*. New York: United Church Press
- Chilcote, Paul W.
2011 *Servants of Shalom in the World*. [Online]. 2011. Available from: <http://www.gbod.org/site/apps/nlnet/content.aspx?c=nhLRJ2PMKsG&b=6519811&ct=3171011>.
[Accessed 03/06/11]
- Drury, Keith
2010 'There is no holiness but social Holiness'. [Online]. 31st August 2010. Available from: <http://www.drurywriting.com/keith/no%20holiness%20but%20social%20Holiness.htm> [Accessed 16/05/2011]
2008 *The Holiness Movement's Heritage of Social Action*. [Online]. August 2008. Available from: <http://www.drurywriting.com/keith/holiness.movement.social.action.htm> [Accessed 03/06/2011]
- Eli, R. George,
1993 *Social Holiness Defined*. [Online]. 1993. Available from: <http://www.cscoweb.org/sochol.html>. [Accessed 03/06/2011]
- Green, Roger
2010 *Why Social Holiness?*. [Online]. 2010. Available from: <http://e-summit.org/conference/Why-Social-Holiness.html>. [Accessed 03/06/2011]
- Kostlevy, William
2004 'Saving Souls & Bodies'. *Christian History & Biography* 82 (2004): 28-31
- Maddox, Randy L.
2001 'Be Ye Perfect?'. *Christian History* 69 (2001): 32-34
- Oden, Tom
• 'Weeds in the Garden'. *Christian History* 69 (2001): 43-45
- Punton, Jim
1975 *The Community of Shalom: God's Radical Alternative*. [Online]. 1975. Available from: <http://johndavies.org/jimpunton-shalom.pdf>. [Accessed 08/06/2011]
- Riddell, Michael
1998 *Threshold of the Future*. London: SPCK
- Salvation Army, The
1986 *The Song Book of The Salvation Army*. London: The Salvation Army

- White, Charles Edward
2004 'Holiness Fire-Starter'. *Christian History & Biography* 82 (2004): 16-21
- Wright, Christopher J. H.
2006 *The Mission of God*. Downer's Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic

Playing at Army

by Commissioner Wesley Harris

ONE of my earliest memories is of when I was a very small boy marching up and down our back yard beating a tin drum if not to the glory of God then perhaps to the annoyance of the neighbours!

Perhaps 'playing army' was not a bad alternative to a game of cowboys and indians but it had little substance or meaning. It was just a game. Like many others I could have been inoculated with small doses of Salvationism and never caught the real thing but mercifully I came to understand the meaning behind the marching and the significance of the singing and music making. To this day I love many of the trappings of Salvationism but it is the essence of it which has held my heart.

Salvationism is about the Saviour. In all things He must have pre-eminence. All we do is either for him and about him or it may be little more than a game we play – interesting and enjoyable but not 'for real'. The central word in our name indicates what should be central in our message. As William Booth put it, we are a salvation people. We are in the transformation business. That is what we are about. We may pay a lot of attention to what we do but it is important to be sure about why we do it.

In the heart of our Founder there was a magnificent obsession which was communicated to our forebears in the faith and which was marked 'urgent'. There was plenty of fun in their service – holy hilarity was characteristic, but it was no mere game. Eternal destinies were at stake. That is still the case.

Songs of Holiness – Part 4

by Major Melvyn Jones

What word or phrase do you prefer to use: holiness, second blessing, sanctification, full salvation, the victorious Christian life, authentic discipleship, Christ-likeness or some other phrase? Living the life is of course more important than using the right phrases – merely talking the talk – but names and phrases are not unimportant. For instance it was not a straightforward exercise to identify the eleven ever-present holiness songs. This is because the various sections of The Salvation Army Song Book – note that it is called a songbook not a hymn book for historic missional reasons, names are not unimportant – have been adjusted and renamed every time a new edition has been published. Thus for instance the following sections:

- The call to holiness
- Seeking holiness
- Consecration and service
- Holiness enjoyed

Were replaced in the subsequent edition by:

- Challenge
- Consecration and service
- Praise and thanksgiving

I have to say that I am not convinced by that change in classification. However it is an earlier change of classification that I want to bring to your attention. At one stage the sub-section entitled “The Holy Spirit” was included within the holiness section. This sub-section was very understandably moved out of the holiness section and was placed more prominently and for good Trinitarian reasons after sections entitled “God” and “The Lord Jesus Christ”. I was initially amused by the thought of the Holy Spirit being moved away from holiness! However this quirk of hymnology presents us with a serious issue: the danger of holiness without the Holy Spirit. The saintly Samuel Logan Brengle was something of a prophet as well as a teacher of holiness. Listen to what he says about this danger. *Brengle responded prophetically to the growing trend within the Army of the day to confuse consecration and sanctification. “J. N. Parker of Chicago has written to me, calling my attention afresh to the fact that so many of our people in their teaching substitute consecration for sanctification”*⁴⁴ This thought is developed by Brengle in a chapter of his book “Helps to Holiness” – entitled “Sanctification versus Consecration”. Referring to a woman with whom he had a discussion he states, *“She wanted to rob religion of its supernatural element and rest in her own works.”* Or to paraphrase Brengle if I may: She wanted to move the Holy Spirit away from holiness.

The Salvation Army is an activist form of Christianity. We are continually busy doing good works. That is part of our DNA and it is a God-given quality that we should carefully guard. However there is always the danger that a strength can become a

⁴⁴ * ‘Sanctified Sanity’ by D. Rightmore 45:120
Quoting the words of Samuel L. Brengle

threat if it is not held in balance. Stage one of altar theology is important but it is not sufficient of itself. Yes we bring everything to the altar, but we do not – we cannot – make ourselves holy. Consecration is not sanctification. The Holy Spirit can never be moved away from true holiness. Our part has to be balanced by God's immeasurably greater part. We bring our few loaves and fishes but God blesses it and transforms our offering.

*My all is on the altar,
I'm waiting for the fire;
Waiting, waiting, waiting,
I'm waiting for the fire.*

Trinity: Unity Without Conformity

by Cadet Dawn Marie Paulson

Augustine said, “Try to explain it [the Trinity], and you’ll lose your mind; but try to deny it, and you’ll lose your soul” (Erickson 342). Over time, many have sought to understand and try to explain the Trinity. How the three parts (tri-) can be one (-unity) without being separate *and* without being the same, has boggled many good minds. People have compared it to a peanut M&M, to an apple (core, flesh, skin), to the roles a person may have as father, husband, and son—or the ever-famous water, ice, steam analogy. Though each of these seeks to somehow help people understand the Trinitarian nature of the Godhead, each one falls short in some way or another. The third doctrine of The Salvation Army deals with one of the essential beliefs of the Christian faith, stating, “We believe that there are three persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, undivided in essence and co-equal in power and glory” (*The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine* XV). This belief both confirms the plurality *and* the oneness of the Godhead. Thus, the tri-unity of the Godhead affirms the *unity* of the three persons without assuming or concluding *uniformity*.

Throughout Scripture, there is no explicit mention of the Trinity—it is not a word that exists within the Bible, but rather, is a concept derived from Scripture as God reveals Himself to man. From Genesis to Revelation, the three persons of the Godhead can be seen. For instance, Genesis one contains the account of the creation of the world, and in it, readers can see each person of the Godhead at work. God *spoke*— and it was so. Generally one of the first functions or roles people think of when they think of God is Him as Creator. Genesis 1:1 reads, “In the *beginning*,” which is the same verbiage as John 1:1, which reads, “*In the beginning was the Word [Jesus] and the Word was with God and the Word was God*” (*The Nelson Study Bible* NKJV). Furthermore, Paul, in his letter to the Colossians writes that Jesus is “*the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth...all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist*” (Col. 1:16-17). So though God the Father is predominantly thought of as Creator, it is obvious from Scripture that Christ was intimately involved in creation with the Father. As the creation account continues in Genesis one, it is revealed how the Spirit was at work: “*And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters*” (Gen. 1:2b). As the story of the Old Testament unraveled, God was revealing Himself little by little to the Israelites, beginning with the creation account. His self-revelation culminated in the incarnation of Jesus, which ultimately brought revelation of the plurality of the Godhead, three persons in one (Olyott 27).

Looking further into the creation account, the plurality of God and the oneness of God can be understood in the phrase “*God created*” found in verse one of Genesis one. The Hebrew word used for God is *Elohim*, which is the plural form of God (which, in its singular form would simply be *El*). This form of God is referred to as the ‘plural of majesty’ or the ‘plural of intensity,’ and can be translated to mean the ‘fullness of deity’ or ‘God—very God’ (Radmacher 4). This understanding is important to the discussion of the Trinity because the plurality of God is inherent even within the name God uses to

refer to Himself. However, this plurality is not to be understood as God being more than one, such as the ordinary plural god(s). Rather, the oneness is intrinsic in the plurality of *Elohim*. This is evidenced in multiple Scripture passages, such as Genesis 1:27, which reads, "Let *us* make man in *our* image (italics mine), and in Genesis 3:22 when God says, "*Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil,*" and again, in Genesis 11:7, "*Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language.*" In each of these instances, God speaks of Himself in the plural, but the Hebrew verbiage is singular, thus speaking to the unity of the Godhead. Jesus also makes reference to the unity of the Godhead, as He commissions the disciples—"Go, therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:18-20). The Greek word used for name is in its singular form, thus pointing to the unity of the Trinity. There are many other similar instances of this recorded in Scripture, but referring back again to the creation account, the very next word—*Elohim* created—is in the singular form. So, the 'plural of majesty'—the 'fullness of deity'—*singularly* created *together*—Father, Son, and Spirit. Therefore, the unity of the Trinity can be traced back to God's own name and His activity recorded in the first verse of the Bible.

The Trinity—or *tri-unity*—of the Godhead asserts that the God who is three persons is one God, as has been previously established. Beyond the inherent nature of this concept in the use of *Elohim*, are God's own claims to oneness within Scripture. In Deuteronomy 6:4, it is written, "*Hear O Israel the Lord our God is One...*" Here is recorded what is now known as the *Shema* and is still recited by devout Jews to this day. Not only does this verse affirm that God is the One and only God, but it also affirms that He *is* one. This verse testifies that "God is one in His essential being or constitutional nature" (Olyott 22). This verse further implies that the essence, being, or substance (often used interchangeably) are one (Olyott 23). *This* is the unity referred to in the third doctrine of The Salvation Army and in the concept of the Trinity. Furthermore, the whole of Scripture *assumes* that there is only one true God, through explicit statements such as the *Shema*, as well as implicitly, through laws against idolatry, for example (Vander Pol 30). God makes it very clear that there are to be no other gods—that His followers must be monotheistic—as evidenced in the first of the Ten Commandments that He gives the Israelites (Ex. 20:3). The oneness of God thus affirms Christianity as a monotheistic religion, an opposing view to those who lack understanding of the unity of the Trinity, and therefore conclude that Christianity is tri-theistic or polytheistic. God's self-revelation in Scripture supports monotheism and the belief that He is one, stated both explicitly and implicitly throughout the Biblical text. Therefore, it can be concluded that the concept of the Trinity must be comprehended within this understanding, such that the unity of God is not forsaken.

A further component of the aforementioned discussion on the unity of God's essence or being, must also be connected to a discussion on the divinity of God. Because the three persons of the Trinity are unified, it implies that each person must then be fully divine. They are all God; they are one; they are divine. This belief is essential to Christian doctrine. Therefore, because of this unity of essence, and because of the fact that each is divinely God, it can be concluded then, that they are each equal to the others. Thus, a

discussion on the unity of the Godhead must be closely linked with an understanding of the equality within the Godhead. For example, Jesus is not subordinate to the Father, nor is the Holy Spirit subordinate to Jesus, but rather, their relationship is such that they each function in their roles in harmony with one another. This diversity in role and function leads to a deeper understanding that the unity of God does not mean that there is uniformity in the Godhead.

In a discussion on the unity of the Trinity, one cannot assume or conclude uniformity, but, conversely, one must comprehend that there is diversity within the Godhead. There is one God, yet there exists a plurality of persons within the Godhead, as has been previously discussed (Olyott 24). The Oneness of God does not negate the three-ness of God. Within this *oneness* then, there are still three distinct persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Their unity is found in their aforementioned identical essence and equality in divinity, meanwhile their diversity is grounded in their roles and functions, as well as their relationship to one another. So as to confirm that the unity is without uniformity, it is beneficial to look briefly at the variety of roles and functions that each person of the Godhead has. God the Father is the Creator of the world and all that is in it, as well as being the Overseer and Orchestrator of creation. He is the Sustainer and care-taker of His creation. He is also the Governor over creation and is the ultimate Judge who will judge the world at the end of the age. All of these are part of His role and function as God the Father. Scripture reveals Jesus as also being intimately involved in the creation process and in the preservation of the world, being the One through whom all was made and through whom everything holds together. Jesus came to earth as a man so that He could be mankind's Redeemer and Savior. Therefore, He is the Mediator between God and man, thus creating the bridge by which humans can cross to spend eternity with God, and without whom, mankind would have no way to God. While on earth, He was an example and a teacher. Because of the incarnation, He is often thought of as the relational one with mankind, since it is through Him that mankind has a relationship with the Father, and as such, He is called Friend. Although He has since ascended to be with the Father in heaven, He is still an intercessor for mankind. And prior to His ascension to heaven, He promised that the Holy Spirit would come and dwell in believers. The Holy Spirit, then, is the counselor and comforter, and is the indwelling of God within those who are saved. The Holy Spirit also convicts the hearts of followers of Christ, and is able to cleanse and purify human hearts. The role and function of each person in the Godhead is vital—so even though the unity of the Godhead is critical to one's understanding of God, it is equally critical to understand that it is not unity with uniformity. On the contrary, the unity still exists despite the variety and diversity of the roles that each person of the Godhead has.

The doctrine of the Trinity is essential to Christian belief. In understanding this doctrine, one must begin to grasp the tri-unity of the Godhead—that there are *three* persons that make up *one* God. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—unified in essence and being, yet without uniformity in role and function. Scripture is rampant with examples of God's own testimony to Himself as One and Himself as three—in perfect harmony to form the One.

- Erickson, Millard J. *God in Three Persons: A Contemporary Interpretation of the Trinity*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995. Print.
- The Nelson Study Bible*. Earl D. Radmacher, gen.ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997. Print.
- Olyott, Stuart. *The Three are One*. Darlington (ENG): Evangelical Press, 1979. Print.
- The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine*. London: Salvation Books, 2010. Print.
- Thoennes, Erik. *The Doctrine of the Trinity*. Class lecture notes, 2003. Print.
- Toon, Peter. *Our Triune God: A Biblical Portrayal of the Trinity*. Wheaton: Victor Books, 1996. Print.
- Torrance, Thomas F. *The Christian Doctrine of God, One Being Three Persons*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd, 1996. Print.
- Vander Pol, Allen. *God in Three Persons: Biblical Testimony to the Trinity*. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing Company, 2001. Print.

Blood and Fire Under Fire

by Major Stephen Court

We are under attack. It has been insidious and effective. As is the devil's strategy, it is not completely false; in fact, it is mostly good. As Commissioner Brengle used to say, "the good is often the enemy of the best."

From our early days the enemy has been attacking, but in recent generations he has shifted tactics and is unraveling the fabric of Salvationism through spiritual influences.

Ask yourself the following questions:

What is the last Christian book you have read?

What is the last Christian podcast to which you have listened?

What is the last Christian music album to which you have listened?

What is the last Christian website you've visited?

What is the last Christian TV show you have watched?

What is the last Christian radio show to which have listened?

What is the last Christian blog you have read?

Who is the last Christian leader you quoted when preaching?

Now, recognizing that the answers may differ in Africa/India/Asia (though sources inform me that Christian television is huge in some African countries), the responses from salvationists in the western world will be overwhelmingly non-Salvationist.

Are there any Salvation Army books, any Salvo podcasts, any Salvo CDs, any Salvos websites, and Salvo TV shows, any Salvo radio shows, any Salvo blogs in any of your answers to the questions above?

You probably read and listen to great, edifying Christian media; but that isn't the point. If most of the Christian influence on us is not Salvationist, our Salvationism is in danger of being watered down...

It is true of officers and even moreso in the rest of the soldiery. In some media it will be Rick Warren or Charles Stanley, in others it might be Hillsong or Integrity Music. And even though most of it will be edifying, most of it will contain some theology and advance some mission that is different from Salvationism.

What are the ramifications?

Doctrines 9 and 10 are threatened in the western world. Inundated as we are by Calvinist soteriology many of us inadvertently live under a practical 'once saved, always

saved' delusion. And popular Christian content so emphasizes the necessity of the sinful Christian life that it is difficult to find too many Salvationists who know what Brengle was talking about, let alone experience it.

Our militant episcopalian structure is also under assault. This has resulted in some places in silos of independent 'churches' with nearly exclusively local commitment.

Our vocabulary and nomenclature are growing extinct in some places, overwhelmed by church terminology. Why is that important? Semantics implicitly affects our identity. We are in danger of becoming a poorly-marketed, drab, discount brand of vanilla-flavoured, middle-of-the-road, indistinct and inoffensive (and ineffective?) evangelicalism (wait – not even evangelicalism, as a generation of non-Salvo influence has flattened that sharp edge with liberal universalisms, leaving us with boring, obsolete, and irrelevant protestantism).

Culture? We're about the down and out. We're specialists of the fragile and marginalized. But most of our Christian influence varies from middle class, self-help advice to how to succeed and prosper by following Jesus.

Mission? We're swamped by remnant and rapture eschatology that is more fiction than theology and that dampens zeal to win the world for Jesus.

What are the solutions?

You don't need to throw out all of your John Maxwell tapes and your Bill Hybels books. A complete lack of non-salvo influence leads to unhealthy insulation and isolation. But how about a concerted counter attack with three components?

First, let's develop critical thinking so that application of non-salvo content is more Salvationist adaptation than blind adoption. We don't have to re-invent every wheel out there but we can certainly tweak vehicles for discipleship and evangelism so that they properly reflect our beliefs and convictions. One corps used a new believers' discipleship book that included a section on water baptism. This section provided opportunity to look into what the Bible teaches on baptism – water and Spirit – and how The Salvation Army's position on that issue represents the Biblical record effectively.

Second, let's exploit the various media to disseminate Salvationist theology and mission and identity and culture. Let's strategically publish AND market Salvationist books and CDs. Let's intentionally advertise Salvationist live-streaming and tweets and blogs and websites. Let's promote Salvationist radio and TV initiatives.

This is not an issue of money – there are African Salvationist authors with several titles to their names (they can afford to publish).

This is not an issue of quality – our musicians are very good, our composers gifted, our preaching amongst the best.

This is not an issue of content – we all believe the doctrines and have covenanted our lives away to the cause.

But it hasn't happened by accident. While we applaud and promote various Salvationist advances in some of these areas – Commissioner Knaggs in Twitter; Grant Whitehead in isalvos.com; Fulton Hawk in design; Corey Baudinette in film; TransMission in worship; Samuel Ljungbladh in popular music, Salvo Publications in books; Michael Collins in preaching; USS's Wonderful Words of Life in radio – it isn't nearly enough to turn the tide. We need to lead by example. You've heard of 'garbage in, garbage out'. Well, if we continuously take in quality Salvo content, we will naturally teach it, speak it, illustrate with it, believe it, apply it, experience it. And our soldiers will follow.

Third, let's strengthen the Salvationist system. To paraphrase GK Chesterton, the Orders and Regulations have not been tried and found wanting, they have been found difficult and not tried. Hardcore Junior Soldiers will help us convert and disciple our children. YP Company and Salvo lessons for Sunday School will help us avoid the start of the non-salvo influence. Corps Cadets, particularly the type that is being created in AUS Territory, will keep and train our teens for leadership. The War College, instead of YWAM or a Bible College, will instill within young (and not so young) adults Salvationist DNA. Senior Soldiership will covenant them for life and warfare within The Salvation Army.

Fragmentation isn't complete. This whole thing can be sewn back together. Let's not leave it for another generation. Let's act now.