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JAC Exclusive Junior Soldier Interview

Editorial Introduction

by Major Stephen Court, Editor

Greetings in Jesus' name. Welcome to JAC108 – the 108th edition of Journal of Aggressive Christianity. We've got a strong training flavor this issue of JAC, as several cadets from USA Western Territory have shared some of their study with the wider world for our general edification. Thanks to the cadets (and the majors) for contributions.

Resurrection Day is scheduled during the lifespan of JAC108 and Major Gord Taylor's poem SILENCE can be used in your personal rations and your public meetings for inspiration and worship.

Cadet Erin Wikle gives us an introduction to the concept of EKKLESIA, and wonders what recapturing an accurate understanding of the term might mean for church in the our generation.

Cadet Claire O'Brien-Hawk takes a deeper look into how Jesus engaged those opposed to Him, teasing out approaches we might profitably apply, in her essay ON CONFLICT.

Cadet Grant Hall gives us a primer on the ASBURY REVIVAL, and prompts us to wonder about what and how conditions might be replicated today to see similar results.

Cadet Chris Wikle proposes AN EQUAL ARMY FOR A BETTER WORLD, emphasizing the tension between the Army's egalitarian ideals and practical performance.

YOU LOST ME is a book by David Kinnaman addressing the demographic departure of millennials from active Christian engagement. Two cadets, Laura Loomis and Grant Hall take a crack at the author's argument.

In The Problem Of Human [Dis]Obedience, The Providence Of A Supernatural God, Cadet Erin Wikle takes a fresh look at residence in and exit from the Garden of Eden and how it reflects on us and on God.

Major Danielle Strickland, the featured author of JAC107, is back with THE WAY OF CHRIST reflections from Lebanon.

We also provide some THOUGHTS ON THE STATE OF HOLINESS IN THE SALVATION ARMY.

Cadet Erin Wikle reflects on Scot McKnight's and Commissioner Kay Rader's considerations in THE BLUE PARAKEET and TERMS OF EMPOWERMENT.

And Cadet Claire O'Brien-Hawk offers us a fresh perspective on THE FAITH OF THE CANAANITE WOMAN in her exegetical paper on Matthew 15:21-28.

We've got a first person, JAC-exclusive Junior Soldier Interview, called MY TAKE: ONE JUNIOR SOLDIER, with Judah Court Strickland to wrap up the contents of this edition of Journal of Aggressive Christianity.

As always, JAC intends to offer provocative, orthodox, and edifying content to readers around the world. Read closely and share widely. Unless Jesus returns, we're aiming for June 2017 for JAC109. If you finish JAC108 before then, feel free to take a deep dive into the previous 106 issues, all free, all archived on the main JAC page.

On to world conquest!

Much grace.

Silence

By Captain Gordon Taylor

the silence

it's not
right?
it's not
usual

there's something about this silence

it's cold
disturbing
even
dark?

I know all will be well
all must be well
yet something is
off

it is the silence itself

not a normal silence
a silence reflecting what is happening
and so we wait
in silence

waiting

waiting

I know I need not worry

but the silence
smothers me and others
silence pervades

and then

it breaks

suddenly

a voice breaks the silence

His voice
The voice

it is my name He speaks
"Gabriel!"

I attend

"Gabriel", He says
"Gabriel, it is time."

"time?" I ask
"time for what?"

"It's time to go..."

"?"

"It's time to go ROLL THAT STONE AWAY!"

Church/ Ekklēsia

By Cadet Erin Wikle

Ekklēsia Outside the Bible

Ekklēsia (“assembly”) is derived from, *ek-kaleo* (“call out” – i.e. summoning an army to assembly) and finds its origins in the 5th century when full citizens of the Greek city state would be *called to assemble* in the case of an emergency or “extraordinary” gathering (Hawthorne 123). These gatherings would allow each rightful member the opportunity to share (specifically, to speak). There is particular emphasis on the fact that *full citizens* had access to *ekklēsia* and that its function was strictly political (a place where judicial decisions would be made).

Ekklēsia in Paul

The work *ekklēsia* is mentioned throughout the New Testament, of which 66 of 114 occurrences are found in Paul’s writings (Hawthorne 124). Hawthorne references three categories of which *ekklēsia* is used in the New Testament: the local gathering, house church, and heavenly gathering. Note, however, that each are in keeping of the original Greek meaning of a called assembly, congregation, meeting, and gathering.

- 1. Local Gathering** – 1st recorded non-Political instance was in Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians) as evidenced in Paul’s greeting, “... assembled by God the Father and by the Master, Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 1:1). The use of *ekklēsia* is true to the original meaning – a gathering of a singular nation, in this case, the Thessalonians.
- 2. House Church** – Hawthorne notes “it was not until about the middle of the third century that early Christianity owned property for purposes of worship”, making reference to homes in Laodicea, Colossae, and Philippi, and Corinth where the earliest believers gathered in Jesus’ name (Hawthorne 125).
- 3. Heavenly Gathering** – This is notably the most general (broad) and eschatological reference to the church as a whole, specifically referencing *all believers*, as would eventually be assembled in heaven.

Origin & Images of the Church

It is alleged that the term *ekklēsia*, when it stands alone in scripture, operates as an abbreviation for *he ekklēsia*, which means Church of God. This distinction is made to assert that God himself and Christ, as part of the triune Godhead, operates as the origin, impetus, and source of [religious] *ekklēsia* (Hawthorne 126). In this, *we* the church, are a living extension of Christ, the head of the church worldwide.

Hawthorne writes that while some images and metaphors are analogous to the true interpretation of *ekklēsia*, the correlation is not always implicit (Hawthorne 127). There

are many instances where mention of “the body” or even “the temple” are made in reference to an individual’s direct relationship to Jesus rather than to the church on the whole. Thus, it is important (critical, rather) to consider the entire context of the particular passage to understand its right interpretation.

The Purpose of the Church’s Gathering

The three main purposes for the church to gather is to edify one another, meet with Christ, and worship God (Hawthorne 129). Paul teaches that gathering together in this was necessitate a willingness to build one another up, showing growth and progress in one’s faith that cannot be done alone, apart from other believers. In meeting with Christ, there is power in remembering that through his death and resurrection, immediate access was granted to meet with Jesus, the Son of God. This is best modeled through, prayer, scripture, sound teaching, and spiritual songs – whereby the presence of Christ manifests through his Holy Spirit where those who believe gather. The greatest distinction between Old Testament and New Testament worship is a frequent talking and teaching point of Paul – worship itself is of a living, active God and should be practiced in “every sphere of life” (Hawthorne 130). Hawthorne continues that worship as a corporate response also works to edify and lift up the body of Christ.

Authority of the Church

Lastly, the church operates under the authority and mantel of Jesus Christ, remembering that he is the head/origin/source of the church itself. Any work of the church in a purely apostolic sense – that is to witness, teach, and build up – was to be done under Christ’s authority, provision, and power alone.

Why Does it Matter

From its beginnings, *ekklēsia*, as we understand it in relation to Jesus Christ, functioned as a place to find commonality even amongst diversity. Its purpose was to gather like and missional minded persons together to *assemble* to edify and encourage one another, grow in one’s faith and understanding of Christ, and worship a triune God who is worthy, above all else. In assembling in this way, God has reminded us of the importance of gathering, assembling, and being “called out”. The church does not exist for itself, but also cannot exist without keeping connected to its source – the Head, Jesus Christ. It is necessary to remember the origin of *ekklēsia*, that even within a political interpretation, the church functioned to respond to emergent matters and that those who *belonged* to it were required to respond with both plan and action.

It seems as though the name “church” has been misunderstood and misrepresented throughout the course of history. It has also *missed the mark*. I can’t help but wonder if this is because *we*, the church, his church has, for so long, wrongly understood our origins and our Origin. Because the church is comprised of completely fallible human beings, the risk of both intentionally and unintentionally hurting others, misunderstanding the needs/hopes/desires of others, and failing to actually *be ekklēsia*. This article served to provide a more academic understanding of the origins of *ekklēsia* without failing to put back within our grasp the basic ideas and tenants of belonging – both for the sake of each other and for the salvation of the world. Real *ekklēsia*

mandates an apostolic way of life, wholly reliant on Christ as our Source, remembering one another and *others*, for the glory and growth of HIS Kingdom.

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On Conflict

By Cadet Claire O'Brien-Hawk

The perception of a divide between Jesus and the Pharisees and Sadducees (hereafter referred to as 'Rulers') is an accurate perception, but one which is vulnerable to superficial and finally, harmful, analysis. Some have characterized the relationship between Jesus and the Rulers as one in which Jesus essentially systemically despises any who go by the title 'Pharisee' or 'Sadducee', but such an analysis is shallow; it weakens Jesus' judgment in Matthew and constrains attempts to understand and enact faithful discipleship. Jesus does not hate the office of the Rulers but rather the embodiment of the office by his contemporaries.

Two common threads can be detected in the conflicts between Jesus (and his people) and the Rulers. First, those opposed to Jesus desperately clutch at resources/power, whereas Jesus and his people submit to and depend on God's providential care. This is first seen in Jesus' birth. Terrified that the baby Jesus would unseat him from his throne of power, Herod engaged in a campaign of terror, massacring all the male toddlers in the region, determined to find and finish Jesus. Later, as Jesus prepares his ministry with 40 days in the desert, Satan tempts him toward self-sufficiency and displays of power. Jesus responds to him with a quote from his ancestors' time in the desert, acknowledging man's total dependence on God and God's total worthiness of man's confidence. Jesus sets the example for how the faithful are to engage power: not claiming and using it for their own security or benefit, but trusting God to secure and profit them in his own time and way.

Second, those opposed to Jesus ignore or exploit the neediness of others, whereas Jesus and his people tend to it. Early in the Gospel, John the Baptizer denounces the Pharisees and Sadducees based on their lack of *actions* in keeping with repentant and contrite hearts. Righteousness that does not reach into the physical realm is not righteousness enough. Throughout the rest of the Gospel, Jesus heals paralytics, interacts with sinners, eats at the wrong time and in the wrong way, and drives out demons. In each of these moments, Pharisees and Sadducees confront Jesus, willing to sacrifice the physical and spiritual well-being of the people for the sake of observing other forms of 'righteousness'. They have lost sight of shepherding, blinded by a consuming preoccupation with self. Though there is nothing inherently and necessarily offensive about Pharisees and Sadducees, these particular Rulers engage in the exact type of tight-fisted, panicky, defensive, self-preserving behavior that cripples justice. This behavior can only ever exist apart from trust in God's ability and willingness to provide; they are mutually exclusive. Each of the conflicts one might derive from the text (gender, race, socioeconomic status) can be traced back to these fundamental patterns: selfishness out of a sense of scarcity verses generosity out of confidence in God's abundance and provision.

In the world today one might observe conflict between cultures, nations, genders, socioeconomic status, religious sects, and political positions. The characters and details

in the dramas may have changed from Jesus' time but the basic stories are the same. As in Jesus' time, most of the divisions and hostility in current society can be traced back to fear. This is evidenced in the ferocity and violence with which people defend their positions. In the same way that Pharisees and Sadducees were quick to put down any sentiment or behavior that threatened their tightly controlled lives, people now try to repress any 'other' that endangers their world.

This biting and tearing down behavior is the exact opposite of faithful kingdom living as described in Matthew. If righteousness and faith are demonstrated in the physical care of neighbor for neighbor, then the infighting that is rampant in the world today is not an appropriate defense of the right and true; it is not even a merely neutral option. It is sinful and to be judged by the Messiah. While it is tempting to believe that defending a belief or cause to extreme measures shows admirable loyalty to the object of the allegiance, this is not the way of Jesus' kingdom. Even violence done for the 'right' is wrong.

It should be noted that Jesus is not exactly conflict-free in Matthew. He himself states that he has come to bring conflict and division. However, to imagine that Jesus is pursuing mere sectarianism is completely wrong. As stated previously, Jesus is not against Pharisees and Sadducees because they are Pharisees and Sadducees. Jesus does not pick demographic favorites. He does not prefer men to women or rich to poor. Jesus is enraged at the Pharisees and Sadducees because they are rejecting Jesus' kingdom where resources are shared and where everyone is fed. Those who ought to be shepherding the community into health and wellness are burdening the people instead. Jesus' division is a line between those who choose to continue to live in violence, oppression, and shortage, and those who choose to enter into peace, justice, and abundance.

There are three passages in particular that seem to allow for a reading that perpetuates unholy conflict today. In Matthew 10, Jesus speaks of bringing not peace, but a sword. He then states that he has come to turn family members against each other and demands that the love of his followers for him be above their love to their own family. This is a passage that could easily engender a lack of charity toward 'others'. If disciples are not even allowed loyal attachment to their family, what kind of commitment can be expected of them toward strangers? This extreme devotion to Jesus has been used as justification for all kind of violent activity against those who do not agree with Christianity. Certainly, Jesus' claim to bring a sword is suggestive of an acceptance, and maybe promotion, of crusader-like mission.

Perhaps a better reading can be supported by context clues. In the preceding verses, Jesus has been telling his disciples that they are open to the same abuses Jesus himself suffered, that they will receive no portion different from their Master's. He has warned that they will be hated and persecuted. This does not suggest encouragement for initiating a violent campaign, but rather warning that they will receive a violent campaign from others. Further back Jesus commanded the disciples to preach and to heal, to give as freely as they have received, to enter towns as poor men, without

provisions. This is a far cry from entering towns as conquerors. Jesus then talks about bearing personal crosses, and losing lives in the attempt to live as Jesus lived. This is not a passage justifying violent practices for the sake of the kingdom. Rather, it is a passage that warns of the way people will come to hate and punish those who follow Jesus and live as he lived.

The passage of the Canaanite Woman, in Matthew 15 and the derisive way in which she is spoken to have provided ample support for those who wish to justify hostility between genders and nations. Because the narrative shows Jesus as dismissing this woman's nation, referring to them as 'dogs', and ignoring the woman's pleas for help, it is easy to believe that Jesus himself took offense at such demographic categories. If one looks closer, however, they will find that the story of the Canaanite woman is one in which Jesus refuses to treat an outsider as a nothing-person. He engages her person and her need when his disciples would have him pay her off. Neither her status as a Gentile nor her status as a woman were enough to allow Jesus to finally reject her. Rather, he draws her in, creating tension, and drawing her to the only point through which she can enter his healing. The only demographic warring in this passage is that which is healed and redeemed in Israel's God.

Finally, in Matthew 21, Jesus states that the kingdom will be taken from 'you' and given to a people who will produce its fruits. This has often been enthusiastically accepted as an indication that the good, fruit-producing Christians are to replace the wicked, didn't-recognize-Jesus Jews as God's special possession. Christian sense of superiority over Jews is extensive throughout the world due to passages like this. A closer look at 'kingdom' may afford clarity. If we take this word to mean 'living in the benefits that derive from doing things God's way', then yes, certainly, those whose behavior produces good fruits will eat and gain nourishment of that fruit. Those who work to diffuse conflict and promote peace in their community are likely to live in a community where there is peace: they have made it so! There is nothing to suggest that there is a demographic line drawn here. No race or gender is more likely to have success. As with Jesus' sentiment toward the Pharisees and the Sadducees, it is not the physical and superficial attributes of a person that Jesus is interested in, it is their heart and whether they produce fruit in keeping with the kingdom. Any person, whether Jew, Christian, black, white, child, or adult, has as much potential as any other for receiving the kingdom: they must simply work toward its institution in their society by the way they live.

The Gospel of Matthew has great news for the divisions of the present age: Jesus is not about them! Not only does Jesus not support these divisions, he himself fought and died to dismantle them and sends his followers out on a mission to do the same. Jesus would not even have *his* followers push the truth onto the world. His way is not even merely "live and let live"; it is a way of living in community in which everyone, regardless of their makeup, has enough to eat and is able to live well. He is a Messiah who is not satisfied for people to continue in their oppression. He does not have people fight for their own deliverance but he fights for them, bearing the scars of this fight for justice in his own body and taking on their position as one despised and rejected. When

Christians today witness hostility and division, they are to follow Christ's example, not allowing these boundaries to limit their care for people in need. Disciples of every generation will see the Powerful hoarding more and more resources, clutching desperately to the illusion that if they store up enough goods, they will be secure. Disciples of Christ must judge this behavior, behavior that robs the weak of their daily provisions. At all times, disciples should proclaim a God of abundant resources, a God who is willing to provide manna for his people, each day in its turn.

Asbury Revival

By Cadet Grant Hall

What is revival, and how does it occur? In the twentieth century there have been a few revivals that have occurred in society. One of note is the Asbury College Revival in Kentucky. This short paper will focus on this revival, and compare some common characteristics with some other revivals that occurred in the twentieth century.

So what happened in 1970 at this small college campus Asbury? What made this such a tremendously important part of our church history? Preparation. According to Dr. Dennis Kinlaw, it began with one of the young female students wanting a deeper blessing of God on this campus (Paris). In October 1969, she started a group of six similar minded students which they called a 'Great Experiment'. This is similar to the Wesley brothers 'Holy club', stressing study, and rules of life that included prayer (Shelley). The 'Holy Club' was setup by Charles and John Wesley to be a group that were motivated by prayer and accountability, in contrast to the impact of Deism in the school, and society (Sheppard). The 'Great Experiment' is also similar to John Avant's accountability group, preceding the Howard Payne College's revival in 1995 (McDow).

The 'Great Experiment' was a small group accountability covenant. For 30 days, they focused on: Thirty minutes of daily prayer, Reading God's word, writing down truth from His word, Obeying that truth daily, Sharing their faith with others, Meeting once a week, and Checking up with each other. From October the 'Great Experiment' grew to six groups of six in January 1970. On Saturday January 31st, the thirty-six students led a chapel service, sharing what they were doing, and what God was doing in their life. There were individual commitment slips on the pews encouraging others to do the same. In addition to this, there were prayer meetings held. On the night of February 2nd, they repeated the question as they would do at the end of all their prayer meetings "Do you think He'll come today?" The response was heard strongly by those present, "It's gonna happen tomorrow" (Paris). And indeed God kept his word.

"I have a problem...and I don't quite know how to handle it." The Dean said.

"What is it?" Asked Kinlaw on the other end of the telephone conversation from Texas.

"It's chapel. It's not over yet."

"It isn't over yet? The morning chapel isn't over yet? What do you mean it isn't over yet? It is 7:00 at night. [Chapel started at 10 am] What happened?"

"God is here!"

What started in October, brought an eight-day chapel service to the Asbury College. This was not an individually led rally, or a meeting like Aimee McPherson's or Billy Sunday's that would entertain us, but it was simply God's presence among the students (Cooper). It was a meeting led by the student body, blessed by God, involving

testimonies, weeping, singing, and prayer. But it did not stop there. At night those students were on the telephone “when the rates were cheaper”, talking with parents, friends, and telling others of what happened (Parisis). And so it spread, like wild fire. A student would share what happened at the Asbury Chapel in a local church, and the experience would be duplicated right there in that church, like a spark on dry brush. God’s spirit was moving, not just in Asbury, but spreading to nearby towns, cities, and states. There was television coverage, local newspaper stories, and students were sharing stories of this event. It had coverage on a national scale.

When Dr. Dennis Kinlaw arrived into Asbury from Canada, there was a noticeable difference in the aura of God as he drove closer. It was obvious that there was something going on there, and now he was amongst it. Not wanting to deflate what was going on, or defile the holy presence with his uncleanness, he entered the chapel, and sat down at the back. He heard the confession of the students, and the repenting of sin. Then one student came up to him. “Dr. Kinlaw. I am a liar. What do I do?” Kinlaw suggested that this student start with the last person they lied to, and ask them to forgive her (Parisis).

What was taking place in this college chapel was, “an honest, candid dealing with personal sin, and with personal disobediences, and personal problems.” The student told Dr. Kinlaw, three days later, she had just repented to her 34th person, and she was free. This was different to the ‘revivals’ that were managed by people like Billy Sunday, and Aimee McPherson. There was no entertainment factor, there was no preaching, just sharing, prayer and repentance. In Asbury College, Howard Payne College, and the Welsh revival, people confessed their sins to a public audience (“Welsh Revival”). Their attitude is similar to what God desired in 1 Chronicles 7 “If my people... will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (v14). On that day in Texas, at Howard Payne University, McDow tells of an avalanche of 300-400 young students that came to the platform to share their sin. One began simply by saying “You think that I have been such a good Christian, but I’ve been wearing a mask. Tonight I am taking off the mask” (McDow 325). In Asbury College a professor did the same. He shared a candid confession of his hypocrisy, living with guilt for not teaching effectively, but then “God came down” (Parisis). The Professor humbled himself, and acknowledged his sin. God replaced it with peace, and joy. He was noticeably different in the following days, weeks, and months.

There was a similar experience in Wales. Evan Roberts was part of a 1904 revival that spread quickly to the surrounding town. Like this lone student at the Asbury campus, Roberts prayed for revival in Wales. It began on Valentine’s Day night with one woman confessing “I love the Lord Jesus with all my heart” (“Welsh Revival”). It continued within a small group of people, who had agreed to seek a deeper spiritual life, staying behind to hear from Roberts. They agreed to confess all known sin, remove anything from their life that they were in doubt, yielding to the Holy Spirit, and publicly confessing the Lord Jesus Christ as their savior. Like Asbury, a revival had started from this small group, which encompassed the local area.

There was change in the darkest, uncanny people in the Welsh town of Loughor. And the effects of this were felt by people in the 100,000's. There were miners, young men, and women who were now speaking openly, testifying of the saving grace of Jesus. It is the Holy Spirit, student led, confession, testimony, and prayer that brought about these revivals. There are records of those who have endeavored to do such things by their own strength, people like Sunday, and McPherson to name a couple. But the revivals in Asbury College, Howard Payne College and Loughor, Wales, were started by an individual. One person who was not content to let God be absent from their community. Not content to keep the fire within themselves, but to share it. And have a strategy. The 'Great Experiment', the 'holy club', and talking to people who desired change in their community. It certainly makes me wonder... Are we doing all we can to encourage revival here?

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An Equal Army For A Better World

By Cadet Chris Wikle

It should be seen as a closed issue – settled over 130 years ago; in the small, peculiar part of the Christian Church known as The Salvation Army, women have always had the authority to lead, to preach, and to teach. The Salvation Army has blazed an important trail in this area. But when we take a look at the wider church, and the secular culture in America, should we feel a sense of accomplishment that we have played a part in advancing gender equality? Or, should we be spurred on to redouble our efforts to express, in all ways, the conviction we so strongly felt at first, that, regardless of what the dominant culture dictates, women truly have the same holy mandate to lead?

An honest look at ourselves and society around us will point to the reality that we must grow to fully become the people we so often laud ourselves for being. We, as The Salvation Army have progressed in this important area, but we have room to grow. When we honestly consider the state of the rest of the Church regarding women in ministry, we can see that there is still much need. When we look at the secular culture around us, we can easily see evidence that demands an urgent response.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, women in the workforce earn 78 cents for every dollar a man earns for the same job (Equal Pay Infographic). Since equal pay became a part of a wider national discussion on women's rights over 50-years ago, this problem hasn't gone away. Women are portrayed by much of today's popular media as objects. Music videos, advertisements TV, and movies are often guilty of this. While many people would say this is unfortunate, this practice has become so ubiquitous, that there are few clear objections. God's plan of redemption and reconciliation must be modeled by His people to this world, with its fractured and estranged relationships.

We say in The Salvation Army, with no small measure of pride, that we were pioneers in the area of empowering women. But we have bowed to the dominant culture surrounding us since our brilliant beginnings. Early Salvationists embraced the scandal and spectacle of sending out women evangelists and preachers. It was a radical idea and was met with vehement opposition. The right of women to preach was, to those Salvationists, not only their personal response to their interpretation of scripture, but it was an important witness for others.

Admittedly, there is not widespread, overt, discrimination against women who are leading or preaching today. The problem is much more subtle. The crux of the matter is that women are underrepresented in leadership in this movement. This is really a product of the lack of opportunity afforded to women in the past. A chronic preference for male advancement has meant that countless women have not had as many opportunities to cultivate their potential as their male counterparts.

The Salvation Army has, over the past two decades, removed or changed most of the institutional structure that has reflected bias against women. The referral to the male of

a married couple as the Corps Commanding Officer, and the woman as “Mrs. Captain”, followed by her husband’s name have been modified to reflect an egalitarian perspective. What was insidious about this was not the terminology, but the thinking those phrases and structures represented. These changes are wonderful, and they represent important progress. Some may say that is good enough.

The Salvation Army of today, however, retains some holdovers from the male-dominated cultures of the past. Married women officers, for example, are usually assigned leadership roles that have more to do with their husband’s gifts than their own. They are not given the chance to fully lead by their own merit, but are appointed, nearly by default, to lead an already crowded women’s ministries department. Today’s Army is, at least, able to judge its single women officers by their own merit. I feel this is owed to the fact that a single woman officer has no male counterpart that can be preferred over her.

The recent changes the four American territories made in officer allowances should be applauded. As late as 2016, married female officers did not receive allowance in their own name. The old system was in place to benefit the Army and its officers from a financial standpoint. The shift to a unitary allowance structure, which now acknowledges the contribution of so many of its female leaders in the way which matters most to our society, was costly. However, this setback to Army wallets will reap a payday to Army values.

This issue affects everyone. The primary stakeholders are women who are already in leadership, as well as those considering leadership. These include pastor’s wives, as well as lay women who would be given freedom to use their gifts in God’s service. By extension, all women stand to gain from cultivating stronger female preachers and leaders, in that the Christian Church can be a major influence on society as a whole. If women are marginalized in the church, it will reinforce their marginalization in society. The opposite is also true.

It may seem that this issue isn’t really much of an issue. Almost everyone who is asked if they are in favor of women having an equal stake in leadership would reply, “Yes, of course.” But if The Salvation Army is, in fact, less than perfect in this area, that means men are disproportionately represented in leadership. For women to gain a stake in this area, men already in power must yield some of their authority. Sharing in this playground has proven to be just as difficult to teach as it was in the schoolyard.

I feel the task set before The Salvation Army is similar in its essence to the function it performed initially; to, by its example, call society to adopt the Kingdom principle, that, “In Christ, there is neither Jew, nor gentile, male, nor female, slave, nor free” (Galatians 3:28). It may be that women have grown in freedom and opportunity greatly in the Church. But self-satisfaction on behalf of the worldwide Church for this achievement is not well-founded. In many parts of the world, women are as oppressed within the Church as they are outside it. It will take time and concerted effort to overcome centuries of deeply-ingrained prejudice against women.

This is particularly daunting when considering those cultures which are particularly entrenched in gender bias, which can be tied into religion, tribal custom, and traditional family structures. Our charge coalesces around this important reality, expressed by the former international leaders of The Salvation Army. "Ultimately, our standard is not Eastern culture or Western culture, but the culture of God's Kingdom" (Rader and Rader 21)

We need to up our game because there are parts of the Church that believe women shouldn't have a voice in God's Kingdom: no voice among the believers gathered for worship, no voice in the planning and strategy of the Church, and no voice in its administration. They believe the Bible supports this claim explicitly. They cite verses like 1 Corinthians 14: 34, 35, which says women should be silent in the church, or 1 Timothy 2: 12, 13, which has Paul declaring that he does not permit women to assume authority over men. They use these scriptures, while ignoring a vast many others, to bolster a cultural viewpoint. Instead of conduct informing their interpretation of scripture, it should be scripture informing their conduct.

In practice, both of these scriptures are often poorly interpreted. Paul's admonition to the Corinthians that women should be silent is a response to the incessant and disruptive questioning and rambling the women of the church were doing at that time. The women had just realized their liberation, by the gospel of Christ, from stifling cultural oppression. They now finally had a voice. It would be natural to use this freedom in ignorance, having previously had no education or training whatsoever, within the community of faith. The Greek verb we translate as "to speak" has an extremely wide scope of usage in the New Testament. Paul's use of it here is more consistent with prattle, or chatter, than giving public address to encourage the believers.

So, to apply this ban on women speaking in the church to *all kinds* of speaking is to ignore what the *same* Apostle wrote to the *same* church in the *same* letter. In 1 Corinthians 11: 4, 5, he describes the appropriate dress for women when they pray or prophesy. If, as Catherine Booth so ably put it in her pamphlet *Female Ministry*, "we assume that the Apostle refers in both instances to the same thing, we make him in one page give the most explicit directions how a thing shall be performed, which, in a page or two further on...he expressly forbids being performed at all" (8). No, the Apostle Paul was not forbidding women from public preaching.

The current state of society regarding its view of women is very bleak. Much of the media continues to portray women as objects. Men receive higher pay for the same work. Women still struggle to achieve equality in workplace advancement. Estrangement is the standard between the genders. Our society loses a significant part of its humanity when we objectify women, or when we hold women in a reductive perspective. God's plan is redemption and reconciliation. This must begin with the body of Christ. There is still work to be done. Much more influence can be brought to bear. We can and must speak more loudly to the world on women's issues. We will only have an entirely credible voice when our practice matches our message.

Our obligation is, first of all, to act according to our convictions – that The Salvation Army would develop and empower leaders irrespective of gender or marital status. We can do this better and more completely than we have so far been able. We must also fulfil our obligation to the rest of the churches, to do our part in calling those that are lacking to more fully embrace these same values of God's Kingdom. Finally, we can influence the world around us – a world that has an appalling history regarding women's rights. Our society must continue to grow to value women, providing the freedom to fully achieve their potential.

General Eva Burrows, one of The Salvation Army's most beloved international leaders – and only the second woman to hold the rank of General – best addresses the need for women to achieve their potential in biblical leadership in today's society.

“This object-centered, technologically-minded, depersonalized world needs the influence of those gifts with which God has graced women, and that women, standing beside men in leadership, together accept their shared responsibility. We will not only be better together, but the world and the church will be better, too” (Burrows 5)

A Salvation Army which fully and dynamically practices what it preaches will more effectively witness to the Church, and, in turn, the world. In opposition to this is an array of hidden prejudices that few would dare bring to light. Some within our movement, men and women alike, have an allegiance to the status quo, which prizes the comfortable and familiar too highly. Most of those, however, who are complicit with this stifling culture do not share these prejudices. All they likely require is the mindfulness to more closely examine our practices. We can, and must overcome. In all likelihood, it won't be too much of a struggle. But we must do it. We must pursue moral excellence.

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You Lost Me – book review

By Cadet Laura Loomis

Book Review of 'You Lost Me' by David Kinnaman

Is Christianity coming to an end? Has the current generation adopted a mindset that makes going to church irrelevant? Or is there a strategy that can be put in place that will demonstrate to them that worshipping God in fellowship with a body of believers is still as important as it has ever been?

Author David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Group, seeks to answer exactly those questions. He contends that the current generation, or “mosaics,” are stepping away from the church in large numbers as they become young adults. It is this proposition for which he builds his case in his book, *You Lost Me*, which he wrote in order to bring awareness to what he calls “the dropout problem” (15).

Teenagers, Kinnman claims, are still highly engaged in the church, but they are not growing into young adults with a strong, disciplined faith in Christ. They feel disconnected, alienated, and misunderstood by the older adults that make up the congregations of a typical North American church. While easy access to media through the internet plays a part in this perspective, they also have a deep skepticism about the institutions that have shaped our society to-date, including the church.

Not every young adult walks away from the church. The ones that do walk away can be categorized into several groups, based on their current profession of faith, or lack thereof. Some of them, which Kinnaman calls “nomads,” walk away from being involved in church, but still consider themselves Christians. “Prodigals,” the author says, are those who completely abandon the faith altogether, and no longer call themselves Christians. The third group, “Exiles,” are described as those who are still believers and seekers of Christ, but they feel unsure how to balance the seemingly conflicting ideals of the church and their culture.

The dropout problem, Kinnaman writes, “is, at its core, a faith-development problem; to use religious language, it’s a disciple-making problem” (21). He argues that the current structure and mentoring in the church does not prepare future generations to be faithful Christ-followers in a culture that is so quickly changing around them.

In order to combat this trend, he suggests that the church should learn how to help the mosaics understand that wisdom is a valuable asset, even more so than just facts and figures. In an age of information overload, access to information on every subject is readily available, and having such easy access can lead to a lack of emphasis on what the information means. A lot of younger Christians know who Jesus is on paper, and they admire Him, but they do not have a relationship with Him as Lord and God in their lives.

Passing on wisdom between generations can only happen if the receiving generation believes that the giving generation has anything worthwhile to say. The gap in communication styles between generations creates a struggle between them that too often hinders the passing on of wisdom. All too many young people do not feel that older adults understand them, or care about what concerns them. Building that trust is an absolute necessity if there is to be any fruitful mentoring between them. There needs to be a change in the relationships between older adults and mosaics, if there is to be any chance at creating turning points in their lives that will make a valuable difference. Kinnaman believes that "...our programs need to be reevaluated and revamped where necessary to make intergenerational relationships a priority" (204).

There is still hope for a beneficial relationship between the generations. By making an effort to understand the new context in which the mosaics are living, it is possible to create the sense of confidence in the wisdom of older generations. This confidence just might help the mosaics to see the value in their faith. In turn, they may begin to hold on to their faith, rather than discarding it as irrelevant, and rekindle the joy in the fellowship and worship of God with believers of all generations.

Personally, I tend to agree with the author on his observations. Many churches that I have visited have a very robust youth group, and a thriving 40+ adult group, but a huge vacancy of any ages in between. I agree that is the effect of a radically different culture than that which existed even 15 years ago. Technology has taken over every aspect of life. Isolation and separation are the norm, and the condition only seems to be getting worse. It is far too easy to have a life on skype or facetime, without even leaving the house. I have seen first-hand the effects of the intergenerational communication gap.

The Jesus of the Bible seems almost obsolete to a generation that cannot fathom life without their smartphones. The personal, intimate relationship that Christ is seeking with each of us sounds too far-fetched to them. The nature of relationships in today's generation is radically different, grounded on a pragmatic philosophy that almost negates the need for authority in their eyes. Mosaics have no idea why a relationship with someone who wants submission and loyalty is so valuable, which is why it becomes seemingly effortless for them to simply walk away from the faith that shaped their lives in their youth.

If the mosaics feel distant and mistrusting of the generation that currently populates the churches, how can we expect that they will understand the value of having an intimate relationship with a distant biblical "character" from 2000 years ago? How could Jesus possibly understand their lives, their concerns, their frustrations? From their perspective, it's not possible for someone so removed from their situation to have any relevance to them.

Having that relationship with Christ, though, is far too important to just leave the current generation to fend for themselves. We need to learn to speak their "language," to get to know what is important to them, and to understand what makes them tick. We must

meet them where they are, and come to them on their terms, if we are to have any hope of restoring their faith.

This book has given me a new perspective on speaking to today's youth about their faith. It has helped me to understand why there is such a large disconnect between the generations, and how to go about restoring the relationships that will change the way they view the relevance of the church. I know that I need to personally invest myself in understanding where this generation is coming from, and what they are all about. Without relevant knowledge of their culture and how they live their lives, I will have no hope of establishing the trust that is necessary for the mentoring relationship that is so desperately needed.

I believe that Christianity will endure, rather than coming to an end. I also believe that the current generation has every hope of having a restored joy in fellowshiping with a body of believers. The strategy is in building the bridges that will establish intergenerational trust. In this way, the mosaics will find value in the wisdom of the older adults in their churches, and they will be able to see that Christ, and worshipping Him with other believers, is as relevant to their lives as it has ever been.

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You Lost Me – book review

By Cadet Grant Hall

Book Review of 'You Lost Me' by David Kinnaman

Has the church distanced itself from the 'mosaic' generation?

In his book 'You Lost Me', David Kinnaman describes various ways in which the mosaics, generation Y, or the millennial generation has distanced itself from the church. In the first part of the book he describes three groupings which characterize groups of people that have separated from the church; Prodigals, Exiles, and Nomads. He then describes characteristics of the church which has encouraged this separation; Overprotectiveness, Shallowness, Repressiveness, Exclusivity, and Doubting. Lastly Mr Kinnaman finishes with solutions for this separation - in two parts. The first part is based on his analysis of the statistical data collected, and his findings. The second part briefly shares 50 solutions from 50 people in society.

From collected statistical data, Kinnaman describes Nomads, Prodigals, and Exiles, and how they have all had "significant disengagement from church - and sometimes from Christianity altogether" (9). It is a saddening conclusion from where I am sitting - inside the church. Kinnaman describes themes such as "disengagement" from the church, disconnectedness from faith, and how there have been some major generational shifts, which contribute to the separation of this generation from the church today (10). He personifies these three groups, and uses Katy Perry as a typical Nomad, how she was "alienated by that which she was raised" (70). He describes Exiles as a group that desire to tackle the deeper issues in society, similar to Daniel, and how he was in the world of Babylon, but not of it.

Kinnaman goes on to describe characteristics of the church that contribute to this separation. One is shallowness, and it is compared with apprenticeships. There are certain questions in the survey that pick up on this character trait of the church, "Church is boring... My church does not prepare me for real life... God seems missing from my experience of church" (116). It is this table of questions, repeated in other chapters, which add weight to Kinnaman's conclusions about shallowness. This particular chapter goes on to describe how to combat this, through crafting apprenticeships. Kinnaman compares the trade of a carpenter with making a disciple. A carpenter focuses on producing a top product, one that will last. This is in contrast to simply producing bulk products that may fail, break, and be defective over time. "Quantity over quality" is a defect of the church today, how we seem eager to "put on events for large groups of kids" rather than "mentor each and every one of them into a mature and holistic walk with God" (125).

For each of these six church characteristics, he compares them to a characteristic that we should be striving for, these are listed below:

Overprotective	vs. Discerning (104)
Shallow	vs. Apprenticeship (126)
Anti-science	vs. Stewardship (137)
Repressive	vs. Relational (153)
Exclusive	vs. Embrace (175)
Doubtless	vs. Doing (190)

Lastly in the final chapters, Kinnaman describes solutions. He uses alliteration to describe three goals in which we, the church should strive for: “Rethinking Relationships” (202), “Rediscovering Vocation” (206), and “Reprioritizing wisdom” (210). These are all positive attributes that we as individuals can incorporate into our life. We should aim for reconciliation in our relationships, aiming to be a church that fosters “racial, gender, socioeconomic, and cultural reconciliation” (203). He described how there is a lot of positive energy, and interaction that can be gained from incorporating intergenerational relationships. According to Kinnaman “intergenerational relationships matter on earth because they are a snapshot of Zion” (204). Additionally, we should also help the people in our church to gain clarity for their calling in life, their vocation, and what God is asking them to do. For Kinnaman, this was the “most heartbreaking aspect of their findings... a modern tragedy” (207).

In the final chapter, ‘the top 50’ solutions, a couple stood out to me. One was that we should “increase our expectations” (215). Another was to “meet a need” (229). Increasing our expectations was a solution posed by Francis Chan. He describes how we have low moral standards, and our motives are off, that people leave our church as “nominal Christians”. We need to see everyone, not just the pastor, as a person who can pray, assume responsibility, counsel, disciple, and be empowered by the Holy Spirit to do mighty works. In this way we will produce mighty shepherds, and disciple-makers “rather than service-attenders” (216).

Meeting needs was a solution posed by Shane Claiborne. This describes how we should be “community planters”, looking to encourage relationships among people in the streets around us. We should grow connections, encourage neighborhood interconnectivity, and simply be there for our neighbors.

Because of the solutions, and descriptions of the 6 failing church characteristics, this is an awesome book to have on hand. One that challenges, and stirs the heart to go deeper. It is a book that brings to light some of the things that we do now in our church, things that are simply ‘lip service’ rather than striving to go deeper, drive wisdom, and encourage our call to truly follow Christ.

In my ministry, the ‘crafting disciples’ analogy of the apprentice struck home for me. It made me think of those in my life who have shaved some sharp edges off, some friends who have spent hours sanding me down, ready for painting. This crafting analogy is one

that I will certainly take with me after reading this book. Of course there are many other things which I can take away: To look for the deep, meat of the word for mature Christians, rather than the milk (1 Peter 2:2). To have the desire to really tackle issues that confront us today, and not shy away from them. To find ways to be discerning in today's society, not "withdraw from culture, but be in it" (Kinnaman 111).

So do I think the church has distanced itself from the mosaic generation? Unfortunately, yes, I believe it has. But, because of this research, because of people like David Kinnaman who has collated this information, it is now up to us, up to me to do something about it. I look forward to finding ways to craft disciples in my life starting today.

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The Problem of Human [Dis]Obedience, The Providence Of A Supernatural God

By Cadet Erin Wikle

In the Beginning

To say, it began in the beginning, may seem to some all too simple. Disobedience began in the garden. And within the well-known story within The Story is a well-crafted, intentioned tale of God's design gone awry when His created, His beloved, His Ish and Ishah, His male and female, fell prey to a crafty serpent lingering about, waiting to whisper lies to the listening ears of His beloved. And so it began. In the beginning.

Chronicling the creation story, Genesis 1-3 details God's sequential plan in creatively calling into existence the heavens and earth: light out from darkness, the sky and its expanse, the watery deep, and land which would yield abundant life – and He calls each touch and flourish of His creative process good. And then, He arrives to “the crown of creation” and breathes life into ha-adam, that is אדם , humankind in its plurality, both male and female (Gen. 1:29-30, The Voice).

As His crown of creation, Adam and Eve, is where our story—that is the story of humanity's constant struggle with disobedience—begins. Created within shalom (perfect peace), Adam and Eve shared in perfect relationship and perfect unity with God. They loved Him, and He loved them. But as the story goes, this perfect peace and fellowship was broken through a simple act of disobedience against God Himself. In a simple moment, the seething lies whispered behind the guise of a harmless garden snake seeped deep into the mind and heart of Eve, causing a certain tension between reality and fantasy to rise from within. Does God really care? Does He love me? And so this moment of doubt gives way to disobedience and life would never be the same again. But could it?

The truth of the matter is... life wouldn't be the same again. But, shalom could be restored. Peace could be found. Reconciliation could occur. And the otherness that resulted could become oneness again. There is hope. It came born through the person of Jesus Christ, the Promised One, who, though His head would be crushed, would in turn strike his (the Enemy's) heel (Gen. 3:15b). Christ would rise victorious in restoring shalom and making things right again.

In his book, *The Blue Parakeet*, author Scot McKnight writes:

God did push Adam and Eve out of the garden of Eden lest they should “live forever” in their “otherness condition.” That act of God was an act of mercy – an act that ultimately anticipates the cross of Christ, Jesus' act of dying our death forgives us of our complicity in Adam and Eve's sin by assuming what we deserved: death. (Scot McKnight 2008, 76)

And so through God's providence and mercy, Adam and Eve are banished from the garden and the story of God's plan to restore what was broken continued.

To Be Continued

Disobedience is something we learn at an early age. Children are taught the difference between right and wrong, good and bad, and are guided in making such decisions based on the reality of consequence. If a child makes a right or good decision, only positive, good, or neutral consequences will follow. If a child makes a wrong or bad decision, only negative consequences will follow. Our understanding of obedience, at the very origin of our cognitive development, is largely consequential. The problem with learning about disobedience at such a young age is that most children are unable to reason that their actions should not be driven by consequence but by rightness or wrongness itself. Further, within these early years, children are almost entirely unable to comprehend that choosing right from wrong, good from bad, and better from best, should not just be driven by morality, but by the tenants of loving, mutually submissive relationship with those responsible for their rearing.

Basic psychology teaches, "Obedience is a form of social influence where an individual acts in response to a direct order from another individual, who is usually an authority figure" (Saul McLeod 2007). The problem here, however, is that this definition elevates authoritative relationship, which, in turn perpetuates the problem of consequentialism. It should come as no surprise that our present philosophy is reflective of our earliest encounters of "trying" to be good, "trying" to come under authority, and "trying" to keep track of what will keep our limited and lacking understanding of authoritative relationship intact. It is within the very vein of our "trying" that we fail and find ourselves further and further from success in seeking to become obedient to what we sometimes consider a punitive God.

So, as we consider our very broken understanding of obedience and authority as it pertains to human relationship, it should also come as no surprise that our relationship with God is similarly reflective of this same wrong understanding. Yet, yielding our conditioned ideas of obedience is requisite to embracing the reality that, we are, in fact, bred—created—for obedience. How is this so? Is this not by its very nature contradictory to everything said thus far? We must take care to consider that Adam and Eve did not directly disobey God for fear of consequences. Their disobedience resulted from a moment of broken fellowship with their Creator. They were designed for relationship; thereby, they were created for fellowship through obedience to God.

Yet, through the insidious introduction of a lie, fellowship was broken, and mistrust grew quickly and deeply within the heart of woman and man, causing a rift to split wide in their relationship with the Creator God. Adam and Eve were created to live within the safety of obedience to God because their relationship with Him was perfect, without blemish, free of defect. His work in fixing the travesty that took place in the Garden initiated our collective opportunity from that moment on to be reconciled with the Creator of the universe. This would be accomplished. And even through the consequence of

banishment, we see the loving hand of a merciful God in His sending His beloved away, covered and cared for, and certainly not alone.

The Outflow of Restored Relationship

Yet, there was consequence. Adam and Eve were sent away, told to leave the Garden, their home and place of complete peace. And from then on, history would continue to tell its countless stories of broken relationship within humanity and with God, detailing His every effort to offer a promise of protection, provide for His people's needs, and rescue them from complete and utter self-destruction. The story within The Story is one of restored relationship, of "fixing" what went wrong in the Garden, of calling each one of us to come under the sovereign covering of a loving and generous God, to share freely in life with one another. And so the outflow of such restored relationship becomes obedience, and the result of obedience becomes freedom through submission.

Storyteller, American writer, and theologian Carl Frederick Buechner writes in his collection of theological "ABCs" and cleverly notes:

OBEDIENCE (See FREEDOM):

We have freedom to the degree that the master whom we obey grants it to us in return for our obedience [...] The old prayer speaks of God 'in whose service is perfect freedom.' The paradox is not as opaque as it sounds. It means that to obey Love himself, who above all else wishes us well, leaves us the freedom to be the best and gladdest that we have it in us to become. The only freedom Love denies us in the freedom to destroy ourselves ultimately. (Frederick Buechner 1993, 34)

And so we see this great paradox play out throughout scripture and within our faith journey – do you want to save your life? Then lose it (Matt. 16:25, NIV). And as Buechner notes – do you want freedom? Be obedient. But what lies at the crux (quite literally) of both our ability and our impulse to live in obedience to God is Love Himself, Jesus Christ, crucified for all humanity to make right, once and for all, all that went wrong in the Garden. And so here we find that love... simply... suffices.

God's intention was that we would live in a state of love and harmony with him, with one another, and with the rest of creation. He also made us free, wanting us to love him voluntarily, not as puppets. That freedom was, and is, misused, which accounts for the pain and paradox of our condition. (Handbook of Doctrine 2013, 109)

So perhaps the childhood (and childlike) constructs with which we have learned obedience as a behavior and response must be demolished. We are granted a glorious privilege for freedom in Christ through our loving commitment to Him, the outflow of obedient hearts. Because the reality is this: obedience is as much about real, covenanted relationship as disobedience is about sin and separation. His call to us is not to live in fear, but in awe of Him. His hope for us is to live in agreement with His plans and purposes, not in discord with them. His purpose for us it to live in loving

obedience to Him, not in worry of retribution and consequences. This was what He had in mind from the very beginning.

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The Way of Christ

By Major Danielle Strickland

the way of christ – reflections from Lebanon

I flew into Lebanon shortly after polishing off a quick book on it's incredible past. The middle east is a part of the world I, like most westerners, have been ignorant of. Fear has dominated the news reports of that part of the world. Years of civil war with factions vying for control that number in the dozens. During those years westerners were routinely captured and imprisoned by radicalized militants who wanted to demonstrate the visceral hatred they had for anyone or anything from 'the west'. The area quickly gained the reputation of a great place not to go. To be honest, I never paid it much attention.

So this trip to Lebanon was a Divine invitation. To learn what I had refused to bother learning before. It was a window into the west-east complicated history and right smack in the centre of current tensions of today's world. It was a front view of one of the oldest surviving Christian community responding to the call of Christ in a wave of overwhelming need. It was the witness of the church in the vast sea of the Arab world. It was humbling.

I was in a tent dwelling of a Syrian refugee Muslim family on the edges of a town in Northern Lebanon. The nine-year old girl goes to a school run by a Lebanese Christian mission. They run a school for kids who have no other means to get an education. The mother was telling us that when they sent their little girl to school they were very worried about her. She was angry and hard. She had bottled up her emotions and was emotionally distant and prone to violent outbursts. They watched as every day upon return from her school she started changing. Softening, her mother said. Her rage left her and her innocence seemed to return. She was a little girl again. The family was so profoundly affected by the change in their daughter that they asked her what was happening. How was this little girl so transformed in only a few months? She told them about Jesus. And Forgiveness. And Peace. She told them she had hope for a future and for the first time in a long time she could dream of living a different way. She told them she didn't have to be angry anymore and that Jesus was love.

The family went to the Christmas play and witnessed for themselves the good news that Jesus showed up in a posture of humility and weakness to offer those of us stuck in darkness some light. They wanted more light. As we sat on the few foam mattresses the family used for surviving the cold nights, in their white UN supplied canvas tent, they asked us to pray with them to encounter the same Jesus that had transformed their daughter. It was beautiful.

It was a picture of how the church should be. Transformation at the center of everything. Honest questions about the demonstrated power of God in a persons' life. Community encounters of face to face faith that visits as equals with respect, responding to each other's needs. That little girl gets a quality education no matter what her spiritual quest

looks like. That family gets a way out of hopelessness for their future, no matter what their spiritual beliefs are. But somewhere on that journey, agenda free, Jesus shows up with an invitation to the deepest need in every human heart. The need for healing from the inside out.

A child will lead them. A nine-year old little girl standing in stark contrast to a world dominated by strength where mortar and rockets have left their marks on a society ruined by a thirst for power. A nine-year old little girl with a big fat smile and some peace in her heart that is so starkly bright in the middle of a dark sea of suffering humanity. She sings the song she learned at school that she taught to her family, in English. Jesus loves me. Simple and profound. The love of God shooting up through the ground – giving life right where it seems things go to die. A nine-year old little girl becomes the vehicle of transformation, a beacon of hope, a light in the dark, a carrier of God's glory. Christ in us. I am a witness to the way of Jesus. And it's a beautiful thing to behold.

Thoughts On The State Of Holiness In The Salvation Army

Earlier in this decade at a congress in USW (now Cadet) Erin Wikle conducted a survey of delegates (you can read the whole thing in JAC81 - Holiness and Other Pertinent Matters by Erin Wikle - <http://www.armybarmy.com/JAC/article3-81.html>). "Of the 160 delegates who participated in an anonymous survey regarding personal understanding of holiness and discipleship, the following were represented: 26% Corps Officers, 11% DHQ/THQ/ARC Command Officers, 53% Soldiers, 3% Adherents, 5% Non-Soldiers, and 2% Non-Specified Participants spanning the age range of 14-49+." With half a decade separation and the perspective that can accompany, we're going to take a run at some of the results of the survey (and a similar survey) and throw out some thoughts...

3% claimed they did not really have a solid understanding of what a "holiness movement" is.

We're a little surprised this number is so low. What IS a holiness movement?

Wikipedia has a lengthy explanation of it at:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holiness_movement

Google spews out 6.24 million links to the inquiry 'what is holiness movement'. But 97% claim to have a solid understanding of what it means for The Salvation Army to be part of the holiness movement. This is encouraging (maybe sales of titles like THE UPRISING, BOSTON COMMON, HOLINESS INCORPORATED, and HOLY! are better than we thought!)

71% truly believe The Salvation Army strives to help individuals achieve "Christian perfection" as expressed and practised through its mission by aid of the Holy Spirit.

Again, this is encouraging. There are some strong expressions here: 'truly believe' connotes conviction; 'strives' connotes intense effort; 'Christian perfection' is no watered-down version of warm fuzzies that often passes these days for holiness; 'aid of the Holy Spirit' puts the focus on the source of our holiness. And still, seven of ten people are convinced that we The Salvation Army exert intense effort in combination with the Holy Spirit to help people experience true holiness. Hallelujah.

The three in ten who don't? Well, this is less surprising. There are probably corps that don't emphasise holiness, meetings that don't promote it, leaders who don't model it. So 30% is understandable.

24% do not believe The Salvation Army of today is representative of its founding position as a holiness movement.

¾ of people surveyed believe that the Army today represents our primitive holiness position and emphasis. ¾ figure we line up in the tradition of Catherine Booth, William Booth, George Scott Railton, Samuel Logan Brengle, T Henry Howard, Booth-Tucker and the rest in unabashedly Wesleyan holiness, promoting instantaneous, expected, supernatural entire sanctification for all believers, now, with an emphasis on the Crisis of the 'processCrisisprocess' continuum (as opposed to the later understanding through Coutts of 'ProcesscrisisProcess' – though, please note, pCp isn't that far different from PcP).

Is it fair to suggest from these numbers that Brengle has come back in the simplistic Brengle v Coutts holiness debate to a point of dominant thought in The Salvation Army? (noting the small survey size)?

79% believe they have been adequately raised up to understand the concept of holiness.

Nearly 4/5 of respondents are satisfied with holiness teaching they have received. Wow. Impressive. This is a higher response than expected. Why?

A few possibilities:

a- small sample size?

b- survey took place at a congress: i. keen salvos would attend such a gathering; ii. they'd be enthusiastic due to the crowds and events?

c- the territory surveyed seems statistically to be excelling; maybe good holiness teaching is a reason for the success?

d- people don't really understand biblical holiness but assume that they do and so figure they've been adequately taught it?

We believe that most weekly holiness meetings no longer teach holiness weekly and that the occasions on which holiness IS taught it may as likely be a non-salvo understanding of it than Coutts OR Brengle (and that on occasions on which salvo holiness is taught it is more likely Coutts than Brengle). Our premise could be wrong. But if we're right, then option 'd' above is a scary possibility.

We believe that most Salvationists do not learn holiness on salvo podcasts or conferences or magazines.

We believe that most Salvationists do not learn holiness from salvo books, even though a large number of salvo holiness books exist, both old and new. We believe this because of the sales numbers of the newer books and because of the general ignorance of the older books we encounter (we know this is purely anecdotal). So, salvo books are not a key source of holiness teaching for Salvationists. That leads us to option 'd' above...

If 'd' represents reality, what is the solution? We'd say that salvo holiness teaching, holiness reading, holiness conversations, holiness prayer, holiness testimonies, holiness challenges (invitations/pitches) and an all-round focus on holiness would help!

93% claim the ministry of The Salvation Army has helped cultivate within them a desire to live a more holy life.

Praise the Lord. Now, we're not sure 'a more holy life' clarifies things. 'More or less' holy is a bit like 'more or less pregnant'. There isn't 'more or less', there is pregnant or not pregnant.

But we guess that 'more holy' in terms of progressive sanctification works (SA terms start with 'initial sanctification' at your conversion and run through 'entire sanctification' at the point you become holy).

And nearly all respondents figure the Army helps cultivate a holy desire. This is encouraging news.

And for the doubters out there (the slang is 'haters' but it is far too strong for us to use), this is an American survey. A lot of salvos outside the States have traditionally looked down on the Army there as a solely social phenomenon. We've argued consistently against such delusion, pointing to six-digit totals of first time seekers of salvation recorded EVERY YEAR in that country, to the officers raised up (the three biggest training colleges in the world are in the USA), in the spiritual influence of Americans on the rest of the Army (off the top, think of the biggest selling SA author of our generation, Henry Garipey; think of the first soldier on the International Doctrine Council, Roger Green; think of spiritual writers from Agnew to Pepper to Needham to Chesham to Brengle; think of the consistently conservative theological position in a sea of changing winds of doctrine; think of the spiritual life commission commissioned by Rader, etc.). And now, on top of all of this, the survey points to the role of The Salvation Army in cultivating holy desire in American salvos.

When the Army's holiness doctrine was presented in modified terminology (I believe that it is a privilege to be wholly sanctified, and that my whole being (spirit, soul, and body) can be sinless before Jesus Christ returns):

80% claimed this was true.
17% claimed this was false.
3% did not offer a response.

Of particularly interesting note...

9% of those Officers surveyed do not believe in the Holiness Doctrine of The Salvation Army

This one's a little tricky because the 'modified terminology' in place of 1 Thessalonians 5:23's and the official doctrine's 'blameless' is the word 'sinless'. 'Sinless' is one of the

battlefield words historically that we've concluded is no longer helpful to use or defend (like other words and phrases – 'baptised in/by/with the Spirit' being one notable example).

Our suggested alternative is 'sin-free'. But the problem with 'sinless' isn't really solved with our solution. The problem surrounds Wesley's understanding of 'sin properly so-called', which is a voluntary transgression of a known law of God. 'Sinless' or 'sin-free' works in this context. But if we include 'sin improperly so-called' – all those other sins of which we are guilty – then 'sinless' and 'sin-free' aren't accurate.

And so, the 9% of officers who claimed this was false could be reacting to the 'sinless' word, which, without a Wesleyan framework, is inaccurate, and, even within a Wesleyan perspective, is beyond both 1 Thessalonians' and doctrine 10's 'blameless'.

What makes the result even more interesting is that even WITH the tricky terminology four out of five respondents believe the doctrine! 80% believe that we can be wholly sanctified before Jesus returns!

Do you believe that we can be wholly sanctified before Jesus returns?

Are you yet?

If not, why not now?

62% claim they have been/are being disciplined by a more spiritually mature believer and member of The Salvation Army

35% claimed they have not been/are not being disciplined by a more spiritually mature believer and member of The Salvation Army

2% did not offer a response.

Again, that 3/5ths of respondents indicate that they are being disciplined within The Salvation Army is very encouraging.

That said, it is almost too optimistic to believe at face value! We'll tackle this point a few lines down along with the next question and responses, but before we do, are you part of the 3/5ths being disciplined or the 2/5ths not?

11% claim they do not actually know what "being disciplined" really means

86% claim they do understand that "being disciplined" means

3% did not offer a response.

Only 1/10 indicate that they don't know what 'being disciplined' means. This is good. That said, it would be very interesting to have some more information. We'd like to see responses to a multiple choice question that ran something like this:

Which of these sentences define 'being disciplined'?

- a- I have a veteran soldier at my corps who I look up to and who influences me by his/her example.
- b- I listen to our corps officer preach on Sundays and teach our Bible Study on Wednesday nights.
- c- I'm in an accountable relationship with a veteran soldier who is intentional replicating his/her spiritual disciplines and character in me.
- d- I took the senior soldier preparation course at my corps and am active in various sections (Sunday School, Songsters, Home League) weekly.

We're afraid that the 3 out of 5 indicating that they are being disciplined might identify with answers a, b or d their experience and describe THAT as being disciplined. We're suspicious that the nearly 9 out of 10 of respondents who know what it means to be disciplined also understand it to be a, b, or d.

Of particularly interesting note...

36% of those Officers surveyed claimed they have never been disciplined

OUCH. More than 1/3 of officers have never been disciplined (in this survey).
Scandalous.

A few quick comments:

We wonder why we don't advance in the salvation war as we read about in the book of Acts or in the early Salvation Army or as we hope and expect. Only 2/3 of our leaders have been disciplined – that's one reason. The apostolic principle (think Peter at the Gate called Beautiful without silver and gold but with the power to heal) is that you cannot give what you do not have. If you aren't a disciple, then, you cannot make disciples. You replicate what you are. So 1/3 of our leaders are not making disciples. God help the soldiers, recruits, converts (if there are any), and sinners in the districts to which these undisciplined officers are appointed.

OFFICER TRAINING! Yes, officer training has to wear this scandal around its neck. Sure, you can point to the corps and the corps officers from which cadets come and say that they should all be disciplined before college – I totally agree. But we've seen from the survey that 1/3 of the corps are led by NON-disciples so we can't expect their cadets to be disciplined. The training system provides TWO YEARS for cadets to be prepared, and a lot of them need discipling. Whatever else is being taught at the training college is rendered much less useful and powerful if the cadets don't leave as disciples and disciple-makers. God help the training principals to sort out this travesty.

While we're encouraged generally (excepting the NON-disciplined officers) by the survey results, we're a little suspicious about the content of the holiness and discipleship responses. We advocate strong teaching on salvo holiness and discipleship throughout The Salvation Army (and, WE'RE The Salvation Army, folks – we can't wait for HQs and publications and periodicals and curricula to respond – let's do it ourselves).

Another Perspective

Around the same time a different territory performed considerable research was done through the territory. Here are some outtakes:

- About a quarter of the officers are estimated to have a genuine experience of holiness.
- that's quite low for a holiness movement. So, maybe we're NOT a holiness movement anymore? (we have blogged on this, including here - July 31: http://armybarmyblog.blogspot.ca/2012_07_01_archive.html#5415398292250766322).
- Or maybe we are not training our leaders effectively (we have suggestions, including the following leadership books – PROVERBIAL LEADERSHIP with Commissioner Harris, A FIELD FOR EXPLOITS with General Burrows, HIGH COUNSEL with Commissioner Noland, LEADING THE WAR with Commissioner Knaggs, CHARGE! With Commissioner Noland...) – you cannot give what you do not have.
- Or maybe the enemy is deceiving officers that to testify to a genuine experience of holiness is pride, which is sin and which in and of itself kills the experience to which they were testifying!
- Or maybe it is a combination of all of these factors. This is what we guess...

About 30% of local officers evidence fruit of the Spirit.

Again, this is terribly low – embarrassing, in fact. God help us. It suggests that most LOs are struggling to serve out of their own discipline and energy and ability. What is not of the Spirit is of the flesh. So we're looking at the strong majority of officers and local officers leading and serving in the flesh. What does that compose? A flesh army.

Our buddy Curtis coined a term that hasn't seemed to catch on (yet?) – to 'flesh out'. That is when we manifest in the flesh instead of the Spirit. It is fair to say from the results that the modus operandi of this territory is 'fleshing out'.

That said, if only a quarter of officers testify to being holy, and one understanding of holiness is being filled with the Spirit, it only follows that just about that number (30% v 25%) evidence Holy Spirit in their lives...

About a quarter of all Salvationists (includes officers, local officers, and senior soldiers, in this research) tithe.

We know of corps at which $\frac{3}{4}$ of this territory's soldiery (including officers) don't qualify to be soldiers. Well, in the spirit of the whole thing, they don't qualify to soldier at ANY CORPS IN THE WORLD if they aren't tithing. But we know some that actually apply this and a higher standard than this – praise God.

Why don't they tithe?

- lack of teaching. Lots of leaders are afraid to teach on money, but it is important – your cartridge is an excellent spiritual barometer).

- bad teaching. This comes back to our old soap box about leaders learning too much from outside the Army and not enough from within. General William Booth sets the standard for soldiers in RELIGION FOR EVERY DAY, vol.1. 1987, p92. “You might work out this rule on a graduated scale, beginning at the bottom with a tenth, and going on increasing as God increases... From a tenth you can rise to an eighth, and then to a fifth, and a fourth, and even further. Make His glory your joy, your conscience, your guide, and the Salvation of men, for time and eternity, the supreme object for which you live and trade and do everything else, and you will not go astray on this subject” (Booth, p95).

The problem is that most leaders don't KNOW this and so they teach something else.

- Bad example. Leaders don't bother tithing so they don't teach others. Again, as Booth notes above, tithing is the bare minimum for soldiers, but it is at least a place to start. This is either straight-up disobedience or spiritual complacency.

- Spirit of poverty. Lots of salvos individually pick up a spirit of poverty that has some sway over the movement in some parts of the world. The deception from the enemy is anticipated – ‘you are the down and out. You can't afford to give money. You can barely pay the bills. You need your money for food and clothes and... God is meant to give money TO YOU. Tithing is for those who are rich...’ etc.

- Sense of entitlement. This is a territorial spirit in some parts of the Army. Corps and the Officer Corps are rife with it in some places. It is a twist on generosity. The Salvation Army generously invested in new corps and poorer corps. Praise God. But over time some of those corps have come to a place of expectation of that generosity. They don't bother to give themselves because ‘the Army’ will pay. Rather than generosity, it is now expected, it is seen as an obligation of the Army.

And this goes for a lot of officers, too, financially and in other ways, too. Insidious.

- They're unhappy. God loves a cheerful giver. And, the Army traditionally has been known for its joy. But lack of tithing is a sign of lack of joy / cheerfulness / happiness.

What's the solution? Well, holiness is the solution to every problem (note that the tithing proportion is similar to the holiness proportion of the troops). But example, teaching, accountability, and deliverance from the spirits of poverty and entitlement will also help.

Half of the corps have a consistent, systematic discipleship programme.

So, of course, half of the corps lack a consistent, systematic discipleship programme. If you happen to soldier at an odd-numbered corps, too bad for you. You'll have to sort out your own discipleship somewhere else. Or, you'll not be discipled (see the stats above from America).

The drag here (well, it is that half our people don't even have ACCESS to a consistent discipleship programme in their corps in this territory) is that The Salvation Army has a great discipleship programme from child to adult all ready to go. We just have to apply it. But that takes a bit of work. And it is easier to just enroll people in a uniform and leave it at that. And discipleship is often messy. And it is easier to show up for band practice or Bible study or home league or some other 'club-like' activity and kid ourselves that we're fighting a war.

Solution? Apply the Army discipleship programmes (e.g. junior soldiers; corps cadets; etc.). And where you are right now, start or join an Infitum hub – infitumlife.com (and read a whole JAC issue dedicated to it:

http://www.armybarmy.com/pdf/JAC_Issue_105.pdf).

The Blue Parakeet and Terms of Empowerment

By Cadet Erin Wikle

Book Reflection: The Blue Parakeet and Terms of Empowerment

The Blue Parakeet by Scot McKnight

From the beginning of time, God knew a great Story would be recounted and written that would feature a whole collection of stories and tales, chapters and verses that would feature the same theme within its many pages: oneness within otherness. I never grow tired of hearing this story. In his book, *The Blue Parakeet*, author Scot McKnight unites an academic explanation of *Eikon* (image/God's likeness) with an altogether accessible account of the idea of *oneness*, and how "from the beginning" God's intention was to create man and woman in his likeness and as one flesh, mutually submissive to each another, and in perfect fellowship and unity with one another, just as is modeled within the Trinity (McKnight 69).

God wastes no time expressing the importance of *oneness*, because before you know it, the story yields conflict and the beautiful and perfect covenant God establishes with his first created is horrifically and tragically broken, only to be magnificently and mercifully restored, one time, once and for all, by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. *The End*.

And yet, its beauty and simplicity brings such complication to "the rest of us." Where we should simply see fit to rest in the knowledge that Jesus restored the "cracked Eikon" McKnight speaks of, we continue to struggle, unsettled with our "otherness" – in being Jew or Gentile, slave or free, and male or female. McKnight's teaching of reconciliation and oneness reminds me that perhaps "it" does need to be that simple.

As I consider my life in Christ and the ministry that lies before me, I see more clearly God's desire for me to remember the Story, the purpose, his intention. I am reminded that from the very beginning of time, God's very intention was to establish that *all* (no exceptions) are created in his very image and likeness, and that God spared not even his own son to make it possible to have our broken image fully restored to him and to one another. If it weren't quite as important to establish from the "get-go" that all of humanity was created thoughtfully and equally, it likely would not have been important to establish at all. Yet, the outflow this story is the very basis by which we are to live, operate, and interact with God and with others. As I consider my life as a *woman* in ministry, I am compelled to uncomplicate the theological debates, internal arguments, role confusion, and spiritual-giftedness timidity by remembering that I was designed for his purposes. McKnight writes, "the *mutuality* view, which taps into this "oneness-otherness-oneness" theme deeply, also believes a woman's responsibility is to glorify God, to love God, to love others" (McKnight 161). That is my goal.

Terms of Empowerment: Female Ministry, Catherine Booth

The co-founder of The Salvation Army, Catherine Booth, makes no mistake in poignantly exposing, through careful evaluation and exegesis of scripture, the *real* roles of women in the home, church, and in society from her perspective. Written just four years after the holiness movement was established, the woman pulls no punches... and doesn't need to, because her platform to speak has not been "given", but rightfully belongs to her.

Though its archaic language was more difficult to engage, I found Booth's argument against what is "natural" to man and woman intriguing. It seemed that women's role in public ministry, specifically her pulpit ministry, was of great dispute, because it seems *unnatural*. Booth argued that "graceful form, attitude, winning manners, persuasive speech [... all seemed] *natural qualifications* for such an office (Booth 1). Booth spoke to the egregious accusations of it being unfeminine or of vain and ambitious pursuit to take up the pulpit, but swiftly makes mention that these same statements are near to nonexistent as it pertains to men taking the same stand in public ministry (Booth 3). Her argument was not that these women who took to preaching *shouldn't* be deemed ambitious, but that there should be no reason to cast off such connotation simply because *they were women* – "would that the Lord's people had more of this ambition" (Booth 3). According to Booth, if man could work towards a full and ambitious pulpit ministry, then so could woman – but not because man could, rather, because she was fully and completely capable of doing so herself.

Booth uses scripture extensively to show the validity of women in ministry – specifically to preach, teach, admonish, pray and prophesy, pointing out the examples of Deborah the prophetess and first judge of Israel, and Huldah, perhaps a lesser known prophetess, accounted for in 2 Kings, and Miriam in the story of the Israel exile from Egypt, etc. She continues to highlight how certain words whose meaning was inclusive of *female company* were even "lost in translation" over the years simply because the implications were too great (Booth 21).

In reading, I was most struck by Booth's brave and bold statement about the oppression of women in ministry causing the "non-success" of advancing the Gospel during their time. She shares, "[this] has resulted in more loss to the Church, evil to the world, and dishonour to God, than any of the errors we have already referred to" (Booth 32). *She pulls no punches*. These statements open my mind to the sickening reality that any acts of oppression pitted against those operating within their gifting in order to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ is a direct affront to the Spirit of God at work within the world. I cringe at the fact that any decision made to withhold one's right to preach, pray, prophesy, make decisions, and operate in authority, are likely rooted in deep fear of what is unfamiliar and perceived inappropriate, and I beg God for his forgiveness on behalf of those who would dare oppose the forceful advancement of God's kingdom for fear of being uncomfortable. It is remarkable that even at the precipice of egalitarianism within the Church and at the onset of the Army, there was struggle – both within and

without. Yet, a century and some years later, here we are, still struggling. Yes, perhaps to a lesser degree, but still – struggling.

Terms of Empowerment: Keeping the Dream Alive, Kay Rader

Commissioner Kay Rader spoke plainly of the problem of inequality amongst women worldwide through personal stories and encounters in places like Uganda, the Congo, India and other 3rd world nations. Rader highlights gender equality as a systemic problem of these 3rd world cultures – stemming from an inaccessibility of education, inadequate healthcare, and ineffective welfare systems. The statistics are staggering and show the reality of inequality: in Thailand, almost 50 percent of child prostitutes are HIV-positive, the number of women who die each year in childbirth numbers near 600,000, and almost (now, greater than) 60 million women are deemed “missing” due to gender discrimination (Rader 74, 72, 76). Rader references Evangeline Booth, who in the 1930s believed transformation for women was imminent... and yet, here we are, nearly a century later, still fighting against the same powers of darkness and wide spread oppression (Rader 70).

Similar to McKnight’s argument in *The Blue Parakeet*, Rader reminds its reader that the biblical basis for equality emanates from *the beginning*, that “God created man in His own image, in the image and likeness of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:27 AMP). For many, it seems inherent, as Christiana and followers of Christ, that we would not consider or treat any man, woman, or child with any bias or discriminatory thought or action. Yet, I do not believe this is the reality within the vast majority of us live. Because the paradigm for which we view the world has been informed by the contexts with which we have been raised and because our own cultural backgrounds play such a large role in forming our thought pattern, it is pertinent we carefully consider any unexposed thoughts of degradation and discrimination towards others – because they *do* exist.

Rader shares, “It is about keeping alive the dream of the founders William and Catherine Booth. We have come a long way in recent years, but there is a road ahead, and we must keep it an open road, a road to the future for women and men, married and single. It’s about keeping the Army the Army” (Rader 98). Undoubtedly, the issue of equality, transcending all places and privileges and for all people, is one that assuredly is not “resolved”. Rather, it seems all the more urgent to aggressively fulfill the mandate to *love God* and *love others* – and in that order – before ever expecting to effect world-wide and lasting change towards the end of real biblical equality.

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The Faith Of The Canaanite Woman

By Cadet Claire O'Brien-Hawk

An Exegetical Paper on Matthew 15:21-28

Matthew 15:21-28 is a particularly troubling passage. In it, we experience a Jesus vastly different from the one we have come to know and expect. The words and actions of Jesus in this passage are brutal; they would be hard to stomach coming from anyone, but they are especially so coming from him. The passage has been characterized as, "totally devoid of conciliatory overtones" and, "as designed to wound a human heart."¹ Many people have tried to make sense of this uncomfortable passage, but the results have often been dissatisfactory. These inadequate readings have given rise to and been used as authorization for violence perpetrated against countless groups of people. One such group is women who have lived as prisoners in a world where unregulated and unhealthy feminine submission is idealized and justified. Then, there are the people of Israel who have been cast off and judged, replaced (so say countless Christians) with the "New Israel". Finally, the masses of unnamed people who have been subject to the actions of formal and informal colonizers, many of whom have found colonizing precedents in passages such as that of the Canaanite Woman.

The way we read and understand this passage has serious consequences, not only for the way Christians navigate life, but also for all those who are subjected to the far-reaching influence of Christians. I believe that a faithful reading of this passage can be used to propagate health and wellness where there has been disease and damage. To do so will require reading this passage in its proper place, as the story of Jesus. To take this passage out of context and search it for answers to our questions about gender and ethnic relations is to do bad work. A thoughtful reading will show this to be a passage about the abundance of God, an abundance that gives hope for the future wellness of all people under the blessings of Israel's God. These blessings cannot be received apart from Israel, however;² God is faultlessly faithful to Israel in her role as God's chosen people and as the channel of his blessing. In this passage, we see a Jesus who, unwilling to deny a person in need, and not commissioned to tend to any outside of Israel, draws sincere Gentile seekers in, struggling with them for their blessing, and willing them to understand that their participation in God's favor must come through Israel. In the story of the Canaanite Mother, we witness such a struggle. Jesus drives this woman forward in her plea, struggling with her toward the confession that enables her blessing.

The narrative of the Canaanite Woman centers on a dialogue between Jesus and a woman. The woman is described as a Canaanite and a mother; both of these designations are significant. As there were no longer any self-proclaiming Canaanites at

¹ Amy-Jill Levine, "Matthew's Advice to a Divided Readership," in *The Gospel of Matthew in current study: studies in memory of William G. Thompson, S.J.*, ed. William G. Thompson and David Edward Aune (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2001), 31, Accessed August 12, 2013, Fuller Library eReserves.

² To be "part of Israel" does not mean strict obedience to the tradition of the elders, as the Pharisees and Sadducees have instructed. In the preceding passage, Jesus shows some of the traditions of the elders to be at odds with the spirit and letter of the Law.

the time of Jesus, and as Matthew has changed Mark's Syrophoenician to a Canaanite, we should understand the title to be significant.

One item of significance about Canaanites is that within Israel's history, no enemy is more notorious. These people regularly led Israel into infidelity to God. Beside the inherent problems of being out of step with God, when Israel wandered, they brought devastating physical consequences on themselves. Canaanites were a dangerous people and a marked enemy. The hate of the Jews toward Canaanites was not arbitrary; they had developed almost an evolutionary reaction to them -by hating and avoiding the Canaanites, the Jews were preserved. By casting a Canaanite to play across Jesus, Matthew has set up the most fractured and acrimonious relationship possible.

Though I certainly do not want to diminish the content of the dialogue -because it is very important-, the ultimate result of the interaction is that Jesus acquiesces to the Canaanite's request by healing her daughter. In a relationship that has been marred by malevolence, Jesus not only discontinues the cycle of violence but he begins a new pattern, one of healing and helping.

When hope and restoration are given to the Jews and Canaanites, of all relationships, we should understand that all the lesser-fractured relationships in society share in that same hope of redemption. What is true for the extreme circumstances must also hold true for the more moderate.

The second interesting description is that this woman is a mother. Why a mother? What is distinctive about the mother-child relationship when compared to any other relationship between a caregiver and care-receiver? Perhaps the significance is to be gleaned from the fact that children represent the future, the continued existence of the present generation. According to this reading, when the Canaanite mother pleads for her child, she is also pleading with Jesus for the future of her people.

It is not clear what kind of arrangement the women had in mind when pleading with Jesus. What was she offering or confessing in return for his healing? Anything? We have seen that the women hail him as "**Lord**"³ and "Son of David", and these seem to indicate her recognition of Jesus as the coming Messiah. This is promising, but we see even among the learned Jews of the age that naming Jesus as Davidic King and Messiah did not necessarily involve an understanding of his character, mission, or mode. Many who acknowledged Jesus as Messiah expected him to assume political power and establish a physical kingdom.

Perhaps in asking for the future of her people, the Canaanite woman is only yet hoping for a continued existence under the rule of an enemy. Not asking for assimilation and acceptance into Israel, maybe she merely wants her people to be allowed to exist independently, in peace. This is not such a stretch to imagine; typically, it was not the desire of an occupied people to have their identity dissolved and to be absorbed into the

³ 'Lord' can be used as a term of general respect, but since it is paired so closely with 'Son of David', it is likely that these terms are both Christocentric.

culture of the occupiers. It may be that hope behind this woman's request was to receive the blessing without the association.

The disciples certainly seem to believe that the Canaanite woman was looking simply for a quick fix. They encourage Jesus to "send her away" and one might imagine the sentiment was, "give her what she wants so that she will leave us alone! Satisfy her need, so we can be done with it!" The disciples were not particular with Jesus' power and God's blessing -willing to dole it out for the cheap purposes of convenience and comfort. For Jesus, however, this is not enough. His resistance to healing under these terms is two-fold.

To begin with, Jesus is cognizant that the blessing of God is one that has been promised to Israel. Beginning with the Abrahamic covenant, Israel has been the recipient and the minister of God's blessing to all other people. To bless a person outside of these conditions is not a neutral act: it is equal to negating the role of Israel as it has stood through its whole history, the role by which Israel understands its present and its future. For a Gentile to acquire God's blessing by circumventing Israel is to cheat. Such an act is sneaky and constitutes foul play. Jesus will not do this. He is faithful to his people even when they seem blind to his identity and Gentiles seem receptive. Because of his faithfulness to the Jews, Jesus is constrained in his healing act: he cannot heal someone who seeks their healing outside of and separate from Israel. To receive God's blessing, one must enter through God's people, his chosen instrument.⁴

For Jesus, the physical healing for this woman's daughter is not enough. He is not just a miracle-worker on call to respond to the people's needs. He has so much more to offer. Ironically, Jesus withholding his power does more for the woman than the dispensation of Jesus' power at the disciples' request would have achieved. Jesus refuses to cheapen his blessings through careless and indiscriminate administration. By demanding something of the Canaanite Mother before agreeing to her request, Jesus draws her into a deeper and more meaningful encounter. He refuses to pay her off, as though she were a meaningless bother, a 'nothing person', more fit to receive a quick-fix from Jesus' power than the serious engagement of her person and her need. Ironically, though it is the disciples who are first willing to give the woman what she wants, it is Jesus who sees her need and brings her to the place where she can truly be satisfied.

Many people speculate about the woman's understanding of Jesus. Was she just looking for a magician? Did she believe him to be the coming King of Israel? Did she acknowledge him as the Son of God and the proper object of worship? The importance of these questions fades when we recognize that regardless of her understanding of him, Jesus understood her. Jesus knew that she had a great need and he also knew that he could not bless her outside of Israel. Notice that Jesus does not send her away unsatisfied; he draws her in, allowing for a tension and a dialogue to develop.

⁴ This rule of entering is not unprecedented. Though Naaman preferred to wash in one of the rivers familiar to him, to receive the healing he so desperately needed, he was required to wash in the Jordan. Upon doing so, he acknowledged the God of Israel.

Jesus engages with her in a very painful way, but this pain brings the woman to point of desperation and to the climax of the interaction: her confession of Israel as the priority in Jesus' mission and, more miraculously, the acknowledgement that even after Israel, Jesus had more to give. Jesus knew that for his help to be legitimate, she must understand it as the surplus of his bounty, not as the redistribution of a limited supply. So he fights and struggles with her until she makes this confession. Though Jesus' words seem harsh, he actually speaks in such a way as to drive the women toward the key for her miracle. Jesus neither fought *against* the woman, nor had his mind changed and enlightened by her; he knew her need and pushed and drove her, fighting *for* her to receive the blessing.

It is very interesting that the Canaanite Woman's faith is commended after she cries out about the abundance of God's goodness and provision. It is not merely the fact that Jesus can heal her daughter, but the fact that even after providing for the needs of all his people, he has leftovers for not-his-people. God caring for *my* needs is less impressive if he stops caring for *your* needs to do so. A God who never neglects you but has enough also for me... that is a God worthy of praise. This God of abundance has, throughout history, cared for Israel and made provision for the rest of the nations. It is the Canaanite Mother's recognition of this God that makes her an example of faith.

It is no surprise to find, surrounding this periscope, the narratives of the feedings. Prior to this passage, Jesus feeds 5,000, collecting 12 baskets of leftovers, likely representative of the 12 tribes of Israel. Following the story of the Canaanite mother, Jesus feeds 4,000, collecting seven baskets of leftovers. This number seven is indicative of the seven great enemies of Israel mentioned in Deuteronomy 7. In both circumstances, there is a plethora of food leftover after the needs of the people have been met. In taking the two narratives together, we see that Jesus is enough to supply the needs of all the nations, even in addition to Israel. This is a wild contrast to the current situation in Israel: a pervasive feeling of scarcity and panic.

Throughout the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus has been angry with the false shepherds of the people, leaders who oppress the people rather than sustaining them. These leaders are a burden on the people rather than a help to them. In the pericope just preceding the story of the Canaanite Mother, Jesus has had a run-in with the Pharisees and Sadducees, accusing them of prioritizing the traditions of the elders over the spirit of the Law. The context of the argument is the failure of Jesus' disciples to wash their hands before eating. Now, I certainly do not want to side against Jesus in this matter, but the Pharisees may have started out with good intentions when they began to regulate the minutia of Israel's life. As previously mentioned, the Gentiles in the surrounding territories were very dangerous to the well-being of Israel. They lured Israel into infidelity and Israel always paid the price. At some point, Israel got wise and instituted practices that would keep them separate from the Gentiles. One of these practices was the hand-washing rituals. The problem with these practices, however, is that they were divisive among the people. They created among the people of Israel a spirit of panic and anxiety. Rather than wholly trusting God and sharing in his provisions, members of Israel were high-strung and controlling, living as if they had to fight for their daily bread.

This 'fight-for-your-own' behavior has led to the oppression of people who cannot fight, or who fight but do not win. This behavior has sickened Jesus throughout the Gospel. Where Jesus hopes to see a sharing of resources and justice, he is affronted by leaders who try to accumulate power and goods and hold them in reserve. It is hard not to think back to the Israelites wandering in the desert, being instructed not to collect more than a day's worth of manna, trusting for God to provide for their needs. Jesus is tempted toward, and decides against, this very take-control, do-things-my-way behavior when fasting in the desert. Jesus essentially responds that he will trust in the provision of God rather than trying to hoard power for himself. It is this characteristic faith in the abundant provision and care of God that the Canaanite Mother demonstrates. She does not grab for her own slice of Jesus' power, but acknowledges and trusts that even if she is not the first fed, she will have enough. The Canaanite Mother here does not show us a new way of doing faith, but she represents in a new situation what this total trust and confidence in God looks like.

If we then are to imitate the example of faith that the Canaanite Mother sets before us, we need to do so by acknowledging and trusting in the abundance of God. This will have vast implications for the way we live our lives. In simple person-to-person interactions, we will willingly take the second turn, trusting that the goodness that God has in store does not run out after the first round of people have received it. It also has larger implications, for instance, in the way nations interact with each other. When we trust that, "man does not survive on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God", when we live our lives in that total dependence on the God who has never failed to sustain us and to profit us in our faithfulness, we will stop fighting amongst each other for resources and for power. We will recognize that these behaviors only serve to tear each other down in a way that is most displeasing to God. To read the narrative of the Canaanite Woman compels us to see in Jesus a man who knows our need and knows how to fulfill our need before we fully understand it ourselves. To read this story is to be confronted with a God who, yes, sometimes leaves us in tension, but who ultimately draws in and wholly satisfies any who will wait on him, trusting that his abundance is enough for the needs of all people, each in their turn.

My Take: One Junior Soldier

JAC exclusive Junior Soldier Interview

JAC – how did you get saved?

JS – I got saved when I was five. My dad was reading Blood and Fireworks to me and it said something about having to know Jesus and love Him to go to heaven. You need to be a Christian. You need to repent. I went to the bedroom with my dad and we prayed a prayer – Sorry / Thank You / Please (sorry for my sins; thank You for dying for me, for loving me.../ please forgive me, fill me, guide me, empower me...).

Jesus forgave me. He came into my life.

JAC – why did you become a Junior Soldier?

JS – I wanted to be closer to Jesus. I want to live with Him all my life.

JAC - How does becoming a Junior Soldier help with that?

JS – When you're a Junior Soldier you can wear a uniform that shows people that you are a Christian, and you can learn things.

JAC – what are some things you have learned?

JS – I have learned to never give up on Jesus. I read in the Bible that Jesus does all these miracles. That shows me He is real.

JAC – Is there anything in your daily life that shows you He is real?

JS – Yes.

JAC – for example?

JS – sometimes we go evangelizing in a few different places. And we ask people their names, and we pray with them. We try to get everyone saved. Sometimes they do. Hallelujah.

JAC – what else?

JS – Last week at school when I was waiting in line, my friend was crying because people were cutting us. Then I asked him, 'can I pray with you?' And he said, 'What's that?' And I said, 'It's speaking with God.' So I prayed with him and soon all those kids who cut in were at the back of the line because some teacher saw what they did, and we were in the front.

JAC – how do you work on your relationship with Jesus?

JS – I do a Warrior Decree every night before I go to bed. In the car, we pray for each other. We also sing songs praising Jesus. And we do memory verses. I'm also learning cornet.

JAC – what words of encouragement do you have for people who are thinking about giving their lives to Jesus?

JS – Say 'Sorry / Thank You / Please' prayer and once you are with Jesus never abandon Him.