

# **JOURNAL OF AGGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY**

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## **Editorial Introduction**

By Major Stephen Court, editor

Welcome to the 149 issue of Journal of Aggressive Christianity. We're blessed by the Lord Jesus Christ to present the following articles for your edification. Our JAC149 contributors are Captain Christine Tursi (Germany), Major Wayne Ennis (Australia), and Steve Bussey (USA).

Captain Christine Tursi kicks off JAC149 with Love A Little Harder. Written to celebrate European Anti-Trafficking Day, Tursi sits in the tension of need and capacity and invites us in to the experience.

Steve Bussey follows with What Is Holiness And Why Should We Even Care? And he riffs on pure love, totally loving God and totally loving all people.

Bussey continues with a consideration of 'Richard Watson On MY Truth'. This will be revelatory and possibly uncomfortable for some who are saturated in the predominant culture.

Major Wayne Ennis shares some thoughts regarding the 'Power Of Symbols' related to the movement where he lives and fights. It is a warning call of a potential future that readers around the world can prayerfully consider.

Finally, in 'Strategos', Steve Bussey breaks down the effective strategy of General William Booth and shows us how it can influence our war-fighting today.

JAC149 contents, when prayed and applied, can accelerate the advance of the salvation war before JAC150 is even due (should Jesus tarry). If you are up to speed on JAC149, feel free to share widely, and then review JAC001-148. And, stay close to Jesus.

Much grace.

## Love A Little Harder

By Captain Christine Tursi

Do you by any chance have a surplus of love? No? No spare love in a pocket? No spare love in a box under your bed or between the pages of a book gathering dust in your library?

Apparently, we only have room for 5 people in our life. 5 people to love, 5 people to care for, 5 people to think of, 5 people to worry about, 5 people whose fears you know, 5 people whose dreams you protect, 5 people you'd go to war for. 5.

I have my 5. I have held them close for the past 30+ years, 3 of them have held me close for the past 36. I don't have room, place, time, energy, spare love for more.

And still, I'm called to love more people, I'm led to more people to love, my heart explodes with love for people pretty much as soon as I meet them. This isn't my making, I was loved first by a God who's made of and creates endless amounts of love. A heart filled with God's love can only expand and make room for more people to love.

Tonight My team and I will head into brothels with tiny cupcakes and gigantic amounts of love (I started this blog this morning, we are now back from the RLD), tomorrow my building will be filled mostly by men looking for food but hungry for more and we'll cover them with love, in the evening I will visit families made of wounded people and I hope love can be a soothing balm.

I have my 5 people, I have my friends, I have the people I was sent to; I might have a smile for a stranger on the street...Honestly, I don't think I have spare love to hand out. And still, there are more people to love...

Today is the European Anti-Human Trafficking day, and as war rages on, poverty increases, the redlight districts fill with increasingly more people (and those are only the ones we see) and people are exploited all around Europe and the world

I wonder...

I wonder how can I love the potential victims, the people in situations of trafficking and exploitation, the people who managed to escape, survive, find a spot back into society. Do we have spare love for them?

How can I love someone I never met? How can I love even more people than the ones already filling my heart and my thoughts? How can I love someone society does not see? How can I love people in buildings I'd never enter, on building sites I'm not allowed on, in factories where the products I buy leave people with bleeding fingers whilst the world screams MORE and CHEAPER?

I can love them by bringing them to God in prayer again and again, not because he doesn't know but because often it's the only thing we can do. So we entrust them into God's hands. He is at work. And our prayers are part of it. Prayers are love letters sent to God, because we don't have the address of the recipient.

I can love them by volunteering at a place taking care of vulnerable people. Showing them love by serving them a cup of tea, showing them love by helping them with homework, showing them love by sorting out clothes for them - did you know that lonely people are more likely to fall into traps? Did you know that hopeless people trust blindly whoever even only hints at a solution to their problems? Did you know that you can remind someone that contracts are important, that one should never hand over a passport, that boys don't always love but instead often use love to trap you? Getting to know vulnerable people, journeying with them, supporting them, showering them with love, that's part of prevention. Those smiles, those gestures, those acts of service, those hours are love letters that can change someone's life.

I can love them by getting informed and spreading information about trafficking and exploitation. It doesn't take long. We often cannot enter places of exploitation, we can't save people from being trafficked/who are being exploited but we can do our best to change the society we live in, by building God's kingdom on earth. Participating in this is a love letter to the world.

I just got home from the redlight district. My jumper smells of smoke, my head is filled with faces (scared faces, yelling faces, nervous faces, smiling faces, empty faces...), I have prayed, hugged, laughed, listened, invited, smiled, worried,...

I have loved with all my heart.  
And still I have more to give.

On this European Anti-Trafficking day let's choose to love a little harder. It's always worth it. There's buckets of it where it comes from.

## What Is Holiness And Why Should We Even Care?

By Steve Bussey

All human beings were created in the image of God, but because of the sin committed in the garden, the image of God has been “effaced.” But through the gift of salvation, we are JUSTIFIED - forgiven by receiving the undeserved and unearned grace of God by placing all our hope on the holiness of the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ!

He demonstrated what we as humans failed to do on our own merit - living a life of PURE LOVE. He modeled what it is to live a life that not only TOTALLY LOVES GOD with all his heart, mind, soul, and strength... but (and this is important) He also modeled what it means to TOTALLY LOVE ALL PEOPLE, not only those who love him back, but even those who do not!

He loved Judas!

He loved the Pharisees and Sadducees who plotted his death.

He loved the Romans who were oppressing the Jews.

He loved the soldiers who nailed Him to the cross!

He loved without condition.

He loved his neighbors and even His enemies! He did this because He longed for the WHOLE WORLD to be REDEEMED - to be capable of being brought back into right relationship with their Creator, their Life-Giver and Keeper.

So He did the unimaginable:

As the only human being on earth and in all of history that was truly SELF-RIGHTEOUS (but not the way we understand self-righteousness as false pretense), He was legitimately pure on His own merit, and did so while being totally human without ceasing to be totally God.

He stood in the place of our LACK of righteousness and paid for ALL the debt, ALL the punishment, not just for one but for ALL of humanity in ALL of history and ALL the world!! His sacrifice was like a CREDIT card that paid our debts in FULL! His righteousness was CREDITED to us! Amazing, right? This was WHOLLY because of LOVE - but it was also prompted from His BEING THE VERY ESSENCE OF HOLY LOVE. He showed to us and continues to be THE IMAGE of the invisible God!

So, the BIBLE - which reflects or mirrors “the image of God” (think about it, 2 Timothy reminds us that all the Bible is God-breathed) - lays out the guidelines and guardrails of HOW TO BE TRULY HUMAN by being TRULY GODLY. Note: not how to BE God, but rather to REFLECT HIS LIKENESS and to BEAR HIS IMAGE. To be holy LIKE He is holy.

Remember how I mentioned earlier that the image of God had been defaced? Think about this:

The Bible shows us who our Creator really is - the one who not only SUSTAINS us, but should in all fairness GOVERN us. And yet we have forgotten who He is - we might not even realize how good He actually is!

Because of sin, we have forgotten that we are made in HIS image and therefore look to things that have been created, chiseled, GRAVEN... and confused those things, those images (even our own self-reflection!) for BEING God. We think they have CREATED us. We think they SUSTAIN us. We allow them to GOVERN us.

We even etch our "authentic" (delusioned) "selves" as that image...

How sad.

How dangerous.

How tragically deluded.

You see, WE FALL SHORT.

We try, but we fail.

Reading the Bible leads to some pretty embarrassing and shocking reality checks - that while we might THINK we've figured things out we actually have got it ALL WRONG!

Like the people of Israel, we have created our own golden calves - our own graven images and worshipped idolatrous things (and idolatrous selves) that cannot save or redeem... The Bible exposes the fraudulence of our man- or woman-made solutions.

The Bible, this LETTER OF LOVE is also a LETTER OF LAW, because it outlines the parameters for being in right relationship with our Creator. It shows us the guardrails - and how we have broken through them and are in a state of spiritual free fall!

But Jesus - who is TOTALLY GOD, and who, because of love, became TOTALLY HUMAN - has done for us what we could never do for ourselves! What the LAW states actually dooms us, but BY GRACE and by GRACE ALONE, we ALL can be saved.

What great news!

Now... stop for a second. Does this mean: So don't even worry about it. Do whatever you want to do, because it doesn't matter how you live? Jesus has got you covered!

So BE YOU.

DO YOU.

LIVE HOWEVER YOU WANT - you've got the golden "Jesus ticket," so it doesn't matter.

Is that what this means?

No. Just, plain no.

You see we are saved BY GRACE. But we are saved by grace through FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS.

Hear that?

We must be IN Christ. Not just have faith ABOUT Christ but have faith IN Christ.  
So, how do we do that?

It means that being “in” is a **CONDITION REQUIRED** to access this gift. Remember the price is **PAID** once for all. But this must be **WILLINGLY RECEIVED**. And He **OFFERS** it for all. However, it must be received by each person coming with conviction to a point where we willfully choose **REPENTANCE** (acknowledging **OUR** guilt) and **FAITH** (acknowledging **HIS** gift) and allowing **HIS IMAGE, HIS NEW, REGENERATING BREATH - HIS HOLY SPIRIT** to truly awaken **HIS MORAL IMAGE!**

What does this mean?

Well, humanity’s curse which goes way back to the origin of sin (think Adam and Eve) is that our dispositions (our internal drive and direction) has a natural propensity for death and destruction. We have a **HELL-BENT** nature that naturally **DISOBEYS** and **DISBELIEVES**. We naturally are deceived, naturally duped into believing that **MY GLORY** trumps **GOD’S GLORY** - that **MY WAY** is best. Yes - I said the word “**NATURAL**” way too many times, but for a reason: it **IS NATURAL** to think and act this way...

Sure, Adam and Eve sinned - but there is **NO** way you and I haven’t lived a life absent of **ACTUAL** sin! If you think you haven’t, you can quickly check the deluded and deceived box! We **ALL** fall short of the glory of God... So being our natural selves might be authentic but that's not a good thing. In fact it is mighty dangerous!!

So, how do we correct our natural **DISBELIEF**? You do so by **FAITH**. Do I mean some Oprah-style, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, confidence-boosting, self-helping faith? **NOPE**. Disbelief is conquered by killing the deception-trap and abandoning the doomed faith-in-self trap to rather place our **FAITH IN CHRIST OUR SAVIOR**.

He saves us. We don't.

If we try to save ourselves, we doom ourselves.

And, how do we correct our natural **DISOBEDIENCE**? You do so by **OBEDIENCE**.

Wait a second: I thought this whole long post was to prove we **CAN’T** be obedient? Remember the whole disposition and “my way is the highway to hell” thing? Yeah, that’s presents a serious dilemma:

Can I repent?  
Check.

Can I place my faith in Christ?  
Check.

Can I be obedient? Be holy? Be righteous?

No check.

No. We just established that we can't "merit" or "earn" or "be obedient" on our own. We lack the power to override our magnetic attraction to do things "my way." So, no matter how much we try to- we continue to fall short. So why even try if we know failure is imminent?

If "continuance in a state of salvation **DEPENDS** on continued **OBEDIENT FAITH IN CHRIST,**" then, is salvation just a cruel joke from a cruel God?

If **REPENTANCE** from sin and **FAITH** in Jesus is the only way I can **FEEL** saved, **KNOW** with assurance I am saved, and truly **BE** saved, then I might as well **STOP LIVING** and die immediately and go to heaven immediately - otherwise I will fail again. Or maybe I should just stay at church and never leave the altar?

Remember: We are not saved by our work. We are saved by grace.

So - again - if I am saved by grace and not the law, I can just do whatever I want to do? Does grace give us a metaphorical "license to kill?" No it does not.

Grace is **NOT** anti-law. The law sends us to grace and grace sends us to the law. Huh?

That's not cool. That's what is actually so cool:

Cue the plot twist:

There is a second part to the gift of salvation!

You see, Jesus doesn't just save us **FROM** sin, but **HIS GIFT** makes us a **PERFECT VESSEL** in which the **BREATH OF HEAVEN REGENERATES HIS SPIRIT IN US** **SO THAT WE ACTUALLY CAN BE HOLY AS HE IS HOLY!!**

Did you hear that?

He doesn't just give us the golden ticket of **JUSTIFICATION**, but He doubles down with also providing via salvation the gift of the **PERSON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT** who can help us truly **U-TURN** from the **GLORY OF SELF** so that we are **REORIENTED TOWARD THE GLORY OF GOD!!!**

So, we are not just saved **FROM** our disobedience (justification) but we are also saved **FOR** obedience (regeneration)!

This is why we say that we **REPENT** to the Father, place our **FAITH** in the Son, and allow the Holy Spirit to **REGENERATE** us (yes - that's the Trinity all involved in our salvation) so that we are not only **JUSTIFIED**, but that we **BEAR WITNESS** with the Holy Spirit with **FULL ASSURANCE** that we are (and **CAN** continue to be) **CHILDREN OF GOD!**

So, God lights the FIRE in us by His BLOOD - but it doesn't stop there - the Blood fuels the FIRE TO SPREAD - REFINING AND RESTORING ALL ASPECTS OF OUR LIFE.

Remember, this is about ETERNITY, but that gift of GRACE is not just for LATER. This gift of grace is about EXPERIENCING ETERNITY NOW!!

You see, the Bible clearly shows us that it is the PRIVILEGE OF ALL TRUE BELIEVERS (those living in a state of continued, obedient faith in the grace of Christ Jesus) to see this gift of Grace spill over into EVERY PART OF OUR LIVES! That our whole bodies and souls and spirits can KEEP HOLY, but do so by the BLOOD AND FIRE - BY SANCTIFYING GRACE!

That, my friends, is what we like to call FULL SALVATION!

So - to go back to the beginning:

The LAW, which condemned and sends us to GRACE is no longer something we FEAR, because it chisels away all the bondage that is barnacled on us! The stuff that weighed us down, that entangled us. The Law now becomes something we LOVE! We look to the Word (the Bible) and see the reflection of the Word (the Son) that helps us know who (and whose) we are and are becoming!

The Bible - which is God-breathed - helps us who have the breath of God, to spiritually respire by having the Holy Spirit ruling and reigning in us! He shows us how to restore the IMAGE OF GOD!

The Bible teaches us how to have the MIND OF CHRIST!

How to reflect His heart!

How to KNOW AND DO HIS WILL!

The Spirit points us to the Son who points us to the Father - and we do so not only in relationship with Him, but also in fellowship with other believers who shine like stars in a world otherwise filled with darkness!

The law sends us to grace and grace sends us to the law which is now a divine mirror, our "divine rule for faithful practice" - to help us reflect on how we can BE LIKE JESUS.

This is our privilege: to be wholly sanctified.

To be wholly holy.

To not PRETEND to be like Jesus (we call that hypocrisy), but to ACTUALLY BE like Jesus.

To experience the righteousness, peace, and joy that comes from being part of the Kingdom of God!

That means the moral image of God is being restored as He intended it to be! To be SINGLY AIMED TOWARD THE GLORY OF GOD and join with Him in His mission to SEEK AND SAVE THOSE WHO ARE LOST!

Such holy love of God will change how we see people. Rather than hating and despising and condemning - we will see even our fiercest enemies in need of encountering the grace of God! we will love unconditionally as He loves.

If we are truly dead to self, and alive to His purpose - we will be able to look beyond the walls and barriers people put up and, with CALVARY LOVE, relate to those whom the world might consider vile and offensive as modeled by our Lord and Savior - recognizing that vile offensiveness once trapped us.

We are called to bear the image of God - and we do that by lifting high the banner which declares: HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD!

That is holy love.

THAT is what the General is talking about!

THAT is why The Salvation Army exists!

I pray God REVIVES this way, this truth, the life in each and every one of us - starting with me!

## Richard Watson On MY Truth

By Steve Bussey

Richard Watson is one of the most powerful influencers of Wesleyan theology that many do not know much about. In 1823, he published the first "systematic theology" from a Wesleyan perspective. His work, "Theological Institutes" is monumental in that it looks at evidences, doctrines, morals, and institutions of Christianity.

Catherine and William Booth were both profoundly influenced by Watson's writings - and his work was included along with the sermons of John Wesley as critical standards needing to be mastered by Methodists - hence the Booths would be deeply shaped by his work based on their years growing up in the Wesleyan Methodist church, serving in the Methodist New Connexion, and being part of the network of Holiness Churches out of which the Christian Mission and The Salvation Army were birthed.

The entire first part - which is a monumental 263 pages - is devoted to firmly anchoring Wesleyan theology in Scripture as the "Divine rule of faith and practice." He philosophically and theologically provides a robust argument for this distinctive anchoring in what John Wesley calls "Scriptural Christianity."

Watson wisely can see in the early 19th-century that they were in the midst of a massive shift from the "divine rule" (Scripture) being the SOURCE OF AUTHORITY to human experience or "practice" taking this role. So Watson aimed to reinforce to all true Wesleyans the classically Christian belief that the "divine rule" is the metaphorical horse and that "human practice" is the cart. He was warning us that the cart should never precede the horse - a practice that is not only illogical, but impractical (and utterly non-sensical).

Here is what he says:

"It is equally a matter of undoubted fact, that in all questions of morals which restrain the vices, passions, and immediate interests of men, conviction is generally resisted, and the RULE is brought down to the PRACTICE, rather than the PRACTICE raised to the RULE; so that the most FLIMSY SOPHISMS are admitted as ARGUMENTS, and PRINCIPLES the most LAX displace those of RIGID RECTITUDE and VIRTUE" (Watson, Theological Institutes, Chapter 3, 1823, p.16)

Why is this relevant for us today? Watson was speaking to a major shift that began in the 17th century, grew in prominence in the 18th, and now was coming to full maturity in the 19th century. The growing sense of questioning the authority of Scripture gained traction in the rationalism of the Enlightenment (in movements like deism and naturalism) and accelerated in German idealism and romanticism that was now seeping into the broader world where Methodism was rapidly spreading. He could see the need for a robust apologetic for Scriptural Christianity that was the foundation of Wesley's theology.

This trend of what would become known as "higher criticism," would lead to the dominance of modernist thinking that displaced the "rule" with the "practice" of human experience, which became the anchoring point of this radical shift from Scripture being the rule to my personal experience. In the world of the 21st century,

we would academically call this "standpoint epistemology" and in popular culture we see this manifest itself in the phrase "MY truth."

What does "MY truth" mean? It means that my local, subjective perspective - bound in time and space - is the lens through which I perceive the world. If I sense it, it is real. Therefore, my beliefs, my values, and my behaviors all stem from ME. Therefore, when I read the Bible, I read it through my lens and how I choose to interpret it is true.

In such a world, whatever I believe is TRUE because I believe it. Whatever I value is RIGHT because it is what I value. And whatever I do is PERMISSIBLE because it is what I do.

And in such a world, what is the role of Scripture? It is reduced to a moral prompt for me to discover the "best me" I choose to be - based on my own therapeutic feelings, my own biases, whatever I want to believe and however I want to behave, I read it with that lens in mind which filters Scripture into my own tailor-made "divine thumbs up." That subjective lens becomes THE compass that serves to validate what I wish for God's will for my life to be - and thus, what I also deem to be "virtuous" or "holy."

This might sound like it makes sense, but it is a deeply flawed perspective because:

- (a) What might seem virtuous and just to me might actually be vicious and unjust to another.
- (b) In essence, this thinking becomes idolatrous - because we have placed ourselves as the compass of truth and justice. Not only is that egocentric, it is a recipe for anarchy because every person becomes a rule unto themselves.
- (c) Not only does this place self on the governing throne of our lives, but - by this decision - we displace God from His rightful place as Governor of our lives. This is the original and fatal flaw made by Eve and Adam in the Garden of Eden.

That's called groupthink. It's confirmation bias. It's rationalizing and justifying what I want. It's taking my own moral choices and giving them a "god approves" rubber stamp.

The only problem is that we have actually made ourselves god in the process... and the real God doesn't take that lightly.

This seduction might seem to be us just being an independently thinking individual - but often there is very little individuality in the process. Most often we are being swept away by the conforming patterns of our present time and circumstances - the "zeitgeist" of our time. Scarily though, this is not even just going along with the social trends for the sake of fitting in... At the heart of it, the same serpent from the garden who sowed disbelief that led to disobedience whispers in our ears today and nudges us, "you do you," "embrace your truth"... and before you know it, we find ourselves in the bondage of our own self-delusion that has left us captive to the prince of this world.

We saw this mindset brewing in the 18th century with someone like Thomas Jefferson. He was a Deist who celebrated human rationality and rejected the immanent work of God by rejecting anything "super-natural" (i.e., beyond the natural

world of science and reason). Jefferson proceeded to create his own Bible where he removed all evidence of anything that his naturalistic, rationalistic, and deistic worldview deemed "non-essential" in Scripture. Seriously - look up the Jefferson Bible for yourself.

In essence, what Jefferson did in the 18th century, we find ourselves doing in the 21st. Each of us, like Jefferson, is tempted to (and affirmed by the trends of a present culture both outside and inside the church) to take our own personal experience and, with metaphorical scissors, has proceeded to "cut out" or ignore parts of this "divine rule" (i.e., guidance that supersedes our own beliefs, morals, and practices). As a result, we read the Bible through the lens of "my truth" because Jesus affirms a "you do you" lifestyle.

Richard Watson's words thus ring deeply as a warning. We must return the horse of the "divine rule" to being what drives the cart of our "faith and practice." This was true of Wesley and Watson. This was true of Catherine and William Booth and the slew of Salvationists who have faithfully embraced their covenant as soldiers in the Army of the Lord.

I pray this principle will once again become a core value for all believers, the pan-Wesleyan community, and specifically my beloved Salvation Army. We continue to state that it is such. I pray that we will fully embrace this timeless truth in the practice of our everyday lives.

## Power of Symbols

By Major Wayne Ennis

We cannot escape symbols: McDonalds, Coca Cola, BP, Google, Vodaphone, KFC to name a few. These are powerful symbols which convey to the consumer what they can expect when they purchase their particular goods or services and also convey or remind those within the organisation of the organisation's vision and mission.

Symbols, whether word, phrase, image, object, action, event or pattern, are powerful and we act or react in certain ways whenever we see them. The close association with the thing they represent gives them an inherent value derived from what they represent. In fact, so closely is a symbol associated with the thing it represents, that it is often synonymous with or equivalent to that thing.

It seems to me The Salvation Army in Australia lost its way, or is at least floundering in an age of unrest. Has it become adoptive and adaptive rather than transformative? The answer is quite possibly found in the decline in the use and understanding of what are Salvation Army symbols. It seems many are unaware that these symbols have meaning and an important place in what it means to be a Salvationist.

In the push to appear relevant to a secular culture we are witnessing a decline in the importance of Salvation Army symbols particularly the Crest, Flag, Covenants, and uniform. In many of today's Corps, social centres, and correspondence, the Crest, made up of six different symbols and a motto which represent the beliefs and mission of The Salvation Army, has been replaced by a shield and is nearly lost amidst a plethora of inclusivity and diversity symbols.

The Flag, symbolising three important Christian beliefs, is often no longer central in many halls and buildings or is being placed amidst other flags, thereby diminishing its symbolic power.

The Shield, although favoured, appears to have been stripped of its symbolic meaning, to tell "of a fight on a spiritual battlefield which must last as long as life itself, and that God in Christ is a Shield to protect and save us to the uttermost" (excerpt from one of The Salvation Army's magazines, All The World, June 1917).

In our worship too often the song book and its songs are no longer used which means we symbolically no longer sing what we believe as Salvationists, we sing somebody else's beliefs and theology.

Without Salvation Army's symbols there is a paucity of what it means to be The Salvation Army, and, without its symbols, the community is endangered. Maintaining a clear understanding of symbols is critical to teaching sound faith as well as what it means to belong to The Salvation Army. Unfortunately, we are seeing the centre with its symbols and their symbolic meaning falling away and being replaced with only some form of their presence. It is like a choice has been made to deconstruct what it means to be Salvation Army and reconstruct a new faith identity and mission authorised by a different theology.

Changing symbols or removing them from sight, not only changes who we are, it also changes the message those symbols embody. We need to seriously debate the reasons for the decline in the centrality of Salvation Army symbols, not acquiesce in substitution by stealth of those symbols by new symbols and a new theology which will betray the work and witness of a long line of faithful Officers and Soldiers.

Christian as well as The Salvation Army symbols have, believe it or not, stood the test of time, even through the darkest days of Christianity and the Army, which I would say makes them even more relevant than ever.

## Strategos

By Steve Bussey

Did you know that the word "strategy" comes from the Greek word "strategos," which actually means "generalship" - the art of being a General? The "strategy" of the "strategos" had to do with the actual direction of a military force!

The Founder of The Salvation Army, "Strategos" William Booth understood this through and through. He modeled for all those who served in his generation - and for all of us who have continued this mission in succeeding generations, exactly where our "ONE AIM" should be directed: towards "THE GLORY OF GOD AND THE SALVATION OF THE WORLD!"

In September 1896, he wrote about how we might "Keep Souls at the Forefront" of all that we do in The Salvation Army. You can see a clear demonstration of "textbook strategic intentionality" that he was seeking to cultivate in his Army of officers and soldiers. He wanted to help each of them to see the value of being strategic in our salvation war.

Here is the quote:

"'Look where you are going. Make the best of your time and chance; not by striking hitty-missy, but by judicious forethought.' You choose sergeants, arrange collections, all with consideration, and, personally, my first thoughts with a crowd are, 'What are these people?' 'How shall I direct my arrows?' 'How can I best bring them down to the Cross?' And in the light of the Spirit I do my best. But that is not to hinder my preparing a general idea of what I shall say. Nay, the one helps the other. Combine thought and prayer, and do your utmost, and, in processing of all this, to 'keep souls to the front, and God shall give the increase.'"

Let's look deeper at this quote. I'll provide some commentary in brackets under each statement that William Booth declares in this quote. I hope this will help demonstrate for you what an ingenious strategy William Booth had - and which he hoped to replicate in Salvationists around the world (and in future generations - principles that remain strategically relevant to our present age:

### **General Booth: "LOOK WHERE YOU ARE GOING."**

[We need to have a clear vision - a clear picture of the future reality we are aiming for. Without that, we will be aimless].

### **General Booth: "MAKE THE BEST OF YOUR TIME AND CHANCE;"**

[We need to recognize our stewardship - that we have limited time and limited resources, thus we have a moral responsibility to not squander these gifts and talents. We have doors of opportunity that, when they open (and they will, by the grace of God), we must be ready and willing to seize every opportunity and put it to maximum use for God's purposes. If we have not prepared for this moment when opportunity strikes, we will miss it!

This is one of the reasons why we must always be training for war. Like a military unit will DRILL to develop SKILLS - we need to LEVERAGE OUR QUIETER

MOMENTS to SHARPEN OUR SWORDS and STRENGTHEN OUR SHIELDS, making these skills so honed and ready for war, that we are able to SEIZE THE DAY OF OPPORTUNITY.

Tried and true salvation soldiers will devote themselves with as much motivation and intense commitment for preparation as will be given to our action-filled moments.]

**General Booth: "NOT BY STRIKING HITTY-MISSY, BUT BY JUDICIOUS FORETHOUGHT.'**

[We sometimes value EFFICIENCY over EFFECTIVENESS. GET IT DONE - even if we don't GET IT RIGHT.

A person can set their ladder on a building and climb quickly to the top - only to realize they set their ladder on the wrong building... Sometimes our desire for efficiency can be extremely inefficient because we don't take the time to assess whether we are actually aiming that effort in the right direction. As the old saying goes, "Don't work HARDER, work SMARTER." If we work hard, but it does not produce kingdom results because we didn't properly aim, we will burn out, get despondent, and give up. William Booth warns us to be careful not to fall into the "striking hitty-missy" (love that description!) state.

On the other hand, we can be trapped in 'analysis-paralysis,' where we are so afraid of getting things wrong that we don't do anything. We want to be effective, but we often need to translate THEORIES into EXPERIMENTS and be comfortable with the fact that we might get some things wrong. In strategy and innovation studies, there is a principle of "failing fast" - but doing so in "cheap, quick, and ugly" ways - developing PROTOTYPES to VALIDATE ideas and, if not, pivoting to solutions that will demonstrate evidence of success before scaling them. This is smart thinking that is not afraid of failure. There is a radical difference between EXPERIMENTAL FAILURE (which should be praised) and COMPLACENT FAILURE (which should be discouraged at all costs).

William Booth encourages us to take time for 'strategic forethought' - but that this must be JUDICIOUS, recognizing that we must "make the best of our time" as he stated earlier.]

**General Booth: "YOU CHOOSE SERGEANTS, ARRANGE COLLECTIONS, ALL WITH CONSIDERATION,"**

[A great strategist should not simply come up with ideas, but also ORGANIZE these into a PLAN. But a plan is useless unless it is IMPLEMENTED... and implementation requires an Army of PEOPLE who are purposefully united in a common aim.

Therefore, the General wisely advises a great deal of strategic intentionality when it comes to PEOPLE RESOURCES (our people), PROGRAMMATIC RESOURCES, and other resources such as property, money, time, etc.

Resources are SCARCE, thus we must STEWARD our talents to MAXIMAL OUTPUT.

When starting any type of initiative, carefully consider the following:

- (1) WHO can do WHAT?
- (2) WHERE and WHEN should this be done?
- (3) HOW best can this be done to accomplish your ultimate WHY?
- (4) WHAT will you MEASURE as the KEY RESULTS of your OBJECTIVES in order to make sure you are accomplishing your MISSION?

You can see that these questions were always being asked in the early Salvation Army - and it produced both QUALITATIVE and QUANTITATIVE RESULTS!]

**General Booth: "and personally, my first thoughts with a crowd are:**

- (1) 'WHAT ARE THESE PEOPLE?'**
- (2) 'HOW SHALL I DIRECT MY ARROWS?'**
- (3) 'HOW CAN I BEST BRING THEM DOWN TO THE CROSS?'"**

[You can see the strategic intention that shaped every action the General makes here. He started with EMPATHY - recognizing there was a UNIQUE set of people living in a unique time and place, but these unique people have a universal (not so unique) need, that they must be BROUGHT TO THE CROSS if there was to be any HOPE truly given to those very people he empathically cared for!

Linking points 1 and 3 required his 2nd point, which is the STRATEGIC DECISION of determining HOW best he should DIRECT his ARROWS.

The word "how" is a strategic statement of CLARITY. The word "direct" is a strategic statement of INTENTIONALITY. The word "arrows" is in reference to the STEWARDSHIP of LIMITED RESOURCES AIMED (with clarity and intentionality) towards a clearly DEFINED TARGET.

What arrows are in your quiver? How can you put it to maximal use as a steward of the King of kings and Lord of lords?

For Booth, his thoughts were aimed at reconciling PEOPLE to GOD via the cross. This is the essence of his mission and the essence of our mission. He called this "THE ONE AIM" - seriously, look at Booths' writings and you will see this come up again and again.]

**General Booth: "AND IN LIGHT OF THE SPIRIT, I DO MY BEST."**

[We do not do this apathetically, but with EXCELLENCE. Not for the sake of PRESTIGE, but we do our best because our DEVOTION and our DUTY to our Savior demands not just part of who we are - but rather our ALL must be laid on the altar. We give ourselves FULLY to be of maximum use for God's glory. We CONSECRATE our all to Him. We must DO OUR BEST. Anything less will not do. This might sound extremely demanding (it is), but read on to the next part of the quote - it doesn't end here...]

**General Booth: "BUT THAT IS NOT TO HINDER MY PREPARING A GENERAL IDEA OF WHAT I SHALL SAY. NAY, THE ONE HELPS THE OTHER. COMBINE THOUGHT AND PRAYER, AND DO YOUR UTMOST,"**

[One of the most misunderstood statements of William Booth is his statement, "THAT AND BETTER WILL DO." Many have thought this to be a graceless perfectionism that is never happy with anything - always demanding more and more. This is NEVER what the General actually meant.

Am I just defending William Booth as a rose-tinted hagiographic fanboy? Not so. I illustrate below:

William Booth's granddaughter, Catherine Bramwell-Booth, illustrated this principle of going "beyond your best" in a story of how, when she was a child she sang and shared a word at the Corps. Upon returning to the Booth home, she spoke to her grandfather who asked her how it went. She responded, "Well, I did my best..."

With that, the General almost roared at her, scaring her at first and saying, "Your best? YOUR BEST?? If THAT is all you are going to do, you will be no use to me, this Army, or God!" - kind of shocking, right? But she goes on to share how, after these prophetic words of sharp and holy rebuke, he pastorally said with a loving and healing balm, "You see when a person is FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, they can do BETTER THAN THEIR BEST."

Catherine never forgot that - and for over a century, her life was one that remained holy and strategically devoted to God's aim for her life - and God multiplied her impact exponentially!

Should we aim to do our best? Of course. Consecration is OUR ACT of devotion - but consecration without the sanctifying POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT will accomplish ONLY A LITTLE...

William Booth understood that ADDITION becomes MULTIPLICATION when a consecrated individual is filled with the supernatural power that comes from on High - from the HOLY SPIRIT RULING AND REIGNING in the deepest recesses of the BODY, SOUL AND SPIRIT! WHAT A PRIVILEGE!!

Such a DIVINE-HUMAN PARTNERSHIP is STRATEGICALLY THE BEST way for His work to be accomplished through us.

Hence, when PRAYER and THOUGHT are combined, GOD BECOMES THE ULTIMATE STRATEGIST - guiding us to how we might do the UTMOST for HIS GLORY.]

**General Booth: "AND, IN PROCESSING ALL OF THIS, TO 'KEEP SOULS TO THE FRONT, AND GOD SHALL GIVE YOU THE INCREASE.'"**

[Today, we would call this "keeping the MAIN THING the MAIN THING!" (nod to the "7 Habits" book written in the early 1990s by Steven Covey). Just as a clarification, because this too has been grossly misunderstood today - when William Booth says, to "KEEP SOULS" - he is not JUST talking about our eternal reality. Some have

misconstrued the entire narrative of "soul winning" to be a rejection of any type of temporal ministry. This was NEVER what the term meant - anyone who has read Wesleyan or Salvationist historic doctrine would see this term means something more than a "Casper the friendly ghost" view of soul...

The SOUL for Wesleyans speaks to that part of us that is the very core of the IMAGO DEI (moral image of God) - that which intersects both body (temporal) and spirit (eternal). This is the very core of who we are as human beings - the part of the image of God that is "dead in transgressions" because of the curse of sin - and must be "born again" or "regenerated" so that "the Spirit can bear witness with our spirits that we are children of God."

To strategically aim for the soul is to aim for the bullseye that justifies us from all guilt (the BLOOD of Jesus) and awakens the work of the Holy Spirit in us (the FIRE of the Holy Spirit) - and enables us to enjoy the FULL BENEFITS of the UNMERITED GRACE OF GOD - Grace that both JUSTIFIES and SANCTIFIES and PRESERVES OUR STATE OF BLAMELESSNESS only possible by the ATONING WORK OF CHRIST and the REFINING WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT!

When we make THIS our AIM, He makes very clear that GOD will multiply HIS INCREASE in our mission. Why would we not long to be SOUL WINNERS? A smart strategist knows to AIM FOR THE ROOT - and when the ROOT OF BITTERNESS is replaced with the ROOT OF HOLINESS, my friends we will have both REVIVAL and REFORM in THIS GENERATION!

What you have done in past generations - THAT AND GREATER, PLEASE DO!

THAT, my friends, is some seriously strategic thinking on William Booth's part! His wise counsel continues to speak to us today! I pray we will heed these strategic words of wisdom from our founding strategos!].