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Editorial Introduction

By Major Stephen Court, editor

Greetings in Jesus' name. Welcome to the 144th edition of Journal of Aggressive Christianity. JAC144 is the High Council Issue.

And it is different from previous JAC High Council content. In that past, we've offered up a whole bunch of articles on High Council, including 'Why Council' (Andrew Bale), 'A High Council Challenge' (Joe Noland), 'High Council' (Wesley Harris), 'The High Council: Who Will Be Nominated', 'What Does The World Think of High Council Delegates', 'High Council Revolution: The Pope and The General', 'High Council Revival', 'High Council Myth Busters' (read all of these, here: JAC Issue 086 [<link>](#)), 'High Council Issues' (here: JAC Issue 070 [<link>](#)), as well as the JAC ebook 'General Counsel' (Joe Noland and your JAC editor) (here: JAC Issue 114 [<link>](#)), 'The Supremacy Of Christ' (Eva Burrows) (not completely on the High Council but an inside story, here: JAC Issue 059 [<link>](#), right back to the very first issue of JAC (JAC1!) in the last century, 'A Manifesto of Aggressive Christianity' by John Norton (not completely on High Council but with commentary, here: JAC Issue 001 [<link>](#)).

We invite you to dig back into that archive of High Council treasure.

But in JAC144, we're leaning in to prayer. The Salvation Army Spiritual Life Development group made a call for prayer for High Council delegates (and is resourcing that call, here: The Salvation Army Spiritual Life Development – Posts | Facebook [<link>](#)). The High Council is scheduled to meet during the current life of JAC144 (May 2023). And we've gathered intercessory direction from salvationists around the world.

JAC144 kicks off with General Paul Rader offering some parameters and then a prayer in A God-born Army.

Soldier Jeni Lipsett in British Columbia, Canada and Bermuda, offers a prophetic word and a devotional exercise in Awaken.

Soldier James McArthur in Toronto, Ontario, Canada and Bermuda, leads us in a heart-felt prayer called Wisdom.

Captain Nana Fatouma Togo, Regional Secretary for Women's Ministries/Mali Region, offers a nearly comprehensive exercise for us in A Prayer for the High Council.

Captain Jessica Welch-Tursi, Corps Officer in north of Italy and Youth coordinator for the Italy and Greece Territory, shares a prophetic appeal to God for us in Return To Me.

Major Rob Reardon, Director of Mission & Ministry, at USW's Training College, has been leading General Prayer for years (see the article for a link to join), and leads our prayer here in Praying At Noon.

And that's JAC144. If you read, share, and pray, God only knows the potential eternal impact of this issue! God bless The Salvation Army.

Much grace.

A God-born Army

General Paul Rader

A God-born Army requires competent and godly leadership - leadership with clarity of vision and an evident anointing of the Spirit. Discerning and affirming the leader to take the movement forward with a certainty of direction is the task of the High Council. In fact, its only task. Who emerges as the General for this time is not only a matter of interest, but of critical importance to every Salvationist. True, in the event, a body of 120 or so men and women will be required to speak for an Army of 1,000,000 and more Salvationists around the world. But they are informed, experienced and spiritually sensitive leaders from every command and territory. They are Independent in their judgments. We are praying that in the intensely spiritual atmosphere in which they will meet this chosen body will know the mind of the Spirit.

Does this matter to those of us who are ordinary Salvationists caught up in the ministries of our local corps? Indeed, it does. There is much at stake that touches the life of every corps and every soldier. Who we are and what are we called to be and do in our lost and troubled world - beginning with the opportunities right before us wherever we are. How do we and how will we understand our mission and purpose? And what should be our priorities in fulfilling that mission?

The General plays a key role in determining and promoting our understanding of all this and so much more.

- The General represents us. The General has a major role in setting the spiritual tone for the Army.
- The General guards the doctrinal integrity of the Army
- The General has a fiscal responsibility for the Army.
- The General selects or approves top leadership in the Movement.
- The General is both a symbol of our unity as a worldwide movement but actively promotes it.
- The General is charged with maintaining the legacy, guiding the mission, and pointing the future of the Movement.

In all this the General serves both as CEO and spiritual leader.

Few churches or missions come close to putting the measure of authority and influence in the hands of their leaders as does the Army. It is all the more critical that we join in a global concert of prayer for God's guidance to be granted the members of the High Council as they seek to know the mind of the Lord in identifying the person to be our global leader.

No one 'runs' for the Generalship. It is not a political objective to be sought. If nominated, one can choose to stand for election or not. It is a task, a heavy mantle of responsibility one is called and chosen to accept. In all the proceedings of the Council and the pre-Council program the members give themselves to recognizing the person with oil on their brow and fire in their heart whom God has chosen and anointed for this hour.

The Council needs — requires the mobilization of our prayer power around the Army world focused on these critical days in May as the High Council convenes. We can be a part of this. Our prayer participation matters. Helpful materials have been prepared and regular bulletins will be made available. What will you and I do?

Let's pray

Father, this is about You and the Army born in Your heart and fighting under Your banner. Guide those charged with seeking Your will in this matter so vital to the future. Bring Your people together around the world to join in interceding for the members of the Council as they prepare their hearts for the task before them. Your will be done so that Your Army may sense Your blessing and guidance as we confront the challenges to which we are committed. Your Kingdom come and Your will be done here and now for Your Glory. We pray in the strong name of Jesus, the Captain of our Salvation. Amen.

Awaken

Jeni Lipsett

A comfortable and adored bride. Asleep in the night, though she must have been waiting for him as the lantern was still lit. She was warm and comfortable in the security of her bed. However, she was unwilling to respond to the call of her lover who had been in the dark of the night, his head heavy with the wet dew.

She yearned for the intimacy and closeness of her lover, but He was calling her to leave the warmth and comfort of her bed. He was calling her to a more mature understanding of what it was to love Him and to be his partner. He was calling her to share His suffering with Him.

She waited too long to respond, and He left without her. Too late she awakened to His call. She went out without Him, and the cost was heavier than what it could have been had she opened the door to Him right away. No matter what should have been, her Lover loved her enough to not give up on her and, she, in her way, loved Him enough to repent of her complacency.

The body of Christ is in a season where Jesus is awakening His church. He wants His church to mature in her love for Him. He is calling us to a deeper understanding of His love. Jesus is standing at the door of our hearts, knocking. He is trying to open the latch, but it has been locked and He cannot enter. There are two potential reasons why we have locked the doors of our hearts to Him:

The first being His calling the body of Christ to seek Him, to share in the fellowship of His suffering; to be willing to leave the comfortable places; to risk all for the sake of Him. The Salvation Army has a vast history of being willing to lay down her life for the call of Christ and go into the darkest places of the earth. She has won many battles and continues to do so. However, I would argue that she has grown comfortable. She has grown comfortable behind her building walls and behind the walls of organization and hierarchy. Jesus is calling The Salvation Army to awaken to her first love. He is calling her to come alive once again and be reminded of her first and most important call, to Him.

Or it could be that the door that Jesus is knocking on is more intimate. The door could represent areas of our hearts that have yet to be opened to the loving, and healing presence of the Father. As full-time ministry leaders, the demand to give more than is being received can be overwhelming and often louder than the knocking of the lover of our souls. Sometimes, Jesus wants to take us in the recesses of our hearts that are the darkest, most hidden, unseen places. He seeks entry, but they are locked, with signs that say, "Do Not Enter." These are places long forgotten or buried under layers of dust and dirt, covered up by the stress and chaos that ministry brings. It is a door that is too scary to open because who knows what lies behind, who knows what darkness is waiting to surface and how do I even have time to deal with the pain. However, it is in these places that Jesus wants to deepen our trust of Him and He wants these places to be full of light and a garden of abundance. He wants ministry to pour through us in a fresh and new way. He is inviting us into the recesses of our hearts but are we too comfortable in our fear and

our apathy? As we allow Jesus into these places, He brings freedom, He makes streams in the wilderness.

Jesus, you are the WAY, the TRUTH, the LIFE. You stand at the door and knock on the doors of our hearts, our churches. You long to enter in and seek to share your sufferings (Phil 3:8-12) with us. I pray that we will awaken and respond to the sound of Your voice. To the sound of your hand trying to unlatch the bolts on our heart. Make a way for us through this dark night that is to come upon us.

Jesus is calling His bride to awaken. Listen for His voice. Allow Him to wake you from your slumber. Respond to the call to step out of what is comfortable, what you know. Seek Him while He may be found. He is longing for a BRIDE. A Mature Bride, who will walk beside Him in humility, in Power and in His glory. Rise up from the ashes of defeat and loss. Break through the fear and the complacency that has wrapped its tentacles around your souls. He has the power. He has gained the victory. Death is no more. The power of sin and death is not our inheritance. Complacency and compromise are our prisons, not our defense. Allow Him to do the work He wants to do in our hearts and in our church.

He is calling us to search the heart. Take the time.

Start off by meditating on these scriptures:

Philippians 3:8-12

Song of Solomon 5:2-8

Revelation 3:20

As you wait for Him, pay attention to the words standing out to you as you read.

- Write them down.
- Take the time to ask Him what they mean to you.
- What is He saying to you, personally? Dig deep and take the time to fully grasp what it is He is speaking.

Here are a few other questions that might be good to ask as well:

- What door is He knocking on?
- Where have you been resistant/complacent in responding to His voice?
- Where and how do I repent?
- What is one thing I can do to move toward His guidance?

Wisdom

James McArthur

*In Christ alone my hope is found;
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This cornerstone, this solid ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My comforter, my all in all—
Here in the love of Christ I stand*

Our Father, as the 2023 High Council prepares to attend Sunbury Court, I ask that you would prepare their hearts and minds to be faithful servants of the trust placed in their hands.

As they prepare, Lord, we repent and confess that...

- We have not loved you as we should in thought, word and deed,
- We have become like the world around us, rather than set apart for Your service. Cleanse us from the dust of earthly striving,
- In our human weakness, we are frequently caught up in the power of our positions rather than in magnifying Your Glory, forgive us, Lord.
- We confess that the message of the Gospel in our movement, has frequently been supplanted by the desire for public funding, and we have surrendered a Gospel ministry for a man-centred program seeking “Social Justice”, forgive us, Lord.
- We are enamoured with numbers and programs rather than Salvation of sinners and transformed lives.
- We have replaced a dependence on Your Word and Spirit with worldly wisdom.

Father, we thank You that as we confess our sins, that You are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Hallelujah!

As we pray for your wisdom in selecting a new General, we would ask that You would help us discern who is 100% committed to the authority of Scripture and exemplifies this in their preaching, by making the point of the text the content of every sermon. Lord, please help every participant to discern that the nominees affirm the authority of Scripture and an orthodox understanding of God’s character, human nature, the work of Christ and the nature of conversion. We would ask that a biblical understanding of the Gospel would be at the heart of any nominee’s commitment to sound doctrine... that is, that every human needs his or her sins forgiven, and that this forgiveness is only available through the substitutionary death of Christ. And lastly, Lord, we would ask that our next General would have an extensive record of discipling others to follow Jesus.

Lord, we would ask that as we look to You, the author and perfecter of our faith, that You would revive us again.

*Revive thy work, O Lord,
Give power unto thy Word;
Grant that thy blessed gospel may
In living faith be heard.
Revive thy work, O Lord,
And give refreshing showers;
The glory shall be all thine own,
The blessing shall be ours.*

A Prayer for the High Council

Captain Nana Fatouma Togo

Health

Dear Heavenly Father:

Receive glory and honor for the ministry of Your servants, General Brian and Commissioner Rosalie Peddle, for all these faithful years of services in Your vineyard. We pray for Your continuous divine presence in their farewell meeting and after retirement. May You renew their strengths each and every day in Jesus' name.

We pray for the chief of staff, Commissioner Lyndon Buckingham as he presides over the opening of the High Council until the election of the President: Lord be his wisdom.

I want to thank You for choosing each member of the coming High Council.

We pray in Jesus' name, our Lord and Saviour, as they are preparing to get together for the election of the next General, may they constantly remember that their bodies are Your indwelling temple to bring glory into Your name.

Heavenly Father, You know them by their names and circumstances. We uplift them before Your throne of grace. Keep each of our leaders, bless them both with spiritual and physical health, let no diseases hinder the smooth running of the electoral process.

Faithful God, fill their months with testimonies on Your divine intervention, spiritual renewal throughout the whole process in Jesus' name.

Father, we pray for spiritual discernment for a God-fearing new General who will not compromise with this world patterns and systems in leading the Army worldwide.

Thank You, heavenly Father, for choosing the man or women according Your own heart, born of Your will to lead Your Army for the next coming years.

Families

Thank You, Heavenly Father, for the gift of a family.

As Your servants are planning to move out of their different families for Your kingdom business, we bring all their family's members before Your throne of grace.

Lord, protect them against any evil calendar. May You please keep them safe and healthy. May You provide to their needs and grant them Your peace. May they be continuously in Your presence, today and for ever more. May they know more of You as their best friend, Saviour, and Everlasting Father.

Well-being

Lord, we pray for the well-being of the members of the High Council, that they may abide constantly in You.

We pray that they will be subject to Your will, Lord, we confess that without You they won't achieve anything, but with You they will do great things for the benefits of Your army. Please keep them rooted in You.

Patience

Gracious, Loving, and Patient Father, thank You for the daily sufficient portion of Your patience we are benefitting. We pray for Your chosen HC members to have grace-filled loving and patient hearts. May they never rush into decision but wait upon You. Grant them the assurance of Your presence with abundant patience to hear Your voice. To You we commit them; help them to execute Your will.

Humility

Loving Father, as You showed us by example leaving Your glory and coming in human flesh, we pray for the High Council members that they may have the same sentiments that were in Christ. Help them not to be selfish but to seek Your leading. May their desires, will, and thoughts decrease that You may be increased. Let Your kingdom come, let Your will be done in Jesus' Name!

*Captain Nana Fatouma Togo
Regional Secretary for Women's Ministries/Mali Burkina Faso Region*

Return to Me

Captain Jessica Welch-Tursi

When thinking about the Salvation Army today, 1 Corinthians 12:26 comes to mind, *“If one part suffers, every part suffers with it...”*.

There is no way to ignore the malaise affecting officers in recent years: many of us are burnt-out, overwhelmed, and disenchanting. Quite a few have handed in their resignation. How do we go forward?

The body is suffering and at the same time there is as big a need as ever, if not more, for covenanted warriors to serve suffering humanity in His name. The forced standstill caused by the pandemic was in many ways an opportunity to pause and regroup and yet, our need to be Martha saw us galloping ahead relentlessly.

God’s desire was to *“allure [the Salvation Army]”* and *“lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her”* (Hosea 2:14): *“Martha, Martha... you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one”* (Luke 10:41). *“Return to Me,”* declares the LORD Almighty, *‘and I will return to you.’* (Zechariah 1:3).

In trying to keep up with trends, statistics, reputation, and donors a huge burden has been put on the new generation of officers. We were called to be shepherds in the wilderness, led by the Spirit to become ‘all things to all people’, walking closely and intimately with Jesus under His yoke and we find ourselves instead like hamsters in a wheel, torn between our calling and the expectations of our leaders. Why are they conflicting? Why does officership hurt? Why do we feel not heard and broken to the point where, as much as it pains us, some choose to leave?

I think the enemy has managed to make us believe that we are fighting alone and that things are hopeless. They are not.

‘Return to me,’ return to the wilderness. The time is now.

To stop the hemorrhage of the Body, we need to tend to the wounded and ask them questions. We need to take a moment to pause and seek Him away from distractions.

Very shortly, leaders from around the World will meet to elect the new General of The Salvation Army. He or she (!) will determine our path for the next years. How do we pray? The Lord’s prayer seems fitting.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name

You are the Holy One, Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things.

This holiness movement was birthed from Your heart - set it apart once again.

Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

Your Kingdom come in our ranks, in our covenanted lives, in our Corps.

Your will be done by each one of us, individually and as an Army.

Your will be done as leaders gather to elect the newest General.

Give us today our daily bread.

We need You.

Give us hunger and thirst for You, only then, will we be satisfied.

Forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors.

Fill our hearts with the Spirit of forgiveness.

Give us courage to put our egos to death, to not get easily offended, to turn the other cheek, and offer second chances.

Give us the humility to support those who come 'under' us, to equip them, to share the burden and serve joyfully alongside them.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Jesus, we want You. We repent of the times we have sought anything else. You are our reason for being. Close our eyes to temptation. Purge our hearts from evil. Give us clean hearts, Jesus.

**For yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory for ever and ever.
Amen.**

1 Corinthians 12:26 does go on. *"if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it..."* And so, if Jesus is honoured (valuing Him for who *He really is*) as the head of the Body and of this Army, if each covenanted warrior is honoured (ascribed *weight* by recognizing real *value*) we will be able to fulfill our calling to serve suffering humanity and advance God's Kingdom on earth and in each one of us.

We have a divine war to fight and we will claim the victory if we tend to our wounds, purge our hearts of sin, and fight together!

Let's persevere in this sacred covenanted life and let's win the world for our Jesus!

Praying At Noon

Major Rob Reardon

From our earliest days as a movement, it was the expectation for Salvationists worldwide to intercede on behalf of the General each day at noon. While this is more less an Army tradition, it holds deep biblical support. The imperative is given in 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, 17: *“Brothers and sisters, we ask you to respect those who are working with you, leading you, and instructing you. Think of them highly with love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. Pray continually.”*

These verses are used by Commissioner Bronwyn Buckingham, as she calls the Army world to prayer for the leaders who will be called to the High Council in May of this year for the purpose of electing a new General of The Salvation Army. Beyond this important call, however, these words from the apostle Paul to the church in Thessalonica are a reminder to us all that we are to keep our spiritual and ecclesiastical leaders at the top of our prayer lists because of the highly important role they play in our lives. Without our spiritual leaders, we would be like leaves on an autumn tree, barely attached to the branch through which we draw our spiritual nourishment. To this end, our prayers for them, in all respect and love are to be for their perseverance to the Gospel and their own strong connection to the true vine, Christ Jesus.

In John 15, Jesus paints for us a word picture that provides vivid detail to the vine and branch imagery. This is the hope we should have for our Salvation Army leaders – that they remain in Christ so that he will remain in them, thereby spiritually enabled to produce fruit that is long-lasting and lifegiving. We are the beneficiaries of such leadership. As Salvation Army leadership convenes during those sacred days in May, would you join with fellow Salvationists, praying that the connection to the true vine is so deep and inextricably linked that our leaders would be able to, as Jesus says, *“ask anything [they] want, and it will be given...”* (John 15:7). We recognize that when truly connected to the vine, our leaders will not be asking for anything born of their own will, or even of their constituents, for that matter, but the will of the Father, who knows exactly what the Army needs and what the world needs of his Army in these days.

Would we all be so connected to the vine so that we could pray along with our poet General, Albert Orsborn:

*All my work is for the Master,
He is all my heart's desire;
O that He may count me faithful
In the days that try by fire!
(SASB #672)*

May that also be the prayer of our leaders as they follow Christ and lead The Salvation Army!

If you would like to join thousands of Salvationists online in prayer for the General of The Salvation Army, you're invited to join this special Facebook group that has been actively praying for successive Generals since 2011 - [<link to Facebook group>](#)