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Editorial Introduction

By Major Stephen Court, editor

Greetings in Jesus' name. Welcome to The Evangelism Interview Issue of Journal of Aggressive Christianity - JAC140. We have interviewed a handful of evangelists for your edification and inspiration.

But before we plunge in to the evangelism interviews, we will open with an entry from Captain Sam Tomlin (UKI) responding to Colonel Richard Munn's JAC138 communion article. Tomlin's reply is 'Communion Reconsidered'.

Evangelism Interviews:

- Major April McNeilly
- Major ST Dula
- Tim Teakle
- Envoy Craig Stephens
- Captain Brent Haas
- James Thompson

We anticipate that prayerful consideration of this interview content will help us all accelerate the advance of the great commission on our local fronts. And once you run through all of this, feel welcome to plunge in to the previous 139 JACs for free in the archives. God bless you.

Communion reconsidered – a response to Colonel Richard Munn

By Captain Sam Tomlin

The Apr-May 2022 edition of the Journal of Aggressive Christianity was dedicated to Colonel Richard Munn, featuring a number of very interesting and thoughtful articles written by him in recent decades on the occasion of his retirement. I have enjoyed Col. Munn's reflections as part of the International Social Justice Commission, on social media and on his podcast. One article stood out for me, however – 'More Communion – Please?' [<More Communion link>](#) in which Col. Munn outlines his thoughts on the issue of the sacraments ('communion' in particular). The argument includes many helpful anecdotes and illustrations, and adheres to the traditional Salvation Army understandings of the sacraments and the sacramental.

I want to offer this response to Col. Munn's article as I think it highlights a number of issues with the Army's stance that have been bubbling away for me in recent years.

Ceremony and ritual

Central to Col. Munn's argument – as with other Salvationist defences of our official sacramental position – is the highlighting of the dangers of ceremony and ritual. After outlining different Christians' approaches to communion, Col. Munn suggests that '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.' Indeed, he proposes 'a more accurate interpretation of the New Testament' away from the "High Altar only" to the humble meal table.'

This is a familiar argument in the Salvation Army – while other Christians endlessly deliberate and argue over the correct way to conduct sacraments, the Army bypassed these debates by simply getting back to the real world where people were. No special or magic words need to be spoken, no particular vestments worn – just simple acts of compassion, mercy, holiness, and justice, draw followers of Jesus back to the basics. In this regard we can have more communion not less – just when a priest might give us a wafer and some wine.

Is there not a danger here, though, that we caricature ritual in other parts of the church to its worst elements? Are there parts of the church that have become too obsessed with ritual, encouraging people to partake through rote repetition and empty ceremony? Of course. Does this mean that all ritual should be discarded and deemed unhelpful for us Salvationists? As James K.A. Smith among others has shown [<video link>](#), human beings are ritualistic creatures and the question is not whether we partake in ritual or liturgy, but which rituals and liturgies? Even we Salvationists, as Col. Munn accepts – the part of the body of Christ seemingly least interested in rituals – created a whole swath of rituals, whether it is our uniform, bands, flags etc., a point to which I shall return later on.

My particular worry here is that we end up contrasting the sacramental life (good) against the dominical sacraments (communion and water baptism - bad) as if they are inherently in tension.

Why do we need to bother with the dominical sacraments, the argument goes, when they are not essential to salvation, and God is calling us away from the sanctuary to the world of pain and suffering? Worrying about these two ceremonies simply distracts from our service of the poor, our search for justice and acts in the 'real world.'

What of the examples of Mother Teresa, Thomas Merton, Martin Luther King, Oscar Romero and Dorothy Day, to name but a few from other traditions who integrated acts of mercy and justice with communion or Eucharist? Indeed, to varying degrees and in different ways they also argued that their action could not be separated from this ceremony. Is our social and justice-seeking action as Salvationists special in a way that these examples are not? It is an interesting comparison to look at the emergence of the Oxford Movement, around the same time the Booths founded the Army. While one group wanted to move away from ritual and ceremony, the other moved towards it, but for both there was a centrality for acts of service and justice.

As NT Wright outlines [<video link>](#), rather than being in competition, the call to gather as believers (represented by the sacraments) and the sending into the world are inherently linked – interpreting and enriching one another. Col. Munn uses the example of Brother Lawrence washing the dishes as being 'as near to Christ' as 'he ever did at the Blessed Sacrament.' The key word here is 'as'. There is no suggestion that Brother Lawrence stopped receiving the sacrament because he felt close to God at other points.

In this regard, do we Salvationists downplay a key aspect of our social work – its firm placement in the context of the rich Christian narrative? This is a key element of the sacraments understood in other denominations. A major achievement of philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre has been to show that our actions only make sense as part of the narrative in which they fall. You can give bread to someone who is starving for very different reasons: you might be doing so to look good to others, to improve your karma, to meet government targets for helping the hungry, or because you are following your saviour Jesus Christ. Without anchoring our actions within a particular narrative, they remain rootless and arbitrary.

Of course, we Salvationists do worship the particular God revealed in Jesus Christ as we gather in our corps or homes – or on the street as we march and sing. The point about communion, however, is that it is a more intense and suggestive way of doing what we already do. It draws us back to the very central event in the history of the cosmos – the death of Jesus on the cross through specific remembrance (as a continuous event with the resurrection) – bread representing Jesus' body and wine (or grape juice) representing his blood. 'For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes,' says Paul in 1 Corinthians 11.26. Col. Munn suggests that the meal shared by Jesus with his disciples is a simple meal among friends, yet this forgets that this meal was specifically a Passover meal (Luke 22.8) – a ceremony of itself, with all the resonance of communal memory, identity and the dramatizing of a past event made present. Jesus does not do away with the ceremonial aspect of this but reinterprets it to now be about himself.

This is why the Church has traditionally insisted upon the dominical sacraments – as a key means of avoiding drifting away from the central truths of the faith; a drift that the Army has arguably witnessed as much of our social work has been divorced from worshipping Salvationist congregations.

Ecumenical unity

Col. Munn also repeats a familiar argument that in being released from the sacraments of communion and water baptism, the Army ‘serves as an important reminder to the rest of the Christian world...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.’ Our role in the wider body of Christ in this regard is primarily as a witness to the possibility of salvation without ritual (specifically the sacraments) – being free to focus on the essence of faith, namely salvation through faith alone and the outworking of this salvation.

There are various issues with this, however. Firstly, does it not absolve us from a concrete command of Jesus? ‘Do this in remembrance of me.’ ‘Do what?’ it is often replied. William Booth suggested this ‘doing’ relates to the enactment of the sacramental life related to the example Jesus gave us. Yet this interpretation fails to deal properly with the text in Luke. ‘Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them... Do this in remembrance of me’ Jesus said. ‘This’ clearly relates to the breaking of bread and to Jesus’ body on the cross and the cup to his blood. Col. Munn suggests that we should ‘cherish the family meal as a place of closeness. Use it as a time of prayer, communion and thanksgiving... Read scripture before or after the meal.’ I say ‘Amen’ to all of this, but also suggest this does not necessarily fulfil what Jesus commanded in Luke 22: the specific remembrance of Jesus’ death on a cross as the central event embodying and representing with greater clarity than anything else God’s self-giving love.

In this interpretation we are removing ourselves from the plain understanding of almost every other Christian in history. Do we really think that almost every Christian – including the greatest theological minds in church history – have misinterpreted these verses when they support the taking of communion, and it was only towards the end of the nineteenth century that the true meaning was discovered?

Col. Munn suggests the Army’s approach is a ‘more accurate interpretation of the New Testament.’ Is he suggesting that other denominations are wrong to practice communion as a ceremony? If not, perhaps it is right for other denominations to practice communion, but the Army has been called to a special role as suggested above. Aside from the rather postmodern assumptions when it comes to biblical interpretation (‘something might be right for you, but not right for us’), this clearly undermines ecumenical unity in my mind. Andy Miller III has written a suggestive essay [<essay link>](#) in this regard, asking whether we really, ‘assume that our witness to the church is more important than our being a part of it?’

The sacraments are a significant factor in our ‘adviser’ rather than full status as a member of the World Council of Churches. Col. Munn also mentions the age-old issue for Salvationists in ecumenical settings where communion is taken but we are not sure whether to participate. Surely the (re)adoption of sacraments in the Army

would help foster greater unity in such settings – where we do not deliberate whether to join our siblings in other denominations but can do so joyfully. We may not share their same enthusiasm for regular ritual, but we can join with them, and they with us in the breaking of bread in remembrance of a specific event – the death of Jesus. Beyond such remembrance, we might also find true their testimony that this simple act can nourish our individual and corporate spiritual life as the bread we break is ‘a participation in the body of Christ’ (1 Cor. 10.16). God may not always be present at a communion table – if it becomes rote repetition, or the poor are excluded; but surely we can accept the testimony of our brothers and sisters in Christ that it can and has been a significant source of spiritual benefit just as our hearing scripture and preaching is. If we want others to listen to our witness of the dangers of ceremony, surely we can listen to their testimony too?

Of course this would not bring worldwide unity overnight. Protestants cannot join with Roman Catholics or Orthodox at the Eucharist – so are we not just wading into unnecessary and endless debates that lead nowhere? While such debates can draw us away from other key aspects of the faith, I refuse to believe that such dialogue with fellow brothers and sisters in Christ is wasted. Jesus called us to unity, and our acceptance of fracture in the body of Christ is one of the greatest stains on the modern church. By debating these matters, it shows we care about unity. By absolving ourselves entirely from them, I worry we subtly communicate we are not as concerned for ecumenical unity.

I am not suggesting that we aim for one world-wide denomination (unity is not uniformity), but when there is so little that visibly unites Christians across the world, the seemingly small act of joining our siblings in a foundational understanding of Jesus’ command - that he asks us to periodically remember his death through the sharing of bread and wine (or grape juice) - would be of great prophetic significance in my mind. Who knows what God might do with this simple act of humility as other denominations see the witness of the Salvation Army moving ever-so-slightly towards ecumenical unity?

If it is suggested that we should avoid such time-consuming debates to focus on the important matters of salvation, let us also pause for a minute and remember the time we have spent as a movement on matters specific to our context. How many articles, social media posts and official minutes have been written on whether women can wear trousers as part of the official uniform for instance? As Luke Bretherton outlines:

‘In the Salvation Army there is, at present, an ardent but to an outsider baffling debate about whether wearing uniforms is a requirement for full membership of the Salvation Army. This debate is a good illustration of what happens when renewal movements abandon the given practices and theological coordinates of the Christian tradition - in the case of the Salvation Army it is the abandonment of the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist. The result is that they end up sacralising the non-essential.’

In this regard, I also wonder how true it is that other denominations view our non-participation in the dominical sacraments positively as our self-proclaimed prophetic role suggests. In my experience, speaking with those from different denominations, there is certainly an admiration for our passion for justice and the connection

between social action and evangelism; but there is usually a confusion and even sadness regarding our stance on the sacraments.

Mediation

At the heart of the Army's decision to reject the dominical sacraments is of course a particular theology of mediation. Col. Munn alludes to this by emphasising the 'immediacy of grace' and 'sufficiency of Christ' as opposed to 'taking communion to ensure salvation.' The Holy Spirit cannot be contained in physical items, and God wishes to speak directly to humans, not using physical items as means of grace.

This is a dense theological matter and I can only scratch the surface here. Commissioner Phil Needham, however, has critically analysed [this](#) aspect of Salvationist theology and suggested it comes close to 'heresy' – strong language indeed from one of our key ecclesial voices of recent decades. Such an emphasis on the entirely unmediated means of grace 'represents a dualistic separation, or even contradiction between spiritual and physical' which comes close to Gnosticism. That God speaks to people today is unquestioned, and we need not abandon the Booths' insistence on the simplicity of God's dealings with humans. But does God ever communicate his presence entirely unmediated? If we are listening to a song, we have language and notes vibrating in the air, reading scripture involves a physical book (or phone!) in a particular language, and we emphasise the importance of the physical mercy seat as a special place to meet with God.

In response to this, it is sometimes suggested that God will use physical things for his purposes (they can be 'sacraments' in the sense of being an outward sign of inward grace) but they are not means of grace in themselves. I am not convinced by this argument for the reasons Commissioner Needham suggests, but even if this is the case our official position effectively amounts to suggesting that God can use anything to be a sacrament apart from the two things or actions which over 99 per cent of Christians have considered sacraments in Christian history. Why should we not allow two more if everything else can be used by God to communicate his immediate presence in our hearts? There is a Protestant tradition, originating with Zwingli (who disagreed with Martin Luther on precisely this point at the Marburg Colloquy in 1529), that denies the real presence in bread and wine – surely this would be the starting point for a Salvationist theology of communion which can honour the tradition of the immediacy of grace and not have to affirm the real presence in the bread and wine/grape juice.

Without the sacrament of communion, it is also unclear what our sacramental life is supposed to be sacramental of. This is an extension of the point made above regarding the family meal not specifically drawing attention to Jesus' death. Col. Munn suggests that we should read scripture when having a meal together as a family or with fellow Salvationists. This is right – but it remains unclear to me why this cannot sometimes include specific memory of Jesus' death with bread and grape-juice to represent his body and blood. In this way, our sacramental life is more clearly linked to the self-giving love of God as he revealed through Jesus' death on the cross.

Practical steps moving forward

In recent years voices have grown to (re)adopt the dominical sacraments in the Army. No surveys exist that I am aware of, but anecdotally I would suggest around 30 per cent of officers and corps members I have spoken with about the issue are in favour of their re-admittance. In one case, a passionate, Spirit-filled, young Salvationist I knew in Germany with whom I corresponded over a number of years recently took the decision to leave the Army and join the Lutheran church. One of the main reasons? The Army's sacramental position. We have probably lost the rest of his life's service within the Army because of this position. What a tragedy for our movement! As Col. Munn suggests, many others want to join Army corps but feel they cannot because of our sacramental position.

I understand that there is a fear that if we (re)adopt the dominical sacraments that we will lose a key element of our identity – the 'aggressive' Christianity of which this journal speaks. I think these fears are over-played. I and others arguing for their (re)adoption are not suggesting we move to an Anglo-Catholic ritualism. Commissioner Needham has written a helpful outline of how the global Army might tackle the issue of (re)adoption of communion and water baptism at the end of the article I referenced above. They could be performed by any corps member – we are a priesthood of all believers and need not descend into clericalism; many of the original barriers (women in leadership not accepted by others, no non-alcoholic alternative to wine) are no longer present; a simple set of words could be designed to help Salvationists if they so desire (if we are worried this might come close to 'liturgy' let us remember we already have such words for dedications, funerals, weddings etc. in our aptly named 'ceremonies book'); and crucially no one (or congregation) would be forced to practice them.

It is on this final point I wish to finish, because I think it comes to the crux of the matter. For, in fact, I agree with much of what Col. Munn wrote! He expresses the beauty of Salvationism and the spirit with which the Booths founded this wonderful God-inspired movement. I simply do not think that anything he said means we cannot allow Salvationists to practice communion and water baptism. Far from compromising this spirit, Salvationists specifically remembering Jesus' death for us as an expression of God's self-giving love, with a basic bread roll and grape juice at a corps meeting, a homeless drop-in or on the streets would enhance and deepen our action for justice and compassion of which we should rightly be proud. If our current position represents the freedom to live the Christian life without relying on ritual for salvation, then surely we must also affirm the freedom to include the dominical sacraments as part of an expression of the salvation of Jesus Christ.

William Booth himself admitted there might come a time when his decision in the 1880's might need to be reconsidered (which itself surely calls into question the firm foundation of the non-practice of communion and water baptism). Now is surely that time.

Captain Sam Tomlin is a corps officer in the UK & Ireland territory, at Liverpool Stoneycroft Corps.

Interview - Major April McNeilly

JAC - Can you introduce us to April McNeilly?

AM - I'm April McNeilly, corps officer of Oshawa Temple along with my husband. I grew up in rural Newfoundland and felt a strong calling to be a SA officer when I was 14 years old. At age 19 I moved from NL to London Ontario, where I soldiered at London Citadel for nine years. I was the second woman to play in London Citadel band. (Great and terrifying memories I assure you, but that's another story). I studied music education at Western university, and theology at U of T. I'm also an enneagram coach.

I have four incredible daughters.

JAC - Who evangelized you?

AM - My home life was a mess. Abusive father and truly messed up situation. A neighbor invited me to church, literally knocking on my door one day and asking my mother if she could take me to the Army. Mom said yes, I went and very quickly fell in love with the people before I actually met Jesus. The church became my second family. Were they perfect? Absolutely not. But they loved me and welcomed me with open arms. In terms of who led me to Jesus, honestly it was a "group evangelizing" effort. That was pretty typical in those days. At some point I made the long walk from my pew to the altar. I remember the corps officer saying "Praise the Lord, little April is saved tonight!" I really didn't know what that meant. I didn't even know how to pray. I smile as I remember praying the only prayer I'd ever heard: "Now I lay me down to sleep..."

JAC - Do you have any horror story evangelism efforts in your past? (if so, will you elaborate on one?)

AM - Not for myself personally. However in those days in NL we did a lot of what we'd call "fishing" during the night (Salvation) service. The corps officer would ask "all those who love the Lord" (which we all knew meant those saved) to stand. The unsaved understood their place perfectly: Stay seated. Some of those with a particular passion/gift would then visit the unsaved in the pews and try to convince them to walk to the altar and accept Jesus. It sounds so weird to us today, but at least people knew where they stood before God!

I dated a guy in my last year of high school who wasn't saved. That was complicated since I knew I was called to be an officer! Somewhere along the way he understood that unless he was saved, we'd have to break up. So he "got saved." It wasn't sincere, he was pressured before God was speaking to him. Perhaps if someone had disciplined him things would have been different.

Sadly, I also remember a tremendous amount of legalism. Too often the unsaved felt that if they accepted Jesus, they'd be joining the church and giving a whole lot of stuff up. God was a kind of kill-joy.

JAC - What essential preparation for evangelism do you recommend?

AM - Great question. I don't have an easy answer in all honesty. I think we've done too little to prepare our people in this way.

Perhaps today more than ever (given the post-Christian, secular world we live in) we need to have a serious talk about this. For starters, we need to get back to the basic question of Why Do People Really Need to Get Saved? Sounds kind of weird I know, but what I'm seeing/hearing is a lot of church goers who are increasingly unconvinced that repentance/salvation/sanctification is relevant today. Or at least they seem unconcerned. Or, they can talk about it but leave it up to someone else to do the work.

So for starters, let's talk more about why people need Jesus, and what our role in this is! Basic stuff.

Secondly, I think it would be great to do actual role playing for our people to see what an evangelistic conversation can look like. I've done this before and it's effective so that people can see how "normal" these conversations can be. Also, role playing helps our people understand that actually "closing the deal" (problematic language I know) is so necessary. People need to know they're coming to Jesus. We talk an awful lot about planting seeds and being good neighbours without being brave enough to actually bring people to Jesus. Heck, an atheist can be a great neighbor and do tons of good works! But he's certainly not going to bring someone to Jesus.

JAC - What is your favourite evangelism approach?

AM - Getting to know people, seeing them as fellow humans made in God's image. And at the right time, sharing who Jesus is in my life. From there it gets easy to talk about their own spiritual reality. I think the old term is "friendship evangelism." Basically we need to make sure that we have people in our circle who are not saved. Otherwise, we're just hanging out with Christians without seeing the world out there. Bringing people to Jesus is the responsibility of us all, not just those with the gift of evangelism.

I think there is a place for doing evangelism with a stranger, or with someone we don't really know. In fact, I suspect that as we get closer to the return of Jesus, we'll find us doing this more often. That would be a different kind of role playing, but practicing this method is also helpful. I think in this scenario it would be those with the actual gift of evangelism who would be inclined this way.

JAC - What should evangelists be aware of when evangelizing?

AM - Yeah, this one is also tricky today, isn't it? At a workplace for example, it may be inappropriate to talk about Jesus, causing problems in a place of employment. Yet that doesn't mean we don't have the same responsibility to participate in what God is doing among our unsaved co-workers. So, pray into this and be careful. Pretty simplistic advice! After hours relationships may be key.

Also, be ready to receive a whole lot of rejection. Rejection is fine, Jesus had tons of it.

Be careful not to come across as judgmental, impatient, or arrogant. Especially if you have the gift of evangelism.

If we aren't truly abiding in Jesus ourselves, our testimony for Him can suffer. So, my number one piece of advice is to go deeper in your own relationship with Jesus!

JAC - What makes what you are doing such an excellent approach to evangelism in the 2020s?

AM - My approach isn't more "excellent" than the next person. I simply want to listen to God and be obedient to what He's saying to me today. Also, I feel a responsibility to understand the times, intelligently seeing the world we live in, understanding what the enemy realm may be plotting, and being prepared to "arm" myself spiritually. Some authors/podcasters recently that have been inspiring to me in this regard are John Mark Comer and Mark Sayers. We need to know what we believe, and why.

JAC - How can people adapt your approach?

AM - Get to know your neighbor and your coworkers. Do you know who lives to the right and left of your home? If you don't, why not?

Wake up to what our responsibility is in taking the message of Jesus to the world. The work of evangelism is everyone's work. It's non-negotiable.

Practice/role play

Pray with other believers / read good books together

Go deeper in your own walk with Jesus (this is vital!)

Listen more intentionally to God's voice.

JAC - What advice do you have for Salvationists who want to evangelise their friends and neighbours and family?

AM - Go for it! Even though I'm advocating studying the times and reading more books/listening to podcasts, we mustn't over-think this! Trust God's work in you and through you. Pray tons. Practice. Be ready for both disappointment and celebration.

And walk in the way of love. (Ephesians 5:2)

People need Jesus. In the West, with anxiety and depression growing at a staggering rate, in a digital age when people are increasingly alienated, and all this confused/wrapped up with wealth and hedonism ...people want to see an alternative lifestyle (even if they don't yet realize this). And I believe with all of my being that Christ-centered communities, where love is the common language, where self-sacrifice and courage become more the norm, and where people are living life together – our world will more and more crave this! We are meant to bring people to Jesus, into our communities with Jesus at the center.

This is a great time to be a Jesus follower. But increasingly the church (the real church) will look different than the church we grew up with. (Another discussion for another day). Let's continue the conversation. Let's be brave enough to hear what God is saying to His people all over the world!

Interview - Major ST Dula

JAC - Can you introduce us to S T Dula?

SD - Yes. Let me introduce myself as well. My name is Maj. Dr. S T Dula, Salvation Army Officer (R), Mizoram, India Eastern Territory

JAC - Who evangelized you?

SD - I was evangelized by Miss Nuhliri Khiangte, YPSM (Young People Sergeant Major), Khatla Corps, India Eastern Territory, on the 26th of April 1981. Also through the unceasing prayers of my grandmother, Mrs. Thangliani Khiangte

JAC - Do you have any horror story evangelism efforts in your past? (if so, will you elaborate on one?)

SD - Yes, it was maybe around 20 years back while we were having a Gospel Camping in a small village. There was a young lady who was possessed by an evil spirit, disrupting and disturbing our holy gathering. Me and my team started approaching the lady and try holding her down, but the lady was quite strong, very disturbing to look at, and have a very bad odour. One can clearly tell something is disturbing her. After many hurdles we were able to hold her down, but that was only the start. She began yelling and talking about our faith, our evangelism, and how incompetent we are, and testing our faith in God trying to bring our spirit down. But the Holy spirit was with us and after many hours of battle, Jesus won the victory and the young lady was set free. Halleluiah!

JAC - What essential preparation for evangelism do you recommend?

SD – 1. Prayer
2. Fasting
3. Memorizing Bible verses
4. Personal Counselling

JAC - What is your favourite evangelism approach?

SD – 1. Personal counseling
2. Sharing testimonies
3. Media Evangelism
4. Crusade/ Gospel Camping
5. Indirect evangelism/ social mission/ social work
6. Literature Evangelism

JAC - What should evangelists be aware of when evangelizing?

SD - Being aware of:

1. Pridefulness
2. Sex
3. Money
4. Power

5. Inability to control oneself for physical and mental health
6. Materialism

JAC - What makes what you are doing such an excellent approach to evangelism in the 2020s?

- SD –
1. The obedience of God's word
 2. The Guidance of the Holy Spirit
 3. Prayer and fastings
 4. Team work
 5. A good relationships with the leaders/ headquarters
 6. Integrated mission

JAC - How can people adapt your approach?

- SD –
1. Having a good relationship with others
 2. Enthusiasm
 3. Authenticity
 4. Passion
 5. Zeal for a lost soul

JAC - What advice do you have for Salvationists who want to evangelise their friends and neighbours and family?

- SD - By advising:
1. More prayer
 2. Regular fasting
 3. Memorizing Bible verses
 4. Being dependent on the power of the Holy spirit
 5. Being patient
 6. Knowledge of doctrine
 7. Openness of Spiritual gifts
 8. Flexibility
 9. Ministries with or without uniforms
 10. Social gospels
 11. More teachings of Heaven and hell
 12. Acceptance of charismatic movement/teaching
 13. Gender equality

I would like to include and suggest:

1. Rebaptism of the Holy spirit among the Salvation Army officers and soldiers
2. Giving more focuses on prayers, example- prayer conference, prayer rally, prayer fastings, seminar, etc.
3. Corps growth studies
4. Discipleship
5. New setup on evangelism at DHQ/THQ/IHQ
6. A root back to your main mission callings

Interview - Tim Teakle

JAC - Can you introduce us to Tim Teakle?

TT - My wife Carolyn and I have been married for 17 years and have 4 amazing kids ranging in age from 9 to 1. I've been working with Alpha Canada since 2014 and began with as a part of the youth department and now have the privilege of overseeing our Church Experience team, which focusing on journey alongside those running Alpha to help resource, equip, encourage and pray with them as they create spaces for people to have honest and authentic conversations about God. Prior to working with Alpha, I was a youth pastor at a Baptist church for 10 years. One of the things I love most about ministry is seeing the lights go on in a new way for someone as they experience more of who God is and deepen their understanding. I have an English degree from Wilfrid Laurier University and an MDiv from Tyndale in Youth and Family Ministries. I'm also a graduate of the Arrow Leadership program and an ordained minister with the CBOQ as well as a commissioned staff with Alpha Canada.. I love movies and escape rooms and spending good times with good friends!

JAC - Who evangelized you?

TT - I was brought up in a Christian home and gave my life to Jesus at the age of 3 when my 6-year-old sister shared about her decision to follow Jesus and invited me to do the same! It was a conversation full of childlike faith, which was easy to do given that we were both children! Beyond that, I am grateful for the constant and authentic influence towards faith from my parents, as well as a youth pastor who journeyed with me through high school and beyond, giving me opportunities to put my faith into action and use the gifts that God has given me.

JAC - Do you have any horror story evangelism efforts in your past? (if so, will you elaborate on one?)

TT - I don't have a particular horror story, but I can definitely say that there have been times in my life where I've tried to share my faith or even just have conversations with people and haven't approached it in the best way. I've come in thinking it was a matter of getting them all the right information, without always thinking through the significance of what they were doing. It's a journey for them. It's a moment of restructuring or rethinking or reworking their entire world view, and we need to remember that so we approach the situation with the right heart and empathy. While sometimes it can become a debate or an intellectual sparring session, more often than not it's a conversation and one that should be approached with care and respect.

JAC - What essential preparation for evangelism do you recommend?

TT - As Pastor Darrell Johnson says, "Evangelism is joining a conversation the Holy Spirit is already having with another person," so the best preparation is to spend time listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit and learning to follow his lead! For me, the goal isn't to "win" or to push a specific agenda or direct the conversation down a path I want it to go so I can use the prepackaged arguments I've prepared. The goal is to

listen and love well and authentically. That requires time spent in God's presence. It requires a willingness to be led and an openness to opportunities that you are invited to participate in. Beyond that, spend time reading God's Word. Commit portions of it to memory so that what you say can be rooted in Scripture. A life lived close to Jesus is the best preparation.

JAC - What is your favourite evangelism approach?

TT- One of my favourite ways to approach evangelism comes from 1 Peter 3:15. *"...in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect..." NIV.* This verse begins with what I just mentioned. It's about having the right head and heart space before and with God. Revering Christ as Lord and allowing that to permeate every aspect of your life. And as you do that, the hope that you have in Him becomes visible and people begin to ask you questions about it. The verse says that we are to be ready to give an answer, which implies that we are being asked a question. That question is rooted in the hope that we have in God, which then also implies that our hope is visible to a watching world. I can't ask you about something I can't see or experience.

From there, we are reminded to answer with gentleness and respect, which sets the tone for the conversation to follow. Ultimately, it's a process of walking closely with God, allowing him to change your life and letting that change show from the inside out, engaging with others around the difference that they see in you compared to the priorities and perspectives of others, and engaging in a way that is open, honest, authentic and gentle.

JAC - What should evangelists be aware of when evangelizing?

TT - I always like to remind people of a few things. Firstly, we are dealing with people, not projects. Loving someone with an agenda isn't really love...it's an agenda. Just as you and I have thoughts and feelings and emotions about all sorts of things, the people that we are talking to and with do as well. Think about what it would be like to be on the other side of your conversation. Would you feel heard and valued? Would you feel attacked or misunderstood? All of us instinctively know what makes for a good or a bad conversation so let's do our part to help ensure that conversations about faith fall into the good category. This absolutely doesn't mean that you have to agree with everything the other person says, but you can disagree well. From there, we need to realize that most people are looking for answers, not just arguments. Most people aren't looking for a debate, but rather to have someone journey with them through their doubts and questions. Even if someone presents a very scholarly front, their stance is more than likely rooted in something very personal or to do with their own past experiences. Every question has a backstory and is coming from a deeper place of inquiry and searching.

The dictionary definition of a conversation is the informal exchange of thoughts or ideas. By definition, I can't win a conversation...and I don't have to. The goal isn't just to "convert" someone, but to help them move even one step closer to God. Following Jesus isn't a purely intellectual pursuit, but rather it's a loving relationship with a real person. Listen to the stories behind their words and questions, rely on the Holy Spirit and follow His lead.

JAC - What makes ALPHA such an excellent approach to evangelism in Canada in the 2020s?

Alpha is a safe place for conversation about things that really matter. There is a talk that lays the foundation for the interaction, but from there guests are welcomed to share their questions, thoughts, doubts, beliefs and to even challenge what was shared. In a season where people have been so disconnected and have felt the pain of isolation and loneliness in some profound ways, there is something significant about being able to gather together, in person or virtually, and opening up about what's really going on. Because Alpha is a dialogue, not a monologue, guests are able to engage and share their hearts and be heard. There is a collaborative learning environment that is welcoming and lets people engage where they are in every sense of the word.

People are open to spiritual conversations, but hesitant to be told what to believe. Alpha creates space for those conversations to happen while also clearly articulating the Good News of Jesus and sharing an introduction into what Christians believe.

JAC - How can people participate in starting up ALPHA?

TT - Simply visit our website, alphacanada.org. From there you can sign up and register your Alpha and get access to training materials, find a coach to journey with you, and get promotional pieces to help you spread the word. Alpha is entirely supported through our family of amazing donors so there is no cost to you at all for any of our resources. I would also encourage you to join some of our online events to get more information and be further equipped to run well in your context.

JAC - What advice do you have for Salvationists who want to evangelise their friends and neighbours and family?

TT - Always frame sharing your faith as something that you get to do, ...not something that you have to do. This should be seen as an exciting opportunity to open up the most important part of your life to those around you. It's a joy and an honour and a privilege, not a task to be completed or a chore to persevere through. Your first steps into the conversation will set the tone for what follows. Be ready to listen more than you talk and don't feel like you have to have an answer to every question. Sometimes an honest, "I don't know!" is more helpful than a well-crafted answer to a question that no one asked! If you get stumped, admit it and then invite the person to join you on the journey of discovery to find the answer. That being said, it's also called the Great Commission, not the Great Suggestion. We have been commanded by Jesus himself to share our faith with others. It's not optional!

Interview - Envoy Craig Stephens

JAC - Can you introduce us to Craig Stephens?

CS - I am a Salvation Army Officer who has a deep hunger for encounters of God and passion to share Jesus. Married for 22 years, I have 3 utterly amazing children (Judah 14, Ilisha 12, and Malachi 8). I got wrecked through encounters of the Holy Ghost during a trip to Toronto Canada (Toronto blessing) in 1998 and the grace of Evangelist emerged on my life. I was given the role of Australian Eastern Territorial Evangelism Coordinator and had the privilege of training and equipping members of The Salvation Army in the ministry of evangelism across Australia.

I have managed The Salvation Army's "Dooralong Transformation Centre" (The largest addictions treatment centre in Australasia) between 2013-2017 where "the Lord add to their number daily those who were being saved" (first time salvations) every day for more than 18 months.

Currently I serve across the NSW Central Coast in Australia and am responsible for New Expressions of The Salvation Army. I enjoy the immense favour of being released by our apostolic divisional leader to pursue new works for the Salvation Army – how blessed is that!

I also oversee a small network of house churches called "community tables", a company of people gifted in evangelism across nearly 30 churches in our region, as well as "Crazy Love" outreach and evangelism. And just for fun I have a weekly "New Expressions" radio program on Rhema Radio. I serve on the board of directors for a global mission movement "Impact Nations" and love to take teams into the developing world to preach the gospel, cast out demons and heal the sick.

JAC - Who evangelized you?

CS - Tragically the only discernible evangelism I observed or encountered for me as a young person occurred from the pulpit. How limiting! Admittedly, I was being raised in a Salvationist household and many may have presumed regarding my relationship with Jesus and Salvation... they would have presumed wrong.

I did make a response to a sermon at a Music camp in my early teens which was a very emotive response (read snot and tears) but without a real understanding of Jesus and his love for me. It was more that I was convinced that I was wretched, sinful, a total mess up, and needed to be really, really sorry (and I think I was in that moment). Not much of a salvation - hey?

As a young person I interpreted whatever was being said regarding Christianity / Salvation as "you have to behave well enough, be good enough, not be a hypocrite, and definitely don't sin". As a teenage boy (and young adult, and adult) I simply couldn't do it. So, I walked out. I walked out of church. I walked out of the pretend Christian life. Of pretending to pray, read the Bible and of knowing Jesus. I wanted to believe, BUT I didn't find anything substantial of Christ and the Spirit in the world I was in.

Many years later I think I became brilliantly born again through the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. I was in a revival church meeting more out of curiosity than anything else, and suddenly I wanted to believe, and I was physically overcome by the presence of Holy Spirit, and everything changed. Perhaps the Holy Spirit evangelised me.

JAC - Do you have any horror story evangelism efforts in your past? (if so, will you elaborate on one?)

CS - Not too many horror stories. Probably because (like many in the Church today) I ran away from conversations with pre-Christians for most of my church (pretend Christian) life. The “fear of man” and “fear of rejection” kept my mouth well and truly shut from doing any evangelism.

It wasn't until I had been filled with Holy Spirit that I had grace to share Jesus. Following Holy Spirit promptings has spared me a lot of grief.

I did have faith to believe that one drunk I was witnessing to would be supernaturally sobered and be able to receive Jesus into his heart. He was open, prayed with me, and then he kept on drinking from his bottle – a little disappointing.

JAC - What essential preparation for evangelism do you recommend?

CS - Get positioned in the love of Jesus...Non-negotiable! Time with Jesus filling you with His love EVERY day (and more often). People do not care how much you know, until they know how much you care... and I suspect we don't care much until we've been cared for. Get loved up, and overflow in love towards those you come in contact with.

JAC - What is your favourite evangelism approach?

CS - The only approach I have is “What do you want to do / say Holy Spirit?” And then do or say that.

I do particularly enjoy when its healing He wants to do and, in the healing then opens someone up to salvation.

JAC - What should evangelists be aware of when evangelizing?

CS –

1. You're evangelising a person! They're loved, cherished, and deeply precious to the King – interact / share with them accordingly.
2. Make sure your good news is GOOD News. “The Kingdom of God has come, repent and believe” (Mark 1:15) is good news for everyone!
3. Evangelism is introducing people to Jesus – so do that.
4. It's not an introduction to theology – something to be aware of.
5. Salvation is the Holy Spirit's job, so make sure He is the one saving.

JAC - What makes what you are doing such an excellent approach to evangelism in the 2020s?

CS - I'm not sure how excellent it is... I'm just functioning out of my current revelation of Jesus and His kingdom (and it seems to be fruitful). Also, how lovely that It's not up to me, it's up to Holy Spirit – His way, His work.

JAC - How can people adapt your approach?

CS - However Holy Spirit directs... sometimes words of knowledge, treasure hunting, sometimes supernatural healing, other times a hug, other times a particular phrase,

and still other times a practical demonstration of the love of God (paying for the groceries in the shopping queue, mowing a lawn, baking a cake for a neighbour).

JAC - What advice do you have for Salvationists who want to evangelise their friends and neighbours and family?

CS –

1. Be Loved. Rest in the love of Christ continually. Then, overflow in that love towards others. In the words of our founder when handing the Army on to his son Bramwell, “I’ve been looking back and let me tell you, Love is everything” – He was spot on!

2. Listen to the promptings of Holy Spirit – do and share things His way.

3. Demonstrate and declare Jesus.

Interview - Captain Brent Haas

JAC - Can you introduce us to Brent Haas?

BH - Christ follower, husband, father, pastor, friend – identity in relationship with Christ. Passionate about doing life with family and friends – outdoors, food, table, games, travel... gives me life... music

What is it that fuels me in this season, the thing that keeps me up at night with excitement is church revitalization and church planting. Even two or three years ago, had you told me I would start a church, I'd probably laugh in your face.

JAC - Who evangelized you?

BH - Friends – in particular those who were a little older, at school, at youth group were key factors to me making my own choice to follow Jesus at a Decision Sunday at a relatively young age. Other friends made that decision and asked me, "Brent, are you going to make that decision?" And a great-aunt was always praying and investing spiritually in me. Officers and youth leaders played a role, too – I want to be like Major Arch (age 8 – articulating calling) – father/son night.

JAC - Do you have any horror story evangelism efforts in your past? (if so, will you elaborate on one?)

BH - Youth weekend around age 17 – after a worship night... a guy a few years younger 'should have gone forward' - I told him you can give your life to Jesus now. Okay – I want you to help me. I froze. Someone else stepped in to help. It was a defining moment – I was passionate about wanting people to come to Jesus and helping, but I was just not prepared to actually introduce someone to Jesus. That moment has never come again! (lead to next one...)

JAC - What essential preparation for evangelism do you recommend?

BH - 1 Peter 3:15 – always be prepared to give an answer...

1. Memorizing scripture – certain Scripture hidden in your heart – the word of God – there's nothing more powerful.

It's almost like going fishing and being surprised when you catch a fish – I don't know how to get it off the hook, how to clean it...

So, be prepared – allow Holy Spirit to do what only He can do – don't be taken off guard when you get the result you are working for.

2. Know your story – one of the most powerful tools is your own story of transformation. If you've got ONE minute with someone – you don't always get 15 minutes to speak with a person – you need to be able to articulate your moment of transformation with God – my experience is this – it is contagious – it's like a fire for the hearts of those who are seeking and searching.

3. Prayer - prayer is the foundation. Prayer is not where it stops but prayer is always where it starts! It is the fuel for the fire. It is the plugging in to the same power that raised Christ from the dead and to enable us to be a witness to the flaming blaze in a person's life.

4. Training - we took half a dozen people to a Salvation Army evangelism training weekend and in the next year 32 people came to Jesus in our town. The encounter

with God the Holy Spirit at one evangelism training conference transformed me as an evangelist.

JAC - What is your favourite evangelism approach?

BH - Relationship – not being friendly, but being a friend. And with that is story – the story of the Gospel but also sharing your story of being set free by God. Conversation is part of relationship.

JAC - What should evangelists be aware of when evangelizing?

BH –

1. What is it about? What are you evangelizing? Is it about stats? What is your motive? There's nothing wrong with goals but we still have to know that our motive is to see lives transformed by the power of the Gospel and the minute it changes to anything else... continuously check your 'why' behind the evangelism.

Also – beware of the difference between conform and transform. It is easy to settle with 'conform' instead of 'transform'. The Spirit of God transforms. Do you want to threaten the hell out of someone or do you want to awaken the heaven within someone.

I've seen the scare tactics but by Tuesday or Wednesday it's all gone.

2. Moment v. Journey. It's not just a moment, it's a journey – there IS a moment but the moment is not an ending but a beginning of a journey of transformation.

There is no evangelism without discipleship and there is not discipleship without evangelism. It's like living in St. John's or Mount Pearl. Where does one end and where does the other begin? We don't know, but we know they are two different things.

JAC - What makes 'Encounter' approach to evangelism effective in Canada in the 2020s?

BH - Methods. Mission and Message remain the same – making disciples in the great commission. The only thing that we've tampered with is the methods. Our Gospel is hot-fire – it is not watered down at all.

We're trying to be innovative, relative. Couches, café tables, social media (we are capitalizing on social media), blogging, gaming room, and more.

JAC - How can people adopt and adapt evangelistic practices and priorities of Encounter?

BH –

1. Adopt (copy and paste) - cultivate priority of prayer (community, healing, deliverance, salvation). There is no 'open in prayer', we 'open it up for prayer'.

2. Mission focus – more than language – we have a laser-focus on lives transformed by the Power of the Gospel. It's not the dart board – it's the bulls-eye.

3. Adapt – be willing to tamper with the negotiables. Don't make the negotiables non-negotiable and don't make the non-negotiables negotiable.

4. Methods / tools / atmosphere. We're exist for the non-redeemed – our focus are non-members. Get to know your community and let your community get to know

you. We don't want you (the reader) to get to know OUR community – get to know yours.

JAC - What advice do you have for Salvationists who want to evangelise their friends and neighbours and family?

BH –

1. Be intentional. No Salvationist in this territory wakes up and says, I'm not going to evangelize today; but how many actually wake up and say, I am going to share Jesus today, I am going to evangelise...
2. Be prepared. If you're intentional and not prepared, that's dangerous. God's Word; your story; formal training. Be prepared WHEN someone is interested.
3. Be prayerful. That is our power; that is how we connect with God. I'm only as powerful as I am plugged in to the Source.

I'm not asking Salvationists to DO, I'm asking them to BE – be intentional, be prepared, be prayerful; be the incarnate presence of God, be the good news of the Gospel, be the transforming influence in our community.

Interview - James Thompson

JAC - Can you introduce us to James Thompson?

JT - I'm happily married to Sarah and we have three very cheeky kids. My life was totally changed when I was baptised in the Holy Spirit. Since then my life has been an adventure in following God and sharing the good news with people! We've been Officers, Missionaries in Africa, and I've recently joined the staff at a local Church in Melbourne Australia where I'm looking after a network of life groups and am helping them "mobilise a mega church."

JAC - Who evangelized you?

JT - When I was seven years old, my parents were appointed to be the officers in charge of the Bangladesh Command. On route to our new home my parents spent time in a training school in London to learn about missions in Islamic nations. One day I snuck away from my babysitter to try and find my parents. I remember cracking a door open to see who was in there and I saw a lady giving her testimony. She said she felt Jesus knocking on the door of her heart and asking to come in. As soon as she said that I felt a thumping in my chest. Later that evening I knelt beside my bed as my parents led me to the Lord. I have no idea who she is, but I remember that moment very clearly.

JAC - Do you have any horror story evangelism efforts in your past? (if so, will you elaborate on one?) -

JT - As a passionate 20-year-old my zeal would overshadow my pastoral concern. I remember a time at a youth camp where we somehow came to the topic of hell. In the conversation I was quite forceful with my "doctrinally sound" position but completely unaware of the fact that one of the teenagers unbelieving parents had recently died. In that moment I realised that I had not represented the heart of God to these young people. I was more concerned with being right than being love. I think it is lazy and immature to rest on the idea that if what we say is "right" then we've done well. I think our attitudes, and the way we treat people should also reflect the good news we are sharing.

JAC - What essential preparation for evangelism do you recommend? -

JT - In Acts 1:8 Jesus says that when the Holy Spirit comes upon us, we will receive power to be His witnesses. I think being filled with the love and power of God is essential. Connected to this is learning and experiencing the Father's heart of love. Jesus said He only did what He saw the Father doing, and only spoke what He heard the Father saying. (John 5:19, 12:49)

When we realise how much God loves and cares for others, and how much He wants all people to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth, and how much love and power is inside of us, then we will be able to share the Good News with passion, conviction and urgency.

In terms of other practical preparation, I would say we need to know how to present the gospel, how to share our story, how to heal the sick and cast out demons, and how to lead someone in a prayer of commitment.

JAC - What is your favourite evangelism approach? -

JT - I love Power Evangelism. In Luke 10 and Matthew 10 Jesus sends out His disciples to proclaim the Kingdom of God and back it up with their actions and a demonstration of the Spirit's power. He also tells them to go in peace, look for and stay with those who are open, (people of peace) bless people, and eat with them. When we look at the life of Jesus, we see that this is not only Jesus' command to His disciples, but the same approach He took.

I have seen God heal the sick, and free people from demonic influence on the streets, in meetings, at my dinner table, in car parks, malls and restaurants. Sometimes the sign confirms something I have spoken, other times I led with the healing and followed up with the message. It's easy to call someone to follow The King of Kings who just demonstrated His love and power.

JAC - What should evangelists be aware of when evangelizing? -

JT - My wife and I spent some time at a missionary training school in Mozambique where the catch cry was "Love looks like something," or posed as a question, "What does love look like?"

When we are evangelising I want to be aware of God's heart for people to be saved, but I also want to know what life in all its fullness looks like to the person standing in front of me. Sometimes it looks like a prayer for healing, other times it looks like me buying them a meal, or listening to their story.

William Booth put it this way, "Nobody gets a blessing if they have cold feet and nobody ever got saved while they had a toothache." I like to mix the proclamation of the good news with the demonstration of the good news.

JAC - What makes what you are doing such an excellent approach to evangelism in the 2020s? -

JT - In Luke 6 Jesus talks about how everything we do comes out of our heart. Jesus' method of changing hearts is to love them, bless them, pray for them, and do good deeds for them. When our gospel presentation is both demonstration (both naturally and supernaturally) and proclamation, it begins to change people's hearts and minds. As the Apostle Paul said, "The kindness of God leads us to repentance."

JAC- how can people adapt your approach? –

JT - BLESS. Here is a really easy starter guide from Dave Ferguson that my family use to reach our neighbourhood. It's a super simple way to get started.

B: Begin with prayer. Ask God to give you opportunities to meet your neighbours and to share the good news. Ask God for the power, love and boldness to be His witness.

L: Listen. Listen to what is going on in your friends' and neighbours' lives. Ask God and yourself the question, "What does love look like in response?"

E: Eat. Invite them over for a meal, or take them out for a coffee. Eating together is a great way of getting to know people.

S: Serve. Find ways to serve them or meet their needs. As mentioned earlier, sometimes this will be something super practical like buying groceries or babysitting their kids so they can have some time out, other times it could be praying for healing, giving a prophetic word or casting out a demon.

S: Share. As you do the above, you will get opportunities to share your story and the gospel.

We get our kids involved and ask them how we can bless our neighbours etc. They've written love notes, made things, and thought of conversations to start. It's a great way to make friends and share the gospel.

JAC - What advice do you have for Salvationists who want to evangelise their friends and neighbours and family? -

JT –

1. Follow the BLESS strategy I mentioned above. When you start combining the proclamation and demonstration of the good news you will be amazed at how people respond.

2. Secondly, get disciplined in reaching out. Starting out can be difficult. The way I like to combat this is by making a routine out of it. For example, make a prayer list and pray through it every morning, or prayer walk around your neighbourhood every Tuesday night. Make it a habit, if you miss one day don't miss two.

3. Another great tip is to find someone to do with this then keep each other accountable. You'll be able to encourage and challenge each other.

4. Finally, build yourself up by listening to peoples' testimonies of how they came to Christ and what that has meant for them. Also, build yourself up by keeping up to date with what God is doing all over the world. We live in extremely exciting times where there are plenty of stories to inspire us!

JAC - Any last recommendations?

JT - Read my blog post, "6 Ways to Develop Spiritual Hunger." It's full of practical advice and resources that you may find faith inspiring!

<https://www.jamesthompson.org/blog/6-ways-to-develop-spiritual-hunger>