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Editorial Introduction

by Major Stephen Court, editor

Greetings in the name of our great God and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. I trust the battle progresses well on your front.

Welcome to JAC130 - the 130th issue of Journal of Aggressive Christianity! As you've grown accustomed, we've collected new and old JAC voices, fresh and seasoned perspectives to edify you this season.

JAC130 addresses a myriad of issues, from SA employees to fund raising, from leadership to evangelism, from spiritual disciplines to Bible reading! You're going to love it.

Major Don Grad, JAC engineer and site architect, kicks off JAC130 with 'There Must Be 50 Ways To Read Your Bible!' If you're looking to spice up your devotional reading or explore approaches to elicit biblical insights, you'll want to dig into this article. And, if you're already satisfied with your reading habits, why not give it a spin and see how many more ways you can add to the list?

Candidate Jeff Robertson participated in a panel discussion this past month in the Canada and Bermuda TC's virtual book club that is reading through Commission Phil Needham's book CHRIST AT THE DOOR: Biblical keys to our Salvationist future around the question of 'Funding v. Missional Voice'. And we've borrowed his comments for your consideration.

Captain Charles Roberts, from Syracuse (USA), combines some gems from the Book of Acts and Commissioner Samuel Logan Brengle in a compelling piece, 'An Exhortation Toward Evangelism'.

Following in this section - the evangelism trio - are two short pieces: first 'Going Out Of Style?' on ways to address evangelistic reticence and '21 in '21?' on pitching a target for the fresh, promising new year, 2021!

Commissioner Joe Noland strikes again, this time with an 'Open Letter to Present And Future Leaders' about the relationship of organisational decline with issues of power and leadership. This one will get shared around the salvosphere.

And, balancing our evangelism trio above, we're ending JAC130 with a book trio:

Phil Laeger's new book STAYED: The simple secret to discovering and enjoying animating spiritual contentment and profoundly divine fulfillment throughout all your years and into eternity, features a popular devotional exercise (that's been picked up by wildly popular YouVersion Bible app) and which is accompanied by original devotional music composed and recorded by the author, called 'The 7 Ps Of Perfect Peace'. We're including it here so you can get in on the blessing (and order the book online).

Commissioner Jim Knaggs's new book, DRUG OF CHOICE: Papers on leveraging creativity in the salvation war, features a chapter by Knaggs called, 'High Counsel: Leading in leadership' that will stir your imagination (and you'll likely want to order your copy online).

And, finally, longtime friend of JAC and frequent contributor Aaron White has a new book called RECOVERING: From Brokenness and Addiction to Blessedness and Community and we've reviewed it for your inspiration in, 'Book Review: A Hopeful Vision Of Beatitude Community'. You'll want to order your copy online.

And that's JAC130. May God use it to strengthen you for great eternal battles that will bring great glory to our magnificent King and Redeemer Jesus Christ!

There Must Be 50 Ways to Read Your Bible

Major Don Grad (R)

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17, NIV

So... we have all heard our Officers tell us the importance of reading the Bible on a regular, daily, and consistent basis, but let's look at the basic question of “how?”

Humbly and respectfully, may I offer a few thoughts for both the new Christian, and the Christian of 40 years... *(full disclosure, I am not a ‘writer’, and give full credit to inspiration from the Holy Spirit)*

Before you start reading the Bible, prepare your mind, so you can receive what God has for you. An Officer friend of mine, many years ago suggested that we should always read the Bible “expectantly”, in other words, read with anticipation; looking for some new element of God's truth; or a message of encouragement; perhaps something we need to change or do; or simply a reminder of something you already know. The Bible is no ordinary ‘book’, and as we read, we also need to ‘listen’ to what the Spirit might say to us.

Of course the obvious answer, is to read the Bible like any other book and start at the beginning. BUT... for the first time reader, it would be easy to be confused by the time you reach the middle of the book of ‘Numbers’.

For the first time Bible reader, the commonly suggested starting place is with the gospels. Read through Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, using a relaxed reading style. Let the stories of Jesus, His love for all peoples, and His amazing teaching fill your heart and mind.

After you have read the gospels, continue reading to the end of the New Testament. So then the question becomes what next? Reading through the New Testament a second time for many would be a useful idea.

It is important to understand the ‘big’ picture of God's love, and this will be best understood by starting at Genesis and reading through the Old Testament. As a suggestion, when you get to the book of Numbers, which literally has a bunch of numbers and names in it, rather than think of it as ‘boring’, consider the alternate thought that God knows the name of everyone who has ever lived. He also loves, and cares, and knows the hairs on the head of every person who has ever lived!

So after you have read the New Testament a couple of times, and have read the Bible from Genesis through to Revelation, what next?

One option is to simply read from Genesis to Revelation again. No matter how many times you read the Bible, you will ALWAYS find new thoughts and ideas and improved understanding as you read.

Most Officers will tell you that while they learned much about the Bible in College, the truth is that **they came to truly 'know' the Bible only as they repeatedly read the Word of God.**

So for your second or third or 23rd time through the Bible there are many possibilities...

Read the Bible in a different translation. Each English Bible version is a translation of the original Hebrew and Greek, but the translations will often use slightly different words or phrases, and this can enhance our understanding. This does not make one version 'right' or 'wrong' per se, but the translators each used various methods to try to make the Word of God understandable for the reader.

It is possible to purchase a Bible with two to four translations positioned parallel to each other, so you can read John chapter 1 in translation 1, then read it in translation 2, and so on.

Another idea is to purchase a 'study' Bible, which exist in many various flavours. Each 'study' Bible will contain various notes at the bottom or side of the page that can fill in background details about Bible times, or can give personal ideas for applying Bible principles. One study Bible that I much enjoyed was an 'archaeology' study Bible. (*full disclosure, I am a science & history geek, and my family gave this to me for my birthday*) This Bible had notes about archaeological findings relating to a passage, or about other cultures of the day. There are many study Bibles available, such as for women, for men, for husbands, for parents, for use with the 12 step addiction program, and much more.

The Old and New Testament portions of the Bible can often seem quite different, but to fully understand God's message and His love, it is useful to learn how the Old and New Testaments connect on so many levels. Many Bibles will have cross-references in the margins. Try reading the New Testament, and after reading a few verses or a complete chapter, go back and look up each cross-reference that connects to the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit led me to do this a number of years ago, and it greatly enhanced my understanding and appreciation of how the Old and New Testaments were powerfully linked. A person could also do the same for the Old Testament, with looking up the cross-references for the New Testament.

Another method, involves 'speed reading' the Bible. This involves reading whole books of the Bible in one session. Individual books of the Bible range from about 2 to 50 pages long. (the book of Psalms is over 100 pages) This can give an improved perspective on the 'big' themes and stories of the books of the Bible.

The opposite of the 'speed' method, is the idea of a contemplative 'slow' reading methodology. This is where a person reads the Bible in 'pieces' that contain a story or topic, and could be a few verses or half a chapter. An example of this would be to read Luke 10, from v.1-16, then v.17-24, then v.25-37, and finally v.38-42, over 4 days. A person could read and re-read the verses, and consider what God is saying, and what it means for them. Sometimes a Bible commentary, or devotional book, can help with exploring a passage.

A person could read out-loud a book of the Bible with a spouse or a friend, a chapter at a time. You of course can read the Bible out-loud to yourself, and the 'hearing' of the Word, will typically help in understanding.

A person could read and re-read one book of the Bible, such as the gospel of John or Romans or Genesis repeatedly for a year, or half a year, or one month. It allows time to really understand the one particular book.

A person could record their Officer's primary Scripture passages from Sunday each week, and in the following week read and re-read these passages. This again allows time to really meditate on a focused portion of the Bible.

A person could pray and ask the Lord for a 'topic' (such as 'holiness', or 'joy'), and then spend time for a month or a year looking through the Bible for passages relating to that topic.

There are a number of 'unique' versions of the Bible. As an example, there is even a 'Comic' book version of the Bible. For people who learn or interact with stories visually, this can be helpful. Of course check the version to ensure accuracy and faithfulness to the Bible message. The Comic book version our family had, remained quite accurate and faithful with the stories of the Bible. I remember our family being at a church event, and there was a Bible quiz, and one question was "what warning did God give, when Israel asked for a 'king like the other nations'? Our 8 yr. old daughter, who was currently reading this Comic book Bible version, responded immediately with a complete and full answer. It both surprised us as parents, but also confirmed that the Word of God was growing in her.

There are many possible versions of the Bible. There is a version called the 'Living' Bible', which is a paraphrase version that puts the Bible in very plain language. There is the Nlrv which is the New International Reader Version, which uses a grade 3 level vocabulary, which is a true translation, but makes the message clear in simple language.

Of course, there is the question of what translation to use? The short answer is to start your reading of the Bible with a translation that you can understand easily. The New International Version (NIV) is very popular, in that it is an accurate translation and uses current English. Many people still like the King James Version (KJV), with its' more poetic sounding English, but be aware that you will encounter words like 'begat'. Some

Christians used to say that they only read the “...Bible that the apostle Paul used, namely the King James”, while forgetting that Paul would have used the Hebrew and Greek version of the Scriptures, as available in the first century.

Of course it is possible to learn Bible Hebrew and Greek, via books, or courses on these languages. If you have the time, and ability, this would allow a person to read the Bible in the original language. I have been told by people who know Hebrew or Greek that this is a very rewarding way to read the Bible. They have told me of how some Hebrew or Greek words have very deep meanings that are hard to translate, and/or other language elements like verbs that describe something as being ‘past - present – ongoing future’ all at the same time, like the love of God.

If a person wants to ‘test-read’ a variety of translation versions, the internet is a great help. There are many websites such as biblegateway.com, which allows you to look up and read the same passage in whatever version you might like. A good test passage might be Matthew 5 & 6, or John 3.

As we read through the Bible daily, we will grow spiritually, we will develop increased understanding of the blessings God has for us, as well as how God would have us live, both now and into eternity.

Sadly, a tactic of the enemy of our souls, the devil and his demonic gang, wants to distract us with temporary ‘trinkets’, and keep us from knowing the many ‘jewels’ God has for His children. An Officer once told me that he would not watch the TV unless he knew he was going to have (make) time in his day to read the Bible. Sound advice for our modern day with its’ many distractions, from TV, to internet, to binge-watching Netflix. TV or Netflix of course are fine, but may they never distract us from the “Words of Life” as God wants us to know.

Going back to an earlier idea of looking at a ‘topic’ for a season, a person could look for how various people in the Bible got ‘distracted’. King David, a great man of God, got into many troubles, when he got distracted by the beautiful Bathsheba, who he could see from his castle.

Now of course, we return to the basic element of reading your Bible. Like the old Nike slogan, “Just do it”...

Hopefully the above 21 ways to read your Bible will spark your Holy Spirit imagination to think of many more ways to dig into God’s Word. And of course there are many good video options, that are Biblically accurate, such as the ‘Jesus’ film.

When we read the Bible, the Word of God, the love message from God; we will find an anchor for our souls, both in the good and difficult times. We will find our lives enriched beyond anything we can think or imagine.

“However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him”

1 Corinthians 2:9, NIV

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:6-8, NIV

“Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.”

Isaiah 40:31, NASB

“My soul, wait in silence for God only, For my hope is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation, My stronghold; I shall not be shaken.”

Psalms 62:5-6, NASB

May God bless you richly as you read His Word!

Funding v. Missional Voice

Candidate Jeff Robertson

My comments are formed through experience working at divisional and territorial headquarters for 25 years as a professional fundraiser and spokesperson, being part of large and small congregations, seeing effective and ineffective ministry, conversations with many officers, business leaders and elected officials.

William and Catherine Booth had a passion for the souls of women and men. Given that there was no social safety net in the mid to late 1800's, the Booth's found it important to provide practical support to the poor – BUT they never lost their passion to save souls.

Today, The Salvation Army depends significantly on government funding to help us serve suffering humanity. At times, these funds may come at the expense of our spiritual witness and missional breadth.

Question:

Is it time for The Salvation Army to reclaim its missional voice even if it means walking away from funds that would seek to silence this voice and diminish the name of Jesus?

My response:

- If our missional voice is to serve suffering humanity, then funding certainly helps. It gives us a voice.
- If our missional voice is to be a transformational influence in our communities, well that doesn't require government funding. It requires community relationships and visible impact. It requires disciples.
- If our missional voice is the share the love of Jesus...if we properly developed disciples, then the money would be there to do what is needed.

There was a highly influential individual a few years back who suggested it was time for The Salvation Army to get out of the business of 'church', and to focus on the business of 'social services'. It seems this issue continues today.

Money, like politics, can be polarizing. We want it and need it. But it can also change us, which is why scripture says that the love of money is bad.

The Salvation Army receives significant money from all levels of government. It allows our banner to be broader, but at what cost?

Government money, and even money from corporations, is often accepted with the promise that we won't proselytize. We aren't allowed to share the Gospel; which begs the question: if we can't share the Gospel, is it worth doing?

Even in the early 90's, a Divisional Commander, at his installation, spoke his dream whereby the Army no longer needed to take government monies, allowing it to serve the way it deemed best. That ideal has stuck with me ever since. We continue to discuss who we are.

A statement I have heard used for years is: 'we do what we do in our community **because** of what we believe'. And yet, the world continues to change, and the idea of being an 'evangelical' organization has its detractors. Many, many people still miss the point that The Salvation Army is a church. Which begs the question: Are we doing a poor job at telling our story, or a very good job at hiding it? I suppose when it come to asking for funds, we tend to hide it.

If we step away from funding that restricts our movement, in order to 'reclaim' a missional voice, what do we gain? Fewer lives being touched. However, if we can't be ourselves, then we are no different than any other service provider.

I don't think it's as much about walking away from funding, as it is about not being shy about what we do and why we do it. We need to be unabashedly open about our work. If we are afraid to speak truth – whether it is because there is a risk of losing funds, or because we aren't all that sure of the truth – then we soften the Gospel, and our reputation.

If a social service program is funded by government money, it tends to become highly specific and professional. If our average soldier cannot get involved in our social service programs to live out his/her discipleship – including service and evangelism, then we need to rethink those programs.

Unfortunately, while the Salvation Army branding is on a building or on a t-shirt being worn by an employee, the person often doing the work is not a part of a congregation – and at times not even a believer. And the work being done is often no different than that of any other not-for-profit, save for the very important role of Chaplain we budget for out of non-government monies.

In my 47 years in the Army, I can't recall any officer teaching biblical giving well. We seem to be timid in teaching the sacrifice of giving, yet comfortable in some places to allow the local corps and its internal programs to be propped up by public monies, under the guise of 'funding the church allows us to run community program'.

If any of our social programs can't freely do all 3 sections within our mission statement...perhaps they shouldn't be done. We must keep our integrity and do what we say we do. All of our programs should hit every single piece of our mission statement.

Let me finish with this: getting government funding allows us to either promote ourselves or promote the gospel. Rarely can we do both. We have to decide what's more important for us.

And if we lose funding...then we move on to something else. The poor will always be with us.

An Exhortation Toward Evangelism

Captain Charles Roberts

Acts 1:8 *“But you shall receive power (ability, efficiency, and might) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the ends (the very bounds) of the earth.”*

Acts 2:

1 *AND WHEN the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all assembled together in one place,*

2 *When suddenly there came a sound from heaven like the rushing of a violent tempest blast, and it filled the whole house in which they were sitting.*

3 *And there appeared to them tongues resembling fire, which were separated and distributed and which settled on each one of them.*

4 *And they were all filled (diffused throughout their souls) with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other (different, foreign) languages (tongues), as the Spirit kept giving them clear and loud expression [in each tongue in appropriate words].*

When the Holy Spirit came, the once-terrified people became the people that couldn't be stopped!

"No great work has ever been accomplished without abandonment to it." - Samuel Logan Brengle

Salvation is the best news ever! "God has provided a salvation for us that is perfect in every particular, and that satisfies both the heart and the mind. It makes its possessor 'more than conqueror' over the world, the flesh and the devil, and enables him to do the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven. It is altogether worthy of its Author. It is a 'great salvation.' It is not a mere set of beliefs, nor a poor pitiful little profession, but a full, joyous, super-abounding, all-conquering life." - Samuel Logan Brengle

Living out Jesus requires balance: "The man who never relaxes, however religious he may be, is likely to become morose, irritable, impatient, and a source of anxiety and perplexity to his dearest friends; or become melancholy and full of gloom, get into the dumps and doubt his call."

Brengle - *The Soul Winner's Secret* (London: Salvationist Publishing and Supplies, LTD, 1960), 43.

Work and pray, work and play! It is in the formal as well as informal times that God will speak to a person. God gives us every moment to enjoy, yet He also uses every moment! To live a missional life, we must be ready in season and out of season to give an answer for the hope that we have.

To do the work of Jesus, we need the Fire! Oh, that we may be so filled with the Spirit that we may arouse wholesome fear in the hearts of men...

Brengle - *Resurrection Life and Power* (London: Salvationist Publishing and Supplies, LTD, 1925), 97.

It's Fire we want, it's Fire we need! "What is this fire? It is love...faith...hope...passion, purpose, determination...devotion. It is a divine discontent with formality, ceremonialism, lukewarmness...noise..."

Brengle - *Resurrection Life and Power* (London: Salvationist Publishing and Supplies, LTD, 1925), 109.

God desires to give you the Fire! 'The zeal of other people blazes up, burns low, and often dies out, but the zeal of a man with a clean heart, full of the Holy Ghost, increases year by year. Others run away from the prayer-meeting, but he holds on. Others do not grieve if souls are not saved but he feels that he must see souls saved, or die. Others are zealous for 'big goes,' tea parties, ice-cream suppers, and musical festivals, but nothing pleases him so much as a prayer-meeting where souls are crying for pardon and cleansing, and others are shouting for joy (p. 77-78).

Brengle - *The Way of Holiness*

The need is the call!

- 4.5 billion people are living without saving faith in Jesus Christ
- 7 million people a month are searching the Internet for answers for their deepest hurts and longing (keyword: LONELINESS)
- 22 million Americans ages 12 and over are addicted to drugs and alcohol
- 21 million Americans (7% of the world's population) struggle with depression and 30,000 commit suicide each year
- An estimated 40 million people in the US feel trapped by fear and anxiety, they live as prisoners to their own emotions.
- 150,000 people slip into eternity each day, many of them not prepared to stand before God.

The pathway to the Fire begins with consecration to the life of Holiness:

*Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in endless praise.*

*Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.*

*Take my voice and let me sing,
Always, only for my King.
Take my lips and let them be*

Filled with messages from Thee.

*Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect and use
Every pow'r as Thou shalt choose.*

*Take my will and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.*

*Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.*

Going Out Of Style?

Major Stephen Court

Evangelism is going out of style, says a 2019 Barna report called *Reviving Evangelism*. More than half of survey respondents said they'd had two or fewer conversations about faith with a non-Christian in the past year. Without evangelizing, we wouldn't be here—"we" being those who have accepted Jesus' invitation into our lives. Remember when He said, "Come, follow me"?

Evangelism should be life-giving, so what's stopping us? I can think of two reasons. Maybe you tried to evangelize and it went poorly. You didn't feel comfortable nudging the direction of conversation with your friend, or imposing on a stranger; you weren't confident about your command of relevant Bible verses and apologetics; you found your gospel advances rejected. They didn't transform into new creations in Christ Jesus, and it didn't feel life-giving for you.

Or maybe you felt poorly and didn't evangelize. You know the stereotype of an evangelist (think slippery, slick, cheesy), and you certainly didn't want to be counted among that number. So you avoided divine appointments—God-arranged moments when it seemed like the gospel would be welcomed. You ignored invitations at the corps to participate in evangelistic events such as door-to-door prayer forays or open-air meetings. There are likely other dynamics at play, too.

Some readers may remember hockey superstar Wayne Gretzky's phrase, "You miss 100 percent of the shots you don't take." If you never evangelize, it's highly unlikely you'll ever play a direct role in someone being born again. If you never take a shot, you'll never score a goal.

There are things you can do to address the two "maybes" above.

If you lack confidence in your understanding of the Bible and apologetics, there are many resources available to get a handle on basic concepts in evangelism (the winter semester of learning cohorts include several options - stay tuned to [armybarmy](#) blog for details).

If you are uncomfortable initiating a discussion with a friend or stranger, try asking questions. Find out their perspective on the big-ticket questions (e.g., "Does God exist?" "What is God like?" "Who is Jesus?" "What about suffering and evil?"). At some point, the conversation will likely turn back to you and, having listened to their beliefs and doubts, you can share some of yours.

You can pray that God will share his love for the people you may soon be evangelizing with you, so that you love them like he does. Ask God to give you insight into their hurts and doubts, or an encouraging word. Ask God to show you anything in your life that might hinder your presentation of the gospel (think "sin in your life" to confess). Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit and to arrange an opportunity to evangelize. Go with a

partner—that's a biblical precedent. There is courage in numbers, but also, one can be praying while the other is talking.

As all of this is saturated in prayer, you may feel more like you are co-labouring with God than just doing something on your own because it seems like the right thing to do. And there is nothing more affirming than partnering with God. Is it life-giving? It is to you, and sometimes even to the person with whom you speak.

The number from the Barna report was 56 percent, meaning that 44 percent of respondents did evangelize at least twice in the past year. And if you and a few of your friends—and maybe even some other readers of *Journal of Aggressive Christianity*—join that group and start evangelizing, we could climb into majority status, and you know what that means. We already know it is re-creational. But we can make it trendy again!

21 in 21?

Major Stephen Court

This is the most eagerly anticipated new year in this millennium. Most people were happy to bid farewell to this past year by Founders' Day! And the social restrictions overflowed into many spiritual practices, including evangelism. For much of the year, the changes in habits, from lock down through distancing to mask-wearing, made evangelizing an awkward, sometimes unnatural-feeling exercise. But with gusts of fresh hope billowing through and flipping the page of the calendar, and with 2020 firmly in hindsight, we can dust off our zealous disciplines and great commission passions for a greater year than has ever been experienced.

How?

Let's be intentional. If we kick off this new year looking for the unprecedented, we're likely to see it. How about this for something new? 21 in '21!

What would happen if each of us reading this, each of us - 1,636,388 million junior and senior soldiers worldwide (Year Book 2020 – and the target readership of JAC!) – aimed to personally introducing 21 people to Jesus in 2021?

Well, if we all hit the target, we'd see 34,363,980 people get saved, transferring from the domain of darkness to the Kingdom of Life, from the power of satan (sic) to God, starting an eternal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's just the raw number. But each number composing that total is a story. And when you add up all of those stories, you'll recognize that all kinds of transformations will have occurred: relationships will be reconciled, lives will be cleaned up, character will be reconstructed, the trajectory of family lines will be redirected, sin will decrease (as cases of abuse crater, and use of porn dwindles, and exploitation of women slumps, and addictions plummet, and racism dissipates, and crudity shrinks, and selfishness and greed and bitterness and rage all tail off...).

Easily said.

But how?

Our first encouragement for evangelism is sanctification. That is, get holy. Have Holy Spirit fill you. As the apostle Paul famously instructed, "Be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18b NIV).

Now, while this is basic for every Christian, you might wonder how it particularly helps evangelism. Well, here goes, in at least four ways:

First, Jesus promises Holy Spirit to the disciples in John 16:7b-8 (NIV): "I will send Him to you. When He comes, He will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and

righteousness and judgment.” Yes, Holy Spirit does the convicting. But HE has come TO the disciples and does the convicting. In some sense, as Holy Spirit is filling US, He is convicting people of their guilt concerning sin...

Second, holiness is equated by the apostle John with ‘perfect love’ or ‘complete love’. Here is 1 John 4:17b-18a NIV): “This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: in this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear.” (‘in this world we are like Jesus’! It’s even stronger in NASB: ‘as He is, so also are we in this world’!) One of the big arguments against evangelizing is fear. Perfect love – or, enacted holiness – drives out fear. In this context, holiness equals fearlessness. Impediment gone.

Third, we don’t have to guess ‘at random’ and rely on our own skills and abilities. We can more ably and appropriately partner with the Lord. This is how Jesus describes it, in John 5:19 (NIV): “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by Himself; He can do only what He sees His Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.” As Holy Spirit is filling us, we can more clearly see what the Father is up to in our daily comings and goings. And so, as we’re looking to evangelize, we can pray, based on this verse, ‘Help us to see what You’re doing and do what we’re seeing.’ This helps turn good intentions into divine appointments!

Fourth, holiness removes the concern that we might be embarrassed or offended. Forensically, the negative side of holiness is the neutralization of our sinful nature, our natural inclination to act selfishly (see Romans 6:6). This is most famously, in Salvation Army circles, celebrated in an old Sunday school based on Paul’s testimony in Galatians 2:20 (NIV): “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” So if we’re dead to sin and our life is Jesus living in us – then there is nothing in us to be offended for being insulted or mistreated or ashamed or embarrassed. Holiness makes us offence-proof.

We could go on.

But, why not stop now and repent of anything dodgy you’re coddling? Why not renounce anything questionable that makes you vulnerable to attack? Why not consecrate every area of your life to the Lord Jesus Christ? Why not ask Holy Spirit, right this minute, to invade and fill your whole life?

Now, 21 in ’21 doesn’t seem like as much of a stretch! Now we’re relying on Holy Spirit to convict people of their sin and need, now that we’re missionally fearless, now that we’re seeing Jesus better and following His lead, now that we’re offence-proof, now that God’s love is saturating and overflowing us to others, it only seems (super)natural that we will have all kinds of opportunities to represent the Lord Jesus Christ with His love and plan to all kinds of people over the 365 days that will compose 2021!

Salvationists presume everyone we meet needs to get saved unless and until they demonstrate otherwise. We presume every social interaction is a divine appointment. Filled with Holy Spirit we spread Jesus' love everywhere we can and introduce everyone we can into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Blood and Fire!

Open Letter to Present and Future Leaders

Commissioner Joe Noland

Our future is in the crosshairs: Gen X (65.2 million in U.S.), Gen Y (72.1 million), Gen Z (68 million). Or 74 percent of the population worldwide. Three generations at risk of extinction—Gen X borderline, Y and Z on the precipice.

With each new emerging generation, our ranks are receding. We don't need another study or fancy statistical analysis to ascertain this. Arbitrarily select a western world corps for a visit on any given Sunday. Sit in the back pew and have a look around.

Yes, there are a few XYZ outlier corps and ministries out there struggling. If lucky, you might happenstance on one. Struggling because they no longer fit the cultural mold. Struggling because they meet systemic resistance at every level. Struggling because their heartbeat requires a progressive mindset.

It isn't a loud, in-your-face kind of resistance; it is under the surface, barely discerning and satanically subtle. Most resisters are unaware that they have this disposition. They would argue, convincingly, taking an oath on the Bible, that it doesn't exist. Again, I remind you, take a seat on any back pew and look around.

This has become personal for me. I am a retired Salvation Army officer, an octogenarian, now on the outside looking in. People I care about have left and others are struggling. I no longer face the hierarchical pressures and systemic resistance I once did. I can see more clearly now.

Part of that clarity comes in taking my own 'pew' poll. Since retiring, I've seen a proliferation of very gifted, committed, and extremely ministry-minded XYZ's elect to choose employee status over officership. Had they chosen the latter, most of them would rate right up there in the top ten percent.

Why is that? I wondered, ergo, the catalyst for my poll. The response was both intriguing and eye-opening. In so many words, they all responded to the "why" this way: (Paraphrasing) "I am called and committed to reach this generation for the Lord. As an employee, I have more freedom and am not bound by the appointment structure and its confining accouterments. I can choose where and how I want to serve."

My follow up question was, "What about the security and exceptional active and retirement benefits that officership provides?" Their response: (Again paraphrasing) "Shame on you for even thinking that question! We were called to serve, not to benefit." Yes, shame on me.

Recently, one of those interviewees (Director of YZ Ministries) was terminated and a very effective outreach program to XYZ's defunded and disbanded. To say that he was gifted and committed would be an understatement. Were he an officer, as a DC or TC, I

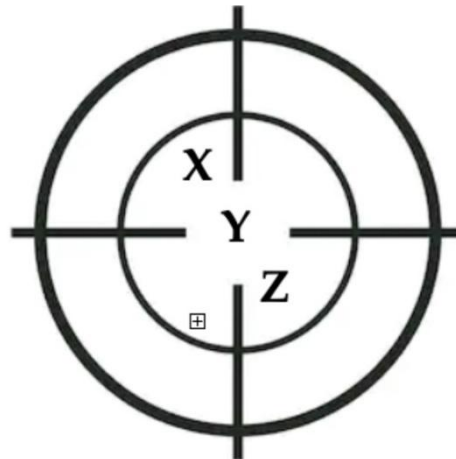
would have taken him in a heartbeat—right up there in the ten percent. And that outreach program would've become the centerpiece of my command.

Covid-19 the culprit, you say? Examine this beside the traditional programs that haven't been defunded or disbanded, those fitting into the cultural mode.

Does all this make me angry? Yes, of course, but even more so, sadness and grief are the overwhelming emotions I'm feeling now. Because I care deeply. Because I desperately want the founding ethos of this movement to go on replicating itself. Because it pains me to think that we're looking at the future through the wrong sights.

Ah, yes, where was I? Present and future leaders, I invite you to take a seat in the back pew, have a look around, and scope it through the crosshairs...

IT WILL BE EYE-OPENING!



PLEASE DON'T SHOOT IT DOWN!

The 7 P's of Perfect Peace

Phil Laeger

(from Phil Laeger's latest book 'Stayed')



In the quiet place that you have chosen for your time alone with God every day, there are steps you can take to develop the habit of "perfect peace" in your life. Each day, there will be a verse from the Bible along with seven Scriptural principles, listed below. Spend a moment with each verse and meditate on it. You may find that, depending on the day, certain principles and verses will resonate in your spirit more than others. No correction is needed here, as God is at work, directing you to the places He wants. The important thing is to establish the habit of meeting with God: trust that He is accomplishing what He wants in and through you.

Along with this devotional, there is a different song included for each day. You may choose to put the song on in the background as you worship, or at the beginning or end of your devotional time. You can access these songs for free on any streaming music platform by searching for "stayed devotional music" or by going to stayedbook.com/music

Following this 21-day guided devotional, you will notice that the format has been divided into seven days, repeated three times.

First Pass (Days 1-7)

Read through the Scriptural principles here. Then, simply read and meditate on each verse for the day, returning throughout the day as able. Do not force yourself too much to cram everything in. Trust that the time you have set aside is enough for God to speak and impress on your heart the things He desires to.

Second Pass (Days 8-14)

On the second pass through, in addition to meditating on the verses and principles during your time, you may wish to journal your thoughts in the space provided, either at the beginning of your day, or perhaps as a reflection as your day comes to a close.

Third Pass (Days 15-21)

For the third time through the devotional, at the end of your morning meditation, we suggest spending a few minutes trying to commit a verse or two to memory. Alternatively, if there is a particular verse jumping out at you, open your Bible and explore the passage in more depth.



Pause

Let all the thoughts you had coming into this time fall at the feet of Jesus, either symbolically or literally, on your knees, if possible. Find a quiet place and be still, recognize any stress or striving and give it to Jesus.



Place

Thank God for where you are, right now, physically, as well as where you are at this station in life (student, staff, employee, parent, child, any other role). You do not need to be anywhere else during this time. God is the sole focus of your attention during this time and you can rest knowing He has provided this place for you.



Person

The center of your life is the relationship you have with the Father, through the person of Jesus Christ. Your worth does not come from what you do but who you are as God's child. Find your identity in Him.



Presence

Wait on the Spirit of God. He may not come to you in a moment but He will come. He may not make Himself physically felt to you, but He is still there. He wants to be with you and you with Him-it is the very last thing He prayed before He faced the cross. You have been on His mind for a long time. He loves you and loves this time with you.



Purpose

First, remember that you have one. You were created by God for His glory and your enjoyment of Him. Second, know that He can infuse meaning into every part of your life, right here and now, even the parts that don't make sense.



Pleading

Knowing that you are loved and that God is caring for you every step of the way, let Him know what is going on in your heart. Cast all your cares upon Him for He cares for you. Also use this time to intercede for others, praying for them as the Spirit leads, and entrusting them to the care of the Lord.



Praise

Sing a song or put some music on if you are able to. We have provided some songs for you, or you may use whatever music you prefer. Music is a powerful tool for marrying the truth of God with the beauty of melody and harmony. Our hearts are drawn to beauty, and music can help us establish God's truth in the deepest places inside of us. If you are in a place where playing music is not an option, meditate on the given verses of praise.

Day One + Eight + Fifteen



Pause

*Be still, and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation.
I will be honored throughout the world.*
(Psalm 46:10, NLT)



Place

But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.
(Matthew 6:6, NLT)



Person

So God created human beings in His own image. In the image of God He created them; male and female He created them.
(Genesis 1 :27, NLT)



Presence

Even when I walk through the dark valley of death. I will not be afraid, for You are close beside me. Your rod and Your staff protect and comfort me.

(Psalm 23:4, NLT)



Purpose

God saved you by His grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago.

(Ephesians 2:8-10, NLT)



Pleading

So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need. So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.

(Matthew 6:31-33, NLT)



Praise

Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts.

(Ephesian 5.18-19, NLT)

Today's Song

Track 1, Seek Me/ Be Still/ I Am

Know that as you get up to leave this sacred time, you can revisit these Scriptures and principles throughout the day. You can **pause** (even for a few seconds, or even just internally while you are processing other things) at any time during the day and thank God for the **place** where you are currently. Remember that you are a **person** created to be filled with the very **presence** of God. He has a glorious **purpose** for you-allow Him to

work it in and through you. When the pain and problems of life arise, surrender to the loving care of the Lord, knowing that He is with you, working out His plan. Serve others by **pleading** to the Lord on their behalf, and lift your heart in **praise** to Him for His goodness throughout the day.

Day Two + Nine + Sixteen



Pause

Be still in the presence of the Lord, and wait patiently for Him to act. Don't worry about evil people who prosper or fret about their wicked schemes.
(Psalm 37:7, NLT)



Place

But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God.
(Daniel 6:10, NLT)



Person

Thank You for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous-how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in Your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. How precious are Your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered!
(Psalm 139:14-17, NLT)



Presence

You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of Your presence and the pleasures of living with You forever.
(Psalm 16:11, NLT)



Purpose

But you are God's chosen treasure-priests who are kings, a spiritual "nation" set apart as God's devoted ones. He called you out of darkness to experience His marvelous light, and now He claims you as His very own. He did this so that you would broadcast His glorious wonders throughout the world.

(1Peter 2.9, TPT)



Pleading

And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?"

(Mark 4:37-40, NLT)



Praise

Let all that I am praise the Lord; with my whole heart, I will praise His holy name. Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things He does for me.

(Psalm 103:1-2, NLT)

Today's Song

Track 2, And Your Love Endures (Always)

Know that as you get up to leave this sacred time, you can revisit these Scriptures and principles throughout the day. You can **pause** (even for a few seconds, or even just internally while you are processing other things) at any time during the day and thank God for the **place** where you are currently. Remember that you are a **person** created to be filled with the very **presence** of God. He has a glorious **purpose** for you-allow Him to work it in and through you. When the pain and problems of life arise, surrender to the loving care of the Lord, knowing that He is with you, working out His plan. Serve others by **pleading** to the Lord on their behalf, and lift your heart in **praise** to Him for His goodness throughout the day.

Day Three + Ten + Seventeen



Pause

*This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: "Only in returning to Me and resting in Me will you be saved. In quietness and confidence is your strength."
(Isaiah 30:15, NLT)*



Place

*From one man He made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from any one of us.
(Acts 17:26-27, NIV)*



Person

*See how very much our Father loves us, for He calls us His children, and that is what we are!
(1 John 3:1, NLT)*



Presence

*Therefore, we who have fled to Him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary.
(Hebrews 6:18b-19, NLT)*



Purpose

*For God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was His plan from before the beginning of time-to show us His grace through Christ Jesus.
(2 Timothy 1.9, NLT)*



Pleading

But You, Sovereign Lord, help me for Your name's sake; out of the goodness of Your love, deliver me. For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.
(Psalm 109:21-22, NIV)



Praise

For this world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come. Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to His name.
(Hebrews 13:14-15, NLT)

Today's Song

Track 3, Have Your Way In Me, Lord

Know that as you get up to leave this sacred time, you can revisit these Scriptures and principles throughout the day. You can **pause** (even for a few seconds, or even just internally while you are processing other things) at any time during the day and thank God for the **place** where you are currently. Remember that you are a **person** created to be filled with the very **presence** of God. He has a glorious **purpose** for you-allow Him to work it in and through you. When the pain and problems of life arise, surrender to the loving care of the Lord, knowing that He is with you, working out His plan. Serve others by **pleading** to the Lord on their behalf, and lift your heart in **praise** to Him for His goodness throughout the day.

Day Four + Eleven + Eighteen



Pause

Let all that I am wait quietly before God, for my hope is in Him.
(Psalm 62:5, NLT)



Place

For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven.
(Ecclesiastes 3:1, NLT)



Person

*For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus.
(Galatians 3:26, NLT)*



Presence

*And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive Him, because it isn't looking for Him and doesn't recognize Him. But you know Him, because He lives with you now and is in you. No, I will not abandon you as orphans- / will come to you.
(John 14:16-18, NLT)*



Purpose

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take.
(Proverbs 3:5-6, NLT)*



Pleading

*I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them.
(1 Timothy 2:1, NLT)*



Praise

*When all the people of Israel saw the fire coming down and the glorious presence of the Lord filling the Temple, they fell face down on the ground and worshiped and praised the Lord, saying, "He is good! His faithful love endures forever!"
(2 Chronicles 7:3, NLT)*

Today's Song

Track 4, Teach Me To Abide In You

Know that as you get up to leave this sacred time, you can revisit these Scriptures and principles throughout the day. You can **pause** (even for a few seconds, or even just internally while you are processing other things) at any time during the day and thank God for the **place** where you are currently. Remember that you are a **person** created to be filled with the very **presence** of God. He has a glorious **purpose** for you-allow Him to work it in and through you. When the pain and problems of life arise, surrender to the loving care of the Lord, knowing that He is with you, working out His plan. Serve others by **pleading** to the Lord on their behalf, and lift your heart in **praise** to Him for His goodness throughout the day.

Day Five + Twelve + Nineteen



Pause

Then Jesus said, "Come to Me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you. Let Me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

(Matthew 11.28-29, NLT)



Place

The Lord is watching everywhere, keeping His eye on both the evil and the good.

(Joshua 1.9,NLT)



Person

Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people-none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God. Some of you were once like that. But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

(1 Corinthians 6.9-11, NLT)



Presence

How great is the goodness You have stored up for those who fear You. You lavish it on those who come to You for protection, blessing them before the watching world. You hide them in the shelter of Your presence, safe from those who conspire against them. You shelter them in Your presence, far from accusing tongues.

(Psalm 31 :19-20, NLT)



Purpose

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them.

(Romans 8:28, NLT)



Pleading

Give all your worries and cares to God, for He cares about you.

(1Peter 5:7,NLT)



Praise

Praise the Lord! Yes, give praise, O servants of the Lord. Praise the name of the Lord! Blessed be the name of the Lord now and forever. Everywhere-from east to west-praise the name of the Lord.

(Psalm 113:1-3, NLT)

Today's Song

Track 5, Come Unto Me

Know that as you get up to leave this sacred time, you can revisit these Scriptures and principles throughout the day. You can **pause** (even for a few seconds, or even just internally while you are processing other things) at any time during the day and thank God for the **place** where you are currently. Remember that you are a **person** created to be filled with the very **presence** of God. He has a glorious **purpose** for you-allow Him to work it in and through you. When the pain and problems of life arise, surrender to the loving care of the Lord, knowing that He is with you, working out His plan. Serve others by **pleading** to the Lord on their behalf, and lift your heart in **praise** to Him for His goodness throughout the day.

Day Six+ Thirteen + Twenty



Pause

Wait patiently for the Lord. Be brave and courageous. Yes, wait patiently for the Lord.
(Psalm 27:14, NLT)



Place

Lord, through all the generations You have been our home!
(Psalm 90:1, NLT)



Person

Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are His dear children.
(Ephesians 5:1, NLT)



Presence

I can never escape from Your Spirit! I can never get away from Your presence! If I go up to heaven, You are there; if I go down to the grave, You are there. If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, even there Your hand will guide me, and Your strength will support me.
(Psalm 139:7-10, NLT)



Purpose

So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.
(1 Corinthians 10:31, NLT)



Pleading

For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.

(2 Corinthians 4:17-18, NLT)



Praise

Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts.

(Ephesians 5:18-19, NLT)

Today's Song

Track 6, Your Love Is Better

Know that as you get up to leave this sacred time, you can revisit these Scriptures and principles throughout the day. You can **pause** (even for a few seconds, or even just internally while you are processing other things) at any time during the day and thank God for the **place** where you are currently. Remember that you are a **person** created to be filled with the very **presence** of God. He has a glorious **purpose** for you-allow Him to work it in and through you. When the pain and problems of life arise, surrender to the loving care of the Lord, knowing that He is with you, working out His plan. Serve others by **pleading** to the Lord on their behalf, and lift your heart in **praise** to Him for His goodness throughout the day.

Day Seven + Fourteen + Twenty One



Pause

The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.

(Exodus 14:14, NIV)



Place

Father, I want these whom You have given Me to be with Me where I am. Then they can see all the glory You gave Me because You loved Me even before the world began!
(John 17:24, NLT)



Person

Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God.
(Colossians 3:2-3, NLT)



Presence

For the Lord your God is living among you. He is a mighty Savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With His love, He will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs.
(Zephaniah 3:17, NLT)



Purpose

They will be My people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart and one purpose: to worship Me forever, for their own good and for the good of all their descendants.
(Jeremiah 32:38-39, NLT)



Pleading

Now all glory to God, who is able, through His mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to Him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.
(Ephesians 3:20, NLT)



Praise

After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes and held palm branches in their hands. And they were shouting with a great roar, "Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!"
(Revelation 7.9-10, NLT)

Today's Song

Track 7, Calmed And Quieted

Know that as you get up to leave this sacred time, you can revisit these Scriptures and principles throughout the day. You can **pause** (even for a few seconds, or even just internally while you are processing other things) at any time during the day and thank God for the **place** where you are currently. Remember that you are a **person** created to be filled with the very **presence** of God. He has a glorious **purpose** for you-allow Him to work it in and through you. When the pain and problems of life arise, surrender to the loving care of the Lord, knowing that He is with you, working out His plan. Serve others by **pleading** to the Lord on their behalf, and lift your heart in **praise** to Him for His goodness throughout the day.

High Counsel: Leading in Leadership

Commissioner Jim Knaggs

Editors' note: This chapter title comes from Commissioner Joe Noland's book, HIGH COUNSEL, in which he looks to the teaching of Jesus and the example of General John Gowans, to suggest a practical, biblical model for leadership. Commissioner Jim Knaggs has stamped three territories with his inimitable creative, apostolic leadership and spins this chapter out of a life's worth of proven experience.

Leading people in the salvation war may seem like an established discipline where all the requirements to do so are established and proven. Certainly, in an Army of Orders and Regulations, one needs only to follow the handbook or at least the steps of a predecessor to know what to do. As a leader in The Salvation Army, I often discovered that existing policies and procedures were not quite adequate for the responsibilities at hand.

Contained in this chapter are briefly expressed aspects of leading that are valuable for our changing culture and the dynamic environments in which we are called to serve. These very social diversities are more prevalent today than ever. Leading others is a moving target.

Leading or leadership ...there is a difference

We speak regularly about leadership as is revealed by the title of this chapter. We conduct leadership seminars, consult leadership books and look for leadership in people.

I see, however a distinct difference in thinking about a person's leadership and their ability to be a leader. Can we consider how the difference might actually affect the realities of leading? Having searched leadership on Google, I received 529,000,000 results in 0.29 seconds. Good for Google. In 0.35 seconds, Google found 6,020,000,000 results on leading. Looks like interest in leading wins over leadership. It does for me, too.

Leadership itself seems to establish a label and culture for leading. I think we need a better approach in this generation.

The difference is in how either defines a person: You can be a leader, but you cannot be a leadership. The study of leadership can lead you to be a leader, but leadership to a leader is possibly a title or maybe a craft, but hardly a way of life.

The key to this concern is found in our approach to the subject much in demand of leadership development. As I see it, we need leader development. Distinct from the scope of style, format and practice is the person that needs development, growth, and experience.

You know you're a leader if people are following you. A leader can have leadership ability, and logically does, but leadership in itself does not necessarily make a person a leader. Can we move on from talking about leadership as if it were a mantle and simply lead?

Philippians 2:3

“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves.”

Lead from the heart of God ...you must know Him

In the corporate context, the expectation to know God's heart to be a leader will not be valued by all. I understand that. Many military leaders too wouldn't be quick to add that qualifier to their list of leader priorities either. That is, unless they knew what I know.

God's heart is at the center of the entire creation and everything that has been and will be created. He knows about corporate matters and wars. He knows about a country, a city, a community, and a home. What decision is it that you need to make for which He isn't already aware?

Knowing the heart of God is more essential than the side of the tracks you come from, the degrees you earned at university, or even your inherent giftedness to lead. Where did that come from anyway? Of course. When you follow God, you'll always be right.

So lead today... using your education, experience, and personality. You'll do it best from your personal, holy relationship with God.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 ESV:

Thus says the Lord: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord.

Lead by example ...nothing is more convincing

We've established that when we lead best, we do so following God. When Jesus teaches us about how to lead, we ought to pay attention. He did it by showing others what it all meant. Here are ways He showed us to lead:

- Expect people to listen to your leading? Listen to them.
- Expecting people to be motivated to excellence? Show what motivates you.
- Expecting people to be honest? ...

- Expecting people to be loyal? ...
- Expecting people to respect you? ...

This is vividly conveyed in many instances with Jesus, but pointedly with the woman at the well recorded in John 4:1-26. Jesus **listened** to her carefully. He spoke about His **passion** of new life in the living water. He told her **honestly** who He was. He was **faithful** to her in her context and **respected** her in every way. She followed Him.

In every aspect of leading, your example is the first orientation for potential followers. You're not perfect? Show them how you manage through.

“Nevertheless, Thy will be done.” – Jesus

Warren C. Johnson ... a man I could follow

Praise God for His faithfulness and the loving memory of Warren Johnson, Order of the Founder. Carolyn and I join the many Salvationists and friends around the world who give thanks to God for Warren Johnson from the Tustin Ranch Corps in California. His ministry and many friendships are unparalleled in The Salvation Army as he readily embraced God's gift in his life and shared God's love abundantly with everyone he met.

He showed us all what it means to be an authentic Salvationist and how to serve God with his every living day. We will always remember him as a loving father, husband and faithful evangelist.

His witness was a constant reminder of the love of God and the possibilities for every one of us. He was inducted into the Order of the Founder of The Salvation Army for his “outstanding and exemplary service above and beyond the call of duty, demonstrating commitment to evangelism and spiritual formation at corps, territory, and world-wide levels.”

He was most deserving of this honor and he was a great leader. His life was filled by God's Spirit and led many of us to deeper commitments and service. We will always remember his great witness among us. His influence on our lives remains significant. Well done, thy good and faithful servant.

Lead with trust ...for the followers

In the course of leading, I have repeatedly encouraged the leader to follow God and trust Him completely. The trust I write about here is that of those who follow you. The leader must trust the followers.

In the trusting of followers, we demonstrate a deeper respect and interest in them. We need to be listening and maintain circumspect concern for them, their hopes, and their value. The point of leading is that there are people who will follow you. I'm convinced

the level of their commitment to follow is directly proportional to the trust you have in them.

In order to trust them, you must get to know them and understand them as best you can. Best friends? This is not necessary; but having an awareness of what drives them is most meaningful. The time it takes is worthwhile. The relationship will undoubtedly even sharpen your resolve, alignment, and focus on the mission.

Philippians 2:3-4 ESV:

“Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

Leading through the storm ...*just where you're needed*

This is when the leader can be at their best... in the storm. Conflict, confusion, contention and all can be a challenge, but the leader leads through it. This is meant to include even those who lead around it. How the storm is confronted is not the issue. A leader knows what to do in the process.

Some leaders see the storm coming. Other storms creep up on you and are in your face when you least expect it. A leader is ready for both, always considering the possibilities and measuring the potential for missional success in the process. Leaders have been known to welcome storms as they present opportunities to actually advance, like the sailor leveraging a strong wind.

Curse not the storm. Take advantage of it to test your mettle and resolve. The strong survive by grace.

Deuteronomy 31:6 ESV:

“Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.”

Lead with Confidence ...*a sure direction*

All of us are less likely to engage in any significant direction if we're unsettled about the way to go. I do believe firmly in stepping out in faith, so what's the difference? Confidence. One of my favorite leaders used to say about himself, “I may not always be right, but I'm always decisive.” He was an exceptional leader.

When the leader is conveying a surety about the direction to go, we are more encouraged to follow. Confidence is not unsubstantiated gall. That would be cockiness. The confidence comes when one is sure of who they are, where they fit, and the mission at hand. Can you see how a holy leader has a distinct advantage? Me, too.

This is not to say that the leader is always right. Many are not, but when we follow the right leader, they are quick to recognize their error and realign with grace, transparency, and... confidence.

I'm sure of it.

2 Corinthians 3:5 ESV:

“Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God.”

Lead with discipline ... *it's hard to follow random*

I believe it's critically important that we lead with discipline. There is a perspective of followers that will be set at ease if your 'lead' is even somewhat predictable. The discipline then has to do with consistency, alignment to mission, adherence to moral standards and generally an even pace in the process.

Our feelings as leaders must be subject to our disciplines, which are based upon our moral posture, best grounded in the Word of God and in following Jesus. We cannot let the weather, social environment, prestige or popularity bully us into diverting from the direction we are committed to take. This absolutely requires discipline.

Keep your focus by clarifying and revisiting your mandate on a regular basis. Test it with your followers and your prayers. When you need to change direction, people will be more likely to follow you still since your disciplines make you dependable.

Proverbs 25:28 ESV:

“A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.”

Lead the best ... *by getting the lead out*

One of the exciting parts of leading is getting going. It's also a bit scary. How thrilling!

The point I want to make here has to do with getting the lead out of leading. That is to say, get the lead out of your shoes, the weight that's slowing you down, and in some cases, holding you back. A good decision to lead most always involves taking a first step and not waiting. Timing, of course is important, but if you wait to get going, you may never get there.

One would also make a strong argument to pace oneself so as to be steady, firm and true. These are great qualities as long as the matter is moving forward. Standing still or moving slowly might allow the circumstances to move beyond your place and require even another decision to compensate.

Let's get the lead out of leading.

Hebrews 12:1 ESV:

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

Lead leaders ...*you're not alone*

In this great process of leading, you'll discover that you're at your best when you're leading leaders. At most levels of leadership, this is consistently true. The leader of a country knows s/he is not just leading followers, but leaders. It's the best way to maximize your impact and leading.

On this basis, we need to value our position so that the other leaders can lead effectively as well. This bodes well for respect, modeling, honesty, transparency, and mission focus among a long list of realities. When you're leading well, so can they. If they're guessing or uncertain, they cannot do their valuable part.

Leading followers? Think about the leaders you're leading. They don't need your micro-management. They need you to lead with your best. That would be to always follow Jesus.

Exodus 19:8 ESV:

“All the people answered together and said, ‘All that the Lord has spoken we will do.’ And Moses reported the words of the people to the Lord.”

Leading to the end ...*Jason Johnson*

Rev 2:10 NLT:

“If you remain faithful even when facing death, I will give you the crown of life.”

Jason Johnson was faced with declaring his faith in the face of death and was martyred as a result. He was killed in Oregon's worst mass shooting, after a gunman opened fire on the campus of Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon. He was going to school to turn his life around. He also had been attending The Salvation Army where his faith and direction from God was affirmed. Hallelujah!

He led the way for all of us who trust God and love Him. In fact, we face death more often than we realize. With each decision to follow God, we choose life over death. We choose to be obedient to the best of what we can be as opposed to the death that awaits our carnal and self-centered desires. It's life and death for us all.

Let's follow Jesus all the way, like Jason.

The Leader ...*my conclusion, choice, and recommendation*

Jesus is absolutely the leader to follow. Unequivocally, He is the best not just in the past, but today as well. Your future is assured as you follow Him.

He leads today from the recorded text of the Bible. His words, lifestyle, commitment, passion and integrity show us the way to take. He is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” He’s also the only way to the Father, our God.

If you are interested in leading... everyone leads at some point... start by following Jesus. I have nothing better to write and nothing more revolutionary or more effective.

Take the time now to begin to follow Him, or affirm your intention to do so better. I find it difficult to follow anyone in serious matters who does not follow Jesus.

John 14:6 (NIV):

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

Book Review: A Hopeful Vision of Beatitude Community

Major Stephen Court

a review of Aaron White's book 'RECOVERING'

Aaron White's 'RECOVERING': From Brokenness and Addiction to Blessedness and Community, is a profound explication of a comprehensive but disregarded scaffolding for Salvation Life, the blessings of Matthew 5:1-12 in Jesus' teaching known as the 'Sermon on the Mount.' The title suggests the context in which Jesus' blessings can be operationalized – Beatitudes evinced in an addiction ecosphere (however, as you read, you'll likely test the flexibility of this concept and find it mind-blowingly reversible, that recovering communities epitomize beatitude!).

Even before many review readers can dismiss the subject matter by the title – RECOVERING – the target audience is instantly expanded, in the introduction, to about 7.8 billion book readers: "What is at stake is not just recovery from drugs, alcohol, and other attachments, but the recovery of full humanity, which is the recovery of the image of the divine in each person. (6) This means 'everybody'.

And through full-bodied teaching interwoven with gut-wrenching illustrations the author crafts a vision of Jesus' ideal for living life together, a concept christened Beatitude Community. White explains, "Recovery communities understand that a wholesale renewal of heart, mind, lifestyle, and relationships is necessary for those addicted to drugs and alcohol. The Beatitudes show that a complete reorientation of life is no less necessary for those who have been conformed to the dislocation of the world." (34)

Readers of Recovering are treated to an ecumenical primer of Christian thought from Saint Macarius the Great, Elder Ephraim, and Abba Isaac the Syrian to Annie Dillard, Dallas Willard, and Rebekah Eklund. To establish his case, White leans on a term coined by Gregory of Nazianzus – theosis - and argues:

"Union with Christ makes sense of the Beatitudes. Who embodies the Beatitudes more than Jesus? Who is poorer of spirit, more mournful, meeker, hungering and thirsting more for righteousness, more merciful, purer of heart, more of a peacemaker, and more persecuted for the sake of righteousness? Christ does not just bless the broken; he is the broken. And Christ is also the exemplar of the "blessed": the inheritor of heaven and earth, the son of God, the comforted, the fulfilled. He is the perfect picture of what it means to be fully human in our brokenness and blessedness." (38)

"One of the key ways for us to create and sustain Beatitude Communities is through intentional friendship with those who can lead is further down the road of vulnerability." (62) What does that look like with your corps on your local front? Who are the most fragile people in your community, the most marginalized? How can you, individually and as a corps, befriend these people well enough to be granted the privilege of honesty about resentment and guilt and regret?

Being confronted with such raw brokenness can be immobilizing. White talks us out of motivational paralysis, counseling, “Rather than trying to transform the world, focus on transforming your table so that you can start making peace on your block.” (150)

This will be a stretch for many, but it is more plausible and practical than ‘world peace’. And, maybe in the process of transforming your table, you’ll participate in the transformation of your block. And from there? God knows.

“This is the purpose of the Beatitudes: not to bring us sobriety, progressive politics, good morals, or full churches, but to guide us toward the recovery of Jesus’ divine image in us and in one another.” And White’s RECOVERING will accelerate the advance toward this goal. (171)