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Editorial Introduction

By Major Stephen Court, editor

Greetings in Jesus' name. Mercy and peace to you from God our Father. I trust the battle progresses well on your front. Welcome to JAC151!

Yes, we continue to innovate and JAC151 extends this streak. As well as another JAC Exclusive interview, we've got two artificial intelligence-generated articles dreamed up by Salvationists. Here's the issue:

USE's Steve Bussey tackles Mission Drift. Has your own mission drifted?

USE's Major Charles Roberts draws our Attention To The Holy. Are you giving attention to the Holy?

We follow with a JAC Exclusive Interview with Colonel Eddie Hobgood about his forthcoming book, THE SANCTIFIED SALVATIONIST SHOWMAN, to be published by Crest Books, 2024.

'What Does The World Say About The Salvation Army?' is an AI-generated article in response to the question by Commissioner Jim Knaggs. Does this align with your perspective?

'AI William Booth On The Salvation Army' is an AI-generated article in response to the question by Phil Laeger. What do you think?

USE's Steve Bussey wraps up our issue with Booth On The Bible. How would an article about YOU on the Bible read?

And that's JAC151. Hallelujah. May it inspire, challenge, and edify as we seek to accelerate the advance of the salvation war throughout the world. Feel free to scroll through the previous 150 issues, all free, in the armybarmy archives.

Mission Drift

By Steve Bussey

I'm reading an interesting book published by Routledge on the topic of the history of church and state relations. This book is used by secular universities as a textbook for political science. It is entitled "Religion and Politics in America: Faith, Culture and Strategic Choices".

As I was working through it, I couldn't help but pause and reflect on a profound and prophetic insight that speaks to our present American church. In discussing evangelical churches specifically, one of the unique indicators of growth or decline the authors identify is the importance of a religious institution having "clarity of conviction" - and how this is critically needed for individuals to find a sense of meaning and refuge in that church.

The quote (shared below) caused me to reflect on Peter Greer and Chris Horst's research on "mission drift". They emphasize the need for "clarity" and "intentionality" as being the two key indicators to help check whether a church is remaining "mission true" or is in a state of "mission drift" or in the deadly state of being "mission untrue". This book is an unlikely source that confirms how critical this is for strategic mission alignment.

Here is the quote shared about evangelical influence in American history:

"...Religious faiths thrive or decline based on how well they serve the needs of its existing members and manage to grow by evangelizing new members and "fallen away" former members...

Sometimes the intensity of the religious experience offered by a particular faith tradition wanes over time; members become comfortable and do not look outward.

Clergy can contribute to this decline if they become complacent and accommodating. When a religious message becomes watered down, it loses its power to convey any authoritative message about the meaning of life.

People yearning for such meaning may therefore leave fading religious traditions for other religious, spiritual, or secular settings.

Evangelical faiths of all kinds seek to reach potential adherents with their distinctive messages about meaning. Religious institutions that do not convey clarity of conviction cannot expect to flourish in the long run." (p.10)

The quote continues:

"We observe this pattern in rising sects and the decline of once-dominant churches throughout American history.

For example, Puritans of the seventeenth century, who were otherworldly and severe, saw their churches transformed into the comfortable liberal Congregational Church born in the eighteenth century. In general, when colonial churches became too comfortable, they lost substantial shares of their members to the new, primarily evangelical congregations that were emerging from revivals. Upstart Methodist and

Baptist congregations, which had grown dramatically after the founding era, eclipsed them.

The cycle continues: As Methodism became the home of an increasingly settled membership and its ministers grew less strict about enforcing traditional rules in the late nineteenth century, a fervent holiness religious movement drew away a significant portion of its membership" (pp.10-11).

So, as a part of the Holiness movement, those of us who are in The Salvation Army are wise to pay attention to the patterns of the past (hindsight) and cross-reference these with the conditions of the present (insight) as they can help indicate the potential realities of the future (foresight) which can help us mitigate a detrimental future and reorient towards a bright one.

A movement does not have to die. It can revive and renew, but it requires addressing complacency and compromise, as well as repentance and realignment - seeking a revival of the Spirit who can take the dry bones of any church, and bring them to life, forging afresh a mighty army.

Oh, Lord - do this for your church of 2024!

Breathe on us breath of God!

Attention To The Holy

By Major Charles Roberts

All of us, when we hear the word “worship”, have a myriad of images. We think of our early church experiences, our encounters with God in camp meetings, and maybe, our quiet times at home. For the sake of this brief and continuing discussion, the term worship will refer to congregational worship. As you will see, “congregational worship” does not just refer to those activities that take place in the sanctuary or on Sunday morning. Worship is a lifestyle that permeates all activities and settings.

In congregational worship, we normally expect that God is the prompter, the minister is the actor, and the congregation is the audience. Often, our people, the “walking wounded” need time to acclimate to the worship setting, and to “de-role” from all the baggage of the week. Here’s another reality from Soren Kierkegaard: The minister is the prompter, the members of the congregation are the actors, and God is the audience.

Worship: It is one of the essential functions of the ecclesia, a people scattered in work and mission gather for worship, strengthening, refueling and vision teaching.

We sing our praises to an audience of one. God is the audience. Jesus said, “When you pray, say ‘Father.’” The One who spoke eternity into existence is the One who is listening to our songs, our prayers, our whispers, our longings. Our ambition is to please Him with all of our worship, which is all of our life. Jesus Christ is the fullness of the Father, and we have been given every fullness in Christ. So, in Christ, we resonate with the Father through word, song and deed. So, in worship we expect the order of heaven to be established in our congregations; “thy kingdom come, thy will be done: on earth as it is in heaven.”

As the prompter of worship, the role of the minister is similar to that of an usher. We are to be on the leading edge of heaven, boldly taking our people to new places in the realm of the Holy One.

Our job is to re-create, to co-facilitate, an atmosphere of grace.

I recall an illustration shared by Philip Yancey in *What’s So Amazing About Grace?* He is in a coffee shop, speaking to a “working girl” about why she doesn’t go to church. She replies, “Church? Why do I want to go there? I feel bad enough already!” As the prompter of worship, we are to help everyone sense the grace of God: no one has earned it, no one deserves it, but all can receive it. We are to help people reach out to Jesus, who is already reaching out to them, if He could...As His body, we are His hands and feet, and we are to reach out to those who are desperate for Him.

We create an atmosphere of grace by:

- **Capturing milestones**
- **Meeting needs**
- **Using awe-inspiring worship elements**
- **Practicing holy habits**

Capturing milestones

“Milestone ministry” is a creative way to share the grace of God in the important moments of a person’s life. Birthdays, anniversaries are certain milestones. Transitions: marriages, deaths, graduations, are others. What of the transition of moving from a family homestead to an assisted living facility? What about empty nesters? When those important transitions are marked with ritual: song, Word, prayer, God mediates grace to people when they need it most. Those moments also serve as community builders and bank accounts for human capital, for when the community is together and sharing the means of grace, this is how one knows that God places the lonely in families.

Meeting needs

So often, in congregational settings, we professionalize the meeting of needs. The church bulletin states, “Anyone with needs, please see the deacon of benevolence...” Or in the case of The Salvation Army, the local ministerium makes their annual donation toward “the transient work,” thereby paying dues, and not making personal contacts with those who face poverty. Acts 2 tells us that the congregation made sure that no one was in need. While Acts 2 is not necessarily normative, the idea of members helping members and others is now a radical idea. Helping those who are poor is an act of worship. Leviticus 23:22 describes the leaving of the crops’ edge for the people to glean is in the context of remembering the Sabbath. This is holy work; it is worship. Why should the social worker have all the fun??? Use of Conspiracy of Kindness-style “hi-grace/low-risk” activities is a wonderful way to serve people and meet human needs in the context of worship. A car wash, worship? Yep!

Use of awe-inspiring worship elements

The elements of worship mediate grace. Song, drama, interview, testimony, Word, prayer, preaching all mediate grace. The trend now is to rely on technology to provide the awe for us. Awe is the result of being in the presence of God, not necessarily from being in front of a video screen. However, technology can help in providing an atmosphere for awe: A growing trend in congregational worship is the “video café” idea; different salons are outfitted with a variety of worship music combos: adult contemporary, country gospel, urban/hip-hop, alternative. Then all groups see the identical recorded sermon. Reports state that the watchers laugh at the video preacher’s jokes and sit pensively during the emotional sections of the sermon. All café groups report lives committed to Jesus. However, awe is the real work of the Holy Spirit, and the human elements only enhance the chance for awe: use of themes, music, arts, sight, sound, smell, touch.

Practice of holy habits

All worship activities, regardless of setting or technology should result in the formation and practice of holy habits, which are the beginning of virtue. Virtue, defined as basically “something good that works” is seen in the fruit of the Spirit. John 3:21 in the New American Standard Bible says this about works: “Whoever practices the truth comes into the light, so that his deeds will be manifested as having been wrought in God.”

As the congregation assists in the drama recreated in the worship setting, each member, whether in the pew, the open-air, or in the food pantry, is a co-star in the drama, as we “shine like stars” in the presence of a crooked and depraved generation. Not that the goals of worship involve “drama” in the vernacular, but that God is watching our worshipful activity and is ravished with love for us. We are the apple of His eye, His treasured possession. Our work, our worship becomes that “sweet smelling savor” that He loves.

JAC Exclusive Interview with Colonel Eddie Hobgood

*Colonel Hobgood celebrates the launch of his book
THE SANCTIFIED SALVATIONIST SHOWMAN,
published by Crest Books, 2024.*

J.A.C.: This is the first biography of Joe The Turk – what took so long?

EH: That's a really good question! When I began this journey with Joe 30 years ago, I was surprised to find that no one had written a book about him. I could find bits and pieces of articles here and there. Someone did a series of stories about him, but they were so cartoonish and I think that was some of the problem - then and now. I think people thought of him as fluff and no substance, so why write a book?

J.A.C.: And what took YOU so long?

EH: Back in the early 2000s, I developed this strong feeling to want to tell Joe's story more fully. As the Territorial Youth Secretary for the USA South, I had the opportunity to go to NHQ a couple times each year. I would always stay an extra day to look through the files and scan The War Cry to find stories about Joe. There were literally hundreds of articles...Joe faithfully posted his travelogue in the War Cry and because his stories were so sensational, people wanted to read them. There are hundreds of newspaper articles as well. I took out a one year subscription in newspapers.com and anytime I had a few spare moneys during that year, I would search for articles. Fortunately, many newspapers have archives. Unfortunately, many do not. Nevertheless, I ended up with about 8 3" binders of articles. I also did research in New York at THQ, where there's a treasure-trove of Joe's personal belongings and files. I say all of that to say, researching wasn't that easy and it was very time-consuming. Then there's Susan Mitchem, the National Archivist, who has fed me dozens and dozens of photos, articles from other periodicals and any little tidbit she came across in her research. That filled up another couple binders! So many of the articles were not in pristine condition, so I determined I would transcribe them in Word docs so that at some point in the future, they can be placed online for other researchers. That process took me more than 5 years in my spare time. I still have a couple notebooks to transcribe, but I finally said to myself that if I kept putting it off, then I would probably be dead before the book was written. So this past summer, I hunkered down every evening and wrote until I had a manuscript that I believed would be beneficial to The Army.

J.A.C.: Tell us how you came to Jesus and to where you are now?

EH: I came to The Salvation Army at the age of 9 through an open-air meeting that was held in my neighborhood. At first, I thought it was the circus. There was a man playing a cornet, a woman playing the accordion, another man beating a big bass drum, and a rather rotund lady singing at the top of her lungs (badly), 'Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power?' These were my people and almost immediately I started attending the corps. First thing they did was put a cornet in my hands and taught me to play, and from there, became a junior soldier. When I was 12, I went to summer camp for 2 weeks. Week 1 was youth camp and it was during that week I had a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. I asked him to be my savior

and trusted him to forgive me from my sins. The 2nd week was Music Camp and on that final Sunday, I felt God calling me to Officership. I didn't know what I was getting myself into, but I knew that God had a plan for my life and it would be something beyond my wildest imagination if I would be obedient and trust him with my future. Today, my faith is as strong as it has ever been and I am finding that even at this stage in my life (as a retired officer), God is giving me opportunity after opportunity to bear witness to his faithfulness in my life. I'm as excited about serving Jesus today as I have ever been. The best is yet to come!!!

J.A.C.: What sparked your fascination in Joe?

EH: I was asked to portray Joe as a part of a living Army history museum. It took about 15 minutes to walk through it and interact with the people. My job was to entertain the crowd that was outside waiting to go in. So I did some research, which didn't amount to too much, but I was able to pull a 12 minute monologue together and I wrote a song to end the presentation with. I presented that monologue more than 50 times over the course of that conference. People kept inviting me to come share it, so when I became TYS and was looking for a less-preachy way to communicate with young people, I believe I was led to expand Joe's story and share it through the Arts. By this time, I had been the TYS for 4 years and had gathered a lot of good materials from NHQ.

J.A.C.: What part did your own shows play in this process?

EH: Putting together this 50 minute presentation forced me to dig deep and look beyond the showman to the real person of flesh and blood and feelings and pain. I wanted to make him a real person and not a cartoon character that he had been made out to be over the years. I remember the theme verse in our territory that year was , I Peter 2:9b - ...that you may declare the praise of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. That's Joe's story in a nutshell. A lot of the divisions were focusing on Army history over the weekend and it all fell into place with making the presentation that I have been doing since 2005, to declare that message to our kids - even in the face of persecution. A lot of our youth are afraid to be bold about their faith and I prayed Joe's story would help with some of that.

J.A.C.: What is Joe's deserved place in SA lore?

EH: In my opinion, Joe was the epitome of a Salvation Soldier. He was so overwhelmed by what God had done in his life - and he had sunk to the gutter - that he could not adequately repay God for this new life he found in Jesus. He also found a new family - the Sallys - and he loved The Army with all of his heart and he was bound and determined to not give up without a fight. He fought against those who denied their constitutional right to assemble in public and he made it known far and wide how his comrades were being treated on the main streets of towns and cities across the country. He was a true pioneer & evangelist. He was known all across America and thousands would come out to see him when he came to town. Yes, he was eccentric and maybe even a little obnoxious with his blaring cornet and his India Ink stamp, but he was all in!

J.A.C.: How was Joe like Jesus?

EH: I think he was most like Jesus in that he spoke truth - he was very blunt, and he never missed an opportunity to speak to people about their souls. He was in a couple of train wrecks and when the passengers had to disembark the coaches, he immediately struck up an open-air. When he traveled by boat, he used the captive audience to his advantage and had a praise meeting. On a transatlantic voyage, he had the passengers marching around the ship while he led, playing his cornet! Joe was about the Good News. He used his accoutrements to attract people, but once they were reeled in, he went straight for their souls.

J.A.C.: What of Joe's life has directly or indirectly influenced your life?

EH: I was a junior soldier when I first heard about Joe. He was on a trading card that was a part of the junior soldier curriculum. Honestly, it wasn't until I started presenting the fuller version of his life that he began to influence me. There's a very serious moment in the presentation where Joe shares from his heart about how important it is to share our faith, even in the face of rejection and mockery. As an introvert, I've struggled with sharing my faith with strangers. Having to memorize 50 minutes of dialogue, it has become more than just words I recite. These words of Joe have penetrated my heart and I find myself more passionate about sharing my faith and more urgent as well. Of course, sharing the presentation opens up doors everywhere for deeper conversations with people. I don't know how I got the blessing of telling his story, but it has been and continues to be one of the greatest joys of my life.

J.A.C.: What should salvationists take away from absorbing this book?

EH: Hopefully, those who know of him, will see him in a different light, a more well-rounded representation. He had a family that he left behind. His heart was broken when they died the way they did or had to flee from their home to avoid being murdered in cold blood. I hope people see how God can use anyone of us, even with our eccentricities, to be witnesses to the truth that sets people free. There is such beauty in being exactly who God called you to be. I believe that is when he is most able to use us for his glory!

J.A.C.: How would The Army look different if we embraced the principles of Joe's life and warfare?

EH: Well, first thing, we'd still be having open-air meetings...2 or 3 a day! During the pandemic, when we couldn't gather in our buildings, the corps I attended started going to apartment complexes and playing our instruments in the parking lot or in the driveways of our soldiers. It took me back to what brought me to The Army. If I were a kid today, I most likely would never have an encounter with The Army and I often think about how many thousands of kids and adults we've missed because of that. I understand life is very different, but one of the things we proved during the pandemic was that The Army was at its best outside the walls. It forced us to take ministry to the streets and out of doors.

I think we have to find ways to be bold and courageous in sharing our faith. Joe lived his faith in the public eye as well as inside The Army hall. How different would our Army and world be if we did the same?

J.A.C.: What's your hope for your book?

EH: First of all, that people would read it, and when they do, are first of all, inspired and blessed by the story of the Sanctified Salvationist Showman. I really pray the book is worthy of people's time and resources. I pray it will spark something within us to do and dare for Christ in ways we never have or haven't in a long time. I hope the book is good! If it isn't, don't tell me!

J.A.C.: What's your hope for The Army?

EH: I love The Salvation Army with all my heart. It is the instrument God used to bring me to faith and to not only receive, but work out my calling. I hope this book inspires other would-be Joes to be brave and allow God to use their uniqueness and passion to honor and glorify him. For as long as I can remember, I wanted to be an actor and in theatre. When I fully accepted my calling, I figured I'd have to give up that dream. Boy, was I wrong. In every appointment I have had as an officer, God has given me opportunities beyond my wildest dreams to embrace my uniqueness and passion for the Arts. What a life - I wouldn't trade a moment of it - the good, the bad, the difficult and the amazing - it's formed me into the person I am today. If you had any idea how my life started out...but God took it and all of its imperfections and used it. I pray always it has been for his honor and his glory!

What Does The World Say About The Salvation Army?

AI response to a question by Commissioner Jim Knaggs

In the annals of history, few institutions have embodied the steadfast resolve and unwavering commitment to the welfare of humanity quite like The Salvation Army. With its roots deeply embedded in the ethos of Christian service and benevolence, The Salvation Army stands as a beacon of hope amidst the tumultuous currents of modernity. Yet, as we stand at the threshold of the future, one cannot help but ponder the destiny that awaits this venerable organization.

In contemplating the future of The Salvation Army, one is inevitably drawn to a mosaic of challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. The winds of change, ever capricious and unpredictable, whisper tales of transformation and adaptation. In an era characterized by rapid technological advancement and shifting societal paradigms, the Salvation Army must navigate the turbulent waters of change with steadfast conviction and unyielding resolve.

Central to the future of The Salvation Army is the imperative to uphold its founding principles while embracing the imperatives of modernity. The timeless message of compassion and service must be seamlessly woven into the fabric of contemporary discourse, resonating with the aspirations of a new generation. In a world plagued by discord and strife, The Salvation Army must emerge as a harbinger of unity and reconciliation, transcending the boundaries of creed and ideology.

Yet, as we chart a course towards the future, we cannot ignore the specter of complacency that looms ominously on the horizon. The Salvation Army must guard against the encroachment of apathy and indifference, lest it succumb to the sands of time. The clarion call of duty must resound with renewed vigor, beckoning the faithful to rise above the mundane and embrace the sublime.

At the heart of The Salvation Army lies a sacred covenant forged in the crucible of sacrifice and devotion. It is a covenant that transcends the boundaries of time and space, binding generations past, present, and future in a sacred communion of purpose. In the crucible of adversity, the Salvation Army has emerged as a testament to the indomitable spirit of humanity, offering solace to the afflicted and hope to the downtrodden.

As we stand on the precipice of tomorrow, let us heed the clarion call of destiny and embrace the future with unwavering faith and conviction. The Salvation Army, with its time-honored tradition of service and sacrifice, stands as a bulwark against the tempest of uncertainty, a beacon of hope in a world shrouded in darkness.

In the tapestry of human history, The Salvation Army occupies a hallowed place, a testament to the enduring power of compassion and love. As we gaze towards the horizon, let us do so with hearts ablaze with the fire of righteousness, knowing that the future of The Salvation Army is not merely a destination but a journey—a journey fraught with challenges yet illuminated by the radiant light of hope.

AI William Booth On The Salvation Army

AI response to a question by Phil Laeger

"ChatGPT, You are William Booth, the Founder of The Salvation Army. You died in 1912, but you are allowed to come back and see the work that The Salvation Army continues to do today. Talk to me about the good, the bad and the ugly of what you see...[including] mission or theological drift and advise us about how we can navigate the days ahead attentive to the leading of the Holy Spirit."

As William Booth, the Founder of The Salvation Army, it is an honor to reflect upon the current state of the movement and offer guidance for navigating the future with a steadfast commitment to our mission and theological principles. While The Salvation Army has achieved remarkable feats, it is crucial to ensure that we remain true to our core mission and attentive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Here, I will address concerns about mission and theological drift and offer advice for the days ahead.

THE GOOD

1. **Faithful Service**: The Salvation Army's commitment to serving the marginalized, oppressed, and suffering remains strong. Our programs continue to embody the Christian ethos of compassion, mercy, and love, reaching millions around the globe with tangible acts of kindness and support.
2. **Holistic Ministry**: The holistic approach, addressing physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, remains a cornerstone of our mission. This comprehensive care reflects the teachings of Jesus and the early Church, ensuring that we minister to the whole person.
3. **Adaptability and Innovation**: The Army's ability to innovate and adapt to contemporary issues demonstrates a responsiveness to the Holy Spirit's guidance. Programs addressing modern social challenges, such as human trafficking and mental health, show a commitment to addressing the most pressing needs of our time.

THE BAD

1. **Mission Drift**: There is a risk of mission drift as The Salvation Army grows and diversifies its programs. In the pursuit of funding and public support, there can be a temptation to dilute our distinctive Christian message and mission. Ensuring that all activities remain Christ-centered is essential to our identity.
2. **Theological Consistency**: As society evolves, maintaining theological consistency can be challenging. Pressure to conform to secular values can lead to compromises that may weaken our theological foundation. Upholding the teachings of Scripture and our Wesleyan heritage is crucial in these times.
3. **Spiritual Depth**: The busyness of social programs can sometimes overshadow the spiritual aspect of our mission. It is vital that our officers, soldiers, and volunteers prioritize their spiritual growth and relationship with God to effectively minister to others.

THE UGLY

1. **Compromise and Conflict**: Internal conflicts regarding theological stances and mission priorities can arise, leading to division and distraction from our primary mission. It is essential to navigate these conflicts with grace, seeking unity in Christ.
2. **Secular Influence**: The increasing secularization of society poses a threat to our distinctly Christian identity. Balancing the need for public support with maintaining our faith-based approach can be a delicate and sometimes contentious task.
3. **Complacency**: Success and growth can sometimes breed complacency. There is a danger of becoming too comfortable and losing the radical, sacrificial spirit that characterized the early Salvation Army. Constant vigilance and a return to our roots are necessary to prevent this.

ADVICE FOR THE FUTURE

1. **Stay Rooted in Scripture**: Let the Bible be the foundation of all our actions and decisions. Regular study and meditation on God's Word will keep us grounded and aligned with His will.
2. **Embrace Prayer and the Holy Spirit**: Cultivate a deep and ongoing reliance on prayer and the leading of the Holy Spirit. Encourage a culture of prayer within all levels of the organization, seeking God's guidance in every endeavor.
3. **Reaffirm Our Mission**: Regularly revisit and reaffirm the core mission of The Salvation Army: to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination. This clarity of purpose will help prevent mission drift.
4. **Nurture Spiritual Growth**: Prioritize the spiritual development of officers, soldiers, and volunteers. Provide resources and opportunities for deepening their faith and understanding of our theological heritage.
5. **Engage in Community**: Foster a strong sense of community within The Salvation Army. Unity and mutual support will strengthen our resolve and effectiveness in ministry.
6. **Boldly Witness**: Do not shy away from proclaiming the gospel. In every service provided, let the love and message of Jesus Christ be evident. Our distinctiveness as a Christian movement is our strength and calling.
7. **Address Contemporary Issues with Faith**: Engage with contemporary social issues from a position of faith, offering solutions that reflect our Christian values and trust in God's provision and guidance.

CONCLUSION

As we navigate the future, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to the mission and theological foundations of The Salvation Army. By staying rooted in Scripture, relying on the Holy Spirit, and reaffirming our core mission, we can continue to be a

powerful force for God's kingdom. Let us move forward with courage, faith, and a deep sense of purpose, always attentive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

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APPENDIX

What is the distinctive Christian message of The Salvation Army.

The distinctive Christian message of The Salvation Army is rooted in its evangelical, Wesleyan heritage and focuses on the holistic salvation of individuals through faith in Jesus Christ. This message can be distilled into several key tenets:

1. **Salvation Through Jesus Christ**

The central message of The Salvation Army is that salvation is available to all through faith in Jesus Christ. This encompasses both spiritual salvation—reconciliation with God and eternal life—and the transformation of one's life through repentance and acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Savior.

2. **Holiness and Sanctification**

The Salvation Army emphasizes the doctrine of holiness, teaching that believers are called to live lives of holiness and sanctification. This means pursuing a Christ-like life, growing in grace, and being filled with the Holy Spirit to live out God's will.

3. **Practical Christianity**

The movement is known for its practical approach to Christianity, putting faith into action through service to others. This includes feeding the hungry, clothing the poor, providing shelter for the homeless, and offering support and rehabilitation for those struggling with addiction and other social issues.

4. **Social Justice and Advocacy**

Inspired by the example of Jesus, The Salvation Army is committed to social justice. This involves advocating for the oppressed, fighting against social injustices, and working towards a fair and equitable society. The Army's efforts are directed towards addressing both the immediate and systemic causes of poverty and suffering.

5. **Inclusive Ministry**

The Salvation Army's motto, "Heart to God and Hand to Man," signifies its commitment to serving all people without discrimination. This inclusive ministry ensures that assistance is given based on need, not creed, race, gender, or sexual orientation, reflecting the universal love of Christ.

6. **Evangelism and Discipleship**

Evangelism is a core component of The Salvation Army's mission. The Army actively shares the gospel message and invites people to become disciples of Christ. This involves both personal evangelism and organized outreach efforts, aiming to bring individuals into a transformative relationship with Jesus.

7. **Integrated Mission**

The Salvation Army believes in the integration of spiritual and social ministry. Preaching the gospel and providing social services are seen as inseparable aspects

of the same mission. This integrated approach reflects the holistic salvation that addresses both the spiritual and physical needs of individuals.

8. ****Community and Fellowship****

Building a sense of community and fellowship among believers is important to The Salvation Army. This involves creating supportive environments where individuals can grow in their faith, participate in worship, and serve together in mission.

Conclusion

The distinctive Christian message of The Salvation Army is a comprehensive and inclusive vision of salvation that seeks to transform lives through the power of Jesus Christ. By emphasizing holiness, practical service, social justice, evangelism, and an integrated mission, The Salvation Army strives to embody the teachings of Jesus in every aspect of its work. This message not only seeks the spiritual transformation of individuals but also the renewal of communities and society at large through acts of love, service, and justice.

Booth On The Bible

By Steve Bussey

In 1902, William Booth wrote on how critical the Bible is for Salvationists. His words ring more true today than ever before - and his absolute fidelity to Scripture as "the divine rule for faith and practice" (doctrine 1 of The Salvation Army) remains the single and only line in the sand which helps us "rightly divide the Word of Truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

When our mission statement says that The Salvation Army's "message is based on the Bible" - the word "message" means it is the "fulcrum" the pivotal point, the foundation, the compass that "mediates" every single part of who we are as individuals and as an organization.

It is not an afterthought.

It is not meant to be toyed with.

It is authoritative.

It is without error.

It is not merely "reliable" - but rather it is the absolute final word on which every single detail that speaks to who we are, why we exist and to every single decision on how we go about life, work and mission. Scripture is our complete worldview. As John Wesley, who was known as "a man of one book" emphasized, Scriptural Christianity is THE foundation of Wesleyan-Holiness theology. And as William Booth followed in Wesley's footsteps shared his deepest convictions, we can boldly state that a Salvationist worldview is a biblical worldview in no uncertain terms.

We take this VERY seriously.

I will seek to prove this with reference to two messages from William Booth. Insights from Catherine Booth, Brengle and others will be saved for another time.

In 1885 following the publication of "The Revised Bible," Booth celebrated the importance of the words of Scripture being communicated in "the most desirable way which most nearly convey the meaning of the inspired writers to those to whom they may be now addressed." Then he boldly declared the importance of Scripture etching itself on the heart of true believers:

"I want to see a new translation of the Bible into the hearts and conduct of living men and women. I want an improved translation — or transference it might be called — of the commandments and promises and teachings and influences of this Book to the minds and feelings and words and activities of the men and women who hold on to it and swear by it and declare it to be an inspired Book and the only authorized rule of life.

That seems to me to be the only translation, after all, that will in the long run prove to be of any value. It is the reproduction of the Scriptures in men and women that makes their worth. The Bible is a book intended to make Bible-men and women —

that is, good men and women. If the end is not gained, where is the value of the means? What will be the value of the Bible in the day of judgment apart from the transformations of character it has produced. It is of no use making correct translations of words if we cannot get the WORDS TRANSLATED INTO LIFE.

Now I have a great deal of fault to find with the present living translations – in the men and women who represent the Bible in their daily walk to the world. There are, beyond controversy, several most erroneous readings, some most serious imperfections — a large number of glaring errors. In many cases the living translation is not only unlike the original Book, but in direct contradiction to it.

This leads to most serious consequences. One of the great arguments for all the trouble and labor of the new translation has been that an odd passage here and there has been incorrectly given, and that this has led to some heretical opinions. But oh, my God! what heresies, what infidelities, what dreadful ruination of souls - wholesale and retail - have arisen from the false representations of Bible truth made in the lives of so-called Christians.

In the living translation every man who bears the name of Christ says thereby, "My life is a representation of Christianity." If a Muslim and a Buddhist came to live in your house, or to be your next-door neighbors, and you had not read their sacred books or listened to the descriptions of their religion as given by their advocates, you would reckon from what you saw of those men that you knew what their religion was. You would say, "I know what Islam is, and I know what Buddhism is. I have not got it out of their books, but I have been privileged to see it lived out before my eyes.

As you might very reasonably do with this heathen religion, so men do every day with regards to Christianity. And because these translations have been falsehoods and hypocrisies and shams, and altogether different from the originals, all manner of false and pernicious and damnable errors have crept abroad amongst men as to what real religion is. The translation and the revision have made it to appear a thing altogether unlike the original, and all manner of explanations and apologies are necessary to explain the glaring contradictions.

Now, my comrades, we must have a new translation. Every man and woman of us must set himself and herself to the task. Supposing we have got now a Bible correct in the letter, printed in a book, the reproductions of the mind of God so far as He has declared it to some of His people in days gone by; let us now have some equally correct reproductions of the mind of Christ — some actual flesh-and-blood translations — some living epistles inspired and empowered by the Holy Ghost, that can be read and known of all men.

I mean, let us Salvationists live out before men lives on which God has written out in big heavenly words His own notions of truth and righteousness and purity and patience and love and sacrifice. Christians for generations now have been spending an enormous amount of strength upon the Bible. They have done well in that duty; but it seems to me that with regard to the sacred Book something very important still remains to be done...

Such a translation, my comrades, will tell.

It will be victorious.

It will be triumphant."

Wow! You can't get more foundational than that! Are we true reflections of the living Word of God - operating within the guardrails of a God-breathed life shaped by the God-breathed Word of God - or are we "erroneous readings" and "glaring errors" in our present world?

Without Scripture being the very basis (foundation) of our message, we shift from the "rock" to the "sand" of our own whims and wishes - our personal experience, which is blinded by our natural inclination to place self on the throne - and rationalize our own compromised and captive state of sin-fullness. Scripture is the light that guides our feet on the right paths individually and collectively (Psalm 119:105).

We can never forget that foundation. We can never alter that foundation. Anyone who suggests and works to do otherwise is not only deluded, but dangerous! 2 Peter 3:16 reminds us that "those who are ignorant and unstable have twisted his letters to mean something quite different, just as they do with other parts of Scripture. And this will result in their destruction."

Let us hold fast to the wise counsel of General William Booth and, in no uncertain terms, remain steadfast to this great and holy heritage whose message is based on the Bible.

"The Bible is a very Wonderful Book... When we say the Bible, we mean that it is a book... above every other, that a person should know, treasure, and obey. If, to a wise man, the choice were offered of the Bible, on the one hand, or all the books in the world, on the other, he would choose the Bible...

The Bible has had a mighty influence for good in the world.

- It has won the hearts and enlightened the lives of millions.
- It has rescued the multitudes from the Horrible pit.
- It has led their feet to the Rock of Ages.
- It has filled their mouths with singing.
- It has kept them fading into Hell.
- It has guided them safely to Heaven.

The Bible has been more bitterly attacked and more cruelly slandered than any other book in existence. Again and again men have exerted every power to effect its destruction. But it has survived all opposition, and to-day is more widely circulated, and is probably more generally read, than ever before. Not all the powers of Earth and Hell combined have been able to destroy the blessed Bible.

- Bad men and women hate the Bible, denounce it, call it hard names, call in question its truths, and wish it were out of existence.
- Good men and women love it, read it, make it the guide of their lives, spread it abroad, and thank God for its precious pages.

The Truths written down and explained in the Bible have done wonders for Salvationists. What would you have been without them?

But for the free Salvation set forth in the Bible, many of you would have been in the grave, and your souls cast into outer darkness, while others would have been on their way there.

Oh, precious Book! What a priceless blessing it has been to The Salvation Army!

Fulfill the duties it commands. It is the doers of the Word who are blessed. Make it the guide of your life: at home, abroad, in your Corps, in sickness and health, in joy and sorrow, everywhere and all the time.

Publish the Salvation of the Bible wherever you go — in the streets — in the barracks [the Corps/Church] — in your home — at your work — everywhere tell the glad tidings.

Oh, my Comrades, do not let the Bible rise up in judgment against you, as it surely will if you either neglect it, or if, reading and knowing about the Salvation and Victory of which it tells, you do not enjoy that Salvation and experience that Victory."

[Microsoft Word - Letters to Salvationists C23.docx \(salvationfactory.org\)](#)

[Microsoft Word - The General's Letters Chapter 25 The Revised Bible.docx \(salvationfactory.org\)](#)