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Bond, Linda Christene Diane. "Through the Lens of Grace: Spiritual Formation Towards Christlikeness in a Holiness Context." D. Min., Tyndale University College & Seminary, 2017.

Tyndale University College and Seminary

Through the Lens of Grace:
Spiritual Formation towards Christlikeness
in a Holiness Context

A Research Portfolio
Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Ministry
Tyndale Seminary

by

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July 3, 2017

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ABSTRACT

To see life *through the lens of grace* is to gain a new perspective of how God shapes his children in the image of his Son. Spiritual formation is a process, a journey with God's people, which calls for faith and participation, but all is of grace. This portfolio testifies to spiritual formation being God's work. Though our involvement in spiritual disciplines and the nurturing of the Christian community are indispensable, they too are means of grace.

The journey of spiritual formation for the individual Christian within the community of faith is explained in the writings of A.W. Tozer as well as the Model of Spiritual Formation in The Salvation Army. The goal is Christlikeness, a goal which requires adversity and suffering to deepen our faith and further our witness. Interviews with eight Salvationists on adversity and suffering in their lives underscore the themes of grace and faith. My spiritual autobiography is a personal witness that faith is enriched through God's means of grace, most certainly through life's challenges. To be like Jesus is the ultimate goal, the divine purpose for which we were created and the means by which we serve.

I have used the New International Version for the Scripture quotations unless otherwise stated. The glossary of terms will be helpful in understanding Salvation Army terminology. Other than italics used for *through the lens of grace*, all others are from the books referenced. Where hymns or songs are quoted, the acronym SASB stands for Salvation Army Song Book. In citing Salvation Army

books, or particular references in the tables, SA will be used though the legal name is The Salvation Army.

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GLOSSARY

These terms have been adapted from Salvation Army Year Books. Most reflect our quasi-military structure.

Adherent Member: A person who regards The Salvation Army as his/her spiritual home but has not made a commitment to 'soldiership'.

'Blood & Fire': The Army's motto, referring to the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ and the purifying, illuminating fire of the Holy Spirit.

Command: A smaller type of Salvation Army territory directed by a designated 'Officer Commanding'.

Commissioner: The highest rank of a Salvation Army officer except General. It is conferred by the General.

Congress: Central gatherings often held annually and attended by most officers and many soldiers in a territory or division.

Corps: (French word pronounced 'core'). A Salvation Army unit established for the preaching of the gospel, worship, teaching and fellowship, and to provide Christian-motivated service in the community.

Dedication Service: A public presentation of infants to God. It differs from christening or infant baptism in that the main emphasis is upon specific vows made by the parents concerning the child's upbringing.

Division: A geographical grouping of Army units. Territories are divided into divisions, each of which has a number of corps and social centers which are mostly run by officers.

General: The General is the officer elected by the High Council to the supreme command of The Salvation Army throughout the world, and is based at International Headquarters in London. All appointments are made, and regulations issued, under the General's authority.

High Council: The High Council convenes in the United Kingdom to elect the next General in accordance with The Salvation Army Act 1980. The High Council comprises all commissioners on active service except the spouse of the General, and all territorial commanders and territorial presidents of women's ministry.

International Headquarters (IHQ): The General directs Salvation Army operations throughout the world through the administrative departments of

International Headquarters in London, which are headed by International Secretaries.

Junior Soldier: A boy or girl who, having come to faith in Christ, has signed the junior soldier's promise and become a Salvationist.

Local Officer: A soldier appointed to a position of responsibility and authority in the corps, who carries out the duties of the appointment without leaving regular employment or receiving remuneration from The Salvation Army.

Mercy Seat: (penitent form, holiness table): A bench or table provided in the meeting hall as a place where people can kneel to pray, seeking salvation or sanctification, or making a special consecration of their life to God's will and service. Usually situated in front of the platform, it also serves as a focal point to remind of God's reconciling and redeeming presence.

Officer: A Salvationist who has been trained, commissioned and ordained to service and leadership, in response to God's call. An officer is a recognized minister of religion.

Pastoral Care Councils: Established in each corps for the care of soldiers, etc. and the maintenance of membership rolls.

Promotion to Glory: The Army's description of the death of Salvationists, with 'glory' symbolizing the life after death in God's presence.

Ranks: Salvation Army officers have different ranks: lieutenant, captain, major, Lt.-colonel, colonel, or commissioner.

Red Shield: A symbol saying 'The Salvation Army' in the local language, identifying personnel, buildings, equipment, mobile units and emergency services.

Self-Denial Appeal: An annual effort by Salvationists and friends to raise funds for the Army's worldwide operations.

Senior Soldier: A converted person at least fourteen years of age who has, with the approval of the pastoral care council, been enrolled as a member of The Salvation Army after signing the Soldier's Covenant.

Soldier's Covenant: The statement of beliefs and promises which every intending soldier is required to sign before enrolment. Previously called, 'Articles of War'.

Territorial Commander: The officer in command of the Army in a territory.

Territory: A country, part of a country, or several countries combined, in which
The Salvation Army is organized under a territorial commander.

PREFACE

On February 14, 2014, while exploring the Tyndale website, I discovered that a new Doctor of Ministry program was being launched. Spiritual formation was to be its emphasis. Having determined to return to school in retirement and already engaged in a course on prayer, this opportunity to study spirituality in an extensive and deep way, was like a door opened by the Lord. Over the course of three years, the reading program, assignments, group sharing, residential teaching, and the support of the professors proved to be invaluable in my own spiritual formation besides helping me to use what was learned for present and future ministry.

The overall theme of this portfolio is spiritual formation. This theme is developed with a funnel-like organization commencing with the wider Church through an essay on the life and ministry of A.W. Tozer, then more particular as explained in a Salvation Army model, then more specifically verified in the life of eight Salvationists. Finally, the theme of spiritual formation is personalized in my spiritual autobiography. Spiritual formation in all four parts will highlight the themes of holiness as Christlikeness, grace and faith.

Spiritual formation has its ecclesiological roots in the Catholic Church through the training of monks, nuns and priests. It was not until the 1960s and

70s, that the Protestant churches developed programs in spiritual formation for the training of clergy and laity (Howard 2008, 268). While the delay in using this Catholic term may have been due to the Protestant churches' reluctance to align themselves with Catholic spirituality, spiritual formation has been a reality in many traditions, but known by different names.

Much is now written about spiritual formation by Protestant and evangelical authors. Definitions vary but there is a consistency in their elements. Darrell Bock believes spiritual formation "refers to all God undertakes and undergoes for us to bring us to maturity. It points to the resources he brings to the task of forming us into his likeness, as well as what we do in the pursuit of this goal." Spiritual formation is about transformation, declares Bock, and "is what God does to and for us, along with all he makes available to make this transformation possible, a process that never ends until he brings us to himself" (Bock in Pettit 2008, 105). Robert Mulholland points out that "Genuine spiritual formation reverses our role as the controllers (who act to bring about the desired results in our lives) to beings who allow the spirit of God to act in our lives to bring about God's purposes" (Mulholland 2000, 27).

Finally, two definitions that will be found later in this portfolio are Robert Mulholland's and Paul Pettit's: "Spiritual formation is a process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others" (Mulholland 1993, 25). Spiritual formation is "the ongoing process of the triune God transforming the believer's life and character toward the life and character of Jesus Christ, accomplished by the ministry of the Spirit in the context of biblical community"

(Pettit 2008, 24). Key words in definitions point to a process initiated by God, participated in by the believer and moving toward a goal. Other vital elements—the importance of the community of faith and mission to the world unfold in the writings of these authors.

Personally, I understand spiritual formation as God’s gracious process in shaping us into the likeness of his Son by his Spirit, inviting our participation in a response of faith. This divine purpose is for his glory, our wholeness and for the sake of others. Spiritual formation is what I have understood as God’s process of holiness or sanctification, producing a life of purity, selflessness and love, a Christ-like life.

Jonathan Morrow also links spiritual formation to sanctification. He writes “For the sake of simplicity I will use *spiritual formation* synonymously with terms like sanctification and the spiritual life” (Morrow in Pettit 2008, 31). “The terms ‘sanctification’, ‘sanctify’ and ‘sanctified’ are translations of the Hebrew and Greek words of Scripture used to describe the holiness of God and the action by which God’s children are made holy and set apart for God’s purposes” (SA 2010, 191). “It is a work of God for all believers”. It is “God’s gracious provision.” The experience is possible “by grace through faith.” It is “a radical life-change” and “a lifelong process” (SA 2010, 191). Other terms have been used for sanctification (holiness).

Entire sanctification (1 Thes 5:23) expresses the belief that sanctification affects the whole personality and reaches the depth of the soul... Full salvation refers to the completion of Christ’s saving work in our hearts... Infilling of the Holy Spirit is a phrase used to describe the fullness by which we are empowered to live the Christian life and to be witnesses

to our faith...Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a symbol of dying to ourselves and emerging as new persons in Christ...Blessing of a clean heart is a term used to emphasise the removal of unworthy, self-centred attitudes of mind and heart (SA 2010, 202-204).

Another term used in interpreting holiness is 'second blessing,' a term used by holiness movements, including The Salvation Army, following the teaching of John Wesley. It was used "to distinguish the experience of sanctification from the experience of justification and regeneration." Rather than implying that there are only two blessings or that a second blessing is God's final work, it "relates to experiences of significant spiritual challenge, decision and growth, subsequent to conversion" (SA 2010, 204). All these interpretations of holiness relate to spiritual formation—the work of God, personal decisions and the shaping process towards Christlikeness. Spiritual formation in this portfolio is in the context of holiness as a process towards Christlikeness, a process that also involves crisis or turning points.

Other themes emerge in this spiritual formation journey—grace and faith. "Grace is the persistent, loving favor of God towards undeserving humanity" (SA 2010, 345). The grand picture of this word is in the salvation provided by God through the atonement of Christ and giving of the Holy Spirit. "It is by grace you have been saved, through faith" (Eph 2:5, 8). Yet grace is never seen in the Bible as an isolated demonstration but rather as a continuous giving by God to save and keep and bless his people. The spiritual formation of every believer is a testimony to God's grace and in this formation, he provides many means to accomplish his purpose.

John Wesley wrote of the ‘means of grace.’ He defined these as “outward signs, words, or actions ordained by God, and appointed to this end—to be the *ordinary* channels whereby he might convey to men preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace” (Outler 1991, 160). In keeping with Wesley’s definition, especially with regards to outward actions, Robert Mulholland believed the scaffolding of the Christian pilgrimage, spiritual disciplines, are not only an exercise of faith, but a means of grace (Mulholland 1993, 104). These are actions ordained by God and used by him to shape the spiritual life. Philip Yancey contends that “...some learn that suffering can be a means of grace to shape them into better persons” (Yancey 1977, 90). This too is in line with Wesley’s broad definition, as God uses multiple vehicles to deepen the relationship with him. Tozer maintained that God had in “his arsenal an infinite number of tools that he at his discretion employs to accomplish his perfect purpose in our life” (Tozer 2011, 199).

Therefore, when grace is referenced in this document, it has to do with salvation, the provision of spiritual disciplines, the redemptive purpose of suffering and the gift of service, as well as the provision of his people as companions for the journey. All are gifts of God’s grace and the means through which the Christian becomes whole.

From the starting point to the finish line, there is a process and God’s grace is in every detail. “God uses everything that happens to the Christian as an instrument of development and change” (Wardle 2003, 20). He uses everything, including suffering to accomplish his purpose, to make us like Jesus. “Our

theology of the Christian life must take account of how suffering, while an aberration in God's creation and not integral to what God has made, is for now—before Christ is revealed and all is well—a means by which God forms us and purifies us” (Smith 2014, 31).

Faith, like grace, when used in this document has wider implications. Faith is “the confident, obedient trust in the living God” (SA, 345). Responding to God's salvation, practicing spiritual disciplines, holding on in times of crisis, and living a life of service, are all considered evidence of faith. Even faith is a gift of God's grace: “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast” (Eph 2:8,9). Believing in Jesus as Savior is the beginning of the spiritual formation journey. The process involves many opportunities for a response to God's purpose to be like Jesus.

The Salvation Army may not have used the term spiritual formation until recent years, but every definition of it has a ring of familiarity, since our holiness teaching entailed a starting point (conversion), a process, the goal of Christlikeness and the conviction that all is by his grace and through faith.

Every author whose writings we have studied in spiritual formation has been clear about the fact that we play a part in this process. “Christian spiritual formation responds to the gracious work of God and requires both perseverance and progress” (Howard 2008, 270). This is a faith journey for the believer. The themes of grace and faith run through every part of this portfolio as essential to the process of becoming like Christ.

Various diagrams and metaphors have been used to help us capture visually what spiritual formation entails. In his book *The Divine Conspiracy*, Dallas Willard called his diagram, the “*Golden Triangle*” of *Spiritual Growth*. He explained that the image was “designed to suggest the correlation in practical life to the factors that can certainly lead to the transformation of the inner self into Christlikeness”. He placed the work of the Holy Spirit at the apex since this ministry was primary. The Holy Spirit “moves within our souls, and especially our minds to present the person of Jesus and the reality of the kingdom” (Willard 1997, 348). The Holy Spirit continues his work within the believer to do the kind of works Jesus did and to develop Christlike character. Willard corrects any notion that the Spirit’s “to us or in us” is all that is required to transform character. At one corner of the triangle he shows that in order to be Christlike, choices must be made to respond to the Spirit and behave like Christ. In the other corner of the triangle, Willard shows that life’s temptations and circumstances are also involved in the shaping process (Willard 1997, 347-348).

Evan Howard’s *formational quadrilateral*, like Willard’s golden triangle, highlights the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our formation as well as the events and choices of ordinary life but also finds spiritual direction and the community of faith as integral to the spiritual development (Howard 2014).

Metaphors with mental images of spiritual formation have also been used to give us understanding. Terry Wardle called his book about a “Christ-centered approach to spiritual formation”, *The Transforming Path* (Wardle 2003). Dallas Willard’s book *Renovation of the Heart* (Willard 2002) gives us a picture of what

he believes about “spiritual transformation”, how and where it takes place and how it impacts the whole of our being and relationships. Robert Mulholland informs us with the metaphor of a journey, giving us “a road map for spiritual formation” (Mulholland 1993).

While terms, metaphors and diagrams are helpful in understanding, seeing or visualizing what we mean by spiritual formation, no one term or graphic can adequately describe the mystery of transformation or the complexities of human personality or the challenges of living “in the world but not of it” (Jn 17:16).

Though we can never fully plumb the depths, we can seek to view life and what God is about *through the lens of grace*. It was a choice I made when writing my spiritual autobiography in the first year of this course of study (2014) and it has been my way of seeing the entire portfolio. Like the need for corrective lens in eyeglasses, we sometimes have to recognize when our perspective has either been unrealistically positive or damagingly negative. If grace is the corrective lens, then what is real and even painful can be seen as valuable and purposeful when we see what God promises and provides in order to fulfil his purpose.

I commence the portfolio with an essay written for the first course of the Doctor of Ministry Program. It is about A.W. Tozer, Christian Missionary Alliance, evangelist, holiness teacher and writer (Tozer 2007). The essay also refers often to the teaching and writing of our professor, Evan Howard, author of *The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality* (Howard 2008). There are three major points in this essay, drawn from Tozer’s life and ministry—the pursuit of God, the purified life and his prophetic witness. His books were not meant to be

spiritual formation textbooks but they are that and more. Christlikeness is an all-consuming goal for this man whose pursuit of God would involve nothing less than knowing the divine intimately and bearing the mark of Christ within. Tozer wrote profusely on the means that God uses to bring about Christlikeness. The cross and the refiner's fire were necessary if such a goal was to be realized. To read Tozer without seeing him *through the lens of grace* may result in seeing the journey of faith as austere and severe, uncompromising and irrelevant. But Tozer's heartbeat was for the Christian's conformity to Christ and the Church's recognition of its identity and mission. Therefore, he refused to let Christians drift into deafness and deadness. He was a prophet for his times and one who still speaks today.

His writings go beyond one congregation. He writes about spiritual maturity for Christians of any denomination, the spiritual life of the whole Church. His writings on the Christlike life relate to the holiness teaching of The Salvation Army in which I grew up and served as an active officer for forty-four years. The Salvation Army is different from other churches because of its quasi-military structure and terminology. But it proved to be an eye-opener as I viewed its spiritual formation in concert with Robert Mulholland's *Invitation to a Journey* (Mulholland 1993). From what I experienced and observed, The Salvation Army has been effective in the shaping of its soldiers to be Christlike with its teaching of the doctrine of holiness. Its message of full salvation is a story of grace and the response of Salvationists in life and service is a witness of faith. Spiritual formation principles are captured in *The Model of Spiritual Formation in The*

Salvation Army. The model is based on the salvation soldier, using the military terms of enlistment, enculturation, encounter, *esprit de corps* and engagement that relate to the quasi-military structure of The Salvation Army. The biblical images for spiritual formation include the battle image. This image is the basis of explaining The Salvation Army, its identity, mission and the rigors of the journey.

The action research project is a natural follow-up to this model for it highlights the stories of eight Salvationists whose lives have been shaped through various difficult circumstances and personal crisis. The subject of this research was “adversity and suffering in the life of a Christian”. Interviews were the basis of the research. The outcome of this approach proved to be stories of grace and faith. I had no guarantee that those who suffered adverse experiences and periods of understandable suffering would reflect these themes to the degree that they did. Their faith, through it all, was a witness. God’s saving and keeping power, his gracious dealings and provision for them emerged in every story. Even more surprising was a witness by some that they thanked God for the experience of adversity and suffering because it deepened their faith, increased compassion and impacted their service.

From the wider church perspective that Tozer gives, The Salvation Army’s process of spiritual formation, the individual accounts of eight Salvationists, I close with the final part, my own spiritual autobiography. It gives an account of my faith development and spiritual formation through my home life, my life and ministry in The Salvation Army and experiences that brought joy and fulfilment as well as challenges.

In 1969, I was commissioned an officer in The Salvation Army. I chose Philippians 1:20-21 as a special text, with little idea of how it now reads for me, not only in the New International Version but in life experience. “I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain”. Maybe then it was the daring, drama and determination of the Apostle Paul that gripped me. That was then. This is now.

Life really is the best teacher. While mental assent is given to the fine books on spiritual formation, and essay writing captures the principles, and professors articulate the stages, experience ultimately will determine whether we really “get it”. That does not mean that all we read, hear and imbibe is not true. And surely it has nothing to do with Scripture in any way being unreliable. But what is on offer to us by the grace of God has to be received, even when what is necessary for the shaping requires courage and even death. To testify, “For me to live is Christ and die is gain” not only requires an unashamed confession of faith and brave resolve, but this commitment to Christ precipitates occasions when both are tested. Yet, there is ample evidence of God’s grace through it all.

The Apostle Paul felt that life for him was Christ, knowing him, living for him, becoming like him. This is the journey of faith, not just for the first century saints, but for us. We too should discover afresh that God’s boundless grace continues to be amazing. Life viewed through his lens calls forth gratitude and praise.

These past three years have underscored a vital truth about the spiritual journey—relationship with God is personal but it is not solitary. This Doctor of Ministry program in spiritual formation has been inspirational and motivational, especially as it has introduced me to men and women of God who experienced him as they experienced life. Their personal journeys, relationship with their church tradition, and witness in the world were meaningful in my own walk and ministry.

These saints, mystics and authors were not only important through their individual witness, but so many represented traditions different from my own, The Salvation Army. There is always a danger of loyalty to one's denomination morphing into arrogance or exclusion. Encountering God's people throughout church history and their different theological settings or worship forms did not diminish the consistency in their understanding of spiritual formation, even if they did not use the term. The strong emphasis on grace, spiritual disciplines, community, adversity, and mission helped me understand my own story and the story of The Salvation Army. They are part of the "great cloud of witnesses" (Heb 12:1) God has provided on the journey.

The parts of this portfolio are distinct but not different in emphasis. They bear the mark of God's grace and celebrate the faith of individuals.

PART I

A.W. TOZER:

**A TEACHER AND EXEMPLAR OF
HOLINESS AND GRACE**

Mighty Lord, our hearts are open
To thy penetrating gaze;
Now, O let the fire descending
Fill our hearts with power and praise.
(Thomas McKie
SASB 1986 201, v. 2)

A.W. (Aiden Wilson) Tozer is a voice that has never been silenced. How can this larger-than-life figure who died in 1963 still speak to the Church of the 21st century? His ordination was a matter of risk-taking by church officials. After all, he was considered an uneducated man in the formal sense since he held no degree from a seminary. He was a self-taught theologian and a lay preacher. His background was not notable. His conversion was radical but not dramatic. He accepted Christ at seventeen years of age after reflecting on the message of a street preacher. He was often out-of-step with not only his culture but with the Church. Yet between the years of his new-birth and his death, he was pastor for thirty-one years, wrote forty books and served as editor of his denomination's periodical, *Alliance Life* (Tozer 2007).

From what has been written about him and from his own writings, we can conclude that he spoke into his generation and beyond in a way that few individuals ever do. His biographer, James L. Snyder in his introduction to Tozer's, *The Mystery of the Holy Spirit* concluded: "Tozer marched to the beat of 'a different drummer', but not in the same way a rebel might do. It was simply that he was totally sold out to Jesus Christ" (Tozer 2007, 182). Snyder further informs us that Tozer was recognized as an anointed speaker and writer, with keen insight, who communicated through powerful and persuasive words.

His deep knowledge and pursuit of God and God's recognized blessing on him have made him a most notable agent of the spiritual formation of thousands who have come under his influence. His life was shaped by the agency and means of the Holy Spirit, as well as other means such as the community of faith, spiritual

disciplines and circumstances. These equipped him to speak authentically about growth toward Christlikeness. His writings are consistent with the contribution of other agents in spiritual formation, both before him and after. They echo John Wesley's emphasis on grace and the Holiness Movement's call for full surrender. He would concur with Richard Foster's spiritual disciplines (Foster 1978), Dallas Willard's "golden triangle of spiritual growth" (Willard 1997, 347), and Evan Howard's Foundational Quadrilateral (Howard 2014).

This essay on Tozer centers on the work of God, and his use of human agency and graces in the ongoing process to make us Christlike. With A.W. Tozer as our guide, it is hoped that we, as Christians in the 21st century, will also see the pursuit of God not as a human initiative but a response to the Trinitarian work of grace. In this process of pursuing, we will also consider the goal of Christlikeness. In this essay, it is called the purified life and comes as a result of the cross, the refiner's fire and life's circumstances that while necessary, are often painful. The essay's final point centers on Tozer as a prophetic witness to the Church. This role in spiritual formation is crucial, for if the Church is to fulfil God's purpose in the spiritual formation of the individual, then Tozer's words have to be considered.

CHAPTER 1: THE PURSUIT OF GOD

A.W. Tozer would have no disagreement with recent definitions of spiritual formation as “the ongoing process of the Triune God transforming the believer’s life and character toward the life and character of Christ--accomplished by the ministry of the Spirit in the context of the biblical community” (Pettit 2008, 24). “Christian spiritual formation involves the reorientation and rehabilitation of our lives. It aims at full harmony with Christ. It is divine insofar as it responds to divine grace; it is human insofar as it is intentional and ongoing. It is expressed in life. It requires both perseverance and progress” (Howard 2008, 270). A distinction has been made in our course textbook between Christian spirituality and spiritual formation. The former centers on the relationship with God as lived out in practice, exploring the whole of life, and the latter focuses on the means of maturity (Howard 2008, 23). The aim is the same, though various terms are used—a relationship with God that results in reorientation, transformation, union with God, formation into Christlikeness.

This relationship with God is informed by human personality and experience, the Scriptures, personal relationships, history and even the human sciences. It is not confined to the ‘soul’ or the ‘spirit’ but pervades the whole person, the cognitive, the affections, and the volition. It affects every process, stage and level of the human experience. Relationship with God is shaped in

visible contexts, with agents and means that contribute to the forward progress of the Christian (Howard 2008, 85-104).

But it all takes place by God's initiative and in the arena of life. God is both transcendent and immanent. Though he is not limited to our time or space, he relates to us in time and space (Howard 2008, 122-125). In his classic book, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, Tozer opens the heavens to encounter the transcendent God—the Almighty, the wholly other, the Omniscient, Omnipresent, Omnipotent, the Eternal God, etc. But he also exposes the heart of the immanent God as gracious Father, who through his Son and by his Holy Spirit brings us into a fellowship of transformational love. God, who is present, speaks and acts and in pursuing him, we can become the persons we were meant to be. Though we still are confronted with the mystery of God, he does reveal himself to us in images that the human mind can comprehend, i.e., Shepherd, Father, Lover, Savior (Howard 2008, 133) but his clearest self-disclosure is through his Son.

Tozer wrote: “Christ walked with men on earth that he might show them what God is like and make known the true nature of God to a race that had wrong ideas about Him” (Tozer 2012, 1236). The correction took place not through admonitions but through a life lived in the deepest communion with the Father and recognized as one “full of grace and truth” (Jn 1:14). He called his followers to live like him. This call of God through his Son was a clear “revelation of grace: uncompelled, undeserved, powerful, active favor” (Howard 2008, 225). As men and women of the Bible experienced this intimate, warm and satisfying life, Tozer believed it was a life to be pursued by every sincere believer.

Tozer saw the intrinsic beauty of such a relationship and outcome but also the cost contained in God's offering it and our pursuing it. The Christian understands from the Scriptures but also through the reality of experience that God's great intention in creation for relationship was frustrated with the tragedy of human sin. However, the story would not end in failure, for "before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4) restoration was in the mind of God (Howard 2008, 191). This restoration would require the atoning sacrifice of his Son, the convicting, regenerating, sanctifying work of his Spirit but also the participation of the believer in the process of maturation. "The most important thing we can devote ourselves to is giving attention to the things of God to save our soul. This must be an active, persistent, and deliberate intent on our part, regardless of the difficulties that lie in our path" (Tozer 2010, 344).

This relationship has its starting point and its process. In truth, the starting point was in the heart of God and the process will take us into glory. There are "four moments of salvation: historical salvation (the atoning work of Christ), initial salvation (conversion), ongoing salvation (Christian growth) and final salvation (heaven)" (Howard 2008, 24). This section will focus on the dynamic of the new birth and the progression in the Christian's pursuit this side of heaven as understood by James Snyder in his study of Tozer (Snyder in Tozer 2010, 125).

The dynamic is the inception of new life, the new-birth. Tozer believed that God longed to dwell in the redeemed heart, making his presence felt continuously (Tozer 2008, 53). But it was the redeemed heart. No externals could replace or supplement regeneration. "Baptism, confirmation, the receiving of the

sacraments, church membership—these mean nothing unless the supreme act of God in regeneration also takes place” (Tozer 2008, 5).

Tozer was quick to correct any idea that our redemption came only by the merits of Jesus as though he had to overcome the reluctance of a God angered by our sin. For Tozer, the Trinity was involved in this dynamic. “We have been redeemed not by one Person of the Trinity putting himself against another but by the three Persons working in the ancient and glorious harmony of the Godhead” (Tozer 2009, 119). He did not minimize sin for he wrote of the “moral bankruptcy of the human soul” and “the foul scent of sin upon us” (Tozer 2010, 186, 205) but the cross and grace of God were more than an answer. “No matter how much sin a man has done, literally and truly, grace abounds unto that man” (Tozer 2009, 123, 125).

The necessity of repentance, faith and surrender were laid out by Tozer in unmistakable language. Referring to the prodigal son’s turnabout, he wrote in *Man the Dwelling Place of God*, “Repentance is primarily a change of moral purpose, a sudden and often violent reversal of the soul’s direction” (Tozer 2008, 34). Here is a staggering take on repentance from the same book:

We have reduced repentance to a change of mind. It is a mental act, indeed, but I point out that repentance is not likely to do us much good until it ceases to be a change of mind only and becomes a wound in our spirit. No man has truly repented until his sin has wounded him near to death, until the wound has broken him and defeated him and taken all the fight and self-assurance out of him and he sees himself as the one who nailed his Savior on the tree (Tozer 2008, 112).

Though repentance brought one to the lowest level, it would be by faith that all the spiritual blessings would be appropriated. “Every benefit from the atonement

of Christ comes to the individual through the gateway of faith. Forgiveness, cleansing, regeneration, the Holy Spirit, all answers to prayer are given to faith and received by faith. There is no other way” (Tozer 2008, 26).

The dynamic of regeneration is only the starting point. The pursuit of God involves process and progression. Salvation is ongoing. Every text or teaching on spiritual formation thus far has included the necessity of spiritual disciplines.

Dallas Willard in *Spirit of the Disciplines* has given this understanding:

“Disciplines refer to the activities of mind and body purposely undertaken, to bring our personality and total being into effective cooperation with the divine order” (Willard 1988, 68). The fact that the word ‘disciplines’ is operative in Christian literature gives an indication that this pursuit of God, as Tozer pointed out, is difficult. The whole point of disciplines is not only to counter any erosion of the dynamic regeneration experience but also to move that Christian forward to full maturity in Christ. If this essay listed every discipline in the *Outlines of Spiritual Disciplines in Selected Christian Literature* (Howard 2008, 290), it would not be a stretch to prove that Tozer practiced most if not all in his pursuit of God. Only a few are mentioned here.

“To truly understand Tozer,” wrote his biographer, “one must focus on his devotional life. Tozer loved to be shut alone with God. He cultivated his ability to focus on him every day. In so doing, he would quiet his heart and adore and worship his heavenly Father.” He wrote: “Our religious activities should be ordered in such a way as to leave plenty of time for the cultivation of the fruits of solitude and silence” (Snyder in Tozer 2007, 183, 272).

Tozer was a man of prayer and the Word. He often commented, “As a man prays, so is he.” His entire ministry flowed out of prayer (Tozer 2007, 143). The Bible for him was a means to hear the voice of God (Tozer 1948, 82). He believed the Scriptures “opened to us the only path into his presence” (Tozer 2010, 547). Tozer is known for his conviction about the Bible, so in his personal life and ministry, it was the authority used by the Holy Spirit to shape a person’s convictions and actions.

The Bible reveals the truth we need to know to save us from sin, to regenerate us, to rehabilitate us morally and spiritually, and to prepare us for the day of the Lord. It is all in the Word, and that is what we mean when we say the Bible is the only sourcebook of information concerning those things that have to do with our salvation (Tozer 2010, 567).

Tozer also loved his hymn book. It was a means of grace and a discipline in that he used it for prayer and meditation. He believed that if one spent a year just meditating on the songs of Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley one would become a fine theologian (Tozer 2008, 168). When we speak of agents of spiritual formation, Tozer would have pointed to hymn writers.

He was a self-educated man, a man who valued study, and read extensively and widely. He often quoted the mystics from various traditions. In many ways, they were his mentors or coaches. He could cope with the different points of doctrinal view but for him, their knowledge and experience of God could not be surpassed. These writers had a heart for God and that is why Tozer was so taken with them. He wanted to know what they knew of God and how they came to know him on such intimate grounds (Tozer 2011, 17). He believed in what they experienced.

CHAPTER 2:

THE PURIFIED LIFE

As Dallas Willard pointed out, spiritual disciplines are purposeful in that they are “to bring our personality and total being into effective cooperation with the divine order” (Willard 1988, 68). This pursuit of God is more than a spiritual jaunt. There is a goal in sight which requires a desire, determination and perseverance. In his book *The Crucified Life* Tozer writes: “I earnestly believe we will hear the Spirit of God say, ‘Let us go on to perfection’. Let us go beyond repentance for past sins; let us go beyond forgiveness and cleansing; let us go beyond the impartation of divine life. Let us first be sure we get these things settled to the point of absolute assurance” (Tozer 2011, 90). It was a matter of priorities in his mind that spiritual maturity would be our chief concern and ambition. “If we were concerned with our spiritual condition as we are with our homes and our businesses and our income, we would go forward spiritually at a great rate” (Tozer 2010, 434).

The ‘going on’ or ‘going forward’ for Tozer, was to fulfil God’s grand purpose. An understanding of that purpose will give us a clearer understanding of how God works in and through our circumstances. In several places, Tozer’s writings are adamant that God’s purpose is not to “make our lives more tolerable here on earth”. In his estimation, this would cheapen the atoning work of the cross. He states it unequivocally: “God’s supreme purpose for us is to make us like his Son, Jesus Christ” (Tozer 2011, 199). Tozer made it clear that God’s plan

was far more extensive and glorious than to rescue us from hell alone. God had the divine nature in mind, becoming like him, taking on the nature of his Son.

Tozer believed that this must be our emphasis, seeing the divine purpose as catching us on our way to hell, turning us around, bringing judgement on the old self-life and then creating a new self within us, which is Jesus Christ (Tozer 2011, 164, 165). This life has also been referred to as ‘deification’, life that is “not merely a conformity or imitation but rather a full sharing of the life—the energies of Christ insofar as they can be incorporated in humans” (Howard 2008, 274). Tozer often speaks of it in terms of the deeper life or the crucified life. “God sends prophets and holy seers to rebuke hollow forms of worship. They call us to the deeper life or the crucified life. This Christian life is something deeper than the average life among Christians and is nearer to ideal New Testament Christianity, which should be the norm” (Tozer 2011, 76).

To be like Jesus, to be Christlike, means to be wholly holy, filled with the Spirit of Jesus, so that every gracious quality of his is lived out in us. So this pursuit, this going on to perfection would then involve a process of purification. Any sincere Christian hungering to fulfil God’s purpose would surrender to any means by which God would conform the believer to the image of his Son. Tozer contended that God had in “his arsenal an infinite number of tools that he at his discretion employs to accomplish his perfect purpose in our life” (Tozer 2011, 199).

How can one truly be Christlike when ‘self’ reigns supreme? By nature, we are self-centered. Tozer had no doubt what was needed. He was captivated by

Galatians 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me”—“Jesus came to put an end to self—not to make us feel better or improve us”, Tozer insisted (Tozer 2011, 160). His language is very strong when it comes to the crucified life. Self must go, be put to death no matter what the cost for there is nothing redeemable in it (Tozer 2011, 161). One wonders if Tozer tends to be leaning toward a radical view of total depravity and forgetting that there still remains something of the image of God in humans. However, C.S. Lewis also uses such strong language of crucifixion:

Christ says: ‘Give me All. I don’t want so much of your time and so much of your money and so much of your work: I want you. I have not come to torment your natural self, but to kill it. No half-measures are any good...Hand over the whole natural self, all the desires which you think innocent as well as the ones you think wicked—the whole outfit. I will give you a new self instead. In fact, I will give you myself: my own will shall become yours’ (Lewis 1961, 163).

The language of the crucified life is severe but Tozer kept the grander purpose in view, a life risen with Christ in victory and fruitfulness.

While Christlikeness means living a grace-filled life, it is also a life of surrender and obedience. The gospels are clear that this was the story of Jesus’ earthly life—doing the Father’s will, completing his work and surrendering his life to crucifixion. Tozer not only focussed our attention on this but also believed that Jesus in no way minimized what following him would involve. He believed that the cross was radical and we were faced with a decision, to flee from it or die upon it. He wrote:

If we are wise we will do what Jesus did: endure the cross and despise the shame for the joy that is set before us. To do this is to submit the whole pattern of our lives to be destroyed and built again in the power of an endless life. And we shall find that it is more than poetry, more than sweet hymnody and elevated feeling. The cross will cut into our lives where it hurts worst, sparing neither us nor our carefully cultivated reputations. It will defeat us and bring our selfish lives to an end. Only then can we rise in fulness of life to establish a pattern of living wholly new and free and full of good works (Tozer 2009, 5).

Dying to self is purification, without doubt. This is what is involved in ongoing salvation. Yet Tozer would also see not only the cross but the Refiner's fire as "one of the tools in God's arsenal" to make us like Christ. "For the Christian on the path of the crucified life, God will bring into his pathway the fiery furnace, the Refiner's Fire, and show that Christian how much he really loves him" (Tozer 2011, 209). Tozer saw the cross and the fire as refining processes which addressed different aspects of our lives. "The cross deals with our self-life; to put self on the cross and have it absolutely crucified under Christ. But the Refiner's Fire takes a different approach. The purpose of the Refiner's Fire is to burn away all the bondage imposed on us by the world" (Tozer 2011, 20).

A.W. Tozer is not alone in his conviction that the Christlike life requires a divine fire to burn up the dross. When Job testified, "But he knows the way I take; when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10, NAS), he saw the hand of God working out his divine purpose in a refining process. Yet the process is costly. But accepting all that life brings, especially the refining fire, is a biblical principle that the giants in the faith have proven true. Theophan the Recluse wrote:

Do everything in an awareness of its being God's will; proceed in this will and submit to it in everything with the whole soul. Acting according to God's will embraces everything that happens to a man. Whatever you do, force yourself to see that God wants this work from you; receive whatever you come across from the hand of the Lord. An individual, a thing, an incident, joy, sorrow—everything should be received with joy, submitting yourself eagerly, peacefully, delightfully, regardless of its distastefulness (Theophan 2006, 313).

Tozer was convinced that every circumstance was useful to God's design for producing Christlikeness. In the ongoing salvation, the Christian must see the purifying value in the ordinary trials of life. As pointed out in our class:

There is the reality of conflict on every level and spiritual formation is not the absence of conflict but victory in the midst of it. Further, these trials recognize that in life things go wrong. There are obstacles, tests, inconveniences, thorns in the flesh and outright attacks both human and demonic. Yet they empty us of our self-sufficiency, reframe our thinking, draw us to the deeper life and raise up virtues (Howard 2014).

We must come to terms with trials and the 'storms of life' as necessary to spiritual progress.

Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit Order, understood this acceptance as a holy indifference, the foundation and principle of his *Exercises*. David Fleming in his contemporary reading of Ignatius writes: "We should not fix our desires on health or sickness, wealth or poverty, success or failure, a long life or short one. For everything has the potential of calling forth in us a more loving response to our life forever with God" (Fleming 1996, 27).

An unnamed song writer has written about the fiery trials that God uses for his purposes. It is a summary of the grace that God provides in the face of life's trials.

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace all-sufficient shall be thy supply;
The flames shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.
(SASB 1986, 653)

CHAPTER 3: THE PROPHETIC WITNESS

Paul Pettit's definition of spiritual formation as referred to in the introduction is especially helpful in understanding Tozer's convictions about the Church. He believes that this transforming process into Christlikeness is accomplished by the Holy Spirit but is done so "in the context of biblical community" (Pettit 2008, 24). In fact, Pettit, the editor of *Foundations of Spiritual Formation* has a secondary title, "a community approach to becoming like Christ".

Tozer saw the Church as vital. He goes so far as to contend, "The highest expression of the will of God in this age is the church which he purchased with his blood" (Tozer in Wiersbe 1978, 839). Another startling statement is: "Let it be clearly stated that there is no service (of religious activity) acceptable to God in this age that does not center in and spring out of the church" (Wiersbe 1978, 839). Since God inhabits his Church, for Tozer, there was no more "important organism under the sun". Tozer is not speaking of any particular denomination but the universal Church. He defines it: "The church is found wherever the Holy Spirit has drawn together a few persons who trust Christ for their salvation, worship God in spirit and have no dealings with the world and the flesh" (Tozer in Wiersbe 1978, 840). Another positive affirmation of Tozer's is that "the church can never die" (Tozer 2008, 152).

In the August 2014 residential class on the topic of “true religion in evangelicalism,” Howard said, “its union with God, a divine life, not mere sentimentalism, sacramentalism, moralism, enthusiasm. Authentic Christianity is more than all these things. When we form our congregation into doctrine, we must form it into living doctrine” (Howard 2014). This expresses the heart of Tozer. This is the Church that can authentically be an effective agent and means through its worship and service into shaping the Christlike life. Tozer believed that the Church was in need of reformation but he had no doubt that it could not die, for Christ himself said, “the gates of hell will not prevail against it” (Mt 16:18).

His biographer, James Snyder (Snyder in Tozer 2007, 231) confirmed that Tozer was considered a prophet to the Body of Christ. When Bible scholar, J. Sidlow Baxter, was defining a prophet, one would think he was describing A.W. Tozer. He explains that the Hebrew word means, “to boil up or pour forth like a hot spring or fountain, suggesting a pouring forth of words from fervent animation or divine inspiration. The prophet came not to present moral discourses, metaphysical treatises, or philosophical reasons but to make known the mind and heart and will of God” (Baxter 1993, 208). Tozer prayed for a prophetic anointing and his tenacious commitment to speak the truth from God came as a “boiling up and pouring forth” but it proved costly. “Years ago I prayed that God would sharpen my mind and enable me to receive everything He wanted to say to me. I then prayed that God would anoint my head with the oil of the

prophet so I could say it back to the people. That one prayer has cost me plenty since, I can tell you that” (Tozer 2007, 241).

Author and speaker, Charles Swindoll, observed: “During his ministry, which included both the spoken and written word, this intense, provocative man—small in stature but strong in heart--functioned as the conscience of evangelicalism” (Swindoll in Barlow 2011, 229). Yet we need to understand that his strong provocative language was an inspired call to God’s Church to be faithful in worship, witness and mission.

In his book *The Mission of God’s People*, Christopher Wright widens our view of the role of the community of faith as he traces God’s intention from the very beginning of the biblical record. God’s people were to be a witness to the world, and whenever that witness was dulled, distorted or diminished, God raised up prophets. God’s big picture, according to Wright, was to reclaim the world. God’s people would be his chosen vessel for this mission. In speaking of this, he wrote: “God called Abraham and his people to be *different*, to live by different standards, to reflect the God who is radically different from all the flawed gods of the nations. Our problem is that so often our church is *no different* from the world, and in some respects, even worse” (Wright 2010, 94).

Tozer’s prophetic witness was just as stirring in its assessment. Tozer saw the evangelical church selling out to the world as the liberal church had done so earlier (Tozer 2011, 8). The philosophy of mid-twentieth century Christianity, as far as Tozer was concerned, was a philosophy of appeasement (Tozer 2009, 60). In an attempt by believers to get along within their culture there was a sacrificing

of biblical truth. But Tozer saw beneath this accommodation. He exposed the shallowness of the church in its feverish activities and worldliness.

Every age has its own characteristics. Right now, we are in an age of religious complexity. The simplicity which is in Christ is rarely found among us. In its stead are programs, methods, organizations and a world of nervous activities which occupy time and attention but can never satisfy the longing heart. The shallowness of our inner experience, the hollowness of our worship, and the service imitation of the world which marks our promotional methods all testify that we, in this day, know God only imperfectly, and the peace of God, scarcely at all (Tozer 1948, 18).

Tozer was distressed when he saw the Church consumed with apologetics as though Christ and his work had to have scientific proof. He believed that it undermined adoration, robbing the Church of the mystery of God, with knowledge replacing faith and explanation replacing worship. His succinct conclusion was, “Our thought habits are those of the scientist, not those of the worshipper. We are more likely to explain, than adore” (Tozer 1948, 78).

This man, A.W. Tozer, knew God and under his anointing would create in others a deep soul-thirst. But the appeasement, shallowness and justifying were not the Church’s only failures. He was scathing when he exposed the obsession of the Church with statistics, believing it had opted for quantitative growth even if it is at the neglect or cost of qualitative. He saw this as idolatrous, worshipping “the great goddess, Numbers”. The financial report and membership rolls were its “test of spiritual growth and the proof of success or failure in most Christian endeavours” (Tozer 2008, 305 Mornings with Tozer).

Harry Shields in covering how to preach in a postmodern society confirms that spiritual formation is about change. Preaching that is effective in bringing

about a spiritual change, therefore, must keep faith with the biblical narrative and sensitively and relevantly speak to the whole congregation and the whole person (Shields in Pettit 2008, 245). Tozer would undoubtedly agree with speaking to the whole congregation and the whole person, with biblical integrity and with the goal of bringing about change. But from what we read of his prophetic witness, he may react to such words as sensitively and relevantly. “Tozer’s goal in preaching was to lead the listener straight into the presence of God. Therefore, everything that would distract from the message, and particularly from God, he ruthlessly cut out” (Tozer 2007, 203). He would not countenance trying to appeal to the congregation or culture. He scorned any use of entertainment as a ploy to keep the attention of the audience. Nor would he use humor as a ‘hook’. To read Tozer as a prophet is to capture the picture of a man who had no time for any method that resembled entertainment, accommodation or self-aggrandizement. He was for pursuing God and believed wholeheartedly that God’s Spirit and God’s Word needed no embellishment.

Though Tozer speaks to a different century (and we may even feel the 21st century is far worse), the truth is that the threats of the world are not new. Howard writes, “the world acts contrary to God’s will, the world attacks God’s people and concerns, and the world attracts God’s people away from God’s heart” (Howard 2008, 164). This is true in every age. What causes the true prophet of God to spew forth condemnation is when we are seduced by the world and worse still, when the world gets into the Church. With the threats from the world, the Church’s mission will only be fulfilled if it heeds the prophets’ call to the Church to

rediscover a robust faith and virile witness. A Church marked by a life of prayer and a life of care takes the spiritual formation of its people as integral to the fulfilment of the mission to the world.

Tozer had a heart-cry for revival. “Nothing is more needed now in the contemporary Church than a revival” (Tozer 2011, 167). He recognized the revivals of the past included personal, corporate and community revivals. Some would use a more general term such as renewal but whatever the term, A.W. Tozer would agree that it is a work of God where “the church experiences a fresh sense of life or vitality, where there is some powerful manifestation of God’s active presence, where significant change is experienced, where the world itself is transformed through the church’s witness, or other similar phenomena” (Howard 2008, 435). Tozer as a prophetic witness called the Church to change, to hunger for the deep things of God, to be faithful to its calling, to invest in the spiritual maturity of its people, to be a witness to the world.

The term ‘spiritual formation’ was not in use among evangelicals in Tozer’s time, but his books are filled with its principles. He really has been an agent of spiritual formation for thousands of Christians. I count myself as one who has come under his instruction and influence. He fulfilled his task of inspiring us to “go on to perfection”, to aim at what was possible, Christlikeness. He would never have taken any credit as the sole motivator. He would remind us of all who went before, the mystics, authors, preachers, hymn writers, local congregation, saintly family and friends. All played a part in spurring us on, modelling Jesus.

So many quote Tozer and he has such wonderful sound bites. But having read several of his books, I think that in our selectivity, we may avoid the hard things. The prophet who called on us to pursue God refused to mince words when it came to the cross and the fire. Spiritual formation is not warm clay in the gentle hands of the Potter, who is content to let any shape emerge. The breaking and the melting are all part of the process and various means are needed. The reshaping and the filling are outcomes in his hands.

There are points of difference with most of us who read Tozer but you cannot escape the sense of the presence of God when you read him. As quoted in the introduction, Tozer marched to the beat of “a different drummer”. I want to increasingly hear that drum beat. I know where the march is headed--to a hill and an empty tomb. It’s a daily march, actually. But this journey is where life is lived to the full, where knowing him and being like him are more than possibilities. This is more than a personal desire. My heart for The Salvation Army resonates with Tozer’s heart for the Church. In a day when even the greatest intentions can be sidelined by public acclaim or resting on the laurels of the past, or seeking to make things happen by human effort alone, I want The Salvation Army to hear the drum beat that Tozer heard. An Army on the march must be in pursuit of God. Such passion to fulfil his will and purpose will result in conflicts that require courage. But it is possible that not only one man like Tozer becomes a prophetic witness but the individual church itself can take its stand in these uncertain times, “when truth is on the scaffold and faith is standing trial” (SASB 1986, 6). The

Salvation Army will not lack God's grace if its allegiance to Christ is the basis of its prophetic witness.

In the following part, there will also be points of difference for readers as they view the model of spiritual formation in The Salvation Army. However, The Salvation Army's effectiveness in presenting the goal of Christlikeness and providing the preaching, teaching and examples of godly people will be recognized.

PART II

A MODEL OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION IN THE SALVATION ARMY CONTEXT

Here, Lord, assembled in thy name
Thy work to do, thy help we claim,
And pray for grace that we may be
Inspired by purest love to thee.

Not might, nor power, thyself hast said,
Can vice destroy or virtue spread;
Thy Spirit, Lord, this work must do,
Who only can our hearts renew.
(Edward Boaden
SASB 1986, 581)

We are The Salvation Army,
Not a bed and board Army. Not a money collecting Army.
Not a recreation center Army. Not a hospital Army.
These are but battlefields,
The weapons and the logistics of the fight.
(Palmer 1981, 1)

The face of The Salvation Army is familiar, thanks to the practical service which is welcomed in communities, but it comes as a surprise to many that the Army is a church. Their association is the thrift store, social services or the Christmas kettle. The vibrancy of The Salvation Army's worship, the depth of its theology and the effectiveness of its spiritual formation are unknown to many.

This model or system is an example of spiritual formation using the battle image highlighted in our name to show that spiritual formation takes place effectively in this part of God's Church called The Salvation Army. It is true for the whole Church, in that, in this spiritual warfare journey, the Church is called to wage war, "against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of the dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph 6:12). This struggle against the dark spiritual forces is both a corporate responsibility and a personal one for every Christian (Wilhoit 2008, 21). Phil Needham concurs: "The Church is an army which exists for the purpose of fighting every enslavement to sin, disarming the causes of human oppression, and overcoming obstacles to pilgrimage" (Needham 1987, 52).

The model could be helpful in non-Salvation Army settings to teach about the Army tradition. It could also be beneficial as a ‘refresher course’ for Salvationists (soldiers and officers) to gain a new appreciation for the Army which God raised up, continues to lead and to bless. In the conclusion, the pedagogical approach for the model will be considered. Though not included in this paper, practical ideas for preaching and teaching have been prepared on how to address what is needed or reinforce what is essential.

Basic to this model, is The Salvation Army’s understanding of the priority of its spiritual life. In March 1996, General Paul A. Rader appointed an International Spiritual Life Commission to think deeply about the ways in which the spiritual life of Salvationists was cultivated and enriched. What emerged from the Spiritual Life Commission were twelve Calls to Salvationists with affirmations. They will be referred to where appropriate throughout this model.

As Rader then wrote:

Nothing is more critical for our future effectiveness in mission as we move into the new millennium than our strength as a Movement. Nothing is of higher priority than the nurturing of our inner life, growing in grace and understanding, in holiness of heart and life, and in our experience of the risen Christ, present among us, experienced by us, and expressed through us in the quality of our lives and service (Rader in Street 1999, v).

In this essay, Robert Mulholland’s treatment of spiritual formation from his book, *Invitation to a Journey* will be used since this relates to The Salvation Army’s understanding of the spiritual life of its people. This book was most helpful in recognizing how The Salvation Army understands and approaches the

spiritual shaping of its people. Mulholland's theology is Wesleyan which is a main part with the Army's theological roots.

After the initial 'explanation' chapter, the other five will be enlistment, enculturation, encounter, *esprit de corps* and engagement, organized under the headings: what is involved and what is needed.

CHAPTER 4:

EXPLANATION

In order to show how the battle image plays out in the shaping of the salvation soldier, theological roots and context with history will be outlined, and biblical verification will be given for the metaphor and its connection to spiritual formation definitions.

Theological Roots

The first three of the eleven Salvationist doctrines or ‘Articles of Faith’ (SA 2010, xv) are a theological starting point for understanding The Salvation Army in its historical context, and the battle image it has embraced.

We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and that they only constitute the divine rule of Christian faith and practice.

We believe that there is only one God, who is infinitely perfect, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things, and who is the only proper object of religious worship.

We believe that there are three persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, undivided in essence and co-equal in power and glory (SA 2010, xv).

Though these statements were not yet formulated when the Movement first began in 1865, they are nonetheless the foundation of all that was to follow. What was true 150 years ago is still true today—the authority of the God-breathed Scriptures alone as the basis for faith and practice. If the battle image in any way was not

corroborated by sound biblical examples, it could never have taken on the significance it did.

Though William and Catherine Booth are recognized as ‘Founders’, for them and for Salvationists through the many decades, there was never any doubt that God raised up The Salvation Army. That the Army was of God was an affirmation that “became increasingly important for Booth. Without that all would be lost. Without that Booth would feel himself engaged in a purely human endeavor. He could not have that” (Green 1989, 47, 48). The Creator who birthed his Church also brought into being a vital part of it, The Salvation Army.

Our theology and witness are Trinitarian. God is its Creator, and it is only by his blessing that The Salvation Army has been or will be effective in the present and in the future. Only our allegiance to his Son and the empowerment of his Holy Spirit will guarantee a future of God-glorifying service and proclamation. Out of the decision and grace of the Triune God has emerged a Movement which, in concert with the Church universal, seeks to live up to its calling to be his people and fulfil our mission:

The Salvation Army, an international movement,
is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church.
Its message is based on the Bible.
Its ministry is motivated by the love of God.
Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ
and meet human need in his name without discrimination.
(SA 2010, 266)

This international mission statement is more than a self-identity or clarification of what we do or why we do it; it is more than a description of the Movement; it is more than an explanation of an organization, or a segment of the Church

universal. It is the testimony of people, a salvation people, people who have been recipients of God's salvation and proclaimers of it. It is a belief and commitment to God's story of a salvation that is for the whole person and the whole world.

Its purpose has not changed. It has been called by God to raise up "slaves of sin and circumstances to be a people of God who shall take their place as soldiers in the fighting line and form a part of the great force attacking evil" (SA 1945, 56).

Historical Context

Today, The Salvation Army serves in 128 countries with a membership of over 1.7 million (soldiers and adherent members) and a host of employees and volunteers. Its 14,000 worship communities (corps) are the basis for its extensive social work (SA Year Book 2016). The growth in numbers and influence seems a world away from the Army's early beginnings in the impoverished and derelict East End of London in Victorian England.

The Founder, William Booth, left the Methodist New Connexion when its insistence that he serve as a minister of a congregation was in conflict with his calling to be an evangelist. His wife Catherine shared her husband's conviction. While walking the streets of London's East End, God opened his eyes to the misery that he could only describe as a moment of destiny:

When I saw those masses of poor people, so many of them evidently without God or hope in the world, my whole heart went out to them. I walked back to our West End home and said to my wife: 'O Kate, I have found my destiny! These are the people for whose salvation I have been longing all these years... And there and then in my soul I offered myself

and you and the children up to this great work. Those people shall be our people, and they shall have our God as their God' (Larsson 2015, 39).

There was no intention in Booth's mind to start another church. What he desired is what we today would call a parachurch organization. He wanted to get people saved and send them to the churches. However, his East End converts were not welcomed in established congregations. William and Catherine would not leave the converts and what emerged from the moment of destiny was The Christian Mission.

Thirteen years later, in 1878, when reading the proofs of the Mission's annual report with its heading, "The Christian Mission is a Volunteer Army", William's eldest son Bramwell exclaimed: "Volunteer! Here, I am not a volunteer. I'm a regular or nothing". William Booth "took the pen and struck decisively through the word 'volunteer', substituting the word, 'Salvation'. The Christian Mission is a Salvation Army" (Larsson 2015, 61). "The change from the indefinite to the definite article completed the new name... The Christian Mission was now in deed and truth an Army of Salvation. No word is more biblical than salvation and no army richer in resources than a detachment of the army of the living God" (Coutts 1974, 35).

By the end of 1878, 'The Salvation Army' had replaced The Christian Mission as the name of the organization, and the General Superintendent became the 'General'. Mission stations became corps, the first flag was presented and military titles adopted. Uniforms followed within two or three years.

Today, it could be more acceptable to explain the army metaphor in terms of structure, flexibility and missional drive. In this present time of incessant global fighting, maybe we should find a more appropriate, gentler word that would be the antithesis of any notion or form of battle. However, biblically and theologically, the salvation story has at its heart God's resolution to history's greatest conflict. The word 'salvation' connotes an image of victory over enemy forces.

Biblical Verification

The biblical battle image is a description of the spiritual life and has been and continues to be used by respected church leaders, by song writers and even in a secular way, in society. It has been associated with Ignatius of Loyola. "He became convinced that he had been called by God to be a soldier for Christ instead of working as a soldier for the king" (King 2001, location 1764). St. Benedict called for an allegiance to the Lord that would prepare monks and nuns for battle against the devil. "Therefore we must prepare our hearts and our bodies to do battle under the holy obedience of His commands" (The Daily Office: Benedictine Edition 2014, 10321-10322).

John Wesley used this warfare language when describing the Church's unity in mission. "We are carrying the war into the devil's own quarters" (Needham 1987, 58). A cursory glance at the website, "Songs with Warfare Theme" reveal numerous familiar and contemporary songs. Stuart Townend's "O

Church Arise” (quoted at the conclusion of this part) captures the battle image in all verses.

Daily we use terms related to this image—battle with cancer, war on drugs. Arguments are a ‘war of words’. Most significant for this project, however, is to verify the image from Scripture.

In their book *How to Read the Bible for All its Worth* (Fee and Stuart, 2003), Fee and Stuart refer to the Old Testament narrative, explaining that all narratives have three basic parts—characters, plot and resolution. Most narratives presuppose conflict or tension that needs resolution. The metanarrative of the Old Testament and ultimately the New Testament is of God, the protagonist (the leading character in the drama); Satan, the antagonist (the person who actively opposes) and God’s people, the agonists (people engaged in a conflict or struggle). It involves the story of creation, the fall, the need of salvation and God’s redemptive plan. The second level would be how this plan plays out for God’s people. The third level is how it relates to the individual stories. Fee and Stuart explain:

The basic plot of the biblical metanarrative is that the Creator God created a people for his name—in his own image—who as his image-bearers were to be his stewards over the earth that he created for their benefit. But an enemy entered the picture who persuaded the people to bear his image instead, and thus become God’s enemies. The plot resolution is the long story of “redemption” how God rescues his people from the enemy’s clutches, restores them back into his image and (finally) will restore them “in a new heaven and a new earth” (Fee and Stuart 2003, 134).

Whatever term we use to describe this redemption history, it is a story of conflict and resolution, of an enemy that needs to be defeated so that the people of God can be set free to fulfil his purposes for a holy, whole people.

We know that the Old Testament battle narratives are more than metaphorical. Most books describe actual defeats and conquests of God's people. God himself is called a "warrior". "The Lord will march forth like a mighty hero; he will come out like a warrior, full of fury. He will shout his battle cry and crush all his enemies" (Is 42:13 NLT). "Do not fear, Zion; do not let your hands hang limp. The Lord your God is with you; the Mighty Warrior who saves" (Zep 3:16, 17). The "Lord of Hosts" is consistently translated the "Lord of Heaven's Armies" in the New Living Translation. Psalm 80:4, 7, 14, 19, a cry for rescue from the enemies and restoration by his favor, are examples of this translation.

The repeated assurance in the Old Testament is that the battle is the Lord's (1 Sm 17:47; 1 Sm 25:28; 2 Chr 20:15). The victory of his people in any battle is assured because God was with them. "For the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory" (Dt 20:4).

For biblical verification in the New Testament, we cannot dismiss the note sounded in the gospels when Jesus embarked on his ministry. In his book *This Means War*, Chick Yuill calls the proclamation of the kingdom as an "open declaration of war". "If God is King, and if he has come to rule in his Son Jesus then Satan must retreat or fight" (Yuill 1994, 38). C.S. Lewis called the world "enemy-occupied territory". "Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us to take part in a great

campaign of sabotage” (Lewis 1961, 47). If the model prayer Jesus taught his disciples is viewed through Lewis’ lens, its counter-cultural tone highlights the battle line. To pray for God’s kingdom to come, his will to be done, his name hallowed, and to declare as the doxology does that all power and glory belong to him, is to threaten and defy the Enemy (Mt 6:9-13).

The battle image described Christ’s atoning death at Calvary. When Paul wrote to the Colossians, he described Christ’s victory in these terms, “disarming the powers and authorities and triumphing over them by the cross” (2:15). A major theory of the atonement of Jesus was the Christus Victor which dates back to the Church fathers. It emphasizes the victory that Christ won, freeing the captives from the domination of evil.

The Apostle Paul used the battle image generously. Rather than avoiding it because of the presence of the Roman legions, he capitalized on it, drawing spiritual truth. He described the inner spiritual experience as a battle waged. He spoke of being held “captive” to the law (Rom 7:6 NLT). The apostle confessed: “But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me” (7:23 NLT). Galatians 5 also highlights the inner conflict between the life of the flesh and the Spirit (5:17). Ephesians, of course, has the notable chapter on the combat with evil being decisively won by wearing the armor of God (6:10-17). In writing Timothy, he encouraged him to see his spiritual life as a soldier of Christ who wants to please his commanding officer (2 Tm 2:3-4).

Paul in no way minimized the battle but was clear that our weapons for conflict both differ dramatically from those of the world and are more effective (2 Cor 10:3-5). Paul's reference to bearing in his body the brand marks of Jesus (Gal 6:17) is consistent with the sense of honor the Roman soldier experienced when he was branded with a hot iron for identification with his legion. In his effort to bring clarity to the subject of speaking in tongues, Paul used a battle metaphor (1 Cor 14:8). "...if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle"?

Other New Testament authors do not neglect the battle image. "What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Do they not come from the evil desires at war within you"? (Jas 4:1 NLT). "Dear friends, I warn you as 'temporary residents and foreigners' to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls" (1 Pt 2:11 NLT). The writer to the Hebrews called Jesus "the captain of our salvation" (2:10). The Bible closes with the great battle. In John's vision about the enemies of the Lord, he explains: "They will wage war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will triumph over them because he is the Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be the called, chosen and faithful followers" (Rv 17:14).

The biblical texts show that the battle image runs through the Old and New Testaments.

Definition of Spiritual Formation

The thrust of this essay is to develop or reflect a model of spiritual formation in my own tradition. With the foundation laid, that the battle image is more than an historical oddity and much more a biblical description of the spiritual life, it is necessary to understand what is meant by spiritual formation. Paul Pettit, editor of *Foundations of Spiritual Formation* defines it as “the ongoing process of the Triune God transforming the believer’s life and character toward the life and character of Christ—accomplished by the ministry of the Spirit in the context of biblical community” (Pettit 2008, 24). The essential resources for this are the Word, the Spirit and the Community of Faith.

Robert Mulholland’s definition of spiritual formation would find no opposition in Salvation Army tradition. “Spiritual formation is a process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others”. He sees this as “becoming persons who love and serve as Jesus did” (Mulholland 1993, 25). The main sections of Mulholland’s book are consistent with his metaphor, using ‘road map’ to explore the nature of spiritual formation; ‘vehicle’ to outline the part we play in the process; ‘the journey’ to describe the disciplines, both classical and personal; ‘companions on the way’ to highlight the sojourners in the faith and action in the world. Though metaphors of journey and army seem to be in contrast, with the former more given to the idea of a walk, and the latter, a march, both provide mental pictures of moving forward to a destination of Christlikeness with God’s people while making an impact on the way.

The classical stages of spiritual formation will be covered by reference to how Mulholland unfolds them in his covering of the journey. These stages will be recognized in this model though the terminology will differ: The stages of ‘awakening’—our response to God, the first step of the journey; ‘purgation’—the process of harmonizing behavior, attitudes, desires on what we learn to recognize as necessary for a Christlike life; ‘illumination’—the awareness that a more Christlike person is emerging; ‘union’—wholeness in the intimate union with God (Mulholland 1993, 75).

As to Mulholland’s “our part in the process”, this will be covered under ‘enculturation’ since it relates to what The Salvation Army tradition provides and how the soldier is shaped. His emphasis on Christlikeness will be the main thrust of ‘encounter’. His chapter on “Companions on the Way” will be reflected in two sections, ‘*esprit de corps*’ and ‘engagement’, picking up the necessity of the community of faith and the missional responsibilities. For the subject of conversion or awakening, the term ‘enlistment’ will be used.

CHAPTER 5:

ENLISTMENT

The Salvation Army's historical and key membership status is soldiership. There are many others who regard the Army as their church home. Some are more formally connected, claiming Jesus as their Savior, but do not choose to become soldiers. They are acknowledged publicly as adherent members. This begs the question as to why one would become a soldier when it means stringent disciplines and commitments when you can belong with less demanding requirements. Is it because it is necessary for ministry participation? Traditionally, and still in some places, to be a member of the musical groups (brass band and songsters) individuals were required to be uniformed soldiers. The same applied to those holding responsibilities or local leadership positions.

Many congregations (corps) in Canada now call themselves community churches. Some of our clergy use the term pastor rather than officer. Uniform wearing is optional for soldiers. There is some question whether the quasi-military structure, terminology and uniform-wearing of The Salvation Army are still relevant.

This question requires an answer. Why enlist in the Army as a soldier? To decide to identify in this way needs careful consideration, for the rigors of soldiership and the missional mentality may seem a uniqueness that is counter-cultural even in the Church, and antiquated in society. After all, this is not the 19th century.

In military terms, enlistment is committing to rigorous basic training and then taking an oath of allegiance as a soldier, loyal to a greater cause or a higher power, e.g. the Queen. But why enlist in the military of any country? According to a recruitment website *10 Steps to Joining the Military*, there are many good reasons for joining the military, including “answering the call to serve your country; taking a stand against terrorism; educational and monetary benefits that can last a lifetime; personal satisfaction and pride; family tradition; honor; devotion to duty; learning new skills; full-time employment; job security; and personal improvement. Whatever you decide, when you decide to join, be sure you have a good reason to do so” (Military.com).

What It Involves

Enlistment as a soldier in The Salvation Army requires a personal relationship with Christ, in-depth teaching in preparation classes and a public identification with the denomination in an enrolment ceremony.

A Personal Relationship

While there are definitely some parallels with the military why some decide to be a soldier of The Salvation Army (excluding employment and remuneration), the best reason lies in the foundational motivation and requirement. You are first and foremost a soldier of Jesus Christ, chosen by him (2 Tm 2:3-4).

The first call to the disciples was to follow Jesus (Lk 5:1-12) and although the metaphor is different, the principle is clear. From then on, there would be identification, process and impact. Involvement in ministry or being sent out on a mission came after the disciples put in time with Jesus. Discipleship meant aligning oneself with him, entering into a relationship that was both personal and life-changing. So it is for The Salvation Army soldier. There must be a faith response to who Jesus is, what he has accomplished and how that transformation takes place. This is “a wholehearted and absolute acceptance of Christ as Lord by every soldier and...a militant, costly discipleship” (Street 1999, 37). The making of a Salvation Army soldier is a spiritual matter, not an organizational process.

When soldiership is seen as a consequence of following Jesus, identifying with him and his kingdom purposes, then it is far bigger than a quaint designation for membership. It is a calling and therefore the costliness is embraced.

Salvation Army doctrines four to eight are such statements of faith as declared in personal and public witness by one who enlists as a soldier of The Salvation Army.

We believe that in the person of Jesus Christ the Divine and human natures are united, so that He is truly and properly God and truly and properly man.

We believe that our first parents were created in a state of innocence, but by their disobedience, they lost their purity and happiness, and that in consequence of their fall, all men have become sinners, totally depraved, and as such are justly exposed to the wrath of God.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has by His suffering and death made an atonement for the whole world so that whosoever will may be saved.

We believe that repentance toward God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and regeneration by the Holy Spirit are necessary to salvation.

We believe that we are justified by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and that he that believeth hath the witness in himself.
(SA 2010, xv)

Yet, just verbalizing “we believe” statements is not the salvation experience. This involves a personal relationship, a conversion, a born-again revolution. It is an awakening. Mental assent to cardinal creeds is not saving faith. “Salvation is a record of God’s merciful doing from beginning to end”, so the soldier is reminded in *Orders and Regulations for Soldiers of The Salvation Army* (Chosen to be a Soldier 1977, 8). What should follow is a comprehensive response that not only involves confession of sin, repentance, and a desire to make restitution but also an expression of saving faith. Saving faith is willingness to stake one’s life and eternity on the promises of Christ, the one who receives and forgives sinners. This gracious, life-transforming provision and offer to be our Savior is one that claims all our allegiance for time and eternity (Chosen to be a Soldier 1977, 9).

The testimony is clear in Albert Orsborn’s confession of need and triumph of grace:

I have no claim on grace;
I have no right to plead;
I stand before my maker's face
Condemned in thought and deed.
But since there died a Lamb
Who, guiltless, my guilt bore,
I lay fast hold on Jesus' name,
And sin is mine no more.
(SASB 1986, 290)

Salvation Army soldiership is fundamentally about this personal relationship with Jesus. But salvation that is personal can never be private. To follow Jesus, to enlist as his soldier, is to not only relish the benefits of salvation and the camaraderie with his people, it is also to have eyes wide open to the front lines, seeing through the eyes of Jesus the hurting, broken, lonely, dispossessed and lost. It is signing up for a grand mission, the salvation of souls and service to suffering humanity. "Every soldier is saved to save. Every salvation soldier is saved to serve" (Chosen to be a Soldier 1977, 12).

A Salvation Army officer put it this way: "We become Christians by trusting in God and his promises for us in Christ; we are members of a church through the confession of that reality and committing ourselves to a particular community. We become soldiers via personally covenanting ourselves in a particular way to this missional idea called The Salvation Army" (Sandercock-Brown 2014, 273). More pointed is this definition: "The Salvation Army is composed of persons, who, having experienced forgiveness of sins and conversion by divine power, are enlisted under its banner as soldiers, fighting for God and souls" (SA 1987, 1).

Sandercock-Brown insists, “The Salvation Army is essentially a missional idea, the Kingdom at work. And we need soldiers! We need people who are prepared to publicly commit to the Army’s mission, to promise to live radically counter-cultural holy lives as living witnesses to the counter-cultural Kingdom” (Sandercock-Brown 2014, 268). In Robert Street’s chapter “Call to Soldiership”, he writes: “Whoever heard of an Army without soldiers?” (Street 1999, 38).

Preceding this concluding statement, he writes:

Soldiership confirms commitment to God who raised up the Movement and that commitment is best expressed through service to others. Without soldiers the Army would die. It depends on soldiers to fight the battle against evil. It needs soldiers who know God’s hand of guidance is on them. It needs soldiers who trust God with their lives. It needs soldiers who obey the Lord and who know how to say ‘yes’ to him.

Salvationist Chick Yuill insists that Jesus’ announcement of the Kingdom “is not simply a challenge to Satan and his demonic forces—it is a call to men and women to enlist on the side of God and his Kingdom” (Yuill 1994, 38). Ruth Myers of Navigator Ministries in her scriptural prayer book *31 Days of Power* uses the battle image throughout, always forming the prayers against a biblical backdrop. For instance, day two: “How I praise you Ruler of the ages... You’ve taught me to yield my allegiance to you as King. And you’ve enlisted me into Your army to join Your people into doing battle under the sovereign rule” (Myers 2012, 148).

For all the reasons given for enlistment in the military of a nation (above), certain aspects can be reframed in the spiritual context—answering the call to serve our Lord; taking a stand against the Enemy; adventure that lasts a lifetime;

personal fulfilment; honor; devotion to duty; vocational security; personal improvement. Answering the call to serve the Lord as soldiers of The Salvation Army is always costly. They will sign a covenant that is stricter in terms of lifestyle than what is involved in belonging as an adherent member.

Preparation Classes

Before anyone is accepted as a soldier of The Salvation Army, preparation classes are required. There are both junior and senior soldiers, the former from age seven and the latter offered from age fourteen. The classes are different in terms of language and activity but both cover doctrine, the Army's place in history and in the Church, and the details of the pledge or covenant that will be signed. The basic training for soldiership shows how doctrines are rooted in Scripture, how our history is shaped by God and faith is connected to life. "It seems pointless to hold onto core convictions unless they actually help us to practice our faith today" (Harris 2014, vi). Junior and senior soldiership preparation classes are necessary for this very reason.

There is not a 'one size fits all' manual for these classes. Several courses are available but all must be consistent with Army theology and practice. Classes for juniors in the corps may cover a six-week period. Senior recruits have a thirteen-week course. There is a stated purpose for these classes. Along with instruction concerning the duties and privileges of soldiership, and an opportunity to determine whether one wants to enlist, they are a vehicle for presenting the

gospel in such clear terms that anyone who has not yet had a definite experience of salvation can enter into this personal relationship with Christ.

Both teaching programs are not lecture-method based but highly participatory. Certainly, with the adults, it is anticipated that everyone would feel free to question and even wrestle with the material in order to emerge with convictions which are personal. The writer of one manual offers this important comment: “Army leaders are anxious to train a generation of soldiers who are well-informed about the Army and its doctrines. But much more than that, we want to train soldiers who are informed about our Lord and are filled by his Spirit, so that they too will have what is known as the ‘Army spirit’. In other words, we want to develop true ‘blood and fire’ Salvationists” (Agnew 1985, x).

In preparing junior and senior soldiers, this spiritual emphasis is predominant and is the basis for mission. They gain an understanding and an appreciation of our history and the fact that, even though our methods have changed, the message and mission have not.

The teaching in the preparation classes is inclusive in an ecumenical sense. Whether participants are children, youth or adults, they engage in material that anchors them in The Salvation Army and the wider Church.

In the junior soldier’s preparation material, the armor of God is taught with relevant application. The young people are called to “speak the truth (belt of truth); do what is right (breastplate of righteousness); go where God wants you to go (shoes fitted with gospel of peace); exercise your faith when you’ve got questions (shield of faith); guard your mind (helmet of salvation); remember to

read your Bible (sword of the Spirit).” In addition to this teaching on the protective armor that God provides, they are taught that no soldier of Jesus stands alone. The Christian community in their own denomination and beyond is there for them.

Not only has God given us armor to wear, he has provided us with a back-up and encouragement to follow his plan... He has provided us with the Church, which is other Christians who encourage us in the fight against the devil’s schemes. Belonging to a Church provides us with the opportunity to meet with others to pray, study the Word of God, to sing praises and to share our life experiences... The Salvation Army is one small part of God’s Church (Junior Solders Preparation Course Lesson 3 & 4).

Finally, both preparation classes conclude with a session to consider the commitments they will make. Junior soldiers will sign a pledge, with the permission of a parent. Senior soldiers will sign the ‘Soldier’s Covenant’.

The junior soldier pledge, though simply stated, is profound.

I know that Jesus is my Savior from sin. I have asked him to forgive my sins, and I will trust him to keep me good. By his help, I will be his loving and obedient child, and will help others to follow him. I promise to pray, to read my Bible, and to live a life that is clean in thought, word and deed. I will not use anything that may injure my body or mind including harmful drugs, alcohol and tobacco (Handbook of Doctrine, 319).

The senior soldier’s covenant includes the eleven doctrines followed by specific lifestyle commitments. Having expressed their desire “to fulfil their membership of his Church on earth as a soldier of The Salvation Army”, they promise, by God’s help to “be responsive to the Holy Spirit and seek to grow in grace; to make the values of the Kingdom of God the standard for their lives, showing integrity in their deeds, maintaining Christian ideals in their relationships and upholding the sanctity of marriage and family life”. They pledge to “be

faithful stewards of all they have and are” and “to abstain from all use of enslaving substances and harmful activities”, which include alcohol and tobacco. Their commitment is to “be active in God’s work both in sharing the gospel and in serving the needy, contributing financially to its support” and to “be true to the principles of The Salvation Army” (Salvation Army Ceremonies 1993, 4).

Enrolment

The public ceremony of enrolment of junior and senior soldiers is considered a very important occasion in the life of the individuals and the corps. It is an opportunity for the officer conducting the ceremony to re-emphasize the principles of Christian discipleship and Salvationism, not just for those involved in the ceremony but also for those in the congregation (Salvation Army Ceremonies 1993, 2). It is seen as well to be an occasion to present the gospel to the unsaved and to call Salvationists to rededication.

The recruits are called to the platform and stand in front of The Salvation Army flag. The red, yellow and blue of the flag symbolize the cardinal beliefs related to salvation—red for the blood of Jesus, yellow for the fire of the Holy Spirit and blue for the holiness of God the Father. It is an opportunity to explain that the flag is not just an organizational emblem but that it represents the deep truths of the gospel of grace.

In the enrolment of junior soldiers, the officer introduces each child to the congregation, acknowledging the presence of friends and relatives and their role in supporting the young Salvationists in their commitment. The meaning of junior

soldiership and the promises they have made are shared with the congregation by the officer. The children are invited to read their pledge. The public or privately-signed pledge is then presented to each junior soldier, with the officiating officer saying, “In the name of the Lord Jesus, whom we love and serve, I now receive you as junior soldiers of the ... Corps of The Salvation Army” (Salvation Army Ceremonies 1993, 6). Prayer is offered on their behalf.

The ceremony for senior soldiers includes an appropriate Scripture passage, a concise reiteration of the doctrines and commitments, and a verbal response to this question: “Do you each declare, in the presence of God and this congregation, that you undertake, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to live and work as a true soldier of Jesus Christ and The Salvation Army, according to the witness and promises you make this day?” (SA Ceremonies 1993, 4, 5).

Then there is the charge—a challenge to keep their promises, to testify openly, give prayer a central place, and to wear uniform as a witness. The officer then accepts them as soldiers of that Salvation Army corps, concluding with a prayer of dedication. Opportunity is given for one or more of the new soldiers to give their testimony. The congregation joins in a chorus or verse of a song that promises faithfulness to God, such as:

Take thou my life, Lord,
In deep submission I pray;
My all to thee dedicating,
Accept my offering today.

(Brindley Boon
SASB 1986, 786)

What Is Needed

If The Salvation Army is to maintain its quasi-military form to identify it as a missional force, we need soldiers, people who are prepared to make commitments which are costly. It calls for renewed emphasis on our calling and mission. People need a cause worth giving their lives to, worth dying for. Belonging to the Army for fellowship or an hour's worship on Sunday, or to be part of a music fraternity is too soft for young men and women who want to make a difference for Christ. The word 'duty' has fallen out of favor in post-modernity but whether we use that term or speak of following through on our commitments, the truth is the same—no thoughtful and practical response to God's call will be without God's grace.

Not just young people must hear a call for soldiership that claims their allegiance and daring. All age groups need to be challenged to play their part and offer their gifts for Kingdom purposes. While so much of the gospel is about receiving, there must be for the Christian a strong presentation of the reality of the battle and the need for them to step up, sign up and get involved.

One of the best ways of recruitment, of presenting the strong claims of Christ and the need for people sold out to him and this mission is to make more of

the enrolment ceremony. This is a 'rite of passage'—a ceremony that marks an important transition in a person's journey. While the commitment should be honored publicly in a ceremony, it has proven to be an inspirational and motivational occasion when the whole worship service is framed around the claims of Christ and his call to be soldiers, using testimonies, music, songs, sermon and prayers to understand the gospel call. It should be a time of consecration but also celebration, with family and friends invited to witness this meaningful step in the person's spiritual journey.

Furthermore, there needs to be a periodical review of the preparation classes for soldiership not only in their timing but their content to ensure that the basis of Salvation Army soldiership is rooted in the biblical image, in strong theology, practical service and relevant learning models. Recently a separate course has been prepared for teenagers preparing to be soldiers. While The Salvation Army at every level needs to reflect on the importance of soldiership as a serious spiritual formation commitment, the decision to be a soldier of The Salvation Army rests with the individual.

For one who aligns herself/himself with The Salvation Army as their church home, soldiership will be an option but it is costly, in terms of discipline and mission expectations. While there may be valid reasons for becoming a soldier of The Salvation Army, enlisting requires not just a good reason. The best reason is to decide based on a relationship with Jesus and a sense that being his follower is the prerequisite and challenge for enlisting as a soldier in The Salvation Army. Such a call is all of grace. The response is an act of faith.

CHAPTER 6:

ENCULTURATION

Enculturation is the process of learning one's culture through experience, observation, and instruction. Whether military or civilian, this process affects thinking, practices and values. Whatever the elements involved or the means of transmission, enculturation is a shaping process towards change. Spiritual formation is an enculturation process.

Biblically, the shaping process is more extensive than one verse, "grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (1 Pt 3:18). Jesus' invitation to "follow me" was more than a one-off event. It was a journey of a lifetime, learning through observation, teaching, and experience.

One of the most interesting and surprising examples of process or enculturation is found in Ephesians 4:17-5:21. Though he is writing to Christians, Paul reminds them that in following Christ, they must put off the "old self" and put on the new. They must live as children of light and love, having nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness (5:11). He is explicit about the residual sins of their old life and the 'not yet' Christian behavior. He deals with stealing, malice, anger, immorality, and godless conversation, etc. Obviously, their decision for Christ was real but the shaping of their lifestyle had only just begun.

Robert Mulholland offers a chapter on process and rightly suggests that "spiritual growth is, in large measure, patterned on the nature of physical growth". Infant to child to adolescent to adult is indicative of the process, even though at

times there may be growth spurts. He admits that in an instant gratification society, frustration and impatience characterize our attitude towards our spiritual progress when the desired results are not realized. Spiritual formation is not just an option in his estimation, and we must see this Christian journey as “an intentional and continual process of growth toward wholeness in Christ” (Mulholland 1993, 20, 21, 24).

Salvationists have understood this in the light of doctrine nine which underscores the need for maturity in Christ to prevent backsliding, but also as a reminder that our spiritual formation is a response to the work of Christ, not a self-help program. “We believe that continuance in a state of salvation depends on continued obedient faith in Christ” (SA 2010, xvi).

The salvation soldier has already been exposed to enculturation in the preparation period and introduced to the full salvation offered, a salvation from sin, salvation that gives access to Heaven, but it is also a salvation which involves Christlikeness, holy living and selfless service in the present. Soldiers may understand the metaphor of battle but what is most vital is to understand and experience salvation. How does the Army further enculturate its soldiers beyond the preparation period?

What It Involves

In his book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, Rick Warren concluded: “vision and purpose must be restated every twenty-six days to keep the church moving in the right direction”. In other words, “make sure you communicate your purpose at

least monthly. If you fail to communicate your statement of purpose to your members, you may as well not have one” (Warren 1995, 111, 112). The Army’s purpose to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed, a gospel of full salvation, has been communicated in much the same way as Warren recommended.

According to Warren, purpose is underscored through Scripture, symbols, slogans, stories, and specifics. To explain specifics, he advises, “Always give practical, clear, concrete steps that explain how your church tends to fulfil its purposes. Offer a detailed plan for implementing your purposes. Plan programs, schedule events, dedicate buildings, and hire staff for each purpose” (Warren 1995, 114). The Salvation Army’s programs and events such as retreats, youth camps, conferences, congresses, as well as communication strategies relate to this final point of Warren’s about specifics. Our buildings are always dedicated “to the glory of God”. Employees must be in agreement with the values and mission of The Salvation Army. International and territorial publications and online resources print our salvation-related mission statement. But enculturation takes place most significantly through the local corps.

Salvation Army Meetings

The Salvation Army keeps salvation and all it means before its soldiers. For Scripture, songs and stories (as mentioned above by Warren), I will center on our worship services, which we have traditionally called meetings. The International Spiritual Life Commission gave three calls and affirmations related

to our worship and meetings. “The Salvationist is called to seek in every meeting a vital encounter with the Lord of life, the One who himself invites us into his presence and speaks and acts”. “In our meetings we celebrate and experience the promised presence of Christ with his people. Christ crucified, risen and glorified is the focal point, the epicentre of our worship. In Salvation Army meetings, we worship the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit” (Street 1999, 9). The Word is “opened, proclaimed and explained” with the conviction that, even when done in human weakness, God speaks through his inspired Word. We are called to a “quick and steady obedience to the radical demands of the word upon Salvationists personally and upon our Movement corporately” (Street 1999, 15).

A unique feature in Salvation Army worship is the invitation to respond to God’s Word by kneeling at the Mercy Seat (see glossary). In the Old Testament, it was a sacred place. “There I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, said the Lord” (Ex 25:22). In its historical setting in the Church, The Salvation Army was influenced by the 19th century revival meetings in the USA where it was called the ‘mourner’s bench’, or as Charles Finney would say, ‘the anxious seat’ or more commonly understood in our tradition, the ‘penitent form’ (Street 1999, 20). It was intended to be a place of decision, repentance, and forgiveness. But it has also become a place of prayer, recommitment and intercession. The Mercy Seat in spiritual reality is the human heart and the outward kneeling, an indication of inward humility, but this symbol has enriched the life of Salvationists as a means of grace (Street 1999, 19).

The salvation story is also communicated effectively through music. In 2015 a new song book was issued, the last being from 1986. It has 1041 songs (hymns). Many are by Salvationist song writers. Many have a contemporary flavor and there are, of course, numerous hymns from the wider Church, especially by Charles Wesley. This new edition also provides Scripture references which anchor each song in the Word. The first main section is called “The Eternal God” (God the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit). The second section is “Our Response to God” (worship, salvation, holiness, life and service, ceremonies). We are so privileged to be able to sing our theology. Congregational singing is one aspect of enculturation. It helps us understand what we believe, why we believe it and how Christ lives his life in and through us.

The Salvation Army is known for its brass bands and singing groups (songsters). Salvationist song writers and musicians have provided a wealth of music. Now worship groups with guitars, keyboard and percussion join these sections in offering their gifts to our worship. God’s great salvation message cannot be contained in a spoken word only.

Salvation Army worship was never intended to be an entertainment event. The congregation is not an audience. The ministry is not confined to the corps officer or musical sections. At its best there is a balance of spontaneity and liturgy. Until recent years, two meetings were held every Sunday. In the morning was the holiness meeting, where the doctrine was central and commitment to mission was included. The evening was the salvation meeting where the gospel was directed to the unsaved. Testimony periods were a regular feature. When

genuine transformation stories were shared, it gave convincing evidence that salvation was for all. With the second meeting discontinued in some places (or replaced by Bible study or other more informal gatherings) these elements needed to be incorporated in the morning worship, often resulting in the testimony period being squeezed out. Personal stories that communicate the purpose of the church are significant. They are also more vital to the enculturation of Salvationists than we may realize for many have been challenged to make a decision for Christ or deepen their faith through the personal witness of others.

Slogans, Mottos, Symbols

Enculturation using visual and memorable pithy statements keep salvation before Salvationists and the mission in focus. Our motto, 'blood and fire' points to the atonement of Jesus and the work of The Holy Spirit. To emphasize the core conviction that salvation is for the 'whosoever', no matter how low he/she has fallen, we have often used, "a man may be down but he's never out". William Booth's directive, "Go for souls and go for the worst" has kept us focussed on the marginalized. The comprehensiveness of our mission to proclaim salvation for the whole person is reinforced in these slogans, "heart to God and hand to man", "soup, soap, salvation". In recent years, no slogan has made more impact than General John Gowans' restatement of our mission to "save souls, grow saints, serve suffering humanity" (Moyles 2009, 1).

A good example of the enculturation process is the word used for the death of a Salvationist, Promoted to Glory. There are many ranks in The Salvation

Army. Ordained ministers (officers) move through them by years of service or conferment, so ‘promotion’ is a familiar term. Reference to somebody’s Promotion to Glory reminds Salvationists of the complete salvation God has graciously provided for all, climaxing in glorification.

Though the red shield is now the most familiar of our symbols, the two that capture our theology the best are the crest and the flag (as explained earlier) (Appendix A). The Army crest is worn on uniforms. It appears on our publications and is normally prominently placed in Salvation Army halls. The round figure (the sun) represents the light and fire of the Holy Spirit. The cross is at the center, intertwined with the letter ‘S’ for salvation. The swords symbolize the salvation warfare. The seven white ‘shots’ refer to the truths of the gospel. The crown stands for the crown of glory which God gives to his soldiers who are faithful to the end (Agnew 1985, 61).

The same flag flies in every country where the Army serves. It is a symbol that is displayed in and sometimes outside every Army building, carried at the head of the march during an open-air meeting and present for every ceremony—dedication of children, enrolment of soldiers, ordination and commissioning of officers and funerals of Salvationists. Both the crest and the flag stand as reminders of the salvation by the grace of our holy God, through the blood of Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Disciplines

In *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster gives this wake-up call:

“Superficiality is the curse of the age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people. The classical disciplines of the spiritual life call us to move beyond surface living into the depths.” (Foster 1989, 1)

He proceeds to unwrap these disciplines under the headings of Inward (meditation, prayer, fasting, study); Outward (simplicity, solitude, submission, service); Corporate (confession, worship, guidance, celebration). Salvationists are shaped by many of these.

Examples of the corporate disciplines of worship, service and celebration are the diverse activities that take place in a Salvation Army corps targeting every age group, whether for discipleship, fellowship, or evangelism (outreach). Sunday School, Bible studies and prayer circles are included. There are groups which specifically focus on ministry beyond the local corps, such as our community care groups and family services. Our musical sections—band, songsters, singing company (children’s choir) meet weekly to rehearse for Sunday worship or special programs within the corps, but also for ministry in nursing homes, community events, etc. All groups have a time for devotions in their rehearsals.

There is general agreement both within and beyond The Salvation Army that we lean towards activism. Some of the disciplines Foster outlines would not be our strength in our teaching or practice. When the battle image is understood and ‘saved to save’ and ‘saved to serve’ are ingrained in Salvationists, we are more likely to interpret “Onward Christian Soldiers” as “do something”. We have

never thought of ‘saved for solitude’ or ‘saved for silence’. However, Mulholland in the section, *The Journey: Spiritual Disciplines*, like Foster, and many other writers on these disciplines, give cause for sober reflection. In particular, Mulholland encourages us to see the disciplines in a new light, especially if we are concerned about them being ‘works of righteousness’. To those who advocate the need for spiritual disciplines, the call to move onward or forward means depth more than distance. “Holistic spiritual disciplines are acts of loving obedience that we offer to God steadily and consistently, to be used for whatever work God purposes to do in and through our lives” (Mulholland 1993, 103).

Three specific disciplines as predominant means of grace to The Salvation Army are the reading of Scripture, prayer and confession. These are weapons of our warfare (2 Cor 10:4).

Devotional reading of Scripture was and is an expectation of our tradition. The junior soldier promises to read the Bible. The senior soldier covenants to live by the truths of God’s Word. The Founder, William Booth called Salvationists to a daily commitment to the reading, sharing and living out of Scripture. *The Salvation Soldier’s Guide*, covering each day of the year with passages from the whole Bible, was a devotional aid. Years later, this aid was renamed *The Soldier’s Armoury*, once again reminding Salvationists of how vital the reading of the Bible was to their spiritual health and witness. Today, this aid to Scripture reading issued three times a year, is called *Words of Life*.

Bible study has also been integral to our commitment to the classical spiritual disciplines. Interestingly, William Booth warned of what many now

realize has been a cerebral approach to God's Word. The recent emphasis on *Lectio Divina*—a spiritual reading of the Scriptures, which is both devotional and influential in living out the Christian life, is necessary. In his introduction to *The Salvation Soldier's Guide*, Booth encouraged Salvationists to not only apply the Word but to share the Word with the unsaved. "Let it be a constant reproof to you if at any time you feel disposed to hide your light, or to go for the study of Scriptures in such a manner as to take away your thoughts or your leisure time from the multitudes in the dark to whom God means you to bring the light" (*Soldier's Guide*, Intro). The proclamation of the Word during worship was always to be a result of sound study but must also be applied to hearers who would then be given an opportunity to respond. For Salvationists, the Bible was given as a means of grace for the transformation of lives, both theirs and the yet-to-be converted.

Prayer has been vital to the Salvationists' spiritual formation. "The early army was on the march because it was on its knees" (Palmer 1981, 13). "The salvation soldier must ever bear in mind that prayer is the chief means of keeping in contact with God to which his life fills the human soul and the Holy Spirit makes the presence of Christ living and real" (Chosen to be a Soldier 1997, 13). The observation is that while there are times when need drives one to talk to God, praying without ceasing comes through the discipline of observing set times for prayer. Prayer is necessary at the beginning and end of each day but not only then. "A salvation soldier will wish to lift up his heart to him at noon, joining comrades

all over the world in invocation for the salvation of people and for God's blessing upon the Army" (Chosen to be a Soldier 1997, 13).

In 2011 the Worldwide Prayer Meeting (WWPM), an international concert of prayer, was launched. Between 5:00 am and 8:00 am on Thursday mornings, Salvationists are encouraged to pray for thirty minutes. As the Army serves in 128 countries on all continents with different time zones, it is at prayer for the whole day. People meet in homes, in corps halls and at headquarters. Online resources are available for the prayer focus.

Prayers are offered at the beginning and the conclusion of our meetings as well as for the offering and prior to the preaching of the Word. Following the sermon is what we call the 'prayer meeting', a very important part of our worship. Salvation Army officers are trained to prepare every sermon for decision, and the prayer meeting time is then given for reflection and response.

Confession is included in Richard Foster's corporate disciplines. The Salvation Army soldier does not understand this in Catholic terms, with the confessional and the discipline of speaking privately with the priest and receiving forgiveness. As mentioned earlier, the Mercy Seat is also called the penitent form. It is a place of confession. Confession is not to be a morbid self-loathing for failure. It must always be in the context of God's great and gracious salvation. In fact, some Mercy Seats have inscriptions on them, "Jesus is mighty to save". "He can break every fetter". "He can save to the uttermost". When a person comes to the Mercy Seat, someone comes to kneel with them, ascertains the need and offers

words from Scripture as reassurance of God's forgiveness. Prayer by seeker and counsellor may be offered.

What Is Needed

As stated earlier, enculturation is a process which involves experience, observation and teaching, impacting our thinking, practice and our values. Every feature of The Salvation Army's enculturation process described above involves some aspect of experience, observation, or teaching. Sometimes all three are involved, as in our worship.

In The Salvation Army's enculturation (spiritual formation) of its soldiers, this section has shown that its meetings (worship services), slogans, mottos, symbols and spiritual disciplines are all means to an end, that is, the cultivation of the inner spiritual life, which affects behavior and relationships. However, it is possible that these become the end in themselves. Dallas Willard uses the language of vessel and treasure in making this point. He shows how the church can become distracted, when congregations "devote most of their thought and effort to sermons, Sunday School, style of music, denominations, camps or board meetings." He cautions that we must not see them as the "treasure" but the "vessels." Willard rightly contends that the treasure is "the real presence of Jesus Christ in our midst, living in increasing fullness in every essential dimension of the personality of the individual devoted to him as Savior and Teacher" (Willard 2006, 162).

It is a warning that Salvationists need to heed. The spiritual life of the Army is essentially the spiritual life of its people. If we serve the programs, pride ourselves in the disciplines, lose the meaning of its symbols, segregate its mission, serve the institution itself, then we will have lost touch with the purpose for which God raised up The Salvation Army.

There is nothing more important than the spiritual formation of salvation soldiers, whose goal is Christlikeness, and in fellowship with believers, serve the world. Their relationship with the Lord deepens through such formation. Christlikeness becomes a reality. The mission of the Army flows from it.

Therefore, it is essential that The Salvation Army continually link what is done for enculturation with why we do it.

CHAPTER 7:

ENCOUNTER

It is not uncommon in military combat action that there are attacks from the enemy that come as a complete surprise. The place or time has not been part of the strategy. Such an encounter has hostile purposes. It is an unexpected battle.

Using the battle image to explain the salvation soldier's spiritual formation, leads to an understanding of the unexpected experiences following conversion. To repeat Mulholland's definition: "Spiritual Formation is a process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others... a journey into becoming persons who love and serve as Jesus did" (Mulholland 1993, 25). He has devoted a whole chapter in *Classical Christian Pilgrimage* to wholeness in Christ describing in detail the four stages of awakening, purgation, illumination, and union. The awakening stage is the initial encounter with God in what we term conversion. He defines purgation as a renunciation of blatant sins, wilful disobedience, unconscious sins, omissions, deep-seated structures of being and behavior (Mulholland 1993, 81). The word purgation itself, conjures up images of pain and struggle.

If Christlikeness is the goal, we cannot dismiss the reality of the process as encountering the Enemy often in surprising ways, with hostile intentions. It is true that spiritual formation can be determined as a journey but this journey also involves a battle, for to enlist as a soldier of Jesus Christ is an invitation to counter-attacks, many of which catch us off-guard. No matter how explicit or

detailed the preparation, basic training or enculturation, reality sets in through experience.

Though the nature of the surprise attacks precipitates crisis, there is also the promise of an encounter with God that is truly transformational and beyond our initial understanding. It may come as a surprise encounter but never with hostile purposes. Much terminology is used to explain the means and outcome of being transformed into the image of Christ, but sometimes, the diversity of descriptions has brought confusion. In the preface to this portfolio, several terms are defined, sanctification, holiness, clean heart, second blessing, baptism by the Holy Spirit, fullness of the Spirit. Others would use classical terms of illumination, deification, or intimacy with God, and the abundant life.

All these terms are correct and are aspects of the Christlike life that is possible for every believer, a life so united to Christ that he lives in and through us with purifying and empowering effect, producing fruit that can only be described as divine love in practice. Our tenth doctrine uses the phrase “wholly sanctified”, quoting the Apostle Paul (1 Thes 5:23) and in its sweeping claim, we see the possibility of a God-effected transformation. “We believe that it is the privilege of all believers to be wholly sanctified, and that their whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (SA 2010, xvi).

The Salvation Army is part of The Holiness Movement, a movement which is comprised of churches and parachurches emphasizing the Wesleyan holiness teaching of the 19th century. This doctrine of holiness is essential to our

identity. Booth was unequivocal: “Holiness to the Lord is to us a fundamental truth. It stands in the front rank of our doctrines. We inscribe it upon our banners. It is with us in no shape or form an open debatable question as to whether God can sanctify wholly, or whether Jesus does save his people from their sins” (Booth 2012, 85).

With the weight of Scripture that emphasizes the possibility and privilege of a holy life (Lev 11:44, 45; Ps 51:9-10; Rom12:1-2; Eph 4:17-5:7; 1 Thes 4:3; 5:23-24; 1 Pt 1:14-16;), it is a belief held by every church that holds to the authority of the Word. However, often the debate is around how and when this takes place. We talk about a ‘second work of grace’ or ‘second blessing’, an experience subsequent to regeneration that can take place in the here and now for every believer. The God-centered experience of ‘entire sanctification’ empowers holy living where one chooses a life of obedience rather than wilful sin, though the capacity to sin continues.

Theological frameworks are helpful but the subsequent experience or as it has been known, the ‘second blessing’ does not necessarily mean that this is the way it always is or has to be. “Holiness is the realization of the Christ-life within us. It is the present purpose and positive benefit of salvation”. “The Cross is at the heart of the holiness experience” (Handbook of Doctrine 2010, 193) and has opened the storehouse of all spiritual blessings God has lavished on his children.

General Frederick Coutts wrote:

The doctrine of holiness should always be considered in its proper setting, as an integral part of the redemptive purpose of God for men. Rightly understood it is the one serious attempt which believers may make (as God

shall help them) to translate the Spirit of Jesus into a recognizable pattern of Christian behaviour (Coutts 1997, 1).

This translation of the Spirit of Jesus into recognizable Christian behavior involves both crisis and process and is at its core, a work of grace. The crisis is not necessarily defined by drama but is always a turning point, an opportunity to choose. With each choice, a refining takes place and there is further growth in this encounter aspect.

What It Involves

The encounter involves both a battle within related to temptations, values and the human will. But there is also an encounter with Christ that is described as a work of grace.

A Battle Within

There is a battle with temptation as we encounter the Enemy. This should not come as a surprise, but what does catch us off-guard is that his seduction is often qualitatively different from what we have experienced before. The temptations strike at the root of our relationship with God. After his baptism, Jesus confronts the Enemy in what Chick Yuill calls the “desert war”, attacking trust in God’s provision, presence and purpose (Yuill 1994, 3). For the salvation soldier, this can be far more subtle than taunting us to return to past old habits. This battle seriously affects the soldier’s trust in God and raises profound questions about identity as his child and one’s mission.

The battle is complex for we also encounter the contrast between the Christian culture and the world in which we live. The regeneration experience has made us more aware of the pronounced differences. There are subtleties where a question like “What would Jesus do?” has no simple answer. Escapism is not an option. We are after all in the world, but not of it (Jn 17:16) but how much of the world is in us? For instance, when Richard Foster calls us to the spiritual discipline of simplicity (Foster 1978, 69), we struggle with how much we are caught up in a materialistic world. We wrestle with what is right about our cultural values and practices and what is in contrast to Kingdom values. We wonder if we are so enculturated in our world that we have given the Devil a foothold because things seem to be vital to our needs and self-identity. The areas of battle are not new. The world, the flesh and the Devil have been the threshold for defeat in the garden (Ge 2), the wilderness (Lk 4) and the Church (Ep 2).

There is another battleground. We encounter ourselves in this process and self-discovery is painful. Mulholland writes, “The process of being conformed to the image of Christ takes place at those points where we are not conformed” (Mulholland 1993, 130). He speaks of “the complex structure of harmful habits, deeply engrained attitudes, troubling perspectives, destructive ways of relating to others, unhealthy modes of reacting and responding to the world” (Mulholland, 1993, 128) and points out that these do not disappear at conversion. It is not unlike the refining of gold. The visible dross is no indicator of what remains deep below the surface.

What is not fully understood is how pervasive and how deep sin has marred God's image in us. In *The Gift of Being Yourself*, David Benner explains it as the unmasking of the false self and discovering the authentic person God created (Benner 2004, 15). Mulholland says it is a deep yearning in the human spirit "for our completeness in the image of Christ" (Mulholland, 1993, 34). Benner, like Mulholland, exposes the truth that sin is much deeper than acts of sin. Having been forgiven and turning our backs on past sins, we struggle with what we now recognize as the depth of our sinfulness and how far we have drifted from God's intention. Salvationist song writer Olive Holbrook wrote: "Deep were the scarlet stains of sin. Strong were the bonds of fault within" (SASB 1986, 176). The choice of words—deep, scarlet, stain, indicate that the etching of sin upon the human personality requires far more than resolve. The inner battle following fresh revelation of deeper issues is expressed in this song of Samuel Horatio Hodges:

Tell me what to do to be pure
In the sight of the all-seeing eyes;
Tell me, is there no thorough cure,
No escape from the sins I despise?
(SASB 1986, 459)

"Christian spiritual transformation is much more radical than sin avoidance. And the knowing of self that is required for such transformation is much deeper. Knowing our sinfulness becomes most helpful when we get behind sins to our core sin tendencies. Now we shift our focus from behavior to the heart" (Benner 2004, 65). The soldier of Jesus realizes that soldiership is far more than wearing a uniform, signing a pledge, or even embarking on a mission. It is not something you do. It is something far deeper. It is who you are. It is the true,

total you, the one created in God's image, redeemed in Christ and bearing "the unique face of God that has been set aside from eternity for you" (Benner 2004, 92).

Not only unrealized expectations cause an interior battle for the Christian. We encounter contrasts which exacerbate the battle. We see victorious living in fellow soldiers; we read Scriptures that promise a "more than conqueror" experience (Rom 8:37); we view gracious, pure Jesus in the gospels; we sing robustly in our worship, "He came to give us life in all its fullness" (SASB 1986, 274) and then we face the reality in our own lives. We are more down than up, more existing than living, more self-centered than Christ-centered. Seeing the ideal, the possibility, even the privilege brings home the raw truth that life is not what it is meant to be. There must be something more.

Perhaps the most surprising realization to one who willingly enlisted as a soldier, embracing the new culture and all that salvation meant, is that underneath the struggles, there is a battle of wills. In quoting Kierkegaard's 'purity of heart is to will one will', Dallas Willard writes: "Before we can come to rest in such single-mindedness as the habitual orientation of all dimensions of our being, to allow it and to sustain it, a serious battle is required" (Kierkegaard in Willard 2002, 153). "Pleasing the commanding officer" was Paul's motivation for Timothy (2 Tm 2:3), but "enduring hardship" can have at its root, dying to self, to our own will. Life's experiences could be the means of such a crucifixion. Choices have to be made that cut across the only self we have known. Like the Phantom of the Opera, the unmasking reveals the ugliness that we had sought to

hide, even from ourselves. Taking up the cross to follow Jesus surely means patience with the burdens of life, the difficult people we encounter, but Mulholland makes it clear that it is not simply about dealing with them. “Our cross is the point of our unlikeness to the image of Christ, where we must die to self in order to be raised by God into wholeness of life in the image of Christ right there at that point” (Mulholland 1993, 38).

It is my belief that a crisis in the process of spiritual formation is most often a crisis of the will. The gift of free will is never revoked and even in our conversion, we are still given a choice. To embrace all the benefits of Christ’s atonement is to let go of all that hinders in our own life. Surrendering our will seems to contradict our very nature and is a form of dying. It is death to the ‘self’ we have come to know. Yet surrender of the will is Christlikeness in its essence, “not my will but yours be done” (Lk 22:42). It is one thing to surrender when resurrection is in view, but another to experience an empty tomb only after a Golgotha. Such consecration is unnatural but necessary if God is to fashion us into the likeness of his Son. This is the life of obedience and trust that resolves every crisis and moves the salvation soldier onward.

A Work of Grace

Robert Mulholland has reminded us that the classical stages of Christian pilgrimage find their climax in *union*, “also known by such terms as *spiritual marriage, transforming union, ecstasy, the unitive way, and contemplation*”. This union “characterizes those experiences of complex oneness with God in which we

find ourselves caught up in rapturous joy, adoration, praise and a deep peace which passes all understanding”. He is clear that this is a work of God’s grace and not self-effort (Mulholland 1993, 97).

In The Salvation Army and other traditions, these mystical experiences, or definable encounters with God can only be described as life-changing, moving the believer to a new level of intimacy and devotion. When documenting testimonies of these experiences, John Larsson chose to call his book *Spiritual Breakthrough*. There are plenty of dramatic testimonies but also those where the turning point was not only a complete surrender but also an embracing of all that God promised the believer for holy living. John Larsson connects these experiences with the totality of God’s intention for his people. “Through these post-conversion experiences, we experience in actuality what theoretically and potentially has always been possible to anyone ‘in Christ’” (Larsson 1983, 85).

These post-conversion experiences of others whet the appetite, for they seem to be a spiritual surge that helps to face life more confidently and even triumphantly. As Thomas Kelly pointed out when referring to the experience of the mystics, they have “permanent residue, a God-subdued, God-possessed will”. Yet he admits that “amazing revelations of his glory are graciously granted only to some” (Kelly 1992, 32). For the rest, the process is more passive, in a step-by-step process marked by holy obedience.

There is no denying that whether God grants a dramatic encounter or meets with us daily in heart communion, he who called us into this holy relationship is at work, shaping, changing us into the likeness of his Son, and

bringing illumination by his Spirit, giving us victory in daily struggles. It takes place below the surface as we focus our eyes on him. “And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (2 Cor 3:18). This Christlikeness is possible because Christ lives his life in and through us. The crucified false self makes way for the Christlike ‘me’ to emerge as an authentic, whole person. Paul said it well, “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” (Gal 2:20).

Perhaps we all want an encounter with God that takes us by surprise, an epiphany that lifts us heavenward and causes our spirits to soar. We know of mystics who have experienced this union with God that takes spiritual formation to another level. But in our course on *Desiring God*, reading about the lives of many mystics, what was abundantly clear was not the nature of the experiences but their fruit. Love was the most consistent description of this union with God—loved by God, loving him, loving others. James Harpur in his account of the mystics from St. Paul to Thomas Merton called his book, *Love Burning in the Soul*. This love experience is not confined to the supernatural encounter but is the work of grace in every believer’s heart. Paul’s prayer for the experience of divine love by the presence of the indwelling Spirit of Christ (Eph 3:14-19) is not just to a certain church or a certain time. It is for all.

There is no better description of Christlikeness than a life marked by love. It is the indwelling of Christ that offers an experience of love that is beyond our

ability to grasp, a love that even flows out to our enemies, a love which gives us security, gives him glory and provides the unquestionable effective witness of the Church. It is without a doubt a work of grace, a Trinitarian work by the “immeasurably more” God (Eph 3:20-21).

The definitions of spiritual formation often express God’s goal for our lives in terms of Christlikeness. That needs to be a starting point. Though the ministry of the Holy Spirit is necessary in drawing the human heart to God, conversion in a sense is where this Christian spiritual formation towards Christlikeness begins. “In order to walk with Christ and grow close to him, a person must be born again” (Wardle 2003, 29). But even at that starting line there can be the long view. Even as we embark on the path, or journey or this renovation experience, we need to ask ourselves what we see when we see Jesus in the gospels so that we can know what changes will be taking place to make us like him.

We can choose to see him as Love. “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs” (1 Cor 13:4-5). In the Beatitudes we recognize Jesus as merciful, peacemaker, pure, persecuted for righteousness’ sake (Mt 5:7-10). The fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) describes the Lord. As we see him in the gospels, his words and actions give proof that every attribute listed in these passages is fulfilled in him.

Furthermore, we view his relationship to the Father, doing his will, speaking his words and doing his work (Jn 4:34; 6:38; 17:4). And significant to

this portfolio is Jesus, embracing the Father's will even when it involved the cross (Lk 22:42).

It is important that we "fix our eyes on Jesus" (Heb 12:2) for the goal of Christlikeness involves our submission to the Father's will, the characteristics of his Son and commitment to his mission. Christlikeness is what God has in mind for us and only his grace will make it possible. But when we look at Jesus and then look at ourselves, the goal may seem unreachable.

To encounter God, to be filled with the Spirit of Jesus is to encounter love. A notable Salvation Army author wrote: "Do you want to know what holiness is? It is pure love. Do you want to know what the baptism of the Holy Ghost is? It is not a mere sentiment. It is not a happy sensation that passes away in a night. It is a baptism of love" (Brengele 2012, 3892-3893). The salvation soldier sings his/her heart desire for such a love that is the defining trait of Christlikeness:

Love I ask for, love I claim,
A dying love like thine,
A love that feels for all the world,⁷
Saviour, give me a love like thine.⁷
(SASB 1986, chorus 83).

To be like Jesus! This hope possesses me,
In every thought and deed, this is my aim, my creed;
To be like Jesus! This hope possesses me,
His Spirit helping me, like him I'll be.
(John Gowans SASB 1986, 328)

What Is Needed

Within and beyond The Salvation Army, there are a myriad of books on the Christlike aspect of holy living. As mentioned in the introduction to this

portfolio, much of what has been considered in these past three years about spiritual formation is what I would have known as our holiness teaching, with Christlikeness as the goal, conversion as a prerequisite, and spiritual growth as a necessity.

Perhaps for some, experiences like a ‘second blessing’ seemed to be the desired short-cut to the goal. But even when attention was drawn to a dramatic encounter or crisis, there was also sound teaching on the process as well. Samuel Logan Brengle, the Army’s renowned holiness exponent was very clear about what holiness was but also about what it was not. In his book *Heart Talks on Holiness*, he explains that it is not perpetual joy, or freedom from temptation, weaknesses, or affliction. Brengle did not paint an unrealistic picture of a holy, Christlike life. He wrote that it “is not a state in which there is no further development” nor is it “a state in which we cannot fall.” It is in his view “a state of conformity to the divine nature, an unspeakable blessing provided for us by the compassionate Heavenly Father through the shed blood of Jesus...” (Brengle 2012, 2318-2363).

We need to emphasize in contemporary language what Brengle and other earlier writers made clear. Spiritual formation takes place in real life. And as this section has explained, it is a spiritual battle that is not devoid of victory. Not only is it our pattern for living the life of Jesus but his indwelling fashions us over a period of time. As we recognize our needs and submit to his transforming power, we become more Christlike, more loving.

We must not lose sight of the goal of spiritual formation, this Christlike life that is marked by love. It is foundational to our identity and mission, not only of every individual Salvationist but to The Salvation Army as a whole. Salvation Army officer Ray Harris wrote his book, *Convictions Matter* on the function of our doctrines. He links each doctrine with the doctrine of holiness, since, as Roger Green, Salvationist author and historian had suggested, it is the doctrine by which “we interpret and live out our common lives” (Green in Harris 2014, ii).

The Salvation Army needs to re-emphasize its holiness teaching in every generation, presenting its many facets but always returning to it as Christlikeness. We need to spend more time in the gospels, considering Jesus as our pattern for living. *The Man Perfectly Filled with the Spirit* as John Larsson called his book (Larsson, 1983), lived out the Spirit’s fruit in real life. We can never diminish the divinity of Jesus, but sometimes we have diminished his humanity and thereby set a standard for ourselves that is below the poverty level spiritually.

Mulholland emphasizes ‘being’ before ‘doing’, calling it one of the significant reversals of spiritual formation (Mulholland 1993, 30-32). Maybe ‘holy’ or ‘Christlike’ are seen as impossible goals because we seek to ‘do it’ by religious effort rather than experiencing the power from within from which actions flow. While we cannot dismiss that God’s full salvation must be believed and received, a distorted emphasis of the part we contribute robs us of what is, in fact, God’s work. His work of grace and power makes what seems incredible, both possible and practical.

The weapons of the salvation soldier are not the weapons of this world as the apostle Paul pointed out (2 Cor 10:4). There is no more effective means in the spiritual battle, whether it be the soldier's inner life or in the salvation mission, than to be indwelt by Christ, living and serving with a love that is transformational and victorious.

CHAPTER 8:

ESPRIT DE CORPS

The term *esprit de corps* is French and literally means ‘the spirit of the body.’ Originally, it was used to describe the morale of a military troop. It refers to a group of people who are united around common values, interests and causes. This unity creates a bonding and camaraderie, a fellowship that results in a healthy pride in belonging to that group. *Esprit de corps* is still very evident in the military but also seen in other groups, i.e., policemen, fire fighters and sports teams.

It is an appropriate term that applies to the universal Church for there are cohesive elements that connect believers within, but distinct from, secular or other religious cultures. *Esprit de corps* certainly describes the loyalty and fellowship experienced in The Salvation Army.

Though the term is not used biblically, the evidence of it is easily seen in the history of God’s people of Israel and the Church. When Paul wrote Epaphroditus, “my fellow brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier” (Phil 2:25), one senses that all the definitions of *esprit de corps* are present in that relationship. Using another metaphor, ‘the Body of Christ’ was for Paul a profound illustration of a community within a culture which shared beliefs, a common cause and unity in diversity (Rom 12; 1 Cor 12:4-11; Eph 4:1- 6). Paul’s teaching emphasizes that we need each other and have something to contribute to

the spiritual health and purpose of each Christian as well as the whole of the Body of Christ.

Spiritual formation takes place within the wider community of God's people. Mulholland writes about "corporate spirituality". "We can no more be conformed to the image of Christ outside of corporate spirituality than a coal can continue to burn bright outside of the fire" (Mulholland 1993, 145). Darrel Bock would agree. "No Christian is an island. God does not bring us into the fellowship with him and make us part of his people to function in isolation" (Pettit 2008, 103).

Shaping takes place in the receiving and giving of our lives to one another and ultimately in our mission to the world.

Spiritual formation is far from a private exercise between God and myself as an individual believer. Though he does work in me, it is never just for my benefit. God renews us, so that we can be ambassadors of renewal for others, whether an encouragement for the edification of other believers or as witnesses of light to those who sit in darkness" (Pettit 2008, 115).

Mulholland's *Invitation to a Journey* shows how developmental psychology can be understood in the spiritual pilgrimage. It is not only our spiritual gifts that are needed to build one another up. Using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, he shows how the unique creation gifts of our temperament make a significant contribution. "The diversity in our temperament types is part of the glorious diversity of the Body of Christ in which God nurtures us to wholeness" (Mulholland 1993, 44).

Esprit de corps is taken to another level when we realize that this unity is more than shared interests or individual contributions. It is a spiritual cohesion.

“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others” (Rom 12:5). It is an ‘in Christ’ fellowship that bonds us together. Bonhoeffer wrote: “Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ. We belong to one another only in and through Christ” (Bonhoeffer 1954, 10). As mentioned, the literal meaning of *esprit de corps* is ‘spirit of the body’. For God’s people, we can rightly say it is the Spirit of the Body. No wonder Paul reminds the Church that this gift needs to be cherished. “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Eph 4:3). There is a ‘belonging together’ by the Spirit.

Christ prayed for this *esprit de corps*. “My prayer is not for them (disciples) alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you” (Jn 17:20-21). The community life for salvation soldiers is a grace-gift that is integral to their spiritual formation.

What It Involves

Esprit de Corps is experienced in the local corps, through our internationalism and in our relationship with other churches.

The Local Corps

The Salvation Army and other churches experience this gift of community within the local visible congregations as we worship and minister together. The International Spiritual Life Commission underscored this with this call:

We call Salvationists worldwide to rejoice in their unique fellowship; to be open to support, guidance, nurture, affirmation and challenge from each other as members together of the body of Christ; and to participate actively and regularly in the life, membership and mission of a particular corps (Street 1999, 47).

The affirmation that follows acknowledges our unique worldwide fellowship and reminds us of “our shared vision, mission and joyful service”. But it zeroes in on the local corps where mutual accountability provides for a more objective spiritual vision, balanced decision and wisdom. Spiritual direction is encouraged through a group or individual. The accountability also provides an opportunity for confession and forgiveness (Street 1999, 47).

The Salvation Army in its local congregation discovers that in our life together, the strength of the community is in the attitude and service of each soldier. The team spirit or *esprit de corps* is experienced when mission effectiveness values the contribution of all, irrespective of age or experience. The soldier may be eight or eighty but each has a part to play.

In the military setting, the troop or regiment depends on every soldier playing their part for the greater good. Mulholland’s definition of spiritual formation includes the phrase “for the sake of others” and refers to both the corporate and social context (Mulholland 1993, 141). Salvationists know their giftedness is for the greater good. They write books, songs, compose music, all of

which are used around the world for spiritual formation, and they do so without remuneration.

The soldier is not just shaped by the gifts of others but by personal interaction and influence. Though the terms mentoring, spiritual direction or spiritual friends may not be used, every soldier could point to specific examples of others who have influenced their spiritual lives, accompanied them on the journey, encouraged and challenged them in the faith.

Internationalism

In a unique way, The Salvation Army experiences an international *esprit de corps*.

Our internationalism is not a complicated thing, but it is one of the Army's hallmarks. We think globally... Our internationalism comes to us today with all the overtones of our past and our historical heritage; it dictates many of our values; it is occasionally inconvenient for administrators; but it is seen by Salvationists as a very significant blessing (Clifton 1999, 172).

This blessing is experienced when we travel. There is a family atmosphere when we greet other Salvationists. Color, culture or language may differ but there is a unity of spirit. We have much in common, such as history, doctrines, structure, one leader (the General), symbols, terminology, principles and regulations, officer and soldier covenants, music and mission. We are a culture within cultures.

One overarching theme has been 'One Army, One Mission, One Message'. The idea of one Army was to reaffirm our unity and how, together, we move forward to fulfil the mission. The cause of Christ is our undeniable rallying

point. Belief that salvation is for the whole person and the whole world sets no limits to transformational possibility and transcends geographical boundaries. Twelve mission priorities were identified in 2012 in consultation with territories and commands around the world. They reflect a longing for a deeper spiritual life, a recommitment to the marginalized, and a determination to proclaim the gospel. International teaching material on the 'One Army' emphasis was released for use in local corps around the world.

International conferences and congresses connect us with Salvationists beyond our own countries. Salvationists serve as reinforcement personnel or in leadership in the global Army. Selected delegates attend courses at the International College for Officers in London, England, living in community for six weeks. This experience emphasizes our essential unity but also our diversity.

Each spring, Salvationists give personally to an International Self Denial fund to support the Army's work in financially challenged countries. We have 'Partners in Mission', linking territories together for project and personnel resources. Salvationists go on mission trips, volunteering time and money for specific projects where the need is great. International emergency teams are deployed to assist local Salvation Army units that serve in disaster areas. Through international publications, informative, theological and devotional articles are shared.

Ecumenism

“Inter-denominational harmony and cooperation are to be actively pursued for they are valuable for the enriching of the life and witness of the Body of Christ in the world and therefore of each denomination” (Clifton 2008, 1). Ecumenism is about the unity of the Christian churches. If *esprit de corps* is a group of people united around common values, interests and causes and in the deepest sense a gift of the Holy Spirit, then the circle for Salvationists is wide indeed. This fellowship of believers is the universal Church. Though we may differ in aspects of our worship and even points of theology, we are one when it involves cardinal doctrines and mission responsibilities. Our values are Kingdom values; our interests are formed around the truths and practices of our faith; our cause is the cause of Christ.

Salvationists assent to the “we believe” and “I believe” of the Apostles Creed and Nicene Creed. We share in the common testimony of the confessions of faith. Every soldier is in step with the Church of God, this mighty army that Sabine Baring-Gould refers to in his song, “Onward, Christian Soldiers”:

Like a mighty army moves the Church of God.
Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod.
We are not divided, all one body we,
One in hope, in doctrine, one in charity.
(SASB 1986, 690)

Though The Salvation Army’s birthplace is London’s East End, our origins are in Acts 2, when the Spirit birthed this dynamic people of God. In the spiritual formation of salvation soldiers, it is important to understand how we relate, respect and cooperate with the whole Church, at the local corps and in the

wider Salvation Army. For instance, the North York(Ontario) Corps building is used by three other congregations--Russian, Korean, and Persian. Twice a year the united congregations have celebrated Christmas and Easter together with a special musical program with involvement from each of the congregations.

At the clergy level, there are often two ministerials in communities. Salvation Army officers are welcomed at both the evangelical and the mainline church gatherings. Salvationist representatives attend national and international assemblies, such as Evangelical Fellowships, Council of Churches, Christian World Communions, Global Christian Forum and the World Council of Churches. Out of the united experience in such meetings, churches have worked together to address social needs and speak with one voice on significant moral and social issues.

The Salvation Army has also held formal dialogues with the Methodists and Seventh Day Adventists as well as informal conversations with representatives from the Vatican. The fruit of such sharing has been a deeper understanding of the theology and practice of other traditions as well as a fresh appreciation of our own.

Yet The Salvation Army's position on the sacraments and even on female ministry, have called for explanation. Covering the latter, it is the conviction of Salvationists that "in the ministry of grace there is neither male nor female. The gospel may be preached, the faithful shepherded, public worship conducted, a marriage solemnized and a saint laid to rest by a man or woman, single or married, with equal acceptance in the sight of God" (Coutts 1969, 75). No local

leadership or officer position is closed to women. They are represented in every office in corps ministry, have held every rank and served as leaders at every level. The forerunner of the Army's views on female ministry was its co-founder, Catherine Booth. Mrs. Booth and her daughters became known for their powerful and effective preaching, writing and leadership, long before other churches opened their doors to female clergy. Female ministry is a legacy that Salvationists hold as a non-negotiable distinctive.

As for the sacraments, The Salvation Army does not practice baptism or participate in the ordinance of The Lord's Supper in the way other churches do. "Our standing conviction is that there is no grace deemed to be mediated through the use of material elements which cannot be fully received by faith alone" (Coutts 1969, 75). The Salvation Army deeply respects the position of other churches but believes its position makes an important contribution to the Church, as a witness to inward grace. "We maintain that no external observance can rightly be said to be essential to salvation or to receiving of divine grace and that the biblical truth is that we can meet with God and receive his grace anywhere at any time through faith" (Clifton 2008, 13).

A much longer paper is needed to explain the sacramental position with reference to Scripture, theology and Church tradition. What is convincing to me is the incarnation of Jesus. "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (Jn 1:14). He still mediates his presence in the flesh, our flesh. The personal indwelling is mystical, that Christ should live his life in and through us. But he also shows his face to the world in the Christlike life of believers. There is a

“Salvationist sacramentalism” (Clifton 1999, 56). For a life that is indwelt by the Spirit of Christ, all of life is a sacrament. This is the dedication of the salvation soldier:

My life must be Christ's broken bread,
My love his outpoured wine,
A cup o'erfilled, a table spread
Beneath his name and sign.
That other souls refreshed and fed,
May share his life through mine.
(Albert Orsborn
SASB 1986, 512)

What Is Needed

It is not things or programs that are needed to experience *esprit de corps* in The Salvation Army. What is needed is a fresh appreciation of how God has used and continues to use our Movement in the process of personal formation. Many of us have taken for granted the means of grace provided for our nourishment and maturity. Our history, theology and practices need to be revisited but not in isolation. It would be good if Salvationists were exposed to the writing and practices of other traditions on the subject of spiritual formation. Perhaps they would realize what depth and wealth we ourselves have for spiritual formation in the Army, as well as learning from others.

The Salvation Army is valued for its contribution to the wider Church. What is needed is a new appreciation of what unity in the Body of Christ means and how we can celebrate diversity in persons and Christian communities. There is a need for clear teaching that is neither defensive nor offensive when it comes

to differences with other churches. But there must also be the affirmation of all we hold in common in belief and witness. It is a witness that must be visible to the world.

To counter any feelings of inferiority, arrogance or the danger of being insular, two important initiatives could be taken, teaching on the Army's position on the sacraments and an ecumenical round-table.

With congregations that already meet in the North York Corps (mentioned earlier), a way to further Christian unity beyond the musical programs at Christmas and Easter would be to share in a fellowship meal, attended by pastors and representative members. The sharing would include items such as a testimony of the personal Christian journey, the celebration of the positive things happening in each congregation and the challenges they are facing. Worshipping together with the Word and prayer would conclude the round-table sharing.

With particular reference to The Salvation Army's position on the sacraments, valuable resources are available that explore the Army's position. This teaching would be helpful for Salvationists and non-Salvationists. The subject should be addressed in the contexts of our historical understanding, the biblical evidence and theological position. What must be underscored is the communal aspect that we share with the Body of Christ in a unity that is ours by grace of God, through the atonement of Christ and his living Presence among us through his Spirit. This is the essence of *esprit de corps*.

CHAPTER 9: ENGAGEMENT

In military terms, combat between two forces in a hostile manner is termed engagement. In the section on enlistment, reference was made to the cosmic battle between God and Satan that plays out in real time and real life. This involves the life and mission of every soldier of Jesus. Spiritual formation is not a spiritual fitness program for religious fanatics. Robert Mulholland wants every Christian to see a wider purpose. Biblical spirituality calls us away from the individualized, privatized forms of faith that enable us to isolate ourselves from the brokenness and bondage of the world around us. Biblical spirituality calls us into a relationship with God that thrusts us out into the world as agents of healing, liberating grace (Mulholland 1993, 11).

The life of Jesus was missional. He came to do the Father's will, to speak the Father's words and to do the Father's work. The 'Sent One' was also the 'Sending One', dispatching his soldiers into the world to be witnesses of the gospel. Their 'staying days' with him were preparation for their mission (Mt 28:19-20; Lk 24:46-48; Acts 1:8). The Church birthed was the Church sent. The Church's identity was and is missional. Mission is "not something it does as part of its total program...or even an effort to extend itself" (Guder 1998, 82).

In his brilliant book on *The Mission of God's People*, Christopher Wright affirms this truth. "It is not so much that God has a mission for the church in the world, as that God has a church for his mission in the world. Mission was not

made for the church; the church was made for mission, God's mission" (Wright 2010, 24). God's mission is the reconciliation of the whole world to himself.

The name 'Salvation Army' is a missional identification and a call to all who join to engage the Enemy who through various means holds the world captive. Roger Green calls it a *War on Two Fronts*, showing how William Booth understood the Army's purpose as both evangelistic and social. This engagement continues to motivate The Salvation Army.

Over a hundred years ago, William Booth clearly articulated what is meant by the salvation war and what needs to be the spirit of the salvation soldier.

While women weep as they do now, I'll fight;
While little children go hungry as they do now, I'll fight;
While men go to prison, in and out, in and out, as they do now, I'll fight;
While there is a drunkard left, while there is a poor lost girl upon the streets,
While there remains one dark soul without the light of God,
I'll fight—I'll fight to the very end!
(Booth 1978, 59)

What It Involves

Engagement involves fighting through social services, fighting for social justice and fighting for the salvation of souls.

Fighting Through Social Services

Frederick Coutts wrote: "The Army's social services were not born out of any doctrinaire theory but out of the involvement of the Salvationist himself in situations of human need" (Green 1989, 89). Before Booth ever published *In*

Darkest England and the Way Out in 1890 (Gauntlett 1946) giving theological expression to social salvation, Salvationists were serving suffering humanity.

To serve with heart to God still requires serving with hand to man. Redemption is not only from the slavery of sin and guilt but from the social and human miseries that bring despair and oppression. To address human need at any and every level is to defeat the works of darkness. It is spiritual warfare.

Our social work, adapted to existing needs, is known all around the world. There are residential homes for men, women, children and the vulnerable. Rehabilitation from addictions, day care centers, schools, hospitals, clinics, emergency services and correction services also are a part of our ministry. Salvationists trudge through mud in Moldova with medical clinic staff, bringing a wheelchair to an amputee, take part in ‘street level’ ministry to the marginalized in Australia, and involve themselves in incredible work in Paraguay in the children’s home and after-school programs.

The war against leprosy in India was fought by Salvation Army doctors who became known for their expertise in treatment and surgery. In Africa in recent years, HIV/AIDS saw teams of Salvation Army personnel doing battle against this scourge, successfully teaching and involving relatives and local communities in addressing prevention as well as the needs of those suffering from the disease and its stigma.

Fighting for Social Justice

While the salvation war means engagement in serving human need, it also calls us to be a voice for the voiceless. “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy” (Prv 31:8, 9). Mercy and humility are marks of the Christian but Micah also called God’s people to act justly (Mi 6:8). The Old Testament prophets left little doubt that worship that disregarded justice was not worship at all. The gospels most powerfully show us that the ministry of Christ is our pattern in serving and standing up for the marginalized.

Salvation Army history has numerous examples of engagement in this battle for social justice. Many are recorded in Carvosso Gauntlett’s book, *Social Evils the Army Has Challenged* (Gauntlett 1946). They include:

The age of consent in Britain: In 1885, shocked by the story of a young girl who escaped from a brothel, Bramwell Booth (oldest son of the Founder) thoroughly investigated child prostitution and the ‘white slave traffic’. Urged by Army leaders, the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, W.T. Stead published such appalling revelations that public sentiment was deeply stirred. A mass petition with 393,000 signatures was deposited on the floor of the House of Commons (no table was large enough) by eight Salvationists. The age of consent was raised from thirteen to sixteen years with unusual speed in England’s law-making history. Today the Army is engaged internationally in fighting human trafficking. It is the lead organization in Britain for the rescue of the victims.

The match factory: William Booth challenged the industry by opening his own factory. Phosphorous was still being used to make matches, giving factory workers severe and painful necrosis of the jaw (phossy jaw). In Booth's factory, phosphorous was banned and wages were almost twice as high. Within ten years, only safety matches were produced in Britain. Booth's mission was accomplished.

Today around the world, women in the poorest conditions are given opportunities through self-help and micro-credit schemes. In Bangladesh the Trade for Hope program 'Others' provides employment to marginalized women whose products are sold worldwide.

Devil's Island: From 1928-1953, The Salvation Army in France championed the cause of thousands of men in the most infamous of penal colonies. Conditions were terrible and an inhumane sentencing system gave them little hope of ever returning home. The Army was allowed to serve on this tropical South American island from 1933, continuing back in France to influence public opinion and bombard the government through articles and books which led to its eventual closure. Accompanied by Salvation Army officers, the last inmates were repatriated in 1953.

In 2010 in Sydney, Australia, inspired by William Booth's 'poor man's lawyer' envisioned in *Darkest England and the Way Out*, a young Salvationist lawyer set up Salvos Legal Humanitarian, a law firm serving the disadvantaged and marginalized, free of charge. It deals with family and children's law, debt, housing, social security law, and migration and refugee law. It is funded by a linked commercial practice for private clients—Salvos Legal.

Fighting for Souls

Students of Army history will recognize Booth's heart for the poor even as a teenager, and when he later saw the misery of London's East End. But Green points out that the Army's social impact emerged over a period of time. Booth was an evangelist before he ever became known as a social reformer.

Booth had one mission only—the saving of souls—and his success was measured by the number of converts. He was preaching to the masses, and it is true that his interest in the poor continued unabated, but he held that the greatest service that he could render to these people was not in the alleviation of their physical lot in life, but in reconciling them to God. His mission at this point was the single one of converting sinners and raising them up as saints (Green 1989, 17).

Green points out that Booth preached more in the open-air services than indoors, much like John Wesley. The purpose was to reach those who would never “darken the door of church or chapel” (Green 1989, 18).

This passion for the lost was a defining mark of early Salvationists. Catherine Bramwell-Booth, granddaughter of the Founder, was very direct when writing to young officers. “The great fact remains that, unless we are saving sinners, our very existence as an Army is not justified” (Bramwell-Booth in Satterlee 1985, 184). George Scott Railton, an early Army pioneer, planned to instruct his children to leave the Movement if it became so respectable and comfortable that they would leave the “godless to perish”. Loyalty to the Army because of the part he played in its inception was no criteria for membership if its soul-saving passion was lost (Railton in Satterlee 1985, 185).

Take away the military paraphernalia--uniforms, badges, officers, barracks, orders from headquarters and you will have our *raison d'être*: getting people saved. But take away the militant evangelism for which

God raised us up and you are left with no more than an expensive and complicated version of toy soldiers (Palmer 1989, 1).

The understanding of engagement for the sake of bringing people to Jesus has not disappeared in the minds of most soldiers. We sing Harry Davis' prayer, "Precious souls are dying, nerve me for the fight" (SASB 1986, 499). Fanny Crosby in her song "Rescue the perishing" calls us to "weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen, tell them of Jesus the mighty to save" (SASB 1986, 691).

Our song books have always carried many songs about the engagement, the mission to bring the gospel to the unsaved. But Salvationist song writer Brindley Boon wonders about the sense of urgency. Questioning himself he asks us all, "Have I lost the sense of mission which inspired my early zeal?" He concludes his song with the reminder that "needy souls are still my mission, sinners yet demand my love" (SASB 1986, 463). For him, this had to be a life ambition, the heart-moving force of his life. Here is a probing of the heart's passion and not just a mental understanding of this engagement mission. It is a reflection needed by every salvation soldier who joins in this statement of faith that speaks of eternal consequences: "We believe in the immortality of the soul; in the resurrection of the body; in the general judgement at the end of the world; in the eternal happiness of the righteous and the endless punishment of the wicked" (SA 2010, xvi).

Chick Yuill wrote his books, *We Need Saints* (1988) and *This Means War* (1994) years apart, but there is a connection for Salvationists. Saint-making and soul-saving are not distinct missions. Again, it is Brindley Boon's song that

repeatedly prays: “For thy mission make me holy” (SASB 1987, 463).

Christlikeness is missional for to be like Jesus is to have a passion for the mission of God in the world. Holy living produces soul-saving passion. Spiritual formation into the likeness of Christ is to have his heart for the lost.

While this chapter on engagement has detailed and illustrated The Salvation Army’s missional heart and practice, such engagement is the responsibility of the whole Church as Robert Mulholland (Mulholland, 1993), Christopher Wright (Wright 2010) and Darrell Guder (Guder 1998) pointed out. The Church is God’s mission for the world and for this battle engagement he has supplied what will be needed most, his armor (Eph 6:10-20). The call of Stuart Townend is the call of the Spirit.

O church arise and put your armour on;
Hear the call of Christ our Captain.
For now the weak can say that they are strong
In the strength that God has given.
With shield of faith and belt of truth,
We’ll stand against the devil’s lies.
An army bold, whose battle cry is love
Reaching out to those in darkness.

Our call to war, to love the captive soul
But to rage against the captor;
And with the sword that makes the wounded whole
We will fight with faith and valor.
When faced with trials on every side,
We know our outcome is secure;
And Christ will have the prize for which he died
An inheritance of nations
(SASB 2016, 819)

What Is Needed

In the late 1990's, a consultant from the Gallup organization on leadership development verbally suggested a triangle image for a basic understanding of how to remain mission-focussed. If the apex of the organization is its mission or purpose, then one corner of the triangle image would represent the human resources needed, the other end, the systems (programs, structures, finances, etc.). Both sides support the mission and move it forward. If the attention shifts so that the comfort of personnel becomes the focus, the organization is in danger of becoming a club. If systems and programs are what an organization seeks to protect, serve and prioritize for its own sake, then the organization becomes a bureaucracy. The triangle becomes lop-sided if mission is no longer pointing upward and forward. The fulcrum to keep the balance and make the mission the priority requires the responsibility and ethics of the Army's leadership in obedience to God's will and by his grace.

John Gowans' succinct statement of purpose, save souls, grow saints, serve suffering humanity, is far more than a catchy slogan. It is rooted in our Wesleyan theology. It is not what we do. It is who we are or, at least, who we are supposed to be. We must recognize the danger of seeing it as three missions and favoring one. The Salvation Army is meant to be a mobilized, flexible, adaptable force to communicate the gospel, the good news for the whole person, for the whole world. We must do so in word and deed.

We have to ask ourselves whether we as The Salvation Army have lost our sense of mission when it comes to rescuing the perishing. The war on this front is

raging and while we are called to alleviate human suffering with social service and social justice we dare not neglect soul salvation. As poet General, Albert Orsborn expressed:

The Saviour of men came to seek and to save
The souls who were lost to the good
His spirit was moved for the world which he loved
With a boundless compassion of God.
And still there are fields where the labourers are few,
And still there are souls without bread,
And still eyes that weep where the darkness is deep,
And still straying sheep to be fed.

O is not the Christ 'midst the crowd of today
Whose questioning cries do not cease?
And will he not show to the hearts that would know
The things that belong to their peace?
But how shall they hear if the preacher forbear
Or lack in compassionate zeal?
Or how shall hearts move with the Master's own love,
Without his anointing and seal?
(SASB 1986, 527)

But this heart for the lost comes from the deep relationship with our Lord. We can never sit idly by while people are disconnected from God, if the Spirit of Jesus dwells in us and through us. We therefore must not neglect the spiritual growth of Salvationists. The deeper our experience of his love, the more passionate will be our engagement for the salvation of others.

The Salvation Army's identity is its mission. It has not been given to us by the donors, the media or the public. It has not been given to us by our Founder or wise, godly leaders throughout our history. It is God's gift, God's commission. To be like Jesus is to be missional. Robert Mulholland presents this challenge: "The world will not believe in Christ because of our sound theology, our correct creed,

our well-defined dogma, our rigorous religiosity. The world will believe when it sees Christlikeness manifested in our life” (Mulholland 2006, 16). To be like Jesus is to live a life of engagement. God help us to live up to our name.

In keeping with the parameters of the project, the essay has covered what is deemed to be a model of spiritual formation in The Salvation Army using the battle image. It incorporates our theological underpinnings and it is verified with Scripture. Robert Mulholland’s book *Invitation to a Journey* has been the major source of reference as a means of comparison. Other sources have been used since the Doctor of Ministry in Spiritual Formation has called us to read widely. They have informed my own understanding of the subject and given me a clearer picture of how formation takes place within my own tradition.

This project has been written as an essay but an essay with the potential of being used for teaching. As indicated in the introduction, its usefulness could prove helpful as a refresher course for Salvationists or in a non-Army setting to broaden the understanding of The Salvation Army. This could take place in a retreat weekend or as a presentation over a period of six to eight weeks.

Pedagogically, the material could be presented in a lecture method, using PowerPoint for significant quotes. Interaction could take place at the commencement or conclusion, or during the presentation, inviting hearers to share their experience of each major point. Where non-Salvationists would be involved, they would use different terminology for their journey. Discussion questions would be provided.

Teaching of the model could also include DVD's on the Army's history and ministry, or accessing our many websites that relate to the six major headings. The Army's wealth of song and music could be experienced through CD's and/or using the songs in the sessions that specifically relate to the topics. Salvationists could also be invited as guests to share their testimony on one of the topics in the model.

If my enthusiasm for what has been discovered about our spiritual formation could be conveyed effectively, we would end with deepest gratitude to God for creating, sustaining, blessing and using The Salvation Army.

In the part that follows, eight Salvationists will tell their story of adversity and suffering and testify to the role the community of faith has played, as well as spiritual disciplines in the deepening of their faith and effectiveness of their witness. The Salvation Army continues to be used by God for the spiritual formation of its people to pursue the goal of Christlikeness.

PART III

ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT:

ADVERSITY AND SUFFERING IN

THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN

I shall not fear though darkened clouds may gather round me;
The God I serve is one who cares and understands.
Although the storms I face would threaten to confound me.
Of this I'm confident: I'm in his hands.

I'm in his hands, I'm in his hands;
Whate'er the future holds, I'm in his hands
The days I cannot see have all been planned for me;
His way is best, you see;
I'm in his hands.
(Stanley Ditmer
SASB 1986, 732)

This research project has sought to discover evidence of God's dealing with selected Salvationists who have gone through adversity and suffering and to determine how their faith was affected. Though the human journey involves painful experiences, this 21st century secular culture does not view suffering as redemptive but as an interruption (Keller 2013, 280-283). It does not see suffering as a means of deepening an understanding of God's grace, building character and positively impacting relationship with God and others.

Using narrative research, personal interviews were conducted with six individuals and one couple, all who shared their story of having come through traumatic experiences. In each case, the conversion and maturing process were crucial factors in the crisis and in all cases the grace of God was in evidence even if it came through reflection. Their faith, though tested, deepened. Their present ministry has been enhanced through their experience. Their stories will impact my personal teaching and relational ministry. It is my hope that The Salvation Army would also benefit from this project, and how it can practically affect the preaching/teaching ministry and pastoral care, especially in local congregations.

It is apparent that not all Christians come through suffering well. But many do. They come through, not somehow but triumphantly. They discover in a deeper way God's grace in the crisis experience and how he uses the lessons learned to strengthen their faith, develop their character and enhance their ministry, themes borne out in this research project.

History and journeys are about stories. The grace of God is not a formula, a hard, cold fact or even just a theological concept. It is about God's dealing with

people. Their personal stories matter to him. He is involved to a degree that no one fully realizes. As Christians tell their stories, especially the tragedies of life, we see and hear God's way with them. They can find healing in the sharing. The community of faith can listen as a caring community and be nurtured as well. In my spiritual autobiography and model of spiritual formation, and in this research, these claims are verified, with reference to theology and characters from the Bible, Christian history and the present day, who have encountered God in a personal way in their life's journey.

In The Salvation Army one of the key elements in our two Sunday meetings, especially on Sunday night, was the testimony period. It was a spontaneous sharing, interspersed with relevant songs and choruses of witness. People spoke of their faith-walk with Christ, whether in the good times or the bad. In pastoral visitation, stories were shared personally with the corps officer or visitor. Both were opportunities of witness and mutual encouragement. In recent years our worship services in most places in Canada, take place on Sunday morning only. Sermons are often longer. In recent years, as a regular worshipper, I have noticed that busy formats have squeezed out personal testimonies. Pastoral visitation does not seem to be emphasized as it once was. How then can we find a way to hear personal testimonies of God's grace? Every congregation needs to rediscover the value of personal sharing that enriches the life of the community of God's people.

This research project has been only a beginning, or one way to speak and hear of God's present work in the lives of individuals through their experience of

adversity and suffering. In *The Relational Soul*, Plass and Cofield contend that it is not enough to review one's own story but it must be shared with another (Plass 2014, 52). They write, "An empathetic listener helps us access and expand our understanding of our emotions and thus our conscious identity" (Plass 2014, 52). This has taken place in the interviews and in the reflection afterwards. The wider implications are yet to unfold and that is how this story-telling can be recovered in our corps ministry of visitation, and personal testimonies.

Wider definitions of grace and faith have been given in the preface of this portfolio, since these constitute the central discoveries in this research project which are beyond the initial salvation experience. The spiritual formation of each believer in my research is a testimony to God's grace. They have given witness that believing in Jesus as Savior was foundational to their response in crisis and their dedication in ministry. Faith became evident in attitude and actions.

As a soldier of a Salvation Army corps (church), I am accountable to the corps officer (pastor). I have met with the leadership team to explain the project and have received their support. The individuals involved in this research were contacted personally about the project. During the actual interview, I reminded them of the process and assured them they were not obligated to either answer any or all of the questions and they could choose to cease participation. They signed the consent form agreeing to participate in this project (Appendix C). After the completion of this report, they were contacted again to explain that in keeping with the confidentiality agreement, their names have been changed.

My potential personal bias has to do with my own experience of facing loss as well as principles learned from other Christians who faced life's reversals. Rather than share from personal ministry experiences, I sought to listen attentively, letting them know that I knew of the crisis in their life but nothing of the details. They were therefore free to tell their stories as they wished.

CHAPTER 10:

CONTEXT

This research project took place with Salvationists who I personally knew through my ministry as an officer and my involvement in a local setting as a soldier. The Salvation Army's denominational tradition is all I have known, in terms of my spiritual formation. Being a Salvationist is for me more than an affiliation. It is almost like it is part of my DNA. Though Salvation Army corps are separate from one another, they are not distinct from one another. No corps is autonomous. The internationalism of The Salvation Army also connects us, no matter where one resides. While there are unifying elements such as a common structure, symbols, slogans, terminology, doctrines, mission, music, etc., we often speak of 'the spirit of the Army' which undoubtedly is all these things and more. What is also important to this action research project is that Salvationists would understand that the battle image that is part of The Salvation Army's identity is a reminder that the Christian walk will involve struggles that have to be faced in the journey of faith. Therefore, when interviewing Salvationists, there was a common understanding of identity, terminology and imagery. They were not interrupted to explain the Army culture or terminology and therefore there was a flow to their stories.

Background

The decision to use narrative research also has roots in my upbringing, my journey and sense of the importance of pastoral ministry. My spiritual autobiography reflects my life as being part of a large family where relational conversations and story-telling were the essence of our growing together. As a Cape Bretoner, oral tradition and one-to-one communication were eastern traits. Sharing one's story was natural. Hearing and sharing the story of others was what we perhaps would have deemed, conversation.

The spiritual autobiography, a course requirement, gave an opportunity to tell my story. Writing it forced me to consider how to view my life. The Lord led me to take this opportunity to see my life *through the lens of grace*. And so I did. Not only did it make me more aware of God's presence and work in my life, but relating even the challenges of the journey only brought his grace into sharper focus. The evidence of his grace has been incredible.

In the first year of my Doctor of Ministry studies, I decided that my final project to research would be how suffering was used by God in shaping Christians towards Christlikeness. Every congregation has stories that could be told that describe life's reversals in dramatic fashion. I could have selected many people to be interviewed. But I chose people with different crises experiences, representing different cultures and from different age groups. It was my hope that in telling their difficult experiences, they could give witness to the fact that faith is tested. Though tested, it becomes more firmly rooted in the ever-present God. In relating

their journeys, they would find further inner healing. It hopefully would be therapeutic for each of them.

As a Salvation Army officer, while my preaching/teaching ministry were priorities, they were never separated from personal home visitation. In fact, my discovery was that quality preparation for proclaiming the Word whether from the pulpit or in the classroom involved hearing how God was working in the lives of individuals, through the good times and especially the tough times. Though my corps officer role was limited to eleven years, the remaining thirty-three in administrative and leadership roles were always based on my pastoral priorities. In the early years of my officership, it was required that I visit eighteen hours a week besides all the other requirements of ministry. This established the pattern and opened the door for me to see the value of one-to-one sharing of the spiritual journey. My decision to use narrative research for my project was in line with my belief in the importance of pastoral ministry. This was a key motivation for the interviews.

During the time spent with each Salvationist, the flow of conversation was natural. It was story-telling as I had been familiar with, hopefully creating a safe space and attentive listening to allow for each person to not only relate his or her journey but to explore it *through the lens of grace* as well. Now that the interviews have been completed the contact with each individual goes on, in personal contact and e-mails. There is something meaningful that has taken place in our relationship and now it is the basis for deeper connections and more informed intercession.

My spiritual autobiography tracks my family background but also the spiritual formation that took place within The Salvation Army. Included in this is my calling and service as a Salvation Army officer and the personal and ministry challenges experienced. Looking back, I see from my family roots, personal experience and ministry how God has used the most difficult times in our lives to shape our character and prove his grace. Grace-gifts along the way included the support and encouragement of other Christians and the wisdom from his Word in how we can face life's reversals.

Scripture and Theology

The weight of the biblical text is profound with regards to suffering and adversity. The lives of Job, David, and Joseph are only three of many examples of Old Testament characters who knew that life held unexpected disasters and detours. Their stories speak of perseverance in the face of great challenges. Their journeys eventually led them to a deeper faith and understanding of God and in the case of Joseph and David, God's grand purpose. The Psalms, in their raw honesty, describe the journey at its darkest and the struggle of faith as well as the perseverance of faith. God at times seemed remote, thus the cries of distress. But the Psalmist understood the transcendence and immanence of God in ways that inform the Christian journey today. Walter Brueggemann's *Praying the Psalms* directly relates to this project as he writes about the Psalms as descriptive of life's orientation, disorientation and reorientation, noting that "Psalms offer speech when life has gone beyond our frail efforts to control" (Brueggemann 2007, 2, 6).

The Gospels are the most powerful expression of the grace and faith needed and experienced in adversity and suffering. The cross and resurrection are the signposts that make sense of life, especially in the throes of pain. Jesus is our supreme example. The writings of the apostles Paul and Peter not only give personal witness to their actual traumatic experiences but consistently warn of suffering and offer counsel on how to persevere through to victory

Timothy Keller writes: “God is sovereign over suffering and yet, in teaching unique to the Christian faith, among the major religions, God also made himself vulnerable and subject to suffering. The other side of the sovereignty of God is the suffering of God himself” (Keller 2013, Location 2325). With reference to the doctrines of God, the Incarnation, the Atonement and the Resurrection, Keller examines this vulnerability and ultimate triumph and relates it to the Christian’s understanding and experience.

The logic of this project is based on the possibility of Christlikeness and the formation towards it. If Christlikeness is not only the goal of the Christian but more profoundly the will of God, then we must believe that he will not waste any life experience and will use all, to bring to fulfilment his desire and his plan. The personal stories of the interviewees in this research give testimony to this and will also point to the community of faith as integral to the spiritual formation.

History and Literature

Salvation Army history also offers examples of faith tested and triumphant in the face of persecution or challenging experiences. We have had those who

have been imprisoned for their faith and those who have suffered martyrdom rather than deny Christ. The most notable of Salvation Army holiness teachers is Commissioner Samuel Brengle. A highly credentialed minister, led to serve as a Salvation Army officer, he discovered that when your ministry giftedness seems ended because of persecution, then God opens unexpected doors. When assaulted with a brick by a drunkard, requiring days of fighting for his life, his convalescence of eighteen months turned into a ministry of writing. His holiness books still carry influence beyond The Salvation Army (Chesham 1988, 12). The early history of the Church to the present day provides a myriad of examples of those who experienced some of life's worst tragedies, but became giants of faith and recipients of God's grace in and through their trying times.

The material referenced for the project encompassed texts that have been assigned during our years in this study program as well as other books on the journey through suffering. Each course has offered one or more books that provide a perspective on suffering in the Christian life. The book by Tim Keller on *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering* (Keller 2013) shows how the Christian views suffering in light of the God who suffers and walks with us and uses the experiences for the deepening of our faith and the impact of our witness. C.S. Lewis' *A Grief Observed* (Lewis 1980), maps out his journey of personal pain with the death of his wife. The test of faith is vividly described and a reorientation took place as he saw that he was consumed with himself, his wife and his anger with God. His priorities reversed as he emerged with a stronger

faith, understanding the gracious purpose of God as giving him a more realistic view of his wife and himself.

Many of our texts on spiritual formation have underscored the importance of the community of faith in shaping the individual generally but also specifically in adversity. Books and assignments on spiritual friends, mentors, and spiritual directors highlighted the importance of companionship in life's difficult journeys. Darrell Bock underscored the importance of the community "in terms of encouraging the believer in growth and as a point of identification and representation" (Pettit 2008, 112,113). God's people, according to Terry Wardle, as a healthy Christian community, gracious, patient and protective are "clearly committed to helping people grow strong in Jesus Christ" (Wardle 2003, 44). The need for spiritual companionship is reinforced by David Benner in his book *Sacred Companions* in which he highlights the personal ministry of spiritual friends and spiritual directors (Benner 2002). The community of faith is a community of spiritual friendships, "a place where your story, including your brokenness, flaws and failures, is known and accepted" (Caliguire 2007, 38).

Philip Yancey provides a realistic treatment of adversity and suffering in the life of a Christian when he wrote, *Where is God When it Hurts?* Yancey contended: God has "let us cry out and echo Job with louder and harsher fits of anger against him... He has joined us. He has hurt and bled and cried and suffered. He has dignified for all time those who suffer by sharing their pain" (Yancey 1977, 182). In this research project, reflection on the journey for a few was not a time of crying out to God in anger or questioning. However, there were

those who asked: why did this happen to me? But whatever the reaction in the crisis, all realized that faith was strengthened and lessons were learned through the experience. They found that the Scriptural principle of sufficient grace in times of suffering was valid and verified in their journey. Like Paul, though circumstances did not necessarily change, God's promise to him was for them also: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9)

All these sources are related. They are on the subject of personal Christian experience and how the journeys through adversity and suffering give evidence of grace and faith. These sources have been invaluable but in order to conduct interviews, analyze, code the data and interpret it, I required texts on research to help gather the information and make sense of it.

Research Resources

I was most helped by three of the recommended texts, though others were referenced. Judith Bell in her book, *Doing Your Research Project*, gave good advice on planning and conducting my interviews. At the conclusion of her chapter on this subject, she provided a helpful checklist which, in the main, was followed in the process (Bell 2010, 172-174).

Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice is written very clearly and at the same time it provided challenge especially in the area of listening as an interviewer. Its author, Mary Clark Moschella was right when she noted that "listening is difficult because it requires us to give up the role of expert, and

become a learner again” (Moschella 2008, 142). She called listening a “primary duty of love”, a “means of grace”. “It brings forth stories through which people make sense of their lives and become aware of the larger reality” (Moschella 2008, 144). This book also was useful in determining how to organize and analyse my data.

The major text for our course, *Qualitative Research* by Tim Sensing covered all the bases. He was helpful in every facet of the project. I used his idea for the Consent Form for Interviews (Appendix C) as well as a series of questions in his chapter on *Taking Note* which helped in reflecting on each of the interviews verbatim. More is written about this chapter of Sensing’s in the methodology section. An understanding of analyzing and coding and how to go about it were provided clearly in his chapters.

CHAPTER 11:

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The overarching methodology for this project was narrative research. Having secured the necessary approvals for my research (Project Proposal 09/12/16, Tyndale Research Ethics Board 09/27/16, The Salvation Army Corps leadership team 09/19/16), I chose to conduct seven interviews, involving six individuals and one married couple, out of the list of ten potential individuals. The interviews were one to two hours in length, at a time and place convenient for the interviewee.

I explained the project to each individual and why I wanted them to participate. When they indicated their willingness, each was given a copy of the explanatory letter (Appendix B), the consent form (Appendix C) and the questions (Appendix D), which explained in detail the purpose, process, parameters and their rights.

Field

Those interviewed represented different adverse events or circumstances which brought suffering. There was diversity in age, culture and gender. Some are retired, others still are students. Educational backgrounds were different. Employment experiences were varied. There was some difference in when and how they came to faith. The details are given in Findings, Table 2. All were chosen not just for the specific reasons mentioned but also because they have

modelled a deep faith and gracious Christian spirit, and consistent service within and beyond their local corps.

Scope

In addressing the subject of adversity and suffering in a Christian's life, I explored the broad categories of before, during and after the crisis. The 'before' section focused on their coming to Christ and on how each participant had been nurtured in the community life of the church. Specific spiritual disciplines were discussed as helps to their spiritual maturity. The boundary I chose here was to keep the focus on conversion and what led to it without spending time on the stories or details in their early background, since the emphasis was going to be their crisis. I have used 'conversion' as the main heading for this section. The purpose in exploring their conversion and spiritual growth was to show what part this played in how they dealt with their crisis.

The 'during' section which will be explored under the heading 'crisis' moved to the incident or circumstance that caused their suffering. This led to the journey in it and through it, i.e., how they dealt with the questions surrounding their faith and what and who helped them in the journey. This also led to what was missing positively for them during this period, either resources or supportive people or their own reactions. The boundary here was to guard against dwelling on the negatives such as self-pity or bitterness that could hinder wholeness. Also, other crises emerged during the interviews. It was important that the telling of

their story would prove to be a further healing experience for them without unearthing other adverse experiences which could not be explored in depth.

The ‘after’ section was about their learning experiences, the depth of their Christian faith and how their journey has affected their influence and witness. The boundary here was also guarding against reflecting negatively even on their view of how they handled situations. This was not to marginalize facts but to avoid self-blame or regrets over decisions that could not be changed. The broad category for interpreting data in this is ‘continuance’.

Methodology

For this action research project on adversity and suffering in the life of a Christian, I chose to dialogue with selected people and record their stories verbatim. In keeping with an ethical approach, they were clearly informed of the purpose and process of the project, and gave both verbal and written consent. I used the *Narrative Research* method for this project, accessing texts that particularly dealt with this approach in a postmodern culture (Savage, 2008).

Each participant was asked to respond to questions related to their spiritual journey and in particular, a specific crisis they had encountered and how they dealt with it. Since I was dealing with both one-to-one interviews and exploring an event or events in the participants’ past, my approach also related to the Appreciative Inquiry method as covered in Mark Lau Branson’s text on *Memories, Hopes, and Conversations* (2004). This approach serves “to stimulate the thinking and the imagination of congregations— through a process that

focuses upon the honorable, the pure, the pleasing, the commendable” (Branson, Locations 69-71).

This was helpful since it not only dealt with individual stories but linked them with congregational change. The interviews were inquiries “into the stories of life-giving forces within the history and experience of congregational members” (Branson 2004, Locations 114-116) with the hope that the benefit would go beyond those who participated and would eventually impact the ministry of their corps.

There was extensive preparation for this project and timelines were set so that those invited to participate had at least two weeks to consider whether they were open to sharing their stories in personal interviews.

In terms of preparation, Sensing’s *Qualitative Research* was helpful (Sensing 2011, 102, 113), as was Moschella’s *Ethnography* for guidelines in setting up the interviews, and both gave practical suggestions for conducting them. While it should have been obvious, having chosen to interview for my research, Mary Clark Moschella provided a good reminder: I needed to understand that “pastoral ethnography is, at its heart, a listening practice” (Moschella 2008, 141, 142). *Doing Your Research Project* (Judith Bell) also has a whole section on Planning and Conducting Interviews. This has been useful, especially with the advice on guided or focused interviews with an excellent checklist at its conclusion (Bell 2010, 172-174).

In choosing the narrative approach I determined that verbatim was the best course for collecting the data, since I was conducting the interview alone and did

not want to miss any part of their story. An audio recording was made of each interview. The value as Moschella highlighted was the accuracy of the wording and also the intonation and rhythm which provided more depth to the story (Moschella, 124). I used quality equipment for the interviews but unfortunately did not have it available early enough to practice using it. By the second interview, I had more competence in the use of the equipment and from then on, the freedom the voice recorder gave assisted in the listening and observing. The interviews were based on the following structure and themes as outlined in these questions:

Before (crisis or trauma) – Conversion

1. Tell me about your conversion. How did it take place? When (not necessarily a specific date)?
2. In your desire to grow as a Christian, who and what helped you in your spiritual journey?

During (crisis or trauma) - Crisis

1. What would you describe as an adverse event or circumstance that brought you the most suffering in your life?
2. How was your faith tested?
3. Who or what helped during this period?

After (crisis or trauma) - Continuance

1. Has this been a learning experience for you? Explain.
2. How has this changed your relationship with the Lord and with others?

I had intended that all interviews would be transcribed by a competent, confidential secretary but found this was too much for her with her work commitments. She transcribed one of the longest ones and I transcribed the rest. Since I am not a skilled typist, the benefit for me was taking the time to type and listen carefully, going over the tape in sections, repeatedly. I then sent the full transcript to each participant for their feedback or desire for any revisions.

In analyzing the data, Tim Sensing's questions (Sensing 2011, 190-193) in his chapter on *Taking Note* were useful, especially in reflecting on the transcripts. Besides the details of the interview—place, time, description and observation of the person, he helped in self-examination of my personal emotional reactions. He challenged me to look more deeply into what was said, how I understood it and what I had learned. Sensing also offered advice on how to analyse theologically and evaluate as well as how to integrate the experience into personal ministry.

I listened again to each interview to extract further information based on observations and personal reaction. This practice of listening using Sensing's questions was helpful in catching details I missed in the initial review and transcription. While there is not an exact connection with Moschella's suggestions for reading the data, Sensing's questions do cover the literal, interpretive and reflective reading her text suggests (Moschella 2008, 172). My findings reflect the literal reading and then there is the interpretation. The reflective reading will be seen in the outcomes and conclusion.

While the analysis primarily needed to be done with the major sections in mind—before (conversion), during (crisis) and after (continuance), the coding took into consideration the various elements within the structure, including various spiritual disciplines and relationships. Coding is the use of a word or phrase that captures the essential meaning of a portion of the material. All the tables in this research project are illustrative of how the material was coded.

However, other material that emerged that could be relevant was included in a separate section. I therefore saw that the use of tables, as suggested by

Sensing and Moschella, would best suit how I organized the information. The first table I set up for the analysis carried large chunks of verbatim in each of the sections, in answer to the questions. This has not been included since it carries too much data of a confidential nature. I chose rather to separate the sections, abbreviate the information and include it in the tables which are in this research project.

I listened to the audio many times and worked with the transcripts in various ways. I collated the separate sections so that all the conversion stories would be one document, as were the crisis and continuance material. I then color-coded these for the themes that the questions suggested. These have been collected in hard copy and electronically.

Table 1a: Phases and Timetable – Pre-Study

PHASE	ACTION	TIME FRAME	WHO	HOW
PROJECT PROPOSAL	Approved	Sept. 12/16	Dr. Chapman	By email
ETHICS APPLICATION	Approved	Sept. 27/16	Tyndale Ethics Board	By letter
INVOLVING THE PARTICIPANTS	Met with leadership team Spoke to interviewees about project Gave letter, consent form, and questions	Sept. 19/16 Sept.30-Oct.2/16	Linda Participants	Explained the project to get their approval before proceeding Interviewees returned consent forms

Table 1b: Phases and Timetable – Collection and Transcribing

PARTICIPANT	INTERVIEW	TRANSCRIPTION	TRANSCRIBE	CODING
JANE	Mon. Oct. 17	Oct. 18-25	Linda	Table/color coding
BEN	Fri. Oct. 21	Oct. 22-Nov. 1	Linda	Table/color coding
KAREN	Mon. Oct. 24	Oct. 25 – Nov. 15	Lorraine	Table/color coding
PAM	Wed. Oct. 26	Oct. 27-Nov. 14	Linda	Table/color coding
KEVIN	Fri. Nov.11	Nov. 12-16	Linda	Table/color coding
ERIC and BETTY	Mon. Nov. 14	Nov. 15-22	Linda	Table/color coding
RUTH	Thurs. Dec. 29	Dec. 30-Jan. 1	Linda	Table/color coding

Table 1c: Phases and Timetable – Analysis and Interpretation

PHASE	ACTION	TIME FRAME	WHO	HOW
REPORTING & FEEDBACK	Return full transcript to participants Ask for feedback	Within a week of interview with one exception (as above) Dec. 14/16	Linda	Sent by e-mail for any revision required By e-mail
INTERPRETATION	Read, re-read transcripts	Dec. 6-10/16	Linda	
DRAFTING	Listened to interviews & note taking	Dec. 13-17/16	Linda	
ANALYSIS	Analyzing & coding	Dec. 20-27/16 Jan. 4-18/17	Linda	
		Jan. 19-28/17	Linda	
REPORTING	Draft sent for participants to review	Feb. 1/2017	Linda	
	Final written report	Feb. 13-17	Linda	Reviewed at February residential
	Give update to participants	Mar. 1/17	Linda	By e-mail

Ethics in Ministry Based Research

In terms of the power differential, I am a retired officer and hold no position in the corps (church). Though my rank and past leadership in the Army could be a factor, I felt confident that these interviews were more pastoral than positionally overwhelming. I did not wear my Salvation Army uniform and

allowed each participant to choose the venue that was most comfortable and convenient to them. Though I know the people involved in a personal way, I have no authority over them. This research was approved by the Tyndale research ethics board on September 27, 2016.

Earlier I explained the process for engaging the participants with explanation of the voluntary nature of the process. The consent form (Appendix C) outlined for each interviewee the parameters of the project and their right to participate or discontinue at any point.

Potential bias was addressed by first letting them know that while they were selected for a particular crisis I had known about, I knew little or nothing of the details. Further details on my conclusions will show how I found some responses quite different from what was expected.

Material gathered from the interviews will be safely stored on a USB flash drive and no hard copies will be kept after five years. The audio interviews are coded by number for storage. Audio tapes will be destroyed at the conclusion of this project as part of my final portfolio and degree completion.

CHAPTER 12:
DISCOVERIES AND MEANING

The verbatim results from the seven interviews provided a wealth of material in answer to the questions given beforehand. Each person came prepared to share their story candidly. In the sections below, the findings will provide the feedback from the literal reading of the transcripts and the interpretation will provide a synopsis of the similarities, contrasts and deeper observations I have discovered.

Conversion Findings

The table below gives some idea of the diversity in age, background, experience and ministry. SA stands for The Salvation Army. The information in the table below came from the interviews and lists the individuals who took part, their culture, denomination, education and employment. Their names have been changed.

Table 2: Findings – Specific Details (Literal Reading)

PARTICIPANT	AGE	CULTURE	DENOM	EDUCATION	EMPLOYMENT
JANE	Over 30	Asian/Can.	SA	BCom/MA	Office
BEN	Under 30	Canadian	SA	Music	Restaurant
PAM	Over 70	Canadian	SA	Lab Tech	Business
KEVIN	Over 40	Canadian	SA	Career Couns.	Security
KAREN	Over 60	African	African/SA	MTS	Retired
ERIC	Over 70	British	Presb/SA	Draftsman	Retired
BETTY	Over 70	British	SA	Finance training	Retired
RUTH	Under 30	Asian/Can	SA	Med Student	Student

In Table 3, the findings dealt with the first question about the conversion of each of the participants as well as their aids to growth. The latter was a specific question regarding the role of others, including family and friends who played a vital role in their spiritual maturity. The church category picks up the part played by the regular worship as well as special events and programs within The Salvation Army that were beneficial in their spiritual journey. Spiritual disciplines are highlighted as well as the conversion impact which relates to whether their encounter with Christ was personal, dramatic or a matter of identification.

Table 3: Conversion & Aids to Growth – Findings (Literal)

NAME	CONV	FAM/FRIENDS	CHURCH	SPIR DISC	IMPACT
JANE	During senior soldier prep class	Mother was Salvationist, took family to church	Asian ministry but not integrated	Worship Devotions	Emotional experience
BEN	Identified with church, Christianity	Christian home, Grandfather role model	Involved in youth musical programs	Worship Reading	Identification
KAREN	Not dramatic but personal with parent's death	Step-mother Church and Christian nurturing	As a child involved in giving out tracts	Scripture Service	Nurtured and then personal
PAM	Decision at youth councils	SA camping program, Friends, holiness preachers	Camps, youth councils, holiness mtgs.	Camp staff Bible study Worship	Emotional. Definite Subsequent experience
KEVIN	Decision in childhood	Parents, friends and officers important	Corps Cadet Passionate in ministry as a youth	Corps programs Scripture Bible study	Early decision Long-term impact Deeper exp. as an adult
ERIC	Decision at youth councils	Neighbors took him to the Army	Involved in programs for youth - SS, Scouts, music	SA songs Scripture Worship service	No dramatic indication
BETTY	decision at SA as teenager	Father took her to church Friend invited to SA	Sang in the songsters	Devotions Scripture SA songs	Vivid in memory
RUTH	As a child at junior camp	Parents important as examples	Fully engaged since childhood	Involved but not deep	Dedicated as a young Christian

Conversion Interpretation

Timothy Keller believes that we can be prepared to handle crisis (Keller 2013, 3159) and suggests it can be done in part by building up knowledge of Scripture and deepening the prayer life. But we need to add the community of believers as preparers, and not just think of them as support in adversity. In these testimonies of conversion and ultimately growing faith they had a link with others. God's purpose is to shape us in the likeness of his Son and this will involve adversity. Suffering of any kind requires more than an individual faith. Life's reversals are not to be faced as a solitary training period. God never designed it to be so. Robert Mulholland has stated it clearly: "We can no more be conformed to the image of Christ outside of corporate spirituality than a coal can continue to burn bright outside of the fire" (Mulholland 1993, 145). For those who shared their stories, they would find that when crisis came, they needed to be warmed in this fire of Christian fellowship.

When participants were selected, I was unaware that they had all been introduced to a church as children whether it was through parents or neighbours. For all of the interviewees, there was a pre-conversion Christian environment. While no one directly related this fact as consequential to effectively dealing with their crisis, I would guess that this aspect of spiritual foundation played a key role.

None of them considered themselves as Christian just because of attendance or family affiliation. Perhaps the one exception could be Ben, when he expressed his conversion as "just a part of everything I did". Yet he clarified it with, "It was a part of me identifying with the Church and with Christianity". So

even for him, it was something personal, if not dramatic. For others, it was a definite decision in a moment of time, as for Kevin, who recalls being six years of age, or Pam knowing it took place at a junior music camp. Betty remembers the second time she attended a Salvation Army meeting and feeling compelled to go to the Mercy Seat. In The Salvation Army traditionally, the sermon is followed by an appeal to make a decision for Christ and kneel at the bench called the Mercy Seat as an act of public decision and witness. Betty said, "I knelt at the Mercy Seat and I have never, never regretted it and God has been so good to me all these years." Eric was a junior soldier (youth member) and would have signed a pledge around age seven or eight, which included a child's statement of faith. But he pointed to a decision at youth councils as the time he was converted. Pam too made a decision as a teenager at a youth councils.

The faith expressed in deciding to follow Jesus as a child or teenager may not have been seen as foundational to the rest of their lives. They may not have anticipated any crisis that would require them to rediscover their roots of faith. It is possible that their understanding of following Jesus did not include crisis.

It is interesting that decisions were made at camps or youth councils, Army events that take place beyond the corps. They involve groups of certain ages from within the geographical boundary called the division. Having served for five years in a recruitment role for Salvation Army officers, I read testimonies of candidates' conversions and callings from individuals across Canada. It was apparent that spiritual events beyond the local corps were often places where lifetime decisions were made. This in no way diminishes the place of the local

corps in the spiritual formation of its people but shows that in a separate environment, often with one's peers, decisions are made, decisions that are the fruit of the nurturing that took place over a period of time in the local congregation. It is a biblical principle that is borne out in the spiritual journey. Jesus pointed to the fact that some sow and others reap (Jn 4:37) as did Paul in describing his ministry alongside Apollos using the agricultural metaphor—one plants, one waters, but recognizing that it was God who brings it all to fruition (1 Cor 3:6).

Where decisions take place is not the crucial element. It is the fact that they do. Jane was challenged when she took the senior soldier's preparation class and made a commitment to Christ. "I still remember that as very emotional". Karen was steeped in Christianity and testified that it was not a dramatic conversion, but she said, "It became very personal with me when both of my parents went to be with God". Kevin and Pam spoke of an important experience subsequent to their conversion. For Kevin, it was a life-changing insight in a Bible study. For Pam, it was alone with her Bible following a holiness sermon. Though the diversity is apparent in almost every aspect, the fact is that every participant witnessed to a decision. In The Salvation Army, it would be considered an act of faith and commitment to be a follower of Jesus.

Though it was personal for each of them, the influence within the home and the church was more meaningful than they could have realized. Their spiritual formation also was highly influenced by the witness of family and/or friends and would contribute ultimately to their resilience. Pam, Eric, Betty, and Kevin gave

ample examples of the fellowship within and beyond their corps as instrumental in their spiritual development. Eric and Betty actually moved from Britain to Canada with a group of Salvationists and were relocated in a corps where they served together. The camaraderie at summer camps and divisional events were hugely influential for Pam in her Christian development.

Kevin often mentioned corps officers who challenged his thinking or came alongside with counsel and comfort or opportunities for service. Ben named leaders of the groups he was involved in as influential to him. Family played a major part for Karen in her early years. The same can be said for Ruth. When I asked whether their Asian culture affected her response to Christ, she could not be sure whether it was the culture that resulted in the strong faith of both parents, or whether it was just who they were. They were both people of prayer. Ruth said, “When I was young, I would always see them reading their Bible, like all the time”.

Relationships are means of grace for the spiritual journey and prove to be vital when facing crisis. Yet in this early stage of the Christian journey, the participants may never have realized why God provides Christian family and friends and a community of faith and worship. Christians need each other to grow, to become like Christ.

All have spoken of worship, service, Scripture and prayer as important in their early journey in the faith. The term spiritual disciplines has only in recent years been familiar in The Salvation Army. So when raising the subject, I articulated what we would have called ‘means of grace’. A section in our song

book with this heading carries songs about prayer, the Scriptures and worship. Pam and Betty spoke of their devotions which would involve Bible reading, a devotional thought and prayer. Kevin admitted that some Salvationists are not great at memorizing Scripture but he was well-versed in Bible stories. Pam, Kevin, Ben, and others mentioned corps cadets. This program for teens included Bible studies and ministry requirements. Both Betty and Eric when asked about spiritual disciplines and in particular, Scripture spoke about our songs with the comment, “the words are certainly scriptural”. The Salvation Army is Wesleyan in its theology and therefore we carry many of Charles Wesley’s songs which are most often a poetic form of scriptural truths.

All the participants have been regular in worship and active in ministry at the local corps and beyond. This is the expectation of everyone who chooses to be a soldier of The Salvation Army. What has been important in the model of spiritual formation, has been the numerous activities that are available for every age group and interest. Music, in particular, has played a vital role and the discipline is more than learning an art. It is a spiritual discipline of worship, service and ministry.

Timothy Keller’s contention that we can prepare for crisis (Keller 2003, Location 3159) is substantiated in the stories of those interviewed. Whether it was through the spiritual disciplines, or relationships, God gave these ‘means of grace’ for the present and future journey and certainly for the facing of adversity and suffering.

Crises Findings

The table below outlines the specific crisis each participant faced. It was for this circumstance that I chose to interview the participants listed. However, in sharing their stories, other experiences of adversity (crisis) came up. We did not discuss these in detail and in two cases I chose not to transcribe the details, since they were very personal. The column on faith tested/affirmed required each participant to share, as much as they could, this difficult time and how it affected their faith. The final column relates to those who helped in the dark times. In some cases, they were the same people who came alongside to help in the maturing of their faith, but there were also others the Lord used to see them through.

Table 4: Crisis, Faith, and Support – Findings (Literal Reading)

PARTICIPANT	CRISIS	CRISIS (OTHER)	FAITH TESTED/ AFFIRMED	CARING PEOPLE
JANE	Death of husband	Immigration challenges	Why?	Army leader Corps officers
BEN	Divorce of parents	Downward spiral	Depression	Youth leaders Grandfather
KAREN	City to village transition	Death of parents Failed marriages	Trust required	Cousin Principal Step-mother
PAM	Terminal illness	Corps/family issues	God can be trusted	Intercessors Family Medical staff
KEVIN	Car accident	Divorce of parents Failed marriages Depression/anxiety	God has a purpose	Friends Corps officers Parents
ERIC & BETTY	Granddaughter killed in car accident	Death of parents Death of sister	God is not to blame	Corps family Friends
RUTH	Hit by car	Relocation to Aus.	Why?	Family Peer advice

Jane could have used the immigration from Asia to Canada with its radical re-adjustment as her crisis. But Jane was invited to share her most painful experience of journeying with her husband through his cancer diagnosis, treatment and death and then adjusting to life as a single mom. Jane and Sam were married in in the 1990s and then had a child. Her husband’s cough did not respond to medication and after six months, further testing resulted in a diagnosis of stage-four lung cancer. Loving his wife and daughter, Sam tried every treatment. The side effects were difficult to endure and painful for Jane to watch. She said, “I think that is the most horrible experience”. Though he was only given six months, he lived for two years. Jane said “During his sickness I prayed with him every night before we went to bed. We prayed with tears for his healing”. Yet

she also spoke to him about Heaven. Though an atheist, he was led to the Lord by a corps officer before he died, for he wanted to meet his wife and child in Heaven.

It was a time of testing for Jane. She wondered why her husband had to suffer so much. But now in reflection she realizes that their suffering was not because of what they did. She said, “Like Job, at the time we were devastated”. Their child was barely two years old when he was diagnosed. But during the most difficult period, people came alongside to help. Her former boss at The Salvation Army headquarters was now in a leadership position and talked to her supervisor to ensure that she had freedom to go with Sam to all his appointments. Her corps officers were truly pastors in their visitation and spiritual counsel.

When asked what was the most difficult, adverse experience in his life that brought the most suffering, Ben responded, “I think the thing so far was my parents’ divorce. It wasn’t necessarily that, initially, that was the cause of all the strife and trauma, but it was more the nexus point for the development of other things that would cause me problems. I sort of pinpoint that as the before and after point in my life”. At ten years of age, he woke up one morning to discover his mother had left, though he had contact with her in the early days following. He kept the pain to himself and eventually was sent for therapy, though its effectiveness was minimal because of his reluctance to open up. For Ben, it played itself out in the years to follow, when he was in high school. “I think subconsciously, initially when I was younger I did not think too much about it but at high school, when I became more aware and cognizant of things, it (the divorce) became more of an issue”.

The testing of Ben's faith extended over a period of years. He described his relationship with the Lord as "pretty non-existent". Ben explained: "It tested my faith because it led me to do things that forced myself to rock-bottom, and then to try and figure out from there what went wrong". He went through a period when he was heavily depressed. "It wasn't a very good time, not a lot of happy thoughts". The unfortunate thing is that Ben did not have people to come alongside to help. Though it was a lonely time, he determined to work things out. However, after an invitation to an Army camp in the USA, separated from peers that were not a good influence, Ben saw things in new light and determined to change.

Karen's response to the question on suffering was: "Wow! I have a lot of it!" There have been multiple difficult and sometimes unusual experiences in Karen's life, not the least of which are two failed marriages, but it is the childhood experience in Africa that will be described. The African culture played an important role in Karen's life. Her mother died when she was a baby and the happy home with her father and step-mother was shattered when her father died. Her dad was a doctor. They lived in a large city. Her father called her a princess and she remembers him as affirming and encouraging. But the culture dictates that with his death, Karen had to be sent to her uncle in the village. She was separated from her brother. Her standard of living was reduced to poverty. During the following years, she experienced physical and emotional abuse. Her education and job training came only because of her own tenacity, and the gracious kindness of a cousin and a school principal.

When Karen was asked what happened to her spiritually when times were so hard, she said, “Oh, I only know the Name Jesus... Jesus Christ”. Her lengthy account of many trials is peppered with her confidence in the Lord, visions, dreams, healing, and protection. Though she was describing a dark period in her life in Africa and afterwards in the USA, she testified to divine intervention that had the ring of the miraculous. Her relationship with the Lord was personal. Her faith dared her to ask for specific guidance. It was surprising that the church community in the African village was not there for her when she was suffering as a child and young woman. But she explained that they could not interfere in family matters. Yet there were people along the way, not necessarily Christian but people who recognized her potential and need and came alongside to help.

Like other participants, Pam could have described other hard periods in her life, one related to a difficult experience in a corps and another, pain over her son’s personal hurt. But the focus we had planned to talk about was the journey through illness. Though I had understood it to be cancer, it was not, but it resembled myeloma and lymphoma, and had to do with the bone marrow and plasma cells. This was a terminal illness. She was extremely unwell and required chemo and radiation as well as a bone marrow transplant. Testing continues. The good news is that a doctor has said that she has been in remission for so long, that she can now be considered cured. However, Pam adds, “Part of me thinks that is too good to be true, but she (the doctor) doesn’t say that lightly”.

Pam exhibited such faith in the Lord. She didn’t find this journey to be a faith-testing time. In response, I commented “So you have this constant trust”.

She replied, “Yes, it’s simple, I guess, and there are times when he comes in ecstasy”. What was most significant for her was the knowledge that people were praying for her, even when she could not pray herself or read her Bible because of the illness. Her family were a great support. In the interview, several times she referenced her family doctor and his staff who are Christians. He prayed for her. She spoke glowingly of doctors and hospital staff who were so kind.

To say that Kevin had multiple experiences of suffering would be an understatement. When he was seven, he and his family were involved in a head-on collision. It was, according to Kevin, “a horrific accident”. Each member of the family sustained severe injuries and his dad especially required numerous surgeries. Kevin suffered a concussion and believes he still has related problems. Later, Kevin had to deal with the blow that his dad had chosen a different lifestyle. His parents divorced. He himself had two failed marriages and both were very painful experiences. His self-worth was severely damaged. Depression and anxiety were factors in losing a job he loved, in a profession of career counselling that he was educated to do. Though he now works in security, his financial struggles continue to be a challenge.

In every crisis, Kevin’ faith seemed to be quite unusual. When speaking about the car accident, he said “But as a young kid, like as a seven-year old kid, for me, we always said it was a miracle that we all lived. I felt great about that. That was a simple enough explanation for me. In a childlike faith, there was a reason that we were all still around. We had a purpose. God had something in store”. That simple, childlike faith is apparent in every description of the

challenges he has faced. Even when he speaks of his depression and ongoing anxiety, it is a testimony: “God is not taking it away. He hasn’t chosen to do that. However, he’s right there with me in the moment”. Kevin describes his journey by highlighting the many people who have ministered to him, such as corps officers, friends or parents. He spoke graciously of those who offered advice, encouragement and practical support.

Eric and Betty, who had their own life stories in their home countries, describe suffering of different kinds. Eric had to relocate his draftsman business because of the local political climate, and Betty as a child experienced the death of her mother, and later her father and sister. But now, many years later in their senior years, they have had to stand alongside their daughter when their married granddaughter was killed in an alcohol-related car accident, as she and a friend returned from a get-together. The granddaughter’s two children then had to be raised by her mother. The pain for Eric and Betty was not for themselves as grieving grandparents, but for their daughter. She had for years struggled with this young woman, rebellious since her teen years, and now dying so unnecessarily, leaving her children without a mother.

When asked whether the experience tested her faith, Betty replied, “Funny enough, it didn’t. I just know that things happen in your life and you just have to trust God knows the big picture and to trust him”. Eric and Betty responded in harmony when asked if they ever blamed God for all that had happened. “Never!” they said. Eric added: “There was never a possibility”. The blame, he felt, lay with the bad choices his granddaughter had made. The support of the corps family

was there for them, but they also spoke in glowing terms of how their daughter and son-in-law were supported by Muslim neighbours who brought food for them and offered to help in any way.

Ruth recently relocated overseas to study medicine. She made passing reference to this when she spoke of her new group of friends and it was not explored as any traumatic experience. However, it did involve a major shift in her life since she had to move far away from the family and friends. The crisis our interview centered on was the result of an accident. Ruth was hit by a car while going for a run with a friend near a Salvation Army camp. She was a teenager at the time. She spent around a week in hospital and then it took a couple of years to recover. She had a broken right shoulder, but mostly it was serious skin abrasions. She had several surgeries and scarring all over her body. Later, there was laser treatment and physiotherapy, acupuncture and visits to the chiropractor. It took a very long time to go through the process. As a young woman, the fact that she had scarring all over her face affected her the most, because it was such a visible injury rather than an internal one. She said, “It was when I first saw myself in the mirror; I was kind of disgusted with what was happening with my face”.

Ruth did go through a testing time. “While I was in the hospital, you have a lot of time just lying there to think. I remember I used to say, why on earth, why on earth does this have to happen to me? I was doing everything that was the right thing to do. I thought I was a good Christian; I was a senior soldier. I did not do anything wrong. I followed the rules and all that kind of stuff. It was just the whole ‘why me’ kind of thing”. It was not a time of doubting God’s existence, but

doubting his purpose in it all. But Ruth became aware of the people of the corps who were praying for her, and of the strong faith of her mother that all would be well. Then a friend came alongside and explained to her how fortunate she was that the accident had not been far worse. He pointed out several of the factors that saved her from something much more tragic.

Crisis Interpretation

A cursory glance at the diversity of the participants makes a statement about adversity and suffering. All eight interviewees experienced a profound change in their lives due to a crisis despite differences in age, gender, culture, maturity, education, or employment. As sin entered the world, so did suffering and death. No human can escape inevitable disappointments and hurts. More importantly for this research is the fact that all those who took part had a Christian upbringing and had made personal decisions to belong to Christ. They were supported in their Christian journey through family, friends and the worship and programs in the church community. Yet their life experience was not without crisis. Christians are not immune to suffering.

Timothy Keller in his book *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering* uses biblical examples of four kinds of suffering: Jonah and David, the Suffering We Bring on Ourselves; Paul and Jeremiah, the Suffering of Betrayal; Mary and Martha, the Suffering of Loss; Job and the Suffering of Mystery (Keller, Location 3288- 3355). Each of these types can be found in one or more of those who were involved in this study.

Ben and Kevin would honestly admit that some of their grief was a result of unwise and reckless choices. Those who have experienced failed marriages, or suffered from the decisions of others, like Karen, have known betrayal. Pam, Ruth, Jane, Eric and Betty suffered loss, whether it related to health or death. For a few, their suffering was a mystery. They asked the question “why”, when their commitment to Christ was strong and their lifestyle was righteous. There seemed to be no answer, no reasonable purpose.

In every case, there was a process. Recovery was never quick and the journey had its twists and turns. Healing, sometimes not complete healing, took time. Faith did not emerge as a result of the crisis. They were already people of faith but for a few, it was severely tested. For others, it was their settled view that God was in control that helped them see their circumstances not as cause for doubt, but as occasions for holding on to God. In fact, there is evidence in the journeys that the presence of God was experienced in the darkest times. Kevin felt that God showed up when he despaired the most.

Several found equilibrium in Scripture and prayer, remembering as Jane and Kevin did, that Job had known devastation. Intercession was extremely important for Pam, Kevin and Ruth. What emerges most often is the support of family, friends and the corps family, or lack thereof. Ben could have been helped more if as a young boy, corps folks had realized his need of care. In Karen’s case, the church did not interfere for cultural reasons. Beyond the close-knit relationships, medical staff for Pam and Ruth, the Muslim neighbourhood for Eric’s and Betty’s daughter, played important roles in their journey. For several of

them, it was also someone beyond the local church fellowship or even their closest relationships that surprised them with affirmation, wisdom and encouragement. The experience of suffering was life-changing.

This research has shown that Christians experience adversity and suffering, that it takes time to heal even when periods of equilibrium are found in holding on to God's Word and finding strength in prayer. But attitude also played a large part in how they handled their crisis.

It is one thing to practice the Christian faith in the good times but quite another when dealt a crushing blow, as experienced by those who have been interviewed. Putting their faith into practice in and through their crisis required them to not only be hopeful, but realistic. Realistically, when faced with crises, they did have choices. Not one of the participants was helpless in dealing with their trauma. Yes, they had been dealt a severe blow, and knocked down for a time. For Ben, it took years before he was able to stand and move forward. Kevin's residual pain resulting from his several crises has not evaporated overnight. Natural instincts have kicked in and there is some evidence in the interviews of bitterness, self-pity, resentment and worry. Ben and Kevin have experienced depression and in Ben's case, rebellion. Yet both these men made positive life choices and continue to make them. This choosing to live with courage, faith and hope is the witness of each of the participants, despite the severity of the crisis. Both Kevin and Ben were raised in a Christian environment where Scripture, prayer, worship and the work of the Holy Spirit would have

challenged their distorted desires, informed their thinking and shaped their character.

To be hopeful that things will get better is not wishful thinking. It is connected to faith. The participants gave evidence that even if the worst happens to one who trusts and obeys the love and will of God, he/she will find that adversity and suffering are redemptive, life-giving and influential. I have seen evidence of this in the lives of Jane, Ben, Pam, Kevin, Eric, Betty, Karen and Ruth. Crisis has proved to be a turning point.

Considering that these were personal interviews and only Eric and Betty were together for this narrative research, it is convincing that the attitude of each person is so positive, even though in a few cases there was an initial “why”. Had they shared in a group and told their stories, one could doubt this conclusion, since there is a tendency to be influenced by another’s perspective and hide what may be too controversial.

How is it that these stories of crises seem so positive? Are they unrealistic? Is it expected in The Salvation Army or any church that you must present a brave face when talking about crisis, so as not to give any hint that your faith was tested and failed? Were these eight participants trying to please me so that the research project could be useful?

Any of these questions above could be answered with a yes or maybe. But experience has taught me that distance from the event makes a huge difference in how you relate your story. When you are going through the crisis, your pain is too close to the surface to speak of it in a detached way. Time does bring healing,

thanks to the Lord's work in us, but it does not change the facts. However, to re-tell the story later without the emotions that you once felt, may not capture the depth of pain experienced at the time. C.S. Lewis in his book, *Grief Observed*, illustrates this truth as he moves through his pain (Lewis 1980). The fact of his loss did not change, but his perspective did.

Continuance Findings

The table below will give a snapshot of the lessons learned and how their relationship with God and others and present ministry was impacted.

Table 5: Continuing – Findings (Literal Reading)

PARTICIPANT	LESSONS	RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD	RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS	MINISTRY
JANE	Valuable experience	Faith stronger Closer to God	More empathetic and sensitive	Encourager desire to lead group of immigrants
BEN	Need for mentoring Downward spirals aren't necessary	Has become more secure, more comfortable, more tender	Desires that his scars could be useful for those going through difficult times	Wants to have an impact on others.
KAREN	Empathetic to what people need when lonely/in pain	Very real and personal	Compassionate	A care-giver in the corps An evangelist
PAM	God is in control He is loving	Very deep, confident and resting	Compassionate	Continues in mission trips in the Caribbean
KEVIN	God continues to do wonders There is purpose	Daily dependence	Empathetic and available	One-to-one ministry Greeter Bandsman
ERIC	Consequence of choices People's pain not obvious	Reflective about Heaven and Hell	Close personal friends in the corps	Bandsman Encourager of young people in the band
BETTY	Consequence of choices People's pain not obvious	Private and personal Daily devotions important	Sensitive to others' needs	Affinity for older people in need
RUTH	Lord has a purpose We can choose how to react	Strong personal faith God is in everything	Desire to witness, and be a role model	Ministry to non-Christians Music ministry

Jane reflected on it as “definitely a very valuable experience”. Though she never expected to have such trauma in her life, or even the challenge of raising a daughter on her own, she looks back with thanksgiving. She is grateful to God “for sending angels her way” who helped her through such a difficult time. Her faith became stronger. Both with her conversion and now with the experience of Sam’s sickness and death, she finds it unfortunate that it often takes a difficult

time to get close to God and know more of his power. She changed as well. “It is because of what happened in my life that I became more empathetic and sensitive to other people’s feelings and suffering”. Jane is very involved in corps life, expressing her gifts of administration in its youth and children’s work. But she hopes one day to meet with some of the women who come to the corps, who too have been immigrants. Several are single moms. In general, her ministry attitude is, “I understand more now, what they are going through and now, I can use words from God to comfort those who are in a difficult time”.

Ben’s experience and certainly his recovery from his downward spiral have matured his faith. He is grateful for what he has learned through his experience. He is not content with superficial relationships, but wants to be available if people need someone to listen when they are working through tough issues. Ben said, “If I can use the scars that I have accumulated to prevent others from acquiring those scars, I am open”. His participation in the music school program at the corps has opened his eyes to the needs of the children that are deeper than a need to learn music. He is a strong male role model. When asked about his relationship with the Lord, he focussed on prayer and worship. Though well-read theologically, he admitted that he should spend more time in Scripture reading. His perspective on prayer was thought-provoking: “Prayer is not necessarily how many times you are on your knees. It is a state of mind. It is whatever you are doing, you are doing it with a purpose and with a direction that this is where you have been placed for the time being. It is your duty as a Christian to do it to the utmost. You are not there to be praying just in your room.

You are to be out in the world”. Ben believes that holiness teaching needs to be recaptured in The Salvation Army and that mentoring of the youth by older Christians is very much needed, along with sound teaching. He sees the failure to emphasize the doctrine of holiness as having an impact on young people who feel it is sufficient just to “show up on Sunday and feel they have a relationship with God and are fine with whatever they do after that”. For Ben, sound teaching needs to be joined with relational support.

Karen is aglow when she speaks about her relationship with God. “God is my Father. He is my best friend. He’s my Savior. He’s my everything!” From the details in the interview and her perspective on difficult times, one cannot doubt that she experiences a daily, deep relationship with the Lord. Her life is marked with compassion. “...Because I know what it is to be in pain. I know what it is to need somebody, and you feel you are all alone in the world”. “People think about big things, you know, like offering big things to people. No, people don’t need big things. It’s all the little things that matter”. She affirmed that people need to hear someone say “I love you”, “I care for you”. From what I have seen of her ministry within the corps, in her apartment building and when she is serving on The Salvation Army Christmas kettle, Karen ‘walks the talk’.

When Pam was asked about what she had learned through years of serious illness, she said, “I do believe that God is in control. Nothing has come to me that has not been filtered by his love. Maybe there has been a reason for it that I’ll never know”. She then went on to wonder if there was a purpose in the people she met in the hospital. Her relationship with the Lord is very deep and she can be

moved to tears as she relates experiences with him. Though she is well over seventy, she still goes with her husband and a group to the Caribbean on an annual or bi-annual basis to build and rebuild Army facilities in various countries. It has become a ministry and her conversation about personnel there, indicated that she is for many, a listening ear and an encourager.

No matter how tough life gets for Kevin, who is still dealing with depression and anxiety and a quality of life that could make one doubt the future, his trust in God only seems to deepen. He testifies that God is still doing wonders for him. His daily dependence is because of need. “Without him, I wouldn’t be here”. “Even if tomorrow I was to pass away, I know God has been with me every step of the way. I don’t regret where I am. I don’t regret who I am. I think God’s working in my life. He’s doing things”. Kevin’s experience has been a source of ministry to others. He did a workshop on divorce and felt that he was heard as he shared his perspective and pain. A friend who suffers from depression and anxiety finds Kevin is an encourager. Kevin chooses to come to the corps early on Sundays so he can greet people. He has a sense that he wants to be there for people no matter how difficult his personal circumstances are. He continues his ministry in the corps brass band.

Eric and Betty, though retired, are faithful in attendance at worship and in ministry at the corps. Betty spoke of her devotions and the fact that she doesn’t express her feelings readily. Eric brought up the thought of Heaven and Hell at the conclusion of the interview because of those who die living quite contrary to Christianity, while others suggest they are in Heaven. Eric said, “I often think

when I see people who have no faith. They're not religiously connected and lose someone. What are they thinking?" Basic faith in Christ was talked about. While this conversation was at the end of the interview, it was pertinent to our discussion of their granddaughter's death and her lifestyle. Yet their realism about decisions and consequences were life lessons. They both spoke about the difficulty in recognizing those who are experiencing adversity and suffering, because "we tend to turn up and then leave". Eric remarked: "You don't know who's suffering what unless it eventually blows up to some crescendo. Then it becomes obvious". "We live at arm's length". Their close circle of friends in the corps has been important in their spiritual journey, but they recognize that new people coming into the corps are sometimes not reached because of the natural divisions, i.e., band, songsters, children's ministry, etc. Eric and Betty continue to play a meaningful role in the work at Christmas, and Eric as a regular member of the corps brass band.

Ruth's response to the question about what she had learned through the crisis was, "Everything will be OK. The Lord is in everything. Everything happens for a reason. It's not some mistake". She recognized a redemptive purpose in suffering. "Even though things may happen to you, it will make you grow as a person, as a Christian. It adds to who you will become, who the Lord wants you to be or who the Lord wants you to meet, or experience, or opportunities that he will give you". Her faith in the Lord is very personal and mature. Though it was not a prepared question, I asked her about choice when it comes to dealing with adversity. In the face of those who are embittered, she asks

herself a series of questions. “Do I want to be like that? Do I want to be miserable? Do I want to flounder, not having anything stable, and just have that constant state of worrying or disbelief...”? Ruth has learned that thinking about Christianity, faith and grace makes far more sense. Ruth has valued her role models and wants to be that for others. But now in her circle of friends at medical school she has to witness among those of different faiths or no faith. She welcomes the challenge and the dialogue, and all are respectful of each other’s story. She is not ashamed to declare her faith but never does so in a threatening way. “We have actually had a few conversations about religion, surprisingly. It’s been interesting. Because we are mature enough, we are at a stage when we are not going to belittle each other’s religion at all. I try and think that I can do something or say something that may make them open their eyes a little...” Ministry in music continues for her, and her chosen profession will be another means of Christian service.

Continuance Interpretation

The journey for each of the participants continues, but now with deeper understanding of the basis of their faith and a fresh perspective on God, life and ministry. What emerges is this big picture of God. Ruth remains confident: “God is in control”. “The Lord is in everything”, Pam believes. Kevin repeatedly said: “God has a purpose”. What has been abundantly clear is that they have allowed God to be God. Though each story is an articulation of faith, there is no doubt that it is not a blind faith, a resignation to fate, or “stiff upper lip” approach to life.

Faith's object has been the gracious, powerful God who walks with them through the difficult times, deserves their worship, inspires their service and provides companions along the way.

Relationships have been vital to the whole of their story, whether it was pre-conversion, subsequent growth, crisis or present journey. Several times Scripture was quoted and certainly prayer has figured prominently, but the community of faith and even those beyond the Christian faith, have played a major role in their spiritual formation. This could be a natural consequence of being raised in a Christian environment and involved in some form of ministry that connected them with people. It could also reflect the fact that two of the questions dealt with relationships. But the truth remains that the journey shared contributed to the victory in the outcome. Intercessory prayer was another tribute to how others come alongside to help. Pam, Ruth and Kevin gave testimony to this.

Without exception, each wanted to use their experience to help others. Ben wants to come alongside anyone who is struggling. Ruth wants to be a role model. Jane desires to speak a word of comfort to those who, like her, experience pain. Pam wonders if her journey was used for others she met in the hospital. Kevin takes any opportunity to come alongside someone who suffers with anxiety and depression. Eric and Betty still want to be of help to others who find life difficult. It would be easy to conclude that they are just being Salvationists, who have been trained to serve suffering humanity. But their accounts of their journey and resultant ministry are more than "duty". Each one, after all, is a volunteer. As

Salvation Army soldiers, service may be the expectation but is not mandated. The avenues of ministry mentioned here are beyond their commitment to musical groups or attendance. What they have learned about life and faith undergirds their desire to minister, above and beyond the call of duty. Though it comes from a strong personal commitment, the social environment of dedicated engagement is very powerful as well.

One of the findings this research revealed was that those who experience adversity and suffering can come through ‘not somehow, but triumphantly’. The “more than conqueror” in all circumstances is a hallmark of Romans 8, not after the fact of the hardships but during them. I wonder if in my own heart, I was thinking more that all the pain and the residual repercussions could be left behind for good. Did I think of ‘triumphantly’ as a final conquest, healed, depression-free, all things restored? If that was in my thinking or an unspoken desire, it certainly is not what these participants have experienced or are experiencing.

For all Kevin’s great faith that God is going to do something wonderful he still is battling anxiety and depression. Pam continues to have tests. Marriages have not been restored. Jane’s husband is not coming back. Yet, these are flesh and blood people, real conquerors who are still marked by their sufferings, but somehow these have become badges of honor. This research project has taught that ‘triumphantly’ is about refusing to give up or give in. It is moving forward, believing that the worst days can actually prove, in the economy of God, to be the best days towards shaping us to be more like Christ, days when we prove his grace and he proves our faith.

The eight continue in their faith and witness, recognizing the value of their experience of suffering and adversity. Several are thankful for their experience even though it proved to be a crisis in their lives.

CHAPTER 13:

OUTCOMES

Earlier, I referenced Moschella's advice about reading the data in three ways: literal, interpretative and reflective (Moschella 2008, 172). In the previous sections, I used the findings under Conversion, Crisis and Continuance to relate to the literal reading of the interviews. The result of interpretive reading followed. My reflective reading will reveal itself in this section and in my conclusion.

In viewing the whole of this research paper based on seven interviews, the outcomes fall into three categories, those related to the participants, to me in terms of ministry and to the local congregation. I deal with the interviewees first.

I started out believing that people had stories that should be told, and in doing so they would find it beneficial and even healing. In the early part of this paper I quoted Plass and Cofield (2014), who believed that one's story needed to be shared. "An empathetic listener helps us access and expand our understanding of our emotions and thus our conscious identity" (Plass 2014, 52). I return to this quote now, since a significant outcome has been the personal benefit gained by the individuals from sharing their stories.

I would have considered this narrative research to have 'story-telling as a journey to healing' as a major finding. However, the responses on the effect of the interview came afterwards, at my request. What became most apparent was the wealth of material on stories of faith, witness and ministry. This evidence came not only from viewing the personal account from their perspective, but also by

standing back and seeing the hand of God in and through the crises—God’s grace at work.

Six of the participants have responded in writing when asked what effect the interview had on them, and how they felt afterwards. The couple have yet to respond but have made no negative comment about the experience. They have verbally expressed that they hoped it would be helpful. I quote in part the comments received:

I do not think it solved all my troubles but it helped me to sort them. I was able to move things around in my mind a bit to help myself. I think it is a good thing to go through for someone like me who tends to be a thinker and is willing to share. Being able to read it later really helped. I was able to hear myself talking without thinking of my next statement. I value that very much (Kevin).

Prior to the interview, I had not really sat down to discuss my past. The interview was conducted so smoothly that I was able to reflect on the way things happened in my life and I saw that everything worked together for good. Like in 1 Thess 5:18, “give thanks in all circumstances for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (Karen).

I think my honest answer would be that it was a relief to have it over since I do not enjoy talking about myself. But it was good to think again, about how God’s grace and mercy took me, and those I love, through all these circumstances, and I have to say that God is always good. We did experience His presence and help through all these circumstances. And even if the outcomes had not been as good as they were, God is still good (Pam).

At the beginning, I thought it would be a painful journey to go through, but in fact, it has been an opportunity for me to reflect and to see how God guides me and uses me today in different areas at work and at the corps. If not, because of my past, I would not have been able to help others at present. When it (the interview) was over, I found peace and love in my heart. I am thankful for the opportunity (Jane).

As for the interview, I felt great afterwards. It is always nice to revisit and re-evaluate what the event did for my life. I always feel I gain something new whenever I speak to people about it. Your use of open-ended

questions helped lead the interview and allowed my ramblings and thoughts to flow more naturally (Ruth).

I thought it (the interview) was quite a natural occasion to talk about myself. There was no pressure to answer if I didn't feel like it, and it was a good opportunity to re-evaluate and reaffirm some of the stances I already had (Ben).

It was interesting that Kevin chose to show his mom and sister the whole of the transcript. His freedom in sharing and satisfaction in doing so is apparent. His mother spoke to me with gratitude about the interview. Though aware of all Kevin's crises, she affirmed that in spite of it all, "he is a good guy".

Pam's humility is moving. It came across in the interview as well as in her admission that she doesn't like to talk about herself. But the fact that the interview gave her an opportunity to reflect on the goodness of God and those who travelled the difficult journey with her, proved the value of this narrative research.

For Karen, Jane and Pam, the interview was an opportunity for reflection as well. However, Jane's personality seemed more reserved when sharing in person than in her comments above. The fact that Ben found it to be a natural occasion with no pressure was a special response. Obviously, our age and gender difference did not inhibit him at all.

With further regards to the interviews, there emerged undeniable evidence of God's grace and the faith of those who participated. Using Tim Sensing's *Taking Note* (Sensing 2011, 190-193), I reviewed each interview for a theological analysis. He asks: "What theological doctrine, problem, question, principle, issue, etc. is demonstrated or suggested in the verbatim" (Sensing 2011, 192). Key words for my review and research were 'demonstrated' or 'suggested'. Besides

the doctrines of God, the Incarnation, the Crucifixion and Resurrection, which I related earlier as likened to the God who suffers and emerges victorious, the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the doctrine of sin emerged.

At times the doctrines were referred to literally by the participants. Ben spoke of sin in terms of downward spiral. An awakening for Kevin came when in a Bible study, John 5:19 gave him a whole new perspective: “The Son can do nothing by himself; he can only do what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does, the Son also does”. “Out of nowhere that verse opened my eyes to a whole new world”, said Kevin. He saw this verse as showing that God in Christ experienced the suffering of the Cross. This was for him reassurance that God was not seeing him from afar but understood his suffering. Pam had a very special spiritual encounter and concluded, “It was the Presence of the Holy Spirit”. Whether the theology of each participant was articulated or not, I perceived that their faith-journey demonstrated that they were confident in the God who understands, cares and guides.

As I reflected on each interview with this theological analysis in mind—the more reflection, the deeper the gratitude. The doctrines point to the theology of grace. Grace cannot be quantified in these interviews, but this undeserved favor of God breathes through each story. It is a grand salvation story. These encounters with the participants were not theological discussions, but the deep truths of God were unmistakable. These people experienced salvation, yet they had to battle against any temptation to be defeated by their circumstances. Christlikeness as the goal of spiritual formation requires this perseverance and trust. The God they

spoke about as being in control, this Sovereign Lord, journeyed with them. Their faith was tested, and the testing produced blessing and witness.

It would not have been surprising, if all had expressed preference for this period in their lives to be missed. But that was not the case. Kevin, reflecting on his journey through adversity and suffering, said: “I think I am a stronger Christian now than I have ever been because of the fact that I know God is with me. I know God’s got my back”. Jane testified, “My faith is stronger. I would say I am getting closer to God and prayers and reading are helping me to go through difficult moments in my life”. God’s grace is in evidence as faith is strengthened, as witnessed in Ruth’s life: “I grew so much in terms of my faith because of that accident. It kind of triggered into the thought that he is in every aspect of my life whether bad or good. The bad things are what makes you grow as a Christian. So I would not change what has happened to me”. When asked by his younger brother if he wished that his parents had never divorced, Ben responded, “Part of me says yes ...but I don’t think I would be as strong or independent a person if it did not happen. The same with my faith and my walk—if it didn’t happen and cause me to lead myself into utter despair and destruction, I don’t think I would be as strong and able to withstand things”. Each person interviewed, having experienced God’s redeeming and sustaining grace would be authentic witnesses to the truth of James 1:2-4:

When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives, my brothers (sisters), don’t resent them as intruders. Welcome them as friends. Realize that they have come to test your faith and produce in you the quality of endurance. But let the process go on until that endurance is

fully developed, and you will find you have become men (women) of mature character with the right sort of independence (J.B. Phillips).

Though each participant has been actively serving the Lord in and beyond the corps, their stories reveal a greater desire to use their experience in sensitive, compassionate ministry for others. This is not sheer activism or busyness, or the result of a duty-complex. This life experience gave them wisdom and a desire for compassionate, dedicated service for others.

In terms of the outcome of this research as it relates to my ministry, I have a renewed desire to engage with people and listen to how God has been working in their lives. I will continue this ministry personally as I plan to visit seniors in our corps, volunteer for visitation at the Holland Christian Retirement Home and serve in a part-time chaplaincy role at The Salvation Army Family Resource Centre in Brampton. This center is for women and children coming from homes of violence. My prayer is to provide compassionate listening and encouragement.

The Lord has opened a door for ministry at a camp this summer. Ben's conversation on the need for holiness teaching has motivated me. Holiness will be the essence of my sessions, but within the context of spiritual formation with its goal of Christlikeness. With other teaching opportunities, I will prepare Bible studies on the subject of adversity and suffering using Bible characters as Timothy Keller did, and finding relevant examples of Christians who have a story that should be heard. If one or more of those interviewed were willing for me to write a brief account of their story to include with such a study, it would be

meaningful to those in the group. If they would choose to share that story in person, better still.

The challenge that mentoring is needed was an important outcome for me. Ben spoke of the camaraderie among the young people but admitted: “There is a weak spot. There aren’t those cross-connections which are so important. There needs to be connections through the generations”. In referring to programs he had known, he said: “There isn’t really the same one-to-one mentoring and there needs to be more of that”. Though reluctant before to engage in mentoring, I have now committed to being a mentor for officers or soldiers, who would like someone to journey with them spiritually. In concert with this one-to-one concern, the ministry of intercession has become a priority for me. When we listen with our heart to people who have suffered life’s reversals, intercessory prayer seems to be an action that God calls us to.

The outcomes of this research project will hopefully impact The Salvation Army corps I presently attend. As a retired Salvation Army officer, my authority in the corps is by influence alone. In reporting my findings to the leadership team on the whole subject of adversity and suffering, I have already been given an indication that a plan will be put in place for a preaching and teaching series on the subject. The corps officer offered to do a series before I began the project, but I suggested he wait until I had finished.

Though the leaders will not be privy to the personal details of those who shared their stories, my emphasis on their importance will recommend three ways in which we better can hear how grace and faith are evidenced in personal

journeys: a revival of the testimony period or at least one personal witness in each morning service; a monthly article as an insert in the Sunday morning bulletin on “my journey with Jesus”; and a renewed focus on pastoral visitation.

With regards to the latter, it will hopefully become a priority of ministry for our corps officer, but also extend to a concerted effort to revive the ‘shepherding program’ involving a group with specific responsibilities for pastoral care. Personal, regular contact is possible through electronic means, telephone calls and notes. These along with face-to-face visits will witness to the corps being a caring community, and underscore the truth that the community of faith is integral to the nurturing of its people.

When reporting back to the leadership team, I would quote responses from participants (without names) to the interviews, especially Ruth’s, as having the open-ended questions beforehand helped her organize her thoughts. For those who find personal visitation difficult, questions to be covered beforehand may be an aid, for it would remove the stress of having to be the ‘expert’ and emphasize that the role of the visitor is to be the listener.

CHAPTER 14:

CONCLUSION

For this project, I interviewed eight people in order to determine how their faith, witness and ministry were affected by the experiences of adversity and suffering in their lives. Overall, I found that these stories underscored the deepening of faith that results when the journey is taken with God, when his presence is recognized in their personal journey and spiritual disciplines, and in the compassionate service of a congregation. I have been impacted by their honesty and journeys. But I believe the value of their testimonies will have a far-reaching effect.

I had hoped that the interviews would be a helpful and even a healing intervention for those who participated. But I have also been a recipient of their ministry. Their stories continue to stay with me and have witnessed again and again to my own heart and mind. The preparation for each interview, the work involved in transcribing, gathering additional data, dissecting, organizing, analyzing, coding, filing, formatting and writing were academic challenges that required discipline. In some ways, I entered a field foreign to me. But though seemingly unrelated to the spiritual content of the interviews, the disciplines of study, exploration and reporting have been means of grace.

Perhaps there is much more that could have come to the surface in terms of the interviews had I not been a Salvationist. More clarity would have been needed for a non-Salvationist interviewer. More questions would have been

asked. But those who shared their stories knew and I knew that we had an understanding as Salvationists. No time had to be wasted in explaining our unusual terminology. They did not have to go through what is involved when becoming a junior soldier, attending corps cadets or even what going to the Mercy Seat entails. There were assumptions throughout the interviews and a basic understanding. Yet I do wonder whether I should have been clearer in asking about spiritual disciplines, listing the personal and corporate disciplines so they could respond specifically. I wish I had asked more about what specific Scripture and what songs were important to them in the crises. Though some were mentioned, it is undeniably true that the Lord uses his Word, whether in Scripture passages or texts or in songs, to reassure and comfort in times of difficulty.

In a few cases, like Eric, Betty and Ben, more discussion could have taken place regarding their personal relationship with the Lord. Their dedication as Salvationists is not in question, but they need the sacred space to talk about their personal experience at a heart level. I am not sure whether there was time enough given to explore this, as I had committed in the ethics and consent form to a one-two hour interview. The three categories of conversion, crisis, and continuance had questions within them and to honor the interviewees, I felt that they had to be given time to answer these fully.

The cultural aspects were touched on in the interview with Ruth and Karen but with Eric and Betty, I surmised some of their reluctance to get too personal was a sign of their British upbringing and even their age. Betty hinted at not being given to tears, and Eric mentioned soldiering on when things are tough. Jane too

is very reserved, private. Is this an aspect of Asian culture or is it just that most of us tend to keep things to ourselves or share only with the most intimate friends? I continue to wonder how much is culture, age differences, personality, or the era in which we live.

The most difficult prospect is that we do not share our stories in church because it is not considered a safe place where empathy and trust can be expected. Philip Yancey in his book *Vanishing Grace* shares scathing indictments by the world of the evangelical church, a place that is not known for dispensing grace (Yancey 2014). But it is not only the outsider who experiences some churches as judgemental, seen as “a legion of moral police determined to impose their notion of right behavior on others” (Yancey 2014, 16). Ann Graham Lotz called her book, *Wounded by God’s People* (Graham Lotz 2013), because her deepest wounds were inflicted by the religious. When a church has rules and regulations, confession is difficult if belonging is important. To share one’s story, especially one that may encounter judgement, may threaten the security of being part of the fellowship. So we tend to keep our secrets and pain to ourselves.

Exclusion takes place in congregations as well when we separate into age groups, interest groups and even cultural groups. All these groupings have been put in place with the best motivation but unfortunately, what were supposed to be bridges into the wider church community became walls separating us. I am wrestling with what can be done for those who are not given a voice, if they truly want to share their heartache and be heard.

These interviews have been only a starting point. Wonderful stories of grace and faith have been told. But ministry to me means there must be further contact. These people cannot think that my only interest in hearing them was to write a paper to complete a degree. Even if no personal visits transpire, I am compelled to be an intercessor now that I have shared a meaningful part of their lives. There are a couple I am truly concerned about because there is still pain. Further contact will be made. Prayer on their behalf will be a ministry.

Before commencing the interviews, I had hoped to show that suffering is a means of grace, and not just an unwelcome interruption in an otherwise blessed life. These interviews have verified that adversity is used by God in the shaping of the Christian. But suffering is only one of the means through which God spiritually forms us. However, I suspect that it is one of the most effective means. Robert Mulholland defines spiritual formation as “a process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others” (Mulholland 1993, 25). He entitled his book, *Invitation to a Journey*. Those I encountered in this research are certainly people on a journey; Christians who are engaged in the process of becoming more like Jesus; Salvationists committed to selfless service.

However, keeping faith with each account required me to view the many facets of grace—the grace of salvation, grace in the provision of spiritual gifts and disciplines, grace of community, the grace of calling and service. Paul the Apostle’s broad sweep of grace confirms why it is amazing: “And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work” (2 Cor. 9:8). It now has personal

implications. It is not the intention to dissect this verse and illustrate how each phrase has a specific application to each individual interviewed, but each story has grace written all over it.

Having studied spiritual formation for the past three years, I have been struck by the insistence of authors of our texts that the community of God's people is necessary for our maturing in our Christian faith. There is an interdependence that is crucial for the development. Paul's use of the body (1 Cor. 12) is the best example of this. God uses his people in a mutuality which edifies others, comforts and challenges. This in no way undermines the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the individual heart, but rather exemplifies how our gracious, Triune God still comes to us in flesh. No one in a congregation should walk alone when they are going through deep valleys. If we show we care for each other when times are good, then people can count on us to be with them when times are difficult. Salvation Army song writer John Gowans captured the truth that God addresses our pain through the ministry of others:

Do you sometimes feel that no one truly knows you,
And that no one understands or really cares?
Through his people, God himself is close beside you,
And through them he plans to answer all your prayers.

Someone cares, someone cares,
Someone knows your deepest needs, your burden shares;
Someone cares, someone cares,
God himself will hear the whisper of your prayers.

Ours is not a distant God, remote, unfeeling,
Who is careless of your loneliness and pain,
Through the ministry of men he gives his healing,
In their dedicated hands brings hope again.
(SASB 1986, 238)

These accounts of adversity and suffering in the lives of eight Salvationists underscore the themes of grace and faith as seen in the essay of A.W. Tozer and in the model of spiritual formation in the Salvation Army. In the context of this wider community of faith, my story is now told. Seen *through the lens of grace*, it is a personal account of spiritual formation that has required a faith response, not just in a specific period of time but in the present as well.

PART IV

**SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY:
THROUGH THE LENS OF GRACE**

All my days and all my hours
All my will and all my powers,
All the passion of my soul,
Not a fragment but the whole
Shall be thine, dear Lord,
Shall be thine, dear Lord.
(Edward Henry Joy
SASB 1986 chorus 32)

One of my close friends, a colleague from Australia, counselled me to write my spiritual autobiography as a positive story. He wrote:

Write your true story Linda... Write about how you got to love Jesus so much, how you learnt to work in the power of the Holy Spirit, how the word shaped your life, how you learnt to minister, how you learnt to pray, how you learnt to make friends so well, how you can have fun, how you practiced integrity in leadership, how you practiced courage.

It was a word of affirmation as well as sound advice. These aspects will undoubtedly be covered as I describe my life and ministry as a spiritual journey. I write this looking *through the lens of grace*.

For many years now, I have been aware of the amazing grace of God. From a human standpoint it is illogical, for if we could understand it, it wouldn't be grace. But to consider 'grace' from the Father's perspective makes sense, for he is a gracious God in every way, revealing himself to us, blessing us on a daily basis, saving us in spite of the depth or the extent of our sin and using us in ways we could never have imagined. His relentless pursuit of relationship with unfailing and unconditional love includes my life story. This story I am sharing is for his glory, the glory of his grace. With Charles Wesley, I offer this superlative response:

How shall I thank thee for the grace
On me and all mankind bestowed?
O that my every breath were praise!
O that my heart was filled with God!
My heart would then with love o'erflow,
And all my life thy glory show!
(Wesley in Weatherhead 1979, 259)

For nineteen years, I have journaled as part of my spiritual disciplines. Having read Augustine's *Confessions* many years ago, I determined to write my

daily musings as prayers. They have reflected the fact that the Bible and The Salvation Army song book have been integral to my spiritual formation and a major source of dialogue between the Lord and me. Therefore, each chapter will include as part of the heading an appropriate Bible verse and conclude with a song of grace.

This life story is neither strictly chronological nor complete. The chapter headings are life themes. A closing chapter is yet to be written some day in the future, and I anticipate that it will be my further tribute of praise to God.

CHAPTER 15:
DEFINING BACKGROUND

For you created my inmost being;
You knit me together in my mother's womb.
Your eyes saw my unformed body;
All the days ordained for me were written in your book
Before one of them came to be.
(Ps 139:1, 16 NIV)

Home Life

I was born in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, in an area called New Aberdeen. It was a coal mining community. The coal company houses, what would now be called duplexes, were mostly painted in dark colours thanks to the prevalence of coal dust. I don't recall many flower gardens or lush rolling hills. It was not a pretty community. The mines were dangerous and work was spasmodic. Thus accidents and poverty were common. Families were large. I was the last of thirteen children. Two died as babies, and eleven of us (plus our parents) squeezed into the three-bedroom house. When I came along, my oldest sister was married with a child and for a time they lived in the front room of our house. Growing up, space was a luxury I didn't know about. That's just how it was. It was not the house that made it a home. It was the family. But older siblings were moving out so memories of each one in particular were few. It was years later, when I connected with them as an adult, that I realized how precious each one was, how different in so many ways, but how the family values marked all our

lives. In fact, it has been their recollections that have informed me of so much of my family background.

My mother was born in Coventry, England, the child of a maid who got pregnant by the lord of the estate. Years later, when living in England, I tried to trace the accuracy of this, but because she was adopted with no official papers required at the time, and her name had been changed, no conclusive evidence could be found. However, aspects were discovered in the process which gave every indication that this was not a fanciful tale. I was able to visit the Stoneleigh Abbey estate three times, where my mother was born. It was a far cry from our company house in New Aberdeen.

My mother was adopted into the Cooling family. My grandparents had one child of their own, and besides my mother, later adopted four other children. I think my mother was the least favored by my grandmother and was marked by feelings of insecurity. The Cooling family moved from England to Nova Scotia, and my grandfather worked in a mine for a period. At the time my mother was eighteen years of age and pregnant. A meaningful relationship had to be left behind in her country of birth. She had loved the English countryside, yet never returned. With her bright mind and personality, she could have excelled in any field.

It would be easy to draw the contrasts with a coal mining town, large family, poverty and little opportunity for education, but God's hand was on her life. She met my father whose love for her was the storybook kind. And there's not one of her children who would want any other mother. Though raised an

Anglican, my mother met the Lord in a personal way in her kitchen. She became a Salvationist since The Salvation Army was my father's church home.

My earliest memory of my father was of his gentleness. He worked at the coal mine. He belonged to a Salvation Army family though he did not attend. No doubt all of my siblings would agree that he spoiled us and was no disciplinarian. He certainly wasn't perfect. He was a heavy smoker. And he could swear!

One Sunday night, for some reason, he decided to attend the Army. When the appeal was given for sinners to come forward to the Mercy Seat, my father responded. The smoking habit, the swearing, all were swept away. But it was more than resolve or reform. My father was transformed. He used to love the song, "At the Cross Where I First saw the Light" (SASB 1986, 395) and I know why. Something happened that night that changed his life forever and impacted our family as well. Though I was not at the meeting that Sunday night, I do recall the rejoicing when my parents came home and the prayer time of thanksgiving we held for his salvation.

But I am getting ahead of myself. My story started years before this. My father was forty-eight years old and my mother was forty-one when I was born. They were old enough to be my grandparents. My mother told me later that this was a difficult time in her life. At the time of my arrival she was in the throes of a nervous breakdown. To make matters worse, the doctor did not arrive for the delivery so the nurse on duty did the honor. My mother was so grateful to her that she named me after her, Christene.

My older sister Audrey has filled me in on one of the details following the birth. With my mother unwell, and my siblings not wanting another mouth to feed, my father complained that I was being neglected. So they struck a deal. They would pay me some attention if they could call me Linda instead of Christene. He agreed. You see, in our neighbourhood ‘Christene’ may have been considered too prissy. Yet I love the name and its meaning and wish it had stuck.

I have often wondered if this lack of bonding with my mother during this time caused the insecurity I have wrestled with. It would be easy to point to this and use it for sympathy. But I cannot do that, because the Lord himself recently interpreted my pre-birth and birth in a way that I can only see as grace. Psalm 139 has erased any thought of negativity surrounding my birth and earliest years. For me the idea of being “knit together in my mother’s womb” (Ps 139:13) was life-changing. I had often focused on the fact that God was my creator, but it is now the fact of “my mother’s womb” that gripped me. It was no accident that Winnie Bond should be my mother. He chose her for me and for my siblings. And we have her DNA. Newfoundlanders have a wonderful expression: “What’s in the cat comes out in the kitten”. I am undoubtedly my mother’s child. For years, I focussed on those qualities of my mother that I wish I did not have, but now *through the lens of grace* I am so grateful that her stamp is on me.

My relationship with my parents brings back specific memories which tell something of how my personality and view of life were shaped. My mother encouraged me to be an idealist in terms of being guided by higher values. She expected me to think for myself and to share my views. Yet I do recall her saying

to me one day that she should have packed me a suitcase when I was three years old and let me go off by myself since I was too independent. Perhaps I was and while this has had its negative aspects, it was also helpful to me as a single woman officer, living alone, at times stationed alone and frequently travelling alone.

One of the most sentimental memories I have of my father was when he scolded me for something. As I mentioned earlier, he was so gentle and to have him rebuke me was unusual. As a stubborn child, I ran upstairs and sat on the floor behind the door in the middle bedroom. I had determined not to come down until he came to me. And sure enough, not long after, I heard the stairs of our old company house squeak and I knew it was my father. He used to call me 'Lucky' and knelt down beside me, dried my eyes with his red polka dot handkerchief and gave me money to buy myself a bottle of pop. In some ways he did all the wrong things. I should have been made to apologize, to respect him and to behave. I deserved discipline. Later in speaking of the grace of God, I used this story because so often God has sought me out, dried my tears and given me gifts when in truth, I deserved rebuke and punishment. Grace to me is always lavish. I saw it lived out in my father.

I went to high school in the town of Glace Bay. It was unlike our community school where most of us came from the same setting. Now I was aware that my new circle of friends had younger parents. They also had nicer homes and even a car. I am ashamed to even write it but I was embarrassed. If Heaven allows for apologies, I have several to make to my parents.

Many of my early family memories are of relationships, laughter, politics and strange characters. With a large family and lots of nieces and nephews, several around my own age, and plenty of kids in the neighbourhood, our childhood was good. The Atlantic Ocean was just a couple of blocks away and we spent summers at the shore when we weren't at the Army, or playing baseball. It was a safer time then. Our parents did not join us or take us to school when we were children. Brothers and sisters took care of each other. We didn't have a car so holidays far from home were out of the question in those early years. Two big annual excursions for us were our holidays—a day picking blueberries with our father and a day at the Sunday School picnic. I don't ever recall feeling cheated because of this.

Easterners are story-tellers. Ours in many ways is an oral tradition. I recall my oldest sister dropping in on the way home from the Army and we would gather together laughing at stories and jokes. Some of these stories were so repetitious that we could all tell them in detail but we would laugh as though we heard each one for the first time. Those of us left still rehearse the tales and have passed them on to successive generations. It was not just frivolous laughter. It was joy.

I was the last to leave home. In reflection now, I wonder how my parents felt. All but one of their brood had moved away leaving them in their senior years to depend on visits and phone calls. My sister Audrey and her large family lived nearby but the rest of us lived in Ontario, British Columbia or Winnipeg. They knew we wouldn't find employment or pursue a career in Glace Bay. Back then

we, like other young adults we knew, had to go away even if we hoped we would find our way back someday. But there is an excitement in youth when you are longing to break free of parental control and find your way in life. Then there was no talk of the ‘empty nest’ syndrome so how the parents felt was not a topic of discussion. But now I see the sacrifice they made and wish I had been more sensitive. It’s easy to take the people closest to you for granted.

In recent years, there have been many opportunities to visit my siblings and their families. Yes, there are the memories that are a major part of an evening’s conversation. More significant to me is seeing the very special qualities in my brothers and sisters that I would not have noticed because I had only seen them through a child’s eyes. I have learned to see them as role models. One of my sisters raised ten children, another eight and to see their ability to organize a household, manage finances to the penny and be so witty and wise, made me realize I had a lot to learn. Several of my siblings have battled cancer, mourned the loss of their spouse or children but their grit, their refusal to feel sorry for themselves, keeping going even when it hurt, made more than a subconscious impact on my life. They would not have framed the lessons they taught me with Scripture references but they lived with courage and perseverance. So often when we think of spiritual formation, we think of those within the local and wider church, but for me, my family have been some of my best teachers.

Political discussion was common in my home. Coal miners and the Labor Party were synonymous to me. My mother was at the center of the heated debates. What was amusing was the fact that the group that gathered all held the labor

point of view. To put their opinion on the table, they had to talk over someone else to get a word in edgewise. What became very clear to me from their discussions was that the rich and powerful were enjoying the good life while the miners were struggling to get by. My mother expected us to be informed and interested when it came to politics and ever since, political drama still fascinates me.

But it was not just political types that came to our home. Though my father did not drink alcohol, it was surprising how many unusual characters used to visit, sometimes very drunk, but my dad was extremely tolerant. They all seemed to have nicknames, like ‘Tom the Cat’, ‘Danny the Goat’ or ‘Danny the Dancer’. One of my early memories is of sitting on the table entertaining them with jokes or listening to one of them recite his regrets and sing tearfully, “Shall you, shall I meet Jesus by and by”?

I see all this now *through the lens of grace*. These experiences of laughter, concern for the marginalized or being at ease with the drunkard, developed in me relational skills that eventually became ministry assets. It is more than my own personality that makes me feel at home in so many settings, with different people of different ages and different ideas. It was like that in our home life.

Salvation Army Corps Life

For a time, neither of my parents were church attenders. However, my oldest sister, Erva, fell in love with the Army when she was a child. It never wavered. In later years, she took on youth leadership roles in the New Aberdeen

Corps (church). She was the YPSM (young people's sergeant-major). She had overall responsibility for every youth program but led most of them herself, as singing company leader, girl guide captain, assistant brown owl, young people's legion leader and what would later be called junior soldier sergeant. As a result, her children and her siblings came under her direct influence. It was taken for granted that we would be involved in every youth program. Quitting was not an option. If you joined, you stayed in for the long haul.

At seven years of age I became a junior soldier promising to love God, read the Bible, pray and help others to follow him and abstain from harmful habits. It was a deep commitment for a child but it was put in such simple language that it was clearly understood. At fourteen years of age I was enrolled as a senior soldier with similar desires expressed and commitments made but now more thoroughly outlined. But my desire to be a senior soldier was not at all 'spiritual'. Of all the youth programming, it was the brass band that captured me. I remember sitting in the congregation and looking up at the platform as the senior band played. I wanted desperately to be fourteen, old enough to be a senior soldier and qualify to play in the senior band.

One of my vivid memories is being invited to play with the men before I was fourteen. It was Christmas Day and a small group of us serenaded around the community. I was delighted. They must have needed a cornet player that day. But I was cold, very, very cold but would not give in or let them know. When I finally got home, my mother was cooking the Christmas dinner and I sat on a chair beside the stove crying because my hands were thawing and I was in pain.

Persevering despite pain would have made her proud of me, I think. After all, she was British.

On reflection, these experiences in childhood and youth were perhaps the most significant in learning what it meant to be a committed Salvationist. We learned to pray, testify, sing, play solos and even give brief messages in public as children. Later on, when I went to train to be an officer, there was no ministry skill in the field training program (ministry practicum) that I had not learned in my youth in my home corps.

Faith development was a priority. I never doubted that the gospel was central to the Army's worship and service. As children we attended 'directory' class. It was our catechism, the time for us to learn the basics, the foundations of the Christian faith. The only Sunday School teacher I remember, Mrs. Ash, seemed old and quaint and read the lesson from a little red manual. I doubt if there were activity books or creative modules. But somehow we learned the Bible. Every quarter there was a decision Sunday. There would be a pointed message and then a call to kneel at the Mercy Seat in response. Getting saved and keeping saved were necessities. In our teen years there was a corps cadet program which involved both Bible studies and practical service. Looking back, most of us who went through the Bible study would admit we were spoon-fed the answers to the questions but agree that something significant took place as we connected Bible teaching with our service in and through the corps.

The Salvation Army's identity, mission and doctrines shaped our worship. Our Salvation Army song book fulfilled what John and Charles Wesley had

intended, and that was to sing our theology in common language. I never realized how effective this was until later when in formal theological studies, some of the deep doctrines were familiar. The light turned on. I knew them because I sang them all my life thanks to song writers within and beyond The Salvation Army, who expressed biblical truths in poetry and gave melody to our beliefs. Everything reinforced our faith and practice. Our symbols, slogans and uniforms were clear reminders of who we were as the people of God and what we must do in living out our faith.

I thought there was nothing like The Salvation Army. My school friends in my teen years were from the Jewish faith and from other Christian denominations, yet it never crossed my mind to pay regular visits to the synagogue or churches, let alone leave the Army to join theirs. Perhaps then, family affiliation was a determining factor and to change one relationship could affect the other. It took many years before I realized the richness of other Christian traditions and how sharing together broadens our perspective, deepens our faith and even gives a more realistic appreciation of our own expression of church.

Like many Christians who have been raised in the church, we love to hear conversion accounts of those who came to Christ later in life, often after shipwrecked lives. They can recount every detail, the circumstances, the day, the date and sometimes, the time. Their ‘before and after’ stories are dramatic. Placing our own ‘growing up in the faith’ experiences beside these, we wondered whether we were really saved. Again, viewing it all *through the lens of grace*, draws out some precious truths. What a privilege to have been raised in a

Christian family. What a privilege to come under the influence of godly people who passed on the faith. What a privilege to hear the gospel as a child. I thank God that The Salvation Army never wavered from preaching Christ, from believing in a personal experience of salvation and a calling to, and empowerment for holy living.

Memory is very selective and sometimes, what plays in our heads communicates a message that is not helpful. The more we play the tape, the more we begin to believe it to be the whole truth, when in fact it may have been a one-off comment. But there are other memories, mental photographs that shape you. I remember our bandmaster leading our band as we played, “O the peace my Saviour gives, Peace I never knew before” (SASB 1986, 549). This time, he closed his eyes as we played as though somehow this song was very significant to him. Sam Smith was not just there to teach us to play a brass instrument. He was there to lead people in this experience. Harry Maidment would not have realized the impact of his testimony. He played bass (tuba) in the band. He always seemed to be an old man but perhaps he was no older than I am now, if that. He would stand beside his gleaming instrument and in his gentle voice, give his testimony. Though I may have wondered about the authenticity of the testimony of others, Harry’s seemed so credible. He was so godly.

My mental photograph album also sees my sister Erva, the YPSM, standing to the left of the Mercy Seat. It was Junior Soldier’s Day of Renewal, an annual occasion for the re-signing of our pledge. I remember kneeling as my sister sang, “I Renew My Covenant with Thee”. That song is a very adult song. It starts

out, “When from sin’s dark hold Thy love had won me”, which immediately conjures up wasted years and concludes with the chorus, “By the love that never ceased to hold me...I renew my covenant with Thee” (SASB 1986, 534). Now why would that image lodge in my mind? Why did this adult song mean so much to a child? Later on, we would sing it at officers’ councils where it seemed far more appropriate. But I understood it that day. I knew that re-signing my pledge was saying ‘yes’ once again to Jesus. Perhaps we spend too much time trying to be age-sensitive when the Holy Spirit can take what seems obtuse to a child and translate it. That is grace!

So I knew the Lord in a personal way and was as active as any child or youth could be in their local congregation. But what would I do when I finished high school? What would I pursue in education? What profession would I give my life to? As ‘Army’ as I was, I was resolute about one thing, not officership!

Master, speak: and make me ready,
When thy voice is truly heard,
With obedience glad and steady
Still to follow every word.
I am listening Lord, for thee;
Master speak: O speak to me!
(Frances Ridley Havergal
SASB 1986, 614)

CHAPTER 16:
DEFINITE CALLING

I never set up to be a preacher,
Never had plans to be a preacher.
Then God called me off the farm and said,
'Go preach to my people Israel'.
(Amos 7:14-15 The Message)

Discovering God's Will

On Sunday morning, our brass band did not sit on the platform as we did in the evening meeting, but below, just in front of the Mercy Seat. I sat in the cornet section in front of the platform, facing the left side of the hall so the poster on the left-hand wall was always in view. It was a candidate poster, visually confronting us with God's call to be an officer, showing a young Salvationist responding. Consciously it had no power of persuasion on me but subconsciously, it refused to let me ignore the possibility. 'Calling' in our corps was seen in the narrowest terms, officership. Years later I realized that 'the call' in biblical terms was much broader. Whatever it is to or for is always in the context of the first call and that is to belong to the Lord, to follow him. But the call to officership was emphasized in our corps, in our divisional youth events and certainly on the special Sunday called Candidates Sunday. It wasn't that I was against officership. I just thought one of my sisters fit the profile better than I did. It was great for others but not for me.

My mother mentioned being an officer to me. I did not respond charitably but said that if God wanted me to be an officer, he would call me himself. I was naïve. God uses many means to get through to us and not the least those closest to us. Even the corps officer mentioned it but it still did not register as a viable option. One weekend the candidates' secretary (territorial recruitment officer) was our special guest at the corps and in the afternoon our officer arranged for him to interview me. I was dumbfounded and not a little annoyed. Why me? I responded to him as I did to my mother. If God wants me, he will call me. The Lord is patient with our refusal to hear him through others.

Yet high school was coming to an end. I was eighteen years old and the group I hung around with were setting their sights on nursing, teaching, etc. Loving sports, I was excited with the idea of being a physical education teacher. I had settled it, I thought, but deep down I had no sense that this was the right path. In desperation, I prayed for the Lord to show me what I ought to do and even added at the end, "even if it means being a Salvation Army officer". I just knew that whatever profession I entered, I needed to do so with the assurance that it was what God intended. One night I was doing my homework at the dining room table. I don't think I was even reflecting on my future when out of the blue God called me. No voice or vision but in the briefest moment of time I knew I must be an officer. To this day, I have never had a second's doubt that this was God's will for my life. It was what I was born to do.

There was little work in Glace Bay and I needed to save for training college so I left for Winnipeg to live with my sister, her husband and their eight

children. Several of my family members had moved west and were linked to the St. James Corps. The two years spent there were significant in many ways. Corps life was exceptional and there were many young adults so the youth fellowship was a dream come true. It was an opportunity to date some Army guys and though one became a more serious relationship than I anticipated, it came to an end when I left for training college. Officers had to marry officers and my calling was so real I had to fulfil it.

During those two years I worked in a factory in Winnipeg to save money for college and while it was not ideal, it did show me a slice of life I had never encountered. People's lifestyles were radically different from the church-going friends I had. But thankfully, during my two years of training I was given more opportunities to meet people at various levels of society outside the church, and especially the marginalized. The training program left me with no doubt that to be an officer not only meant serving the local congregation but representing The Salvation Army in the community. It meant touching the lives of those who needed care and assistance the most. Even as I recall some of those experiences, I can only do so *through the lens of grace*. Nothing is wasted with the Lord. It now seems like each thing, though valuable in itself, was preparation for the day when I would be commissioned as an officer. I would move into corps and community life with a covenant that called me to proclaim the gospel and make their salvation the chief aim of my life. It was a gospel proclamation that would be both in word and deed.

Corps Officership

Salvation Army officers are appointed. On the platform of Massey Hall in Toronto, in June 1969, in the presence of 3000 Salvationists, I was commissioned a lieutenant and appointed to Nipawin, Saskatchewan as an assistant officer. It was the first time I heard of the place. In those days, appointments, especially for single officers, were not very long. In the first nine years of my officership, I had five appointments, four of them in charge, sharing accommodation with nine single women during that period. At first, I think I was easy to live with, having come from a large family and having lived with my sister, her husband and their children before training college. Even the residential environment of the training college was easy.

But as time went on in my appointments, I increasingly found it difficult. Working together with so many different personalities, while living together, had its challenges. Perhaps it brought out aspects of my character that surprised me. I was gregarious in public as one assistant officer observed, but quiet at home, maybe even sullen. I came to resent the fact that we not only had to share ministry and live together but there was the unspoken expectation from corps members that we would socialize as well. No doubt they thought that would make sense, since we were both away from family and shared so many things in common. In those days, the Army appointed singles together without conferring with them or possibly even considering the personality or gift mix. When I did live alone years later, sometimes people would feel sorry for me and wonder if I got lonely. Little did they know that I had learned to love my private space. While still engaged

socially as an extrovert, silence and solitude were disciplines that became increasingly more important to me.

My corps appointments in those nine years were in Saskatchewan (twice), Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia. After nine years away from corps in other appointments, I asked to return to congregational ministry and was appointed to the Kitchener Corps (ON), living alone but with a married officer couple to assist me.

So much could be written about each appointment, the wonderful people I served and worked with and the specific lessons learned through successes and failures. As I tell my story, some of those life lessons will emerge. When I came to the end of serving in corps appointments, I was able to reflect on the priorities of ministry. For me, they were preaching, teaching and visitation. My home and corps environment had put me on a path for public speaking. In my home, expressing an opinion in the company of others was expected, as was being involved in platform ministry at the corps. In one of my earliest appointments, I discovered the joy of leading Bible studies. The group was small and my knowledge limited, but thanks to the adult lessons in the Scripture Press material and its direction for teaching, I learned more about the Word and how to communicate it.

In the early days of corps officership, it was an Army requirement that I devote eighteen hours weekly to visitation, besides attending the weekday programs and Sunday ministry. I did my best to meet the standard. While my motivation was reaching goals, I learned to appreciate how important it is to meet

people face-to-face, not just a select few but everyone associated with the corps. In administrative and leadership roles later on, these were still my priorities. I used to say that I was a corps officer at heart. However, one day it dawned on me that it is not just corps officership. This is what officership involves, whatever the appointment. Every appointment during my subsequent years of service would be marked by these priorities. Whether they were the outcome of the gifts God gave me, my upbringing, or the ministry the Army expected, does not matter. What is true is that they have shaped my life.

Other Appointments

Very early in my officership, I decided that I would receive my appointments from the Lord and go when and where I was sent. Although my ‘move’ would have been decided by my leaders and my ‘marching orders’ signed by the territorial commander, there could never be an appointment where God could not and would not use me. Over the years, I have had eighteen appointments and all but two seemed the perfect fit. The other two turned out to be the best preparation for the appointments that followed.

It has been my privilege to serve on the training college staff in Toronto, ON and St. Eric’s, NF. I was also appointed as territorial secretary for candidates and students, responsible for the recruitment of candidates throughout the territory. In total, I spent eleven years dealing with young adults who were prepared to surrender everything to serve the Lord in ministry. These appointments were also team ministries with other officers and employees where

camaraderie and learning together were daily experiences. My love for the Word of God and teaching grew in these appointments.

Officership opened other doors, not necessarily doors I would have chosen, since I entered the world of administration. For many years, my spiritual gifts were in the areas most suitable to congregational ministry and the classroom. Yet after years of headquarters (administrative) appointments on divisional and territorial levels, the last gift analysis showed administration as one of my gifts. This unexpected gift confirmed for me what I had suspected, that obedience is more important than a sense of suitability. I could not refuse an appointment just because I didn't feel I had the gift. If I truly received my appointments from the Lord then 'being thrown into the deep end' would be an opportunity to learn to swim. Administrative appointments ushered me into leadership roles. Team ministry, visioning, mission-focus, serving the local corps and social expressions stretched me, but never painfully. Joy in the fulfillment of one's calling is his gift of grace.

Until 1995, my ministry was in Canada. Then an appointment to International Headquarters (IHQ) in London, England opened the door to the world. My assignment was daunting but that will be explained later. The most wonderful fruit of those years was the lifelong friendships that developed. To this day, my circle of friends is international. How graciously the Lord teaches us to see life beyond our own prejudices and borders. He brings people into our lives we come to love and trust. The mutuality of those relationships gave me a heart for the world. It was more than the diversity of friends that brought me to this

conclusion. The very nature of International Headquarters is to serve the world. As I experienced how it touched the lives of Salvationists in over one hundred countries, how could I possibly remain cloistered in my cultural comfort zone?

The International College for Officers (ICO) in London is a microcosm of the global Army. Four times a year, twenty-six officer delegates from countries around the world came for an eight-week residential course. I was a delegate in 1988 but in my appointment at IHQ, a longstanding role of teaching spiritual leadership at the ICO commenced which reinforced my global perspective.

One of the highlights of my time in England was to serve on the International Spiritual Life Commission. It was convened by the General to “review the ways in which The Salvation Army cultivates and sustains the spiritual life of its people” (Street 1999, vii). Each of our five meetings lasted for five days. There were eighteen delegates as well as corresponding members, representing the whole Army world. This was a life-changing experience. It confirmed for me our identity and mission. The ‘affirmations and calls’ that emerged from our discussions were convictions held by many of us but we had never really articulated them clearly. This sense of what it means to be The Salvation Army would never leave me and all my leadership from that point would be influenced by it. This was not just an organizational regrouping. I firmly believe the Lord was speaking into the life of the Army. Whether Army history will record it or not, this spiritual life commission was one of the most important initiatives in the history of our Movement.

When I look *through the lens of grace*, I now see the world. I am no longer a Canadian Salvationist. I am a Salvationist who happens to be a Canadian. General Evangeline Booth wrote, “The world for God. I give my heart. I will do my part” (SASB 1986, 830). It was more than an Army perspective. Bramwell Booth, the second General of the Army believed that every land was his fatherland because every land was his Father’s. Feeling at home in God’s world would be very beneficial in my final role.

After serving at International Headquarters and a brief period as divisional commander in the United Kingdom, based in Manchester, I returned to a leadership role as the chief secretary (second-in-command) in the Canada and Bermuda Territory. This is the top administrative role in a territory and I had seen myself as anything but an administrator. When the territorial commander phoned me in England to welcome me home, I acknowledged my limitations for this appointment. He dismissed my excuses and assured me that he and his wife were seasoned leaders and would be there for my support. My journal of April 18, 2001 records this prayer: “... You give the ability to rise to the challenge. Availability is my contribution. Ability is yours, given at birth, or as a spiritual gift, or as a gift for the hour. Thank you, Lord. May I never hold back from a task because I feel I don’t have the resources”.

As chief secretary, travelling around the territory was demanding but it was the best way to get to know it. Like many other Army expressions, the Canada and Bermuda Territory had its challenges, but it was a strong Army with excellent personnel, many vibrant corps and social services. This was again a

team ministry appointment, and I now realize that I learned more during those years than I ever contributed. So often, God shapes us through the lives of people as we work together for a common purpose.

It was a personal call from the General that redirected my life. The stock question put to those who have been selected to serve internationally was asked of me. “Is there any reason why you cannot serve as territorial commander of the USA Western Territory”? This is a wise way of putting it for it omits such questions as “would you like to?” or “do you want to?” There are four territories in the USA, and they had never had a woman leader since Evangeline Booth served there as national commander in the early days of the Army’s history in America. That the General believed I would rise to the challenge was very affirming. Yet, journal entries from April 2002 indicate that there were mixed emotions. I wrote on the nineteenth: “...there is nothing to fear. The secret is his presence and his will...The future promises adventure”. Then on the twenty-fifth:

Waves of fear come over me, Lord. So often of late, I say to myself, ‘I don’t want this’. The pride associated with rank and position gets swallowed up in one lowly walk from the bathroom to bed when the kid from 211-8th Street (my childhood home address) does not want this. Sometimes, I feel like a brave, courageous leader, ready to take the next hill and at other times, like the whimpering child in a fox hole”.

No doubt being single and going alone came into play.

Perhaps I wondered how a single woman territorial commander would fare. Though the Army has led the way in the ministry of women, there still remains that notion that a man and most certainly a married couple are more suitable leaders. On two occasions as a young officer, the corps to which I had

been appointed complained to headquarters. They didn't want a single woman. In one case, my appointment was changed. I came to the conclusion that men have to prove they could not lead. Women had to prove they could. There is still something in me that is saddened by this. However, it made me sensitive to other people who experience prejudice and were never given a chance because of their accent or colour or background rather than their ability. Recalling my earlier reservations about going to the USA Western Territory, there was no need to fear. The experience was rich, especially in the area of team support, godly leaders on the frontline and innovation in mission. Those years were mainly a joy. The balance of quality time with the Lord in morning devotions and the shared fellowship of the Christian community at work and through contact with friends by phone, were spiritually formative and brought personal security in Christ.

But as I returned to my journals for this spiritual autobiography, I realized how difficult 2002 was on a personal and professional level, with the deaths of my sister, a brother and a dear friend, the transition to another country and the adjustments to a different Army and national culture.

One memorable experience while living in Los Angeles was meeting Joan Kroc, the heiress of the McDonald fortune. A few years earlier, Mrs. Kroc had wanted to build a community centre in San Diego. On the advice of a friend, who was a former Mayor, she entrusted the Army with the running of the centre, a magnificent enterprise aiming to develop young people by providing first class facilities. It had an ice rink, swimming pools, fitness facilities, a theatre, library and classroom, as well as a meeting place for a corps. The chief secretary set up a

meeting with Mrs. Kroc and we went to her summer residence. She was taken with the fact that I had come from a large family, had a Labor Party background (she was a Democrat) and was a woman in leadership. The fact that her dogs took to me was also important. She loved dogs. I believe we connected that day. She continued to be very generous to the Army, though we never solicited donations from her.

A surprise phone call reached me when on holiday in Nova Scotia. It was Mrs. Kroc's personal assistant, telling me that Mrs. Kroc had been diagnosed with terminal cancer. When I phoned Mrs. Kroc, she asked that I speak at her private memorial service. I did.

During an officers' retreat in Oregon, I received an urgent phone message from Joan Kroc's lawyer, asking me to come to San Diego the next day. I met with him and her two trustees in the board room of her building. Sitting across from me, the lawyer said something like, "I guess you want to know why we asked you to come right away". Yes, I did. He slid a section of Mrs. Kroc's will across the table for me to read. "Bottom line", he said, "Mrs. Kroc left The Salvation Army \$1.6 billion to build community centres across America. She wanted you to be the first to know and to communicate it to the other American Army leaders".

The speakers at her memorial service were former President Jimmy Carter, the President Emeritus of Notre Dame University and me. They spoke of her generosity to Habitat for Humanity and the University of Notre Dame but few, possibly only her trustees, her lawyer and I knew just how generous she had been

to The Salvation Army, as it had not yet been announced. What was wonderful about her wanting the Army to build these Ray & Joan Kroc Community Centres was that these facilities could also be used for sharing the gospel and holding church services. To my understanding, some very effective Christian ministry is now taking place in the twenty-seven Kroc Centres across the United States.

I tell this story with an earlier comment about my upbringing and being comfortable with drunkards and the marginalized. Those tough years for the miners made my parents and friends suspicious of the rich owners who got wealthier while the miners worked hard for little pay in unsafe conditions. When I view this *through the lens of grace*, the Lord reminds me that ‘the ground is level at the foot of the Cross’. I used to use this expression to focus on how the mighty are brought low, but now I realize that it also means that they too come within the embrace of God. They too are used to bring blessing as they share their resources.

When I sat at the dining room table in my last year of high school, how could I ever have imagined that God’s calling would take me across Canada, to the UK and America in such diverse appointments and with people of all ages, backgrounds and status? He is truly the God of grace and surprises.

O use me, Lord, use even me,
Just as thou wilt and when and where,
Until they blessed face I see,
Thy rest, thy joy, thy glory share.
(Frances Ridley Havergal
SASB 1986, 612)

CHAPTER 17:
DEEP HUNGER

As the deer longs for streams of water,
So I long for you, O God.
I thirst for God, the living God.
(Ps 42:1-2a NLT)

Desire to Know Him

God in his grace draws us to himself and I experienced this drawing in my teen years. I had a deep desire for him, a hunger that never seemed to be satisfied. The desire intensified as an adult with the study of the Scriptures and The Salvation Army's emphasis on the doctrine of holiness. The Scriptures made clear that God called us to be holy, to live life to the full, to be filled with his Spirit, to be Christlike. John Wesley, William Booth and many others believed there was an experience subsequent to conversion that God called us to, a 'second blessing' promised and provided for. I read about holiness from other theological perspectives and realized that there were different points of view. But this conviction that something could happen within me that spelled victory, whet my appetite. The books of Samuel Logan Brengle, a renowned Army holiness teacher and writer, were read and re-read. Holiness seminars and preaching were common throughout my officership. I preached it, taught it, and wrote about it. Seeing Christlike living in other people made it all the more believable and desirable.

I think I was caught up with the idea of the dramatic. I heartily agree with what William Booth expressed in a song: "We need another Pentecost", and I

visualized its results for the Army and for me personally. Reading *Spiritual Breakthrough* by John Larsson, a contemporary Army author, brought balance, for he showed through many testimonies that the holiness experience did not always come with the extraordinary, by vision or voice. Sometimes it was received in a simple act of faith. That was reassuring.

Yet many times I offered myself completely and thought I had appropriated it by faith, only to be faced with defeat. I have wondered if what I was wanting was an escape without having to make any hard choices about my priorities in life. Was I looking for some kind of special experience that would make me more effective, set me free, and give me something to brag about? Did I desire the gift more than the Giver? Was I preaching and teaching about something that was unrealistic? I seemed to live in Romans 7 more than Romans 8, wrestling with a ‘yo-yo’ existence of good intentions and bad attitudes rather than being ‘more than conqueror’. So, the longing for a dramatic change continued.

I was in New Zealand to speak at a Salvation Army conference. They termed it New Zeal. It was a contemporary style rally with three other special guest speakers. Before the event began the four of us met with the organizer in our hotel lobby to discuss the weekend. One guest was the wife of a Pentecostal minister. She was fashionably dressed, attractive and a noted speaker, whose gregarious personality and humor captured your attention. The other was a Salvation Army captain from Melbourne whose street mission ministry was receiving headlines. His presentations were always visual and his passion drew

people to make decisions for social justice. The third was Pete Greig, the young man who re-ignited hearts for prayer with his 24/7 emphasis. He described to me the marvellous vision God had given him that became the genesis of this prayer initiative which was sweeping the evangelical world. And then there was me. I was senior to them all, in full Salvation Army uniform (not looking contemporary at all) and feeling anything but ‘show-stopping’. And I was the one who was to speak at the opening session, the one that should strike the note for ‘new zeal’.

We went over to view the auditorium. I returned earlier than the rest to go back to the hotel. I was complaining to the Lord and saying something like, “If you gave me a vision like Pete Greig’s or I had a dramatic encounter, this keynote session would get off to the right start. It would ignite the fire for the weekend”. Standing at the street corner, I pressed the button to change the lights. Then the Lord spoke to me. “Am I not enough?” Through tears, I responded, “Yes, you are enough”. In my hotel room, his question rang in my ears as did the answer. Yes, for me, he was enough.

He has come to me so many times and in so many ways to meet the hunger of my heart that to want ‘something more’ makes me feel spiritually greedy. I have wanted a bright light, a quick fix, a warm fuzzy feeling. I wanted to know him (Phil 3:10) and if I experienced the power of his resurrection in some convincing way, then I would truly have received the ‘second blessing’. But I could never really countenance the thought of sharing in his sufferings. Yet the passion to know him grew in intensity.

One day while driving alone in my car, I opened myself to every possibility, even if it meant embracing suffering. God took me at my word. Since then, I have had challenging experiences. I was like the disciples in their initial encounter with Jesus. I wanted to follow the Son of God, the Messiah, the One the prophets spoke about, the King, but not the Lamb (Jn 1:29-51). So he comes again and asks, “Do you really want to know me? Will you follow the Lamb”? Albert Orsborn, a Salvation Army officer and song writer, wrote “I Know Thee Who Thou Art” (SASB 1987, 59) and the last verse is singularly important to me.

Let nothing draw me back
Or turn my heart from thee,
But by the Calvary track
Bring me at last to see
The courts of God, that city fair,
And find my name is written there.

Resurrection power and holiness experiences can never be found except by way of ‘the Calvary track’. This deep hunger to know him, to love him, to follow him, so that I live each minute of every day not for the sensational, but for his glory, is my prayer. Perhaps my prayer journal on May 27, 2005 expresses it best: “I want what you know I need”.

Prayer

I discovered how important prayer was to meeting my spiritual hunger. The Salvation Army, like other evangelical churches emphasizes prayer—personal and corporate, private and public, and certainly spontaneous. We probably viewed set prayers as cold, dry formalism. To pray ‘as the Spirit moved’ was to pray

lively, heartfelt, passionate prayers. I have vivid memories of some of those moving occasions.

When I was stationed at the Halifax North Corps, we always had a prayer meeting before the evening service. A group of us would gather and plead (on our knees) with the Lord for souls to be saved. The sergeant-major (local officer) was one of the godliest men I ever met. When he cried out to God to bless our 'great salvation meeting' you felt that something of eternal consequence was going to take place that night. Souls would be saved.

When stationed in Manchester, England as the divisional commander, I was again touched by that kind of praying. I was invited to a united prayer meeting, all churches together to pray for the city and its ministries. I assumed it would be for an hour in the evening and after a long day that was enough for me. I was in for a surprise. It seemed to go on for hours and with no sense of deadness or duty at all. There must have been more than two hundred people there. We prayed in various ways for specific ministries, for our own and each other's denominations.

The Anglican bishop and I had been invited as church leaders in the city. He was to pray or read Scripture and I was to speak about what I believed God was saying to the churches in the United Kingdom. I had hardly been in Manchester for a year and before that, just three years in London, so I began by explaining that. Who was I to know what God was saying to the UK churches? I was a Canadian. They knew their needs best. Rather, I would share the UK Salvation Army's new vision statement. I just recited it with passion. To my

surprise, they received it as a word from the Lord. In The Salvation Army itself, some had viewed it as just another grand idea from headquarters. Yet that night in Manchester, these prayer warriors heard the voice of God in that vision statement. And they prayed for the Army. I shall never forget how one woman prayed. It was as if she took hold of God. She asked the Lord once again to give The Salvation Army a trumpet voice as they marched through the streets to reach the world with the message of Jesus. If I had to be reminded, I was convinced that prayer is not public speaking with your eyes shut. That night it was an encounter with the living God.

When I was stationed in Australia, I was a guest speaker at an Army rally in Queensland, called Unlimited. Such contemporary events were known for lively singing and passionate praying. Before the service started, the prayer team asked me to join them so they could pray over my ministry. There was a lot of noise in the background and I could hardly hear the prayers though they were doing their best to pray over the clatter. They asked if I had a special request. Yes, I did. I had just learned that my oldest sister Audrey was seriously ill, and it didn't look like she was going to make it. It was going to be difficult to focus on preaching when she was on my mind. So they prayed. When we finished, I went and sat down. One of the prayer team came and said to me, "The Lord told me to come and tell you that Audrey is going to be well". Later I found out that because of the noise, he had not heard her name. But when the Lord spoke to him, it was about 'Audrey'. That was over eight years ago and Audrey is still living.

But there is another form of prayer that I am appreciating more and more. Spontaneous, heartfelt prayers speak into my life but formal, set prayers are no longer dry or empty. For years now I don't just read the Psalms, I pray them. Nothing compares with them for the raw courage to express every emotion. They give me permission to complain, question and even call God to honor his promises. They drag me out of my self-concern to see the beautiful world, the sad world and the dire need for divine intervention. They call me to shout, to sing, and to be joyful when I only have a dirge in my heart that has no melody. They force me to look up and see God, to listen, to wait, to trust.

I also read the prayers of the song writers and saints from various traditions. I have learned to pray with the Church by following the fixed hour of prayer. In preparation for my devotional period each morning, I often pray the Scriptures as I go through the Lord's Prayer, or the Ten Commandments, or the Book of Ephesians, or selected verses that are especially meaningful. After so many years of very public ministry, I now have the time and desire for a ministry of prayer.

The Word

This spiritual autobiography is an account of my faith development and how God used various means of grace to meet my deep hunger. It is the story of a journey and the consistent companion has been the Word of God. Maybe my junior soldier's pledge had something to do with reading the Bible when I was young. After all, I had promised to do so. I recall reading the Psalms and being

struck by the verse “Put them in fear, O God, that the nations may know themselves to be but men” (Ps 9:20). I have never forgotten it. Why did it lodge in my mind? I think there was a world crisis at the time and this verse seemed so appropriate. I realized then that the Scriptures were relevant. But like many people, I was captured by the well-known texts that we memorized and passages that we read and heard the most. Becoming a Salvation Army officer in leadership of a congregation, I had to broaden my knowledge in order to preach “the whole will of God” (Acts 20:20).

My post-secondary education at this point was The Salvation Army training program. That was necessary, once I knew I was called. But in the early years of officership, I was encouraged by two colleagues to take more formal studies, while still engaged in ministry. The Army was open to this. I had done very well in elementary school, though not so well in high school since my social life replaced serious study. So I was ready to take on this new challenge. When I was stationed in Halifax, I attended Mt. St. Vincent and took biblical courses from a learned, godly Catholic sister. One subject was law and grace, a study of the Book of Galatians. To this day, what I learned from that study has informed my theology and practice.

To teach at the training colleges, you had to be a student, whether privately or formally. I guess I was both. No book excited me more than the Bible. It stimulates my thinking but through it, the Spirit warms my heart and ignites my desire for the Lord and his mission. With Tyndale Bible College just up the road from the Toronto College for Officer Training, I entered the Bachelor

of Religious Education program, with most of my studies being biblical and theological.

The degree was taken over a period of time in night courses. I was at Territorial Headquarters as candidates' secretary when it was completed. This was a busy appointment and I travelled across the country for speaking engagements. Yet every assignment I had was used in that ministry. It was never a matter of shifting gears for me.

Final assignments came at the same time as I was organizing and leading three seminars for candidates, in St John's, Toronto and Mission, British Columbia. I feverishly worked on planes in order to meet deadlines; the learning experience was wonderful but more important was an equipping to communicate the Word more effectively. I now had an appetite for study, to stretch myself, to fully meet and exceed the requirements of my appointments but at the same time to give my best to learning. Later opportunities to earn a Master of Theological Studies and to enrol in a Doctor of Ministry program came my way, but always the emphasis was on the Scriptures.

While I love to be engaged in academic courses, it is not about devouring a body of knowledge and discovering how little you really know. It's not even about achieving a degree or acquiring a skill in order to be a better speaker or teacher. His Word is really just this to me: the voice of God speaking into everyday life. He reveals what an awesome God he is and how he acts on behalf of his people. His salvation story through his Son never fails to move me. His Holy Spirit, who inspired the Word inspires me, turns a light on its pages and in

my heart. I meet God every day in private devotions as I read the Bible and pray. It was a commitment I would have made as a seven-year old junior soldier and I am discovering that it is anything but a duty. It is a joy.

Corporate Worship

My spiritual hunger could never be met completely through private devotions or personal study, no matter how deeply they affected my life. Corporate worship has also nourished my soul. I have experienced a vital encounter with the Lord of life in Salvation Army meetings in very different settings in Canada and around the world. Though music varied, cultures differed and languages were diverse, we were always directed to worship, reflect and respond.

The spirituality in worship expressed in outport Newfoundland is different from the corps I now attend, North York. The vibrancy, drums, accordions, shouts of hallelujah, spontaneity in testimonies, a long altar call, are not mirrored in North York Corps, where we have predictable worship services, with the same format each week. The brass band is well-nigh professional. There is no longer a testimony period. The altar call is brief. Yet there are such inspiring elements—the reading of Scriptures from the Old Testament and New Testament; the involvement of children and youth in each meeting; the use of more blended worship songs; and strong preaching. Very different meetings but the blessing of his presence is experienced in both.

For two years, when serving as General and home from travelling, I attended the Southwark Corps in London, England. Having come from a traditional Army corps, I could not believe that I enjoyed this ministry. Yet not only were all the elements of a rich Army meeting there, it perhaps was more like the Army in its early beginning in a most positive way. Our multi-cultural congregation included those in the community, the homeless, post-psychiatric, immigrants, and active children. The music was in no way professional. The Word was taught and faithfully preached. Freedom in prayer, testimony and moving to the Mercy Seat were part of every meeting. This corps believed that to worship is to bring authenticity to the Sunday meeting and to serve the community, no matter how disconnected the people were from God, from themselves and from each other.

The metaphors of hunger and thirst are very fitting, for corporate worship is truly a means of grace. I recently participated with my cohort in the sacred ceremony of Communion and saw in their faces as they returned that they had been nourished in this remembrance of the body and blood of Christ. It was for them a most special spiritual encounter. For me, seeing people move to the Mercy Seat and return having met with God is a similar experience of feasting. No part of an Army meeting is more sacred. The times I have knelt before the Lord in the presence of his people were not just acts of dedication, but indications that only God can meet the deepest need and hunger of my heart.

This account of my spiritual hunger could be perceived as highlighting my saintliness with a deep desire for God, my habits of prayer and love for the Word

and corporate worship. They could mask my weaker sides. I would never want that to be so. It is human frailty that drives me to God, not just a desire to be a competent officer or to become spiritually mature. There have been times when I have failed the Lord and broken my promises. My strengths have been my weaknesses. What God has given to be used for his service, the devil seeks to destroy. If the enemy came in a frontal attack and let us know that this is really about frustrating God's grace, maybe we would be more resistant. But he feeds our egos and my insecurities proved at times to be fertile ground for him. I now realize that his tactics have the Garden of Eden written all over them. The idea of being 'god', to be the center of one's world and everyone else's, can seem irresistible. I sometimes took the bait, chose self-will above God's will, failed him and wounded people as a result.

Grace is a word that most captures the Father's dealings with me. I could not and cannot live without him. He is truly the Love of my life and his forgiveness and acceptance are everything to me.

I look at my hunger for God, for holiness, my prayer life, my heart for the Word and see it all as a journey, a growth in grace. I wish I had known some things earlier and practiced them more diligently. But grace forbids me to focus on the regrets. Instead my life must be filled with praise and thanksgiving.

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear;
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds and drives away his fears.

It makes the wounded spirit whole, and calms the troubled breast,
'Tis manna to the hungry soul and to the weary rest.

Dear name, the rock on which I build, my shield and hiding place,
My never-ending treasury filled with boundless stores of grace.

(John Newton
SASB 1986, 58)

CHAPTER 18:
DIFFERENT LEADERSHIP

Jesus called them together and said,
“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them,
and their high officials exercise authority over them,
Not so with you”.
(Mt 20:25-26)

Spiritual Authority

Discernment does not come with a single event or through a single individual. The Holy Spirit took me on a journey using an appointment, a project, a list, a book and an apostle. An understanding of spiritual authority, power, servanthood and suffering changed not only my leadership but my life forever. My leadership was transformed by the Holy Spirit.

In 1995, after serving four years in my home division, the Maritimes, I was transferred to International Headquarters (IHQ) in London, England, as under-secretary for personnel. While this portfolio involved other things, its main mandate was to work on a plan for the identification, training and development of leaders for the international Salvation Army. The need for this had been a major recommendation from an earlier international conference of leaders. To say the least, I was totally ill-equipped for this research project in terms of understanding the theories or being academically qualified. The expectation was that I would give my best to this challenge.

It was a privilege to be serving at IHQ with senior leaders from around the world. Three in particular had a passion for the subject of leadership and could very well be termed my best mentors and supporters during that period.

Developing a plan meant knowing the subject, and it was time for me to immerse myself in books about leadership. The starting point, other than the Bible, was the Army's *Orders & Regulations for Officers* which clearly outline the expectations for the quality of an officer's life and ministry.

I also worked with the Gallup Organization and was privy to their leadership research through two of their consultants. Having drafted some ideas, I realized that the qualities and qualifications for senior leadership must include spiritual authority, relational skills, management skills, experience and education, global perspective and vision. Interestingly enough, the Gallup Organization had earlier reached very similar conclusions. The major difference was their emphasis on ego drive and mine on the primary element of spiritual authority. It was strange that this old term emerged and I wondered if it would sound too outdated.

Among the material I gathered on leadership, there was a list which contained the *10 Commandments of Spiritual Authority* by Watchman Nee. To this day, I have no idea where that came from. I had no background material on these commandments or principles. I knew, however, from the little knowledge I had of Watchman Nee, that he would have culled them from Scripture. Biblical verification, affirmation from other writers on leadership and my understanding of Salvation Army officership had to give content to each commandment. In time, I

was asked to share this material in seminars and did so extensively over the years in several countries.

Though I focussed on the ten for some time, later because of classroom time constraints, I used the two that had the greatest impact on me (#1 and #8): “One who learns spiritual authority as the power base for ministry must recognize the essential Source of all authority: God”. “Spiritual authority is never exercised for one’s own benefit but for those under it”. The first thought-provoking consideration was: if the power base for our ministry is not spiritual authority, then what could it be? Many Christian leaders are credible leaders not based on spiritual authority, but on their track record as effective pastors, their ability to grow congregations, their education or family name. Personality has been a door-opener for many and the charisma of some leaders has been their leverage of influence. Leadership styles and profiles have underscored the right to be heard and to lead. We can have positional authority but not spiritual authority. In my estimation, the Church (myself included) bought into the business of the world’s secular assessment of what a leader is and does. It is often about power, not servanthood. It is not only different, but also most often diametrically opposed to what the Lord modelled and taught.

Here is where the book comes in. The appointment to IHQ involved the leadership plan project; the list was Nee’s commandments and the book: *Understanding Leadership* by Eric Marshall. On the first and eighth commandment quoted above, Marshall’s book turned my leadership perspective

on its head. His chapter on the “redemption of power” was used by the Holy Spirit to open my eyes to the crux of leadership from God’s point of view.

Fallen power that imposes its own will is now brought to yield to the Father’s will, power that seeks autonomy, to be its own end and its own god, is faced with a will set in the direction of utter obedience... power that is permanently bent in the direction of obedience to God, in contradistinction to worldly power that is perpetually twisted toward self-seeking (Marshall 1991, 63, 64).

In the Garden of Eden, power was usurped and corrupted. In the Garden of Gethsemane, power was surrendered and redeemed. Here was my model. To lead with spiritual authority, I must surrender my will to his, to lead not with arrogance, pride, insensitivity, self-aggrandizement or self-will but to lead with the Spirit of Jesus. No longer could I lead as one with power over people but with power for people. No more could this be top-down leadership, imposing my own agenda. The power I was given was the power to love, the power of the cross, resurrection power. So much of my leadership had been credible based on upbringing, gifts, appointments and experiences but in and through it I discerned, thanks to Nee and Marshall and godly role models, that there was too much of self. I hungered to be a leader with spiritual authority. To exercise it, every other credential needed to be sanctified.

Nee’s eighth commandment, “Spiritual authority is never exercised for one’s own benefit but for those under it”, spoke to me of servanthood. Here again Marshall’s perspective was life-changing for me. I was travelling by bus from London with a group of officers to a mission conference in the UK, where I was to do a workshop on spiritual leadership. I was reading Marshall’s chapter seven

on the redemption of leadership. He believed it to be servanthood. He explained what it is and what it is not. His contention was that servanthood is “nature, not activities; nature, not leadership style; nature, not role” (Marshall 1991, 68-70). It is not the things you do, your personality type or your leadership role.

Though as an extrovert I may not have seen myself as a servant as some introverts do, I had found it was to do servant things, like washing dishes or cleaning churches. I certainly had servant roles, as the second in charge or a member of a team. But I realized in that moment that I saw being a servant as another credential, a tool in the leadership box, something I would practice and develop to be more effective as a leader. The crisis came. I knew in that moment that I did not have the nature of a servant. Tears welled up as this dawned on me.

Using Jesus’ model of servanthood set forth in Philippians 2, I was led to surrender my ambitions and agendas, strengths and weaknesses and die to self, so that the nature of Jesus himself, the model servant, could be formed in me and would characterize my life and leadership.

Practical Leadership

I once heard a divisional leader tell a group that he wore ‘two hats’, one in the office and one in the pulpit. At least he thought you could do both preaching and administration, but they were separate functions. It was as though practical leadership and spiritual leadership could not be done as one. The spiritual authority principles were now so imbedded in my life that I saw things differently. So much of my officership in recent years has been in leadership positions where

policy, strategy and administration have played key roles. I found that ‘two hats’ were not needed.

Paul’s epistles often start out with sound theology and then practical implications are laid out. They are not distinct from one another. Belief really does govern behaviour and should do so in leadership in the church. I sought to lead in a way that would be consistent with my Christian faith. To serve with the gift of leadership in a Christlike way would honor the Lord, loving others and leading with integrity. It is my hope that my approach to leadership was seen to be the fruit of my relationship with the Lord.

I have had opportunity in four conferences for the senior Salvation Army leadership teams in Africa, South Pacific & East Asia, Europe and South Asia, to share leadership principles drawn from my experience and practice. With such diverse cultures, it would be easy to believe that these principles could not be applicable everywhere. Yet I found that they resonated in each setting because we shared a common faith and calling.

The principles were related to good management, relational skills, personal discipline, integrity and vision. The nineteen points were about how to work with those in authority over us, in partnership with our closest colleague, with the team, the people we serve and our support staff. Boards were not seen to be outside the spiritual and relational aspects of ministry. Efficiency was required, of course, but board meetings gave opportunities to relate decisions to faith statements and to see outcomes as beneficial to others. What we designated as

business meetings were opportunities for teaching, for listening to one another, for making sound decisions that were Kingdom-focussed.

In reviewing personal journals, board days were cause for prayer. Had I possessed more business acumen, perhaps, I would have been less dependent on divine resources or the expertise in the team. I was very aware, when chairing or co-chairing boards at territorial level, that we were dealing with millions of dollars in property and investment portfolios. We were strategizing for the future of the Army that would impact every facet of our service. Program decisions had to be made that kept us mission-focussed but also culturally relevant while living within the constraints of governments at each level. Internationally, the boards and councils were making decisions for the Army world. In the 21st century, selecting and sending leaders to other countries was no small task in an age of nationalism.

As well-meaning as every Christian leader is around a boardroom table and as qualified and experienced as they are individually and as a group, the issues that face the Church today, as at no other time, require the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit. This is necessary in order to keep faith with biblical values and principles of eternal consequence.

A huge issue that occupies an organization's time is the necessity, extent and effect of change. Many of us steeped in tradition find this one of the most difficult aspects of leadership. Entrepreneurs thrive on the adventure of it. A journal entry on January 20, 2004 shows an inward struggle with the leadership issue of change. "Perhaps I am afraid that we will hold to the past for fear of

change, or change for novelty's sake. I am so afraid we won't take your lead and will end up very busy and distressed but ineffective". I, like many others, did not want to 'throw the baby out with the bath water', nor did we want to be in a time warp.

In the list of practical leadership lessons, personal pitfalls for leaders were also addressed by advocating for impartiality, admitting mistakes, seeking advice, not seeking personal gain, refusing to micro-manage, being available and visible. Crucial to leading in a Christlike, practical way was not to 'die on small hills'. I found that to take issue with minor matters was self-centered and a vain attempt to prove who's the boss. Rather than needing to have it your way, I discovered that the life of a leader is far more enjoyable when flexibility, camaraderie and mutual caring are characteristic of the leadership style.

It was a principle of mine, therefore, to make the working environment a pleasure. We can give people the impression that when they are at work, they must keep their heads down and produce. I believe that productivity is more the outcome of freedom and joy rather than restraint, isolation or stress. For me the workplace was friendship-building, a place of affirmation. Walking about from desk to desk was not a managerial tool for accountability, but for the personal care of officers and employees.

These leadership lessons were learned not just from reading books, but most of all from living out the spiritual authority principles. Under the advice to be multi-relational, I recommended this: "Respect your leaders in authority over you". This point was crucial to me and was not without the need for personal

discipline. Coming under authority may seem natural for any officer in The Salvation Army. Our quasi-military structure calls for obedience. In a day and age when personal autonomy is in the forefront, things have changed and sometimes for the better. Consultative leadership is more appropriate than the command style. However, when you are appointed as a senior leader in the Army, does coming under authority have a hollow ring to it? No, I believe more than ever that if practiced, it can prove to be a spiritual discipline, not an organizational capitulation.

Perhaps some would view this as naive and cowardly, but it is a serious matter to me. It involves my trust in the Lord. Even if my leaders might get it wrong and unless the Lord asks me to challenge their decisions, I must believe that eventually he will work all things out for the good of the Army and for me personally, even if the obedience proves to be very costly.

So much of leading as the Lord would have us lead, is the consistency of our personal devotional life, honoring our calling and being an example. It means leading with his heart for others, not just those in the circle of influence but seeing the world through his eyes. As I shared with territorial leaders, it is to believe that God created The Salvation Army to be a holy people and to fulfil his mission. It is to catch his vision, set direction and communicate it in every possible way.

Reminders

Communication is the key and sometimes vital matters related to identity, mission and leadership are best remembered by visual and verbal reminders. The

Salvation Army symbols and slogan (as detailed in the Model of Spiritual Formation) have been powerful reminders for me. But in recent years, one Scripture and a picture have been even more pointedly used to remember what it means to be a servant leader with spiritual authority.

When coming to grips with the meaning of spiritual authority, one passage of Scripture in particular was the most powerful.

Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mt 20:25-28 NIV).

“Not so with you” was a clear call by our Lord to see leadership differently. I was so struck by this phrase that I had it carved into a wooden plaque and I hung it in my office. It was to be a visual reminder that if ever I was tempted to exercise leadership for personal prominence or with insensitivity to others, he would rebuke me with “not so with you”. It may be the world’s view that efficiency and effectiveness have to do with ‘bottom lines’, numbers, ladder-climbing, or personal gain but that is not how one is to lead. No ‘lording it over’, no ‘me-first’ mentality.

I did not dispute that the Church and its leaders can learn from the organizations and CEO’s of the world, but when there is a hint that there is disconnect between those values and Christian principles, then I believed we must be courageous enough to be different. I believed that if we lead as Jesus directed,

and kept faith with his mission, then his blessing would bring about an effectiveness that would not be unrealistic or impractical.

When I was the territorial commander in the USA Western Territory, we wondered if we could have a painting commissioned to depict the spiritual leadership principles. We invited a Christian artist to come and I shared with her my convictions about leadership. She painted a tree shaped like a cross and at the foot of it, a basin and towel. All divisional leaders received a copy of the painting for Christmas. The picture was also used in teaching spiritual authority and given as a bookmark. I often said that in the world, the power of leaders could be depicted with a clenched fist or a ladder. For us, our ladder is the cross, dying to self to live for others. We humbly serve with outstretched hands. We belong to the order of the basin and towel.

When we think of great leaders, we perhaps see A-type personalities, the movers and shakers, the fearless and task-oriented. Jesus did not lack courage nor did he neglect the mission, but his style of leadership had a gentleness about it that is best described by Isaiah, “He will not shout or raise his voice in public. He will not crush the weakest reed or put out a flickering candle” (Is 42:2-3 NLT).

Spiritual authority is this very Christ living out his life in ours.

When John Lawley, one of William Booth’s earliest associates, wrote the song, “Rescue the Perishing”, he was not speaking to Christian leaders alone, though they were included. The mission was clear and the manner in which it was carried out was counter-cultural to a worldview of powerful, effective leaders. It is about weeping, pleading gently, touching lives with a loving hand, expressing

kindness. It is about bringing people to Jesus. It is being Jesus. It is the essence of spiritual authority.

Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;
Weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus, the mighty to save.

Chorus

Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.

(John Lawley
SASB 1986, 691)

CHAPTER 19:
DELIGHTFUL MINISTRY

Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup;
You make my lot secure.
The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
Surely I have a delightful inheritance.
(Ps 16:5-6)

A Different Appointment

Truly I view my life *through the lens of grace*. In 2005, I received a new appointment. Though I would serve as an International Headquarters officer, I could live in Canada, making regular visits to London, England. My designation was rather lengthy and involved two separate portfolios, both requiring significant travel. I was to be the secretary for international spiritual development and for international ecumenical relations.

The first was ‘my cup of tea’ for it fit perfectly into my heart for Salvationists personally and the Army as a whole. The International Spiritual Life Commission’s conclusions provided me with some settled views. It offered material that could feed Salvationists because it was rooted in the Scriptures. I sought to find creative ways to teach and preach it. I was convinced that the Lord had spoken into The Salvation Army. I travelled to many Army territories in our five zones and was thrilled to have such a global ministry opportunity.

Because I was the International Headquarters’ representative for ecumenical relations, I was a member of the Committee of the Conference

Secretaries for Christian World Communions, a group of about thirty. While I had had association with other churches through my corps and divisional appointments, I had not been immersed in ecumenism before. It was through this appointment that I led an Army group to the World Council of Churches General Assembly in Brazil, attended a Conference of European Churches in Romania and the Global Christian Forum in Kenya. During that period, I was selected by the next General to be part of a team of five officers to enter into informal theological dialogue with the Catholic Church. Their representatives were mainly Vatican bishops who served in the office of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity. We met once a year in London or at the Vatican offices. I also served as a member of The Salvation Army International Doctrine Council.

As I reflect on those three years of my service, it would seem that the two roles were very different, one focused on the Army and the other outside my denominational comfort zone. Yet whatever contribution I brought to this appointment was far less than the learning experiences and blessings received. I became a better Salvationist because of it, not in an insular sense, but more appreciative of the fact that so much of our theology, worship and ministry is in line with the Body of Christ. Every major creed expressed doctrinal statements that I was familiar with through our own Articles of Faith. But even in the spiritual life development role that was mainly Salvation Army, I was able to serve with a broader perspective and call Salvationists to play the part God had assigned us in order to make the whole of his Church stronger. I knew first-hand from church leaders that The Salvation Army's contribution was valued and

needed. My spiritual autobiography would be much the poorer had I not had this dual appointment where I came to see God's variegated tapestry of the universal Church.

Australia Eastern Territory

During one of my visits to London I met with the General to discuss the forthcoming Vatican conversations. To my surprise, this item of business was very brief. The General disclosed his main reason for asking to see me. He planned to appoint me to the Australia Eastern Territory as territorial commander. The General felt the appointment was right and therefore I would take up leadership of the Australia Eastern Territory as of April 2008.

This turned out to be an appointment that was 'a marriage made in heaven'. Colleagues in leadership became personal friends and remain so today. Australians have a 'can do' attitude and I needed that kind of optimism and creative energy. My own personality was more about guarding the Army's beliefs and policies. Australian Salvationists were risk-takers for the Lord, sanctified entrepreneurs. Here again, I needed to look *through the lens of grace* which sees "a land flowing with milk and honey" that must be occupied, and not be immobilized in the wilderness because of fear of the giants (Num 13).

Yet even with all the wonderful things happening in the territory, there was still much more that could be done if we were more mission-focused. In an early article in *Pipeline* (the internal monthly magazine), I wrote to Salvationists restating our mission. I asked what changes or innovations were needed to keep

faith with our identity and mission. I had carried out a similar exercise as territorial commander in the USA Western Territory based on findings already gathered from Salvationists. I became convinced that if God had raised up The Salvation Army, then somehow Salvationists would have an inner sense of who we were and what we were supposed to do. Top-down strategies are only effective if they are based on bottom-up convictions. God speaks through his people, not just the leaders. I believed it was in the DNA of Salvationists to know what needed to happen to honor the Lord in our faith and practice.

Over 400 readers responded. Then in an employees' survey, we asked questions about our mission and in excess of 1000 respondents gave us feedback. In addition, the work of my predecessor and his team provided excellent thinking on going forward with regards to our mission. So we had a wealth of material from which to identify the most frequently repeated themes to be given priority.

In two appointments as territorial commander, why was I so committed to developing mission priorities? It goes back to a Salvation Army executive leaders' conference I attended in the USA Southern Territory years before. I was there to speak about spiritual authority and Dr. David Gyertson was the other guest. During one of his teaching sessions, he spoke about revival and how it comes at different times and different places. He described revival as a tide that comes in and goes out. He believed that presently the tide was out. And then he asked, "What do you do when the tide is out? We clean up the beach". I have prayed ever since for revival and have seen my leadership role as cleaning up the beach in preparation for a coming revival. For me cleaning up the beach meant

keeping our identity and mission before our people and, where we were lacking, to set mission priorities. Once these were set, they would be the basis of boardroom decisions, sermons, teaching, articles and conferences. Spiritual leadership meant being faithful to God's calling not only as an individual but in leading his people.

When the priorities were established and communicated, I received a call one day. One of the headquarters' team members was visiting a division and was speaking about the priorities and asked me, "What do you see when these priorities are met"? I gave a quick answer, "an Army on the march". She asked me to unwrap it more and as a result a vision statement was articulated that encapsulated the mission.

From the time I was welcomed in Australia Eastern and throughout those years, the expression "for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14) was often used about the timing for the territory and for me. Since then the leaders have continued to move forward with passion and innovation, living the vision and seeing the fruit.

Ministry as General

In January 2011, after serving in the Australia Eastern Territory for three years, I was elected the nineteenth General of The Salvation Army, the third woman to hold that office. Several family members and friends came from Canada for my welcome meeting. I was so grateful to the Lord that they could join in the celebration. Afterwards my siblings and I made a special trip to Stoneleigh Abbey where our mother was born.

Though I had already been welcomed at International Headquarters and had spent days in the office, the public welcome meeting was the formal launch of my ministry as the Army's international leader.

The Lord had taught me so much about how to lead and especially how to follow as he led, that what is perceived by many as an onerous task was in fact, made easy because of his grace. I say easy, not in a trite sense but easy as explained by the Lord. "Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly" (Mt 11:30 The Message). This verse came to life in my ministry as General. I actually did find joy in the journey. Yes, though my journals record many times when jet lag or the weight of the office left me very tired, I continued to do what I had always done in my ministry and that is preach, teach and spend time with people. My whole life had prepared me for the work he now called me to do. From wise advice given earlier, I learned to lead with my strengths or spiritual gifts. I was blessed in leadership appointments to have colleagues in the team who had expertise in areas where I was deficient. The major difference in earlier ministry and the present was that my 'parish' was now the world.

In my High Council speech I had articulated the vision that guided my leadership in Australia. It would become the basis of my leadership as General with slight revisions. In Australia, the short form of the vision was *One Army, One Mission*. While on holidays in Toronto, I received a note from one of the commissioners at IHQ. He observed that the vision actually fell into three parts

and the third part was *One Message*. It was as if a light was turned on. It was a word from the Lord, I was sure of that: One Army, One Mission, One Message.

Priorities had not yet been set for the international Army. As I had done as territorial commander, I wanted to find out from the field what should be our mission priorities. Every territory and command was asked to send in their priorities or strategic goals. From these, themes were recognized and with the help of the leadership team at International Headquarters, four priorities for each segment of the vision were chosen. If these were truly of the Lord, they would have their basis in Scripture. I discovered a wealth of texts related to the vision. The vision and priorities then formed the basis of my sermons, teaching, every conference and monthly articles. This vision still governs my life personally for it is not just a corporate strategy but a personal conviction:

I see a God-raised, Spirit-filled Army of the 21st century
Convinced of its calling,
Moving forward together
Into the world of the hurting, broken, lonely, dispossessed and lost
Reaching them in love by all means
With the transforming message of Jesus
Bringing freedom, hope and life.

The vision and priorities were launched ‘live’ on the website, October 2011, along with a colorful logo depicting the globe and One Army, One Mission, One Message. I made it clear that the territories were not obligated to buy into every priority but would be expected to focus on the ones they had developed. The wonderful surprise as I travelled the Army world was to see how the logo, vision and priorities took root. For me, it was and continues to be an indication that this vision was not mine but the Lord’s.

The Salvation Army at that time served in 124 countries. As I had done in divisional and territorial roles, I believed we should commit ourselves to be a praying Army. We called it the Worldwide Prayer Meeting. It connected through our website, Twitter and regular e-mails.

On January 12, 2012 I journaled this prayer:

Today the Army is at prayer, Lord. You want us to pray. We have no life as an Army except from you. Our hearts may be sincere but only you can move us into an unknown future, motivated and equipped. Only you can effect the transformation we talk about. It will be around “one common Mercy Seat” that we find our unity, our cause for hope, our reason for being. It will take united, fervent prayer to realize our vision, see our mission priorities fulfilled in our time. Please dear Lord, raise up an Army of thanksgiving, intercession, petition and dedication. All for your glory! All to hear your voice, see you work, and experience your blessing!

Many decisions needed to be made that affected our personnel, business, programs and strategies internationally, so prayer would not only be crucial to the Army but to me. Also, I am convinced the yoke was easy; the burdens were light because “we worked with him and walked with him”. When his vision that calls us to be the people we were meant to be and do what we were meant to do governs the Army, and when we truly grasp that an Army on the march must first be on its knees, then we discover the “unforced rhythms of grace” (Mt 11:28-30 The Message) as Eugene Peterson expressed it.

I spent about half of my time in London, half my time travelling the world. I visited thirty-eight countries, and led four zonal conferences for the top territorial leadership teams—Africa, South Asia, South Pacific & East Asia, and Europe. In my term of office, there were seven four-day General’s Consultative Councils, attended by IHQ commissioners and designated territorial leaders from

around the Army world. An international conference of leaders was held in Toronto in 2012 and a European congress for Salvationists in Prague later that year. One of the most memorable gatherings was a United Kingdom event, the “I’ll Fight” Congress in the Royal Albert Hall in London. It was the hundredth anniversary of William Booth’s famous speech in that same building: “While women weep as they do now, I’ll fight...I’ll fight, I’ll fight to the very end” (Satterlee 1985, 234).

It was a privilege to stand on that stage and repeat this powerful and relevant manifesto and then to spend the weekend with Salvationists unwrapping it for the 21st century and preaching to the vast, responsive congregation, which included many young people.

Outside Army circles, I was invited to preach at Westminster Abbey during the Christmas season and at the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Korea, where 20,000 were in attendance. Looking at my life *through the lens of grace*, seeing the tiny, shabby corps hall in New Aberdeen, Nova Scotia and being part of a small congregation makes me realize again the Lord himself opened such doors of ministry.

But it was not a ministry of giving only. The Lord ministered to my heart through ordinary people I met, young and old, so I will mention a few.

In Haiti, I saw the devastation of the earthquake and incomparable evidence of poverty. One early morning I was taken to one of the Army’s many primary schools for the flag-raising ceremony. Fifteen hundred children sang their national anthem as their flag was raised, but immediately after the Army

Founder's song, "O Boundless Salvation" was sung as I had never heard it before and the tri-colored flag of the Army was raised. It was extremely moving.

On one of my visits to India, I preached to a thousand-strong congregation under the traditional open-sided tent, unaware that workers around the grounds were catching the message over the loudspeaker. One of them wrote:

I was born and brought up in a Hindu family. I was asked to clean the Army ground where the meetings were held and started to hear the message about transformation. First, I was unable to understand clearly but then I realized the importance of cleaning the heart as I am cleaning the ground...I asked God to clean my heart. While you were praying I felt a special power touched my heart and cleansed it, and I have become a Christian.

He was not the only Hindu who was saved that day.

In Moldova, in an old Soviet building, I saw a Salvation Army couple, both medical doctors, bring physical healing with Christlike compassion. The long, dark, narrow corridor was crammed with patients of all ages waiting for the mobile clinic to visit their village. Before consultations began, the doctor read from the gospels, gave a challenging word and prayed. But the day's ministry was not confined to the building. I joined volunteers who struggled through muddy lanes to deliver a wheelchair to an amputee and groceries to a family.

In Ghana, the children from one of the Army's rehabilitation centers stole my heart. To hear and watch them sing and do the actions to "Lift Jesus Higher" was an experience only surpassed when they joined the Sunday morning march. Although they could not walk the whole distance, they wanted to be part of this special occasion no matter how challenging their disability.

In one of my prayer letters to Salvationists around the world, I told of my visit to Myanmar (Burma):

More than 700 Salvationists gathered for the ordination and commissioning of their seven cadets. On the stage, at the front, was a most striking backdrop. The large center curtain was red velvet flanked on each side by blue drapes. Before them was a large white cross. As the cadets came slowly in, holding open Bibles and moving towards the cross, we heard in the background the song, "All Heaven declares the glory of the risen Lord". It was such a stirring scene that many of us, seasoned officers who attended many commissioning events, were moved to tears. Then to see children, youth and adults kneeling at the cross all weekend in acts of commitment... well, it doesn't get any better than this.

At a reception at the Canadian embassy in Mexico, ambassadors from Israel, the USA, the Netherlands and representatives from other embassies were present with church and community leaders. The highlight was a boy from one of the Army's homes. After some of the children performed traditional dances, eight-year-old Rameses stood to give his testimony. The eminent crowd standing on the stairway looked down into the enclosure as the fearless child spoke. He had notes but never once looked at them. He told about the loving care he received in The Salvation Army's children's home, but also about the privilege of getting an education and learning about Jesus. His witness was captivatingly powerful.

In Japan, I met a tiny woman officer in our meetings. She was over one hundred years old. Later when I visited their social centers, I saw her again at the seniors' home, this time in civvies but still spry. When she came nearer I remarked that she walked so briskly and didn't even wear glasses. I assumed she was living in this residence in retirement. Not at all! I was told she was volunteering.

As I reflect on these and many other scenes that come to mind I realize that my ministry was not preaching only. The visit of an international guest must be a ministry of encouragement, of seeing what others are doing in Christ's name and being amazed and grateful. There is also a ministry in being approachable. I was so surprised that shaking someone's hand or a warm embrace meant so much to ordinary people. My upbringing would not let me stay at a distance from the crowds. Jesus' example shaped my worldwide ministry. I had earlier recorded a prayer, "Father, please remind me that the General belongs to the world. Don't let me tire of people who want to see the office, shake hands or take pictures. But may I be more than an "office". Please let me show love and encourage Salvationists to live for you" (Journal–June 3, 2011). He answered my prayer.

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise;
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of his grace!
My gracious master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad
The honors of thy name.
(Charles Wesley
SASB 1986, 64)

CHAPTER 20:
DEDICATED RETIREMENT

Let the morning bring word of your unfailing love,
for I put my trust in you.
Show me the way I should go
for to you I entrust my life.
(Ps 143:8)

Ministry in Retirement

I used to think about what I would do in retirement. I wanted to lead a small congregation again but when I became General, I realized that was unlikely. But it was my desire to be a good soldier of the corps, visit seniors, lead a Bible study and go back to school. I am now experiencing the joy of every aspect of this dream. For thirty-three years of the forty-four of active officership, I have held appointments which required travel, leading meetings and preaching. My soldiership involved attending the corps only when I was at home. Now I go every Sunday, not to pulpit ministry but to sit in a pew, thoroughly blessed by the fellowship and ministry. A Salvation Army officer is first and foremost a soldier of Jesus Christ and a Salvation soldier in the local corps. There are numerous opportunities to serve as well as be the recipient of the ministry and service of others.

The Word and Prayer

Leading Bible studies with young people on Sunday and with an adult group on Wednesday kept me in the Word for my own personal growth and opened a door for me to equip God's people. The studies have also been shared by e-mail with a number of people across Canada and other countries, some of whom used the notes in their own ministry. Within a two-year time frame, there was time to get into the context of our favourite verses, the Books of Colossians and Hebrews, Jesus' ministry to the marginalized, the first five chapters of Revelation, an in-depth study of the parable of the prodigal son. Preparing the handouts for each class was a spiritual discipline but not an onerous one.

An e-mail from our youth leader a couple of years ago, asked me to convene a prayer group since some of the children needed urgent prayer. Since then every Sunday, a group of eight meet to pray by name for every child and youth connected to our corps, and since we have a huge music program and two day-camps a year, we have a very long list. These children and young adults have dedicated Salvationists ministering to them in different ways. They may never know that behind-the-scenes, on a Sunday morning, their name is placed before the Lord by adults who want them to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Pe 3:18).

Visitation

Visiting seniors reminds me of what it really means to be a Salvationist. Some of these people have been giants in the faith though they never held an

officer's rank and will never make the history books. They are models for me of faith, dedication and perseverance. I was privileged to get to know Jessie Williams, visit her at home and chat in a weekly phone call. She was amazingly healthy for a 100-year-old and her clarity of mind never ceased to amaze me. I recall one of my first visits. I was on my way to 'kettle duty' that is, standing by the Army's Christmas kettle to collect money for families in need over the Christmas season. To be honest, this service was a matter of duty for me as a Salvationist, in terms of service beyond the local corps or my appointment. Jessie expressed how much she wished she could serve in this way. Her heart for ministry was an inspiration. Then on Sundays, she would attend worship, immaculate in her Army uniform. She mourned her limited eyesight and mobility because she had been used to moving about greeting the people and sending cards of celebration and sympathy. When she recounted her conversion, it was a testimony of gratitude for a definite moment when she realized that Jesus died for her sins. She was an inspiration, and to be asked to speak at her funeral as a 'friend' was a privilege.

This ministry to seniors goes beyond the home corps. I have also commenced volunteer ministry at a Christian retirement complex. Several, like Jessie was, are still bright in mind and spirit though in their late 90's. Then of course, there are those who suffer with dementia. My ministry is not as a theologian, Army leader or expert on any level, but as a listener, an encourager, an intercessor.

Several years ago, the Lord taught me that he would open doors of ministry and he does that. The Salvation Army has a Family Resource Center for victims of family violence. The administrator asked me to speak to staff and volunteers about the international Army and how their Center fits into its mission. This initial visit led to weekly morning visits with residents. Different faiths are represented but with their permission, I share the Scriptures and pray with them. To be an influence for Christ is what ministry is all about, but the Lord is teaching me in the process. The courage of these women, who leave violent situations, with children and nowhere to go, no home, no idea what the future holds, calls me to be there as an ambassador of grace and hope, a friend who comes alongside to help and to be faithful in intercession.

Mentoring

Not every door the Lord opens is greeted with immediate obedience and joy. Though my studies and experience have equipped me to walk with others in their Christian journey, I resisted any idea of it. My insistence was verbalized in a class on 'nurturing spirituality'. The professor was sympathetic and even understanding that this was not a ministry I wanted to embrace. There was no grand reason for my reluctance but rather an acknowledgement that I was not a good listener and such ministry required wisdom based on hearing and discerning.

The Lord is patient. He reminded me of those who were mentors and spiritual directors in my life. They were instrumental in opening me up to God's Word, or to spiritual authority in leadership, or showed me what steadfast service

looked like when it flowed from a dedicated inner life. Those I now consider ‘mentors’ may not even know they were. Perhaps some throughout the years, have seen me as a mentor, though I would not have assumed that role in any definable way. But now, the Lord was leading me to see this as intentional, not as a leadership consultant but as one who contributes to the spiritual formation of another. With consistent prayer that he would teach me to listen and to hear not just the person but the Spirit, I now have a mentoring ministry.

Study

While study is a spiritual discipline, it is also ministry received and given. The determination to be a lifelong learner is not just for the acquisition of knowledge or even to keep my brain alert. It is to be in the company of a “great cloud of witnesses” (Heb 12:1). Many of those witnesses are long gone, but they continue to speak and strangely enough as we hear their life stories, read their writings, there is a mental interaction. Dialogue takes place through private study but also in the company of professors and fellow students. There is a ministry of sharing perspectives, of ‘iron sharpens iron’, of being stretched beyond your personal or denominational boundaries. Life is enriched through the contribution of others, but my hope is that I too have played a part in contributing to their spiritual formation.

My closest friends would concur that study is ministry for they have read assignments, listened to my new discoveries, even read some of the books on my reading list, and spiritual formation has become a regular topic.

What is learned must be shared and I do that, for education is not the accumulation of facts but rather life-changing principles. Throughout my years of service as an officer, I have preached, taught and shared in one-to-one ministry the things learned through formal and informal study. Retirement is ideal for this ministry.

It is the Lord's will that we should live life to the full. His promises of inexpressible joy and peace beyond understanding are not vague or vain promises. Retirement is not to be spent dwelling on past adventures except in a spirit of thanksgiving. Retirement calls us to give ourselves to ministry in the now, with eager anticipation of being used for his glory in the future. He is the "immeasurably more" God. Grace best explains my journey.

Christ of glory, Prince of Peace,
Let thy life in mine increase;
Though I live may it be shown
'Tis thy life and not my own.
Dwell within, that men may see
Christ, the living Christ in me.

Answer now my soul's desire,
Purge my heart with holy fire,
Soothe the hurt with gentle balm,
Breathe within my life thy charm,
Fill me now, so shall there be
Christ, the holy Christ, in me.

Gracious Lord, thy grace apply,
Both to save and sanctify;
All my life wilt thou control,
Calmly ordering the whole,
That the world may ever see
Christ, and only Christ, in me.
(Colin Fairclough
SASB 1986, 479)

In 1983, life turned upside down for a family and the Glace Bay congregation. The Fosters, an elderly couple, were known in the town as Mr. & Mrs. Salvation Army for their weekly “league of mercy” ministry in nursing homes and hospitals. One evening when Mr. Foster had dropped his wife off for a women’s meeting, two young men jumped in the car and drove him to a deserted place to rob him. They only got \$44. He pleaded for his life, asking them to drive him home and he would give them more money. They refused, stabbed him repeatedly and left him to die, setting his car on fire. The whole town was shaken.

During my summer holidays shortly after, I attended the corps and spoke personally to Mrs. Foster about this terrible experience. She shared something with me that has become a life lesson. In her unspeakable grief, she asked the Lord, “why?” When her husband lay dying on the ground, why could she or her daughter (a nurse) not have been there just to hold his head off the ground? In what she described as like an audible voice, the Lord’s response was, “But I was there”!

It was a lesson that I too have learned. Adversity and suffering are facts of life. As pointed out in my research project, the crises may differ and the causes are varied. Pain is very real. But so is the presence of the Lord. This spiritual autobiography is a story of grace but it also has been a story of faith. I, like so many, have had to journey through dark valleys but they served to deepen my faith and make me daily aware of God’s unfailing love. He continues to speak, to call me to love him, to give my all, to open my heart to others. When life is

viewed *through the lens of grace*, we not only celebrate the ‘now’ but we can confidently move into the future, unafraid and filled with hope.

Following the retirement of a General, an official portrait is hung at International Headquarters. As other Generals had done, I wanted to include symbols of what has been significant in my life. I chose to have my photograph taken in the Glace Bay Salvation Army hall, holding an open Bible beside the pulpit. In the background is a stained-glass window, a memorial in tribute to the ministry of Edmund Foster and his wife, Jean. Such sterling Salvationists have been my models for life and service. On one side is a miner wrapped in Jesus’ arms, humbly kneeling before him. That is my background. I am a miner’s daughter. On the other side are Army figures and symbols of ministry. There is also the Army crest, and every detail reminds me of God’s gospel of grace.

The Apostle Paul’s prayer for the Romans is being fulfilled in my life: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Rom 15:13). These are strong, powerful, positive words. I have viewed my journey from birth to the present *through the lens of grace*. I now look to the future with the same perspective.

My story is incomplete. There is another chapter to be written some day and that too will be a story of grace.

Many are the things I cannot understand,
All above me mystery I see;
But the gift most wonderful from God’s own hand
Surely is his gift of grace to me!

*Higher than the stars that reach eternity,
Broader than the boundaries of endless space,
Is the boundless love of God that pardoned me;
O the wonder of his grace!*

(Howard Davies
SASB 1986, 52)

AFTERWORD

When Robert Mulholland offered a “road map” for spiritual formation, with the goal of Christlikeness, he called his book *Invitation to a Journey* (Mulholland 1993). The succinct definition by Evan Howard, quoted in the introduction, also highlights the goal of Christlikeness: “Christian spiritual formation, in all its contexts and all its agents, refers to processes through which we may be *conformed to and united with Christ*” (Howard 2008, 274).

Reaching the goal is not a self-effort program, nor is it devoid of challenges. Christian spiritual formation is about change. The formation is not conformity to an ideal. It is actually about transformation, how God desires to shape each Christian into the likeness of his Son. Spiritual formation is a story of grace and faith. It is about the work of the Triune God, who extends the invitation, provides for transformation through the blood of Jesus and confirms the possibility for Christlikeness with the provision of the purifying and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. But it is an invitation that needs to be responded to. The initial faith required to embark on the journey will be developed, tested, deepened and nurtured in various contexts and through many agents, as Howard suggests (Howard 2008, 274).

To view this prospect naturally could cause us to shrink from the journey for it necessitates dealing with self, embracing the cross, trusting God in painful circumstances. But to view it *through the lens of grace* is to accept an invitation to an adventure towards a glorious goal. This divine process not only involves the

challenges but also the joys and victories that are ours through living life in and through him, as he lives his life in and through us.

This portfolio has highlighted one of the Church's best exponents of spiritual formation, A.W. Tozer. The essay on Tozer shows how he understands God's purpose for his people. Tozer's ministry of preaching and writing continue to speak today, for he never treated the invitation to follow Jesus superficially. His was not a gospel of 'health and wealth'. His language continues to remind us that God is the great Refiner, who produces the gold in our character through purifying fire. Tozer would never understand being conformed to the image of Christ without experiencing the cross, not just the cross that Jesus bore but the cross he calls us to carry. Yet for Tozer to pursue God and to know him intimately was worth every sacrifice. As indicated in my essay, he was a prophetic witness who called the Church to change, to hunger for the deep things of God, to be faithful to its calling, to invest in the spiritual maturity of its people, to be a witness to the world.

As I have reflected on spiritual formation in my church tradition, The Salvation Army, seeing it *through the lens of grace* has not meant that I am unaware of its inadequacies or failings. It will always need prophets like Tozer to remind it of its mission to save souls, grow saints, and serve suffering humanity. A notable history does not guarantee a deep spirituality or effective witness. But in the challenge to present a model of its spiritual formation, I found that what has been required of a church for the spiritual development of its people, has been provided. The battle image used to explain The Salvation Army is anchored in

Scripture and relates to the journey of spiritual formation for the salvation soldier. If a Christian chooses to enlist as a soldier of The Salvation Army, then enculturation must take place for the purpose of faith development. In that deepening experience, an encounter with temptation and testing are inevitable but so is the promise that one encounters Jesus in a more intimate way. The support that comes from being a soldier in an international Salvation Army as well as a local corps furthers the deepening of the Christian life. But to enlist in the first place, means the soldier has signed up to be engaged in the Army's mission to the world. All of this is what spiritual formation entails.

It was in the context of this tradition that I chose to interview eight Salvationists for my action research project. The means of grace for the purpose of Christlikeness were in evidence in each of their lives, with saving faith, spiritual disciplines, as well as the nurturing and support of the corps family. I wanted to explore adversity and suffering in an attempt to show that no matter how diverse our crises experiences, God is faithful. These eight Salvationists representing various cultures, age groups and ministry, spoke of their conversion, the crisis and how they now continue on their journey. All were raised in a Christian environment. All found strength in his Word and in prayer. All were supported by people within the corps or beyond it. All have been marked by the crisis but in a transformative way. Just hearing their stories was an invitation in itself, an invitation into their sacred space, to have a fresh glimpse of faith tested and grace sufficient. These were signs that God is shaping them into the likeness of his Son and their trials proved to be means of grace.

My spiritual autobiography details the invitation to belong to Christ that came to me as a child, my calling to officership and the multi-faceted ministry through years of active service. In my journey, there were challenges that required me to discover the reality of his Presence in a more intimate way and to respond to him in obedience and truth. Faith deepened is the fruit of such abiding.

For three years, I have been immersed in the subject of spiritual formation. When God invited me on this journey on February 14, 2014, he knew it was a journey that would affect me personally and have a wider purpose. While grace and faith are the precious gifts that have merged through this portfolio, the idea of the journey has been a theme of the whole of the Doctor of Ministry program. Not unlike many people, I like quick fixes. Though my head knows that life is a journey, I do not like the fact that it takes so long to learn things or to move on. After three years, the destination still seems far off. Christlikeness is my deepest desire, but reality says there is much more needed to shape and refine. The word that stands out for me is process. The Salvation Army teaching on holiness has often referred to crisis and process. I am certainly still in the process stage. But the assurance that has come to me over these years is that God is in charge of the process. As I look *through the lens of grace*, the hand that beckoned me to join the journey is the hand that leads the way.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Crest and Flag



APPENDIX B

Letter to Participants

Date:

Dear

Further to our conversation regarding your participation in my research project for my Doctor of Ministry program, I write to confirm that this study on “adversity and suffering in the life of a Christian” has received the approval of the Tyndale Ethics Research Board. It has also been approved by the leadership team of the corps.

If you agree to participate, the attached consent form will provide you with the necessary information and will require your signature. It clearly outlines the purpose, procedure, risks and benefits. Confidentiality is guaranteed. Your involvement from the commencement to the conclusion of this project is voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any point you choose without consequence.

Your participation is desired because you have experienced adversity and suffering in your life. My research is to explore how you have dealt with such a difficult part of your Christian journey. My prayer is that as you share your story, your courage and faith will be affirmed in an empathetic and pastoral way and your witness contribute to the ongoing preaching, teaching and pastoral ministry of our corps.

Thank you for considering my request. I will contact you within the next week to determine your willingness to proceed. If you choose to do so, a copy of the questions will be given you and we will determine the date, time and venue for the interview.

God bless you richly.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX C

Consent Form

(Adapted from Appendix 1 – Sample Consent Form for Interview)
Qualitative Research – Tim Sensing

Introduction

I am seeking your help for a project I am engaged in for my studies at Tyndale University Seminary. I am in my third and final year of a Doctor of Ministry Program in Spiritual Formation and am conducting a research project on *Adversity and Suffering*. You can contact Dr. Mark Chapman or me if you have questions regarding this study [e-mails and phone numbers supplied].

Purpose

My purpose for this project is to show that in the Christian life we are not immune to suffering and adversity though they may take different forms. I want to explore how Christian individuals deal with suffering.

Procedure

If you consent, I will interview you personally and privately in your home or in your choice of venue. If you wish, you can have another person present with you. The interview will take 1-2 hours. The questions, which you will receive beforehand will centre on your conversion, your experience of suffering, how you have come through it and with what result. With your permission, the interview will be taped. The following week, I will write a synopsis of the interview and return it to you for your comments of whether something should be deleted or something that was missed should be added. I will contact you by phone or personally visit, if you wish, to review the interview synopsis.

Voluntary

YOUR PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY. IF YOU CHOOSE TO PARTICIPATE, YOU MAY STILL REFUSE TO ANSWER ANY QUESTION, OR WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY AT ANY TIME WITHOUT CONSEQUENCE. NOR ARE YOU WAIVING ANY LEGAL RIGHTS.

Risks

There are no known risks. However, if anything in the interview causes you discomfort or emotional distress, please feel free to let me know.

Benefits

Though there are no guaranteed Benefits to this study for you, I do hope that our time together will be a source of affirmation and encouragement as you share your spiritual journey.

Though not part of this project, The Salvation Army [name of corps] could benefit from the wider care implications, informing the preaching, teaching ministry in the area of adversity and suffering in the life of Christians and the pastoral visitation of all members, especially those in faith-stretching journeys.

Confidentiality

I will not use your name in my final project unless you give me permission to do so. Be assured that anything you say in confidence will not be divulged. The interview will be transcribed by a confidential secretary afterwards. She will not be present during the interview nor will she keep a copy of the audio or typed notes. Your story will become part of my research but will be compressed and anonymous. However, it is likely that local corps members would recognize your story even without your name. You can choose to not have your story included in my project.

Sharing the Results

I plan to construct a project referring to the synopsis of interviews as well as material from books, focus groups and biblical principles which will be shared with my professor and two members of my study group at Tyndale.

Before you sign: You are agreeing to an audiotaped interview for this research study. Be sure you are satisfied that any questions you may have had are answered. If you sign this document, you will be given a copy of it.

Participant's signature

_____ Date _____

Print Name _____

Researcher's signature

_____ Date _____

Print Name _____

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions

Before (crisis or trauma)

- 1) Tell me about your conversion experience. How and when (not necessarily a specific date) you came to know Christ as your Savior?
- 2) In your desire to grow as a Christian, who and what have helped you in your spiritual journey?

During (crisis or trauma)

- 1) What would you describe as an adverse event or circumstance that brought you the most suffering in your life?
- 2) How was your faith tested?
- 3) Who or what helped during this period?

After (crisis or trauma)

- 1) What were some of the most profound lessons learned from that experience?
- 2) How has this changed your relationship with the Lord and with others?

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