

# **JOURNAL OF AGGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY**

# **JAC Online**

**Issue 138, April – May 2022**

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## **Editorial Introduction**

by Major Stephen Court, editor

Greetings in Jesus' name. Welcome to the 138th edition of Journal of Aggressive Christianity.

JAC138 is the Richard Munn issue! As we continue our decades-long focus on Jesus and the great commission, we salute Colonel Richard Munn, who, along with his wife, the formidable Colonel Janet Munn, is scheduled to enter 'retirement' during this issue's lifespan after 35 years of active Officership inspiring and sharpening The Salvation Army's focus on Jesus and this great commission.

So much can be said of the good Colonel, and readers can hear a lot of it between the lines of the 'pages' of JAC138. For our purposes here, we will highlight just one thing. Back in the day, Munn popularised for our tribe and our generation the term 'apostolic optimism'. And, to be truthful, many probably figure that he coined it.

But as it turns out, he didn't invent it. No, Richard Munn did more than that - he epitomised it. John Henry Jowett, preacher and author of 19 books (who died 99 years ago), contrived the term as the title of his most famous sermon. Jowett explains apostolic optimism in its introduction:

"That is a characteristic expression of the fine, genial optimism of the Apostle Paul. His eyes are always illumined. The cheery tone is never absent from his speech. The buoyant and springy movement of his life is never changed. The light never dies out of his sky. Even the gray firmament reveals more hopeful tints, and becomes significant of evolving glory. The apostle is an optimist, "rejoicing in hope," a child of light wearing the "armor of light," "walking in the light" even as Christ is in the light."

If you haven't met Munn in person, you will sense these characteristics in his contributions through JAC138. Jowett continues:

"This apostolic optimism was not a thin and fleeting sentiment begotten of a cloudless summer day. It was not the creation of a season; it was the permanent pose of the spirit. Even when beset with circumstances which to the world would spell defeat, the apostle moved with the mien of a conqueror. He never lost the kingly posture. He was disturbed by no timidity about ultimate issues. He fought and labored in the spirit of certain triumph. "We are always confident." "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Readers who have had the pleasure of meeting Munn, learning from Munn, or knowing Munn, recognise in Jowett's description of the apostle Paul a description of Colonel Richard Munn. Hallelujah.

For this special issue, Colonel Munn has hand-selected articles he's written over the decades of his Officership with a view to our JAC readership.

#### International Social Justice Commission – Publications

Our celebration begins with a JAC-Exclusive interview with Colonel Richard Munn that is worth book-marking (don't stop before the prayer at the end!).

Revival - In Australia East Pipeline, Munn reaches back to original salvo DNA to inspire faith for revival today.

Fight The Good Fight - Conditioning - Munn operationalises one of the affirmations all soldiers make in the Articles of War.

My Credo - From the Gordon Conwell Journal, this one is a little deeper than his seminary submission on the same topic! (you'll have to read it, to get it)

Social Justice - Munn explains how the Salvos activate the Gospel.

More Communion, Please? - Originally in Rubicon, Munn puts a unique spin on an age-old debate that will be revelatory to many readers.

Militancy - In a SA Distinctives Series, Munn explains the militant spirit of Salvationism.

Have A Word - as part of a SA Jargon Series, Munn breaks down a significant phrase for our movement.

Sexism Reflection - from The Officer Magazine, Munn vulnerably exposes ubiquitous sin.

Walking - In SA Connects, Munn fuses physical exercise with spiritual formation.

Come Join Our Army - in the War Cry, Munn offers a novel take on an 'outsider' who seems to have offended the Biblical disciples.

Anytown Citadel 1517 - and from a War Cry Doctrine Series, Munn imagines the Salvos pre-Reformation.

Now, this likely only sparks your hunger for more Munn. You can listen at your leisure to his popular, penetrating Munnday Mornings Podcast (for example, here: [Munnday Mornings on Apple Podcasts](#)). And, as a long and loyal friend of JAC, the Colonel has edited multiple issues of JAC (Reformation 111, 2020 Vision 125) and contributed many articles, including on egalitarian relationships (JAC119), Zwingli ('Ancestor of The Salvation Army?', JAC66), dragon hurling ('Violent Night, Deadly Night', JAC40), 100 Most Influential Salvationists (JAC81), revival (JAC98), militancy (JAC89), justification

('Salvation – Our first name', JAC78), married officer leadership ('For Such A Time As This?'), JAC80, JAC39, holiness movement (JAC70), preaching ('We preach', JAC74), men, women, and the Bible (JAC43), Choice Wine (JAC13), prayer ('Circles of Influence', JAC67), Salvation Coastguard (JAC29), holiness ('Time To Be Holy', JAC69), decentralized smorgasbord ('The Northern Front', JAC27), worship (JAC23), cost (JAC15), unity ('One In Christ', in JAC13) mission and the Trinity ('The One, The Three, And The Army', in JAC35), emergent mission ('Funky Army', in JAC31), women officer leaders (JAC16), the personality of our doctrines (JAC132), 'Lean Right, Love Left' (JAC 131). And his fingerprint can be found all over the ISJC resources pages: [International Social Justice Commission – Publications](#) (salvationarmy.org), and his book, 'Salvationist Ethics In a Complex World'.

Of course, without the demands of active appointment, we look forward to varied output Holy Spirit inspires from Colonel Munn, and hope that it will include influence in future editions of JAC. Until then, may these words in JAC138 inspire love for Jesus and zeal to spread His love to 7.9+ billion people around the world. God bless you.

## JAC Interview with Colonel Richard Munn

JAC: Please tell us about your background, how you came to know Jesus, and how you came to know The Salvation Army.

RM: I am a 4th generation Salvationist, with our family patriarch – my great grandfather, Adjutant Harry Munn – recorded in the history books as ‘Mad Munn.’ He was a flamboyant pioneer evangelist. So, I was born into the movement; but all that heritage and upbringing was essentially irrelevant until I came into a personal, born again, living, warm-hearted relationship with Christ. That happened at Camp Wonderland in Massachusetts, USA, in my early 20’s. The army then suddenly all made more sense.

JAC: Tell us how you came to be an Officer?

RM: I experienced a genuine sense of calling and, like many, this was a surprise. A delightful and daunting one. I’ve always considered this calling a sacred privilege, and that Salvation Army Officership is a truly noble vocation. As an adult my mother told me that I wanted to go forward in response to the call for Officership in the Royal Albert Hall, when I was only 10. She dissuaded me at the time, thinking it was a bit dramatic. So maybe the calling was there, just below the surface. I went to Asbury Theological Seminary and then Janet and I went to training in the USA East, 1985-87, Messengers of Peace session.

JAC: You retire from active service this month - how can you sum up your active Officership?

RM: In summary, a quite amazing adventure, almost like a grand amusement park ride, steep climbs, rapid propulsion, friends and family in the car, sometimes hanging on for dear life, most of the time a great view.

Here’s the chronological list, covering 35 years:

- inner-city corps, Camden, NJ
- divisional youth ministry, Massachusetts
- suburban corps, Manchester, CT
- divisional leadership, Northern New England
- THQ, Program Section, USA East
- International College for Officers, London, UK
- Chief Secretary, THQ, Sydney, Australia
- Ethics and Theology, THQ, USA East
- and finally, International Social Justice Commission, IHQ, New York City.

JAC: We won’t ask you to pick a favourite appointment, but can you tell us one highlight from each of your appointments?

RM: In broad terms I would say:

- the inestimable value of urban incarnational ministry in Camden
- the impact of creative arts in divisional youth work
- the irreplaceable benefit of long-term exegetical sermon prep in Manchester
- the value of a cohesive team in Northern New England
- the sheer fun and impact of Army programming at THQ
- the beautiful internationalism of the army at the ICO
- the savvy innovations of the Australian salvos
- the integrated fusion of our doctrines and ethical principles in the USA East
- the razor-sharp vitality of our global social justice outreach and presence while at the ISJC.

JAC: How have you changed since you were commissioned?

RM: I would say a realization of the irreplaceable value and cumulative impact from living and serving for 35 years with one movement. This includes a seasoning, with raw youthful idealism being gradually replaced with deeper convictions and savvy. My prayer is for no loss of zeal, just stronger certainties. That I would be less enamoured with frippery and increasingly certain of unshakeable Kingdom principles and the universal salvific power of the gospel.

JAC: How is the world different because of your warfighting?

RM: Some academic and written records will remain because of the enduring power of the written word; some people are now followers of Christ because of the privilege of serving as a conduit for the gospel; some marital and missional egalitarian values will continue to be emphasized as a result of our marriage and ministry model.

Of course, Herbert Booth captures it all so well:

*I've little strength to call my own,  
And what I've done, before Thy throne  
I here confess, is small;  
But on Thy strength, O God, I lean,  
And through the blood that makes me clean,  
Thou art my all in all.*

JAC: What are you looking forward to in this next season of Salvation Life?

RM: Serving and fighting in the great salvation war with a new horizon and a clear opening to explore avenues and outlets with curiosity and creativity; to integrate the beauty of 'a long obedience in the same direction' with 'keeping it fresh.'

JAC: What are your dreams for The Salvation Army?

RM: Intentional egalitarian leadership and deliberate racial integration, moral courage and increasing compassion, shrewd strategies of evangelism and vibrant holiness

teaching, evolving creative arts and fiscal integrity, swashbuckling heroes and quiet saints.

JAC: Who has been most influential in shaping you into who you are today?

RM: Some quite amazing people on the journey, lets' start the list:

- Janet – a remarkable Officer with multiple gifts and stunning productivity
- Commissioners William and Marilyn Francis who greatly influenced us both as young adults
- General Paul and Commissioner Kay Rader who modelled egalitarian leadership
- Commissioner Joe Noland who overflowed with creativity and innovation
- Stephen Court and Danielle Strickland who burst onto the scene with dynamism and freshness
- Commissioner James Condon who epitomized pastoral leadership under unimaginable pressure
- Dr. Jim Read who embodies both grace and exquisite scholarship

JAC: Which books have influenced you most?

RM:

- Celebration of Discipline – Richard Foster
- Song of Ascents – E. Stanley Jones
- Peculiar Treasurers – Frederick Buechner
- Beyond the Curse – Aida Bescancon Spencer
- Addiction and Grace – Gerald May
- Your Church Can Grow – Peter Wagner
- Beyond Sex Roles – Gilbert Bilezikian
- No Discharge In This War – Frederick Coutts
- Echoes and Memories – Bramwell Booth
- Marching To Glory – Edward McKinley
- Community in Mission – Phil Needham
- Heart Talks on Holiness – Samuel Logan Brengle

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

RM: The personally most impactful preach I can recall was as a cadet when Colonel Paul Rader, our training principal, preached for the outgoing 2nd year cadets, 'The God Who Answers By Fire.' God used that time to seal in me a desire to be an 'on fire' Officer.' It is amazing to me how that moment stands the test of time, and still resonates today.

Other great preachers who have fed me over the years:

- Janet Munn – 'Get Some Oil For Your Lamp!'



- Israel Gaither – ‘It’s Time To Drop The Baggage’
- Martin Luther King - ‘I Have A Dream!’
- Linda Bond – ‘Step Up! Sign Up! Show Up!’
- William Francis – ‘A Life Without Christ Is A Life Without Purpose’
- Marilyn Francis – ‘Purpose! Power! Passion!’
- Steve Court – ‘Love The Fight!’
- Danielle Strickland – ‘Holiness in the Chaos.’
- Phil Wall – ‘It’s Not About The Bones. It’s About The Breath!’
- John Gowans – ‘I Hear the Loud Call of The Mighty To Save!’
- John Larsson – ‘Send the Fire!’
- Bram Tillsley – ‘If Ever I Loved Thee, My Jesus, ‘Tis Now!’
- Paul Rader – ‘The God Who Answers By Fire!’
- Tony Campolo – ‘It’s Friday, But Sunday’s Comin!’
- TD Jakes – ‘Your Ministry Is In The Mess!’

JAC: What is God teaching you these days?

RM: The essential truth of the gospel, the enduring authority of the scriptures, the indissoluble essence of the Kingdom of God, the indescribable beauty of holiness and the raw vitality of Salvation Army mission.

This season is becoming more reflective, the tinsel that once attracted, now not so much; but, now replaced by bread that endures. A sweet deal.

JAC: What is your most significant spiritual experience?

RM: The moment I came to saving faith in Christ, personal salvation. Here is how I described it in a journal:

On the third Sunday of June 1979, my heart was strangely warmed.

This was now my fourth summer at The Salvation Army Camp Wonderland in Sharon, Massachusetts. I had come to Wonderland on an Educational Exchange Program. Active involvement with The Salvation Army had ceased during my freshman year at college. More importantly, I had essentially severed any personal relationship with Christ. Initially, I was mildly irritated that The Salvation Army operated the camp. In retrospect, I can see that God was using this to bring me back to Himself. It was his prevenient grace.

Without knowing it, I subconsciously came to camp that summer to align myself with Christ. During the staff orientation service, Captain Bill Francis preached the sermon that led me to Christ. I recall the specific words, ‘A life without Christ is a life without purpose.’ A paradigm shift of enormous proportions took place in my heart. I decided to follow Jesus for a lifetime.

Interestingly enough, I never went forward to pray during the prayer meeting. The grace had already been mediated. However, I did stand to pray in public. It was my signal to the world that I was now a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sitting no more than two seats away from me was an 18 -year-old, Janet White. The rest of that summer I grew in grace by leaps and bounds. I was clearly a new creature in Christ. By the end of the summer, Janet and I were dating and already beginning to talk in terms of marriage.

JAC: Would you take this opportunity to offer an edifying exhortation to soldiers around the world?

RM: Here is prayer God laid on my heart for a congregation, and here, for our international army:

*God Almighty, the very fountain of love, burst out with a cascade of love into this beautiful army! Surprise us and reveal to us the passionate zeal we must have for you. In succeeding days may we all be increasingly astonished at the level of affection we have for you. Invade us with such intensity that we almost can't bear it.*

*Discard with a swat of your mighty hand any pathetic attempts to thwart this movement. Obliterate any presence of evil in our midst. Lead us to a level of ardour that we have not travelled before.*

*Break through into our midst.*

*And as we exult in your presence increase our capacity to love each other. May there be a bond of love in our midst that has never been experienced before.*

*Bind us together as one: One with each other - and one with you.*

*In Jesus' mighty name I pray. Amen!*

## Revival - In Australia East Pipeline

By Colonel Richard Munn  
*Joel 2:28 – 32 and Acts 2:1 - 12*

The spiritual outpouring during Pentecost is the fulfilment of the original Jewish feast in which the hallmarks of a great harvest of souls and a new era for the Holy Spirit establish this as the original 'revival.'

This is still the birthright of the army today.

**Introduction:** Beloved Aussie poet Henry Lawson understood The Salvation Army. He saw us in action in both the outback and the city, even recalling our East End roots in 'Booth's Drum.':

They were ratty - they were hooted by the meanest and the least,  
When they woke the Drum of Glory long ago in London East.  
They were often mobbed by hoodlums; they were few, but unafraid;  
And their Lassies were insulted, but they banged the drum, and prayed -  
Prayed in public for the sinners, prayed in private for release,  
Till they saved some brawny lumpers; then they banged the drum in peace.

Like many fellow Australians in those early days, the poet captures that mix of bewilderment, wariness, misapprehension and respect the army generated.

What appears to be a travelling circus is the beginning of a much loved and respected movement that will soon endear itself to a nation.

What appears buffoonery is, in actuality, profoundly significant, a new spiritual initiative that will reap a great harvest of souls.

**Scripture:** Apparent clowning that masks deep spirituality is present in the Acts chapter 2 story of Pentecost. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit with the miraculous speaking in other languages appears to the curious onlooker as drunken comedy, so it takes Peter to stand up and speak forcefully, pointing all the way back to the old prophecy of Joel, and under the anointing of God to say: 'This is that!'

In other words the Joel passage has been fulfilled - it is not one of those prophecies that can even be thought of as 'maybe' happening one day in the future. 'This is that,' says Peter without flinching.

It is worth noting, because the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is richly precise and significant. There is nothing haphazard here.

**Pentecost:** The feast of Pentecost is a pilgrimage kind of a feast. That would explain the cosmopolitan gathering of Mediterranean types.

Pentecost literally means 'fiftieth.' Designated all the way back in Leviticus (23) is the ordinance to bring a grain offering seven weeks and one day after the Passover

Sabbath. Also called the 'feast of weeks,' it marks the symbolic beginning of the harvest for a richly arable people.

And so the Joel passage: "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved ..." is a true harvest of souls, the greatest revival in the history of the church.

"...about 3000 were added to their number that day." (Acts 2:41)

There is something else significant about the choice of Pentecost for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, however, because over the centuries it becomes a celebration of the giving of the law, the 10 commandments, to Moses on Mount Sinai. Tradition has it 50 days after escaping from the slavery of Egypt, the first night of Passover.

And so the Joel passage, once again, is richly significant: "I will pour out my Spirit on all people."

- If the 'law' was given on Mount Sinai, it is an 'advocate' (lawyer) who is poured out at Pentecost.
- If it was the law - written on tablets of stone and impossible to keep - given at Sinai, it is the Holy Spirit searing God into the hearts of people given at Pentecost.
- If it was cloud, fire and God's voice on Mount Sinai, it is rushing wind, tongues of fire and miraculous languages at Pentecost.

Holy Spirit Pentecost stands as both contrast and continuation of the Jewish Feast of Pentecost, an extension of the great saving ministry of Jesus Christ, his ascension preparing the way for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit Pentecost brings unparalleled power to the disciples. It is for this that Jesus instructs them to wait in Jerusalem.

Holy Spirit Pentecost marks a new era for the third member of the Trinity. It is the first birthday of the church, an explosion of the presence of Christ around the world, an unusual visitation of God pouring out new life, invading human beings in a way that shatters old expectations.

**Downpour:** Joel twice describes the coming of the Holy Spirit as a 'pouring out.' The image is that associated with a heavy tropical rainstorm - not a drizzle or a shower here. 'Pouring out' has a finality to it. What is poured out cannot be gathered again. And so it is at Pentecost, a Holy Spirit typhoon, and the recipients will never be the same again.

This pouring out is for 'all people.' Just in case we don't believe it Joel articulates it for us: regardless of gender, age or social status the Holy Spirit is for you.

While there is specific reference to 'prophesying' - and that certainly is accurate - this is not just for the preacher types. The universal outpouring of the spirit empowers us to communicate Christ in manifold creative ways, academic, artistic, aesthetic and more.

The outpouring and empowerment of the Holy Spirit is essential for mission and discipleship, whatever your field – home, school, factory floor, office complex, add your world to the list.

And so, just as Christ was baptized by the Holy Spirit in the River Jordan at the commencement of his public ministry, so too the disciples receive a baptism before their public ministry can begin. If Christ relied on this Holy Spirit empowerment, how much more must we depend upon such a Holy Spirit commission for our day.

**Vision for a Salvationist Pentecost:** Pentecost is perfect for The Salvation Army. Our founder writes, "We want another Pentecost."

We identify with the holiness movement and were birthed in revival. Male or female; young or old; clever or simple is part of who we are

General Eva Burrows one pronounced to a congress of Salvationists, with thunderous applause, 'The Salvation Army doesn't need any more programmes, what we need is more of the Holy Spirit.'

So, come on beloved Australia East, this Pentecost bang Booth's drum with confidence, and see some 'brawny lumpers' saved.

The Salvos and Pentecost – perfect together.

## **Fight The Good Fight**

By Colonel Richard Munn

*A series on the 10 Salvation Army Articles of War*

**I will be responsive to the Holy Spirit's work and obedient to His leading in my life, growing in grace through worship, prayer, service and the reading of the Bible.**

### **Conditioning**

In the world of sports there is great investment in the preparation of athletes for the arena of competition. While an individual will compete in one particular sport, it is generally recognized that for overall physical conditioning a variety of athletic experiences will combine to produce the best competitor. Olympic swimmers will lift weights and run long distances as well swim laps in their training regimen. This **cross-training** combines to produce the finest conditioned swimmer.

The first Article of War outlines the cross-training essentials for every soldier in The Salvation Army. It is an excellent way to commence. To neglect these essentials is to fight the good fight in a weakened condition. To commit yourself to this cross training will enable you to **be responsive to the Holy Spirits work and .... leading in your life.**

**Worship** is the basic function of the church and the heart of The Salvation Army. Every energy of the movement is expended to lead people into a living relationship with Jesus Christ. This living relationship is primarily expressed through worship. A follower of the Lord Jesus Christ who does not worship is a weakened and out of condition Christian. Regular and active worship in a community of faith is the healthiest activity in our relationship to God and our relationship with fellow believers. It is simply indispensable to spiritual conditioning.

**Prayer** is the language of worship. It is the central avenue God uses to transform us, says Richard Foster. To engage in prayer is to dialogue with the Master. To neglect it is to cut off an intimate means of grace and personal relationship. The end result is a feeble spirituality. The diversity of prayer available to us ranges from the privacy of our own devotions to the corporate prayers of a congregation, from spontaneous cries for help or thanks to liturgical prayers that express in exquisite language the deep adoration of our hearts. Prayer is a vital sign of a healthy and conditioned soldier. We neglect it at our own peril!

Avenues for **service** abound in The Salvation Army! One of our mottos says simply that we are saved to serve. It is the outward expression of our inward spirituality. It conditions us towards muscular piety writes Ian Cutmore. It is a response to the love of God which now propels us to do something. Serving others provides an outlet for the considerable energies initiated by new life in Christ. It is through acts of service that the Kingdom of God on earth is established. To neglect service is to neglect spiritual vibrancy. The end result is spiritual atrophy.

The **reading of the Bible** is the final component of spiritual conditioning. The pages of scripture contain the exercise manual for spiritual health. It is the Manufacturer's Instructions. The revelation of God in Christ through the Word is a primary means of grace for us. It is tantamount to life itself. A close second to the assembling for worship are occasions available for Bible study. It is in such gatherings that the revealed truth of God is discovered, often in the company of trusted friends. To neglect the reading of scripture is to disregard God. It renders us spiritually ignorant and vulnerable.

The first Article of War sets the standard for spiritual conditioning. These are not unattainable exercises; rather, they are indispensable to spiritual health. Show me a soldier who worships weekly, prays frequently, serves faithfully and reads the scriptures regularly and I will show you a soldier who is in top spiritual condition!

As Paul would write to Timothy:

**If anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules.**

(1 Timothy 2:2)

Such cross-training enables us to fight the good fight 'with all our might'.

## **My Credo**

By Colonel Richard Munn

During my very first semester in Asbury Theological Seminary our theology professor asked us to submit a paper, 'My Credo.'

I handed in the 11 doctrines of The Salvation Army.

Now, somewhat more evolved, the following are distinctives that form my belief structure.

### **Prevenient Grace**

I love the truth of prevenient grace. It reminds me of God's passionate love and desire to reclaim us as His own. Before we are even conscious that we needed the saving grace of Christ, God woos us and orchestrates events to bring us to His own heart.

From the initial moment I stood in my college student center and saw the poster '*Spend the Summer in America Working With Children*' until the time I stood in a summer camp chapel and publicly acknowledged Christ as Lord, I can see that God was gently and persistently calling me home.

Today, I am often intrigued at how God is expressing His prevenient grace in the people I meet who do not yet know Him. Prevenient Grace can be utilized as an effective tool of communication. The fundamental certainty that God Himself is communicating with people can be confidently anticipated while sharing the gospel.

### **Saving Grace**

At the heart of the gospel is the saving grace of Jesus Christ. It is the anthem of the army. It is the foundation on which the church stands.

I sometimes think we cannot fully fathom the nature of saving grace and, therefore, either muddy its content or add appendages to it. In my own journey I can simply testify that I needed to experience saving grace. Being raised in a moral family with an army-attending tradition was not enough. It was an awareness of the futility of my own aspirations and the sinfulness of my life that led me to the Savior. The release of this grace and the resulting peace was transformational. I experienced what I was helpless to do myself – I was cleansed from the inside out.

The impact is so transformational that it is expressed as a vocation. The joy of my life is to function as a servant of the gospel.

### **Sanctifying Grace**

The rather startling notion that the earthy vessel of my life can be made pure and holy is revolutionary indeed! Approximately a year and one-half after I was saved, I realized the disconcerting truth that residues of sin remained in me. This was not overt or deliberate actions of sin, but the unnerving awareness that genuine principles of sin remained.



I knew I was a Christian – the issue was settled – but all was not well. My first semester at seminary provided the environment for the mediation of sanctifying grace in my life. In a short span of just a few weeks, I had opportunity on several occasions to pray for the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit. At the time, I mistakenly yearned for ecstasy; it never came. However, in retrospect, I can see that it was during these days that God poured the fullness of His Spirit into my heart in a new way. From that time, I experienced a new confidence and certainty in ministry and mission.

Sanctifying grace is a beautiful – and necessary – expression of saving grace. The truth that ‘this is the privilege for all believers’ and not just for superstars or specialists is particularly liberating. Recognizing that my essential personality does not change makes it downright miraculous.

My ardent prayer is that I would embody – only possible by grace – the holiness of God.

### **Spiritual Warfare**

I believe that to authentically function in The Salvation Army, one needs to embrace the truth of spiritual warfare. Remove this distinctive and the movement is reduced to playing soldiers.

Even a cursory reading of the Army’s founding years will reveal a quite militant spiritual warfare. The recognition of powers and principalities, and the truth that often our pilgrimage is assailed with spiritual battle, is an important part of the total process. Without being paranoid, it keeps me vigilant. The notion of taking the offense against the forces of darkness, and not being content with simply hunkering down defensively, is a boldness that I enjoy. ‘The gates of Hell will not prevail.’

Embracing the reality of spiritual warfare is not instinctive for me. I am not a natural fighter. However, I believe in taking the initiative against the forces of darkness. The pages of scripture are too replete with images of warfare and militancy to think otherwise. Taking the light of the gospel into the worst parts of town, confronting the worst of sinners and ‘waging war not as the world does’ is all part of this strategy. Binding the Strong Man in the mighty name of Jesus and setting the captives free augments the theme. Sometimes, of course, the warfare is sufficiently brutal that simply ‘standing firm’ is all that can be accomplished. Notwithstanding, embracing spiritual warfare makes Salvation Army mission more meaningful and alive to me.

### **Social Justice**

I believe an important component of the gospel is ‘muscular piety.’ This ‘faith without works is dead’ principle is vital. To serve as a conduit and to focus my energies towards the ‘submerged tenth’ with the love of God is a noble calling. It makes the gospel come alive and rescues it from hypothetical irrelevancy.

Jesus said we would always have the poor with us. In other words, the job will never be done this side of heaven. Recognizing that poverty is not measured in material goods

alone, but in powerlessness and poverty of spirit renders the task a seeming impossibility. However, comprehending that the social justice of both the prophets and the gospel stand at the very center of all the great movements of compassion and justice through time is a great boost of confidence to me.

It seems that cultures without this presence are bereft of compassion. The force of a Francis of Assisi, William Wilberforce, William Booth, Mother Theresa or Martin Luther King is immeasurable. The two-fold mission of 'saving souls' and 'serving a suffering humanity' is one of great beauty. It is integrated. It is holistic.

### **Women In Ministry**

One of the remaining injustices of our day is the oppression of women. There is a particular insidiousness in the subjugation of women. Its ancestry traces to the Fall itself. 'He shall rule over you.' It surely doesn't take too much mental assent to embrace the truth that Calvary should counter this curse.

Sadly, while contributing the larger percentage of attendees, women are systematically excluded from formal positions of leadership in much of the church. The rather sanctimonious and thinly supported theological rationale for this situation makes the practice even more distasteful. This is an ancient wrong that needs to be rectified.

Men need women to save them from themselves. Congregations need women to proclaim the gospel. Men and women in joint leadership reflect the original design of creation. Our committees and councils are deficiently lopsided when women are absent from them. I believe the throne of heaven will be heavily populated with longsuffering women who have patiently witnessed for Christ in environments of subjugation and exclusion.

I am thankful for the ministry of Jesus Christ who modeled liberating respect for the women of His culture.

### **Multicultural Kingdom**

I believe the gospel is fully magnified and more completely proclaimed in multicultural settings.

Quite simply, I believe this because heaven will be a multicultural gathering. In other words, such gatherings here on earth more accurately reflect the constituency of the Kingdom of Heaven. When I have participated in multicultural events or worship there is often a noticeable power that distinguishes them from ethnically segregated or monochrome gatherings.

While people seem to like experiencing and expressing the gospel in their own cultural milieu, I believe the truest expression of the kingdom is multicultural. The belief that every culture and ethnicity will one day be gathered at the foot of Christ in harmony and unity is a beautiful thought. I look forward to that day.

### **The Sacrament Of The Ordinary**

It was Brother Lawrence who once wrote that he felt more holy while working in the kitchens of the monastery that partaking of the Blessed Sacrament. The bold notion that God desires to sanctify the ordinary moments of our lives is important to me.

Certainly, I can attest that delivering food baskets to needy families, taking inner city kids on woodland hikes, raising money by the Red Kettle or giving an Easter present to a bedridden senior citizen prove more sacramental than many religiously formal rituals.

However, it is a daring notion to apply the principle to every moment of life. It certainly does not seem inconceivable that meals with my family, cleaning up afterwards, or walking with Janet in the park can be holy-filled moments. Sensing the presence of God – in fact, praying to that end – makes such times come alive. Sanctity is infused into the moment.

While too often the profane dominates, we can embrace the truth of Albert Osborne's words:

*My life must be Christ's broken bread,  
My love his outpoured wine,  
A cup o'erfilled, a table spread  
Beneath his name and sign.  
That other souls, refreshed and fed,  
May share his life through mine.*

## Social Justice

By Colonel Richard Munn

***“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”***

(Matt 25:40)

In the eyes of the general public around most of the world it is the social outreach of The Salvation Army that is most readily recognized and affirmed.

At the heart of this compassionate ministry is the cherished belief that in reaching out to the hungry, thirsty, lonely, naked, sick and imprisoned we are actually reaching out to Christ himself.

Salvationists see Jesus

- in the homeless dormitory
- in the rehabilitation center
- in the hospital ward
- in the refugee shelter

The international Salvation Army has innumerable social service programs reaching out to the poor and disenfranchised of the world. The list is seemingly limitless in character and scope:

- schools for the blind in Africa
- orphanages in South America
- suicide prevention in Australia
- soup kitchens in India
- ministry with prostituted women in Europe
- day care centers for children in North America.

This diversity is an expression of the one holistic gospel in which The Salvation Army so passionately believes.

The spiritual and social aspects of the Christian gospel combine to form an **integrated** or **total** ministry. We perceive it artificial and unscriptural to separate the two.

Giving a cup of hot chocolate to a shivering fireman can be a powerful spiritual experience. Military veterans who received a donut amidst the horrors of warfare testify to the love of God experienced in that simple action.

General Frederick Coutts describes this holistic concept of social work and evangelical work:

'It is not that these are two distinct entities which could operate one without the other. They are but two activities of the one and the same salvation which is concerned with the total redemption of man.

- both rely upon the same grace
- both are inspired with the same motive
- both have the same end in mind.

General Frederick Coutts describes this holistic concept of social work and evangelical work as 'two activities of the one and the same salvation which is concerned with the total redemption of man. Both rely upon the same divine grace. Both are inspired with the same motive. Both have the same end in mind. And, as the Gospel has joined them together, we do not propose to put them asunder.'

The founding days of The Salvation Army saw rapid and practical responses to the poverty of Victorian England.

'Soup, soap and salvation' became the catchphrase. The consistent and effective social ministry of The Salvation Army eventually changed the tide of public opinion from hostility to admiration.

William Booth's 1890 book, 'In Darkest England And The Way Out,' is regarded as a landmark publication in the articulation of Salvation Army relief work.

It resulted in:

- homes for single mothers
- orphanages for abandoned children
- farm colonies for unemployed men
- the ministry of 'Slum Sisters,' quietly working in city ghettos tending the sick, cleaning the streets and homes and cooking meals

Upon seeing homeless men sleeping under London Bridge William Booth instructed to his son, Bramwell, 'Do something!'

Ever since, Salvationists have felt compelled to respond in practical ways. The essential social program of each Salvation Army unit today is simply to serve suffering humanity.

This social outreach is:

- not distinct to evangelism
- not a means of evangelism
- not as manipulation for evangelism later on
- but, social action with evangelism

General Eva Burrows once recalled an African student who commented on the parable of the Good Samaritan. 'In the story you have the robber who does bad, you have the Samaritan who does good and you have the religious people who do nothing.' Salvationists are religious people who 'do something!'

## **More Communion - Please?**

By Colonel Richard Munn

***Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.'***

Luke 22:19

Last month we celebrated Valentines Day. Apparently, teachers are the recipients of the most cards and gifts. Husbands and wives celebrate love for each other. Young men and women take the opportunity to send a signal of interest – sometimes anonymously – to that special someone who makes their heart beat just that little more swiftly, and if all goes well a spark of romance ignites into full blown ardor.

As any discerning suitor knows a candlelight dinner setting with exquisite food, soft music and unhurried service provides an admirable opportunity for closeness and intimacy. Such is the fabric of sweet romance!

### **A Meal Together**

Even removed from this idealized setting, the act of simply eating and drinking together provides genuine intimacy amongst people. It brings people closer together. Other social barriers are removed and relationships are strengthened. A type of bonding takes place. An invitation into someone's home to eat is a special grace of kindness and hospitality.

Add to these dynamics the notion of a last meal together, and you have a pretty powerful event. The meal becomes even more meaningful. Close relationships become more intense. Lifetime memories are indelibly imprinted both during highly stylized final High School and college graduation banquets, or in the quiet family breakfast before a son goes off to war. Even someone facing execution is given the choice of a last meal.

It is in the drama and intimacy of such a setting that Jesus chooses to teach the disciples some of his most important lessons. The result is a life changing closer communion between Jesus and the twelve.

We can picture the scene; close friends sitting around a table in a home celebrating the annual Passover, stopping in the middle of a good meal to remember God's saving act to the people of Israel in slavery – talking, laughing, giving thanks, singing and praying together.

### **Ritual**

Over the centuries, from this one event and the words of Jesus, 'Do this in remembrance of me,' has grown one of the central rituals, if not the central ritual, of the Christian Church – The Eucharist; the sacrament of the Last Supper; Mass.

It is a ritual much beloved by millions of Christians all over the world. From the wine and fresh bread used in the Pontifical High Mass in the cavernous austerity of St. Peter's Cathedral – to Welch's grape juice in a paper cup and Ritz crackers given to prisoners by the visiting chaplain.

Some churches observe communion every single time they meet for worship – taking more precedence than any other part of the worship service. Others do so the first Sunday of the month; still others only once a year.

Some churches only allow baptized members to join in communion. Some only allow ordained male clergy to administer the Blessed Sacrament. Some believe passionately that 'intinction' is the only way to perform the ritual – dipping your bread in the shared cup. Others downplay the ritual – small nubs of cracker with minute thimbles of juice taken in the company of dozens, hundreds and even thousands suffice for them.

### **Salvation Army Distinction**

Into this cosmopolitan expression of faith enters The Salvation Army. If there is one genuine theological distinction of the movement, it is this; that her congregations around the world do not observe the sacraments as part of their regular worship.

This is a cause of genuine celebration in some; and a cause of veritable consternation in others. For some it is liberating and a point of attraction; for others, it is disconcerting and is the singular feature that prohibits them from ever becoming an enrolled soldier.

I have met fellow Salvationists who have joined our movement from other traditions who rejoice in the freedom from ritual that was so empty for them for so many years. I have talked to other individuals who have told me they would join The Salvation Army, but they cannot abide the thought of surrendering communion. For them the church is communion. Do away with communion, they say, and you do away with the church.

One thing is certain – The Salvation Army as a denominational body is in the great minority in this matter. Only the Society of Friends – the Quakers – joins us in this. Were the body of Christ represented by a pie, we could not even cut a slice to show the percentage difference.

Born and raised in The Salvation Army I was never baptized; and I never took communion. It wasn't until I was a young adult that the matter first faced me. I would look at my Seminary chapel program, scheduled three times a week, and inwardly groan when communion chapel was scheduled on a particular day. Once, as classes ended my interest was piqued when a colleague overtly enthused, 'Man, this is just what I need, some communion!' I simply could not match the eagerness.

Around that time our Salvation Army band visited an Episcopal church for Sunday worship. As communion was observed, and the elements passed around the bandsmen were all thrown into a theological tizzy – should we take part, shouldn't we? Some did. Some didn't. Far from being unifying – it mildly splintered the ensemble.



So, what is going on here? What are the issues involved?

### **The Sacraments**

‘Sacrament’ is one of those words that is important to Christians, and yet is never found in the Bible – like Trinity!

Sacraments represent an inward truth by outward symbols; outward signs of inward graces. They express spiritual faith – which can’t be physically seen – outwardly and symbolically. The Roman Catholic tradition has 7 sacraments. The Protestant tradition has 2 – baptism and the Eucharist.

The point of mystery and intrigue is the relationship between the physical and the spiritual. For some the bread and wine simply evoke a memory – a remembrance of what the Lord Jesus Christ did at a very special time in his ministry. For others, there is much more of a connection between the bread and the wine and the actual body of Christ. The connection is real; to partake in the elements is to mysteriously partake of the body of Christ. For some the bread and the wine ‘become’ the body and shed blood of Christ.

So, literally in the bread and the wine, by faith, the grace of Christ is mediated to the person who partakes. This is very powerful teaching. We can see why communion is so important to some people.

### **Ceremony**

Now, we should pause a minute here. Because we’ve come a very long way from the Luke text where a close group of friends in the faith, eating a meal with the master teacher they love, gather in a home, talking, giving thanks and praying together.

Does it appear from the text that Jesus is instituting a ceremony here? A ritual? It generally seems that Jesus was wary of religious officials who invested a lot of stock in outward ceremony. A ceremony can so easily become an end in itself, can’t it?

The meal in the upper room is fraught with spiritual meaning, and Jesus certainly intended it to be remembered as such. We should remember the meal. It just seems a long way from ‘the meal’ to a ‘ceremony,’ from a ‘home’ to a ‘sanctuary,’ from ‘communion with friends’ to ‘communion given by a male clergyman only.’

It is precisely this – and, I believe a more accurate interpretation of the New Testament – that The Salvation Army represents. Salvationists are not ‘anti-sacramental,’ just ‘non-sacramental,’ moving communion from the ‘High Altar only’ to the humble meal table; from the sanctuary and back into society. In so doing it may actually be closer to its origins. General Couetts said it well; ‘We believe in the Real Presence.’ What we seek is not less communion, but more.

Bramwell Booth, second general of The Salvation Army writes of his visitation with an elderly man he called 'Old Cornish.' He recalls that these humble meals with a simple man were communion in the deepest sense. Here with this converted drunkard, remorseful of his former drunken treatment of his wife, eating sacramental fried bacon and potatoes and drinking tea, Bramwell remembered that when they knelt to pray Old Cornish was so uplifted it seemed that he was another man. Bramwell writes, 'There came to me, in answer to those prayers ... a new feeling of relationship to the souls of people, a directional impulse, impelling me to love and suffer for the sake of others. Again and again I have come down those old squeaking stairs feeling as though I walked on the wind, and have gone out to Mile End Waste to speak and pray with sinners in altogether a new and self-forgetting fashion.'

### **Pragmatism**

If there one thing that can be said about The Salvation Army is that it is a practical group. The genius of the founders, William and Catherine Booth, was their ruthless pragmatism. Shockingly so! 'If it doesn't work with real people, forgo it!' 'If they don't know the church songs, put Christian words to the bar room songs they do know.' 'If they won't ever go through the doors of a church, meet in the dance hall that they do know.' 'If the sacraments are not necessary to salvation, dispense with them.' That essentially is the theology – shockingly practical.

Taking communion to ensure salvation is surely faulty thinking. 'By grace you have been saved through faith,' writes Paul to the Ephesians, not 'by grace and communion you have been saved.' Saving grace is mediated to us from Christ alone – not Christ and prescribed ceremony. 'Christ is sufficient.'

Approaching the matter positively is important. Habitually emphasizing 'anti' or 'non' nomenclature is unhelpful; rather, it is preferable to place emphasis on the 'immediacy of grace' and the 'sufficiency of Christ.' In so doing The Salvation Army serves as an important reminder to the rest of the Christian world. She has a genuine theological contribution to make – reminding communities of faith that ritual easily becomes an end in itself and that many Christians lead vibrant and spiritual healthy lives without regularly taking communion.

General Paul Rader says it well: 'We believe that the grace of Christ comes to us, not through the act of partaking of small pieces of bread or drinking small cups of grape juice or wine several times a year as it is given to us by certain accredited ministers of the gospel empowered to do so. We believe the saving and empowering grace of Christ is available to us here and now as we reach out in faith to him.'

'We would rather not squabble over who can take the communion and who can give it how often it can be offered and whether it should be bread or crackers, wine or juice, taken in seats or at the altar rail. Our concern is whether or not we know personal communion with the Lord: 'Jesus said, I am the Bread of Life. Who comes to me will never go hungry. Who believes in me will never be thirsty.' (John 6:35)

The monk Brother Lawrence writes that he felt as near to Christ when he was washing the greasy dishes in the monastery kitchen as ever he did at the Blessed Sacrament. Salvationists say 'Amen!' to that. We feel communion with Christ delivering food to needy families, visiting prisoners, serving a thanksgiving meal to the indigent, or giving a simple gift to a comatose senior citizen in a nursing home. This has been called the sacrament of 'the Good Samaritan.' It is closer to the foot washing in the same upper room as recorded by John – though through the centuries noticeably absent as a ritual.

Sometimes it takes a child to provide perspective. The story is recorded of a London school boy at the turn of the 19th century given a 'farthing' breakfast at the local Salvation Army corps. Later in the day a school inspector questions him: 'Your people do not have the Lord's Supper, do they?' 'No sir,' replies the child. 'Then what do they put in its place?' asks the inspector. 'Farthing breakfasts for starving children, sir,' says the boy.

### **Salvationist Symbolism**

It does need to be recognized that Salvationists are just as symbolic as other traditions. In fact we rather specialize in symbols! Flags, uniforms, the crest, enrollments, the mercy seat, a brass instrument and the red shield are but a few. We simply believe that grace comes from Christ alone, not through any symbol.

If you are embarrassed or confused by this Salvation Army practice, you can cheer up! 'Our position is not due to any theological carelessness or slap happy evangelism. This is a matter of utmost consequence,' said General Coutts. We have an important message.

Conversely, if you have looked down on others who 'need' the Eucharist, and you don't, repent of spiritual pride. You are not 'more spiritual' than those for whom communion is beautiful and important.

### **Conclusion**

More 'communion,' please! Cherish the family meal as a place of grace and closeness. Use it as a time of prayer, communion and thanksgiving, not just a rote sentence prayer assigned to a child. Read scripture before or after the meal. 'Do this in remembrance of me.'

More 'communion,' please! Extend invitations to others for distinctly Christian friendship and meals in your home. Pray and read scripture together on those occasions. Share intimately in each others lives. 'Do this in remembrance of me.'

More 'communion,' please! Serve the needy, the outcast and the powerless. Clothe the naked, feed the hungry, house the homeless and visit the shut in. 'Do this in remembrance of me.'

More 'communion,' please! Frequent the mercy seat when the opportunity arises. This is the communion rail, so to speak. 'Do this in remembrance of me.'

Let's have some communion!

## Salvation Army Distinctives – Our Militancy

By Colonel Richard Munn

*Part 2 of an 8-part series*

***‘Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.’*** (Ephesians 6:11)

Certainly the most visibly distinguishing feature of The Salvation Army within the Christian church is its ‘quasi–military pattern’ of organization. The accompanying symbolism and imagery truly reflect the second word in our name – Salvation **Army** – and include such features as uniform wearing, a rank system of soldiers, officers and a General as well as a structure of Brigades, Corps, Divisions and Territories. This identification with a military motif permeates throughout the Army with flags, a crest and a shield and unique phraseology where bible memorization is known as a ‘sword drill’ and tithing as ‘firing a cartridge.’

This, however, is simply the form. To identify with only the form and to miss the content, the rich biblical imagery regarding spiritual warfare as a reality to be engaged, is to miss the true militant spirit of The Salvation Army. From the Old Testament depictions of God’s people capturing the land of Canaan from the evil grip of Baal to the New Testament image of Christians wearing the spiritual armor of God there are numerous references to our spiritual lives as ones of raging conflict with the forces of evil. This is the driving force of Salvationism and revolutionizes the manner with which we perceive our spirituality and our role in the church.

This militant spirit – as opposed to militariness – was the overwhelming obsession of the founding soldiers of The Salvation Army. They saw this distinction with great clarity. General William Booth included the idea of ‘Holy Warfare’ in his address during the 1904 Congress as one of the ‘seven spirits of Salvationism,’ and made reference to ‘aggressive Christianity’ and a ‘spirit of boldness’ and ‘adventure.’

Key to this Christian militancy is the notion of taking initiative against the forces of evil; not simply being defensive or reactive to Satan’s attacks, but, taking the offensive against the Kingdom of Darkness. The image from Christ of the ‘gates of hell’ not overcoming the church suggests an offensive action from the Kingdom of God. Gates are defensive structures! Salvationists, therefore, sing with vigor ‘Storm the forts of darkness bring them down!’

In practical terms this has meant The Salvation Army fearlessly engaging in service and ministry where spiritual warfare is toughest and where evil is most rampant. Whether it is the vice and squalor of urban ghetto, the front line of national military action or the catastrophe of natural disaster – The Salvation Army is mobilized as a Christian presence.

Historically, the name change from The Christian Mission to The Salvation Army in 1878 had dramatic results. ‘An irresistible spiritual offensive swept over cities, towns and

villages in every direction' writes Army historian Robert Sandall. This resulted in an increase from 30 stations and 36 evangelists to over 1000 Corps and 2260 officers in an eight-year period. The change in name and structure seemed to mobilize the energy of the movement, set its destiny and define its character. This was no mere sentiment or Victorian cultural expression, rather, it reflected clear biblical theology from the founding soldiers regarding spiritual militancy. Documents reveal a mindset of spiritual warfare in prayer meeting memoirs, open air strategies and evangelistic campaigns.

The resulting character of the movement and the effect on individuals engaging in militant spirituality is what Ian Cutmore calls 'Muscular Piety.' Administratively The Salvation Army is extremely mobile and can quickly and efficiently galvanize personnel to meet pressing needs. Salvationists demonstrate great loyalty to the cause of Christ through the Army mission as well as soldier-like obedience to the claims of Christ regarding their personal contribution to 'the great salvation war.' As any military veteran will testify this will mean personal sacrifice, and yet, in the service of One who gave the ultimate sacrifice, Salvationist Christians can do nothing less.

Salvation Army soldiers are under no illusion regarding the enormity of the strife. 'No discharge in this war' wrote General Frederick Coutts. From the moment individuals become soldiers and sign their 'Articles of War' until the day they are 'promoted to glory' there is righteous warfare to be waged. As someone has written; 'Every day. Around the clock. All over the world. Tough battles. Down-in-the-dugout street fighting. Hand to hand. Heart to heart. Always with a love that knows no bounds.'

'Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' (I Corinthians 15:57)

Fire a Volley!

## **Army Jargon - Have a Word**

By Colonel Richard Munn

Arguably, it is the phrase that birthed the army.

'Would anybody like to have a word?', said the leader of the street meeting outside the squalid Blind Beggar east end London pub, the summer of 1865. Out stepped the lanky Reverend William Booth, riveted the onlookers, and the rest is history.

The invitation remains a cherished part of army meetings around the world – the offer for anybody to 'have a word.' Mysteriously, Catherine Booth used the same phrase before her first sermon, asking William if she might 'have a word.'

It is pure Reformation, of course – divine insight, exhortation and authority are not the sole prerogative of the ordained clergy. God forbid. Indeed, the testimony period is often the most memorable part of a meeting. The 1970 Asbury College revival began with student testimonies.

The Psalmist memorably exhorts, the prequel to many a testimony meeting: 'Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.' Paul needles timid Timothy: 'Do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord.'

Ever strategic, Booth realised rough and ready testimonies in the accents, language and colloquialisms of the street could be a powerful tool of communication. Ever earnest, Brengle sees quick public testimony to sanctification as key to sealing the experience.

Even now, many a quaking 14-year-old newly enrolled Salvation Army soldier is asked to share a public testimony.

Ah! Stuff that makes an army.

Would you like to have a word?

## **Taking A Stand**

By Colonel Richard Munn

*From The Officer – ‘Sexism – A Personal Reflection’*

I have been committed to egalitarian values and principles since before my commissioning, over 30 years ago. My family-of-origin, national culture, understanding of Scripture and The Salvation Army all combined to fashion this. And yet, even with this conviction, I would be naive to think that a sexist disposition is eradicated or does not periodically surface.

So, where do I fall short of my best and highest aspirations to embody and live out an authentically egalitarian, mutually honoring and serving interrelationship with women?

Here is my inventory:

### **Mansplaining**

Described as ‘the practice of a man explaining something to a woman in a way that shows he thinks he knows and understands more than she does,’ by all accounts the behavior is ubiquitous.

Verdict: Guilty, despite my best intentions. Maybe especially as an under-developed young man overly ambitious to establish credibility and assert a pecking order. Hand-in-hand with this would be conversational interruptions with a woman, inattentive listening and only partial credence to problem solving or creative initiatives.

### **Gaslighting**

Here, in order to gain more power, a person makes another constantly question their sanity. The unique phrase comes from the 1944 movie, Gaslight, where a man manipulates his wife to the point where she thinks she is losing her mind. Everyday examples include, ‘You are imagining things,’ ‘Stop overreacting,’ ‘I do not know what you are taking about.’

Verdict: Guilty, despite my inner revulsion at the thought. Most occurrent when the emotional truth of a conversation comes too close to home, my defense mechanism might be to respond, ‘I’m only kidding.’

### **Toxic Masculinity**

This is an evolving phrase used to describe the glorification and expectation of exaggerated masculine traits. Thus, ‘manliness’ is based on physical strength, emotional detachment, self-reliance, dominance and sexual prowess. Accordingly, a man who does not display such qualities is not ‘a real man.’

Verdict: Guilty, despite rejecting the traits above. Here’s the rub, cultural values for masculinity, even though caricatured, still exert their influence. They must be consciously countered.



## **Conclusion**

As with so much else, the model is Jesus, who consistently relates to women with grace and dignity. He embodies 'meekness,' strength under control, (2 Corinthians 10:1) and the Fruit of the Spirit, 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.' (Galatians 5:22). We might say, 'truly and properly man.'

So, brothers, how is your sexism inventory?

## Walking

By Colonel Richard Munn  
*From SA Connects – USA Eastern Territory*

Back in a dim and distant past I was a Phys. Ed. major – seems downright extraordinary now, but at the time for a strange season it fit. In a fluke I was accepted into a top-notch Phys. Ed college, and so got used to high octane calisthenics, cross training and all-round physicality.

It was not meant to be, clearly. I moved into more cerebral, mystical and aesthetic pursuits. But, I was imprinted – inside this scrawny frame was a toned athlete, raring to race around the track, spike a game winner or stick a perfect landing.

I maintained a modicum of fitness though the rigors of parenting, seminary, training and Officership, but the glory was fading, and intermittent, at best.

And then, two worlds fused – physical exercise and spiritual formation. It began, where many good things begin, in a small group where we worked though the popular 'Experiencing God' book by Henry Blackaby. One assignment was to rise early, and walk, praying, talking and listening with God. I dutifully followed through, choosing the quite beautiful Casco Bay cliff side in Portland, Maine.

My goodness, I can only describe a quite transcendent experience. The old gospel song writer got it right on, 'He walked with me and he talked with me.' For me, Casco Bay, the crumbling Munjoy Hill district will always be holy ground. I was nearly neo-Brengle on Boston Common, loving 'the sparrows, the dogs, the horses, the little urchins on the streets and the strangers who hurried past me.'

What happens when you experiencing something like that? You go back again, and again, and again. And, it fairly stayed the same. I walked and talked with God. And today? I walk and talk with God. I've done so in Sydenham, Sydney and Suffern, and many, many places in-between.

Some additional fuel was added to this latent Phys Ed fire when I read a Time magazine article outlining the long-term benefits of walking as ultimately more physically helpful than running. And then I read that for centuries people walked in pairs, and talked through their problems and concerns, that in the physicality of walking the release of endorphins and other such intriguingly named chemical secretions actually help humans process knotted up complexities.

Come to think of it, I always enjoy a Good Friday pilgrimage, walking through town with an old rugged cross, infinitely more than 3 hours at the cross seated in a pew.

So, sanctified ramblers, walk on. And as with the startled disciples of old en route to Emmaus, may 'Jesus himself draw near.'

## **Come Join our Army**

By Colonel Richard Munn

***‘Teacher,’ said John, ‘we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us.’ ‘Do not stop him,’ Jesus said. ‘No one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, for whoever is not against us is for us. I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward.’***

Mark 9:38 – 41

Anyone familiar with Salvation Army history will know that following the evangelistic efforts of William Booth in the east end of London, new converts – rough and ready former alcoholics, prostitutes and down and outer’s – were directed to the established churches of the day. They felt so uncomfortable that they promptly returned en masse to Booth and company in order to continue under the ministry that had so impacted them, and where they felt at home.

In those days of explosive growth and apostolic power, the order of the day was unconventionalism and unorthodoxy. As a matter of principal and as a strategy of evangelism even, the more outrageous the better. The mission was to wake up a sleeping church, attract the attention of the public by any means possible and then press home with vigor the claims of the gospel. And it worked!

Open Air evangelism, banging a drum and blowing a trumpet, clapping hands and playing a tambourine, waving a flag, meeting in dance halls and circus tents, encouraging public testimony from the audience and singing sacred words to secular tunes all combined to generate much attention and startle the church.

The effect was also to form a cast of larger-than-life characters who found a new and unlimited outlet for their considerable theatrical and communication skills, and a divine cause for their prodigious energies. Former convicts, town drunks, circus performers and music hall entertainers all now utilized those experiences and skills to proclaim new life in Christ.

There was no doubt about it, The Salvation Army was the best show in town and God used it in a powerful way to extend his kingdom.

Now, it will come as no surprise that such an uncommon ministry drew the withering criticism of many. While new converts were singing ‘Come join our Army, to battle we go, Jesus will help us to conquer the foe,’ others were rebuking this unorthodox church.

For many years The Salvation Army was ridiculed by the conventional church. It was not accepted. It was lampooned and rebuked. It was only much later that acceptance came.

Now, the inability of some parts of the body of Christ to accept other parts has been around as long as the earthly ministry of Christ himself.

If ever there was a select group of individuals who could, it would seem, justifiably think of themselves as having positions of special influence and authority, it was the original disciples. They had been handpicked by Jesus, for goodness sake.

You can imagine their surprise when they came across an 'outsider' performing some pretty intensely powerful ministry, and accomplishing it effectively, successfully casting out demons.

*'Because he was not one of us,' says John, 'we told him to stop.'*

*'Do not stop him,' says Jesus. 'No one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me.'*

Yes, the demons had been driven out in 'the name' of Jesus – even John had noted that. This wasn't some charlatan. He was legitimate. He just wasn't one of 'them.'

The irony, of course is that just before this incident the disciples had tried to cast out an evil spirit from a convulsing boy and had failed in spectacular fashion in front of a crowd and the teachers of the law. After Jesus delivered the boy, the disciples asked him privately what had gone wrong for them. *'This kind can only come out by prayer,'* responded Jesus.

They then met the unnamed exorcist who succeeded in exactly the area they had failed in. He may not have been one of the twelve, but he evidently recognized Jesus as Lord, and had a successful ministry and healthy prayer life.

Out of the insecurity of the disciples came their rebuke to stop. His success was a threat to their special status. The lesson for us, of course, is that when we become self-important we build barriers instead of bridges, and in the process can miss completely the work of God.

Quite frankly, we have to make space for the mavericks and others who may not be one of us, and who may make us feel uncomfortable with their methods, but who serve in the name of Christ.

The broad principal laid down by Christ is simple: *'Whoever is not against us is for us.'*

We need an expansive vision of the Kingdom of God. To rejoice in who and what God had called us to be, and to become more accepting with those who are new in Christ and are attempting ministry and leadership.

*Lord, free us from distrust, and liberate us to encourage new ministries and new leaders. Then by your grace we can truly sing: 'Come join our Army!'*

## **Anytown Citadel - 1517 AD**

By Colonel Richard Munn

***We believe that we are justified by grace, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;  
and that he that believeth hath the witness in himself.***

Salvation Army Doctrine #8

I'd like to take you on a journey– a journey back in time – to a Salvation Army Corps early in the year 1517 AD.

It was a bitterly cold and windy day as the people made their way to Sunday morning worship. As they trudged the muddy road up to church, they grumbled about the concerns they faced – the harshness of the winter, the lack of fuel and dwindling food supply, and the fortune of the rich. As they neared the building others, all wearily plodding to the same point, joined them. There was a sense of routine about this depressing scene. Certainly, most people in the town were stopping the tasks of the moment with a sense of quiet resignation to make their way to the Church.

Yes, Salvationists of the Middle Ages in Anytown Citadel had an ingrained discipline, forged over the centuries that would not allow them to think otherwise. At this time on a Sunday, you just stopped what you were doing and went to Church.

In fact, everything this group of people were familiar with centered on the institution of the Church. The source of political power, the center of wealth, the heart of all education and the most prominent architectural edifice all belonged to the Church. And so, lifelessly and coldly, mechanically and robotically, the Salvationists of 1517 AD went to the Church every Sunday morning. As they congregated on the road there was increasing criticism. These people intensely disliked what happened every week. There was palpable hostility towards the Church that found its roots in a deep–seated confusion as to who and what she was. All these people knew was that you had to go, and if you didn't you were in big trouble in the next life.

Outside the building the Assistant Officers were selling certificates – at high cost – that would help to secure you a place in heaven. The theory was that as the God–ordained institution in securing the Kingdom of God on earth your financial investment towards this 'Kingdom' would be returned as membership in the Kingdom of Heaven. The more certificates you purchased, the more secure you could be of a mansion in heaven. The problem was that the prices of the certificates were always being raised. This instilled a hatred for the Assistant Officers amongst the people, an emotion they didn't keep to themselves as they passed by on the way to worship.

If the soldiers despised the Assistants, they positively lived in fear of the Commanding Officers. They alone could decide if you were in the Church or not. And if you weren't in the Church, then forget any chance of heaven. If you crossed them then you could be out – excommunicated – and the only way to heaven was through the institution of the Church and the authority of the Officers.

The people may have been ignorant of many things surrounding their religion, but they knew enough to keep on the good side of the Officer.

Once inside the Church building the situation became more banal. All the Officers and denominational officialdom clustered around the altar, completely separate from the people who thronged at the back of the sanctuary and observed the religious proceedings through a wooden screen. The congregation was not allowed to sing, and with the words only in Latin it would have been meaningless if they could. Under no circumstances could any of the people participate in any of the ceremony. And so, they huddled together and mindlessly watched the show. Cold, bored and without emotion.

Christianity was irrelevant to the experience of the people and was an oppressive force that fostered collective anger.

This was the church in early 1517 AD. Where was the experience of salvation in Christ? Where was joy in worship? Where was the fellowship of the Body of Christ?

This is the church without the truth that 'justification is by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.' For late in 1517 AD Martin Luther began the reformation of the church by proclaiming the truth so hidden that 'salvation is by grace through faith.' In so doing he revolutionized Christianity as we know it and demonstrated that doctrine has a deep impact upon our experience, that what we believe impacts how we conduct ourselves in the arena of life.

So, what does this grand doctrine of salvation mean to you and me today?

We don't deserve salvation: The essence of grace is that salvation is free. God is not forced to show us grace, but out of His great love He does so freely. In fact, if we deserve anything we deserve the wrath of God. While that may sound harsh it reminds us of the beauty of grace and the spotless holiness of God that recoils from any trace of sin. Because grace is free salvation cannot be earned or purchased. If this were so, only the wealthy and clever and powerful would have access to heaven.

Salvation centers in Christ only: The church does not save anyone. Clergy do not save anyone. The Salvation Army has never saved anyone. The story is told of DL Moody who was approached by a man obviously drunk who greeted him with the introduction, 'I don't know if you remember me, but you saved me once.' Moody replied, 'I must have done, it certainly wasn't Christ.'

Not even faith itself can save an individual; it has to be faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. 'There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved,' thundered Peter.

We can experience salvation: The witness within ourselves of this grace is a heart-warming experience. Christianity for our imaginary Church in the Middle Ages was

devoid of life and warmth. Salvation has everything to do with life. It has a gloriously experiential dynamic to it. From John Wesley who writes of his heart being 'strangely warmed' to the tearful teenager testifying of an encounter with Christ, we are reminded of 'experiences' people have with Christ.

Do you have a 1517 AD Christianity? Is your worship experience lifeless and irrelevant? Are you a member only? Is your heart strangely cold?

Grasp this truth and embrace it: 'Salvation is by **grace** through **faith** in our Lord Jesus Christ and we can **experience** it.'