

# **JOURNAL OF AGGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY**

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## Editorial Introduction

by Major Stephen Court

Welcome to the 125th issue of Journal of Aggressive Christianity - JAC125. We're blessed by guest editor Colonel Richard Munn for this edition of JAC. Casual readers of JAC will know Colonel Munn as the 2017 guest editor of the Reformation Issue (JAC111), and as a frequent contributor over the first 20+ years of JACternity on topics like egalitarian relationships (JAC119), Zwingli ('Ancestor of The Salvation Army?', JAC66), dragon hurling ('Violent Night, Deadly Night', JAC40), 100 Most Influential Salvationists (JAC81), revival (JAC98), militancy (JAC89), justification ('Salvation – Our first name', JAC78), married officer leadership ('For Such A Time As This?', JAC80, and JAC39), holiness movement (JAC70), preaching ('We preach', JAC74), men, women, and the Bible (JAC43), Choice Wine (JAC13), prayer ('Circles of Influence', JAC67), Salvation Coastguard (JAC29), holiness ('Time To Be Holy', JAC69), decentralized smorgasbord ('The Northern Front', JAC27), worship (JAC23), cost (JAC15), unity ('One In Christ', in JAC13) mission and the Trinity ('The One, The Three, And The Army', in JAC35), emergent mission ('Funky Army', in JAC31), women officer leaders (JAC16)...

As Munn explains;

*The aim of this series and edition is to capture at a strategic moment in time – 2020 (a media consultant's perfect slogan – 20/20 vision) – insights and challenges from key individuals regarding issues, passions, dreams for our army. Each writer is eminently qualified to address the aspect of their specialty.*

Contributors include Janet Munn – Gender Equity

Phil Wall – Soldier Empowerment

Steve Carroll – Social Media

John Clifton – Street Justice

Melanie-Ann Holland – Earth Care

Tabitha Swires – Creative Arts

Jim Read – Ethical Integrity

Soo Kim – Multicultural Mandate

Nick Coke – Refugee Resettlement

Katherine Clausell – Racial Reconciliation

Richard Munn – Social Justice

*The list is eclectic, and undoubtedly there are more areas that could be covered; but, from sexism to social media, and refugees to racism, there is good breadth here.*

Each writer tackled the review and challenge with a 500-word challenge (JAC typically avoids word limits, so you will appreciate the punchy brevity of this issue!).

Thanks to Colonel Munn and each of the contributors for informing and challenging and edifying and blessing. These 11 articles can be discussed in small groups settings, prayed over in devotional groups, and applied by sections and whole corps. May JAC125 accelerate the advance of the salvation war and speed the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Godspeed.

## **20/20 Vision - Social Justice**

By Colonel Richard Munn

Injustice fundamentally bothers us – in fact, maybe the most repeated childhood complaint is, ‘that’s not fair!’ Could it be that justice is hard-wired into our being, a very inescapable attribute of God?

Certainly, from the beginning the Hebrew scriptures stand apart from other religious writings of the time with its repeated theme to care for the outcast, marginalized and powerless. It insists on the dignity of the poor, and it commands us to resist any temptation to view the poor as somehow different from ourselves.

We might say, this world is fallen and filled with injustice, yet, in this same broken world God calls his people to justice.

Caring for the poor and marginalized is one of the major themes of the Old Testament that prepares us for the person and work of Jesus.

With gospel narrative of Jesus, we clearly see compassionate justice with another dimension. He does not deviate from the Hebrew Scriptures, which he says he ‘came to fulfill, but now embodies the essence and deliberately lives out on the very margins of society.

For instance, we find an early pattern in Luke where Jesus cares in rapid succession for a leper, a paralytic, the sick and demonized, a widow and an ‘unclean woman.’ (LK 5-8)

His focus is towards people living on the margins of society, isolated from community.

Jesus incarnates the compassion and justice of God. This is a major shift: from theory to practice. Immediately apparent is the sheer volume and variety of people. The cast of characters contained in the gospel narratives are remarkably diverse, and they interact with Jesus for numerous reasons:

by desperate need  
from curiosity  
with searching faith

We can trace a pattern that provides a theological framework for us:

We arrive at an important juncture in our Social Justice journey – the birth of the Church.

### **Service – Without Discrimination**

In the gospels we read of instinctive acts of compassion for hurting desperate people. Here are people with raw human need. Jesus meets the need. There is often no required faith commitment or change of heart.

The starting point when offering care is the conviction that all people are precious in the sight of God.

### **Welcome – Without Condition**

In the gospels we read of welcome, hospitality and kindness for alienated inquisitive people. Here are people inquisitive and interested in the things of God. Jesus responds with openness and inclusivity.

Giving a warm welcome to the sincerely seeking person is our first instinct. God welcomes us in spite of our sins. We welcome others too.

### **Wholeness – Without Doubt**

In the gospels we read of ready acceptance into the Kingdom of God for marginalized seeking people. Here are people who openly acknowledge Jesus as Lord. Their lives change. As such, they enter into the Kingdom of God.

The willingness to follow Jesus as Lord is transformational. A person moves from death to life, from blindness to sight, from being lost to being found.

In the Old Testament God speaks; in the gospels Jesus acts; in the New Testament people respond. From a divine voice, to a solitary example, now to the initiatives of groups of people across cultures and boundary lines, at the same time.

The expansion goes hand-in-hand with the concurrent multiplied story of salvation. As the Church takes root and grows, organized social actions begin.

We see this in the community utopia of Acts 4 where ‘all the believers were one in heart and mind, no one claiming that any of his possessions was his own. But sharing everything they had [...] there were no needy persons among them.’

There is organized distribution of food by Acts 6. Individual believers such as Tabitha and Cornelius are commended ‘helping’ and ‘remembering the poor,’ and Paul creates systems by which money is raised and sent to needy Jerusalem from wealthier Macedonia.

This new social justice organizational component is a significant and important development.

While social services bring a compassionate response of help to an individual or family, and social action can be a proactive movement to address wider community needs, it is the role of social justice to challenge root causes of systemic inequity and exploitation.

### Conclusion – A Theological Synthesis

The Trinity – undivided in essence – may provide a strong social justice missional paradigm for The Salvation Army:

‘I Am Who I Am’ is an early self-revelation of God the Father to Moses in the desert.  
Theologian Martin Buber says it essentially means,  
‘I’ll Be There.’

‘The Word became flesh’ perfectly describes the incarnation of Jesus.  
Writer Eugene Peterson memorably translates this in *The Message* as  
‘God moved into the neighborhood’

‘The comforter’ is a beloved name and description of the Holy Spirit.  
It literally means  
‘the one called alongside to help.’

How about this for a Salvationist Social Justice Mission Statement? ‘We’ll be there for you, moved into the neighborhood, come alongside to help.’

## **A Call To You, Dear Artists**

By Lieutenant Tabitha Swires

Art has a voice. Art speaks. And when the artisan is submerged in the word and fire of God art has the potential to pour the voice of truth out over the earth.

Listen! It's the voice of someone shouting, 'Clear the way through the wilderness for the Lord! Make a straight highway through the wasteland for our God!' (Isaiah 40:3).

Art has been given a voice and art has been making a pathway since the beginning of time.

Martha Graham, mother of modern dance stated, 'Dance is the hidden language of the soul.' It's been given a place of authority for thousands of years like a key into the depths of a human soul unlocking a message that could have otherwise been tuned out if not shared through this language. Art itself is a prophetic voice. Art has privilege and where once that privilege existed purely for the world's pleasure, it now has access to the body of Christ on a new level. It's time to level up.

Art took a place on the stage of The Salvation Army decades ago and our vibrant Army saw the value of this language and rose to the occasion. Praise God for the visionaries that went before us! Who started small, who treaded lightly, who were mocked, and sometimes still are. Yet, they forged ahead in hope.

Art in the Army has been on a formidable journey and fought a great battle. And now, it has gained greater authority. Art in the church itself has not fully gained the opportunity to speak as it has in The Salvation Army. For this we should truly rejoice. We are unique. And even though the first battle is over for us— the second is just starting.

The creative voice of the Army is being heard and a pathway has been forged for each of us to speak up.

How will you use this ground beloved artists, in order to keep this ground in the years to come? This is the battle we now face. The world is listening, your Army is listening, your audience is captive and wide open. Will we remain comfortable in the walls of our hard-won acceptance? Or will we take seriously our call as God's mouthpiece to and communicator of the soul. Speak up! And let's take our ground while it's wide open. And prophesy! Prophesy not only to the body, but to the world.

Haven't you longed to see revival? You want to win the world for God? Speak the creative word of the Lord with the tools given to you. Be sent into a dying world to save it! Speak to them and communicate to these dying souls with a language they can understand. To the souls that your art has the key to.

And please, let's continuously put our hearts, minds, and bodies back into the fire to be cleansed and made holy. This is how our art will have power, this is how our art will transform.

The ball is in our court. Now is the time to move boldly like never before.

## **Christian Integrity**

By Jim Read

### **Integrity.**

It's not one of those personal character traits that stirs the blood, like being 'daring' or 'creative' or 'fun-loving'.

People distinguished for their Christian integrity seldom light up the room. They can sort of fade into the woodwork and be taken for granted. But if you have been on the receiving end of actions by those you thought had integrity but who really lacked it, you will know it. The sting of disappointment or betrayal can be shattering.

Integrity means doing what you say and saying what you do. It means being honest. It means being consistent, not 'like children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine.' It means being reliable, letting 'your yes be yes and your no be no,' as Jesus said. People of integrity are the sorts of people who can be counted on to keep their word.

Integrity also means acting on sound principle, and in this morally-fickle world that means integrity needs to be joined with courage. Not the sort of courage that goes on the attack, but the courage that stands its ground. What's right is not always what's popular, so people who don't simply bend to popular opinion need to have strong spines. They need the full armor of God, especially the shield of faith to fend off flaming arrows of evil that are shot their way.

Only God's integrity can be trusted absolutely, however. Even the most steadfast of people are not superhuman. Human integrity is strong, but it is also fragile. Consequently, in a world fraught with temptation, Christians will treat integrity and humility as conjoined twins. While they will want their yes to be yes and their no to be no, they will also welcome structures that require them to be transparently accountable.

Without good accountability structures, the mere reputation for integrity has provided the cover for heinous evil. Think of clergy that have been entrusted with intimate matters of the soul who have then abused those who trusted them. Because it has been assumed that clergy must have integrity, it is the abusive clergy who have been believed, not the exploited parishioners. (If you're not familiar with this phenomenon, just check out #ChurchToo.) Churches are now scrambling to put in place robust accountability structures that more secular professions have had for a long time.

Five years ago leaders of The Salvation Army showed up before a 'royal commission' and confessed that children in Salvation Army care homes in Australia had been abused. They admitted to failure in the Army's duty of care. They took responsibility for the victims' hurt and shame, not trying to find legal loopholes, offering apologies and restitution. What are we to make of these actions relative to integrity?

Being trusted and being worthy of being trusted are different things. Scoundrels simply want to be trusted. People of integrity want to deserve trust. And, when there has been a lapse, people who care about their integrity will be among the first to see the need to confess and seek forgiveness and reconciliation, and so regain more than mere reputation. Would that the witness Salvation Army leaders gave to the commission had come earlier, but the fact that it did come, is a sign that, although integrity had unquestionably been damaged, it was not utterly lost.

Christian integrity means having the humility and courage needed to make the changes that will give others reason to trust once again, remembering that it is not only us we want them to trust but also the God whom we purport to worship and represent.

Surely the incidents in Australia are not entirely unique.

Where else, we might ask, in the ongoing pursuit of Christian integrity, do we (individually or corporately) need to confess failure, seek forgiveness, and re-earn trust?

## **Multicultural Mandate: Meeting God's Promise in Full View**

By Major Soo Kim

*'There's a day coming when the mountain of God's House will be The Mountain - solid, towering over all mountains. All nations will river toward it, people from all over set out for it. They'll say, 'Come, let's climb God's Mountain, go to the House of the God of Jacob. He'll show us the way he works so we can live the way we're made.' Come, family of Jacob, let's live in the light of God.'*  
(Isaiah 2, The Message)

Foreshadowing the New Jerusalem later described in Revelation as the destination for all nations of the earth, the author of Isaiah writes of a hope that is at once fully embodied and present, yet which calls us toward a future where we may 'live the way we're made... in the light of God.'

A peculiar feature of the passage above worth noting is the seemingly impossible image of a river flowing uphill, toward a mountain. This surreal image indicates a reversal of man's 'natural course' toward sin and fragmentation, and it is the impossibility of this image which allows the reader to imagine, along with Isaiah, the possibility of man's future reorientation toward God.

This image of reversal can, with little effort, be considered a restoration of a world broken by sin and illusion. Brought to bear on the so-called 'multicultural mandate', it can help us to understand that what may appear to us this side of the fall as a mandate, command, or 'order', is perhaps better understood as the recognition of God's originally intended order.

It was from the beginning of creation that there would be diverse and multiple expressions of nations glorifying God and living in His light, even if the light which illumines this restored order is a strange light unlike any other:

*'The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it.' (Revelation 21:23-24) The nations will live in God's presence, their offering will be a representation of their own nation, and God calls this 'a splendor.'*

The USA Eastern Territory's 2020 Vision includes a 'Cross-Cultural Ministry' goal described as 'expanding cross-cultural ministry, as indicated by the demographics of our communities.' A good start.

Pushing further, we must continue to practice giving and receiving in the kinds of meaningful cultural exchanges which provide us a taste of what is to come in the eternity. Shared encounters of faith promote fuller participation into the Gospel center, the heart of Christ, the anticipation of justice, and true missional advancement. This will

require a cooperative, intentional, and focused organizational effort likely to entail surprising encounters with otherness, or perhaps even call for the occasional divestment of power, prestige and privilege.

The way of the cross leads us far from power. It points us in impossible directions.

Where our 'natural course' is often toward homogeneity and the building of walls which keep others out, the multicultural mandate, as a dimension of faith, demands the kind of gospel courage that 'gives us heart', a courage which 'rivers' us toward greater inclusion, representation, and strength.

## Refugee Resettlement

By Major Nick Coke

Two days after Christmas and my Twitter feed is full of speculation on whether Jesus was a refugee.

The majority of tweets purport to be a biblical, theological and historical discussion of Matthew 2:15-17 and the 'flight to Egypt'. What everyone knows, but won't openly admit, is that it's really a thinly-veiled discussion on the politics of immigration. Rather predictably two camps emerge as Jesus' dubious immigration status in scripture is held up as a reason to justify helping or hindering those crossing borders to find sanctuary today.

I can't help thinking it's a rather odd way for Christians to approach this issue. You see - what is the value in arguing about whether Jesus was a refugee when Jesus *is* a refugee?

In 2017 my corps, based in south west London, welcomed a Syrian family as they stepped across the UK border having fled the devastating civil war that stole from them their home, their peace, and their loved ones<sup>1</sup>. We greeted them with badly pronounced Arabic and a lovingly crafted welcome banner at the airport arrivals gate before taking them to a home we'd prepared. Without doubt it was one of the most profound, sacred moments of my life. As we came together in the airport we stood on holy ground – a meeting space of awkward strangers who in mutual vulnerability let down our guard just enough to allow the light of God to pierce its way through the cracks of nationhood, religion, culture and ethnicity. In that moment the walls crumbled, and Jesus was amongst us:

*'I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home.'* (Matthew 25:35).

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees reported in 2019 that there are approximately 26 million refugees worldwide<sup>2</sup> - the highest number on record. Of this number they project that in 2020 there will be 1.44 million people who are in need of resettlement to another country<sup>3</sup>. These are refugees who are at risk in the country they have sought protection, and therefore must be resettled to a third country. These are some of the most vulnerable people in the world – double refugees, if you like. In 2019 only 1% of refugees requiring resettlement had the opportunity to do so, because their resettlement is entirely dependent on the number of places offered by countries around the world<sup>4</sup>. As desperate as this sounds, there is good news – resettlement programmes are on the increase<sup>5</sup> and emerging in many countries.

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<sup>1</sup> Read more here: [https://issuu.com/salvationarmyuk/docs/home\\_from\\_home\\_booklet](https://issuu.com/salvationarmyuk/docs/home_from_home_booklet)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/5d1384047/projected-global-resettlement-needs-2020.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/resettlement.html>

<sup>5</sup> Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative: <http://refugeesponsorship.org/>

In the UK and Ireland the resettlement scheme my corps has championed – Community Sponsorship<sup>6</sup> – is growing fast. Five more corps welcomed Syrian families in 2019.<sup>7</sup>

As I have listened to each corps talk about their experience, I've been struck with how it resonated with my own. It goes something like this: we sought to transform a family's life, but quickly discovered it was our lives being transformed. On reflection we should not find this surprising. In a context of increasing walls, and rumours of walls, the church is called to be the church.

Whilst governments may build walls, the church should always welcome strangers. And when we do, if we have eyes to see, we'll notice amongst the refugees seeking sanctuary a presence that looks strangely, but unmistakably, like Jesus.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.resetuk.org/community-sponsorship>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEqOCB5bqvM>

## **Racial Reconciliation: A Social Gospel Imperative?**

By Major Katherine Clausell

Every January, when Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday is celebrated I consider the state of relations between marginalized ethnic minority cultures and white majority cultures in the USA and around the world. Many of our communities are plagued by racial strife and filled with people who long for racial reconciliation but feel powerless to achieve it. I am guilty of thinking about racial reconciliation as an idealistic notion...something to seek and even strive for, but doubtful that it can ever be achieved.

Despite the too numerous incidences of hate-motivated violence, I find hope when I see acts of forgiveness despite the violence. We must take seriously Jesus' instructions that unity must be our distinctive.

Having worked most of my life in the social services sector, I have been conditioned to view the problems of society as primarily social in nature. As such, their resolution will come through interventions by social services workers. However, when I view society from a Biblical Social Justice lens, I no longer see most of the challenges we experience in today's society as primarily a breakdown in society, but also as a failure of the church to live out Jesus' reconciliation in the world and before the world.

I believe that racial reconciliation is, first and foremost, a gospel imperative, not just a social issue for society to wrestle with.

Although there is little-to-no consensus regarding the church's role in the work of racial reconciliation, unity and reconciliation is at the core of our Christian faith and practice. The Gospel tells us that racism exists due to sin.

The Biblical basis for racial unity and reconciliation begins simply with the Bible's statement of our common humanity. When Paul addressed the Athenians on Mars Hill, he appealed to their common humanity. The Athenians considered themselves to be superior people. Wiser, more noble, more blessed than any other people on the face of the earth. But the Apostle Paul made it clear that we all have a common origin and we all live, move and have our being in God (Acts 17:26-28). There are different nations and languages, different people and tribes, but there is only one human race.

Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus demonstrated disregard for the sense of superiority of his contemporaries. Many Jews of His time saw God's election of the people of Israel as a mark of their superiority over the other nations around them. They accepted this view even though the Old Testament specifically forbade this way of thinking. When Jesus Christ came, He recognized the dignity of each person whether Jew, Samaritan, Canaanite, or Greek. Whatever the race, gender, culture, or sin, Jesus still went to them. Jesus went into their homes. He ate with them, and they received Him gladly. The Son of God showed us how we are to be.

John 17 records the passion, the motivation, and the longing that fills Jesus' heart as He prepares Himself to go to the cross. His passionate prayer was that all of us would experience the kind of unity that the members of the Trinity experience. The longing of Jesus Christ is that we (black, white, yellow and brown; male and female; young and old, from every people, tribe, tongue, and nation) may be one.

Jesus prayed saying, "May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." Christ's desire is not differing ethnicities worshipping in separate churches, but rather that all may be brought to complete unity.

Before this can be achieved, Christians must be honest about our racist past. If we don't, we will never be able to adequately address the complicated questions in our racist present. Progress will be difficult, if not impossible if we deny that racism still exists - individually and systematically - in home, church and society. Racism is an evil ideology of hate, which shows itself most clearly through violent or prejudicial actions, as well as in more subtle ways.

For example, the church growth movement promoted homogeneous congregations ... just one group, one race, one culture or one economic class. Such a plan for the growth of the church is a rejection of His final prayer for us before He died. God is building one temple. Not a white, black, poor or rich temple, but one temple.

The Church must become the place where people from all walks of life are united by their love for Christ and their need for grace. Pride of heritage, security in our cultural identity or comfort in our color cannot stand in the way of racial reconciliation.

Imagine if the church, working intentionally to model diversity, became the one place where what is envisioned in Revelation 5 and 7 starts happening now, not just when Christ returns. What a glorious sight that would be.

Jesus said that the world will know that the Father has sent the Son, because of **the witness of the unity that we have with one another.**

We can be sure that the prayer He prayed then is the prayer He prays for us today.

## Gender Equity - Better Together

By Colonel Janet Munn

Results of a simple Google search of the phrase 'better together' include: several popular romance songs; a TV program by and for Christian women; technology for multi-player, cross-platform gaming; a political campaign against Scottish independence; and, 219,277 'relevant items' on Amazon.

The arts, entertainment, religion, technology, politics, e-commerce – all recognizing the importance of synergy.

*Synergy: the interaction or cooperation of two or more organizations, substances, or other agents to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects, ie. 'better together'.*

Gender equity values the synergistic necessity of females and males co-operating. In the language of Genesis 1:26-28, this is described as males and females co-reigning over creation, with shared responsibility to lead well on planet earth – the double image of gender mutuality – God's original design.

As early as 1895, The Salvation Army stated its belief in and commitment to gender equity:

One of the leading principles upon which the Army is based is the right of women to have the right to an equal share with men in the work of publishing salvation to the world ... She may hold any position of authority or power in the Army from that of a Local Officer to that of the General . . . Women must be treated as equal with men in all the intellectual and social relationships in life.

*Orders and Regulations for Staff Officers of The Salvation Army in the United Kingdom*

Further, as recently as 2019, in its International Positional Statement on Sexism, The Salvation Army reaffirms its commitment to gender equity, while, in a demonstration of corporate self-awareness, acknowledges its own failure to fully live up to its own biblical ideals and stated values:

*The Salvation Army believes that our world is enhanced by equitably valuing, equipping and mobilising all human beings [better together]. While valuing gender equity, The Salvation Army acknowledges with regret that Salvationists have sometimes conformed to societal and organisational norms that perpetuate sexism.*

The absence of gender equity is called sexism, discrimination against females because they are female. Some disturbing results include females having lack of access to education, health survivability, political participation, and economic security (World

Economic Forum's Gender Gap Report). The absence of gender equity globally is evident in the gender pay gap, restricted work assignments, female sexualization and subjugation, and its darkest expression, 'gendercide'.

More girls and women are now missing from the planet, precisely because they are female, than men were killed on the battlefield in all the wars of the 20th century.

*Half the Sky, Kristof and WuDunn, 2009*

The consequences of disempowerment for women, their families, and their communities are manifold and disastrous. In other words, the absence of gender equity leads to the opposite of 'better together' – everyone is far 'worse apart'.

However, when women hold assets or gain incomes, family money is more likely to be spent on nutrition, medicine and housing, and consequently children are healthier. Giving females access to power economically, politically, and educationally "yield(s) large social and economic returns" and is key to fighting global poverty (US State Dept). The wisdom upon which the 'better together' synergy of Genesis 1 was based is being confirmed through social science.

Effective leadership is a demonstration of the ability to build and maintain high-performing teams, and to inspire followers to set aside their selfish agendas in order to work for the common interest of the group.

Sounds like Jesus' leadership, sounds like gender equity, sounds like Eden restored.

How can you help?

## **Some Of My Best Leaders ...Are Soldiers**

By Phil Wall

William Booth caused something of a stir when stating that 'Some of my best men are women'. Challenging the prejudice of his day around the gifting and calling possible for women, he set a course that has continued to challenge ministry norms for women all over the world. As we reflect on the roles played by soldiers and officers in our own day, I wonder if he might cause a similar stir with our title statement?

The perception of many Salvationists is that the job of officers is to lead, and the job of soldiers is to follow. Our military metaphor makes sense of that perception, which often sadly leads to faithful, hard-working officers being over-burdened, seeking to meet unrealistic expectations. This mindset is somewhat limiting and misses much of the potential and possibilities of a fully activated soldiery.

In a movement of only 27,000 officers yet over 1.2 million soldiers, there may be few more important missional questions for us to consider.

One of our challenges is the general missional view that the focus of soldier 'outreach' should be based in and around the location of the Corps. This may well have made some sense when the place of work, living and worship was in the same community. However, in many urbanised contexts soldiers work, live and worship in three different communities. In truth the prime missional context for most working Salvationists should be the place where they spend the bulk of their waking hours, which is the workplace. This is certainly something that Booth seemed clear on:

"... in my judgement, every Salvationist should not only accept his secular employment as of divine appointment and strive to do that heartily and well, but that in that condition of life in which he finds himself placed, he is called upon to be a worker together with God for the salvation of his fellow men" (The Founder Speaks Again, 105)

I am concerned that we have lost sight of this as our culture of Salvationism neither values nor has any seeming interest in what the majority of soldiers do with most of their time. Of course, there are exceptions to this, but as a general rule our movement seems to care little about the vocational role of their soldiers.

We know this is true because organisations measure and record the things they value - attendance, Corps based roles, local officer commissions, giving etc. As far as I am aware there is not one context where Corps are invited to record the workaday roles/skills of the soldiers. Our prime, if not our only concern, appears to be what working Salvationists do with their 'spare/social' time and their money. I am pretty sure this is not what Booth meant but fear it has become the norm.

This clearly dulls our missional cutting edge and I think is one of the reasons why many soldiers lack a clear vision for Kingdom impact in their workplace - it is just not an expectation they are often encouraged to embrace. It seems to make sense that the

equipping of our Sunday ministry should be focused upon supporting soldiers to live the life of Jesus in their workplace reaching those they work with for Him.

A further consequence of this unhelpful mindset is that oft times soldiers are invited to leave their working brains and skills at the door of their corps building. I know of Salvationist lawyers, financiers, strategists, therapists, technicians, communication specialists, senior leadership development consultants etc, working nationally and internationally, and their common experience is that rarely are they invited to contribute at a strategic/leadership level.

This is not to suggest that normative corps roles are beneath such folks, but just that there is so much more they can contribute were the opportunity to be given. One such person felt they were mainly seen as a 'cheque book on legs'.

We also see this mindset demonstrated with 'in house' conferences that are called 'Leadership Conferences' whereas in truth they are 'Officer Conferences', no non-officers are invited. This is not to speak ill of officer leaders, some of the best leaders I have known are such; rather, it again risks missing the insights of folks with vast experience.

As a movement whose stated theology of ministry makes clear that the only difference between officers and soldiers is the availability and use of time, we risk missing out on the power of this ecclesiology upon our missional calling.

So, my encouragement to my fellow soldier colleagues is to seek God for a fresh vision for your workplace and find ways to offer your experiences and expertise to your local context. My encouragement to my officer friends is to expect more, and ask more, of your soldiers. Together there is much God has for us to do.

*Phil Wall is a soldier of Raynes Park Corps, and works as an executive leadership coach, speaker and social entrepreneur.*

## Social Media

By Major Steve Carroll Jr.

It was 1997. My friends and I had started our own evangelistic comedy team. We were ready to share our faith with the world. And, we were going get our message out using any means at our disposal.

First, we wrote a newsletter. We called it *The Christian Underground*, eventually we just called it *The Underground*. We sent our newsletter out to every email we could acquire. Within six months we had over 1,000 'subscribers. While we celebrated our milestone in the next newsletter, we were privately disappointed. It occurred to us that with only 1,000 readers it would take us a long time to reach the world for Jesus.

But then came 'Tom'. Tom Anderson, founder of MySpace.com famously added himself to every member's friend list. MySpace.com pioneered the virtual world of Social Media which now includes dozens of platforms each targeting different groups of people, offering different formats and features, but all sharing one great opportunity: the chance to connect the users with large numbers of other users.

For some of us social media has become second nature, a virtual extension of ourselves. Others avoid it because it is new, different or simply unappealing. There is nothing intrinsically good or evil about Social Media: someone figured out how to use new tech to create a form for people to connect, then others adapted and adapted.

Now we have platforms based on picture, text videos and on and on. For those of us who love Jesus and want the whole world to know it this creates new opportunities and a few concerns.

Our potential to share the gospel with larger numbers has just soared past what we could have even imagined 15 years ago. When I look back at that first online newsletter and our 1,000 subscribers. I am astonished by how far we've come in such a short time. A few weeks ago, I posted a simple video of a volunteer playing carols at a red kettle and that video reached 1,000 views in the first 30 minutes then went on to hit 15,000 views within a couple of days. Our spheres of influence are growing exponentially.

Access to so many people also gives us great opportunity to discredit the gospel. What we do and say is seen by so many people. And when people become comfortable on social media, they often let their guard down and become more open online then they would ever be in the 'real world'. Essentially, accounts become a widow into our lives, that then allow the world to see into us.

Creating a personal social media mission statement has allowed me to be more focused with my online presence. Your mission statement is an opportunity for you to state what you are using social media for. When you are tempted to post outside of your stated purpose you can hold yourself accountable.

In my statement I limit posts to four categories:

1. I post to share my faith
2. I post to promote the work of The Salvation Army
3. I post to connect with friends and family.
4. I post to make people laugh and show the world that Christians can have fun.

Occasionally, I get passionate about a current issue or a political happening. I may even get a post off in my passion ... when that happens, I use my mission statement to determine if my post should remain up.

What about you?

How can you use your social media to share Jesus with the world? How can you guard against showing the world too much of you, and not enough Jesus?

## 20/20 Vision: Earth Care

By Melanie-Anne Holland

'O boundless salvation! Deep ocean of love,  
O fullness of mercy, Christ brought from above,  
The whole world redeeming, so rich and so free,'<sup>8</sup>.

Is it possible that our soteriology has become too small?

There are many assumptions that come with our language about the redeeming work of Christ. But at the heart of Jesus' ministry is God's love for 'the world'<sup>9</sup> – our entire cosmos – not just the fallen state of humanity. Paul tells us that God's intent was through Jesus *'to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross'*<sup>10</sup>. The creation groans, anticipating when it will be liberated from decay and brought into freedom<sup>11</sup>, and the followers of Christ are mantled with the commission to *'go into the whole world and preach the gospel to all creation'*<sup>12</sup>.

But is the Church good news for the earth, with whom she shares her eternal story? Is The Salvation Army a conduit of liberation from decay for our environment?

Daily our news feeds are jammed with alarming reports about our groaning home: deforestation, pollution, drought, impoverished soils, increasingly erratic weather, species extinction, climate change. As a movement committed to loving our neighbour as ourselves and actively positioning ourselves alongside the marginalised and vulnerable, we are consistently dealing with the human suffering that accompanies ecological crisis.

It is right to do so. It is true to our foundations, but our Salvationist heritage would also challenge us to become more proactive in dealing with the causes of such suffering.

The Salvation Army's International Positional Statement on Caring for the Environment outlines a commitment to:

- (i) Repentance for our attitudes as a movement that have contributed to ecological crisis;
  - (ii) Cultivating a culture of increased environmental care for the environment within our movement;
  - (iii) Reviewing and modifying our practices to become more ecologically sustainable;
  - (iv) Advocating for those who are adversely impacted by environmental degradation;
- and

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<sup>8</sup> William Booth (1829-1912) Song 509 (The Founders Song), The Salvation Army Song Book, 2015

<sup>9</sup> John 3:16

<sup>10</sup> Colossians 1:20

<sup>11</sup> Romans 8:21

<sup>12</sup> Mark 16:15

- (v) Partnering with governments, organisations and peoples towards greater ecological sustainability<sup>13</sup>.

All of these measures are good, but they are inherently anthropocentric, and do not reflect the great need for us to love the world as Jesus loves – to see the inherent value in each species, to live sacrificially for the sake of other's flourishing, to contribute to healing of the lands and oceans and all who depend on them (both human and non-human alike).

A 20/20 vision for The Salvation Army must include a deeper commitment to earth care – both as a practical element of loving our human neighbours, but also extending good news to all of life around us.

We must have courage to speak truth to power about the crippling consequences of economic models of consumerism, greed, continuous growth and exploitation. And we must find ways to serve and model with the gentle wisdom of Christ – a ministry of reconciliation between God and humanity; people with each other; and people with the earth. It's a grand-scale soteriology, worthy of our deepest commitment.

Every Salvationist must contribute to this redemptive work.

The calamity might be daunting, but The Salvation Army is needed in such a time as this. Gus Speth rightly points out, '*the top environmental issues are selfishness, greed and apathy, and to deal with those we need a spiritual and cultural transformation*'. As prophets of hope, may we lead the reformation.

*'The whole world redeeming so rich and so free ...  
O come mighty ocean, and roll over me.'*

Amen!

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<sup>13</sup> The Salvation Army's International Positional Statement on Caring for the Environment, IHQ, 2014

## Street Justice

By Captain John Clifton

The famous proverb says:

*'Give a person a fish and they'll eat for a day. Teach a person to fish and they'll eat for a lifetime.'*

When it comes to justice, there is a third part:

*'Organise for power and the whole community will enjoy the feast.'*

In 2011, I met a man called Mustafa. He had lost his accounting job and a family fallout meant he was street homeless. After a 13-hour crash course in navigating bureaucracies, I admitted that I didn't know what to do next:

*"I'm sorry, Mustafa. Here's a sleeping bag. Come back tomorrow."*

Our natural tendency when with someone in need is to try to meet it. This is good; however, a need is often a product of someone being in a situation of powerlessness. The conditions described in Matthew 25:31-46 are emblematic of this – hunger, thirst, nakedness, sickness, estrangement, and imprisonment. The appropriate response, therefore, is to build power, defined as 'the ability to act.' Through visiting, sharing drink and food, by clothing, and welcoming, relational power is built, not just in those we have met, but also in us.

Matthew 25 isn't saying my response to Mustafa should be to 'give a fish' or 'teach how to fish', but to build power together.

Historically, The Salvation Army in the UK has had a fragmented approach to this sort of thing, with a split between our Corps and Social work. This is reflected in the way we organize (a) our people, with Officers being trained for specific 'field/Corps' or 'social' responsibilities and (b) our money, with a separation between The Salvation Army Trust and The Salvation Army Social Work Trust.

Our structure does not intrinsically facilitate a face-to-face encounter between Salvationists and Christ coming to us as a man like Mustafa. Rather, the institutional design results in Corps members raising money to pay other people to help those in situations like him. This easily limits Corps to 'giving' and 'teaching' rather than pushing Salvationists 'to organize for power' where we too are transformed.

The last eight years at Ilford Corps has seen the consequences of a relentless orientation toward Christ who is present in the conditions of powerlessness described in Matthew 25.

We went to the streets and met Christ sleeping there. We welcomed Him to our Corps building to stay in a night shelter. We are opening Malachi Place, the first Corps-led accommodation in our territory, which has challenged the traditional divisions between 'Corps' and 'Social' and created new opportunities for integrated approaches. It is our testimony that we have experienced a transformation that is best described using the sacramental language of the *real presence of Christ amongst us*.

The challenge is two-fold: first, how might you move beyond giving, and teaching, towards organising for power? And second, what bureaucratic or structural obstacles do you need to confront?

Malachi Place is a small example of communities coming together to organise for power so that everyone has a better chance at enjoying the feast.