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Editorial Introduction

By Major Stephen Court, Editor

Centenary Celebration Series

Greetings in the name of our great God and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Holiness and zeal to you from God our Father. I trust the battle progresses well on your front.

Welcome to JAC101! Yes, this centenary celebration is so big we're taking three issues - a whole series - to soak it all in. In JAC100 - part of the Centenary Celebration Series - we lifted every JAC Exclusive Interview over the first 99 issues and we all had opportunity for inspiration from all sorts of soldiers from all over the world. JAC100, along with JAC1-99, is available online, free, for all to enjoy.

JAC101 builds on JAC100. Whereas JAC100 was the Interview Issue, JAC101 is the ISSUE Issue. We've looked through 99 editions of JAC and found a bunch of articles by a bunch of people that touch on some interesting issues that have currency for salvationists. Among them are some of the most popular issues in the Journal of Aggressive Christianity. While we could go on all day with this adventure (remember that there were more than 50 entries in JAC100), we decided to stop at ten. There is a lot more in the archives to challenge, inspire, edify, instruct, of course, and we encourage you when you have an 'off'-evening to choose the JAC library over Netflix.

Here are the ten, in order of appearance (no ranks included):

Eugene Pigford's *The Encounter Of Sacrament*, from JAC18 (2002) has provided biblical basis through spiritual lenses for a confident embrace of thorough salvationism.

John Cleary wrestled, for all of us, with *Chosen To Be A Soldier* (JAC22, 2002) and the longstanding challenges as well as emerging dynamics of soldiership in our day.

Danielle Strickland went off on *The Married Women's Ghetto Rant* back in JAC41 (2006) on an issue we still haven't sorted out.

Steve Bussey contributed *Lolli-Pop Spirituality: Why Youth Are Crashing From Sugar-Coated Christianity* back in JAC46 (2006) and the lessons seems perennial.

Grant Sandercock-Brown's *On Liberalism*, from JAC54 (2008) was short and bracing, polite but uncompromising.

Anthony Castle asked, *Are We A Metaphor?* in JAC56 (2008) this is actually the updated entry of the wildly popular article from an earlier edition.

Harold Hill threw out *Four Anchors From The Stern* in JAC64 (2010) that encapsulates the emerging (we hope) understanding of the identity of our movement in the context of the whole people of God.

Harold Hill, in *Vision for the Lost Or Lost Vision*, challenged the movement in light of our origins.

JoAnn Shade presented *A Problem Like Maria* in JAC98 (2015), a problem that she will soon sort out for us all - stay tuned for an imminent edition of JAC!

Janet Munn issued *The Call to War* in JAC99 (2015) that we'll all do well to heed. God help us.

That should be enough to stir everyone up. Thanks to the contributors - all 100 issues of them represented by these good folk. As always, read, apply, share widely. Let's fight as if Jesus is returning tomorrow (don't worry, you'll likely be able to catch up on back issues in heaven).

Godspeed.

Stay close to Jesus.

Much grace.

The Encounter of Sacrament

By R. Eugene Pigford

This article offers a convincing prophetic interpretation of Biblical ritual in relation with spiritual reality. It provides an important component to an integral SA prophetically non-sacramental position.

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" Genesis 1:1.

Perhaps in no other verse in scripture are the coordinates of our existence so succinctly and so specifically spelled out. "In the beginning" is the reference to time. Without referring to duration, it confirms its finiteness. "The heavens" is the reference to space which the created order occupies and through which it moves. "The earth" refers to matter and all form of physical substance from which all of the created order is formed.

As part of the created order, man as a physical being, exists in matter, space and time. By contrast, God exists above and beyond the created order. His existence and self-sufficiency are apart from, prior to, and beyond the creation. Yet God sees his creation as good. This phrase is repeated frequently through the opening verses of Genesis. Subsequent to the creation of man, God pronounces his creation as very good.

The prevailing question related to encounters of sacrament is, How does God communicate himself to us through his creation? One can engage in scientific study on both an astronomic and microscopic level and discover order, balance, and precision bespeaking a technology far in excess of our own. But this merely reflects the mind of the Creator. It is not synonymous with it.

Similarly, one could study the interrelatedness of the food chain and dependency of one life form on other life forms for its existence. But once again, while God is the conceptualizer, initiator and sustainer of these processes, He does not incarnalize Himself in them.

The word Sacrament is of Latin derivation and has to do with the concept of oath. A Roman Soldier being sworn in to military service would declare the "Sacramentum", thus swearing his allegiance to his government and his role. In the history of the Church, it has come to mean certain specific religious exercises, through which special blessing or spiritual edification is dispensed. It has been the subject of much debate whether or not these observances are efficacious in and of themselves, or whether they become the associated vehicle through which special blessing is channeled and dispensed, along with but separate from their practice.. And, if the latter is true, are they really necessary?

To fully consider these matters, some identification of ancillary issues would appear to be important, namely;

1. What is the nature and evolution of sacred symbols in scripture?

2. In what ways in scripture is spiritual life conveyed by material substance?
3. How does one's philosophy of hermeneutics (scripture interpretation) impact the development of theology concerning the sacraments?
4. What is the text and context of scripture related to the sacraments?
5. What is the role of the church in celebrating and communicating spiritual truth?
6. What significant "rites of passage" are intertwined with a particular church heritage thus forming strong emotional linkages with some sacramental practices?

After some consideration of these points, some integrative and personal observations will conclude these considerations.

1. What is the nature and evolution of sacred symbols in scripture?

A. Circumcision

When the Lord reveals himself to Abram as El-Shaddai and his name is changed to Abraham, the practice of circumcision is introduced with the following direction; "Then God said to Abraham, 'As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep. Every male among you shall be circumcised. You are to undergo circumcision and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. For the generations to come every male among you who is 8 days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner - those who are not your offspring. Whether born in your household or brought with you money they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant.'" Gen 17:9-13

In the Old Testament, circumcision was periodically reinforced. Moses was required to circumcise his sons before going to Pharaoh in Egypt (Exodus 4:24). The Israelites circumcised all their males immediately upon crossing the Jordan and prior to taking possession of the Promised Land. (Joshua 5)

During the establishment of the early church, there was a contingent seeking to make circumcision a prerequisite for new believers. Paul confronted this error in his letter to the Church at Galatia, "Mark my words, I Paul tell you that if you let yourself be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all.....For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love." (Galations 5:2&6)

While the rite of circumcision was not practiced by Gentile believers, the term was applied to them in a spiritual context as may be noted in Col 2:11, Romans 2:29 and

Phil 3:3. Thus, the importance of the meaning of the practice became a priority over the practice itself.

B.Devoted Things

Periodically, in scripture, the instruction was given to the Israelites that every living thing in a conquered city was to be utterly destroyed and absolutely none of the spoils were to be kept. (Joshua 6:21).

The Israelites loss of the battle of Ai and King Saul's loss of his monarchy were both related to disobedience concerning this issue.

Samuel the prophet declares, Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord. To obey is better than sacrifice and to heed is better than the fat of rams I Samuel 15:22

The apostle Paul is perhaps building on this concept when he declares, " But whatever was to my profit, I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have suffered the loss of all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him...(Phil 3:7-8). Once again the spiritual truth takes precedence over the earlier physical act.

C.The Brazen Serpent

During the wilderness wanderings of the Israelites, they periodically engaged in grumbling and complaining. Numbers 21:6 describes how God sent venomous snakes in judgment upon them and, when they confessed their sin and requested forgiveness and healing God made a provision for them. A bronze serpent was made and fastened to a pole. Anyone who was bitten would be healed if he would look at the bronze snake.

2 Kings 18:4 reveals that this bronze serpent eventually became the object of idolatrous worship and had to be destroyed by King Hezekiah as part of his spiritual reforms.

Jesus, in his discourse with Nicodemus uses the analogy of the serpent in the wilderness to describe the necessary death of the Son of Man. The spiritual lesson and analogy of the wilderness serpent continue to be important. The physical representation of the serpent itself has long since been destroyed.

D. The Ark of the Covenant

This was the most sacred object of all the tabernacle furnishings. It was a wooden box overlaid with gold. Inside of it was a pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of stone received by Moses on Mt Sinai.It occupied the central place in the Holy of Holies. It was carried at the head of the procession when the children of Israel were on the move.

There were specific instructions for the covering and transporting of the Ark. Any carelessness with regard to these instructions was usually fatal to the transgressor.

The Lord had instructed Moses that He would focus his Presence between the cherubim on the Mercy Seat or the lid of the Ark.

We might logically assume that with the specific instruction and severe penalties associated with proper regard for the Ark, that it would have a place of permanence in the worship setting of the Israelites.

However, after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Jeremiah prophesies that "Men will no longer say, 'The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord' It will never enter their minds or be remembered, it will not be missed, nor will another one be made." Jeremiah 3:16

From the beginning of the Babylonian captivity, the children of Israel had no access to a temple, tabernacle or any worship setting that would have had any of their religious symbols. It was during the Captivity that synagogues developed, not as places with the religious symbols that had been so characteristic of the Hebrew faith, but as meeting places where the scriptures could be read, studied, and expounded.

The period of the Captivity was a difficult time for the children of Israel but a time of learning and spiritual discovery as well. Though they could not encounter Jahweh through their historic religious observances, including Passover, they did discover His overruling hand on their circumstances.

The New Testament introduces radical change to the theological assumptions of the Jewish culture of the day. Although, the springboard for the Christian faith is very Jewish in its character, the essential spiritual nature of the Kingdom of God is prominent throughout the gospel writings and the epistles.

At the onset of his ministry, Jesus emphasizes to Nicodemus (John 3) that the transforming experience of conversion is best likened to a spiritual birth. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Similarly, he says to the Samaritan woman, "A time is coming and now has come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24).

In fact, some of the Jewish rites themselves become teaching models utilized by Jesus in interpreting the deeper spiritual truths of the Kingdom to the new followers of faith in Him. This is certainly true of the rite of baptism and observance of Passover along with several other Jewish festivals. While intermittent practices of these rites or some modification of them continues into the early church, it should be noted that their continued practice was not without difficulty as may be noted with regard to baptism in I Corinthians 1:13-17 and communion in I Corinthians 11:17-33.

References to the word baptizo in Jewish usage appear several times in the Mosaic laws of purification (Exodus 33:17-21, Leviticus 11:23, 15:8, 17:15, Numbers 19:17&18,

31:22&23). Its meaning is that of "washing" or "cleansing" in these instances. In the Septuagint the word is used three times; II Kings 5:14, Ecclesiastes 34:25 and Isaiah 21:4. In all of these references the most likely meaning is one of cleansing.

John the Baptist introduces a new ethical dimension to the practice by associating it with the necessity for personal repentance. It became a public declaration of a personal decision to change one practices and manner of thinking in preparation for the coming of the Kingdom. In and of itself it is an incomplete act as may be noted in Acts 18:25 and 19:3-5.

But Jesus, himself, affirms the new emphasis on repentance John has brought to this Jewish rite by himself participating in the baptism of John. The participation of Jesus in the baptismal event can be most easily understood as the Son of Man, as Jesus often referred to himself, anticipates the day when he will become the Sin-bearer while simultaneously endorsing the preparatory process of John's ministry in announcing Christ's kingdom.

In the Septuagint, the greek word "baptismos" is used to refer to the Jewish rites of the act of washing itself. In the New Testament the word used is "baptisma" which "always incorporates into its meaning the entire scope of the redemptive significance of the incarnate presence of Christ"(Dr. Clarence Bass)

In the New Testament, the same word is used in an entirely spiritual context. For example, Jesus (subequent to his baptism by John says, "I have a baptism to be baptized with" (Luke 12:59), and "Can you drink of the cup that I drink of and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? (Mark 10:38, Matt 20:22). The New Testament makes a strong contrast between John's water baptism and the subsequent baptism of the Holy Spirit. Passages such as Mark 1:8, Matt 3:11, Luke 3:16, Acts 1:4, and 11:16 all show this emphasis.

Throughout the epistles there is growing emphasis on the redemptive, transformative and empowering dimensions of spiritual baptism. (Romans 6:3-5)

Finally, scripture emphasizes the essentials of faith including the dimensions of "one baptism" Eph 4:5 which we would understand to be the essential baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The greatest challenge to the salvationist today, is to reverently respect, the various manners in which God the Holy Spirit is pleased to work through a variety of understandings of doctrine and sacramental practice throughout many denominations, seek and encourage fellowship and spiritual growth among all of God's people, and humbly assert not the supremacy of non-sacramental observance, but simply the validity of it as a legitimate posture within the various expressions of Christian faith and practice.

Chosen to be a Soldier

By John Cleary

Chosen to be a Soldier,
Chosen by God.
Chosen to be a Soldier,
Washed in His Blood.
Chosen to be a Soldier,
Lost ones to save.
Chosen to be a Soldier
In the Army brave.

How long is it since any of you have sung that chorus in a meeting. When you sang it, was it as part of a 'good old Army' nostalgia trip, or as a central expression of identity.

'Then who wouldn't be a soldier,
An Army soldier, a valiant soldier,
Every soldier goes to war,
That's what we've enlisted for,
And we don't want any dummies in the Army'

How about the confidence, almost arrogance of that lyric? Yet it is utterly innocent and free of guile. Here is a vision of belief and confidence. This is a song written and sung by a winning team... A team sure in its vision certain of its goals and convinced in its world redeeming relevance.

Who would write such a song today without a whiff of irony and scepticism?

'Of this Great Church of the Living God, we claim and have ever claimed, that we of The Salvation Army are an integral part and element – a living fruit bearing branch in the True Vine'. (Bramwell Booth)¹

This statement of Bramwell Booth is quoted at the head of Chapter Ten 'The People of God' in Salvation Story Study Guide (SSSG). It contains the major dilemma facing the Salvation Army today. Who and what are we - a Church or a Movement? Part of the Universal body of Christ, yes, but what kind of part? - A fully-fledged denomination, or part denomination, part para-church agency? Depending on the answers to these questions, another set of questions arises. What is the nature of membership in the Salvation Army, and what does it mean to be a Soldier? These questions and others were among those addressed in The International Spiritual Life Commission Report, reproduced in SSSG². In recognition of the unresolved nature of these questions SSSG states, "There are differing understandings of what the Army is, not only outside our

¹ *Salvation Story Study Guide*; IHQ, London, 1999;p89

² *Salvation Story Study Guide*; IHQ, London, 1999; p113-9

ranks, but sometimes within them. We need clarity about our identity and our mission without which we cannot be effective.”³

The Spiritual Life Commission, recognising change was happening by default across the organisation, recommended that means be explored for recognising believers, who do not choose to be soldiers, as members of the Body of Christ in the Salvation Army. It is in recommendation nine, and can be found in Salvation Story Study Guide.

Things are changing rapidly; soldiership no longer has the resonance it once had. Some would be happy to see the concept drift away like many other distinctives of The Salvation Army, as a symbol of an age that has past and a time that was different. Yet I wish to suggest that soldiership is much more than a useful device whose time has past, and that in fact how we deal with the concept of soldiership will be critical to the future of this part of the Church we call The Salvation Army. I wish to further suggest that if there were not such a concept, someone, somewhere in the church would be busy developing something remarkably like it.

The Dilemma. Why is Soldiership an issue?

First there are Cultural reasons.

The external culture has changed. When the Salvation Army was created the military was high fashion, and life was lived on the streets. Life was lived in communities, not in nuclear families. People loved to belong. This was the highpoint of the great lodges, such as the Masons, the Oddfellows, the Ancient order of Buffaloes, The Rechabites and many more. For young people, organisations like the Scouts and Guides were being established. You were defined in society by your participation in all those sorts of groups that gave you access to networks of support and influence, because you needed them to survive.

Such was the climate that organisations could put strong fences around membership. People had to meet certain criteria before they could be admitted. And people were very much prepared to sign up and endure what today are seen as the most eccentric of rituals to obtain the goods which that society promised. Hence the paraphernalia of freemasonry and all the other lodges.

People used to believe in order to belong. They were so keen to belong they were prepared to jump through the most demanding and even eccentric criteria for membership.

How times have changed.

The Military, except in certain circumstances, is not the aspirational it once was. Two world wars and the threat of nuclear destruction have seen to that. Today life at its most successful is represented by privatised wealth, held behind the closed doors of the

³ *Salvation Story Study Guide*; IHQ, London, 1999; p94

nuclear family, fed on a personalised multi-media diet of vicarious risk delivered by a tube into your living room. A diet whose richness is determined purely by your capacity to pay. Life in community is seen as an extra, or even a burden, in the pursuit of private, personal fulfilment.

The end of life is no longer the good of the group or community, in which your good is also guaranteed. It is now the good of the individual to which the community must be subservient. If the organisation does not meet your personal needs you leave and find another or maybe none. You are conditioned by the media to 'try before you buy'. We will no longer accept the merits of an organisation on face value. Today people wish to belong first, to decide whether the organisation meets their personal needs, and then to commit themselves. But that commitment is always conditional on the organisation's capacity to deliver the goods. People are consumers; organizations like the church are commodities. Now people demand to belong in order that they might believe.

In summary, People used to believe in order to belong. Now they belong in order to believe.

This sociological shift adds greatly to the burden of organisations like The Salvation Army who exercise strong entry control through criteria such as soldiership, before the privileges of full membership can be offered.

To this general cultural burden is added an additional 'post-modern' sensibility - distrust of institutions. Institutional religion is on the nose. Irrespective of the rights and wrongs, the events of recent months surrounding the scandal of the clergy and child sexual abuse, serve simply to demonstrate how deep that institutional distrust is.

It is interesting to note that historically in Australia, The Salvation Army has been singularly exempt from that contempt. The Salvation Army seems to have escaped the odium associated with institutional organised faith. I think this is because we have been seen to be first identified with the suffering, and not concerned with theological correctness and point scoring. The public function of the uniform has here served us well. This faith of the public however cannot be taken for granted.

Organisations, like churches, are now just commodities in the rich supermarket of communities. The Salvation Army is one that stands out. However, its distinctive brand, whilst recognisable and as loved as Vegemite, is one which very few people have a taste for.

These are some of the broad cultural issues confronting the issue of membership in The Salvation Army.

Internal Issues

I wish to suggest however that, partly as a result of this pressure, and the general changes resulting in the way we think about The Salvation Army as part of the Church

Universal, a number of issues are being exposed which centre on this question of membership and are of central significance to the future of the movement.

I am not the first to raise these questions. This is but one contribution to a continuing debate. Nevertheless, a debate must be held and resolved quickly because the future of the Army as a distinct part of the body of Christ is at stake.

The pressure is beginning to tell already. As local corps, in an attempt to make themselves relevant to their local community, have begun to de-emphasise the movement's distinctives, so they are exposing the issue. If a corps begins to call itself a community church, why should it be setting radically more difficult hurdles to membership than any other local community church? Soldiership and uniform become direct impediments to the evangelical enterprise of making the congregation as familiar and comfortable as possible to the local community. If, the argument goes, we can make ourselves more attractive by doing away with our branding as a corps and call ourselves a church, why don't we do away with the other brand distinctives such as soldiership and uniform. Moreover, in this context who can argue but that they are right?

In the past couple of years several corps officers have approached me concerned about how to deal with aspects the issue. It is usually expressed in terms of alcohol and Adherency. First is the number of young people growing up in the Salvation Army who wish to be identified as Christians yet do not wish to undertake the disciplines of Soldiership and uniform wearing, because they wish to drink alcohol, and do not see a scriptural problem with it. Then there are those, who wish to regard the Salvation Army as their Christian home in the full sense, and yet they are denied membership, because membership is tied to soldiership, and as people who in the normal course of life drink alcohol or smoke, they are barred from its benefits. Adherency does not meet their needs, for though it satisfies the organisation's desires to count heads in a meaningful way, it goes nowhere to satisfying their desire to be acknowledged as fully participating members of the community of faith called the Salvation Army.

Colonel Earl Robinson highlighted the dilemma in the Officer Magazine of Feb 2002. Let me quote:

"A friend of mine decided to change her place of worship from The Salvation Army to a local Baptist church when she married a person of that denomination. She chose, however, to retain her name on the soldiers' roll of her last corps rather than change church membership. That did not make any difference to the areas of ministry into which she was invited in the new church – as a member of the choir, the worship team, and in taking up other areas of leadership. She was apparently fully recognised as a member of the Body of Christ in that congregation and able to be involved fully at her new place of worship, even though she did not become baptised by water or sign any documents about new allegiance.

That is somewhat different from what has normally occurred in The Salvation Army...”!

Indeed, you might say he is putting it modestly. If the husband had come over from the Baptists he would have had to jump through a number of hoops in order to participate. He would have had to satisfy not just the ordinary criteria of membership in the Body of Christ called the Church. He would have had to have satisfied the criteria of ‘super-Christian’ and meet the base line standards of soldiership such as total abstinence to enjoy the privileges of Salvationist membership.

The problem has arisen in part because The Salvation Army has begun to acknowledge ‘de Jure’ what has been for the best part of a century the practice ‘de facto’ that we are no longer a para-church movement with specific aims and objectives to be achieved within the Body of Christ, but are now acknowledging we are a denomination with the responsibility of meeting the holistic needs of a worshipping community. Needs and aspirations that stretch well beyond the specific mission imperatives of a para-church movement.

As St. Paul declares, within the body of Christ there people with all sorts of gifts, evangelists, prophets, teachers, - not all are cut out to be soldiers. Specialist criteria of membership so appropriate to the aims of a para-church movement are neither practically nor theologically acceptable for a denomination, which by definition must be a reflection of the whole body.

Once we own we are a discrete denomination, the issue of membership becomes critical. If this membership issue is not resolved we could not only find ourselves short on members, we could find ourselves heading into the dangerous waters of exclusivism and sectarianism and ultimately heresy within the wider church.

This is in part the reason why I suggest William and Bramwell never wished to see us as a distinct denomination and also why Salvationist leadership, even up until the present, are rather shy on the issue.

In his book ‘Who are These Salvationists’ Shaw Clifton spends some time with the question. He points out that it has been very hard to pin down the movement on the issue. He says the acknowledgement is as late as 1998 publication of Salvation Story and even here it has to be inferred. However if you check ‘Chosen to Be a Soldier’ first published in 1977 says ‘For practical purposes the Salvation Army has increasingly come to be the church of its own people and of large sections of the people’⁴

Historical Background

The technical word for this discussion in church terms is Ecclesiology. A very useful term for this debate in the context of The Salvation Army. According to the Salvation

⁴ *Chosen to be a Soldier*, IHQ, London, 1977 p64

Story Study Guide, "The term comes from the Greek word *ekklesia* (the church) and *logos* (word, mind, or doctrine). The word *ekklesia* is comprised of two other Greek words: *ek* (out of) and *kaleo* (I call). The word was used in the pre-Christian period to indicate the summons of an army for battle."⁵

Why have we got ourselves into a pickle? We have come to see membership and soldiership as the same thing. Was this always the case and should it remain so? Why do we see membership and soldiership as the same thing?

The truth is the issue of membership of the Body of Christ was never properly sorted out. It is part of that group of issues like the sacraments, which we have held in suspension. Historically it was never sorted out by that other great para-church organisation from which the Army sprang, Methodism. John Wesley established the movement called Methodists as a para-church organisation within the Anglican Church.

According to David Bebbington in 'Evangelicalism in Modern Britain' the whole issue of ecclesiology was confused.

'The relegation of principle relative to pragmatism was evident in church order. Methodism, as some of its nineteenth century defenders delighted to insist, was totally flexible on this subject. Wesley and his adjutants initially had 'no plan at all'... Above all, Methodists did not have to be Christians. Admission as full class members was open to all who sought the forgiveness of sins and not just to those already converted. ...There was no correspondence between joining the Methodist organisation and entering the true church. The organisation was merely an environment suitable to gaining converts.'⁶

So, should we just let the whole thing go? Simply establish criteria for membership and let soldiership quietly slip into history. Another solution could be to remove from soldiership its distinctive demands and simply allow soldiership the same criteria as membership. This amounts to the same thing, consigning the concept of soldiership to the shrine of memory.

Priesthood of All Believers

My answer to this rhetorical question is no, no, a thousand times no, a thousand bands and a thousand drums, no! Conceptually, Soldiership is brilliant. It is a practical recognition of the priesthood of all believers delivered with style and real substance. It came out of a Wesleyan theology that had confidence in the dynamic and continuing love of the creator for the whole of creation. It enabled an ecclesiology, which was flexible and responsive to the moment. In fact it was an ecclesiology which was in the true sense radical, going back to the root of the word *ekklesia*.

⁵ *Salvation Story Study Guide*; IHQ, London, 1999; p92

⁶ Bebbington D, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, Baker, Michigan 1989, p66

The idea of uniforms was not unique to Booth and the movement as is pointed out by Ken Inglis in his book 'The Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England':

'Booth was by no means the first crusader in Victorian England to dress his followers in a uniform and organize them as an army. The 'Shakespearean Association of Leicester Chartists' under Thomas Cooper, the 'Hallelujah Bands' from which Booth gained some recruits, and the temperance organisation known as the 'Blue Ribbon Army', all preceded the Salvation Army, and may each have helped inspire it'.⁷

Nor was the idea of an activist corps acting as the spearhead of vanguard of widespread social change unique. It was an idea explored and developed by social thinkers as diverse as Marx and Lenin, in the concept of the 'Vanguard of the Proletariat', and Hitler in the militarisation of the whole of society.

What William Booth recognised instinctively rather than intellectually was the power of such an idea wedded to the deep theological power of the priesthood of all believers. And what power it unleashed. Here was a concept that took you from the gin palace via the mercy seat to a new life, with steps for guidance at every stage along the way. Within days you were converted from a life of pointlessness and powerlessness to involvement and activism in a world-redeeming mission, in which you had an identifiable place. The details today seem excessive and extravagant. Those early soldiery manuals which to us in Corps Cadets in the early 1960's appeared so quaint, now stand in the light of history as brilliant examples of practical guides to rebuilding lives of the sort that the 'Aerobics for Jesus' generation is only just beginning to comprehend. This is work of intuitive genius. It has power. Such power and commitment is desperately needed in today's church for today's world.

How do we recover the genius?

First we need to grasp fully the implications of what Earl Robinson is suggesting. The implication of what Earl Robinson is saying is that if you wish to express your commitment to the body of Christ through The Salvation Army, then you should be able to be a member on the same basis that you can be a member of any other part of the body of Christ called the Church Universal. The Spiritual Life Commission did not grasp this nettle; perhaps because they are afraid of what this will do to the concept of soldiery, 'no-one will become soldiers any more!!' Well perhaps they won't become soldiers because you are no longer teaching what soldiery is. Perhaps the approach that needs to be taken is – that soldiery is a sub-category of membership, it is a special calling within membership.

This helps us in a couple of ways. It restores or regularises our position with regards the rest of the church universal over the nature of membership in the Church. Repent, believe, be born again. Once you do that you are in, you are a member, like any other section of the body of Christ of which we are but a part.

⁷ Inglis K, *The Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England*. P181

To those people who fear that in going down this path we will lose the concept of soldiership, I suggest if we stick to the concept of soldiership as membership, soldiership is dead anyway, in all but name, completely dead.

Introducing a concept of membership as distinct from soldiership regularises our position with the wider church and opens the possibility of a revival of soldiership within the concept of membership.

In church order terms, Salvation Army structures are very similar to the Episcopal structures of the major denominations such as the Catholic and Anglican, and some Methodists. The structure works through several orders of ministry: Bishops, Priests, Deacons, and People. This is directly comparable to the Salvation Army structure where functionally you could compare Bishops with D.C.s and above, and Priests with Officers.

This seemed to be the rationale carried into effect when ordination was introduced as a term used for officer commissioning in the late 1970's. What was at that time left unaddressed was the issue of lay orders of ministry. Traditional Episcopal structures recognise an order between full priesting and lay membership, and that is the order of Deacon. The deacon is a lay person who has taken certain vows and makes certain commitments in time and resources to the church short of full priesting. The parallels with soldiership are not hard to draw.

The soldiers of The Salvation Army are a fighting diaconate. A diaconate far larger and more successfully deployed over the best part of a century than any comparable model within the protestant tradition. In the Catholic Church it fits comfortably with such lay orders as the Christian Brothers. The Anglican Church recognised this over 100 years ago, when in an act of direct imitation they established 'The Church Army' as a distinct order within Anglicanism.

We have to find a way of reviving soldiership.

Perhaps one way towards this is to formally recognise what de-facto has been the case for almost a century. We are a distinct denomination and need to accommodate the needs of a far wider group of communicant members than a concept like Soldiership does. Soldiership will be killed if it continues to be tied to membership. Why? Because you will be forced to hold your reasonable demands on soldiers to that of the lowest common denominator of your members. Similarly membership will continue to decline if it is pegged as soldiership because less people will see soldiership as necessary to the living of an ordinary Christian life. Both of these propositions are unarguable, they are happening before our eyes and will continue to do so unless the position is changed.

Would it not be great if a C.O. could know of her soldiers at the start of the year, that she had a committed portion of their time given in stewardship to the Army? That the soldiers had said from the beginning of the year 'my spiritual work and worship will be in

and through the Salvation Army and to that end I will commit to the Army X hours a week. That's giving soldiership meaning, that's giving the corps officer a real force, that's giving a movement back the ability to wage war.

Uniform

Clearing up the issue of membership also helps with another issue, uniform.

Some are saying that the uniform is a sacrament. However, I want to say that the Salvation Army is a non-sacramental organization for very good reasons that have to do with the human tendency to wish to make objects sacred. We sacralize symbols. We turn things into Gods, or images of Gods and hence render them untouchable. This is why the early Army declared itself non-sacramental. In sacramentalizing things, we allow their symbolic value to gain primacy over their practical utility. To sacramentalize the uniform is to fix the movement in aspic. It will become impossible to change or modify or relate to the real world because it is meant to represent the unchanging values of the eternal world. This is nonsense.

The uniform was created for very practical reasons. It was:

1. Non-discriminatory. Class distinctions disappear. Rich and poor look the same.
2. Cheap
3. Practical
4. Durable
5. Distinctive
6. Attractive.

How many of those would you tick with regard to Salvation Army uniform today? Cheap? No. Practical? No. Durable? Yes, at a price and if only worn once or twice a week. Distinctive? Absolutely. Attractive, well perhaps to some, but certainly not to the bulk of the public who generally regard Army uniforms as quaint relics of a different age. This list may not score very high on the early Army quotient for uniform.

Is there anything wrong with uniforms per se?

What does every kid wear every day. – Logo's, almost everything they wear is branded from the Nike shoes, the tee shirt, the windcheater, to the Levi jeans. Kids love uniforms.

The Salvation Army's Australian Employment Agency, Eplus, wear contemporary office uniforms with a Red Shield logo. The staff is pleased to wear them. The badge is not the issue. It is the style and type of uniform that is the issue. The question is what sort of uniform, and for what purpose? Even such conservative public institutions as the Military and the Police up-date their uniforms more often than The Salvation Army.

Our uniforms are our most immediate symbol of social engagement. That is what the public see when they think Salvation Army. Our uniforms need to be tied back to their foundational relevance to the world.

If you were serious about uniform you could go to the Commissioner and say, 'Commissioner we think uniform is important for the Army and we love it. We want to ensure that it continues to be worn by the maximum number of soldiers and is identified on the maximum number of occasions. We wish to establish a standing committee on uniform.' The brief would be to review the uniform every five years according to a set of criteria similar to those outlined above and come up with appropriate changes.

If this is considered too adventurous the Army could leave the 'dress blues' untouched for IHQ approved changes, and institute a practical 'undress' uniform that would do for the real work and witness of the movement.

Uniforms must once again become evidence of engagement not symbols of separateness.

Again, as with soldiership, these changes are happening now and will accelerate by default. The leadership of the movement can either get in front of the game and guide it, or simply let it run and pick up the bits later. To do the latter would be a sign of utter corporate failure.

The Future

People need to be attracted back into communities of belief. However, they will not enter communities with strong barriers to entry. The commercial experience of the past half-century has taught them that their ultimate allegiance is not to the group but to the self. The most appealing religious fashion of the moment is not found in community but in self-realisation. Its most extreme Christian expression is found in the so-called 'prosperity gospel'.

Churches built around community values are going to have to struggle profoundly with this dilemma. For The Salvation Army with its super-Christian criteria for membership and not particularly attractive compulsory dress code, further states that to enjoy the full benefits of belonging you have to jump through a series of unappealing hoops which other churches do not put in the path.

We will have to respond by opening many of our traditional units. This will inject a healthy dose of realism into our evangelical enterprise. Bands and Songster brigades for example, have long since ceased to be the front line of our evangelical enterprise and have become tools of pastoral ministry. Opening them to wider participation will enhance that role and allow reorientation towards more effective evangelical weapons.

We are going to have to give people good reason to take on the disciplines of soldiership. That discussion goes to a much wider agenda than can be encompassed here. But just to touch on it by way of ending this part of the discussion. The issues, which caused Catherine and William Booth to shape The Salvation Army out of the Christian Mission, have not changed.

The old parish structures that Booth regarded as insufficient to meet the evils of his time, are even less relevant today. The great issues of Godlessness, and the saturation of the cities in squalor have not diminished, they have now moved from the east end of London onto a world stage.

The Wesleyan spirit of evangelical revival was indissolubly linked to a passion for social reform. The holy life was one lived in and for the world, as Wesley once said, 'There is no holiness but social holiness'. It was this connection that gave the early Army its energy and drive. It also produced its joy and confidence. The devil's kingdom could be brought down, literally. The 'Forts of Darkness' could be identified in every town and suburb. They were not just the brothels and gin palaces, but the structures and institutions that drove people to the gin palaces. As Salvationists worked for the eternal salvation of their neighbours, they also fought beside them for the reform of the sweatshops, prisons and streets in which they lived and worked.

Today on the world stage all those issues confront us. And all are overshadowed by the daunting prospect of Global Environmental destruction. Issues of Child Prostitution, Industrial Exploitation, lack of access to Law for ordinary folk, discrimination, industrial disease, poverty, hunger. All are written on a global scale and all can be traced back to the same issue of material greed, which underpinned the Darkest England Scheme. Similarly they can all be overcome by the same world-redeeming change of heart that is central to the mission of the Salvation Army. But what is needed is an Army. A passionate priesthood of all believers. A fighting diaconate flowing out of the membership.

What's the use of being a soldier if you are not fighting a battle? The sexual exploitation of children was a historic seminal issue for the early Salvation Army. In February 2002, Child Exploitation was on the cover of Time Magazine. It is a major issue of international concern. Yet, on this issue today Salvation Army is nowhere to be seen.

Yet, The Salvation Army has the structures and machinery to deal with such issues better than any other church including the Catholic Church. We can marshal forces worldwide. In our structure the General tomorrow, could raise this as a major issue, have territories determine it as a priority, and get Divisional commanders to co-ordinate through their officers to get soldiers involved in local branches of the Campaign to End Child prostitution. If there are no local branches soldiers in the local corps can help establish one. This is core Salvationist methodology applied to a core Salvationist issue.

No other church could do it. They would have to spend months working through local committees diocesan committees, state committees, national policy bodies, and finally national assemblies, to get such a policy response up and running. And then someone at a local area could decide they don't like the cultural or political leanings or personal style of someone running a group in their area and say, 'we're not going to have anything to do with them.'

The whole rationale of the Army's structure is designed so that it may respond quickly to spiritual and physical crises around the globe. The creation of that capacity was the chief motivation for the transformation of a Mission into an Army. Its effect was to unleash such power through the priesthood of all believers as to create the shock troops of a world-redeeming crusade. The battle's just begun.

I opened with an old chorus let me end with one. The tune may be dated but the lyrics are as profoundly relevant as on the day they were written.

The World is needing us, Christ is leading us
Comrades let us be true.
His love constraining us, prayer sustaining us,
Faith will carry us through.
His service calling us none appalling us,
Deeds of Valour we'll do.
For souls are needing us, Christ is leading us
Comrades we will be true

The Married Women's Ghetto Rant

by Danielle Strickland

So here's the rub. There were many married women officers at the high council and not one of them was nominated. Do we think that out of all the women officers represented at the high council that only single women have the gift of leadership? Are married women less capable, less inspiring, less able? Most would insist, with some trepidation, that no married women possess the experience necessary for the Generalship. The rough part is this: they would be right. This problem is what might be called "the women's ghetto of The Salvation Army".

When Martin Luther King Jr. was trying to stand up for the rights of the urban poor in the northern part of the United States, he ran into a movement of young black ghettoized youth that had assembled themselves into an organization known as the Black Panthers. They were a group of militant young people, so jaded and cynical that they scoffed at King's non-violent protest methods. They wanted something done about the injustice they endured – they wanted it done now.

The injustice they experienced was somehow more humiliating than the black man in the south because it was in the land of 'freedom'. In other words they technically could be free but found themselves still trapped and bound by circumstances and stuck in a ghetto. Even though they could hear about the freedom and see the freedom and even sometimes taste the freedom, they couldn't live it. This infuriated them.

Married women officers are unlike the slaves in the south. They are more like the black ghettoized youth in the north. They are told they are free, and, indeed, they are free in many respects. They are free to learn, to grow, and to lead on a basic level (especially as Corps Officers), BUT they cannot have the freedom to truly lead in the full potential or capacity they offer in the current system of The Army because of the women's ghetto. By women's ghetto I mean that part of the system of The Salvation Army that allows men to exercise leadership within the formal system while deploying their wives into corresponding positions over other women in a weird parallel universe. The end goal in this corporate structure is to be married to a Commissioner – and ultimately be the wife of the General. It has no bearing on the election of a General whether or not his wife is even good at her job – as the position is not functional but positional. By that I mean it is not a merited position and is not considered an appointment providing leadership experience to become General (in fact, the wife of the General is the only Commissioner not allowed to attend high council!). Sure, a married women might one day aspire to be married to a man that can take her to higher positions on the totem pole of the women's ghetto. It may be a nice place for her – but it does not matter if she is qualified, able, or even gifted for the appointment. Indeed, all the women ghetto positions in the world cannot offer a reasonable opportunity for women to learn, cultivate, or prove leadership qualities enough to get out of the ghetto.

I am, of course, on dangerous ground. To even speak about these things so plainly will cause some leaders to consider me a whiner; will permit unsympathetic male officers to

disdain me as a femi-nazi; and might persuade women who have bought into the ghetto and find comfort in it to treat me as a threat. But I think it's time we, at least, spoke plainly.

Consider my life. I am a Corps Officer, celebrated in our system as a front-line, leadership position. I am free to teach, preach, lead, and learn. I can sort out all my leadership skills alongside my husband and we can 'share the load' and work it out together. This is the most extreme freedom I will ever experience in my officership. This is, in actuality, the promise realized... but it's all downhill from here for me. It is true that the organization chants in response to this rant, "see, look at the front line... look at the trenches – Corps Officers are married women. They are leaders. They are free."

Here enters the illusion that eventually gives birth to the anger. Every successful Corps Officer has proved his/her leadership abilities on the 'ground' and is thus considered able to offer leadership to larger areas of command. The problem is that the leadership at a Corps level is only credited to the male officer. "Oh, that can't be!" you lament. "That's not true – surely a shared leadership command would be credited to team leadership not just the male." But alas, it is true. Women leaders – even after proving themselves in front-line appointments as a fully functioning, fully able, fully contributing Corps officers – active in the leading of the Corps Council, PR in the community, structure, and systems of the Corps, leadership training, preaching and teaching and training – are sent to the women's ghetto and their corresponding husbands are given a job that is directly related to their 'success' as a leader on the Corps level.

Then you never hear from married women leaders again – unless you head to a women's retreat! It seems we can't match our walk with our talk.

The cause of this current system of imprisoning effective women leaders for generations is unknown. Booth was known to promote married women according to their giftedness, not their married-ness... call him crazy! But even Booth ran into problems from the mainstream-informed officers in his ranks: In 1888, addressing a meeting in Exeter Hall, William Booth said, "We have a problem. When two officers marry, by some strange mistake in our organization, the woman doesn't count."

From what I can piece together it has been a subtle yet increasing theological and systemic shift that has managed to render a huge section of The Army's leaders unusable and at best very limited to the larger war front. The Army has hamstrung itself, fighting a war against a well-armed enemy with an arm and a leg tied behind its back.

Now, there are officers who believe that 'headship' is a scriptural principle and as a direct result keep married women in submissive positions as leaders. Married women officers themselves often have been taught and continue to believe this lie. When I have challenged it I realize that not only does The Army perpetuate it by its current system but has probably even established it by previous practice.

I don't have time to dissect the necessary principles on women in leadership here. Suffice to say, Catherine Booth did it a hundred and thirty years ago in a little book entitled *Female Ministry* (which no recently commissioned officer, male or female, seems to have read), and recently Loren Cunningham (founder and president of YWAM) along with David Hamilton (Biblical scholar) offers a great overview of the new world winning strategy called *Why Not Women?* Good question.

I've met many capable married women officers – and an alarming amount of them are on anti-depressants. I've got a hunch they wouldn't be if they weren't so angry about their apparent freedom lost in a slave-like reality. The Apostle Paul offers that health in the body is in part due to letting people use their gifts. If someone has the gift of leadership, Paul suggests a good, godly idea – let them lead (Romans 12). I think he's on to something.

I've recently seen a movie that reminds me of the situation. It was called *Jarhead*. I don't recommend the movie but it may offer us some advice. It was about some soldiers trained, equipped, and sent to the front to fight in a war. The problem was that they were never deployed. The government that sent them wouldn't give them permission to engage the enemy (they were caught up in political talks) and so the soldiers sat on the ground. Trained, equipped, and stuck. Not able to engage the enemy, not able to shoot, or fight, or even die. So they started doing other things. Trying to keep in shape, wasting time on the decorations in their bunkers, learning to cook in different ways, and getting angry at each other. It was a picture of soldiers stuck. And every married women officer-leader lives the same reality. So we busy ourselves on the ground.... Taking courses, watching our weight, picking on each other, over-organizing every women's event and project... all the while simply trying to create some meaningful existence for ourselves, convincing ourselves that it isn't our fault that we can't lead, but having no way to prove it.

Now I've had this conversation enough times with enough people to tell you the responses. **Why do you need to lead on a positional level...are you hungry for power?** This is a stupid response. It suggests that every leader wanting to stretch her ability to lead is hungry for power. It is an argument already lost by the practice of many godly men who long to lead well and lead bigger to mobilize forces and take more ground for God. Stop insulting us by considering any godly ambition for women leadership to be a 'Jezebel' type of control thing. It's embarrassing.

How about this one: **the women's ministry department is a valid leadership area.** Yeah. Good one. It's so valid that even the top dogs in the ghetto can't qualify to lead The Army, and any single women General can add the job description or World President of Women's Organizations to her responsibility as international leader of The Salvation Army. Nice.

Here's another: The Army's great strength is in '**team leadership**'. Married couples should work together and the women shouldn't need a position to be able to lead with her husband. Yeah, this one really works, except when it comes to any administrative

position – where there is only one head, and except when it comes to an organizational culture that dismisses women from the boardroom and power positions. It's such a nice offer to let us women 'influence' the final decision made by men anyway. No signing authority, no positional authority, and no real authority means no authority. Let's be honest.

Don't get me started on **headship**. Anyone who still holds to this view needs to check their own head and read the Bible again. Here's a hint: look deeper. Not only that, but our movement has already established Army theology – (even if it remains unimplemented), so if you believe in headship limiting women leaders – join another movement.

It has the potential to wreck marriages. Nice marriage. There is nothing like a union that insists on one of the members stuffing her gifts and abilities down inside of her for fear of her partner looking smaller in light of them. This behaviour insults the purpose of marriage, and makes men look bad. Grow up and get a healthy ego. Stop needing your women to be smaller than you to feel good about yourselves. Actually, to take a more pastoral note: get some counselling.

I've heard there were some attempts to make some married women officers department heads and one couple was called in to see if they would accept. This is insulting. I've never heard of a couple being called in to see if it was okay to offer promotions to men. Never. Ever. The marriage is never considered, and often is compromised when it comes to promotions. Think about it. The Commissioner calls me up and says, "we've been thinking about promoting your husband but were concerned about how that would affect your marriage. Would it be okay with you?" Yeah, that'll happen. But when it has potential to work the other way – we ask first and then call it off! What happened to equality... what happened to the greater work of the war trumping our personal preference? Come on.

Women don't want to lead. Yeah, sure. That's a good one. The women's ministry department in Canada has the most success at getting converts and then building disciples by making soldiers. This means that even from the ghetto women are leading and leading well. Perhaps the shrinking programme departments around the western world should take note. There might just be a married women who could grow a whole programme department... imagine!

While I'm on this one... does it matter if a male officer doesn't want to lead? Don't sign up. Kick women out who don't pull their weight. Don't use lame women leaders as an excuse to paint us all with the same brush. It's pathetic. Honestly I've known some male officers who lack the muster to work hard... doesn't seem to make a difference on the ones who do... hmmm.

Here's the best one of them all. **In many cultures and situations this is not culturally acceptable.** I can't help but chuckle as I imagine Catherine Booth in Victorian England scandalizing the country and even herself as she spoke the scriptures publicly for the

first time. It was as counter-England in her century as you could find. Now go with me to America as 16 year-old Eliza Shirley leads the charge or how 'bout The Marechale opening the Army as a young WOMAN in France. And on and on I could go *ad nauseum*. We have never been a culturally relevant movement... we've been the very opposite. We were a threat to the established church culture, we were a circus to the thinking class, and we were a sign and a wonder for the average person on the scene. When did we start thinking cultural sensitivity was our calling? If there is an evil part of culture – let's do everything we can to offend it. I suggest that subjecting women to unequal treatment and opportunity is an evil to be challenged, not a relevancy to be followed. Let's go buy ourselves some courage and return to the war ready to actually fight!

How do we change it? With so many women convinced of bad theology and bad practice, how do we turn the tide now?

Here are a few ideas:

Teach good theology. Make every officer read *Why Not Women?* by Loren Cunningham to start. Not just the women – but all officers. We must teach on this subject. If we don't give proper theology our officers will get it somewhere else. Most likely it will be the Baptists and most mainline Evangelicals teaching them **WRONG** theology on women. **THIS IS IMPORTANT.** What we think affects what we do. So this is not just a method problem but a thinking one.

Make changes FAST. We can't wait. When my husband thinks of his potential and future he grins. When I think of it I grimace. It's killing my dreaming potential for my place in The Army and the call God has on my life. Really. It sucks. Change it fast. Give many married women, whether they want to or not, leadership positions. Give them a chance to succeed and give them a chance to fail. Just give them a chance.

Use separate appointments/or separate tracking early. Follow the gifts and skills of officers. Do something easy to make this happen. Please don't make another committee to discuss it. Just have married couples give a report of how they divide up the command and what their gifts are. It's not rocket science. Get to know your leaders. Do you know how many times a leader has responded to husband on a letter I wrote him? It's insulting. I don't even have the same last name. They just aren't listening.

Dismantle the women's ghetto. Put the women's department where it belongs, in Program. Give officers appointments that match their giftedness, and/or capabilities.

Dismiss officers who don't work. Get on it. They are a drag on our system, our culture and our potential. It doesn't matter their gender. Incompetence should be rewarded with a new job (just not with us).

Make it a must. Imbalance cannot be corrected without a counterweight. Create a reasonable minimum requirement of married women department heads in each territory. Do this for a minimum of five years to correct the initial imbalance. Whole countries do

this in the workforce to create an equal setting from which the 'best man for the job' becomes more than a literal description of what's happening. We should be leading the world – transforming the culture, and this will only happen by intention.

Invite good married women officers to **actually speak at non-women events**. I know a few if you need some suggestions.

Most of all, and above all let's stop making excuses. **Let's stop pretending**. Let's be honest, real, and practical about what to do. I know I sound passionate, but it is our whole future we are talking about here. Do I think God can't use me outside of structure and system, promotions and process? Of course not! He just can't use me as General of The Salvation Army. Oh, and any kind of department head leadership possibilities, oh, and anything that might insult my husband's ego, oh and...

Let's start partnering with God in His great design for The Salvation Army... let's really allow our workforce to grow in big proportions overnight and engage the enemy in a fight he hasn't had to bear or to lose for a hundred years now. We did have him scared... now we have him sleeping... but I think if we started marching, full strength we could wake him with a fright. And he just might meet his end at last. Read Psalm 68:11 for details.

Special Note:

My frankness in this article is born out of frustration. It is intended to stimulate thinking and present an honest look at a potentially bleak future for married women in the Army of today. I don't think I'm expressing anything new or anything unsaid by already existing virtual policy... I'm just putting it in words and expressing it out of my own perspective. My experience is in the Canadian Territory – I'm aware that not all territories have the same bias and that some are much better and others much worse. I'm also reminded daily that I have been given a great gift in any opportunity to serve and lead in this great movement. For that, I'm grateful.

I also know there are many great women officers who do lead in the women's ministries departments around the world with great effectiveness. This is not meant to insult you. It's meant to honour your giftedness with the potential to use it fully. I'm grateful for all married women officers who have served from any area they have been given with whole-hearted devotion. You inspire me.

Lolli-Pop Spirituality: Why Youth Are Crashing From Sugar-Coated Christianity

by Steve Bussey

“Show the world a real, living, hardworking, toiling, triumphing religion. Show them anything less and the world will turn around and spit upon it.”

Catherine Booth

“We don’t want God to work unless He can make a theatrical production of it. We want Him to come dressed in costumes with a beard and with a staff. We want Him to play a part according to our ideas. Some of us even demand that He provide a colorful setting and fireworks as well!”

A.W. Tozer

Major Rick Munn, the Program Secretary for The Salvation Army’s USA Eastern Territory recently sent to me an article from Time Magazine (Time, 2006) on how “...sugar-coated, MTV-style youth ministry is over”, and “Bible-based worship is packing teens in the pews.” When I read this article, I resonated with what was being written. In response, I wrote the following as a reflection on the implications of this shift in youth culture. They are going through a spiritual sugar-crash and are looking for something of greater substance that will sustain them through the challenges of living out their faith in a consumer-driven world.

The candy-coated version of youth ministry has been a homogeneous formula that has been sold as youth ministry for the past 25 years. This paradigm of youthwork suggests that the deepest, Maslowian "felt need" of adolescents is *to be entertained*. As a result, hundreds of thousands (if not millions) of dollars have been invested in trying to entertain our kids into the kingdom.

My problem with this strategy is that:

(1) *We will never be able to compete with Hollywood, but Hollywood is competing with us.* A W Tozer speaks about those of us in the church creating "second-rate talent shows" to attempt to match up to what the media industry is able to produce. Therefore we have created an entire Christian consumer subculture which, ironically, has become so lucrative (middle-class Christian teens have quite amount of disposable income!) that even the major media moguls have caught onto this. Most Christian brands from VeggieTales to Youth Specialties products are now subsidiaries of larger companies such as NewsCorp and Viacom. Even Hollywood has noticed how consumer-driven Christians are - and have begun to set aside "Passion dollars" for ideologically Christian stories - because we evangelicals LOVE to be entertained!

At what point do we begin to recognize this as a form of hegemonic co-optation? Are we giving glory to Jesus or to Rupert Murdoch and Sumner Redstone? At what point do we begin to realize that this as a form of gospel domestication? I'm all up for going to the movies and listening to well-produced artists singing songs which reflect the kingdom -

but this is very different to lolli-pop spirituality! If we were in Africa - Christianity that is uncritically synergized with culture is considered syncretism. At what point do we begin to examine our own 'cultural accretions' - our own syncretisms?

The Israelites in the wilderness longed for the benefits of slavery in Egypt - the food and treasure... these were concessionary bribes from Egyptians that were intended to win the consent of the people of Israel. The provision of the slave-lord can often be more alluring than the provision of God... but at the price of what? Our freedom? Our destiny? Similarly, we evangelicals need to seriously begin to ask whether commodified Christianity is going to be what truly satisfies this generation?

The French philosopher Guy Debord refers to America as a "society of the spectacle" (Debord, 1995). Unfortunately, those most attracted to this dangling carrot-spectacle happens to be lucrative evangelicals! The only problem is that this next generation is one of the most consumer-savvy cultures out there - they are "the iPod generation" - a generation that has the market tailored to their own desires. The only problem is that youth are beginning to sniff out that such me-centered worlds ("I"/Me + Pod/Mini-World) are simply a tailor-made prison that brings little satisfaction. In essence, the need for satisfaction is sent into an abusive, spiraling, addictive race to keep up with whatever is the latest and greatest.

If all that we (as the Church) have to offer to youth is a Christian, sanitized, knock-off version of these tailor-made, me-centered consumer prisons, they will quickly reject Christianity. Therefore, the solution for youth ministry is not to create better products and more entertaining programs - what this Time article is articulating is that youth workers are beginning to realize that these are simply hollow solutions to a much deeper need.

(2) "To be Entertained" is a misinformed goal of today's generation. We have missed the mark if we think that youth desperately want to be entertained - as I have mentioned in the previous point, they have, to use a Neil Postman concept, been "amused to death" (Postman, 2005). So what is their deepest desire? I believe there are three deep longings:

(a) They do not want to be entertained - they want to be challenged. Statistics have shown that more and more teens and young adults are getting involved in philanthropic volunteerism. Civic engagement has been steadily increasing as youth become bored with the physically solitary life of X-Boxes, computers, delivery food and Tivo. Recently, one of our students gave up their X-Box and television and came to Project 1:17 choosing to live a solitary, monastic lifestyle - with a focus on being trained to service the poor in the name of Jesus!

I believe that we are in a perfect position in The Salvation Army to take full advantage of this. With our wholistic view of spiritual/social mission, we can meet this need in today's youth. Issues of social justice such as addressing poverty, illiteracy, delinquency, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, human trafficking and the exploring community-based solutions

to the HIV epidemic are among the noble philanthropic causes for an individual to commit themselves to. To do this "in the name of Jesus" - and to share the faith, hope and love available through salvation makes this type of service not just temporally, but also eternally effective.

This generation believes that they can change the world! This can be perceived of as a utopian optimism that will quickly be shattered by the harsh realities of life... or it could also be understood as a cultural opportunity which, when linked to a solid eschatology and missiology, could be seen as a God-moment

(b) They do not want to be entertained - they want to know 'why?' This generation is a deep thinking group of young people. Often, we mistake our youth's refusal to participate in something/or do something as rebellion. Most youth today are driven by a great desire to know "why" they should do things - they require a rationale and logic. A group of people that have been inundated with every form of mass-marketing are provided all sorts of rationales for why they should watch television shows, buy certain brands of clothing, click on certain websites, listen to types of music, etc. etc. that they have become what Maire Messenger Davies has called "critical connoisseurs of media" (Davies, 1997) The critical skills have made them sophisticated in their decision-making process. Gone are the days of "do this because I am telling you to." They need to know why - or they'll not buy in.

Unfortunately, in the church, we have also been going through a bit of an identity crisis. Modernity has swept the church for the past 50 plus years to the point that we celebrate the contemporary or the new that we have become disconnected with our history. As a result, once two or three generations removed from anything that even mildly represents "tradition" - we have no reason why we do what we do! So we end up having Corps which are a hybrid of Salvationism mixed with a hodge podge of contemporary church models ranging from charismatic, conservative, liberal, emergent, mega, homogeneous (ad nauseum!) Our churches look more like a Baskin Robbins after a busy streak than a community that knows who it is!

So what happens when a young person chooses to become a part of our movement? They enter into soldier's classes being trained by people who don't know what a soldier is. They sit in youth programs being run by people who don't know why what they are doing is critical to the mission of The Salvation Army. They worship in Corps that have lost focus, don't understand the difference between a holiness and salvation meeting, and have never done an open air in their lives! When they begin to ask why we are doing what we are doing... they are answered with a "just do it" response. Our youth are not going to stick around long until they are able to understand why we do what we do!!

The Salvation Army used to put out a manual called "The Why and Wherefore of The Salvation Army" - the intention was to give people a rationale for why we do what we do. This needs to be pulled out, dusted off, and taught once again. Like the temple builders who discovered the law afresh, we need to rediscover why we do what we do! We need to re-educate ourselves on the methods behind the madness of what makes

Salvationism so effective. Then we need to be willing to sit down with our youth and have long conversations with them - where they are welcome to test the validity of our rationale. I have confidence in what we are doing so much that I would invite any young leader to test our philosophies and theologies, principles and procedures. Once they discover how solid things are, they will be willing to give their lives to serving gone in this amazing vehicle of the gospel.

At Project 1:17, we have incorporated a soldier's training class. One of our students soldiery was limited to being shown a picture of William Booth and being told what the flag represents!! Majors Bob and Donna Green have been relaying the foundations in this class - seeking to ensure that we send out of our program students who have had the freedom to explore deeply the why's and wherefore's. Philosopher Alisdair MacIntyre has commented that controversy and questioning is not an enemy, but an ally to tradition. Apathy will kill any sense of heritage, but asking why will produce a great sense of allegiance (MacIntyre, 1984).

An entertainment-driven youth work will repel youth from future involvement in our movement. The coliseum was created to distract the masses from asking why questions. Similarly, a trip to the movies might ward off questioning for today, but the insatiable hunger to know 'why' will not be satisfied by cracker-jack prizes - it will only be satisfied by the meat of true, rigorous engagement.

(c) They do not want to be entertained - they want to be engaged by a vibrant and authentic spirituality. A generation that has grown up after the death of God is hungry for authentic spiritual encounter. Physical entertainment will not satisfy metaphysical desires. Catherine Booth was prophetic when she said "show the world a REAL, LIVING, hardworking, toiling triumphant religion. Show them anything less and the world will turn around and spit upon it!"

We are fools if we think that the chocolate-coated, fool's golden calf of entertainment is going to satisfy the deep need for genuine spirituality. One thing which has worried me in recent years, though, is that there has emerged a commodified version of spirituality. Sometimes I will stand in the middle of a youth-oriented worship gathering and turn on the anthropologist that exists in me... and I wonder, "what social experiment am I in???" I have discovered that I can travel from Africa, to England, to the East and West of America, from community to community and find similar patterns of youth worship sub-culture! There are codes to our worship, certain CDs, atmospheric pre-requisites and emotional reactions that parallel themselves in almost all of these communities - almost a global youth spirituality culture. Is this what we understand to be "authentic spirituality?" I think the answer is both yes and no. We all create contexts, ceremonies, traditions, rites of passage - this is the essence of culture. There have been many 'skins' that have clothed the church - globally and historically.

The issue of spirituality has less to do with the skin which embodies worship than it has to do with the posture of the worshipper. Youth are looking for people who can help to lead them into the presence of God. They don't care whether this is being done by

through a tattooed and tongue-pierced worship leader or through a retired Salvation Army officer - what they desperately need is not the cultural skin, but rather the bones and sinew of authentic spirituality! So many youth are being attracted to the most liturgical worship settings - not because "retro ecclesiology" is "in" - but because they are able to meet with people who are deep and contemplative in their spirituality. This is why I will often find myself chatting for hours to a Lt-Colonel Lyle Rader. We might be cultural opposites in our expression of spirituality - but we are attracted to similar things when it comes to the 'sinews and bones of salvationism.'

The Time magazine article recognizes accurately that there is a malcontent with an entertainment-driven youth ministry. Our goal in the Army - I would argue - would be to ensure that in our youth work we are creating opportunities for intentional engagement in local marginalized contexts (maybe a league of mercy for youth); increased critical dialogue on foundational issues of salvationism (Corps Cadets does a great job of this already, but maybe also relooking at soldier's training); and a deepening of our spirituality (24/7 Prayer Weeks, Prayer Weekend etc.).

In The Salvation Army, we saw the redemptive value of the circus-as-context-for-missional-engagement. We used innovation, new technology, entertainment and the absurd as tools-with-a-purpose (Winston, 2002). They were a means to an end. They were part of our Muktifaj contextualization strategy - as William Booth has said, "attract their attention." However, without "gaining their confidence; saving their souls; and training them to live for God and the salvation of the world", attraction is simply an empty opportunity - an iPod without music!

If we are going to allow this generation to "taste and see that the Lord is good" and therefore "...take refuge in Him" (Ps. 34:8), then we must ask ourselves the hard question, "What are we inviting this generation to taste?" My prayer is that youth workers in The Salvation Army will learn to balance the sweetness of culturally adaptable methodologies and tactics with the meatiness of our time-tested biblical and practical orthodoxy. Let's show the world what we're really made of!

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On Liberalism

by Grant Sandercock-Brown

I am not a fan of liberal theology. It's nothing personal. I know some very nice people who are liberals. It's just that for me, an evangelical, underneath our surface similarities there is a radical divergence in our world view.

It's why my liberal friends and I so often talk past each other. I say, 'Of course I believe X, that's what the bible says', and my liberal friend replies 'I know the bible says X but I can't accept it. (This conversation is usually repeated in varying paraphrases). We then walk away, baffled by the other's refusal to accept the obvious truth. However, the bafflement springs, not from insufficient communication skills, but rather mutually exclusive worldviews that will always talk past each other.

I'm not saying that liberal theology is all bad. The liberal social gospel has been a reminder to evangelicals that the gospel is also a call to help others; to make the kingdom a reality in the present. Evangelicalism is too often self-centred. At its worst it becomes, 'I thank God because He is there when I need him'. Sadly, in practice, that seems to be not very often at all.

Nevertheless, Christianity is still about a personal relationship with God. Remember, *Amazing Grace* is written in the first person. We shouldn't just dismiss a theology that embraces what we think, feel and experience. It's hard for me to see how all meaningful theology is not, at some level, personal and experiential. So yes, it's true that modern spirituality is often centred on personal experience. But in a piece of delightful irony, so is classic liberal theology.

For my hypothetical liberal friend, 'I can't accept it' actually means, 'I can't understand miracles or believe in the resurrection or accept that God was involved in inspiring the bible or understand how Peter wrote such good Greek'. What underpins all of that is the word 'I'. Here also is a 'me' centred worldview. Liberal theology is not born out of the failure of the bible under scientific scrutiny or a disproved God. It too is an experiential world view, where my reason trumps the mystery of God. Therefore I must cut God down to size. I may worship God the Father, but he is the father only in the sense that Ingmar Bergman is the father of modern cinema. That is to say, he retired a long time ago and has been rather ineffectual for years, admired but no longer potent. In fact he died a little while ago didn't he?

Isaiah, in chapter 46, mocks the Babylonians for this very thing. 'How can you worship a God of your own invention? You pour out gold, hire a goldsmith and make it into a god, you set it in place and there it stands'. "Though one cries out to it, it does not answer". Of course. Ultimately, the problem with liberalism is that you can't worship a question mark.

British playwright David Hare, a self-confessed agnostic, was asked to address the Lambeth Bishop's conference some years ago. Hare said that while he appreciated the

compassion of liberals in the church, as an observer he was rather surprised by their reluctance to mention their founder. "If Jesus Christ really did rise from the dead, then call me a fanatic but I think you have to tell people about it". He's correct. The centre of an evangelical faith is grounded in the truth of a real and risen Lord.

And because of that truth, by the grace of God, I am a believer. I believe that in Jesus I can know the living God; believe that I may not have all the answers but I serve the One who is the answer. Surely 'me' at the centre of faith is never enough. There are truths beyond my ken.

C.S. Lewis once wrote "Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important". God is God or he is not. For me? I believe.

Are we a Metaphor?

by Anthony Castle

A dangerous assumption

In recent discussion and debate a vital question, or common assumption, about The Salvation Army's identity has arisen. Basically, is TSA's militant metaphor contradictory and irrelevant to the gospel and the culture in which we minister.¹ In my view, the crux of this issue is not the relevance or alleged irrelevance of a militaristic identity, but the assumption that it's metaphorical. I concede that the term 'metaphor' has been employed in the past to explain TSA's militant modus operandi, though I suspect for lack a better word. You see when one assumes that TSA is a metaphor, one perceives its identity, cause and methods as figurative, immaterial, and like any trope of language, open to alteration. If we are a metaphorical army in a metaphorical war, then we are not really an army and this is not a war.

This assumption naturally arises because militancy is but one of many images presented in scripture to give simple description to our faith and practice. After all, it is not as if militancy is the only descriptive image offered in scripture. What of 'reaping the harvest' or 'running the race'? Scripture utilizes agricultural and athletic metaphors frequently, often alongside the militaristic image, and you don't see any other denominations getting carried away and transforming into the Harvesters of Deliverance with uniform overalls and farming equipment. No Athletes of Redemption either, equipped with vestment shorts and ecumenical relay baton. So why does the militant image apply beyond mere literary function. Why do we take the militant perspective, the notion of the great salvation war, so seriously?

The sword of the Word - Eph 6:17, Heb 4:12

We take it seriously because scripture does. The militant image appears often in the epistles, frequently terming Christians as "soldiers" (Php 2:25, 2 Tim 2:3-4, Phm 1:2) engaged in a "struggle" (Heb 12:4, Eph 6:12), a "fight" (1 Tim 1:18, 2 Tim 4:7) or a "war" (2 Cor 10:4, 1 Pe 2:11). We are given divine armor (Eph 6) and weaponry (2 Cor 6:7, 10:4) to combat the strongholds of satan, whose title translates to "adversary" or "enemy". Outside the epistles there are a number of linguistic references in scripture regarding militancy, for example 'paganus', a term for those who aren't Christian, was originally used when describing one unengaged in military service.² The designation of Jesus as 'kurios' was actually an authoritarian title for a military commander.³ Scripture employs a detailed militant rhetoric that easily supercedes any alternative image in frequency, depth and spiritual application.

Now, I admit that some of these passages are discoursing in various tropes, both metaphor and simile, but ultimately the militant image in scripture is more than words in its relation to the unseen reality of spiritual warfare and its apocalyptic conclusion. The spiritual realms are plagued with unseen, but actual, battles that define our faith and steer the fate of creation (Dan 10:13, Eph 6:12, Rev 12:7), until Jesus returns victoriously to "make war" against satan and his nations (Rev 19).

Literary vs Literal

So the militant imagery applies literally to the metaphysical, but what about our physical action? Isn't the militant view of our ministry still just a metaphor? Maybe not. When we feed a hungry person, the experience of hunger is actually overcome and defeated. When we lead someone to Jesus, they have actually switched sides in a violent, cosmic struggle. We are literal protagonists involved in a literal conflict. We can express ourselves in metaphor through language, but not in behavior. We cannot be or do a metaphor.

If, for argument's sake, TSA must function as a trope, it may be better suited to metonymy. A metonymy is a figure of speech where the name of something is substituted with one of its attributes or associations, for example, referring to a Christian and their faith as a soldier in a war.

However, metonymy is just another rhetorical device, and though it may be useful in theological theory, it will fail when applied to our identity and its day to day practice. This is more than a case of semantics. Ultimately, this splitting linguistic headache has to do with our culture's preoccupation with categorisation and definition. It is a reaction symptomatic of the postmodern world's fatal cynicism. If something appears anachronistic or idealistic, we feel compelled to employ our most effective tool of subversion to devalue it... a definition.

Manifest Mystery/Sacramental life

When the mirage of acceptance and respectability beckons, definitions are tempting. However, no figure of speech can accurately capture what we are as a movement. So could it be that we actually transcend rhetorical categorisation? When something eludes definition and understanding, it is either meaningless, or alternatively, a mystery. To avoid becoming yet another meaningless institution, we might need to advance into the 3rd millennium claiming the transcendent nature of our identity, not rejecting it. Letting our sweat, tears, prayers and epaulets do the talking. Avoiding all attempts to fit into uncomfortable categories and just function as a living, breathing, manifestation of mystery.

This works on the most basic level. Tell your neighbor that you're an official member of a conservative, protestant Church denomination/charity and they'll have turned their back and walked off before you've even finished the sentence. Tell them you're a covenanted warrior fighting to banish social and spiritual evils from the world and they'll at least pay attention.

This is the crux and the calling of the Salvationist. To fulfill the great commission in lives sacred and consecrated to the Kingdom of God. In other words, to live a sacramental life. Despite its ecclesiastical application, the term 'sacrament' derives from the Latin sacramentum, or mysterion in the Greek, a word that lends itself to two definitions: First, something set apart for sacred purposes, and second, a soldier's vow of self-consecration in regards to their army and kingdom.⁴

Our oath as soldiers, our identity as an army is rooted in mystery and the sacred and in consequence does not easily fall into definitions or submit to figures of speech. As sworn soldiers, was our promise to Jesus, our covenant to His cause, a metaphor? If it is, then is the Kingdom of God a metaphor? What about our salvation?

Context of culture or a context of compassion

The question of metaphor never entered into the Salvationist ecclesiology of our spiritual ancestors as they vowed to evangelise the world. As early as 1879 Catherine Booth stated,

“We are an army. We grew into one, and then we found it out, and called ourselves one. Every soldier of this Army is pledged to carry the standard of the Cross into every part of the world, as far as he has opportunity. Our motto is “The World for Jesus”.⁵

William Booth put it in a similar fashion,

“Gradually, the Movement took more of the military form, and finding as we looked upon it... that God in His good providence had led us unwittingly, so to speak, to make an army, we called it an army, and seeing it was an army organised for deliverance of mankind from sin, and the power of the devil, we called it an army of deliverance, an army of salvation- The Salvation Army.”⁶

As far as William Booth was concerned, there were “killing armies”, and in sharp juxtaposition there was The Salvation Army. We weren’t the fake army, the others were.

Then again, maybe the question never arose. After all, the original Salvationists were probably too busy leading tens of thousands to Jesus, changing legislation to free women and children from prostitution and industrial slavery, as well as leading a branch of the Kingdom that spread dynamic spiritual and social reform across the planet. Why would they bother questioning what they were?

The weary suspicion that would have us mistake the sacramental reality of spiritual warfare for an anachronistic image will pass, especially in the context of mission. What does the homeless junkie overdosing in an alley have to say about our detailed and conflicting ecclesiastical rhetoric? What about the prostituted women on my street who’ll be beaten by their pimps tonight? The 44 children that have starved to death in the third-world in the time that it took for you to read this article? We are not a metaphor to them. We would do well to discard the literary categories and claim the literal reality. Make no mistake. This is war.

Footnotes

1- In various writings, articles and debates the militant identity of The Salvation Army and its articulation in our form have been questioned. In almost all of these instances our militant identity has been labeled a ‘metaphor’. It is understandable that in light of the Church’s abhorrent contribution to such historical

episodes as the crusades and colonialism, militancy in our faith has understandably become unpopular and intellectually taboo. Historically, The Salvation Army has often tailored the articulation of its militaristic identity to suit the sensitivity of new mission fields, for instance, Booth-Tucker in India etc. Those entrenched in the frontlines of sensitive mission fields should be the ones to further discern the appropriate articulation of militancy in our form, and partner with Holy Spirit in advancing the Kingdom.

2- Major Phil Needham, *Community in Mission: A Salvationist Ecclesiology*, (The Campfield Press, Atlanta, 1987), p.126.

3- Needham, *Community in Mission*, p.126.

4- James Hastings Ed., *Dictionary of The Bible* (Morrison and Gibb Limited, London,1936), under entry 'Sacrament', p. 806.

5- Trevor Yaxley and Carolyn Vanderwal, *William and Catherine: The Life and Legacy of the Booths Founders of the Salvation Army*, (Bethany House Publishers, Minnesota, 2003), p.153.

6 Yaxley, Vanderwal, William and Catherine, p.148.

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Four Anchors from the Stern

by Harold Hill

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The Salvation Army as “a Church”: a Dissuasive

You will recall that when the ship in which Paul was sailing had come through a great storm, the sailors sounded a rising sea floor. To save the ship from drifting onto rocks in the darkness, they threw out four anchors from the stern and waited for the morning.⁸

I think the Salvation Army’s drift to “denominationalism” also runs onto a shoaling shore in a fog of confusing definitions and I would like to throw out four anchors from the stern. While the organisation’s mission statement has until recently described it as “an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church”, there is now a tendency for it to be described as “a world wide evangelical Christian church”. Certainly, we are *part* of the Church, members of the body of Christ. That is altogether different from being *a* church.

My four anchors are the Salvation Army’s own history, the doctrine and history of the Church, the sociology of the Church and, finally, Scripture.

My first anchor: the Salvation Army’s own history.

We are familiar with the way in which the Army began as what today would be called a para-church agency, assisted by people from diverse church communities. In the manner of such bodies it eventually became an independent entity.

The change probably came about as early as 1867; Sandall calls that year “the turning point”.⁹ In that year the East London Christian Mission was named, acquired a headquarters, hired a theatre for Sunday meetings and increased its number of “preaching stations” to six, began to hire workers (nine by the end of the year), established a system for processing converts, printed its first documents (combined articles of faith and bond of agreement), began giving social relief to the poor and issued its first financial statement. It was also the year in which many of the former supporters left and went back to their churches, replaced by new converts and other enthusiasts like James Dowdle, and the year in which members of the mission are first reported as taking the sacrament together. It was becoming an independent community of faith. We might call that “a Church”.

But they did *not* call it “a church”. They called it a “Mission”, and later on an “Army”. They also liked to call it a “Movement”; that seems a little free-flowing for anything so tightly organised though there was at first an element of spontaneity about it. In Maud Booth’s words,

8 Acts 27:29. I borrow the title from Alan Richardson who used it for his riposte to Alec Vidler’s *Soundings* and John A.T. Robinson’s *Honest to God* in 1963.

9 Robert Sandall, *The History of The Salvation Army* (London: Nelson, 1947) Vol. 1, p. 72.

“There are sects and denominations enough. This is an Army, a band of aggressive men and women, whose work of saving and reclaiming the world must be done on entirely new lines...”¹⁰

And for a century, they stoutly resisted any notion that they might be “a church” although they were happy to be counted a *part* of the church. At the same time the Army increasingly resembled a conventional church denomination, and eventually, as we entered the 21st century, it finally, unambiguously, described itself as “a church”.¹¹ Colonel Earl Robinson plotted the course of this process in his paper for the Johannesburg Theological Symposium in 2006 through a series of quotes.¹² Major David Noakes has helpfully summarised these as follows in his paper for the 2007 Australia and New Zealand Tri-Territorial Theological Forum:

- William and Catherine Booth: Not a church, an army.
- Bramwell Booth: Part of the Church.
- Albert Orsborn: Not a church but a permanent mission to the unconverted.
- Frederick Coutts: Not a church, but implies it.
- Clarence Wiseman: Pointed to the need for an ecclesiology, doctrine of the Church.
- 1969 *Handbook of Doctrine*: Makes direct reference to the term “ecclesia”.
- Philip Needham: The Salvation Army is a true denomination and integral part of the church.
- *Salvation Story* (1998): Chapter 10: “People of God – the Doctrine of the Church”.
- John Larsson (2001): A watershed had been reached in transition from a movement to a church.
- Shaw Clifton: Emphatically states the Army is a church rather than merely a part of the universal Christian Church.

All of this illustrates that we have not stood aloof from that organising principle which can be demonstrated from every part of the church and in every age: that *doctrine follows praxis*. We like to assume otherwise; that we do what we do because it is principled, or theologically sound, or God’s will. Alas, whatever we do, we eventually come to sanctify it with the belief and claim that this is what God intended, even though we might originally have adopted it for quite pragmatic, or even questionable, purposes. It is called “tradition”, or “the guiding hand of the Lord”. It becomes inscribed on tablets of stone. It sets like concrete.

Of course, when other people do that, and claim for example that Jesus ordained the three-fold orders of bishops, priests and deacons, or that the Pope is infallible, well of

10 Maud B. Booth, *Beneath Two Flags* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1889) p. 271.

11 *Salvation Story* (London: 1998) p. 100.

12 *Word and Deed*, Vol. 9 No. 1, November 2006 pp. 13-17, 28-31.

course, that is different. From their vantage point, when we do it with the sacraments for example, well that is different too.

Now who am I to try to turn back the clock? Organisations come fitted with a ratchet clause; they don't back up. Some people are mildly scathing about those who want the Army to revert to being a Christian Mission. Well I am not urging that, but through the ages, every movement for reform and innovation has sought validation from the original Founding Vision, so here goes.

The reasons those founders resisted being a church – are they valid today? Has the wheel turned and their time come again? Here were some of their arguments:

- William Booth said, “We are not and will not be made a Church. There are plenty for anyone who wishes to join them, to vote and to rest.”¹³ Thus he dismissed churches as characterised by democracy and a passive laity, neither of which he intended would have a place in his Army.
- Booth also spoke of not wanting strife with the churches or to be in competition with them. When interviewed by Sir Henry Lunn in 1895 on the Salvation Army position on the sacraments, Booth claimed, perhaps a little disingenuously, that “we came into this position originally by determining not to be a church. We did not wish to undertake the administration of the sacraments and thereby bring ourselves into collision with existing churches.”¹⁴
- In *Heathen England*, George Scott Railton inveighed against sectarianism as ingrown and insufficiently evangelistic:

Shall we ever sink into a sectarian spirit of selfish care about our own, and cease to spend all our strength for the good of others?” Answering the hypothetical objection, “But this is making a new denomination – a new sect,” he responded, “Well, and supposing that it is. Is there any harm in doing so? Is there not a need for just such a ‘sect’ in many cities?... But we deny that we are in any proper sense a sect... We are a corps of volunteers for Christ, organised as perfectly as we have been able to accomplish, seeking no Church status, avoiding as we would the plague every denominational rut, in order perpetually to reach more and more of those who lie outside every Church boundary.”¹⁵

- Catherine Booth also argued that the clericalised attitudes prevalent in churches meant that the unsaved were left unsaved:

“Yes, thank God, we are teaching the Churches that others besides clergymen, ministers, deacons and elders can be used for the salvation of men. The multitudes have too long been left to these. As a clergyman said to me the other day, ‘There are 35,000 souls in my parish, what can one do?’ What indeed! Set

13 *Orders and Regulations for The Salvation Army* (London: SA, 1878) p. 4.

14 Harold Begbie, *Life of William Booth, Founder of The Salvation Army* (London: Macmillan, 1920) I, pp. 468-9.

15 George Scott Railton, *Heathen England* (London: S.W. Partridge, 2nd edn, 1878) pp. 143-4.

the carpenters and the washerwomen on to them, saved and filled with the Spirit!"¹⁶

The essential, underlying argument was that of “adaptation of measures” (Charles Finney and Catherine Booth), or “being all things to all men, if by any means we might win some” (Paul). The Army’s target group, those Railton said “lie outside every Church boundary”, the socially disenfranchised British underclass, did not relate to and never had related to the Church or churches, so the founders deliberately chose not to identify themselves in that way.

Now we can say, that was *then* and now is *now* – we have moved on. These early arguments against being a church tended to pillory inadequate kinds of church – and would be refuted and held to be no longer applicable by many evangelical churches today. (Just as some of our still-repeated arguments against the practice of the sacraments as “formalism” or dependence on external means might be denied by those practising sacramental worship today...) Despite the concern Booth expressed to Henry Lunn, we not been deterred by the thought that some churches might see us as competitors in the religious market either.

The fact is, however, that many Salvation Army corps have come to resemble the kind of churches the founders did not want their Army to be like, and many of us as Salvationists to resemble those church-members. This has come about as part of that same transition which has led us to think of ourselves as “a church.”

My argument from our history then is not just that our founders did not conceive of the Army as a church because it did not appeal to the people we sought to serve and evangelise. It is firstly, that our community today in our part of the Western world, the word “church” suffers from the same disadvantage today. And secondly, that our becoming more church-like has not necessarily meant becoming more effective in our mission; sometimes, the reverse. As the Archbishop of Sydney once said to a Divisional Commander, “Mr Salvation Army, you’ve got it *all* going for you, you lot. Why isn’t it happening?” If it isn’t happening, might the founders’ arguments against “churchliness” still carry some weight with us?¹⁷

My second anchor: the doctrine and history of the Church.

Sometimes the claim is advanced that the Salvation Army exhibits “the marks of the church” – whether these are the traditional yardsticks of “one, holy, catholic and apostolic”, or more involved criteria such as the no fewer than twenty adduced by Earl

16 Catherine Booth, *The Salvation Army in Relation to Church & State* (London: SA, 1889) p. 75.

17 Quoted by Lt. Colonel John Major, former Divisional Commander in Sydney. Have I shot my own argument in the foot with this quote? Nothing could be more churchly than the Archdiocese of Sydney and nothing more successful! However, *our* constituency is those who will not have a bar of the church. Those who *do* want church can be left safely in the hands of the Archdiocese of Sydney. What about the others? I rest my case.

Robinson in the paper to which I have already made reference – and that therefore we are a church. Certainly we should exhibit the marks of the church, if we really are a part of it. Praise God we do! But these are marks of *the* church, not of *a* church. We can't go from "these are the marks of *the* church" to "we exhibit these marks" to "therefore we are *a* church". The syllogism is flawed. We need to define what we mean by "the Church", "a church" and "a part of the Church".

Salvation Story defines "the Church" as "the fellowship of all who are justified and sanctified by grace through faith in Christ." It goes on to define "a church" as "an evangelistic body of believers who worship, fellowship, minister and are in mission together". It affirms that "Salvationists are members of the one body of Christ. We share common ground with the universal Church while manifesting our own characteristics... [we are] one particular expression of the Church."¹⁸

Salvation Story's definitions of *the* church and *a* church are good as far as they go, but they do not address the question of the relationship between the two except by implication. They leave unexamined the fact that there is in practice another level of entity between the two – that of separate (even rival, competing, disagreeing) associations or families, of churches. We are on safe Biblical, theological and ecclesiological ground when we speak of *a* church as a local congregation and of *the* church as the whole church, but it is more difficult to justify the denominational entities except as the product of history. They are a concession to *realpolitik*, rather as Jesus spoke of Moses permitting divorce "because of your hardness of heart."

Sometimes the view is expressed that the "real" church is spiritual, and quite independent of human, sociological structures, so it is unimportant how it is structured. The Army has never subscribed to that theory; the body of Christ is clearly incarnate and has structure and organisation. Further, the Army accepts that the Church's unity is manifest in diversity ("with other Christian denominations and congregations", as *Salvation Story* puts it) rather than in uniformity, and the Booths very early forbade criticism of any other body.¹⁹ The difficulty lies in making this paradox work. Lack of uniformity would not be such a worry, but unhappily too often the diversity is displayed in disunity. We do not maintain the Lord's Table, so unlike the Roman Catholics we cannot refuse any one access to it – but I do know senior officers stripped of their soldiership and rank *after their honourable retirement* for accepting ordination in "another denomination". To adapt G.B. Shaw's Bill Walker in *Major Barbara*, "Wot prawce unity nah?" Sometimes our actions speak louder than our words.²⁰

Since fairly early times there have been rival factions of Christians: witness the great schisms which took place over discipline and doctrine, setting rival Donatist and

18 *Salvation Story*, pp. 100-1.

19 *Orders and Regulations for Field Officers* (London: The Salvation Army, 1886) Part XVI, Chap. I.

20 Though here's an interesting story about Peter Cullinane, RC Bishop of Palmerston North, speaking recently to a group of priests and laity about who might receive communion from the hands of a priest. Said the Bishop, I will give communion to any Catholic in good standing and, if a Salvation Army member in uniform was to come to receive communion, I would not hesitate to offer the host." (The context was that those who were not Catholics should not receive the host.)

Catholic, Arian and Catholic, Nestorian and Catholic, Celtic and Roman Catholic and eventually Orthodox and Roman churches squaring off against each other over the centuries. They could be compared with “denominations” in our modern sense in that they were rival associations of local churches, in some cases occupying overlapping territory and each claiming to be more correct than the other – the *true* church.

Most of what we now call denominations are a comparatively recent phenomenon; the heirs of the reformation. Although the Pope still claims that all save the Roman Catholics Church are “defective” in some respect,²¹ these churches seldom anathematise one another today, being usually content with a slightly smug assumption of superiority. It is difficult to generalise about the origins of these groups – personal disagreements, social and national interests, theological controversies have all played a part.

In the now-ebbed high tide of ecumenism in the mid-twentieth century, it was held by many that the history of denominationalism in the church demonstrated the “scandal of disunity”, a betrayal of Jesus’ prayer “that they may all be one”. To my mind that is still is a dissuasive against it. Claiming to be a denomination consciously buys into that disunity. It attempts to sanctify that status quo. Our doctrine meekly follows our praxis.

We make no apology for not practising the sacraments. We happily swim against the tide of general church doctrine and practice in positing our own spiritualised interpretations of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, on the ground that they represent a valuable witness to the rest of the church. So why are we unable to hold the line on this, no more peculiar but equally important distinctive mark, that we are not a “denomination”? Probably because it is the line of least resistance. We resist conforming to something arguably derived from the Scripture but collude with something evolved in the era of the Enlightenment. In this we pass up the opportunity to maintain a witness to another great principle – the unity of *the* Church, a refusal to accept the divisions of the Church as final.

Obviously I am not claiming that our choice of vocabulary will heal the divisions amongst God’s people; only that this take on the doctrine of the church gives us an opportunity to bear witness to something important. Have we ever claimed more than that for our stand on the sacraments?

My third anchor: the sociology of the Church.

My third anchor is the pattern of decline and renewal, repeated at intervals throughout the history of the Church. Evangelicals might explain these in terms of the waxing and waning of evangelical faith and fervour. Sociologists examine more objectively the patterns of human behaviour, and can also help us to make some sense of the church’s past.

21 Pope Benedict XVI, “Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church,” document issued July 10, 2007.

The life-cycles of organisations, including religious ones, follow a sigmoid curve from movement to institution as they grow. They tend to plateau and enter a period of decline, from which they may or may not recover. Commonly, with the onset of decline, some schismatic or renewal movement strikes out upon a new trajectory of growth before eventually repeating the pattern.

In the Catholic Church, various orders and groups from monasticism in the second century to Opus Dei in the twentieth, as well as heretical fringe movements, have been the loci of such renewal. In Protestantism, itself such a movement in origin, sectarian groups have flourished. Such reactions against the institutionalising of the original movements seek to recover their founder's vision and validate their new departure by the past. The original theorist of sectarianism, Max Weber, referred to their adherents as "spiritual virtuosi", the athletes of spirituality. They make the rest of us feel somewhat uncomfortable. Usually the sectarian offshoots themselves institutionalise in due course – in Protestantism such groups are usually known as denominations. Sometimes, usually in response to the new offshoot, a large segment of the church experiences a measure of rejuvenation, as in the sixteenth century Counter-Reformation or with the "third wave" of the charismatic movement of the twentieth century.

Bryan Wilson summarised the characteristics of the sect as:

A voluntary association; membership is by proof to sect authorities of some claim to personal merit – such as knowledge of doctrine, affirmation of a conversion experience, or recommendation of members in good standing; exclusiveness is emphasized, and expulsion exercised against those who contravene doctrinal, moral or organisational precepts; its self-conception is of an elect, a gathered remnant, possessing special enlightenment; personal reflection is the expected standard of aspiration...; it accepts, at least as an ideal, the priesthood of all believers; there is a high level of lay participation; there is opportunity for the member spontaneously to express his commitment; the sect is hostile or indifferent to the secular society and to the state.²²

The Salvation Army would admit to many, though not all, of these descriptors and it can be readily seen that the movement fits this pattern in origin and development. Some sociologists have described it as a "conversionist sect"²³ on account of its over-riding sense of mission, or an "established sect"²⁴ because it seemed to retain many sectarian characteristics long after it might have been expected to discard them. (Real life is seldom as tidy as the sociologists prescribe.)

I find this sociological analysis helpful in trying to get a handle on what has happened and is happening to the Salvation Army. The Army, like most renewal movements, has gradually institutionalised and its leadership has become clericalised. At the same time it has retained some of its sectarian character and some of its soldiers have to some degree retained, or attempted to recover, its earlier revivalist ethos. The institution has

22 Bryan Wilson, "An Analysis of Sect Development", *American Sociological Review* 24 (February 1959) pp. 3-15.

23 Bryan Wilson, *ibid.*, p. 5

24 B. R. Scharf, *The Sociological Study of Religion* (London: Hutchinson, 1970).

of course moved inexorably in the direction of accommodation to the world and assimilation into the generic church, both in representing its officers as “clergy” and more recently by describing itself as a “church”. So now that the wheel has turned full circle, and we have our own renewal movements, our *virtuosi*, the neo-primitive Salvationists, the 614 movement, seeking to recover the original vision.

General John Larsson, addressing a 2001 International Theology and Ethics Symposium in Winnipeg, Canada, stated that “A key question for us is how we make the transition from a movement to a church in such a way that we do not lose the original dynamic that brought the Army into being. Or if we have lost something of that dynamic, how do we regain it?”²⁵ Unfortunately “loss of original dynamic” may describe an essential difference between “movement” and “church”. Werner Stark quotes Bramwell Booth writing to Railton, “I am convinced that we must stick to our concern, and that we must also keep up its so-called extravagances. They, and they only will save it from drooping down into a sectarian nothing.”²⁶ Stark comments, “What Booth wanted was precisely what Trotsky wanted: a permanent revolution.”²⁷ Finke and Stark comment, “When successful sects are transformed into churches, that is, when their tension with the surrounding culture is greatly reduced, they soon cease to grow and eventually decline.”²⁸

In this “watershed in its self-understanding”, as General Larsson has called it,²⁹ the Salvation Army’s leaders have a choice as to what traits in its DNA they will promote as dominant and what aspects will be relegated to the status of recessive genes. The “neo-primitive” ideals call for an emphatic rejection of clerical status and a turning away from the trap of denominational identity. Those directions offer a chimerical security, whereas the Army’s true vocation is as an egalitarian, counter-cultural movement. This sociological analysis of the Army’s role in *the* church therefore argues against its being content to be called a church.

My fourth anchor is Scripture.

Are we to say that denominational diversity is quite acceptable? By what criteria is this situation to be judged? Some would argue that there is no reason to suggest that the disunity manifest in these separate denominational groups, cooperating at best and competing at worst, is contrary to God’s intention. This applies to ecclesiology the dictum of Wallenstein, “Anything not forbidden is permitted,” rather than the reverse, laid

25 Quoted in background papers to the 2006 International Theology and Ethics Symposium, Johannesburg.

26 To clarify the terms, by “sectarian” here Bramwell Booth meant what we would describe as “denominational”.

27 W. Bramwell Booth, Letter of 6 October 1874, quoted from Th.F.G. Coates, *Prophet of the Poor*, p. 98, in Werner Stark, *The Sociology of Religion* Vol. 2, *Sectarian Religion*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967) pp. 284-5.

28 Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America 1776-1990* (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992) p. 148.

29 John Larson, Opening Address to the International Theology and Ethics Symposium, May 2001.

down by Calvin (and George Orwell). If our first doctrine, that Scripture is the “Divine rule of Christian faith and practice”, is to be maintained, then denominational diversity might be judged by Scripture.

Does Scripture have anything at all to say about denominational diversity? In the New Testament, the word “Church” is used in more than one sense. It meant the local community of faith, and also the whole company of those who name Jesus as Lord, wherever they might be. Early on, there were varieties of local church; Hebrew-speaking Christian synagogues and Greek-speaking ecclesia. There were churches that met in the houses of their leaders, and were named for them. Then Paul wrote to churches in various geographically scattered places. They even had local variations in pattern of government until gradually the three-fold orders of bishop, priest and deacon became general in the second century.

However, unlike so many of today’s churches, these churches recognised each others’ ministries and shared the one table. They were all *the* church. That is the New Testament, Apostolic, sub-Apostolic picture, and it persisted long after the canonical ink had dried. The only way in which the expression “a church” could be used of New Testament times is with reference to a local congregation of “the church”. The concept of some local congregations being associated in a bond that excluded some other local congregations simply would not compute. When eventually that unity fell apart in schism, they viewed that as a scandal to be resolved rather than an achievement to be celebrated.

In Scripture the solitary example of a literally denominational situation is that which Paul cites in 1st Corinthians 1:10-17. There he condemns the division into sects claiming over against their rivals to be followers of Paul or of Apollos, of Cephas or of Christ! Paul specifically *accused* them of being, literally, “denominations”. That sounds more like a forbidding than a permitting – a binding rather than a loosing. Tested against Scripture, denominations are a confession of our sinfulness, borne with shame, to be repented of rather than aspired to. Is that what we’re so anxious to claim to be?

To offer one further Biblical reference, an analogy rather than an injunction, it seems to me that our aspiration to church identity and clerical status is like the elders of Israel begging Samuel to give them a king so that they could “be like the nations round about”.³⁰ According to at least one strand of Biblical history, that didn’t turn out too well.

Do all these arguments fly in the face of reality? All right...I admit it. There is no doubt that legally (in most countries) and sociologically we *are* “a church” in that we exhibit all the marks of a denomination. It looks like a duck, walks like a duck, quacks like a duck... so why do I still resist calling it a duck? Because I believe that names still have some power. They represent meaning. We tend to be shaped by the discourse we adopt. It’s the collective application of Proverbs 23:7: “As a man thinks in his heart, so he is.”

30 1 Samuel 8:5.

Since I'm attempting to propose an alternative reality, what might we call that reality? General John Gowans recalls the Methodist historian Gordon Rupp saying to Salvationists in the 1960s, "You are our Franciscans. We Methodists began as a mission. We have become a Church. May the Army always remain a mission."³¹ "Mission" may not be a term to conjure with but the evidence tabled from sociology suggests that we could make a claim to be a Protestant "order", which would be one way of defining that missional, not-a-denomination, state.

This argument has been rejected on the grounds that "order" pre-supposes a subordinate relationship with some other ecclesial body – like that to which the Salvation Army might have been reduced had the Anglican-Salvation Army talks of 1882 succeeded.³² That of course is the status of most existing orders, though Taizé seems to have established itself with general acceptance in the ecclesial no-man's land between the great confessions. So how about the suggestion that the Salvation Army is an order of the *whole* Church, the catholic church, rather than of any particular denominational branch of the body? That would involve no concession of independence. That is in fact what our traditional claim to be a "part of the church" has amounted to; we've just never used that particular word to describe it. Why have we given it away? We fit the criteria exactly. Now I am not arguing that we should use the word "order" ourselves. We already have a perfectly good word, a proven "brand", to borrow the ubiquitous advertising jargon: we are an *Army*.

This is not a conservative response, a reluctance to let go of what we're used to, but a radical response, in the true sense of going back to our roots – which means back to the future. It can be dismissed as "make-believe" – except that believing does indeed make it so!

In sum then, we are an example of a revival movement which has institutionalised and settled down, finally coming to claim status as a "church", a denomination. This is seen as appropriate, an achievement, a reason to congratulate ourselves, and necessary in order to maintain and consolidate our status. I suggest otherwise. If status is what concerns us (and if so, that's a worry in itself), our claim to be an Army, a permanent mission to the unconverted, has not involved any fatal disability or disenfranchisement in the eyes of the "churches" or the community over the past hundred or more years. Safeguarding some degree of ambiguity on the question has not threatened our integrity.

So: I argue that the Army's own history, the history and doctrine of the church, the pattern of sociology, the Word of Scripture, all testify against any great need to be "a church". Our own history provides us with a clear precedent for retaining our identity without resorting to denominationalism; the history and doctrine of the church provide an ecclesiological and theological base, the sociology of religious movements provides a rationale, and Scripture provides a mandate.

31 Quoted by Denis Hunter, *While the Light Lingers* (privately published 2005) p. 36.

32 For example, by General Clifton in *The Officer*, January-February 2007, p. 3.

In the morning the sailors cut the ropes and drove for the beach. Well, we've already done that: my dissuasive is too late. But I'm still perched in the stern, trying to yell above the wind that beached vessels do not always set sail again.

Questions:

1. Is this just nitpicking about words without any practical application? In what ways does this analysis not make sense? Please refute my arguments.
2. If it *were* a helpful thing to "back up" in this matter, how might the Salvation Army do that?
3. If the Salvation Army cannot, how else might it be renewed as a denomination?

Vision For The Lost, or Lost Vision

by Harold Hill

Vision for the Lost, or Lost Vision? - William Booth's Legacy 100 years on
by Harold Hill

*A paper prepared for the Thought Matters Conference
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My field is history rather than theology, so I propose to offer some historical context for our theological discussion. To frame that context I will put four questions:

1. What was Booth's vision?
2. What do we now see?
3. How did that happen?
4. What now? Can the vision be re-found?

What was Booth's vision?

When William Booth burst in the door of his Hammersmith home late one night in 1865 and exclaimed, "Darling, I have found my destiny!" he'd been walking through the slums of the East End of London. That glimpse of hell on earth constituted Booth's primary vision; hell was the East End writ large and forever. Commissioner Wesley Harris once asked Commissioner George Joliffe, once secretary to William Booth, what motivated the Founder. Joliffe replied, "His vision of Hell!"

Booth was fond of vision imagery, even collecting a series of articles in one volume entitled *Visions* in 1906. One of these says (I abbreviate):

I saw a dark and stormy ocean. ...

In that ocean I thought I saw myriads of poor human beings plunging and floating, shouting and shrieking, cursing and struggling and drowning; and as they cursed and screamed they rose and shrieked again, and then some sank to rise no more.

And I saw out of this dark angry ocean, a mighty rock that rose up with its summit towering high above the black clouds that overhung the stormy sea. And all around the base of this great rock I saw a vast platform. Onto this platform, I saw with delight a number of the poor struggling, drowning wretches continually climbing out of the angry ocean. And I saw that a few of those who were already safe on the platform were helping the poor creatures still in the angry waters to reach the place of safety....

As I looked on, I saw that the occupants of that platform were quite a mixed company. ... But only a very few of them seemed to make it their business to get the

people out of the sea. ... though all had been rescued at one time or another from the ocean, nearly everyone seemed to have forgotten all about it. Anyway, the memory of its darkness and danger no longer seemed to trouble them... These people did not seem to have any care – that is, any agonising care – about the poor perishing ones who were struggling and drowning before their eyes...³³

You know where the rest of this was going... To serve that vision, the Army was called into existence. And Booth believed that “If you were to take hell out of our doctrine, The Salvation Army would soon disappear”³⁴

Booth did imagine scenes other than of hell; visions of the millennium, and of heaven. He speculated in 1900 that London could become the New Jerusalem, with Hyde Park roofed over to become “The World’s Great Grand Central Temple”.³⁵ His vision of the Millennium looked remarkably like a Salvation Army International Congress. And like those grand Congress occasions, the purpose of his sharing this vision was to motivate his followers to greater efforts on behalf of the lost. He visited heaven and interviewed participants in the Acts 2 account of Pentecost in order to bring back a hurry-up message from the Apostles and Saints to shirkers in the ranks. The focus was not the attainment of bliss but the compulsion to rescue people from hell.

But there was a further vision. Although acts of mercy and service were part of Booth’s Wesleyan dna and long featured in the Christian Mission’s agenda, from the late 1880s on Booth was persuaded that the depth of social deprivation the Army encountered made it too difficult for many people to hear and understand the message of Salvation. He had to do something about hell on earth as well as hell hereafter. While the Army was already engaged in social action, Booth came to see the need for more fences at the tops of cliffs as well as more ambulances at the bottom. Sometimes he even tried to do something about the levelling cliffs themselves. He saw that society, as well as the individuals comprising it, needed to be saved.

So he began to describe another, extended vision. Here’s an example, as reported by former Commissioner Alex Nicol:

In one of his most inspired moments he delivered an address to his Staff upon the Salvation Army of the future. He called it a vision. He saw:

- Homes for the Detention of Tramps.
- Transportation Agencies for Removing Slum Dwellers from one part of the world to another.
- Steamers owned and chartered by the Salvation Army for the purpose.
- Stupendous factories, splendid stores, colossal workshops, and vast industrial enterprises.

33 William Booth, *Visions* (London: The Salvation Army, 1906 [1998]) 46.

34 William Booth, *The General’s Letters*, 225, quoted in <http://www.armybarmy.com/blog.html>, 10 April 2012.

35 William Booth, “The Millennium; or, The Ultimate Triumph of the Salvation Army Principles”, *All the World*, August 1890, 337-43.

- Inebriates' Home for "men and women who drink distilled damnation in the shape of intoxicants."
- Rescue Operations of many orders for the deliverance of fallen women.
- Land Colonies evolving into Salvation cities.
- Orphanages becoming villages and Reformatories made into veritable paradises.
- The working out of my idea for a World's University for Humanity.
- A Salvation Citadel in every village, town, and city.³⁶

The post-millennial character of the Army's vision is evident in this 1895 American article:

When we consider in our times, and appreciate the fact that we are in the very beginning of the glorious Millennium, we have cause to rejoice... It has not been the reconstruction of society and government – the paternal – modelled after Bible times and practised by General Booth in his early Army – I say it has not been these improvements, although they have helped. The great power, as we are all aware, is the fact that people have been saved and cleansed from all sin by the Blood of Jesus. This is the power that has brought about this reign of unselfishness and love among the people of the earth. This is the reason the entire world speaks the same language, and the word "foreigner" is obsolete... It was upon the debris of social ruin that The Salvation Army built up a grander civilization – one that honored [*sic*] and served God... The Lord was with His Army as He promised (Joel 2:11). In the year 1900 A.D., The Salvation Army numbered 20,000 field officers, in 1925 A.D., 200,000, when every city, village, and hamlet in the entire world had corps. Whole cities had been converted. ... In 1950 the world was about conquered and the devil so discouraged that he gave up the fight.³⁷

So what was Booth's vision? A vision of hell. But by late in Booth's life his vision encompassed not only Salvation *from* hell in this world for heaven in the next but the Salvation *of* this world as well.

What do we now see?

Admitting that the 1950 millennial prediction was a tad premature, does what we now see look like Booth's vision?

To begin with, how about saving people from hell? An early-days Salvationist was an uncomfortable person with whom to share a railway compartment. You would be ear-bashed on the subject. Today, many of us are more anxious to demonstrate our inoffensive normality. The fact that many Salvationists have become less motivated to engage in personal evangelism probably indicates a slackening commitment to the

36 A. M. Nicol, *General Booth and The Salvation Army* (London: Herbert and Daniel, 1911) 136-137. The speech here summarised by Nicol may be found in William Booth, *International Staff Council Addresses* (London: Salvation Army, 1904) 47-58.

37 *The War Cry* (USA) 12 January 1895, p. 4, quoted in Allan Satterlee, *Turning Points: How the Salvation Army Found a Different Path*. (Alexandria VA: Crest, 2004) 79.

doctrines underlying such activity. A diminished conviction that our neighbour is going to hell renders us less inclined to risk giving offence by trying to save him from it.

But lest we think this only came in with Rob Bell's book *Love Wins*, here's ex-Commissioner Nicol again, a hundred and one years ago. Commenting on the Fifth Doctrine, "We believe that our first parents were created in a state of innocence, but by their disobedience they lost their purity and happiness and that in consequence of their fall all men have become sinners totally depraved and as such are justly exposed to the wrath of God," Nicol wrote, "The Army is committed for all time to this doctrine and many others equally contentious, and some of which Staff officers no more believe in than they do that Bacon wrote Shakespeare."³⁸

Really? Perhaps Nicol had the integrity to resign because he no longer believed those doctrines. Perhaps many of us have since found ways of re-interpreting them to our satisfaction, just as Anglican clergy once pledged a token adherence to the long-outmoded Thirty-Nine Articles of 1571.

This is not to say that modern Salvationists do not believe, or that sinners are no longer brought to salvation by our witness – they are, thank God – but Booth would probably consider some of us to be people "who do not seem to have any care – that is, any *agonising* care" – for the lost.

And what of Booth's other vision, of the salvation of society?

All over the world, battalions of Salvationists and employees are engaged in alleviating social distress. Sometimes they not only attend to the consequences of social evil but also seek to engage with its structural causes. For many years this last was somewhat understated, partly because of the increasing social conservatism of the Army's constituency and a fear of all things "political", but in recent years it has been given a more prominent place in our mission. The mission statement of the Army in New Zealand is, "Caring for people, transforming lives, *reforming society*".

Any hesitations? Booth's "Darkest England" scheme of "social salvation" in *this* life was intended to *support*, to *complement*, not to *replace*, his commitment to "spiritual salvation" for the *next* life. He feared that service could become an end in itself. Today many of those working for the Army in this field are not Salvationists, and need not be Christians, and may not be particularly in sympathy with that aspect of the Army's mission. In 2004 some New York employees sued the Army for insisting on it. They claimed that "When the Salvation Army's religious mission was made mandatory in our work place, it changed the climate in a way that caused us fear and concern about our ability to ethically deliver services."³⁹

38 Nicol, General Booth, 93-5.

39 <http://www.au.org/media/church-and-state/archives/2010/04/salvation-army-in-ny-cant.html>, downloaded 11 April 2010.

Although Salvation Army leaders have always been reluctant to allow donors, government or private, to determine our policies and values, we cannot resist the bait of those assiduously cultivated funds. Booth would take money from the devil himself and wash it in the tears of the widows and orphans – but the devil usually has his terms.⁴⁰ I know that there is a strong argument that our mission must be holistic, not confined to “saving souls”, and that even giving a cup of water in Jesus’ name contributes to the salvation of the world, but would Booth have been entirely satisfied that his vision was being embodied in all we do, both Word and Deed?

So, has the evangelical imperative become diluted? If that’s what we now see, and if it be thought that we *have* lost the vision,

How did that happen?

We naturally idealise the early Army as a time of exponential growth, but statistically, the Australasian flood tide had peaked by 1900. In barely a generation the initial energy had begun to dissipate, the vision begun to fade. Reinhold Niebuhr echoed Luther in writing that, “By its very nature the sectarian type of organisation is valid for only one generation... Rarely does a second generation hold the convictions it has inherited with a fervour equal to that of its fathers, who fashioned these convictions in the heat of conflict and at the risk of martyrdom.”⁴¹ The children and grandchildren of those who had experienced the miracle of the changing of beer into furniture did not necessarily enjoy the same kind of vital conversion experience of their own. They grew up within the world of the Salvation Army and it was their familiar sub-culture, but they did not necessarily inherit the evangelical imperative. Many found the sub-culture restrictive and they began to slip away.

Let’s not beat ourselves up. This was a perfectly normal and natural thing to happen. Renewal movements initiated by charismatic leadership, always institutionalise and decline. Sometimes they break out again in renewed vigour. This has happened within the Christian church many times since the original “Jesus movement” which shook the institutionalised religion of first century Judaea. The Montanists, the Monastics, the Mendicant Friars and late medieval movements, the radical Reformers, the Methodists and the Pentecostals all illustrate the seemingly inexorable progression of the seasons of divine inspiration and human endeavour. Radical religious movements tend to arise in eras of rapid change and transition, of cultural liminality, of chaos, to which they are in part a response. Because such periods often involve social and economic dislocation, these movements are also often marked by concern for the poor, or are identified with them. As Johan Metz put it,

40 See for example an address to the 1921 International Social Conference by Commissioner Adelaide Cox in *Social Problems in Solution* (London: The Salvation Army, 1921) 39-41; Clarence Wiseman in “Call to Renewal and Change”, in John Waldron (Ed.) *Creed and Deed: Towards a Christian Theology of Social Services in The Salvation Army* (Toronto: The Salvation Army, 1986) 280; Dennis Garland, “The Salvation Army and the State of Welfare: An analysis of Text and Narrative.” MA (Hons) Thesis, University of Western Sydney, 2004, iii.

41 H. Richard Niebuhr, *Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: Meridian, [1929] 1957) 20.

[Religious orders/congregations] are a kind of shock therapy... for the Church as a whole. Against the dangerous accommodations and questionable compromises that the Church... can always incline to, they press for the uncompromising nature of the Gospel and the imitation of Christ...⁴²

We fit the template. The Salvation Army emerged in the late 19th century as the latest body of Enthusiasts, those Max Weber called the *virtuosi*,⁴³ the dazzlingly skilled, the spiritual athletes. The Army was widely recognised as a *de facto* new religious order within the church. The poet Francis Thompson in an essay on “Catholics In Darkest England” wrote, “Consider what the Salvation Army is. It is not merely a sect, it is virtually a Religious Order...”⁴⁴

But, as Gerald Arbuckle writes of Catholic Orders:

Historically, once these movements cease to be prophetic, though in Church law they may remain religious congregations, they are no longer authentically religious. By sinking to the level of purely human institutions they have lost their reason for being.⁴⁵

The Army fitted this template also. Booth knew it was changing even in his day. Here he is in 1902:

[M]any ... officers are trying to do the Salvation Army without salvation – at any rate, with very little; trying to exemplify the principles of the most wonderful religious organisation that the world has ever seen with very little religion. They get into a formal or legal way of doing things and go on doing them without any results or with very little results because the life and heat, and fire and passion are burned out or almost out.⁴⁶

So in 1904 he described another vision, for a new order of officers. He wrote (again, I abbreviate):

I thought ... I saw a new body of Officers suddenly start into existence...
... they appeared to manifest extraordinary signs of earnestness, self-denial, and singleness of purpose; indeed ... a reckless, daredevil set. ... to welcome privations... to revel in hardships ... facing opposition and difficulties with meekness, patience, and love.

... they had voluntarily embraced the old-fashioned vows of celibacy, poverty, and

42 J. Metz, *Followers of Christ: The Religious Life and the Church* (London: Burns and Oates, 1978) 12. Quoted by Gerald Arbuckle, *From Chaos to Mission* (Collegeville MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996) 11.

43 Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (Boston: Beacon, 1964) 162-5.

44 Francis Thompson (Ed. Wilfred Maynell), *Prose Works* (London: Burns and Oates, 1913) 3, 57. (Kessinger Publishing 2003).

45 Arbuckle, *From Chaos to Mission*, 12.

46 P.W. Wilson, *General Evangeline Booth of the Salvation Army* (New York: Salvation Army) [1935] 1948, 132-3.

obedience... vows ... only binding upon them for a term of years, with the option of renewal for a further term at the expiration of that period, or of being able at that time to honourably return to the ordinary ranks of Officership.

... they wore a novel kind of uniform ... evidently proud of their colours.

... refused to accept any money or gifts ... were pledged not to own any goods of any kind... except the clothes they wore.

... great wanderers... on foot, ... and speaking to the people in the streets... wherever they had opportunity, about death, judgment, eternity, repentance, Christ, and salvation...

... I saw their number... very, very small at first, gradually increase until they reached quite a multitude. And the educated and well-to-do, charmed with this simple Christ like life, swelled its numbers, coming from the universities and the moneymaking institutions and other high places.⁴⁷

Booth was describing officers as he had expected them to be twenty five years earlier – and clearly recognised that they were no longer. He didn't admit that his troops were now too burdened with canvassing for funds, reporting statistics and managing the already-saved, all concomitant with the institutionalising of his vision, but he knew he now needed a *new* Order. Had he been 50 years younger, he would have *founded* it himself.

But he didn't, and his "old" order is now 100 years older. It will be obvious that in this I'm speaking of the Army in the West – of which Australasia is a part. The present surge of growth the Army enjoys in the "Developing World" may appear to parallel that of the Army's early days, but that's another study. It's the decline of the West with which I'm concerned here.

So how did it happen? Quite naturally and humanly. The reasons are as much sociological as spiritual.

So what now? Can the vision be re-found?

Can the Army of the West be *re-founded*? Gerald Arbuckle would say not only *can* but *must!* Arbuckle is a New Zealand Marist priest who works out of Sydney consulting with Catholic religious congregations (Orders) internationally. He draws a distinction between "renewal", which is really just tinkering with the existing responses to a situation, and "refounding", which is about in-depth, radical change in the face of change. He defines refounding as "a process of returning to the founding experience of an organisation or group in order to rediscover and re-own the vision and driving energy of the pioneers."⁴⁸

There is a need for such a rediscovery when society enters a renewed period of change and chaos. The mission which responded so aptly to the challenges of an earlier period may now be stuck in the form created to address conditions which no longer obtain. Of

47 William Booth, International Staff Council Addresses (London: The Salvation Army, 1904) 144-147.

48 Arbuckle, From Chaos to Mission, 3.

course society is always in transition but sometimes change becomes exponential. As a time of rapid change and transition, of cultural liminality and chaos, the last half of the twentieth century has been equal to the era of the Army's founding.

Arbuckle says that "when people own their powerlessness, they return to the sacred time of the founding of the group. There they can ask fundamental questions about their origins, about what is essential to the founding vision and what is to be kept, and what is accidental and to be allowed to go."⁴⁹

It is not my purpose now to draw up lists of what is accidental and what is essential, but we've been debating the *non-negotiables* of Salvationism for years now. Our debate is sometimes framed largely as an exercise in renewal, concerned with the trappings, and which of them we want to retain or discard, rather than focussed on the vision itself. Our nearest approach to a reform of officership some years back managed some comparatively minor changes – most of them subsequently reversed – because we did not go deep enough. But can deep change come about from the top?

Casting a vision is one of the functions of leadership. Admittedly change in hierarchical organisations requires permission from on high, but is that where change is initiated? People can rise to leadership by conforming to the established patterns, and even when they do not, their room for manoeuvre is likely to be limited when they finally arrive at the top.

Permission-giving is important – the classic is Commissioner Harry Read's liberating order of the day to the British Territory, "Just *do* something; I give you permission to fail". But real change begins from the bottom. What alert leadership does is read the signs of the times. Edward Schillebeeckx makes the point that throughout the history of the Church whenever there has been any significant change, "on each occasion official documents sanction a church practice which has grown up from the grass roots."⁵⁰ The profound change embraced by the Roman Catholic Church after John XXIII had called the Second Vatican Council in 1962 had been fermenting beneath the surface for several generations.

It ferments also beneath the surface of the Salvation Army. As Arbuckle goes on to say, after describing how prophetic movements become human institutions, "When this happens, new prophetic movements within the Church and/or re-founding people arise within existing congregations to challenge them to return to the radical demands of the Beatitudes."⁵¹ A buzz-word in the evangelical community in recent decades has been the "new Monasticism" – another way of describing an attempt to re-found. We have their representatives within the Army – what else were Alove and 614 and ArmyBarmy and neo-Primitive Salvationism about? It's significant that such new movements almost invariably propose to serve the poor, and include a focus on social justice. Are they the "new order" Booth envisaged?

49 Arbuckle, *From Chaos to Mission*, 87.

50 Edward Schillebeeckx, *Ministry: A Case for Change* (London: SCM, 1981) 3.

51 Arbuckle, *From Chaos to Mission*, 12.

Let's tease out further what is involved in "refounding." Arbuckle suggests that the "most powerful myth is the group's creation story"⁵², which in our case is Booth's vision. Arbuckle says that every founding myth contains within itself polarities, such as the tension between individual rights and the common good in a free, democratic society. Just so, the polarity between individual and social salvation is intrinsic to our Salvationist myth and our vision. It is Booth's own multifaceted vision that has left us with this theological dilemma between Word and Deed, between "saving" and "serving". It's encouraging that Booth's polarities of personal and social salvation are maintained and perhaps better integrated in today's emerging Army. Divergent views of what Salvation consists of – and its application to this world or the next – need to be held in tension.

There are related polarities, such as the one encapsulated by Booth's lament that "I have been trying all my life to stretch out my arms so as to reach with one hand the poor, and at the same time to keep the other in touch with the rich. But my arms are not long enough."⁵³ This is an area of both theological and ethical challenge for the Army today, if we are still reluctant to challenge unequivocally the structural greed which divides rich and poor in our societies, divides the rich and poor nations, and threatens the very survival of the biosphere. As Anglican Bishop Peter Selby has written recently in *The Tablet*, "Our slavery to the principalities and powers represented by what money has been allowed to become has to be broken."⁵⁴ We could be thinking – and speaking – more radically about these things, but would that offend our donors?

But there are other polarities, also likely to be exposed by the shifting world-values around us. What of the challenge offered by the intellectual dislocation of secularisation and post-modernism, the continuing fall-out of what Callum Brown has described as "the pretty comprehensive nature of the collapse of Christian culture in the 1960s"?⁵⁵ The Army has been able to respond to some social and economic trends; we have been less ready to comprehend, let alone respond to, the secularisation of society and the loss of fundamental religious identity this has involved. Has our theology has equipped us to address this change? Let me fly a kite here.

Does recovering Booth's vision for the lost necessarily mean reverting to his theological frame of reference? Indeed, can another polarity, this time between conservative and innovative theology also be discerned even in the Founder himself? Certainly he had no interest in the Higher Criticism of his day but read of his enthusiastic reception of new translations of Scripture – he placed a copy of the Twentieth Century New Testament in the hands of each officer in 1904. He had no truck with the literal verbal inerrancy which came to be identified with fundamentalism – he wrote against it. Or even reflect that as

52 Arbuckle, *From Chaos to Mission*, 66.

53 <http://www1.salvationarmy.org/heritage.nsf/36c107e27b0ba7a98025692e0032abaa/463c4193456551e980256b8a0037ea9a!OpenDocument>. Sourced 5 August 2012.

54 Peter Selby, "Wake-up Call", *The Tablet*, 4 August 2012. <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/article/163054>. Sourced 5 August 2012.

55 Callum G. Brown, "What was the religious crisis of the 1960s?" *Journal of Religious History* 34:4, December 2010, 472.

an early adopter of Phoebe Palmer's new, streamlined theory of holiness, Booth was running ahead of the Wesleyan majority of his time. Or that his radical resolution of the debate on sacramental usages was an attempt to cut through a Gordian knot which still binds the church at large? Or that his commitment to the role of women in ministry was counter-cultural? Again, has Booth's own vision left us an inheritance of theological diversity? If so, can we embrace it?

We have not done that well. Like a certain other hierarchical ecclesiastical institution, we have a history of making it difficult for people who think outside the square to remain in our ranks. Nicols resigned in 1910. Fred Brown was forced out in 1970. How many others have simply slipped away unnoticed? Were not Alexander Nicol and Fred Brown, with hearts for the lost as well as questioning minds, also legitimate inheritors of the Founder's vision, equally with those who were content to parrot the formulae and proof-texts of the Doctrine Book? We can ill afford to lose those who ask the hard questions about our theology. Captain Matthew Clifton recently announced his resignation, explaining that

Energising as the covenant was while evangelical belief could be sustained, I have the wrong kind of personality to have foreclosed enquiry by binding myself to religious truth claims.⁵⁶

That was his choice of course, but do we *want* to "foreclose enquiry"? Can we afford to? More than half a century ago Colonel Catherine Baird wrote to General Kitching in defence of allegedly "modernist" Salvationists whom she claimed were being "witch-hunted":

Surely [she wrote] anyone should be ashamed to have, after 30 years, no deeper, clearer understanding of the atonement, holiness, last things, and other great doctrines, than he had at the beginning. And surely, this deeper knowledge does not mean that he has departed from that which he first knew. Given the alphabet, a child can write simple words and little more. In manhood, he may write a sonnet. But that does not mean that he no longer believes that "cat" spells cat.

... If we want the sort of young people who care more for truth than for privileges and places, we shall have to consider a matter of such vital importance without fear or prejudice."⁵⁷

With Colonel Baird, I believe we must encourage and nurture our radical thinkers. We need them. I don't believe that retreating into reaction is a way forward for us. Fundamentalism may seem a refuge from hard questions, and its current surge may offer an apparent highway, but it's a dead end. I wonder about the latest revision of the *Handbook of Doctrine*, announced in recent weeks, described as a "correction for clarity". It appears to retreat from Booth's position on Scripture, perhaps to

56 Former Salvation Army Officers' blog: <http://fsaof.blogspot.co.nz/>, downloaded 11 July 2012.

57 Quoted by John C. Izzard (edited by Henry Gariepy), in *Pen of Flame: the Life and Poetry of Catherine Baird* (Alexandria: Crest Book, 2002) 112.

accommodate more comfortably our Fundamentalist comrades?⁵⁸ Or perhaps it just leaves more options open. In that case can we please move beyond the totalitarian, sectarian ethos where any opinions expressed are assumed to be representing the Army, and therefore must be vetted for doctrinal soundness? As Dean Smith has cogently argued, Liberals and Evangelicals may not be singing from the same song sheet, but could “agree to disagree without moral judgement.”⁵⁹ Perhaps what I’m asking for is, in Brian McLaren’s phrase, a “generous orthodoxy”.⁶⁰

If, like that polarity of Word and Deed, the polarity between theological conservatism and innovation is also intrinsic to the myth and vision inherited from our Founders, it is in the tension of such polarities that new vision is generated – as it was in Booth’s day. So:

1. What was Booth’s vision? *One of hell, and salvation, here and hereafter.*
2. What do we now see? *Perhaps not quite the same vision, or with the same clarity of vision.*
3. How did that happen? *Quite naturally.*
4. Can the vision be re-found? *Yes! But it will look different.*

The alternation of renewal and decline as the context within which we have attempted to place our visionary theme reminds us that entropy and dissolution are not the whole story. In the Salvationist micro-climate, we may occasionally have our equivalent of what in the Catholic Church Karl Rahner called a “winter period”, and we may regret the repetitive pattern of institutionalisation and decline, but we can rejoice also in the reiterated springtime which, God-willing, ensues. May the Holy Spirit give renewed vision for our times.

Remember Gerard Manley Hopkins’ lines:

58 “On behalf of the General, I am pleased to announce a change of wording for a paragraph found on page 11 of the Handbook of Doctrine (Chapter 1 – ‘For further exploration’ - 1.A.3. - page 11).

“The old wording in question includes:

“The inspiration of the Bible provides a foundation for our understanding of the reliability of the divine revelation in Scripture. It is uniquely inspired in a way that is different from other writings or works of art. However, this does not mean that the Bible is infallible or inerrant, so that it is incapable of misleading and contains no human error. Whereas we believe that the overall message of the Bible is inspired and reliable, each individual passage must be read and interpreted carefully, in context, and with careful reference to the whole of biblical truth.

“Effective immediately, two paragraphs will replace the one above:

“We believe the message of the Bible is inspired and reliable. However, each individual passage must be read and interpreted carefully, in context and with reference to the whole of biblical truth.

“We affirm that we can rely upon the Scriptures for instruction and guidance in matters of divine truth and the Christian life, because in Scripture we meet the Word of God himself, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit who inspired the writers also illumines those who read its pages and leads them to faith.”

The War Cry (NZ) 11 August 2012, 17.

59 Dean Smith, “Are Liberals and Evangelicals singing from the same song sheet?” The Heythrop Journal XLVIII (2010) 14.

60 Brian D. McLaren, A Generous Orthodoxy (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006).

*And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs –
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah!
bright wings.⁶¹*

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61 From "God's Grandeur", by Gerard Manley Hopkins. Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Selection of his Poems and Prose by W. H. Gardner (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1953) 27.

A Problem Like Maria

Part 1 of a 2 part series

by JoAnn Shade

In their 1959 musical, *The Sound of Music*, Rogers and Hammerstein story began in a convent with Maria, a young woman who didn't quite fit the mold of what a nun should be. As the sisters talk about her, they break into song, with the key line, "Oh, how do you solve a problem like Maria?"

As an officer of thirty-seven years (now retired), I've watched as the Salvation Army has wrestled with our version of the married woman "Maria problem." Is there a joint covenant or individual covenant? Is she a volunteer who is expected to assist her husband in his religious and charitable work (rendering little or no service or devoting full time [effort] to this work (as defined in a letter written in 1957)? Is the married woman officer (as is the case in the United States) a non-compensated worker but also an officer in her own right? And, once a couple has left the model of the shared leadership of corps officership, how can Salvation Army decision-makers appoint married women officers commensurate with their gifts and abilities?

While there are a number of problems/opportunities surrounding the married woman officer role, these comments (in this article and a subsequent one in the next edition of JAC) will address the question of our Maria problem. How can the Salvation Army appropriately appoint its married women officers when they are no longer in shared ministry with their husbands on the corps level? Can/should appointments for married women officers be given as much priority and prayer as those for married men officers? Of course, the gender-inclusive question would be, how can appointments for both husband and wife be given the same priority, for a cursory glance at the current practice in the Eastern territory of the US indicates that the male officer is predominantly in the more prominent position on the leadership chart.

Questions like these are not new. First exposed to the Salvation Army as a teen-ager. I liked what I saw in the ministry of the married women officers in the corps, yet when I worked at camp the summer after high school graduation, I was surprised and a bit offended to recognize that one of the headquarters officer women had the responsibility of supervising the laundry for the summer. Was folding hundreds of sheets the best use of her time and talents? She was an ordained minister, an officer of many years experience, and she was watching the dryer spin around. Oh, she gave good counsel to the teen-age laundresses, but was that it? If I chose officership, was that what I had to look forward to?

I have in my possession an article written for *The Officer* in 1931 entitled "Opportunities and Responsibilities of Wives of Headquarters Officers." In it, Mrs. General Higgins recognizes the same concern. Unfortunately, her first conclusion (more than eighty years ago) was that it was inevitable, given the structure in place at the time.

Now this condition, which can hardly be avoided, produces peculiar and delicate situations. In the years that have gone it may be we held a front-rank place, and led and controlled others; people looked to us, obeyed us and in most things we had the privilege and responsibility of the last word . . . Now everything is changed. To those of us who from the beginning, in obedience to a clear and definite call, took up our cross to follow the Master in becoming Officers, and appreciated the high calling as the greatest honour of life, the experience I have described carries with it a great trial.⁶²

Her conclusion at that time was that those married women officers needed to accept their assigned role, determining that “God shall still guide and control,” and suggesting that they look for opportunities to serve as the Home League treasurer or “just as ordinary Soldiers.” “But if in all the sweetness and gentleness of Christ we go to the Corps, showing the spirit of ‘I am among you as one that serveth,’ I am sure we shall find more open doors than we can enter, as well as an increased measure of love, sympathy, and blessing in our own spiritual life.”

I’m guessing that Catherine (Price) Higgins didn’t write this article in a vacuum – nor, at that time, was she serving as just an “ordinary soldier.” Even eighty years ago, it’s likely that married women officers in a variety of positions were finding those positions uncomfortable if not untenable. Apparently their concerns were known to the wife of the international leader (as she probably had experienced them herself), and her response is preserved for history through the written word.

Would it have been possible for her to work towards finding some kind of solution to the appointment dilemma rather than accepting it as a condition that could hardly be avoided? Was the only answer to the dilemma found by presenting a spiritual rationale to accept it as it stood? Perhaps even then some women questioned the reasoning of her guidance, but it came from the General’s wife so had to be accepted, didn’t it?

Is Higgins’ argument a theologically sound response in 2015? Are certain sacrifices expected of people because they are female and married? Or is that simply a rationalization that excuses the gender-specific selection of leadership once there is a wedding ring upon the finger of the woman? Elizabeth Janeway describes it this way: “When our mythology instructs any class of adults that it is their role to be gentler and more virtuous or humbler than the powerful, it operates as a form of social control...”⁶³

What do we believe theologically about marriage and officership? Do we believe, as determined through the eyes of the Wesleyan quadrilateral – the primacy of the Scriptures, the tradition as found through the two millennia history of the Church (and, I’d suggest, in the one hundred fifty years of Salvation Army history), reason (rational thinking and sensible interpretation), and the experience of the Christian in their

⁶² Catherine Price Higgins. *The Officer*. 1931.

⁶³ Elizabeth Janeway, *Powers of the Weak*. 1980, 158-159)

personal and communal journey ⁶⁴in Christ – that women are to be subservient to their husbands in their work? If so, then the current appointment paradigm makes sense.

Perhaps we, as a denomination, do believe that the woman is the weaker vessel, incapable of serving in the same way that a man does. If that truly is our theological position, backed up by solid Biblical interpretation, then folding sheets may be an acceptable assignment for a married woman officer – or perhaps she should be freed to pursue other opportunities for service outside the Army.

But . . . the Salvation Army has a foundational commitment to gender equality based upon the strongly-held beliefs of its founders. Christine Parkins explains that while “Catherine Booth accepted that the Fall had put women into subjection as a consequence of sin and that submission to the male was God’s judgment upon her disobedience,” Booth argued that “to leave it there is to reject the good news of the gospel.”ⁱ William was in agreement: “I insist on the equality of women with men. Every officer and soldier should insist upon the truth that woman is as important, as valuable, as capable and as necessary to the progress and happiness of the world as a man.”⁶⁵ While he may have had a theological acceptance of gender equality, Booth’s position was also a pragmatic one, as soldiers of both genders were needed for the salvation war. However, William also understood the cultural dynamics, and refused his daughter Evangeline permission to marry, as he recognized that marriage for her would limit her leadership role in the Salvation Army.

“But she really doesn’t want to be in leadership. She really wants to fold sheets all summer.” There may be a bit of truth in what some say behind closed doors. There are issues of small children and elderly parents, of marital dynamics and of low expectations, and, as I’ve so happily discovered, grandmother days. But there are many married women officers who are willing to give “every passion, every skill, every dream” to the work of the Kingdom as expressed through the Salvation Army but find that the job assigned is folding sheets, even if those sheets are figurative rather than literal.

So how to sort it out? We can’t really look to models elsewhere in the history of the church or even in our contemporary culture because the required dual clergy role has no cultural equivalent that I’m aware of. The US military offers no help unless we are willing to have separate deployments, with one spouse in Iraq and the other in Texas. So we are left to address this ‘issue’ ourselves through prayer, theological considerations, and the hard work of talking about it from the grassroots to the appointment consultations. It is time for the Aksah’s of our day to get down off our donkeys and tell those who hold the power what we want and need (see Judges 1:12-15).

⁶⁴ Christine Parkin, “A Woman’s Place,” in *Catherine Booth, Her Continuing Relevance*, Clifford Kews, ed., (St. Albans, VT: The Campfield Press, 1990) 11-12.

⁶⁵ William Booth. *Messages to Soldiers* (London; The Salvation Army, 1908) referenced on the Salvation Army international website, www.salvationarmy.org

The nuns solved their problem of Maria by setting her free to serve outside the convent so that she could “climb every mountain.” I don’t believe that’s what the majority of married Salvation Army women want. I’ll take a stab at what we do want and how to get there in the next edition of JAC.

The Call to War

by Janet Munn

The authority God delegates to sincere followers is eminently practical. It is not merely about sitting in heaven with the angels and saints and martyrs and 24 elders and four living beings. It is about winning the war on earth right now. And the devil struggles with all his energy to dissuade, discourage, distort so that we settle for our current level of obedience. Our clear understanding and embrace of this thoroughly biblical authority will empower us to confidently and victoriously confront the enemy in every situation.

The Authority of the Believer: Exercising Our Dominion in Christ

God gave the dominion of earth to humans

A. God gave the dominion of the earth to humans forever. He releases His power in the earthly realm in response to redeemed humans living in agreement with Him (in their individual sphere of influence). The Spirit moves in response to what God's people say and do. Jesus will rule the earth forever in partnership with His Bride who is filled with adoring obedience.

Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion... over all the earth... God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over... every living thing that moves on the earth." (Genesis 1:26-28) 'Let Us make humankind in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over... every... thing... upon the earth.' ... God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over... every living thing that moves upon the earth.' (Genesis 1:26-28 NRSV)

The heavens are the Lord's heavens, but the earth He has given to human beings. (Psalm 115:16 NRSV)

What are human beings that You are mindful of them... You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; You have put all things under their feet. (Psalm 8:406 NRSV)

For all things are yours: whether...the world or life or death, or things present or things to come – all are yours. And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. (1 Corinthians 3:21-23 NKJV)

Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me... (John 17:24 NKJV)

To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne... (Revelation 3:21 NKJV)

B. When God gave the governing authority of the earth to Adam, he had the right to use it in any way that he chose. He did the unthinkable with it. He committed high treason and gave his authority over the earth to satan (Luke 4:5-6 NKJV). At that time, satan became “the god of this world.”

This authority...has been delivered to me [satan], and I give it to whomever I wish. (Luke 4:6 NKJV)

Whose minds the god of this age has blinded...lest the light of the gospel...shine on them. (2 Corinthians 4:4 NKJV)

C. At the cross, Jesus as a Man defeated satan and all demonic powers and made a public spectacle of them before all in heaven and hell. He has won the victory, but it must be enforced in this age. Authority is delegated power. A police officer stops a car by the authority of the government, not his physical power. Like the policeman, we must put our hand up and invoke the name of Jesus.

Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it [His death and resurrection]. (Colossians 2:15 NKJV)

D. We must enforce Jesus’ authority on earth. The enemy’s attacks against us will continue if we accept them. There are two common errors in responding to satan’s attack. **First, to ask God to resist satan for us.** We must not ask God to do what He entrusted to us. As God will not plant the seeds and pull the weeds for the farmer, so He will not rebuke the devil for us. **Second, to accept satan’s attack under the banner of honouring the sovereignty of God.** They say, “Jesus, I trust Your leadership.” We trust His leadership best when we obey His command to actively resist what the devil presents to us. It is a misapplication of the glorious doctrine of God’s sovereignty to passively accept what we must actively resist. There is no “cease fire” in our spiritual conflict.

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. (James 4:7 NKJV)

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith... (1 Peter 5:8-9 NKJV)

E. We must use our authority against satan, who seeks to steal, kill, and destroy God’s blessing in our life (by fear, addictions, emotional oppression, division, sickness, financial oppression, etc.). Jesus gives insight into satan’s nature and tactics against us whenever he is involved in our life.

The thief [satan] does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. (John 10:10 NKJV)

F. The principalities and powers speak of the invisible demonic hierarchy in the spirit realm. Our primary problems are not of human origin, but are invisible enemies. To

stand (v. 13) is to refuse to accept satan's attacks. God's Word is our weapon. We resist satan's attacks by speaking the Word. Heightened strife or negative emotions often involve satan's flaming missiles striking us.

We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers...in the heavenly places. Take up the whole armor of God... having done all, to stand... taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one... Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God... (Ephesians 6:12-17)

G. Our problems are often the result of several factors working together including psychological issues (our mindset, belief systems, and life choices), physiological issues (diet, alcohol, chemicals, etc.), sociological issues (what others do to us), and spiritual (demonic attack). By using our authority, we can remove the added pressure that demons bring to our problems. This makes it easier to solve physiological, psychological, and sociological problems. Exercising authority against satan's attack does not automatically cancel all the consequences of our wrong choices or the effects of what others do to us. There are varying degrees of demonic oppression.

H. Fear, rejection, and addictive urges are a form of demonic oppression that must be rebuked. If they are allowed to gain dominance in our thinking, they will dominate our life with despair. We must take authority over the spirit of fear. It must not be accepted or allowed to grow.

God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7)

Our spiritual authority is based on Jesus' victory and exaltation

A. Our spiritual authority is based on our union with Jesus. The authority that Jesus received as an "exalted Man" is given to His people. God gave Jesus to the Church (v. 22) as our head (v. 22) and made us His body or the vehicle through which He expresses His power on earth (v. 23).

The Father of glory, may give to you... revelation in the knowledge of Him... that you may know... The exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe... which He [the Father] worked in Christ when He raised Him...and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places... He put all things under His [Jesus'] feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him... (Ephesians 1:17-23 NKJV)

We have the same category of power within us that God used when He raised Jesus from the dead. Money can't buy it. Threats can't make it happen. Military power/natural weapons can't compare to this power.

In 1 Corinthians 12 the emphasis is on the people of God, the Body of Christ connected to each other. But in Ephesians 1 the emphasis is on the Body connected to Jesus, the Head – forever and ever.

B. We must take our place of authority in Christ as those seated in heavenly places with Jesus (Ephesians 1:3, 20-22; 2:6). Having been raised to sit with Jesus in heavenly places, we are given access to God's throne. When we pray according to God's will, our prayers reach His throne and find approval, resulting in the release of power. We must know who we are in Christ.

Raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ... (Ephesians 2:6 NKJV)

C. The command of faith doesn't always bring results instantly. Do not become sluggish, but...through faith and patience inherit the promises. (Hebrews 6:12 NKJV)

D. Our authority is based on what Jesus accomplished, not on our moods, feelings, fervor or recent victories.

“Not by [human] might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” Says the LORD of hosts. (Zechariah 4:6 NKJV)

Examples of wrestling in prayer:

Take (wield) the Sword of the Spirit: A human being agreeing with Jesus. Speaking the Word of God and keeping at it – that is wielding the Sword of the Spirit. (Don't endure it – speak to it.)

- 1 “I refuse to accept this any more. I refuse passivity but I rise up against it in the authority of Jesus Christ, who has conquered every foe.”
2. “I will steadfastly resist.”
3. “In the name of Jesus I cancel your assignment against me.”
4. “In the name of Jesus, go, now – (be specific). Leave my marriage, my children, my parents, my finances, my thought life, my relationships.”
5. “Take your hands off my marriage. I cancel your assignment against me in Jesus' name.”
6. “I plead the blood of Jesus Christ over my body.”

7. "I take authority over... fear... lust... perversion... suicide... demonic harassment and torment."
8. "In the name of Jesus I bind that spirit of fear."
9. "Release Your glory, Lord. Release Your manifest presence now, Lord."

We call Salvationists (and all warriors of Jesus everywhere) worldwide to join spiritual battle on the grounds of a sober reading of Scripture, a conviction of the triumph of Christ, the inviolable freedom and dignity of persons, and a commitment to the redemption of the world in all its dimensions – physical, spiritual, social, economic and political.

We affirm that Christ our Lord calls us to join him in holy war against evil in all its forms and against every power that stands against the reign of God. We fight in the power of the Spirit in the assurance of ultimate and absolute victory through Christ's redemptive work. (from "Called to Be God's People" – International Spiritual Life Commission – bracket added by Munn and Court)

(Speak the word – don't just think it)
