

JOURNAL OF AGGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY

JAC Online

Issue 76, December 2011 – January 2012

Copyright © 2011 Journal of Aggressive Christianity

In This Issue

JOURNAL OF AGGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY

Issue 76, December 2011 – January 2012

Editorial Introduction *page 3*
Major Stephen Court

JAC Exclusive Interview with General Linda Bond (JAC13)
page 4

In Praise of Enthusiasm *Page 8*
Commissioner Wesley Harris

Say It! Know It Do It! *page 9*
Captain Michael Ramsay

Salvationism Still Works *page 13*
Officer X

Love and Life in Community *page 16*
Captain Mark Braye

The Ammonite Uprising *page 19*
Major Stephen Court

Greed *page 22*
Major Danielle Strickland

Pro-Life or Just Anti-Abortion-On-Demand *page 24*
Major Stephen Court

Editorial Introduction

by Major Stephen Court

Welcome to the 76th edition of Journal of Aggressive Christianity. There is a wide range of content in this issue. We encourage you to share it widely through your networks.

We start with a JAC exclusive interview with General Linda Bond. How did we score that, you ask? Well, it is from JAC13, back when the General was a Colonel. But the questions remain pertinent and some of the answers are even more interesting now that she is the international leader of The Salvation Army.

Commissioner Wesley Harris writes In Praise Of Enthusiasm. In his classic style the Commissioner highlights a wonderful Salvationist trait though winsome exhortation.

Captain Michael Ramsay also exhorts us, in Say It! Know It! Do It!, a breakdown of two key verses in Romans 10. This one is great to share with your friends who are not relying on the Lord Jesus Christ yet for forgiveness and salvation.

While Ramsay explains salvation to us, Officer X shows us how Salvation Works in this stirring testimony of a Junior Soldier's impact on her local school. Read this, be challenged, and share it with all of the junior soldiers and corps cadets that you know.

Captain Mark Braye engages with John's first epistle and Bonhoeffer's Life Together in an article called Love And Life In Community. For those looking to cultivate authentic Christian community in your corps and on your local front these words will help.

The Ammonite Uprising takes a second look at Israel during a difficult period, at the cause of Israel's struggles, the solution, and the effects. There might even be some application for us, today!

During this busy Christmas season, as temptations are ubiquitous, Major Danielle Strickland takes another look a Greed. It is one of the seven deadly sins. And we're equipped by God to conquer it.

Back in JAC4 we carried a piece called Doing The Right Thing, on abortion. You can read it for free in the archives on the front page of JAC. In that same vein is Pro-Life Or Just Anti-Abortion-On-Demand? We expect it will ruffle some feathers.

We accept submissions for consideration at revolution @ mmccxx.net.

May God use these articles to encourage, instruct, inspire, and edify you in the salvation war.

JAC interview with (now) General Linda Bond

How did we score an interview with General Linda Bond, you ask? Well, it is from JAC13, back when the General was a Colonel. But the questions remain pertinent and some of the answers are even more interesting now that she is the international leader of The Salvation Army

JAC: Please tell us a little about your conversion experience.

LB: I don't recall having a dramatic conversion. I was raised in the Army and my earliest memories are of hearing the gospel. It took no "leap of faith" for me to confess my sins and accept Jesus as my Saviour. Those who shared the Good News with me were Sunday school teachers and officers who were credible witnesses.

JAC: Please tell us a little about your experience of holiness.

LB: If I look to a dramatic experience, it would be while I was a cadet in College. This is not the time or place to go into detail, but the Lord came to me in a very clear way and assured me of a deep cleansing. I do have to confess that I have failed Him miserably, but I am convinced that His call to holiness is insistent and every provision through His Son and Holy Spirit has made it possible for me to claim by faith this holy life.

He has all there is of Linda Bond and whether He chooses to grant dramatic encounters in my spiritual journey or requires me to walk by faith alone, then that is His choice. I seek to be like Jesus and be open and responsive to the Holy Spirit.

JAC: What are the greatest challenges of your current appointment?

LB: The greatest challenge is to see every part of my work as His. It is to recognise that He is in charge. It is to take tough decisions when they are not popular. It is to recognise truth even when it comes from sources least expected and respected.

JAC: What books have had the greatest impact on you over the years? Why?

LB: The Bible (It is still my favourite textbook for living and leadership), The General Next to God, Knowing God, The Cross of Christ, The Disciplines of Grace, Songs of Heaven. There are many more but these have either been significant because of a spiritual need or to stretch my mind to take in something of the magnitude of God's grace.

JAC: Who are your heroes? Why?

LB: Commissioners Ed Read & Roy Calvert. These men have modelled a believable holy life and leadership. Our leadership styles are different but I am convinced that one can have their approach to life and leadership sanctified.

JAC: General Catherine Booth went on record, stating, "The great fundamental principle of The Salvation Army is the law of adaptation." This comment has been used by many salvos at many times toward diverse ends. What is the proper understanding of this fundamental principle for us today, in light of tensions between priestly vs. prophetic roles?

LB: In my earlier years, I thought it was necessary to protect and preserve the Army that I had grown up knowing. John Larsson's article in the April 1998 Officer Magazine entitled "Back to the Future" has provided me with the best understanding of what we need to hold on to. It is not the snapshot of the 19th Century Army but rather this flexibility at the essential core to carry out our mission. General Gowans has also been helpful with "save souls, grow saints and serve suffering humanity".

I have personally adopted the UK Vision 2002 Statement and added one line on holiness, "We will be a Spirit-filled, radical growing movement, with a burning desire to lead people to Jesus Christ, lead believers into an experience and expression of holiness, actively serve the community and fight for social justice."

If the above clearly describes our identity and mission, then we must hear the Army Mother out on "adaptation", and in my mind that is the willingness to change in order to get the mission done, not change our essence but change our methods, if in fact they are kept only for preservation and not for advancement.

JAC: What is the most significant part of your ministry today?

LB: The proclamation of the Gospel. I take my covenant very seriously on this matter. I have never allowed my office to interfere with my platform ministry but have trusted the Lord to give me strength to attend to the "business" entrusted to me and keep a rigorous schedule for preaching/teaching. However, I use more than the platform. Personal relationships, correspondence, and even board meetings are also avenues for Kingdom news and values.

JAC: What are your dreams for The Salvation Army?

LB: Perhaps the vision statement above best describes it. I do have "watchman/warrior mentality and therefore I dream of an Army moving forward to claim people for Christ, moving in purity and courageously. I still believe we must be a soul-saving movement. I have great hopes for the reclamation of our Wesleyan doctrine. I also believe the Army will once again find its "voice" and speak with conviction and intelligence on issues that matter to our Lord.

JAC: What is God teaching you these days?

LB: The Lord has been teaching me that He is absolutely trustworthy when it comes to guiding us in the right direction, if only we listen, obey and act with courage. I have been

helped by the words of Jehoshaphat, "We don't know what to do but our eyes are on You", and on Alan Kreider's (Towards Holiness) interpretation of "Be still and know that I am God -Stop fighting and know". He is right I believe that our God has promised to provide for and protect His children. My leadership these days is characterized by my conviction that this is true.

JAC: You are considered one of the Army's great preachers. What are your keys for faithful, bold and compelling preaching?

LB: I don't think of myself as a great preacher. I am unpolished and not a great adherent to the disciplines of sermon-making and presentation. The keys for me are a healthy devotional life, allowing the Scripture to speak and then seeking to understand the principle and translate it for today.

If the Word excites me then I can preach with passion and if the Holy Spirit anoints me, I can speak with power. I generally pray that I will be "fuel for His burning". I don't try to be anyone else; I don't even try to conform to any set standard. If I am faithful in preaching, it is because I tell people what the Bible says, what it means, and what it can mean for us. It first of all meant something to me in order for it to be considered for others. Boldness- This could be a personality trait but it is more than this. I do believe in the Word and if the Spirit has used it to speak to my heart, I don't, find it difficult to speak clearly, with conviction. If I have been a compelling speaker, it is because I maintain eye contact. I preach from outlines. But beyond that, it is because, once again, I have personally been "fired up" and have given myself to the Holy Spirit for His anointing.

JAC: Can you tell us of any memorable preaching you have heard and what made it outstanding?

LB: My favourite preacher is John Eric Akexanader, a Scottish preacher that I heard many years ago at Urbana. He was outstanding in my mind because he preached the Word clearly and cleverly (not in a negative sense). His deep convictions come through in his passion. You never felt he was trying to sell himself or make an impression. He was totally sold out to the Lord and committed to faithful proclamation.

JAC: Please comment on the state of aggressive Christianity in the 21st century. How relevant is primitive salvationism?

LB: In 32 years of officership, I have never known such a sense of the Church desiring to move forward. Prayer is more intense than I have ever known. Our young people are mission- minded in a way that my age group never was. The Church is linking arms, not to submerge their own personalities but to proclaim the gospel in word and deed. This is primitive salvationsim. This is primitive Christianity. The world may appear to be bleak but greatest extremities provide greatest opportunities. I used to say that the Army's greatest days are ahead but I think it was more "wish" than truly belief. I now have hope as I have never had before. There is much cause for optimism. There are still many

salvationists in the "barracks or on the parade square". We need to encourage them to "move out". We are on the march. Its an old chorus but it has profound truths: "The world is need us, Christ is heeding us, comrades let us be true".

In Praise of Enthusiasm

by Commissioner Wesley Harris

IN AN old English cemetery was a chiselled epitaph for a parson which stated that he had been 'vicar of this parish for forty years without showing the least sign of enthusiasm.'

Since the eighteenth century the word 'enthusiasm' has broadened in its meaning from indicating religious frenzy or fanaticism as might be suggested by its literal meaning of being 'possessed by a god'. According to the Oxford dictionary it can also indicate an ardent zeal for a person, a purpose or a cause and without that any cause is likely to be lost.

That is certainly true in relation to evangelism. It is recorded that an article by an atheist prompted the famous cricketer and missionary C .T. Studd to dedicate himself for the spread of the gospel. In part the writer had declared, 'If I firmly believed, as millions say they do, that the knowledge and practice of religion in this life influences destiny in another then religion would mean everything to me. I would cast aside any earthly employments as dross...'

Jesus Christ was the supreme Enthusiast who came into the world to save sinners. His master passion was for the kingdom (or reign) of God in the hearts of men and women and 'apostolic enthusiasm' was a hall mark of the Church he founded. It certainly characterized the early Salvation Army. Our forebears in the faith were imbued by what was called a passion for souls. William Booth was a pace-setter who made a point of personally challenging all and sundry about their need of salvation and his son Bramwell defined enthusiasm as 'love on fire'.

Maintaining enthusiasm may be difficult. Edwin Way Teale wrote, 'The measure of an enthusiast must be taken between interesting events. It is between bites that the lukewarm angler loses heart'. Sometimes enthusiasm can diminish with the passage of years which caused one writer to dismiss it cynically as a 'distemper of youth'. But that need not be the case. I know fellow retirees in whom the flame of enthusiasm burns brightly. It is what keeps them alive!

In 1875 the Army Mother, Catherine Booth, wrote, 'The glorious means and appliances placed at our disposal for the salvation of souls are such as should not fail to waken the grandest enthusiasm. When the lifeboat goes out to the stranded ship and brings some of the shipwrecked crew safe to shore, no one complains of the enthusiasm of the bystanders who perhaps hoist them shoulder high and carry them through the town. I maintain that is right to be enthusiastic when we have such a gospel to preach and such results over which to rejoice'. Amen!

Say It! Know It! Do It! by Captain Michael Ramsay

Romans 10:9: “That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Romans 10:13, “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

These two verses are critical verses in that famous ‘Romans Road to Salvation’ – there are many different versions to Romans Road but these two verses, 9 and 13, seem to be regular stops so I thought that we would visit them now. The periscope has in it a ready-made 3 points:

- 1) Romans 10:9: “That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord’ and
- 2) Believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”
- 3) Romans 10:13, “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

- 1) Confess Jesus as Lord with your mouth. Say it.
- 2) Believe in your heart in His resurrection. Know it.
- 3) Call on the name of the Lord. Do it.

We need to remember, pertaining to Salvation both now and forever, that in order to fully take advantage of the Salvation that God has offered to the whole world as a free gift (Romans 6:23; John 3:16-17), we should: 1) Say it! 2) Know it! And 3) Do it!

1) Say it! Romans 10:9: “...confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord...’

This is important. Whenever I hear this verse I immediately think of Peter, the rock upon which Christ was to build His Church (Matthew 16:13-16; cf. Mark 8:27-29, Luke 9:18-20). We know this story, right? Jesus tells Peter that He is going to use Peter to help build His Church. This is the point where Jesus gives him the name ‘Peter’ as a nickname – that wasn’t his given name; Simon was his given name – Peter means ‘Rock’ or even ‘Rocky’. Simon ‘Rocky-Peter’ here is to be one of Christ’s main ‘go to’ people after Jesus’ resurrection. We remember the story about how Jesus told Rocky-Peter that he would deny Him three times before the cock crows twice. Shortly after Peter’s third denial that he even knows Jesus; the rooster crows and Peter is devastated (Matthew 26:69-75; cf. Mark 14:66-72, Luke 22:55-62, John 18:15-27).

Point #1 about Salvation today: Say it! (Cf. also Luke 21:12–15; 1 Corinthians 12:3; Philippians 2:11; 1 Peter 3:13–16, 21) Simon Peter had his chance to confess Jesus as Lord but he declined it. Now, if the story had ended there it would be sad indeed but John 21:15ff, records Simon Peter’s restoration as Rocky, as Peter.^[1] The Resurrected Lord asks him three times to feed his sheep and he agrees to it.^[2] Near the conclusion of the book of John, Jesus then blows on Peter -and the other disciples- giving him the Holy Spirit (John 20:22). Luke picks up the story of Rocky-Peter in the book of Acts where Rocky-Peter is there at Pentecost, taking the lead as the Holy Spirit -like a starting pistol- sends the disciples and more out to proclaim salvation to the world. In Acts Chapter 2 it is recorded that, after they share the gospel in many different

languages as the Spirit enables them, the Lord adds to their number daily those being saved (cf. also Deuteronomy 30:14; Matthew 10:32, 2 Corinthians 4:13-14; Philippians 2:11). Point 1, Romans 10:9: Say it!

Peter and the disciples say it and many are saved. And just to underscore that Peter did fully recover from his earlier denial, church tradition states that in the end Peter even earned his martyr's crown. He was apparently crucified upside down as he left his life here for heaven to await the resurrection. Point 1: Say it! This brings us to Point 2.

2) Know it! Believe in your heart in His resurrection.

It is very important to proclaim the gospel but that is not the end of it. Speaking is one thing but believing can be quite another. If you have any doubt about that, think about the general reputation (accurate or not) of our elected politicians – speaking is one thing, believing what you say is quite another.

Paul in this section of the Scriptures is really addressing the whole problem of Israel (Romans 9-11; cf. also Deuteronomy 30, Leviticus 18). He is addressing the problem of the Law and their relationship to the Law and their relationship to God. He is very concerned about people who are quite happy to say what needs to be said – the Pharisees, as a group, did believe in the resurrection in general and as a group were quite evangelistic (cf. Acts 23:7-8)! But believing in your heart in Jesus' resurrection is quite a different matter (1 Corinthians 15:17; cf. 2 Corinthians 4:13-14). The Apostle Paul - who was a Pharisee - celebrated the fact that Jesus has been raised from the dead but sadly many Israelites and even many Pharisees did not. It pained Paul that people who were zealous for God's Law were indeed missing out on the benefits of the culmination of that Law: Jesus, the one to whom the Law points (cf. Romans 9:1-5; 10:1-4; Matthew 5:17,18; Luke 16:16; Acts 4:12; Galatians 3:19-24). Salvation is about, Point 1, Saying it, confessing that Jesus is Lord, and it is also about, Point 2, Knowing it, really believing in your heart in the resurrection and in Jesus' resurrection, which is the central part of not only Paul's message but of all of Christianity (Romans 6:9, Romans 9:16; 1 Corinthians 15:17, 20; 2 Corinthians 4:13-14; Ephesians 1:20-23; Philippians 2:9-11; Colossians 3:1-4; Hebrews 2:9; Revelation 1:17-18; cf. Deuteronomy 30:14, Acts 4:12, cf. also Isaiah 28:16).^[3] N.T. Wright tells us, "Almost all early Christians known to us believed that their ultimate hope was the resurrection of the body. There is no spectrum such as in Judaism. Some in Corinth denied the future resurrection (1 Corinthians 15.12), but Paul put them straight; they were most likely reverting to pagan views, not opting for an over-realized Jewish eschatology."^[4] Belief in the resurrection and the resurrection of Christ is central to Christianity.^[5]

To review what we know so far about Romans 10's three points of Salvation:

- 1) Say it! - Confess Jesus as Lord with your mouth.
- 2) Know it! - Believe in your heart in His resurrection.
- 3) Do it! Call on the name of the Lord.

3) Do it! Call on the name of the Lord.

This is important. Saying it is good. Knowing it is better. Doing it is imperative (This fact is also implied in v. 9).^[6] The Scriptures speak about this quite a bit (cf. for ex: Leviticus 18:5 and Deuteronomy 30:11-16, which are cited in vv. 5-8; Luke in Acts 2:16-21 and this passage by Paul are both quoting from Joel 2:32).^[7] I believe that Matthew actually paints this picture vividly. In Chapter 25:31ff is recorded the parable of the sheep and the goats. In that parable you have two groups of nations. Both groups – the sheep and the goats – 1) say and 2) know that Jesus is Lord. But it is only the sheep that 3) do anything about it. As a result, it is only the sheep that are saved. The goats that didn't do anything go off to where there is a weeping and a gnashing of teeth. Matthew 7:21 is quite clear on this matter. It is recorded there that the Lord says "Not everyone who calls me 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven but only he who does the will of my Father in heaven": Say it! Know it! Do it!

We must actually call on the name of the Lord. We have to call on Him. We have to trust him.^[8] This is important. For example, it is one thing for me to confess that I know my wife; it is another thing to believe in my heart the many wonderful things that have been done through her: these are wonderful things but my relationship with Susan only grows when I actually call on her, when I actually spend time with her. I can say she is my wife all I want; I can believe she is my wife all I want; but we only actually have a marriage if I bother to see her, to call on her sometimes. This is important. Christianity isn't some academic pursuit. Christianity isn't some code. Christianity isn't some rules and regulations. Christianity isn't some club. Christianity isn't some principles to live our life by. Christianity is a relationship with the risen Christ. Jesus Christ rose from the grave and He promises that, Romans 10:13 "...everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." He loves us and He wishes that none would perish. Salvation in our text today is as easy as 1, 2, and 3; so, it is my prayer today that every one of us will:

- 1) Say it! - Confess Jesus as Lord with our mouths.
- 2) Know it! - Believe in our hearts in His resurrection.
- 3) Do it! – That we would call upon the name of the Lord.

Psalm 34:8, "Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him." Matthew 11:30: "For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." And blessed is he who comes in the Name of the Lord (Psalm 118:26, Matthew 21:9, Matthew 23:39, Mark 11:9, Luke 13:35, Luke 19:38, John 12:13). Romans 10:9a, say it: confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord. Romans 10:9b, know it: believe in your heart in Jesus' resurrection. And above all else, Romans 10:13, do it: call upon the name of the Lord and then even we will be saved. Let it be.

Notes:

[1] Cf. Captain Michael Ramsay, 'John 21:15-23: We're Back!' Presented to Weston Corps of the Salvation Army, May 2006 and Nipawin Corps of The Salvation Army, 21 February 2009. Available on-line: <http://sheepspeaks.blogspot.com/2009/02/john-2115-23-were-back.html>

[2] Cf. George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, (WBC 36: Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1987), 404-405.

[3] Cf. William Hendricksen, *Exposition of Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, NTC (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic: 1981), 345

[4] Cf. N.T. Wright, 'Jesus' Resurrection and Christian Origins' (Originally published in *Gregorianum*, 2002, 83/4, 615–635). Reproduced by permission of the author on-line at http://www.ntwrightpage.com/Wright_Jesus_Resurrection.htm

[5] Cf. Everett F. Harrison, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Pradis CD-*, ROM:Romans/Exposition of Romans/VI. The Problem of Israel: God's Righteousness Vindicated (9:1-11:36)/D. Israel's Failure to Attain Righteousness Due to Reliance on Works Rather Than Faith (9:30-10:21), Book Version: 4.0.2: Paul's statement in vv. 9, 10 is misunderstood when it is made to support the claim that one cannot be saved unless he makes Jesus the Lord of his life by a personal commitment. Such a commitment is most important; however, in this passage, Paul is speaking of the objective lordship of Christ, which is the very cornerstone for faith, something without which no one could be saved. Intimately connected as it was with the resurrection, which in turn validated the saving death, it proclaimed something that was true no matter whether or not a single soul believed it and built his life on it.

[6] Cf. John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans Vol. II*, NICNT, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans, 1968), 56; John Stott, *Romans: God's Good News for the World*, (Leicester, UK: IV Press: 1994), 283; F. F. Bruce, *Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*. Downers Grove, IL : InterVarsity Press, 1985 (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries 6), S. 201 - Doing it, though not specifically reference (it doesn't need to be because it is referenced a few verses later in v.18), is implied as well in verse 9.

[7] F. F. Bruce, *Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*. Downers Grove, IL : InterVarsity Press, 1985 (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries 6), S. 201: There the statutes and ordinances of God were enjoined on the people so that they might do them and live. Here God says that his commandment 'is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, "Who will go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it *and do it?*" Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who will go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear it *and do it?*" But the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, *so that you can do it.*' (Paul significantly omits the italicized words.) That the doing of the commandment was the way to life in the Deuteronomy context is evident from the words of Moses which follow immediately: 'See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you this day, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his ordinances, then you shall *live ...*' (Deut. 30:15–16).

[8] Cf. John Stott, *Romans: God's Good News for the World*, (Leicester, UK: IV Press: 1994), 285

Captain Michael Ramsay

Swift Current, Saskatchewan and the world for Jesus!

(306) 778 0115

Comics and daily Bible readings: <http://drwas.blogspot.com>

Commentary : <http://renewnetwork.blogspot.com/>

My book, *Praise the Lord for Covenants*, is available from Supplies and Purchasing.

Salvationism Still Works

by Officer X

I love reading of the early Salvation Army and how they empowered ordinary people by sending them out on exciting missions and for some strange reason it worked! Take this example from Railton;

“Let us examine a little more closely the method of the Army’s increase, as illustrated by one of its most recent advances. A couple of young girls, formerly engaged in domestic service, declare themselves to be called to go out and preach the Gospel. For this purpose they place themselves at the disposal of the only religious organization in the world which thinks it right to give them this opportunity, and after careful examination into their character, they are sent off to a foreign country, where they are to raise an Army corps in a certain small town. The building in which they are to gather their congregation is simply a long-disused workshop, where a number of unbacked seats have been placed. There is not a single person in the town who can be regarded as friendly to their mission, and most people consider their appointment as directly opposed to the will of Christ. Yet night after night their humble barracks are crowded with an audience consisting mainly of persons who have never worshipped God before. The meetings are interrupted, and violent scenes sometimes occur. Yet, as is common all over the world, those two officers have raised a corps in a short time.”

Could you imagine sending some young girls to start the work in your community? What would it look like? Who would you send? What would you train them to do? How would they go? Would it work today? I often look back at the early Salvation Army and marvel at how they got so much right, then wonder, what on earth does this look like today? How do we be truly Salvationist in such a different culture? Well, the Lord has been answering my questions! And in fine tradition, He has answered by pointing out the faith of a YP. (Young Person)

We have a Junior Soldier who is thirteen years of age who is one of these people who has been sent into the world to win the world for Jesus. Currently she is leading what she is calling, “Mini Salvos.” This Junior Soldier comes from a Christian family who are involved in our Corps. They are great parents who have brought her up in the ways of the Lord. Praise God! The Corps recently had an evangelism weekend where this girl was encouraged to step up and start sharing the good news.

So, she did.

She led a friend to the Lord one day. Then a couple of days later, because the first friend was so excited about having God in her life, another 2 friends got saved. As she was testifying to us, the Corps Officers, we told her to start a YP Corps at her school. We encouraged her to be a missionary in her school and to lead as many people to the Lord. Practically speaking, we told her to run it just like we do at the Corps.

So, she did.

Mini Salvos meets at the local High School 4-5 times a week. They have “Get-Saved” meetings, Bible Studies, Question and Answer Sessions, Be Filled with the Holy Spirit Meetings, and Service Visits. This Junior Soldier states that she has lead 11 people to the Lord in the last few months. However, that is only counting the people she has lead to the Lord and only the ones that have stuck around to be disciplined.

All up, Mini Salvos has prayed salvation prayers with around 20 people. Our Junior Soldier is the leader of this movement, whose aim is to get the whole school saved. She said that recently it has been getting tough because there are too many people wanting to get saved at one time. People are even coming up to her asking her how they can be saved. It can be hard she says, to lead people deep into the Lord when there are so many people wanting God right now! If she speaks and prays with one, others miss out, and so she is learning how to corporately lead and disciple people.

Something else that is happening is that she’ll be praying for people to be filled with the Holy Spirit but because there are so many people to pray for, she lays hands on three people at a time just to get through the lines. Often people will start shaking and seeing visions! Glory fits are a common experience. They have tried to steer clear of being “slain in the Spirit” as they don’t want to be in a trance for too long and miss their next class.

She also shares that she is extra busy because those who are being saved are immediately being sent to evangelise the rest of the school. But because these young converts don’t know enough Bible yet they often come and grab her to do some apologetics and explain the way of salvation more fully. She is also busy because the new converts are holding their own meetings around the school for other new Christians that they have lead to the Lord, therefore she needs to give apostolic oversight. It all seems like it is getting quite big quite fast.

It hasn’t all been smooth sailing though. Recently these thirteen year olds have hit some spiritual warfare. Often as they are praying people through salvation the darkness will descend and will manifest the kingdom of darkness in sickness, distress etc. This means that they also have to kick some demons out at the same time.

When my wife and I heard all these reports we were blown away! WOW! How amazing is this! I laughed as she recounted story after story of people being saved and of the Army’s work taking so much ground at the local High School. She asked why we were laughing and we told her that we were just so happy!

As the conversation continued she said a passing remark, “Adults Don’t Understand!” She says that these kids are really getting saved and adults just don’t get it! Just because they are kids doesn’t mean that they can’t lead people to the Lord. It’s happening and amazing things are still coming! But adults, the people who are supposed to be strong and mature in the Lord, do not understand what is going on...

It seems to me that this Junior Soldier has definitely captured what it means to be a Salvationist. She is young, a pioneer, aggressive evangelist, her disciples know they are saved to save and so they do, they focus on the importance and practicality of being filled with the Holy Spirit, they kick out demons, enjoying glory fits, and are seeing heaps of kids saved! And this isn't even Africa!

But something stood out whilst talking to this girl. She said that, "Adults don't understand." Adults don't understand that youth can make a difference, that youth can actually evangelise, disciple and send. Adults are locked into their world of logic and systems. Salvationism is not learnt at a university, nor by Training College, it's not even something you grow into.

Salvationism is put into the hearts of die-hard followers of Christ. It comes by total consecration. It comes to those who choose to live for the glory of God and salvation of the World. Salvationism happens when passionate Spirit filled people are filled with a holy discontent for the way things are, and cannot help but act. It is not planned, there is no blueprint, it just happens. Like a virus it is contagious and infects those who choose to lay their lives down for the salvation of the world. It comes to the humble, to those who realise that they can do nothing, but God can do everything. It comes to those who realise that the power of God is far better than any sentimental, nice and neat prayer or act of service, as good as that might be. Salvationism is where "I" die and God lives. Salvationism is a gift from God. Holy Spirit makes us Salvationists. And Salvationism still works.

This Junior Soldier has asked to remain anonymous for now, hence the name Officer X.

Love and Life in Community

by Captain Mark Braye

Hanging on the wall of my office is a framed poster I purchased at Ten Thousand Villages entitled “How To Build Community.” A community is illustrated along the four sides of the poster and the centre is filled with community-building sayings: “Turn off your TV,” “Know your neighbors,” “Talk to the mail carrier,” along with several others. One of my favorite books is about building Christian community: *Life Together* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

The opening words of *Life Together* are from Psalm 133: “Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”¹ *Life Together* is a classic text on fostering Christian community. It’s a must read for Christians of all denominations and ages. It’s a commentary on Biblical texts that speaks to communities of faith. It’s a book about relationships; about love; about life. It’s a book about love and life in community.

“Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ. No Christian community,” writes Bonhoeffer, “is more or less than this.”²

- Life in community is never easy.
- It takes work.
- It can be complicated.
- It involves conflict.
- Life in community brings ups and downs; good times and bad times; loss; joy; excitement; sorrow; jealousy; anger; sadness; celebration; and happiness.
- Life in community is all around us; we cannot escape it. No one is an island unto themselves.
- Marriage is a form of community. A family is a form of community.
- A circle of friends and a place of work is a form of community.
- A congregation and church/corps family is a form of community.
- Community is all around us.
- The Bible, as Salvationists our only source “of Christian faith and practice,” speaks volumes about community.

The Ten Commandments, as well as being foundational to Judeo-Christian faith and the Scriptures, are, on a simpler level, about community and relationships. Commandments one through four speak to our relationship with God; Commandments five through ten speak to our relationships with others and community. Many Psalms speak of the importance of community. The Prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures spoke and wrote of the importance of justice and helping other members of society. Throughout the Gospels Christ spoke explicitly and implicitly about community and others.

The Apostle John wrote these words in the first letter attributed to him in the New Testament:

¹ Psalm 133:1, King James Version

² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, page 21.

This is the message you have heard from the beginning: We should love one another. We must not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and killed his brother. And why did he kill him? Because Cain had been doing what was evil, and his brother had been doing what was righteous. So don't be surprised, dear brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. If we love our Christian brothers and sisters, it proves that we have passed from death to life. But a person who has no love is still dead. Anyone who hates another brother or sister is really a murderer at heart. And you know that murderers don't have eternal life within them. We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God's love be in that person? Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions. Our actions will show that we belong to the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before God. Even if we feel guilty, God is greater than our feelings, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if we don't feel guilty, we can come to God with bold confidence. And we will receive from him whatever we ask because we obey him and do the things that please him. And this is his commandment: We must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us. Those who obey God's commandments remain in fellowship with him, and he with them. And we know he lives in us because the Spirit he gave us lives in us.³

This text is a wonderful passage regarding community. These are challenging words. They're challenging words for any Christian in any century.

Verse twenty-three sums up the above passage with a theological statement and a practical notion: believe in the name of Jesus Christ and love one another.

Later in the same letter John revisits community reflections and writes:

Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us. And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us. Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. All who confess that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world. Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. We love each other because he loved us first. If

³ 1 John 3:11-24, New Living Translation

*someone says, “I love God,” but hates a Christian brother or sister, that person is a liar; for if we don’t love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their Christian brothers and sisters.*⁴

Again, challenging words for communities of faith. John is not holding back or sugar coating anything in these passages. He is tying very theological notions to the practicalities of community. Community is important.

Love and life in community is one of the many blessings God has given us. It brings challenges, yes. It also brings joy, love, and peace. We can pray for each other, be a listening ear, and a shoulder to cry on. We can stand with and for others. We can welcome the stranger, love the unlovable, and befriend the friendless in community.

“How wonderful and pleasant it is when brothers [and sisters in Christ] live together in harmony!”⁵

⁴ 1 John 4:7-21, New Living Translation

⁵ Psalm 133:1, New Living Translation

The Ammonite Uprising

by Major Stephen Court
(Judges 10:6ff)

"It looks as if the chief trade of Israel had been to import deities from all countries. It is hard to say whether it was more impious or impolitic to do this." Matthew Henry

"The ministry of deliverance was always birthed out of a womb of social darkness and trauma." Francis Frangipane

'Though muffled, the ear-rattling cacophony of heavy, rhythmic thumping beat time with incessant drumming in my head. Inside, wound in this warm, slightly suffocating womb, darkness was interrupted by the wild flickering of dancing shadows behind sacrificial flames. Sweat mingled with incense, and fear with intrigue. Pungent with the odor of flesh, both living and dying, human heaving punctuated the encompassing symphony. Scattered among writhing bodies jutted ritualistic paraphernalia of all shapes and sizes. Judged by the elders to be old enough to contribute to the encouragement and stimulation of the gods, I stood doubtful after my escort escaped into the dancing shadows. Millennia later, the double-dip Drive-In would offer a much less intimidating sexual introduction. While processing these images and questions against the rumors I'd heard, my temple prostitute swayed into view. Hideous make-up covered her whole body, most of which I could see, even in the eerie light. Virgin fear beat tracks ahead of disgust as I recognized, beneath the layers of body paint, my buddy Yitzak's mother! I changed my mind about helping Baal and Ashtart get together.'

Scholars disagree about what actually took place during the ritual sexual acts of the pagan temples in which the Israelites desecrated themselves. But you get the idea.

Put yourself in Israelite shoes. Imagine a whole generation that had never planted a flower, let alone a crop; that had never worried about the weather, because, odds were, the people were picking up to leave sometime soon, anyway. The wilderness generation of Israelites fed from the gracious hand of God.

This Promised Land deal wasn't all it was cracked up to be. Not only did they have to fight for the land, the Jews had to fight with it. The nomads were settling down. And there were decidedly no green thumbs among them.

It was only natural that they would look around to learn how to farm. The Hebrews looked to their neighbors, the Ammonites, Sidonites, Philistines, and Moabites. And they learned that to ensure a good crop, you had to placate the god of the crops. To guarantee a fruitful season, you must mollify the god of fertility. Evidence indicates that not only were the Israelites eager to learn, but that their neighbors were eager to teach them.

These neighbours imagined that their crops flourished when Baal performed sexual intercourse with his consort, Ashtart, or Ashtoreth, the goddess of fertility. So, to

encourage the gods along, worshippers engaged in sexual intercourse, the man identifying with Baal, and the woman with Ashtart. Astarte had an appetite for the young, similar to the gods of today.

The Israelites adopted this liturgy. Maybe they were too enthusiastic! Their syncretism was temporary. Quickly it became apparent that the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and the gods of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the Ammonites and the gods of the Philistines could not be served along with Yahweh, could not be added to a counsel of gods that included Yahweh. They learned, as they abandoned Him, that He is a jealous God. He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and Ammonites.

They were shattered and crushed. Declension from righteous standards leads to a reversion to the senses. Often perversion squirms its way into worship. Male anatomy gets attention. If you have sex enough then the crops grow bigger. God was angry. God sold them into slavery. Poverty, bondage, and abuse replaced righteousness, compassion, and justice. The revolt against the Law was the turning point of their sexual revolution. And for eighteen years they suffered under this oppression, in this sin.

Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD, "We have sinned against you, forsaking our God and serving the Baals (Judges 10:10)." The LORD replied, "Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them save you when you are in trouble!" But the Israelites said to the LORD, "We have sinned. Do with us whatever you think best, but please rescue us now." Then they got rid of the foreign gods among them and served the LORD. And He could bear Israel's misery no longer. Judges 10:14-16

Upon their repentance, God sent a deliverer to His people, and unlikely hero. And in so doing, He offended their primitive religious sensitivities. He sent them a Gentile whose name prophetically promised, "Yahweh will open". Modern Jews figure that he was an Ishmaelite. Jephthah delivered the people of Israel out from under the oppression of the Ammonites, and into a substantial period of peace.

The Anatomy of the Ammonite Uprising.

The watchwords of revival were repentance, solemnity, humility, and peace.

After wandering 18 years in the wilderness of sin and oppression, the Israelites cried out to God in repentance. Their humble confession not only submitted to God's justice but also appealed to His mercy.

The children of Israel met together, probably in a solemn assembly at the door of the tabernacle, received the impressions of the message God had sent them, were not driven by it to despair, though it was very threatening, but resolve to lie at God's feet, and, if they perish, they will perish there.

And then God taught them continuing humility, as He devised a rescue plan hinged on the leadership of a Gentile. But the result of repentance, solemnity, and humility, was a

period of victorious peace, as three Israelite judges led Israel in succession to Jephthah (Judges 12:7-15). They returned to the family. They returned to God. They re-established the Law. They stopped their sinning. Their society grew strong without the weakening of sin. Blessing followed their obedience to God.

The return of peace to the Israelites brought with it the opposites. Freedom, the rule of law, trade, support, and opportunity were available to all. Mercy and justice became routine aspects of Israelite life.

The Ammonite Uprising is evocative of the various episodes the people of Israel experienced with different judges. Cycles of revival and declension mark the book of Judges. Consider the depth of impact that this revival had on society, though. No longer were the Israelites subject to the whims and whippings of Ammonites and Philistines. They enjoyed a national autonomy in terms of governing and trade, customs and justice. No longer did they have sex to help the wheat grow. No longer did they import foreign gods. No longer did they toss their babies into idols' mouths. No longer did they suffer under the oppression of a god made in their image. Now they served in the freedom of a God in whose image they were made.

Jephthah returned to Moses' roots of the law. They regulated their lives according to clean and unclean foods, clean and unclean hygiene, good and bad sexual practice, good and bad business practices, right and wrong ethics. Because they clean their hands after going to the bathroom, they lived longer than their neighbors who fell victim to disease. With each successive revival under the Judges, Israel crawled back to the foundation of western civilization. The word of God became, once again, the template for the people of Israel on which to pattern their lives. The law became the arbiter of moral right and wrong, instead of some foreign, fickle, raging idol. And so divine discipline was imposed from above, structuring their lives according to the rhythm of justice, righteousness, and compassion so that revival had hands and feet, and invisible people became people people.

Beyond the period of peace, the cycles are uninteresting. Four hundred years of fluctuation teach us that when everyone does what is right in his own eyes the result is havoc, but when those same eyes turn toward heaven in humble obedience, blessing will follow (Judges 21:25). That and... The face of the earth is changed as the hearts of its people are transformed.

Greed

by Major Danielle Strickland

Occasionally I feel like I'm in an episode of Hoarders. You know the show that reveals the apartments and houses of people who just keep collecting things and won't throw anything away. They suggest that this kind of behavior is an actual mental disorder. I'd suggest it's just an extreme version of what most of us suffer from – greed.

Now greed is a bit tricky – because most of us have been convinced that it's measured by how MUCH stuff we have. Yet, even if we are living on the minimum wage – or if we are on a government subsidy in any Western, developed country we are still in the top ten percent of the wealthiest people on the planet. I'm not kidding – check out your own status here: <http://www.globalrichlist.com/>

Now, to be sure two-thirds of the world live on the money we spend weekly on munchies – but that's just it. It doesn't mean that we are greedy just because we are rich - does it?

What does greed look like?

My friend was a missionary for a few years in a pretty poor country. On the compound where she lived were several families. Some of them were from the country and some were from Western countries. One of the young little boys, Johnny (name changed to protect the guilty) received a gift from his home country (a tricycle) and he was so excited that he was riding it around the compound all morning. His friend had never seen a tricycle before and was running around after him – enjoying the excitement of it all. Eventually, as Johnny got tired of riding his friend asked him, 'can I try'? At this question Johnny got very mad and said 'NO' and wouldn't get off the bicycle. Quickly distracted the little bike rider saw the swings close by and realized that he felt like doing something different. But because he didn't want to share his new bike he got off, picked it up in his little arms and carried it over to the swing set. He was not going to share that bike!

Greed looks like that. It's a staunch refusal to share.

Mother Teresa was once being questioned by a skeptic reported who said to her, 'how can you believe in a God who allows people to go hungry?' to which she replied, 'don't you go blaming poverty on God. Poverty exists in the world simply because God's children refuse to share.' Ouch. Greed grows like an infection in us – hollowing us out inside – making us dead to other people's needs and plights – causing extreme poverty in the world and while other people are looking for food to survive we are throwing ours out by the platefuls - what can we do?? We need to fight greed in this generation– but how?

Jesus helps us out here. He lives a life that is radically different than the status quo. Greed isn't a new idea – it's an old one. Actually, it's greed that caused Adam and Eve

to want what they couldn't have and then blame each other! It's greed that has caused war, famines, dictatorships, and countless casualties of crime. It's greed that turns the greatest expression of generosity the world has ever known – Christmas – into a frenzy of selfishness. So, Jesus always attacked greed with excessive generosity. Even salvation is generous – he made it free for anyone who would receive it. Jesus took what was originally the Jews (the message of the Messiah) to the entire world. He lived what I call an open-handed life. He was free.

Ever since I began to see the posture Jesus assumed – the way He lived His life open-handed I've been trying to live like Him. It's hard – but it's fun. It wasn't that Jesus didn't receive – even as a young baby He received extravagant gifts. It wasn't that Jesus didn't have any money (He had appointed a disciple just to look after the cash). It's that Jesus wasn't **owned** by his money, gifts, status, successes – freely He received, freely He gave. This is an open-handed posture.

Why don't we live like that?

Jesus instructs his disciples to make this the posture of their whole lives, 'freely you've received now freely give' (Matthew 10:8). Once the disciples catch this radical idea of living open-handed in a closed fist world... it's amazing what happens. Thousands of people get saved in one day. Prison breaks (miraculously done), people are healed, saved, set-free, there are dead people raised up – people started to live together to share resources – the scriptures tell us that the first disciples so caught this message that in their community **NO ONE WAS IN NEED** (Acts 4:32-35 - which by the way, was the miraculous sign for the Israelites in the desert in [Exodus 16:18](#), "the one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little. Everyone had gathered just as much as they needed). Wow. They solved poverty by learning to live open-handed. Freely they received, now freely they gave.

Why don't we live like that?!

(For some further resources on fighting GREED at Christmas check out the advent conspiracy – theadventconspiracy.org).

Pro-Life or Just Anti-Abortion-On-Demand

by Major Stephen Court

I am growing increasingly convinced that many Christians are not taught the truth about abortion. I just assumed that because you are born again, your sins are forgiven, you've been adopted into God's family, and you've crossed over from death to life, that you'd be pro-life.

But many in my circles aren't. In fact, the movement in which I fight is not pro-life. Now, before anyone gets all hot and bothered, let me admit that they say they are pro-life. But what they really are is anti-abortion on demand. That is not pro-life.

That is pro-convenience and anti-mess. That is pro-pill and pro-condom. That is vaguely moral-sounding.

But it is not pro-life.

You see, if you believe in the sanctity of life, if you are PRO-life, then you are pro-life. What I mean is that if you are pro-life you don't attach a bunch of exceptions to your stand. Many of my comrades say that they are pro-life EXCEPT in cases of _____, _____, and _____ (*fill in the blanks with your choice of unseemly situations including rape, incest, etc.*). What they are really saying is that they are against abortion on demand. Yippee. At best they are saying, "I am in favour of life (of protecting a baby's life) with some exceptions, in which cases I am not in favour of life."

And they don't see the issue. It is tantamount to saying that I am pro-Jesus, except _____, _____, and _____ (*how about these blank-fillers: 1. when it means I have to stop sinning; 2. when I might be embarrassed for being labeled a Jesus-follower; and 3. when I might have to obey Him at the cost of my desires?*). You're not pro-Jesus. You might be pro-religion, pro-appearance, or pro-warm-fuzzies, but you are not pro-Jesus. In effect, you can say, "I am in favour of Jesus, with some exceptions, in which cases I am not in favour of Jesus."

Once you throw an exception in, your position is not based on principle. It may be based on preference or consensus or consequence but not on the fact that you believe human life to be anything special.

Does that make sense? For example, you may not want to kill unborn babies on demand. That may be an issue of preference. You would prefer to use a pill or a condom than have your tax dollars (*in my country*) poured into killing babies as a means of contraceptive. Or it may be an issue of consensus. Most people in our western society feel it a little uncivilized to be killing babies on demand. It could be an issue of consequence. So you are against killing babies on demand because if you go around killing unborn babies on demand it becomes increasingly difficult for the mother to bear children in the future.

But you cannot say that you are against killing babies on demand because you hold a principle that human life is sacred, since you make exceptions to your anti-abortion stand.

And once you start down that road you find yourself traveling with the likes of Professor Peter Singer, who actually argues that some humans aren't people and so don't deserve the same human rights as the rest of us. Unborn babies are on his list. But so are newly-born babies.

And there are also really old people who can't really do much anymore.

And he'd include all sorts of health issues and mental limitations.

So, once you make an exception to your pro-life role you are in cahoots with Singer and the death squad. You may think it unseemly to kill old, sick, or whiny people, but your distaste for killing them is not based on any principle but only preference, consensus, or consequence.

Christians need to learn about the sanctity of human life. We are created in God's image.

Let's fight to protect life.