

# **JOURNAL OF AGGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY**

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**Issue 87, October - November 2013**

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## **Editorial Introduction**

by Major Stephen Court

Greetings in Jesus' name. Welcome to the 87th edition of Journal of Aggressive Christianity.

We're featuring a JAC exclusive excerpt from Gordon Moyles's brand new book (launched on the date of the release of this issue!) **Glory! Hallelujah!: The innovative evangelism of early Canadian Salvationists.** Our excerpt features **EVANGELINE BOOTH'S IMAGINATIVE APPROACH TO EVANGELISM.** Buy the whole book at Trade.

Major Harold Hill uses Popes and Plymouths to controversially overturn our conventions and concepts of **HIERARCHY AND HOLINESS**, a 'mind-blowing' confrontation of the status quo.

Commissioner Joe Noland dares us to **RETHINK EVANGELISM** – this is an outtake from one of his popular blogs, used with permission. We point interested readers to [joenoland.com](http://joenoland.com) for more provocation.

Sergeant Steve Simms explains **17 BENEFITS OF PRAYER WALKING WITH THE SALVATION ARMY FLAG.** As an advocate of this means of community intervention (intervening between the community and demons) we invite you to give this easy and effective exercise a try or three.

Major Robert Evans, Australian corps officer, has had an encounter with the **UNTAMEABLE GOD.** When you read this you, too, might have such an experience. God grant it!

Captain Scott Strissel, fighting in the USA Central Territory, exhorts us to **GET MOVING INTO SPIRITUAL FITNESS.** Are you up for it?

Commissioner Wesley Holiness, long-time JAC contributor, has a pair of short articles: **INETERNATIONAL SALVATIONISM** and **RADICAL SALVATIONISM.**

Denis Mestrery, who is currently researching charismatic eschatology in Ireland, plays on a few words and on a popular tv show with **THE APPRENTICE: YOU'RE FIRED!** All interested in discipleship and 'revolutionary salvationism' will want to bookmark this one.

James Thompson, who wrote the book **GREATER THINGS: 41 days of miracles**, has this follow-up, **MIRACLES FOR SALVATIONISTS.**

Such is JAC87. It takes its place in the honorable line of issues aimed with edifying, orthodox, and provocative contributions to accelerate the advance of the salvation war on your front and around the world. Thanks to each of the writers. God give us wisdom

in how to apply the lessons learned. Feel free to read each of the previous 86 issues, all available for free in our archives, and to share widely with your networks.

Stay close to Jesus. Much grace.

## Glory! Hallelujah!: The Innovative Evangelism of Early Canadian Salvationists

Excerpt from new book by Gordon Moyles

Book excerpt - *Evangeline Booth's Imaginative Approach to Evangelism*



It is the evening of November 21, 1897. Tonight Commissioner Evangeline Booth will deliver her 'Miss Booth in Rags' performance at Toronto's Massey Hall. Blanche Read, one of her officers, arrives at 6:30 for the 7:30 event, sees hundreds of people waiting to get in, but finds that the doors are locked against them. "What a pity," she murmurs, as she approaches the doorkeeper. "Lucky for you," he assures her, as he looks at her reserved-seat ticket. "We have had to close the doors, because the Hall is quite filled. All these people here just cannot be accommodated. Miss Booth, it seems, is the greatest attraction we have seen since Massey Hall has been opened. Who is she, anyway?"

She is, of course, the well-known daughter of William Booth and, at this moment, is commander of The Salvation Army forces in Canada. She was born Evelyne Cory Booth —has since legally changed her name to Evangeline— on Christmas Day, 1865, a few months after her father had begun his mission to the people of east London. And so she grew up along with The Christian Mission and, while still a teen, saw it transformed into The Salvation Army. She was, therefore, a Salvationist to the core —had professed conversion, worn the uniform and begun her career as an officer by selling *War Crys*.

"She claims," wrote her biographer, "that she became the champion seller of *War Crys* in the Army, and her position was on the pavement outside Liverpool Street Station close to a big public house. She reduced her business to a system. First, she read the current issue of the paper with careful intent. Then, she made a list of all the countries and towns mentioned in its columns. This list she committed to memory, and she would then pursue passers-by, telling them that there was an interesting piece in the *War Cry* about this or that place. Over and over again it meant a sale" (P.W. Wilson, *Evangeline Booth*, p. 59).

From that auspicious beginning she graduated to preaching and, then, with native ingenuity and imaginative daring, she disguised herself as a London flower-seller, just to reach and share her testimony with the ragged girls who plied their trade at the base of the Piccadilly Circus fountain. Though probably not as rash as Railton or Dowdle, nor as flamboyant as Lawley, Evangeline Booth nevertheless embraced the Army's spirit of

aggressiveness —of innovativeness, daring and individual initiative. And she continued to do so when, in 1896, she became the Field Commissioner of the Salvation Army in Canada. A brilliant speaker, a gifted actress and an accomplished musician, she had also a flair for creative evangelism.

One of the most talked-about events of her Canadian tenure (1896- 1904) was her 'Miss Booth in Rags' performances. They were among the memorable events of many Ontario cities and towns. At Massey Hall in Toronto, in the City Hall in Montreal, at barracks and town halls across Canada, she brought her audiences to tears as she re-created her early experiences among London's poor. As she would do so many times later throughout the United States when (as 'The Commander in Rags' or 'The Tale of a Broken Heart') she re-assumed the character of a Cockney flower-seller and, dressed appropriately, regaled her audience with tales of broken and mended hearts.

The Toronto *Globe* stated that Miss Booth's performance drew to Massey Hall "the most enormous crowd that has ever surged around its doors... the manager of the hall estimates that not less than ten thousand people tried to secure admission. The Governor-General and Lady Aberdeen, Lady Marjory Gordon and party from Government House were among those present, occupying a box near the platform."

She [Miss Booth] was dressed in a grey and rather frayed woolen dress, the sleeves of which came just below the elbow, and had a white apron and a plain shawl above it, the shawl being worn in the East London fashion, that is, pinned around the neck and falling down below the waist. Her hair was 'dressed' in Whitechapel style, and her shoes, decidedly worn, were tied with strings...

It was she explained, the beginning of self-denial week in the Canadian department of the Army, and she desired to speak of the beacon lights set for those who would follow Jesus. She built upon the platform during her address a cross, the various parts of which had upon them the words Obedience, Sympathy, Sacrifice, Love and Crowning. As Miss Booth paused in her remarks, and each block was added to the model, a choir stationed out of sight in one of the corridors sang a verse of a hymn appropriate to the word on the block.

In a voice that "sweetly resonated" through the Hall, Evangeline Booth told stories of how, as a young girl, she had disguised herself as a London cockney, and visited the courts. "When cases were tried and the prisoner convicted and she heard the wail of the wife, or the cry of the daughter, or the old man's sob of 'My son, my son,' she went to the sorrowing ones and offered to visit their friends in jail and take messages for them. After delivering the message she spent the time going from cell to cell and corridor to corridor praying and talking. At last the officials learned who the ragged little girl was, and when they let her out they would whisper, 'Get another case and come again.' They told her later how when she was praying the prisoners in the upper corridors would put their ears to the grating to catch the words" [Nov. 22, 1897].

At other times, quite often in fact, Evangeline Booth would re-create her experiences as a London 'flower-seller' —the occasions in her youth when she had assumed that role in

order to reach the lower classes. She was, writes her biographer, “conscious of the line drawn between herself and the people at the base of society that she wished to win. She must cross that line and feel within herself what it is to earn a living on the pavement. Bernard Shaw’s *Pygmalion* was a flower girl who was turned into a lady. Evangeline Booth decided to be a lady turned into a flower girl. She clothed herself in a ragged costume and took her place on the steps of the fountain at Piccadilly Circus”

The other flower girls in their shawls did not know what to make of her. Her hands were smooth. Her voice was gentle. But her boots were worn, her stockings were darned, her dress was tattered and her demeanour was wistful. They pitied the ‘dearie’ who came down in the world so low as this. Not that she was slow at the game. She sold as many flowers as the best of them” [Wilson, p. 64]. And soon she had won her own small congregation of ‘street people’ to whom she ministered in her own inimitable way.

It was this period of her life that she presented to her Canadian and (later) American audiences. Always careful to advertise her performances as ‘representations’ and not mere ‘acting’ (because Canadians were wary of mixing drama and religion), she drew thousands of people to the Army who might otherwise have ignored it. As one *War Cry* report stated: ‘The audience applauded and wept, laughed and cried as they beheld that child of God in tatters before them, as delicate almost as the flowers she carried in the basket on her arm; and this was not a performance, it was a representation of real life —of a life lived by one who was portraying it.’ With a superb sense of the dramatic, Evangeline Booth would choreograph her performance so that while she spoke, the soft sweet sound of a children’s choir (all dressed in white) literally floated above her. On other occasions she was preceded onto the platform by a group of officers dressed in various costumes whom she would use in her performance, and then she appeared (to thunderous applause), a seemingly “lonely figure clad in a ragged skirt and torn apron, a gaudily-colored shawl around her shoulders.” At an appropriate moment, she might draw a small child to her bosom, explaining that she was one of the orphans who were now under the Army’s care” and who would lead the expected procession of people who would place gifts on the altar. Other times, when she described how music alone had the power to break down the barriers in the slums, she would pick up her accordion and play ‘Home, Sweet Home.’ And sometimes, to enhance the moment, she would often use her own adopted children, Pearl and ‘Little’ Willie (who sang beautiful duets), along with live animals, to lend reality to her message. Here is how the *War Cry* described one such event:

Miss Booth in vivid language, pictured to us first her little home in the slums, with its bare floor and few pieces of simple furniture. In her lecture she took us down into the miserable cellars in which such a large percentage of London’s poor are housed, and led us through the brilliant confusion of London street-life at midnight, to the darker alleys where she rescued two children from the cruel treatment of their father.

We observe [in the audience] now a ripple of laughter, now a flutter of handkerchiefs to wipe off a tear of compassion as we listen to Miss Booth’s first lesson in scrubology; now again sobs and tears as she tells us of the matchless

heroism of the poor crippled boy who did everything to win an insurance for his starving mother and his smaller brothers and sisters [June 10, 1899].

Soon every city in Ontario —and even further afield— was eager to receive the celebrated ‘Miss Booth in Rags.’ Nor were they, as this report from the *London Advertiser* attests, disappointed with her performance:

The announcement that Commissioner Evangeline Booth would speak at the Dundas Street Methodist Church last evening drew an audience that completely filled the large church, many persons standing throughout the evening.

The lecture was Commissioner Booth’s first appearance in London in the costume worn by her among the poor of London, England. She wore a ragged plaid shawl over her shoulders, and crossed in front, and her fingers toyed with the frayed ends as she spoke. A torn white apron half concealed a tattered grey calico dress, from beneath which peeped coarse broken shoes laced with twine. Aside from its immaculate cleanness, the make-up was perfect, and would pass unchallenged in the most squalid court in Old London.

On the platform with the Commissioner were Major and Mrs. Southall, Ensign Welch and Willie and Pearl, two pretty little mites, charges of Miss Booth’s. Rev. Dr. Saunders, the pastor, opened with prayer.

Miss Booth came forward and sang sweetly an old favorite Salvation Army hymn, accompanying herself on an accordion. Then in a low, pleasant voice she began to speak. Her work was so well known that she needed no apology for appearing in that peculiar garb. Many people wanted to know how she was able to get into the blackest, foulest haunts of vice and crime and poverty in the world and win the confidence of the unhappy people who lived there. Those people hated with a hot, bitter hatred all whose condition was happier than their own, and it was only by means of such a disguise that they could be approached. As a foreign singing girl, or a water-cress girl, Commissioner Booth was able to go among them.

The vital part of Miss Booth’s lecture was in the narration of the incidents of her work in the London slums. It would be impossible to reproduce Miss Booth’s stories. She lived them over again as she told them. And the audience saw them as if portrayed by some great tragedienne. The sickening brutality, the woeful want, the bitter, burning shame and black despair on those lives came home to the listeners with tearful reality. And then the magic transformation wrought by love and sympathy of one devoted woman was shown.

At times Miss Booth’s words came in a torrent of passion and they seemed to choke and burn her; again her speech was filled with poetic fire, as she turned for a moment from the black foulness of sin to contemplate the beauties of nature with a poet’s passionate love. There were flashes of playful humor, too, as sunny and careless as a child’s laughter. But through it all shone a beautiful, intense,

devoted love and sympathy for the poor and suffering. Love, sympathy, sacrifice and action —those were the keys, she said, which had opened to her the hearts of the criminal, the poor and the sorrowful.

The entire lecture was intensely interesting, powerful and dramatic, and the audience listened with almost breathless attention for two hours [July 14, 1899].

Without any doubt, Evangeline Booth was a remarkable and talented lady. She played the accordion and the harp; she was a brilliant elocutionist; and she was, as her biographers makes clear, a consummate performer. She believed, and made explicit her belief, that such talents should be used to win people for Christ. She was therefore not only indefatigable as Canadian Commander —criss-crossing the country from St. John's to Victoria in her attempt to promote The Salvation Army— but was imaginatively inventive in her attempts to reach those who remained “just slightly out of reach.”

She was, as well, passionate about exercise and the benefits of outdoor activity, even to the point of having a tent set up in her Toronto garden in which she could sleep. She rode her horse as often as possible, and when they became fashionable for ladies, she advocating the healthful benefit of riding a bicycle. Not merely in the city itself, but on long excursions to nearby towns to conduct weekend specials. In the summer of 1897, for example, she formed her first ‘bicycle brigade’ for a long ride to towns along the road to Hamilton:

The Brigade [wrote Eva Booth in the *War Cry*], was timed to leave at 1 p.m., and was formed in line on the ground decided upon for mustering outside the large doors of the Territorial Headquarters. Eager spectators crowded the windows of Eaton's store opposite, looking with no small admiration upon the neat regulation ‘cycling uniform which by its brown color appeared to declare the Brigade's preparation for the clouds of dust with which during their heated journeyings they would have to contend, and indeed by its close similarity to the earth, seemed to challenge any detection of dirt. Although the customary Army blue was changed to brown, the Soldier-cut jacket with braid ‘S.S’ and epaulettes which mark the military appearance ever accompanying a Salvationist on duty were all in good prominence, and the bugle note announcing the moment of departure combined with the farewell salutes of ‘God bless you,’ ‘Hallelujah,’ ‘Pray for us,’ thrown to the officers remaining in the city, declared beyond dispute that ‘they went out a band whose hearts God had touched’ not for pleasure but for battle.

Staff-Captain Horn and Adjutant Morris formed the Advance Guard, myself with the two children —Dot and Jai [who Eva had brought with her from England]— on either side, came next in the ranks: then followed the remainder of the Brigade in form, each man having his allotted position and specified comrade given by myself, as organizer of the Brigade. The uniformity of the parade attracted the attention of all and caused no little comment as it passed through the thronged thoroughfares, for not wishing to run down any traffic, or wound any

quadruped, our speed allowed of our catching the different expressions of wonderment and surprise dropped by onlookers.

'Who are these?' said one.

'Fancy! That looks well,' said a gentleman.

'Salvation Army!' cried one or two others.

'Well, what next? —what next?' spoke yet another.

And indeed 'what next? was the question upon many minds still waiting proof, and other 'cyclists passing on the way were brought face to face with the fact that you could wheel to Heaven with ever so much happier heart and easier propelling than you could wheeling your machine with no greater object in view than your own satisfaction and the whirling away of time [July 31, 1897].



Clearly, Evangeline Booth was enjoying both the sheer physicality of the jaunt and the publicity it generated. During that tour alone, she added, the Brigade wheeled over one hundred and eighty-nine miles, a prodigious feat indeed. The main problem was not the dust but the sun, for the heat was almost unbearable and sun-burned skin a large concern:

However, by rising early in the morning before the elements were well-dressed in fiery brightness, by an arrangement which combined parasol and fan —a flying handkerchief at the back of one's neck, and the aid of an occasional rest beneath a big tree, with a proportionately big bucket of water to quench our thirst, we ran

into our specified battleposts, feeling decided overcomers, certainly having ‘come through’ and ‘gone over’ in more senses than one, no small tribulation.”

Then the runs were alike in the kindness that was shown us all along the road. Not only were garden gates, but cottage doors thrown widely open—we could go into the kitchens, despite the dust of our shoes, we could have chairs to sit on under the trees if we preferred, cold water was drawn for us from the well, and in many instances pails of milk were gratuitously bestowed. Tea was offered me by the mother-hearts of a good number of the cottages, the trouble for the preparation of the same being overlooked, and we were even given cake—when I say given, I mean we had nothing to pay for it, which is always a consideration for a Salvationist, and I would like to tell my readers, but I must not, how amused I was in watching how fast the boys could eat it, only of course they had not the least idea how humorously my mind was employed.

Humorously and thoughtfully—the first watching the rapidity with which the substantial square pieces were being disposed of and the latter thinking about the kindness of those who had given it—thinking how it was, just because it is such a beautiful thing to be kind and because kindness, with its deeds and words, never seems able to die, the Master promised exceptional blessing should attend even the giving of a cup of cold water. . . .

We left these halting places a good deal refreshed and rested, but speaking for myself personally, the most beneficial effect was in my heart derived from the fact that as well as those found in the ranks, we had so many who loved us, believed in us, and were anxious to help us in the quiet and by-ways of Canada and since back in the struggle and strife with the regiments of conflicting matters ever trooping through my office, these memories remain to help me.

Renewing her bicycle brigades in the summer of 1889 and 1900—calling them now her ‘Red Crusaders’—Evangeline Booth toured most of eastern Ontario, holding ‘camp-meeting’ revivals. Because the halls were often too hot to be comfortable (and because Eva Booth was a ‘fresh-air’ fanatic), she rented a large tent, about 15,000 square feet, which was taken by train to the various towns, while she and her ‘bicycle brigade’ rode the many miles for a stay of about three or four days to conduct religious meetings to which, having heard of her flair for the dramatic, thousands of people flocked much as they would have to the well-known Chautauqua events. The ‘brigade’ consisted of about fifteen people, divided into four sections: the cyclists, the transport team with the tent, the advance guard which bombarded the towns with posters, and Little Willie and Pearl (her adopted children) who were accompanied by a harp, and traveled by rail. They all dressed in khaki because it did not “show the dust, and the material is such as will stand the rough usage to which a tenting party will naturally put it. The trimmings are in red braid, and the black stockings and grey Klondike hats made up a neat and novel uniform.”

The first stop, in the summer of 1899, was Deseronto, in the Bay of Quinte on the shore of Lake Ontario. There they erected their large tent, a feat which, as *The War Cry* put it, offered “excellent physical exercise” —of which Eva Booth thoroughly approved. “There are scores and scores of stakes to be driven with a sledge hammer, and the erection of three masts, and the pulling up of 1,200 lbs. of canvas, gives ample opportunity for the full use of muscular Christianity.”

And thus began one of Eva Booth’s most successful campaigns to which, often, whole communities rallied. From town to town, in such places as Newmarket, Odessa, Colborne, Port Huron, Napanee, Cobourg, the ‘Red Crusaders’ became the summer’s main attraction. On occasion, Eva Booth would ride her horse (of which she was inordinately fond), while her cohorts rode their bicycles. “Of tumbles there were one or two,” wrote a *War Cry* reporter, “but nothing of an artistic or fatal character.” But dust-covered they certainly were. “We hope our appearance was imposing as we climbed the Main Street, Newmarket. If we were not as trim as when we started, Yonge Street’s sandy hills and dales must be blamed. The dust billows of the roadside had thrown their spray over our uniforms from cap-peak to toe. . . . The youthful agility and active wheelmanship of Adj. Welch, Ensign Griffiths and others were somewhat belied by the grey locks upon which their caps rested, dust having done what as yet old age had not given and granted them heads quite remarkable in appearance” [Aug. 5, 1899].

About these summer events, Evangeline wrote to her sister, Emma, that her Crusaders had had “regular old Salvation times. The chief object of the campaign was to visit some very small and hard places where the getting of a crowd at all implies that you have the best part of the population out to see you. The people drove in for miles around to attend the meetings, and what with the immense audiences, sometimes stretching outside the canvas, and the almost suffocating heat, the effort was terribly exhausting. [But] we had souls in nearly every meeting, though it almost killed us to get them” [Wilson, p. 125].

In rural Ontario the tent evangelism of Evangeline Booth’s ‘Red Crusaders’ became, for two summers at least, a much-anticipated event. Thousands of Canadians, some Salvationists of course, but many who did not know the Army, were drawn by the sound of the music, by the wellplaced posters and the sight of a motley crew of bicycle-riders advancing towards their town. It was an ingenious and effective way of promoting the Army and preaching the Gospel. As this *War Cry* report amply illustrates:

Belleville, our next place of call, is a pretty little town of considerable commercial importance. The spot selected for the Red Crusaders’ campaign here was a broad grassy corner, in an excellent situation. The tent went up in fine style. Its erection is a science by itself, and the Crusaders are getting adept at it. Those who are accustomed to lift no heavier burden than a pen, may be seen driving stakes, hoisting poles, roping canvas, and performing other noble feats of strength and skill. In referring to the ‘works department’ we cannot pass over the ‘small boy’ who has played quite a prominent part in it. ‘Everybody that wants a job, fall in,’ from the Chief Secretary has brought the young hopefuls to stand at

'attention,' and they have reported for some real help, too. At Belleville, Colonel [Read] rewarded his small service corps by some toothsome candies. This early roping-into-assistance of the boyish element has prevented it from becoming a disturbing element during the real business of the campaign. 'Now, my beauties, I'll tell you when to talk,' from the Colonel has had a most peaceful effect, and the behaviour of those who are now generally known as 'the Colonel's beauties,' has been remarkably good for their restless and mischiefloving age.

The Belleville campaign was fully on a line with the triumphant events which it succeeded, and the three days spent there will not soon be forgotten. They will certainly wake pleasant echoes in the memories of both visitors and townsfolk. The opening meeting, or, as Brigadier Pugmire terms it, 'the preliminary canter,' was well attended and enjoyed. Sunday's battle was opened by a knee-drill at which Capt. Susie French officiated. The holiness meeting was a time of spiritual refreshing. Brigadier Friedrich, Ensign Hyde, and Captain Easton delivered expressive sermonettes, and the Colonel gave one of his characteristic Bible readings, which, by their originality and helpfulness, are now so looked for.

A splendid crowd greeted the Commissioner in the afternoon. The event of the evening was her address. It was full of fire and unction, and listened to with rapt attention. Her remarks on cross-bearing were particularly forceful. 'I fancy I see some come up to the pearly gates,' she cried, 'and ask, "Where is my crown?" and the Master, looking back through your life and work, will ask, "Where is your cross?" We have seldom heard the Commissioner more manifestly inspired, and that the Lord owned and blessed her words was seen in the definite cases of salvation which were dealt with afterwards at the penitent form [July 21, 1900].

Inspired by Evangeline Booth's efforts at 'aggressive evangelism,' many of her officers followed her example. During her stay in Canada, 'traveling specials' became a common feature of Salvation Army outreach. As an example, "The Salvation Marine Band" was started in 1897 by Major Southall, in charge of the Western Ontario Division. Dressed in sailors' uniforms, with "Salvation Army" emblazoned on their hats, they travelled throughout western Ontario in a horse-drawn van—a kind of covered wagon—having been instructed not to travel more than ten miles a day, "as horses could not be expected to drag the heavy load of bandsmen and instruments farther than that." George Smith, one of the bandsmen, tells how, as an advance guard, he would go into the various towns (Kincardine, Mitchell, etc.) and put on a "gramophone recital" (that musical machine being then a great novelty), by which he acquired enough money to rent a hall. That was 1897. The next year, still governed by John Southall's ingenuity, the band was re-formed to become an acting troupe, performing a religious play called "The Modern Prodigal." This they performed in thirty-six Ontario towns, again demonstrating how, with a little imagination, the Gospel could be "taken to the people."

That Evangeline Booth was extraordinarily gifted is beyond dispute; she believed, however, that others, less gifted than she, should use whatever gifts they possessed just as she did. That was how the 'aggressive evangelism' of which her mother had

written was to be put into action. And 'action' was her chief delight. Displaying what one writer has called an "irrepressible initiative," she had, while still in London, started one of the Army's first female bands; she was the first Salvationist to ride a bicycle (defying what was then a convention that women did not do that sort of thing); in Toronto she rode her horse to headquarters and slept during the summer, as already mentioned, in a tent in her backyard. She was both innovative and daring; and, by her example, many Canadian Salvationists also engaged in an innovative and daring brand of Christianity.

## Hierarchy and Holiness

by Major Harold Hill

Remember those cartoons where you are invited to *Spot the Difference*? Here's one.

### Spot the differences...



We hear of Pope Francis deserting the luxurious Papal apartments to hang out in a sort of boarding house for priests, scooting round Rome in a little old Ford Fiesta instead of using an armour-plated Mercedes, laying aside ornate vestments and handmade red shoes in favour of a simple cassock and his old scuffs. He's sending signals.

We're used to receiving and interpreting such signals. I remember in my callow youth asking the formidable Commissioner Robert A. Hoggard whether he didn't think his snazzy new 1952 Plymouth Cranbrook was a little too flash for the Salvation Army to be seen going about it? (I do not know where I got *that* idea from!)

#### 1952 Plymouth Cranbrook



He replied, "Oh, no, not at all. Where I come from [USA Western territory], this is a Lieutenant's car. Commissioners drive *Cadillacs!*"

#### 1952 Cadillac Fleetwood "75"



Then when I went to London in 1970 I noticed that whereas a mere Commissioner drove an Austin 1100, the Chief of the Staff drove an Austin 1800, and the General was driven about in an Austin 3 litre.



Years later in the USA Salvation Army National Archives I read the correspondence between a Territorial Commander and a Lieutenant who was threatened with dismissal and was eventually sacked because he wouldn't dispose of his Oldsmobile (I think it was), deemed *not* to be a "Lieutenant's car". I kid you not. (Perhaps there was another back-story.)

1977 Oldsmobile Cutlass



They were all signals. What these examples signalled was "hierarchy". The difficulty I found lay in reconciling those signals with Jesus' words, "That is the way the VIPs and Celebrities of this earth go on... Don't be like that!"<sup>1</sup> All this may be juvenile taking of the mickey, but what was signalled was no light matter. My subject, for which I am indebted to Caroline, is *Hierarchy* and *Holiness*. I need to talk about each in turn, and then about both together.

## Hierarchy

Firstly, we're familiar with the concept of *Hierarchy*. A pyramid, with the broad base of plebs at the bottom, rises through more restricted levels of middle-management, to the solitary splendour of the occupant of the apex. In his study of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, C.S. Lewis explains how pre-modern society was quite unambiguously and unapologetically structured hierarchically. It wasn't considered just a convenient and effective way of constructing work relationships; it was seen as inherent in nature. Lewis wrote,

Degrees of value are objectively present in the universe. Everything except God has some natural superior. The goodness, happiness and dignity of every being consists in obeying its natural superior and ruling its natural inferiors... Aristotle tells us that to rule and to be ruled are things according to nature. The soul is the natural ruler of

<sup>1</sup> Matthew 20: 25-6.

the body, the male of the female, reason of passion. Slavery is justified because some men are to other men as souls are to bodies (*Politics*, 1, 5).<sup>2</sup>

Now I'm not about to argue the anarchist or Leveller converse, that Jack's as good as his master, but need to remind you that our whole clerical system in the church derives from this hierarchical conception of reality, which we no longer take for granted today. The early church was relatively egalitarian. It had leaders but no priests. Over its first few centuries, as it institutionalised, it accommodated to traditional religious expectations, to hierarchical society and to the Roman state.<sup>3</sup> The Church took on characteristics incompatible with its founding vision of free and equal citizens in the Kingdom of Heaven (rather like Israel's earlier ideal of being a nation of kings and priests).<sup>4</sup>

When society becomes too unequal and is at risk of breaking down, Christianity seems to rediscover its roots and new groups with a greater emphasis on internal equality are formed.<sup>5</sup> Thus renewal in the Church often coincides with disruption in society as whole, or dissatisfaction of marginalised groups. Both the Christian Mission and the 614 movement started in the slums. Further, nearly all sectarian movements including and from the early church on – monasticism, the mendicant orders of friars, the Waldensians, the reformation churches and sects, the Methodists and the Pentecostals, have begun as "lay" movements, acknowledging little distinction of status between leaders and led, but nearly all have ended up controlled by priestly hierarchies, whether so called or not. The more institutionalised the body becomes, the greater degree of clericalisation and "hierarchisation" likely.

Bryan Wilson sums up:

What does appear is that the dissenting movements of Protestantism, which were lay movements, or movements which gave greater place to laymen than the traditional churches had ever conceded, pass, over the course of time, under the control of full-time religious specialists... Over time, movements which rebel against religious specialization, against clerical privilege and control, gradually come again under the control of a clerical class... Professionalism is a part of the wider social process of secular society, and so even in anti-clerical movements professionals re-emerge. Their real power, when they do re-emerge, however, is in their administrative control and the fact of their full-time involvement, and not in their liturgical functions, although these will be regarded as the activity for which their authority is legitimated.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> C. S. Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (London: Oxford University Press, [1942] 1960) 72-3.

<sup>3</sup> A comprehensive account of the process is found in Colin Bulley, *The Priesthood of Some Believers: Developments from the General to the Special Priesthood in Christian Literature in the First Three Centuries* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000).

<sup>4</sup> Exodus 19:6; Revelation 1:6; 5:10.

<sup>5</sup> The egalitarian vision remained, in David Martin's terms, "a store of explosive materials capable of fissionable contact with social fragmentation" so that "schism is inevitable and rooted in the nature of Christianity itself as well as in the nature of society." David Martin, *Reflections on Sociology and Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) 42-3.

<sup>6</sup> Bryan Wilson, *Religion in Secular Society* (London: C.A. Watts, 1966) 136.

Religious authorities usually claim some “spiritual” legitimation for their human behaviour. For example, in the church there grew up a tradition that ordination indelibly and irreversibly changes a person’s essential, ontological character, just as baptism (or conversion, in the Evangelical tradition) is believed to do. The second Vatican council stood in a tradition stretching back to Augustine of Hippo (who died almost 400 years after Jesus) when it asserted that

The common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial priesthood... differ essentially and not only in degree.<sup>7</sup>

Others deny that. Emil Brunner says that

All minister, and nowhere is to be perceived a separation or even merely a distinction between those who do and those who do not minister... There exists in the Ecclesia a universal duty and right of service, a universal readiness to serve and at the same time the greatest possible differentiation of functions.<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, whether we hold that clergy are essentially different from lesser mortals or we claim to believe in equality, the end result is often the same. Miroslav Volf noted that even in the contemporary unstructured house church movement:

“A strongly hierarchical, informal system of paternal relations often develops between the congregation and the charismatic delegates from the ascended Christ.”<sup>9</sup>

Whether in the Exclusive Brethren or the “Shepherding” movement, you know who is the boss. Having clerics does not necessarily involve clericalism. Not having clerics does not necessarily mean clericalism can be avoided. Office itself, formal or informal, inevitably confers power and power offers at least possibility of those who exercise it “tyrannising over those allotted to [their] care”.<sup>10</sup> (Peter was aware of the danger!)

In Walter Brueggemann’s *Prophetic Imagination*, the alternative, prophetic community of Moses is contrasted with the “royal consciousness” of Egyptian Empire. Within 250 years of the Exodus from Egypt, the establishment of Solomon’s Empire represented the rejection of that free association of Israelites and a return to structures of oppression.<sup>11</sup> In the same way, the process of institutionalisation and clericalisation in the church can be seen as a successful reconquest of the new community by the old structures of domination and power. These in turn may be subverted in due course by renewed egalitarianism.

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<sup>7</sup> “Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, Article 10” in Austin Flannery (Ed.) *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents* (Collegeville Min: Liturgical Press, 1975) 361.

<sup>8</sup> Emil Brunner, *The Misunderstanding of the Church* (London: Lutterworth, 1953) 50.

<sup>9</sup> Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church in the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1998) 237.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Peter 5:3.

<sup>11</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn 2001) 23.

My argument is that the Salvation Army's own development conforms to this general pattern. I won't rehearse tonight the steps by which this came about – you can read my book if you want the details; Salvationist Supplies still has some copies!<sup>12</sup> I'll say just one thing: The Salvation Army doesn't accept that becoming a priest or a bishop (or, officer or an officer holding "conferred-rank") alters your Christian "character", but in practice it behaves as if it did. The most recent expression of the Army's clericalisation is found in the adoption of "ordination" by General Arnold Brown in 1978. Ordination came about originally because of the Church's adoption of the concept of "ordo", the class structure of the Roman Empire. The Army doesn't endorse that, so why play dress ups?

This is not saying we need no structure. Any human society needs some form of order to avoid falling into either anarchy or tyranny. A society called into being around some founding vision requires some means of maintaining what in the church is called "apostolicity" – authenticity derived from faithfulness to a founding vision. That is part of the role of leadership, which a hierarchy can provide. The danger with leadership, however, is that rather than being merely a means of maintaining authenticity, it can come to identify itself as central to it, the means becoming the end. That is clericalisation. That is the shadow side of hierarchy.

### Holiness

Now, leaving Hierarchy for the present, what about *Holiness*? When I was growing up it was never explicitly stated but somehow assumed quite widely that holiness was a matter of personal morality, spirituality, piety and general "niceness". It tended to be regarded as a field for the spiritually athletic, the virtuosi, rather than the general run-of-the-mill Christian like me. It was an advanced degree, an honours course, to which a few went on after getting their BA, or Born Again. Wesleyan Holiness, our traditional take on the subject, has lost credibility over the years, partly through being inadequately taught. The result, to adapt G.K. Chesterton, was that rather than being tried and found too hard, it was thought too hard and not tried. Put to one side the tedious "shibboleth-sibboleth" debate about "crisis" and/or "process" aspect of Holiness – I'm not concerned with that!

Holiness has suffered, amongst other things, from an unbalanced, individualistic interpretation of the gospel. In our Evangelical tradition Salvation, which includes holiness, was about *me*, getting *me* saved and sanctified and going to heaven. When we read that holiness is "the revealing of Christ's own character in the life of the believer",<sup>13</sup> that's true, but it's not the whole truth. That's still about *me*. In western countries, that individualistic focus of our mindset was intensified in the later twentieth century under the influence of New Right economics when our whole society took a turn away from social responsibility and towards the sanctification of individual greed as the driving force of society, with the excuse that by a process of trickle-down, all boats would rise on the flood-tide of prosperity. That hasn't just changed our economic

<sup>12</sup> Harold Hill, *Leadership in the Salvation Army: a case study in clericalisation* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> Frederick Coutts, *The Splendour of Holiness* (London: Salvation Army, 1983) 41.

arrangements; it has increasingly permeated our world-view. It didn't alter our doctrine of holiness; it merely completed the total skewing of our perception of what holiness involved. That is, that it was just a matter for the individual.

We glibly dismiss the people of Jesus' day as preoccupied with his setting up an earthly Kingdom, whereas his Kingdom was "not of this world". We, with the benefit of hindsight, know so much better than they did what he was on about. Yes? No, not entirely.

If we read Jesus without our inherited spectacles of individualism, we notice that a *lot* of what he talked about was *not* about the saving and sanctifying of the individual as an end in itself but about redeeming society as a whole. He came preaching and teaching about the Kingdom of Heaven, which wasn't pie in the sky for me when I die, but the redemption of *this* world so that it would more closely resemble how God intended it to be. "Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven," is what he taught us to pray. A renewed emphasis on social justice is a rediscovery of this dimension of holiness; embraced by many, while many others regard it as a distraction from the real spiritual business of saving souls.

Salvation, of which holiness is a subset, part of a continuum, is about *Shalom*: wholeness, peace, well-being, and *righteousness* – which did not mean being goody-goody two-shoes, but meant being in a *right relationship* with ourselves, with others and with God. Which is why John Wesley exclaimed, against the notion of the solitary seeking of perfection, that, "there is no holiness but *social* holiness." Christianity is a team sport, not a narcissistic individual hobby like body-building.

At the personal and interpersonal level, holiness is expressed in what William Temple described as the "true test of worship": "not whether it makes us feel better or more holy or more at peace... [but] what it does to our lives; whether it makes us more unselfish, more easy to live with, more efficient in our work." That is "becoming more like Jesus". At the macro-level, a concern for social justice is integral to a concern for personal holiness; it is making the earth more like heaven. I cannot be holy and still content that others suffer injustice. At Finney's campaign meetings 150 years ago, seekers were directed from the "Mourners' Bench", either to the table at which they could sign up to the anti-slavery campaign, or to the table at which they could sign up to work for female emancipation and women's rights. And if they were unwilling to do either, they were sent back to their seats: it was not believed that they'd made a real decision to follow Christ.

So the polarisation we frequently encounter, between "saving souls" and "serving suffering humanity", as though either one of these were more central, a loftier aim, and the other merely optional window-dressing, is a false dichotomy. As William Booth put it, there needs to be "Salvation for Both Worlds".<sup>14</sup> Birds do not fly far on one wing only.

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<sup>14</sup> William Booth, "Salvation for Both Worlds", *All the World*, 5 (January 1889) 1-6, reprinted in Andrew M. Eason and Roger J. Green (Editors), *Boundless Salvation: the shorter writings of William Booth* (New York: Peter Lang, 2012) 51-9.

If we want biblical underpinnings of this argument we need look no further than Jesus' summary of the great commandments – to love God, and to love our neighbour as ourselves.<sup>15</sup> He said the second was “like the first”; it wasn't a minor, optional extra.

### **Hierarchy and Holiness?**

Hierarchy is a way of structuring relationships; holiness is to do with the nature of those relationships. One is to do with form; the other is to do with essence. So the question needs to be asked, how holiness may be expressed in socially just relationships. Can our institutional structure, our hierarchy, facilitate loving behaviour, by all involved, so that we love all our associates, both those in authority over us and those subordinate to us, as we love ourselves? This is at the heart of the question of what holiness has to do with hierarchy.

I suggest that that the hierarchy created by clericalisation is a form which can make its imprint on the essence instead of the essence being expressed in the form. That's a very sweeping generalisation and therefore only partly true, but let's tease out the tension between hierarchy and holiness. Firstly, the hierarchical structure which clericalism has created can foster a spirit incompatible with “servanthood” Jesus modelled and taught; it can undermine relational holiness and so threaten the kind of community Jesus calls together. Secondly, by concentrating power and influence in the hands of minority, clericalisation can disempower the majority of members of Church. That can co-exist with patronising the brethren but not with loving the brethren. It can therefore diminish the Church's effectiveness in mission.

Of the first adverse effect, you could supply your own examples, but if it's any help, Bramwell Booth was aware of the danger long back. In 1894 he was complaining that “the D.O.'s [Divisional Officers] are often much more separate from their F.O.'s [Field Officers] than they ought to be. Class and caste grows with the growth of the military idea. Needs watching.”<sup>16</sup> Thirty years later he was still anxious about Divisional and Territorial leaders in that “they are open to special dangers in that they rise and grow powerful and sink into a kind of opulence...”<sup>17</sup> (Unhappily, Captains are just as prone to this as Colonels.) General Albert Orsborn acknowledged to the 1949 Commissioners' Conference that

dissatisfaction and decline... is blamed on our system of ranks, promotions, positions and differing salaries and retirements... that it has created envy and kindred evils and developed sycophancy, ingratiating, “wire-pulling”, favouritism, etc... It is a sad reflection that we are in character, in spirituality, unable to meet the strain of our own system.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Luke 10: 27.

<sup>16</sup> W. Bramwell Booth, letter of October 1894, in Catherine Bramwell Booth, *Bramwell Booth* (London: Rich & Cowan, 1932) 218.

<sup>17</sup> W. Bramwell Booth, letter to his wife, 27 April 1924, in Catherine Bramwell Booth, *Bramwell Booth*, 437.

<sup>18</sup> General Eric Wickberg, “Movements for Reform” (Address at the 1971 International Conference of Leaders) Minutes, 9.

*Koinonia* and just social relationships are difficult to maintain within that system. All of which is to say that it is in the nature of systems to get in the way of the reason they exist. If the doctrine of holiness is not lived as well as talked about, human nature will take its course, and a system which actually encourages it to do so, as ours tends to, requires extra vigilance.

And the second adverse effect, the disempowerment of the many by the exaltation of the few? The American Nazarene sociologist Kenneth E. Crow summed it up: "Loyalty declines when ability to influence decision and policies declines. When institutionalization results in top-down management, one of the consequences is member apathy and withdrawal."<sup>19</sup> Likewise the Indian Jesuit Kurien Kunnumpuram claimed that "the clergy-laity divide and the consequent lack of power-sharing in the Church are largely responsible for the apathy and inertia that one notices in the bulk of the laity today."<sup>20</sup> Does our structure likewise disempower the Army's soldiery? The root of disempowerment is a lack of respect for others, and that is, again, evidence of a failure to love one's neighbour as oneself.

It would be difficult to say whether clericalisation had led to a loss of zeal, or loss of zeal had been compensated for by a growing preoccupation with status, or whether each process fed the other. There is a paradox here: the military system, quite apart from the fact that it fitted Booth's autocratic temperament, was designed for rapid response, and is still officially justified in those terms. The Army's first period of rapid growth followed its introduction. It caught the imagination for a time. However the burgeoning of hierarchical and bureaucratic attitudes came to exert a counter-influence. The reason for success contained the seeds of failure. The longer-term effect of autocracy was to lose the loyalty of many of those hitherto enthusiastic, and to deter subsequent generations, more habituated to free thought and democracy, from joining.

Clearly I'm talking about what we may loosely call the "Western" Army. In Africa and India the Army is still expanding rapidly *and* is also extremely rank-conscious! The cultures are different. I do not believe that in *our* culture, our salvation lies in the hair of the dog that bit us. Furthermore, the abuses of power already evident in the third world Army suggest that there will be a reckoning to pay there too. Faced with a flagrant example of such abuse in the past year, a Zimbabwean Salvationist wrote, "The Salvation Army now frightens me... We now know we are waging war against a Monster... Our very own church! Am now very ashamed to wear my uniform and so are many other people."<sup>21</sup> Such a reaction does not augur well for continued expansion. Unfortunately clericalism is to clergy as water to fish, wherever we live. It's so pervasive we don't recognise it, but as a soldier working at THQ once said to me, "It's in our faces all the time!"

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<sup>19</sup> Kenneth E. Crow, "The Church of the Nazarene and O'Dea's Dilemma of Mixed Motivation" ([www.nazarene.org/ansr/articles/crow\\_93.html](http://www.nazarene.org/ansr/articles/crow_93.html)).

<sup>20</sup> Kurien Kunnumpuram, "Beyond the Clergy-Laity Divide" (<http://www.sedos.org/english/kunnumpuram.html>) May 2000.

<sup>21</sup> Email in my possession.

How may the ill-effects of the hierarchical system be mitigated? That is, how may the essential holiness still be expressed through this form? Leadership is indispensable to the effectiveness of any movement; it's a given. Structure is necessary; it will happen anyway, and it needs continuity, accountability and legitimacy to mitigate the effects of unrestrained personal power. There are two ways the problem can be approached: one is structural, the other attitudinal.

In 2002 the first edition of the Salvation Army's Doctrine Council's publication, *Servants Together*, made the following suggestions for structural change:

What actions does Army administration need to take in order to facilitate servant leadership? Here are some of the important ones:

- Develop non-career-oriented leadership models.
- Dismantle as many forms of officer elitism as possible.
- Continue to find ways to expand participatory decision-making.<sup>22</sup>

I believe structural change is essential but none of us is in a position to make it, and you know it's not going to happen. In fact that whole paragraph quoted was deleted from the second, 2008, edition of *Servants Together*. And wherever else the expression "participatory decision-making" was used, that was replaced by "consultative decision-making".<sup>23</sup> Do you draw any conclusions from those excisions? Perhaps none of the structural changes suggested might have made any difference anyway.

In 1996 when Commissioner (later General) John Larsson was about to conclude his term as Territorial Commander in New Zealand, he kindly invited me to arrange the annual Executive Officers' Councils as a training seminar. With his approval I engaged Gerard La Rooy, a Heinz-Watties executive and management guru, to lead sessions on "Flatter Structures" in management. By citing awful examples from the realm of business and expressing astonishment at the laughter as the officers recognised the same scenarios as found in the Salvation Army, he led them to consider how the work might be enhanced by flattening out some operations of the hierarchy. Some "participative decision-making" might have been involved. They got as far as drawing up suggestions for change – all pretty minor but likely to improve efficiency – and nominated a working party to continue developing the theme in the coming weeks. Then it all went quiet. After some weeks I asked the Chief Secretary, Hillmon Buckingham, "What happened?" "Ah," he replied, "For the week after the Councils I had a succession of senior officers come to my office saying, 'We might have got a bit carried away with this flatter structures business... I think we should be a bit careful...'" And so we were.

<sup>22</sup> *Servants Together* (2002), 121.

<sup>23</sup> A letter to Territorial and Command leaders from the Chief of the Staff, dated 31 July 2008, stated, "...it is the General's wish that all copies of the previous edition be removed from trade department shelves, training college libraries and any other resource centres where copies may reside, and destroyed. Also, in publicizing the revised edition within your territory/command, please encourage your officers and soldiers to purchase this latest edition and to discard any copies they may have of the 2002 edition." Upon being asked about this, Commissioner Dunster wrote further that "The General's request for copies of the first edition to be discarded is simply a matter of practicality and good sense. We do not really want classes of cadets - or others - where some are using the old book and others the new one. That would lead to unnecessary confusion." Letter to Major Kingsley Sampson, dated 19 August 2008.

Even the slightest tinkering with the structure of hierarchies can produce severe symptoms of insecurity.

And the truth is that no structure can ensure that we love our neighbour – whether our senior in the command structure or our subordinate – as ourselves. That leaves our *attitudes*. The 2002 text of *Servants Together* made one other suggestion:

- Teach leaders to be servants by modelling it.<sup>24</sup>

That was also deleted from the 2008 edition. I guess it was too much like Jesus, or Paul... in a word, subversive. Too often, the mantra “Servant Leadership” is an oxymoron. Servant is as servant does. To model servanthood is the only suggestion most of us can aspire to implement, but it is also the most important. And where opportunity affords, to name and challenge its antithesis, its shadow, which is the abuse of power.

Because *power* is at the heart of the matter. Money, sex and power are said to be the three pitfalls for clergy, but the first two are usually only means to, or expression of, the third. Hans Rudi Weber wrote that “Jesus transforms the love of power into the power of love.”<sup>25</sup> Sometimes we get it the wrong way round. Power, like steroids taken by an athlete, may enhance performance but exact a long-term cost.

So the question is whether holiness, both personal holiness (which is being like Jesus) and corporate holiness (which is the application of the principles of social justice to our structural relationships, so that the Body of Christ can be like Jesus), can redeem a hierarchical institution?



Over the years the doctrine of the Trinity has been presented in such a way as to support a hierarchical conception of both God and the Church. Here is a medieval Swedish Gothic representation of the Trinity. You can see who is in charge.

<sup>24</sup> *Servants Together* (2002), 121.

<sup>25</sup> Hans-Ruedi Weber, *Power, Focus for a Biblical Theology* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1989) 167.

But there is another tradition, of what is termed the perichoretic trinity. Here is an ancient icon. Who is in charge here?

Trinity icon by Andrey Rublev, c. 1400



So, is there a way in which Hierarchy may be Holy? If so, the Hierarchy may not look like we expect. Paradox is involved. Colonel Janet Munn, being interviewed last month, spoke of the paradox in Jesus' combination of humility and boldness (by contrast with the frequently found human combination of arrogance and cowardice). She noted that "Servanthood requires humility; leadership demands boldness."<sup>26</sup> Jesus in fact deconstructed leadership along these lines: "I do not call you servants any longer, because a servant does not know what his master is doing. Instead, I call you friends..."<sup>27</sup> Mind-blowing it may be, but he is inviting us to gather round that table. The implications for both hierarchy and holiness are worth considering.

<sup>26</sup> You can watch it on [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_4IPSn8qAG0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_4IPSn8qAG0)

<sup>27</sup> John 15: 15.

## Rethink Evangelism

By Commissioner Joe Noland

### *Reinventing Evangelism - A Cyberspace Street Corner*

I was recently asked the question, “What do you think the difference is between SAVN.tv (Salvation Army Vision Network) and other Salvation Army online ministries? Here is my expanded response to that question.

A lot of thought, discussion and feedback has gone into determining the mission, purpose and direction of SAVN.tv. From one leaning, the pressure came to make it traditional, internal and culturally relevant for the “select” few - playing to the troops.

Many, however, favored an external, evangelical approach, insisting that the nomenclature and look be open, appealing and nonthreatening, especially to both the seeking believer and nonbeliever. A kind of 21st Century, contemporary Cyberspace street corner presentation designed to “Get their attention,” as William Booth so aptly framed it. He invented the army’s unique way of evangelizing; SAVN is reinventing it.

Whilst this was in our thinking from the beginning, we were also cautioned from many sides to use terminology and visuals that would appeal and attract, not repel. Whilst the terms “corps,” “citadel” and “fire-a-volley” are comfortable and understood by the initiated, they are foreign and uncomfortable to the outsider, those whom we are attempting to engage.

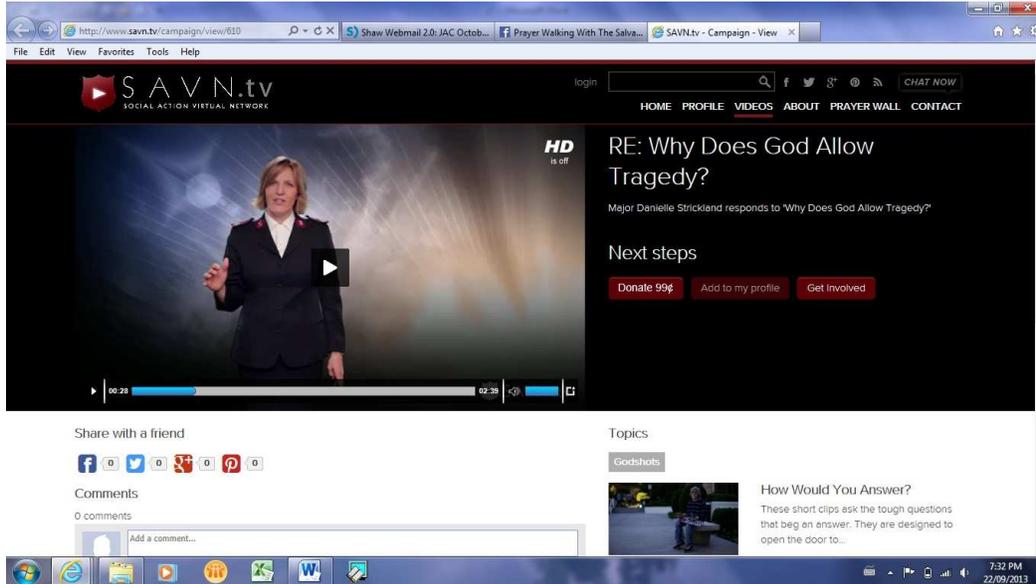
Further, it was determined that one of our important audiences would be Generation Y, also known as the Millennial Generation - the future. This emerging generation is cause (mission) oriented, according to a recent Pew Research Study. If a church does not involve them in a cause, they will go elsewhere (And they are going elsewhere!). The genius of the Army is that, historically, it has been social action (cause) oriented, that’s what sets us apart.

Thus, social action causes become the first-look “hook” that attracts and engages. Once hooked, the viewer digs deeper (follows them into the Army meeting) where the Gospel message is presented visually, creatively and interactively.

Godshot: <http://www.savn.tv/campaign/view/609>

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the SAVN.tv website. The main content area features a video player with a play button and the text "Do you believe in God?". To the right of the video player, there is a sidebar with the heading "Why does God allow tragedy?" and a sub-heading "Why does God allow tragedy? How would you answer?". Below this, there are three buttons: "Donate 99¢", "Add to my profile", and "Get Involved". The website has a dark theme with white text. The browser's address bar shows the URL "http://www.savn.tv/campaign/view/609". The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the date and time as 7:27 PM on 22/09/2013.

Response: <http://www.savn.tv/campaign/view/610>



SAVN.tv is meant to be, in part, the aegis (umbrella) site and Cyberspace channel for a multiplicity of social media congregations (Corps), or our preferred terminology, “Mission Stations.” The strategy is two-fold: Content and Delivery (Distribution).

### “CONTENT IS KING”

SAVN is committed to the creation of professional, attractive content, appealing to the audiences we are attempting to reach - CAUSE oriented. Whilst there are exceptions, for the most part, as research suggests, content will be served up in short 1-5 minute “story” segments, designed for a fast-paced, tech savvy generation with “a sense of immediacy as they are on a faster journey and their expectations of services or relationships are higher,” according to Anni Macbeth, trend forecaster.

### “DISTRIBUTION IS QUEEN”

SAVN is committed to a personalized, interactive content delivery system - a continuing “work in progress,” video driven website, always changing experientially as new ideas and innovations surface. It is collaborative, partnering with Odyssey, Back to the Bible, the Billy Graham Association, the Jesus Film, YouVersion, Mary Rice-Hopkins, “Not Today” movie, “Mac Lucado’s Christmas Candle,” and more. Cyberspace street corners GALORE!

Social Media Soldiers are being recruited and trained, partnering with [www.groundwire.net](http://www.groundwire.net), a collaborative coaching, live chat ministry customized for SAVN. In development is an interactive, small group channel (Bible Study, Recovery, etc.) where those so motivated can start their own social media groups (Mission Stations),

thereby distributing the Gospel exponentially far and wide. To become a SMSoldier, go to:

<https://www.facebook.com/search/620178944676031/members>

Our goal: Create quality content and design delivery systems, easily accessible and available to all. Become the resource and aegis (umbrella) site for a host of online customized causes, corps, congregations, recovery groups, mission stations ad infinitum. THEREIN LIES THE DIFFERENCE.

If you have read this far, you are obviously not of the Millennial Generation. They would have read the first couple of paragraphs and moved on. That's OK, they already know the gist of what has been clarified here. This was written for you, representative of another generation, and just as vital to the SAVN mission. Join with us as we change the world one Cyberspace street corner at a time.

## **17 Benefits of Prayer Walking with the Salvation Army Flag**

by Sergeant Steve Simms

Prayer walking with the Blood & Fire Flag is a simple activity. It only requires one Salvation Army Flag and one (or more) human being. The person carries the flag on the streets, praying as they go. This simple act is very powerful. Here are 17 benefits of flag-prayer-walking:

- 1) It increases the amount of intercessory prayer for your neighborhood;
- 2) It helps you to understand the needs in your neighborhood;
- 3) Prayer walking with the flag increases your love for the people in your neighborhood;
- 4) It unites corps members who participate together into a team;
- 5) It builds spiritual fellowship;
- 6) Flag-prayer-walking increases your corps' visibility in the neighborhood;
- 7) It gives you an easy way to witness to people when they come up and ask you about the flag.



- 8) It's excellent physical exercise;
- 9) Prayer walking with the flag helps to overcome the fear of what people think about you;

- 10) It presents the Holy Spirit with new opportunities to work through you;
- 11) It makes people curious and draws some people to your and your corps (church);
- 12) It sets a worthwhile example for other people and corps and churches to follow in your steps;
- 13) Flag-prayer-walking is a way to claim the promise made to Joshua that God will give you the territory wherever you walk;
- 14) It is a powerful weapon that brings victory through spiritual warfare..
- 15) It will build your faith as you see God working right in front of you.
- 16) It will give you powerful testimonies to take back to your corps.
- 17) Finally, it will give you a first-hand experience of what it was like in the early, "glory days" of The Salvation Army.

There is a Facebook page designed to give you help and encouragement in flag-prayer-walking. It is called "Prayer Walking With The Salvation Army Flag". Check it out today.

<https://www.facebook.com/#!/TheSalvationArmyFlag>

## Untameable God

by Major Roberts Evans

The words of Chris Tomlin's song Indescribable are a powerful poetic description of the awesome creative power of God who created the beauty, vastness and complexity of the universe. Yet, in the very title of this inspiring worship song is the paradox that, despite the best efforts of the song writer, God is indeed indescribable! Our language is inadequate to describe Him, our expectations too small to contain Him and our strength too weak to tame Him. In the presence of such a God, *"Awestruck we fall to our knees as we humbly proclaim You are amazing God."*

Today, while attending the "Dwelling in the Spirit" conference in Melbourne I encountered the "indescribable, uncontainable, untameable" power of God as I fully surrendered myself to the presence of God's Spirit during an awesome time of worship. What made this time of worship so powerful, apart from following an amazing afternoon and evening of teaching and the tangible presence of Holy Spirit, was that there was absolutely no attempt to contain or tame the movement of God by those engaging in worship. There was an air of expectation and a deep desire to experience ALL of God, however that manifested itself.

At times, I have been one of too many Christians who have tried to contain God to a size and image that fits our intellect or theology and have tried to tame the movement of God to that which is rational and controllable. As I continue to witness God move in mighty ways, breaking through spiritual, emotional and physical barriers, releasing people from the bondage of sin to freedom in Christ, why would I (or anyone else) want to contain or tame that?!

When Jesus gave His commission to the disciples, He said, *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age"* (Matthew 28:18-20) Contain that...NO WAY!!

When God sent His Spirit at Pentecost, Peter witnessed to the crowd that, *"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved"* (Acts 2:17-21). Tame that...NO WAY!!

Friends, it is time to stop restriction God's work in your life and His Church by reducing Holy Spirit's movement to something describable, containable or tameable! It is time to fully surrender to God, to fully embrace Holy Spirit and to be fully devoted to Jesus, allowing Him to radically transform your life and use you in ways you could never

imagine!! It is time for the Church to remove any blockages that prevents Holy Spirit from being unleashed in worship, mission and ministry in Jesus name and to the glory of God!!!

It is time for every Christ follower to be *"Awestruck"* and *"fall to our knees as we humbly proclaim You are amazing God."*

Posted by EphesiansFour12

## Get Moving... into Spiritual Fitness

by Captain Scott Strissel

There was sweat pouring and pooling on and around the collar of my workout shirt. It hadn't taken me long to break a sweat. 'Is that normal?' I wondered to myself as I continued to pump my legs up and down as I strained towards another invisible incline on the elliptical machine. I stared straight ahead, bored to tears at the lack of scenery in my living room all the while motivational 'cardio' music pumped through my earphones. 'Don't look down' I kept saying to myself, 'don't look down'. One would imagine I was walking a tightrope a thousand feet in the air if they had heard my mantra. Yet my eye inevitably looked down upon the elliptical machine's work out clock...I still had plenty of time yet to complete. My work out was far from over. I groaned.

Scolding myself for looking down again, I tuned into the music which pumped out another fast rhythmic beat. I matched the rhythm with my strides on the elliptical. I was determined to make it over the next incline. I gritted my teeth and pushed through the discomfort and the screaming protests of my muscles. The effort would be worth it, I kept telling myself. There was a goal in mind, to lose weight to feel healthier and to live a longer more productive life. I knew that there would be miles and a miles of invisible inclines to go but my goal was worth the sweat and tears. My goal would payoff in the end.

It got me thinking. Isn't that the image that we get when the Apostle Paul talked about running and about the prize of eternal life?

### **Check this out:**

"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize." -1 Corinthians 9:24

"Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, "I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." - Philippians 3:14

### **Application:**

The Apostle Paul, a former persecutor of Christians, humbly and openly admitted that he was not there yet. He hadn't crested that imaginary incline of faith. He knew that there was still work to be done within his life. He still was lacking and coming up out of breath spiritually. Yet his short comings were not going to deter him from seeking and attaining his goal.

What is your goal? What are you striving to become within God's kingdom? Are you serious about your pursuit of personal holiness? Are you committed to that seemingly invisible incline of faith? God doesn't want to leave us (nor will He) at the Altar of our initial sanctification (our salvation story)! His Holy Spirit wants to do a work within us. An amazing work within us! He wants us 100% committed to Him for His purpose and

mission! But we have to be willing to move from spiritual infancy to a deeper more lasting spiritual maturity. This move takes place when we get serious about our relationship to Christ. It's deeply personal and only we can make the decision to move. The Holy Spirit will prompt, prod and even convict us but we are the ones who have to make the conscientious decision to get up and move. There will be sweat and sacrifice, of that we can be sure of. Yet if we make the move, we begin to tap into the very power of the Holy Spirit who can help us and sustain us in this discipline of holiness.

What are your personal goals as a Christ-follower? There is a purpose for each of us as fellow sojourners. God does not want us to settle for mediocrity in our faith. Nor does He want us to become out of shape (spiritually), lazy and without missional purpose. There is so much more He wants of us, but in order to accomplish anything for Him, we have to have the right priorities in place in our lives.

### **Prioritizing Spiritual Fitness:**

These priorities begin with our daily spiritual workout. That spiritual workout consists of our daily even moment by moment conversations with God. How can we train, how can we run in this faith without first being plugged into the very source of our hope and salvation? A daily discipline of feasting on the word of God, coupled with our prayerful conversations with Him will set us in the right direction of forward progress in our personal and spiritual growth. Without these two main components placed as top priority in our lives, we face the possibility of becoming utterly lost in our jumbled world which could be full of empty pursuits. The Holy Spirit can shape us and mold us, if we allow Him to, but it takes effort and willingness on our part. We have to be available and willing to move.

Are you ready to work out? Are you prepared to sweat and strain for the goal of being Christ-like in your life? Then it's time to get up and move. Don't ignore the Holy Spirit's promptings in your life, He wants to complete that work in you...are you willing? Are you ready? Let's go.

## **International Salvationism**

by Commissioner Wesley Harris

To be successful in most aspects of life it is important not only to have good intentions, but determination to put them into effect. That would be true for anyone intent on starting a business as a bit of doggerel makes clear:

He who whispers down a well  
About the goods he has to sell,  
Will never find the golden dollars  
Like he who lifts his head and hollers.

I salute the would-be athletes who, in the early mornings, pound the pavements near my home determined to be fit even if they drop in the process! While others slumber they nearly run their legs off in order to fulfil their dream. Fair enough! The Apostle Paul admired such people and so do I.

I also admire people who take seriously the vows they made when they became soldiers of The Salvation Army. They have an inner "ought to" which ensures that the intentions which led to their enrolment remain constant through the years. So also, those sacred intentions hold them through the week at work in the factory or the office. They are good Salvationists on Monday as well as on Sunday - "fair dinkum" as they say in Australia! At the weekend they may make their message audible through their music and visible through their uniform but all week they make their intentions credible through their holiness of heart.

Real Salvationists stand up for Jesus and seek to win others for him. That is what makes them different from but never indifferent to those around them.

Leslie Taylor Hunt wrote and I would echo:

Fix the intention sure,  
Make my desire secure,  
With love my heart keep pure,  
Rooted in thee (SB.416).

## **Radical Salvationism** by Commissioner Wesley Harris

WORDS may sometimes be manipulated to mean what we want them to signify rather than what is their essential connotation. Take the word “radical” for example. Some may interpret it to indicate a wild eyed extremist intent on getting rid of anything that has been accepted as normal. But the Oxford Dictionary – a “bible” for many users of the English language - defines the word as “of the root, naturally inherent, essential, fundamental” and in that case this long time Salvationist would say, “bring it on”.

What is radical may seem to be different but is essentially in line with what was original, of the essence of what was intended, but perhaps lost in time. A stiff dose of history may be called for and, through the years, that has been provided through the language of priorities employed in the “Journal of Aggressive Christianity.”

The Army began as an expression of radical Christianity. It was about saving and serving the lost. That was the burning passion of our founders and literally, God help us, if we have cooled off in our motivation. We are called to be people people. Every Corps exists for those who don't belong to it as well as those who do. The people in our neighbourhood are not merely our “clients”; they are the reason for our existence!

Many of our Corps are very busy doing this and that but sometimes we may need a reality check and should ask ourselves what we are all about and what are the results. This kind of check may be disconcerting for us as individuals and as an Army but it could well bring on growing pains and growth itself.

## The Apprentice: You're Fired

By Denis Mestrustery

Listening recently to a sermon, the preacher was reminding his listeners that at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, he called his followers to maintain the life of discipleship that had grown as he taught and demonstrated the Kingdom to them.

My mind began to wander, and construct its own sermon...

You may have watched the TV series "The Apprentice". In the UK, the lead is taken by Lord Alan Sugar, and the US version sees Donald Trump sifting a group of hopefuls seeking to be chosen as the new apprentice, with a significant salary and future prospects as they are mentored in business success. As well as watching the progress of these often over-confident business 'wannabees', there are also series featuring celebrities from a number of fields, which can be equally entertaining as we engage with the clash of major egos.

As my mind drifted, I recalled that the Greek word used for disciple (*mathetes*), can also be correctly rendered as 'learner' or 'pupil' – or 'apprentice'.

In the UK series, the one putting contestants through a range of strategic tests, is Lord Alan Sugar, a successful business entrepreneur. In the Christian life, the One testing our faithfulness is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The main difference, I suspect, is that while the TV programme participants almost literally walk over each other and back-stab in order to be recognised and achieve the goal of becoming The Apprentice, Christians are called to be apprentices/disciples from the outset of their relationship with Jesus.

While we will be called to the test, 'success' or 'failure' does not rely on our own strength and abilities, but on Christ's faithfulness to us. He will not test us more than we can endure,<sup>28</sup> nor is his disciplining ('apprenticing') of us done out of anything other than a Father's love.<sup>29</sup>

At the end of each TV episode, once the winning and losing teams have been declared, some members of the losing team are brought back before Lord Sugar (or Donald Trump) and his advisers in the fictional Board Room. Here further enquiries produce defences and self-justification until someone who will be leaving the process is identified. This leads to the climax of each episode, where an accusing finger is pointed at the losing contestant, and the ominous words "You're fired!" echo around the room. A potential career in ruins, potential earning power reduced, personal and professional embarrassment. Some will rise above this setback and continue in an existing successful career, others may wilt at the disgrace, while others refuse to understand this totally illogical rejection of their obvious skills and expertise...

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<sup>28</sup> 1 Cor 10:13

<sup>29</sup> Heb 12:6, Prov 3:12

It struck me, as I listened to that sermon, that if we are identified as Jesus' apprentices, then we should NOT be afraid to hear the words "You're fired".<sup>30</sup> In fact, as part of the Christian life and experience we should welcome them. What do I mean by that?

Well, while the firing of potential apprentices in the TV shows spells disaster and disappointment, Christian apprentices can identify a welcome alternative nuance to the words.

When we think of 'fire' in Biblical terminology, we will often associate this with the 'fire of the Holy Spirit'<sup>31</sup> or the fire of cleansing.<sup>32</sup> Fire is often used in the Biblical narratives to connote the presence and power of God.<sup>33</sup>

Thus getting 'fired' for the Christian apprentice, is not a route into abandonment or disappointment, but the pathway to victorious living by way of the empowering fire of the Spirit and the sanctifying fire which burns the very character of God into us.

In Old Testament times, the sacrifices of Israel were at times consumed by a direct holy fire from God himself<sup>34</sup> manifesting both his reality and acceptance of the offering. Indeed, the priests were charged with maintaining a perpetual fire on the altar which was not allowed to go out.<sup>35</sup> God's presence manifested as cloud (daytime) and fire (evening)<sup>36</sup> as the Israelites journeyed with the Tabernacle, providing light, guidance and security.

Paul's letter to the Romans encourages believers to be a 'living sacrifice'<sup>37</sup> – something which is accepted by God and consumed for his glory. Nowhere is the presence of God's Spirit more equated with fire than on the Day of Pentecost when 'tongues of fire'<sup>38</sup> rested on each of the believers gathered in the Upper Room.

Fire, thus, speaks of God's presence, power, and purity.

The fire of testing purifies and refines us, in the same way that impurities and flaws are removed from precious metal through extreme heat.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> In fact, we are more likely to hear the words "Well done, good and faithful servant!" -Matt 25:21, cf 2Tim 4:7f

<sup>31</sup> Matt 3:7b 'He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire'

<sup>32</sup> Isaiah 6:6f 'Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar, With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for".'

<sup>33</sup> cf Exod 3:2, Ezek 1:4,, 2 Kings 1:10,12, Judges 13:20

<sup>34</sup> Lev 9:24

<sup>35</sup> Lev 6:13

<sup>36</sup> Num 9:15; 17-23

<sup>37</sup> Rom 12:1

<sup>38</sup> Acts 2:3f

<sup>39</sup> Ps 66:10, Prov 17:3

In his First Letter to the Corinthians, Paul warns that we should build our lives wisely on the foundation of Christ:

If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.<sup>40</sup>

Even God's fire of judgement will allow the believer a means of escape through Jesus, even though much of what they 'built' during their lives may prove not to have eternal value.

Paul's later warning "Do not quench the Spirit"<sup>41</sup> carries the connotation of a Spirit who burns with God's power, which could be choked or dampened in the life of a believer or church.

Through our covenant with Jesus and our sanctification by the Spirit, our goal is to be Christ-like and "do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."<sup>42</sup> It is comforting to realise that in Biblical covenants, our gracious God commits himself to undertake the roles of both parties. Since in Jesus Christ, God the Son becomes fully human as well as being fully divine, he fulfils both the God part and human part of covenant requirements. As we are grafted into him in our new birth, he "works in [us] to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."<sup>43</sup>

May we engage with the Spirit daily so that his fire burns brightly in us.

It is the Gowans/Larsson musical *Spirit*, where we find the words of this prayerful song:

1.  
Burning, burning, brightly burning,  
Brightly burning Fire divine,  
Satisfy my spirit's yearning.  
Fill this empty soul of mine.

(Chorus)  
Burning, burning, always burning.  
Holy Spirit, stay with me;  
To your will my will is turning,  
What you will I want to be.

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<sup>40</sup> 1 Cor 3:12-15

<sup>41</sup> 1 Thess 5:19

<sup>42</sup> Eph 2:10

<sup>43</sup> Phil 2:13

2.

Burning, burning, deeply burning,  
Deeply burning holy Fire,  
Now, your perfect plan discerning,  
Your design is my desire.

3.

Burning, burning, gently burning,  
Gently burning Fire within,  
From your love my love is learning.  
Now I feel your work begin.

Revolutionary Salvationists<sup>44</sup> will often describe themselves as being 'on fire' for God.

So, Apprentices – let's "get fired!"

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<sup>44</sup> Christians of other denominations are also available!

## Miracles for Salvationist

By James Thompson

SALVO 1: Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. His character has not changed, and His actions have not changed either. In fact, all those things Jesus did in the New Testament are still happening today!

SALVO 2: Really? I haven't seen any of that stuff. Sure God can do it, but I don't think He does it like that anymore.

SALVO 1: How about I share some testimonies I have heard with you, maybe that will convince you otherwise.

SALVO 2: If you think that will help...

SALVO 1: Excellent. Let's start with Healing.

A Salvation Army Officer had a stroke that doctors said should have left him paralyzed for the rest of his life. They told his wife to arrange a nursing home to look after him as he would lose function of his body. His wife had other ideas. She cast her burden upon Jesus, and her husband is alive and well, preaching the gospel with passion!

An Australian man asked his officer to pray for healing as he had a sore back. The officer prayed and heard God say the man's back was out because he had one leg longer than the other. The officer had the man sit down, he grabbed the short leg and commanded it to grow... Which it did. The man left the hall literally leaping and jumping and praising God!

To add to this there are some Salvationists who regularly see people healed. I know of other stories where people who medically could not give birth actually did! There are stories of Salvationists being healed of cancer and all types of other sicknesses!

SALVO 2: Wow, that's a lot. I might concede that healing may happen a little bit but what about demons? Surely that stuff doesn't still happen today, does it?

SALVO 1: Actually it still does! There are Officers in all sorts of appointments who have had deliverance ministries. For example,

A woman in Africa was brought to an Officer for they needed help. This woman had been taken over by some type of spirit. This spirit would cause her to behave in strange and unusual manner, she would fall to the ground and begin moving like a snake. The Officer took charge and cast the demon out. This woman was restored to fullness.

SALVO 2: Yeah, but that's not Western world. Those stories happen all the time, it's probably just because they don't understand mental illness right?

SALVO 1: I wouldn't write off their experiences so quickly! These sort of things still happen in Western Countries too. Like this time,

A youth went to her Youth Worker to be saved. He cast out demons out of her and her whole entire life changed overnight. People at her school didn't even recognise her the following day!

SALVO 2: Ok, Jesus raised the dead. Surely that hasn't happened too?

SALVO 1: More than you think!!!

A baby girl in the USA died in her mother's arms shortly after childbirth. 60 years later she joined her husband as the International leaders of The Salvation Army.

An Indian Officer enjoys organizing revival campaigns. In one campaign they gathered all the names of the people in the local hospital. They prayed for these people at the meeting. Later that day he went to visit the sick in hospital only to find that they all had been healed and had gone home! Another time some people brought a dead person to Home League. They prayed for the man and he rose from the dead. He jumped off the table and ran home. He came back with all his drugs, he gave them to the officer and declared that he would now follow Jesus!

SALVO 2: Wow, I didn't realise that that sort of thing was so common. Here's one then, Jesus multiplied food. I'm sure you can't beat that one?

SALVO 1: Actually I can! And this one happened in the USA and made the media!

The Salvation Army was responding to Hurricane Ike which had taken 195 people's lives. They were offering food and served 800 people, but when they looked at what they had fed the people they realised they only should have been able to feed 91!

SALVO 2: Jesus calmed the winds and the waves. He protected His followers from harm. I'm guessing you have stories about that too?

SALVO 1: You bet I do!

A bus carrying the officers and cadets, the leadership of The Salvation Army in Bangladesh was driving along a narrow one way road. All of a sudden a speeding truck hurtled their way. As they braced for the crash they realised nothing happened. Somehow God had picked up the bus, the truck went beneath them and then they were placed on the road again. No one was injured or harmed.

SALVO 2: Ok, you have heaps of these stories, but they are spread out all over the world. Surely miracles aren't for everybody right?

SALVO 1: Actually, God is still at work in the world today. And His word clearly states that miracles are a part of Christianity. This is how Jesus said it, "And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." (Mark 16:17-18)

SALVO 2: Are you saying that if we believe we too can see these miracles?

SALVO 1: That is exactly what I am saying. God has not changed. He still wants to be involved in this world! He wants to answer our prayers. If we want to see miracles we need to believe to receive!