MORE INSPIRATIONAL THAN PENETRATING: THE SALVATION ARMY'S USE OF HISTORY

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With a culture that values action over words, The Salvation Army has tended to produce inspirational popular history, rather than penetrating academic works. It co-opted biblical narratives, church history and personal testimonies to save souls, create community and encourage soldiers to further action. As it moved from a mission to a defined denomination, history was used to elevate officership and diminish the voices of key pioneer soldiers, such as James Hooker in South Australia. This has paralleled the disempowerment of soldiers and encouraged a passive 'lay' role. Revitalization of the soldiery can be assisted by a recovery of 'lay' involvement in history. New techniques in church history which encourage 'bottom-up' perspectives could bridge the divide between popular and academic history.

In 1887 Hawkins, a Melbourne *War Cry* journalist, queried the lack of reports from the Australasian headquarters. The General Secretary replied that, 'I believe it can be truly said of the Salvation Army everywhere, that we are so busy making history that we have not sufficient time to write it.'[1] The Australian officer was repeating a saying of Catherine Booth, the wife of the Army's founder, William Booth.[2] A century later it had become a truism both within and outside the Army world, and could be reported at such events as the centenary of the opening of the Norwood Citadel.[3]

It should not be assumed from this that The Salvation Army has not produced historical writing. In fact it has flowed out of its

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[1] *War Cry* (Adelaide), 25 November 1887. The General Secretary was a senior staff-officer. Staff-officers were officers (ministers) temporarily attached to headquarters, which had oversight of the corps (churches) in a division (area). Note that the term 'corps' traditionally refers to the body of soldiers (members) and 'barracks' or 'citadel' refers to the building.

[2] Frederick de Latour Booth-Tucker, *Catherine Booth: The Mother of the Salvation Army* vol 1 (London: The Salvation Army, 1910), 44. William Booth is often referred to as the 'Founder' and Catherine as the 'Army Mother.'

[3] *The Eastern Courier*, 13 August 1997.

publishing houses since they were established, predominantly in the form of biographies. Walter Hull, a journalist for the Australian *War Cry* claimed, 'A personal opinion is that the Army is stronger on biographical writing than any other aspect of book publishing. For example, percentage-wise, we have not issued a large amount of theological or doctrinal work...'[4]

Nevertheless, the works which were produced were aimed predominantly at those who were already committed to the Army, either as soldiers or as supporters. As such they retained an inward focus. When aimed at a wider market, they had an apologetic function. This has resulted in a body of work that is predominantly hagiography and has perhaps unkindly been referred to as 'the enormous condescension of historiography.'[5] Nor was there significant study on the Army from outside of the organization. Accepting the movement's firm denial of being a church at face value, church historians have often relegated The Salvation Army to the place of an interesting nineteenth century mission.[6]

In recent years historians have become interested in The Salvation Army and it is becoming a legitimate topic for academic study. Norman H. Murdoch's *Origins of the Salvation Army* was the first attempt at a history of the movement written from an outside perspective. In his preface Murdoch concedes that 'not all army history has been done badly', implying that most of it has.[7] Murdoch does not outline what he would consider to be 'good' history, but from the tenor of his writing, it can be assumed to be a critical analysis of the movement and its place in its wider society. He cites with approval Howard R. Murphy's complaint that the Army is more interested in being 'inspirational than penetrating.'[8]

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[4] *War Cry* (Australia), 25 August 1984. Reprinted in Walter Hull, *Paper Platform*, (Melbourne: The Salvation Army, 1993), 191.

[5] Theodore Koditschek, 'Pulling the Devil's Kingdom Down: The Salvation Army in Victorian Britain,' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 33:2 (1 August 2002): 293.

[6] For example, Bruce L Shelly has a comparatively lengthy half page on The Salvation Army, mentioning its evangelistic and social service work between sections on the Nonconformist labour movement and Christian Socialists. *Church History in Plain Language* 3rd ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 411.

[7] Norman H. Murdoch, *Origins of The Salvation Army* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1994), ix. Murdoch is the son of Salvation Army officers, but in attempting to avoid the 'pitfalls of hagiography' he borders on hostility in his language and could be seen as an external writer.

[8] Howard R. Murphy, review of Arch Wiggins, *The History of The Salvation Army: Volume 4 1886-1904* (New York: The Salvation Army, 1964), in *Victorian Studies* 8 (Dec 1964): 185-6.

This complaint raises a number of questions. To what extent is it realistic to expect an organisation to conduct critical self-analysis of its own history? Given the available records, is it possible to construct a 'good' history of The Salvation Army? How does The Salvation Army use its own history? Is the Army's use of history effectively inspirational? Is the divide between popular and academic writing an artificial one and therefore unhelpful? Is there a way to bridge the divide and be both penetrating and inspirational? These may be more useful questions than simply wondering why The Salvation Army persists in writing 'bad history.'

Fully answering these questions would require a paper in each case. In addition, it is clear that regional differences play a part. Most of the current research into Salvation Army history has been conducted in North America, even when the research is on countries outside of America. A survey of recently published historians shows that Andrew Eason, Diane Winston, Norman Murdoch, Pamela Walker, R. G. Moyles and Roger J. Green are all located in either Canada or the United States, with Glenn Horridge a lone Briton. A study of the factors leading to this imbalance would be instructive. Instead this paper will outline some general tendencies in the Salvation Army use of history, with the focus on examples from South Australia, in the expectation that a case study from a specific context will suggest trends in The Salvation Army as a whole and raise questions as to the reasons for any regional exceptions.

At present there are few books on the history of The Salvation Army in Australia and none on South Australia. The last book published was for the 1980 centenary.[9] Although engaging and readable, like most Australian history writings it suffered from relying on secondary sources and a tendency to be Eastern-states-centric. There are reasons for this. Many of the original records have been destroyed and now exist only as citations in the earliest histories. The International Headquarters of The Salvation Army in London suffered a direct hit by an incendiary bomb on 11 May 1941. On 22 April 1975 the first Australian Corps, now known as Adelaide Congress Hall, and the South Australian Divisional Headquarters, which was located in the same building, were destroyed by fire.[10] The Clare Corps records were similarly lost in a fire in 1917.[11]

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[9] Barbara Bolton, *Booth's Drum* (Sydney: Hodder and Stoughton, 1980).
[10] Undoubtedly equivalent examples could be found in other locations but the author will be demonstrating her own biases by preferring to use South Australian examples in this paper.
[11] *Yorke Peninsular Country Times*, September 1980.

However, even without these losses, it is doubtful that the historical records would be complete enough for traditional approaches to church history. From the time that a *War Cry* editor instructed his officers to 'give us a report of work done, souls saved; not an essay,' the detailed recording of events has been a low priority.[12] Some early officers were illiterate or at best semi-literate.[13] Corps membership rolls were often rewritten for internal purposes such as the assignment of numbered 'cartridge' envelopes for tithing, making accurate statistical analysis of soldiers impossible.[14] Corps history books were only introduced in South Australia in 1912 and few were consistently maintained. Given the Methodist enthusiasm for recording every minute detail, it is difficult to comprehend that one of its offspring could have such modest written records.

The mind-set of making history rather than writing it has also led to the lack of a well-defined archival policy. Corps records are the responsibility of the corps, but unless a commanding officer shows a particular interest in history, there is no impetus to record historical information, or even to keep old records. Corps that close down are not required to pass on the records to headquarters. It is often only the interest of soldiers or other parties that ensures this happens, thus leaving Salvation Army artifacts prey to both internal and external private collectors or simply destruction. Too much of South Australian history has been preserved by enthusiastic 'dumpster-diving' and not all of the saved material has found its way back into official hands.[15] There have been changes in the focus of historical writing from ecclesiastical forms to religious history, making the lack

[12] *War Cry* (Adelaide), 20 June 1884.

[13] For example, the Adelaide *War Cry* normally edited officers' reports, but the 29 April 1887 edition contains an unedited report from 'Brudder Gough', a lieutenant stationed at Riverton. The quality of the writing casts doubt on the literacy of his commanding officer, Captain Harry Symons, if Gough was assigned to write the Corps reports.

[14] For example, the earliest known Soldiers Roll in South Australia is at Mount Gambier Corps. It contains several lists, presumably for this purpose, and is unlikely to be the original roll.

[15] For example, the Victor Harbor Corps history book was lost during its nine year closure from 1963-1972. No one now remembers who took the book home for safe-keeping. South Australian David Morris was a renowned 'dumpster-diver', collecting much of the material from corps that closed down. The South Australian Heritage Centre Archive and Museum owes its existence largely to his influence.

of corps records less of a barrier.[16] However, it is significant that North America has the best-resourced archives as well as the most prolific Salvation Army historians.

One factor in the lack of penetrating historical writing may be related to officer training. William Booth adopted the revivalist distrust of formal theological training and abandoned his own studies to conduct evangelistic work.[17] Until recent years few officers in Australia had undergraduate qualifications and no officer has completed postgraduate study in Australian Salvation Army history, preferring to concentrate on the social welfare, leadership or theological aspects of their work.

It is debatable how much this affects research in the area, given historical work is rarely undertaken by church leaders, who tend to lack the time to undertake painstaking primary research. The historians mentioned previously are not officers and the most penetrating South Australian denominational histories have also been produced by laypeople.[18] However, the residual distrust of theological education has meant that there has been until recently little encouragement for even lay soldiers to conduct in-depth historical research of The Salvation Army and few mentors available to support them.

Neither the lack of material nor the lack of a culture of historical writing fully account for the 'bad history' of the complaints. The real problem can be seen in a work which Murdoch might concede is not done badly. *The History of The Salvation Army* is a multi-volume work begun by Robert Sandall and is one of the most important records of Salvation Army history. In his preface to the first volume, Albert Osborne paid 'tribute to the persistent care with which the author has given himself to his task.'[19] Sandall researched his work

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[16] Some of the changes in focus are outlined in John Gascoigne, 'The Journal of Religious History 1960-2010: The Changing Face of Religious History over Fifty Years,' *Journal of Religious History* 34:3, 262-272. The journal itself was founded in 1960 to explore expressions of religious practice, rather than the then focus on ecclesiastical structures.

[17] George Scott Railton, *General Booth* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912), 43.

[18] David Hilliard's history of the Anglican Church in South Australia, *Godliness and Good Order* (Netley: Wakefield Press, 1986) and Arnold Hunt's history of South Australian Methodism, *This Side of Heaven (*Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1985) are just two examples of this. In the Salvation Army Colonel Henry Gariepy, 'promoted to Glory' this year, was a notable exception. It may be significant that he also was based in North America.

[19] Robert Sandall, *The History of The Salvation Army: Volume 1, 1865-1878 (*New York: The Salvation Army, 1947), vii. Sandall's desire to 'set things down correctly' is

carefully and uncovered inconsistencies in the material. These included a mistake John Gore, co-founder of The Salvation Army in Australia, made in the date of his own conversion.[20] Sandall was prepared to conflict with 'ideas long and widely held,' yet according to Osborne even this work was not written out of academic interest, but so that the 'study of its History [might] bring to so many readers a new stimulus to holy enterprise.'[21]

This is the crux of the tension between academic historians and Salvation Army writers. Historians expect academic excellence – explanations of the motives of leaders, historical perspective, an assessment of the initial context, the Army's impact on a society, causes, trends, underlying social processes, etc. The Salvation Army has had no interest in any of these on more than a superficial level. Nor is it likely to, unless such analysis can be used to further its core objectives. It is primarily a practical movement and even its history is merely a tool to be used. Murphy complained that 'This book, to put it bluntly, is intended to save souls, not to feed scholarly curiosity.' Yet even he sensed that such a statement would be taken as a compliment by Arch Wiggins, the writer of the book he was critiquing.[22]

It is curious that both Murphy and Murdoch expected The Salvation Army to conform to their expectations of historical writings. From its earliest days The Salvation Army was prepared to co-opt even biblical history to the service of evangelism. Instead of sermons carefully exegeting Bible passages, officers told stories of Jonah, 'the captain who ran away' and of Jesus Christ arranging for a 'Great Open-air Demonstration in Galilee' after his resurrection.[23]

It was a bold move in a climate that was already unsure of the legitimacy of the then newly published Revised Standard Version translation of the Bible, let alone the adaptation of biblical characters, but it also gave the soldiers courage in the fight. If Moses and Aaron could go 'before Pharaoh to demand the right to march

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expressed in a letter to Australian historian Percival Dale, 6 January 1945, D151197, Salvation Army Heritage Centre, Melbourne.

[20] According to Sandall, comparison with the date of The Salvation Army's use of the Edinburgh Castle, Stepney, London, as a preaching place showed that Gore had given the wrong date in a widely quoted letter to William Booth in 1880. Robert Sandall, *The History of the Salvation Army: vol 2, 1878-1886* (New York: The Salvation Army, 1950), 243-244.

[21] Sandall, 2: vii-viii.

[22] Murphy comments that 'the author not only failed to do his duty as an historian but would have considered it wrong to do so'. Murphy, 186.

[23] *War Cry* (Adelaide), 8 June 1883, 10 June 1887.

and serve God' and God was mighty enough to defeat Pharaoh's army with the result that 'Moses marched the Salvation Army out of Egypt,' then being arrested in Kapunda for marching in the streets was merely a temporary setback and even vindication of their determination to claim the world for Jesus.[24]

Prior church history was used in a similar manner. The Salvation Army appealed to a direct religious lineage that reached back to the apostles. It was the same claim that John Wesley had made in defence of Methodism.[25] In a clear identification with church history, Catherine Booth pointed out that persecution had accompanied the work of the church throughout history, citing opposition during the Reformation, and to George Fox, and to the Methodists.[26] At a North Adelaide Demonstration, it was declared that 'we [are] the Apostolic succession' of Acts 1.[27] This was language foreign to Salvation Army theology, but it served to reassure converts that they were supporting a mainstream expression of evangelical faith.

Personal history was also to be conscripted into God's service, public testimonies being a feature of Salvation Army meetings. Converts were expected to demonstrate the reality of their commitment by immediately making a public declaration of their new-found faith to the rest of the congregation. They were then required to attend open-air and other meetings - standing near the front and being ready to participate in the meetings by relating stories of their conversion and subsequent growth in holiness.[28]

Early testimonies emphasised prior misdeeds in order to magnify the grace of God. A remarkable number of early converts had been on the verge of slitting their wives' throats, and had been unapprehended thieves or unremitting drunkards. One man claimed he had tried to blow up his house with his wife in it! Almost every convert claimed to be the worst of all sinners.[29] Given the emphasis on testimonies and a miraculous conversion, it was tempting for soldiers to exaggerate their circumstances prior to conversion. Those

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[24] *War Cry* (Adelaide), 5 December 1884.
[25] See 'On Laying the Foundation of the New Chapel,' Sermon 122 in John Wesley, *Works* vol 6.
[26] Opposition was identified as a hallmark of the faithful church. *War Cry* (Adelaide), 22 June 1883. See also 25 January 1884.
[27] *War Cry* (Adelaide), 3 June 1887.
[28] *War Cry* (Adelaide), 25 February 1887.
[29] *War Cry* (Adelaide), 22 June 1883, 29 June 1883, 7 December 1883, 18 January 1884.

who could not claim a criminal past could testify to spiritual indifference. Those who had not been regular church-goers proclaimed how long it had been since they had sat in a pew. Regular church-attenders became mere seat-warmers.[30] There were indeed startling transformations of drunkards and nominal Christians, if perhaps not as many as was claimed. And although tainted with an element of reverse pride, such testimonies were designed to persuade listeners that no sin was too extreme to experience the forgiveness of God. All were welcome in the Kingdom of Heaven, no matter how appalling or indifferent their past.

Testimonies were a way in which every soldier could take part in the life and purpose of the church. Education, social status, appearance and race were all irrelevant to the ability to tell a story. Even language was no barrier. At Angaston the German converts gave their testimonies in German.[31] In Naracoorte, 'Charlie the Chinaman' testified and was later 'taking a prominent part in the meetings by reading from a Chinese Bible in his own language, and then explaining the same in English.'[32] At Bowden one Easter there were testimonies from the Scotch, the Cornish, and an Aborigine in his own tongue.[33]

Testimonies also created a sense of community. Those who shared were no longer strangers, but brothers and sisters in Christ. This was important to those whose main friendships were found in the pub culture and who needed replacements if they were to have any hope of conforming to the temperance expectations of The Salvation Army. It was also attractive to those used to the stiff formality of the typical church of the time. A seeker in Jamestown admitted to having been 'brought up to the Church of England, but I like your plain, outspoken talk.'[34]

William Booth had repeatedly urged his soldiers to 'go for souls and go for the worst.'[35] The soldiers in South Australia took his command to heart, gleefully reporting when they saw the 'worst characters in town' saved.[36] Salvation experienced by one was often

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[30] *War Cry* (Adelaide), 4 May 1883, 16 May 1883, 18 November 1887, 25 November 1887.
[31] *War Cry* (Adelaide), 12 December 1884.
[32] *War Cry* (Adelaide), 19 December 1884, 1 April 1887.
[33] *War Cry* (Adelaide), 15 April 1887.
[34] *War Cry* (Adelaide), 21 January 1887.
[35] Harold Begbie, *Life of William Booth: The Founder of the Salvation Army*, vol 2 (London: MacMillan and Co, 1920), 473.
[36] *War Cry* (Adelaide), 1 February 1884.

the catalyst for more of their friends being saved, the rough testimony of a former comrade in strife being much more effective than the most eloquent sermon.[37] Testimonies were not long discourses. At a Hallelujah Supper at Bowden there were sixty-four testimonies in ten minutes, approximately one every nine and a half seconds.[38] Children's testimonies were also found to be effective. Little Nellie, aged nine years, could state that 'I am glad that I am a little soldier of the cross. I am still trusting in the Lord.'[39]

It was the use of 'unlearned testimonies' that formed some of the objections to Salvation Army methods.[40] However, the use of refined services and erudite sermons had done little to attract the working classes. The Adelaide *War Cry* quoted an unnamed Presbyterian Doctor of Divinity who stated, 'Something was needed to break up the staid and dignified formality of the churches, and to impress the myriads of men with the Importance and Utility of Salvation and the so-called cultivated and scholarly preaching of the present day is utterly useless to souls needing a Saviour.'[41]

With such a strong emphasis on personal testimony, it is little wonder that the first intentional international historical records were biographies. George S. Railton wrote about Salvation Army figures such as John Allen, (*The Salvation Navvy*, 1880) and this was followed by biographies of Catherine Booth by W.T. Stead (1890) and Frederick de Latour Booth-Tucker (1892), and General Booth by Railton (1912) and Harold Begbie (1920).[42] Biographical works remain the key focus of Salvation Army publications. These works retain the purpose of testimonies; to demonstrate the grace of God in the lives of converts, to create a sense of community, and as encouragement and inspiration for continuing their efforts. Consequently, they are predominantly descriptive, rather than

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[37] *War Cry* (Adelaide), 27 July 1883, 25 April 1884, 22 August 1884.
[38] *War Cry* (Adelaide), 22 August 1884.
[39] *War Cry* (Adelaide), 10 October 1884.
[40] *War Cry* (Adelaide), 11 April 1884 , 18 April 1884.
[41] *War Cry* (Adelaide), 11 April 1884.
[42] George Scott Railton, *The Salvation Navvy: Being an Account of the Life, Death & Victories of Captain John Allen, of the Salvation Army* (London: The Salvation Army, 1880); Frederick St. George de Lautour Booth-Tucker, *The Life of Catherine Booth, the Mother of the Salvation Army* (London: The Salvation Army, 1892); W. T. Stead, *Catherine Booth* (London: James Nisbet & Co, 1900); George Scott Railton, *General Booth* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912); Harold Begbie, *The Life of General William Booth, 2 Vols* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1920).

analytical, and are aimed at contemporary Salvationists, rather than an intentional record for posterity.

In the preface one of the earliest biographies of William Booth, Bramwell Booth wrote a rare purpose statement for Salvation Army historical writing:

> We cannot think it possible for anyone, especially a Salvationist, to read it without being compelled ever and anon to ask himself such questions as these: 'Am I living a life that is at all like this life? Am I, at any rate, willing by God's grace to do anything I can in the same direction, in order that God may be more loved and glorified, and that my fellow-men may be raised to a Godlike and happy service? After all, is there not something better for me than money making, or the search after human applause, or indeed the pursuit of earthly good of any kind? If, instead of aiming at that which will fade away, I turn my attention to making the best of my life for God and for others, may I not accomplish something that will afford me satisfaction at last and bear reflection in the world to come?[43]

Booth later outlines a secondary purpose for the book – to raise money for a Memorial Scheme to erect premises for training officers, headquarters and halls, and the extension of the work internationally.[44] These two purposes have remained the same for much of Salvation Army writing. Indeed, two resources produced recently were designed not so much as historical references but as encouragement to continue the social and evangelistic mission of The Salvation Army. *Insane* by Nealson Munn and David Collinson, a book which outlines specific historical events, includes study questions which address similar current social issues.[45] *Boundless Salvation*, an analysis of Salvation Army history, theology and mission by John Cleary, was deliberately produced as a four part DVD series with an interactive study guide in order to facilitate group discussion.[46] Both challenge the participants to relate Salvation Army history to current circumstances and encourage further action in those areas. As an example of the second purpose, proceeds for Geoff and Kalie Webb's *Authentic 'Fair Dinkum' Holiness* have supported the building fund for the Ingle Farm

[43] George Scott Railton, *General Booth* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912), iii-iv.
[44] Railton, v.
[45] Nealson Munn & David Collinson, *Insane : the stories of crazy salvos who changed the world* ([Melbourne]: The Salvation Army, 2007).
[46] John Cleary, *Boundless Salvation* (Salvation Army Southern Territory: Radiant Film & Television, 2008).

Corps.[47] Yet, however similar the purposes for historical writings are, there is one area which has intensified over time – the emphasis on work done by officers.

Being a practical organization, The Salvation Army used any suitable person for a task, regardless of their race, gender, social status, education or rank. This freedom to act without excessive reference to hierarchy meant that the Army could respond to situations and needs as they arose, rather than after approval from a committee. This enabled innovative solutions from unlikely sources.

Bernard Watson observed that:

> The Army was certainly not created by an officer marching before and a mass of highly docile soldiery coming on behind. Sometimes the picture emerging from the study of Army history is of the soldiery advancing enthusiastically and the officer behind having a bit of a job to keep within shouting distance![48]

Traditionally there was little difference between soldiers and officers, apart from the commitment of time. The first South Australian corps was founded and was expanding, with a half-built hall, by the time the first officers arrived in February 1881. Soldiers could, and did, participate in meetings with testimonies, Bible readings, singing and sermons. They wrote reports for illiterate officers, ran the finances and led the march to new outposts. Richard Briant, a pioneer South Australian soldier, never became an officer, but founded and ran the East End Corps and was in charge of divisional finances for several years before ill-health forced his retirement. Allowing soldiers to function in these roles was an excellent way of finding potential officers.

However, as the movement turned into an organisation, with a defined structure and hierarchy, independent action by soldiers was discouraged and declined. Officer roles became more managerial and soldiers turned into members.[49] The appearance of more passive language reflected a more passive role for the participants. Instead of an army, they were becoming a congregation; spectators, rather

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[47] Geoff and Kalie Webb, *Authentic 'Fair Dinkum' Holiness (*[Melbourne], The Salvation Army, 2007), 11.
[48] Bernard Watson, 'The Contemporary Framework (2): Amidst the Workers,' *The Officer*, April 1970: 261-265.
[49] Harold Hill traces this process in *Leadership in the Salvation Army: A Case Study in Clericalisation*, Studies in Christian History and Thought (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006).

than active combatants in the 'war against sin and Satan'. Language doesn't just describe, it also subconsciously creates identity and informs expectations.

Historical writing reflected this trend, with accounts increasingly concentrating on the activities of officers, rather than soldiers. This could be attributed to the availability of material – it is easier to access centralised official officer records than those of soldiers. While this might be true of accounts of those in the international hierarchy or events of denominational importance, this trend was also evident in local history, where material was more evenly available for both officers and soldiers.

The concentration on officers did not just apply to new events, but led to a revised treatment of history. Significant 'laity' started disappearing from the historical records. It can be clearly seen in the change in presentation of James Hooker, a founding member of The Salvation Army in South Australia. Hooker was one of the first soldiers enrolled in the Adelaide I Corps. His involvement in the Army's work probably stemmed from an interest in the temperance movement.[50] John Gore and Edward Saunders recognised each other as English Salvation Army converts from their testimonies at a temperance meeting held at the Wesleyan Church of which both Saunders and Hooker were members. Although Hooker had no prior experience of the Army, having arrived in Australia in 1852, well before Booth's involvement with the East London Christian Mission (a precursor to The Salvation Army), he must have been attracted by the enthusiasm of the other two men, for when they discussed starting The Salvation Army in Adelaide he joined in their enterprise. Their first open-air in Light Square was held the following night. Hooker arranged some of the temporary halls used for subsequent meetings. He donated the land and organized finance for the purpose-built barracks of Adelaide I Corps (that later included the South Australian Divisional Headquarters and Training Home for officers).[51]

In 1882 the Hookers went on a holiday to England. James Hooker used the opportunity to expand the work in South Australia, meeting William Booth, lobbying for more officers and paying for the passage

[50] *Advertiser,* 24 March 1906; *Chronicle*, 1 October 1910; Geoffrey R. Needham and Daryl I. Thomson, *Men of Steel: A Chronicle of the Metal Casting Industry in South Australia* (Croydon Park: G.R. Needham, 1987), 30; *Local Officer and Bandsman*, 1 November 1944.

[51] *War Cry* (London), 20 July 1882; *The Salvation War 1882* (London: The Salvation Army, c. 1882), 146.

of several. When it was clear that no more officers were available, he arranged for fifty single women to take advantage of the free passage offered by the colony to domestic servants. These 'Hallelujah Lassies' were a significant reinforcement for the corps and several later became officers.[52]

This plan was so successful that it is likely to have influenced the immigration portion of Booth's *In Darkest England* scheme. Like other contributors, Hooker's name is not mentioned, but the shortage of domestic servants and the availability of paid passage for suitable women are mentioned in his proposal. It is unlikely that Booth did not have Hooker's efforts in mind when he wrote this section.[53]

On his return Hooker travelled widely in South Australia on business, being associated with the principal railway bridge-building work carried out in the colony.[54] He claimed that 'wherever I go the people are asking me when the Salvation Army are coming.'[55] It is likely, given the rapid expansion into country areas, that Hooker was able to pave the way for new corps with his business contacts. He took an active role in the opening of corps such as Jamestown and visited a number of others.[56]

A founding member of the Adelaide I band, on the departure to Sydney of Thomas Sutherland, the first officer and founder of the band, Hooker was appointed the first bandmaster. He soon realised that he could not conduct and at the same time play the clarinet, which needed two hands to play. He relinquished the position, although he remained in the band. He also arranged for the immigration of Bertram Fry, a member of the original Fry family which had founded the first Salvation Army band.[57]

More importantly, Hooker was appointed Inspector of Buildings for the Salvation Army and given responsibility, along with Captain Thomas Gibbs and Richard Briant, of managing 'all work in South Australia'. He accompanied subsequent commanding officers to various towns in South Australia, giving advice and conducting

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[52] *The Salvation War,* 146; *War Cry* (London), 20 July 1882, 7 October 1882, 4 April 1883. The careers of those who became officers can be traced in subsequent *War Cry* reports.
[53] William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out,* first printed 1890, (Atlanta: The Salvation Army, 1984), 197.
[54] *Advertiser,* 24 March 1906; Needham & Thomson, 30.
[55] *War Cry* (London), 20 July 1882.
[56] *War Cry* (Adelaide), 4 April 1884.
[57] *War Cry* (London), 22 December 1881, 20 July 1882; *War Cry* (Australasia), 16 August 1958, 31 August 1968.

negotiations for the lease and purchase of properties. Hooker never became an officer, but remained a staunch Salvationist until his death in 1906.[58]

In the summary of worldwide Army work in 1882, it was reported that:

> Early in the year Mr. Hooker, the builder of this hall, who had stood almost in the position of a father to the work in South Australia from the first, visited this country on business. Passing up and down amongst our corps, he induced a great many of our people to emigrate to the Colony, thus conferring not only the great benefit upon both lands, and upon those few from amongst our over-crowded population, but also helping to provide a well-trained company of soldiers there, from amongst whom, as well as from the Australian converts, plenty of officers should be obtainable for the whole continent.[59]

By 1950 Hooker's role in the founding of The Salvation Army in South Australia was already being downplayed in official histories, becoming a 'friend', rather than a co-founder. In addition his innovative use of existing resources to support Army objectives was assumed to be a government commission:

> The builder was James Hooker, an iron-founder and engineer, who was so good a friend to the pioneers that he became known as 'The father of The Salvation Army in South Australia'... At this meeting Hooker who, with his wife, was in England combining with his furlough a governmental mission to secure emigrants, described how the work had been started in Adelaide... An advertisement in the War Cry (7th October 1882) invited on his behalf applications from 'fifty Blood and Fire lasses' who were cooks, housemaids or in general service, for free passages to South Australia. A considerable number reached Adelaide early in 1883, and found situations at once.[60]

Note that there is no record of a commission or payment for this task by either the colonial government or the Adelaide City Council, and no mention of Hooker in letters and reports by either the London Emigration Agent or the Commissioner of Crown Lands, who administered the scheme. It therefore must be concluded that Hooker was acting without official standing, and had decided to take

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[58] *War Cry* (Adelaide), 7 September 1883; *Local Officer and Bandsman*, 1 November 1944; *Advertiser* 1906.
[59] *The Salvation War*, 146.
[60] Sandall, 2: 245-6.

advantage of the colony's assisted passage schemes to reinforce the work of the Salvation Army with soldiers who had been converted in England.

Shortly afterwards the first Australian history distanced his involvement even further:

> Early in 1880 Mr. James Hooker, proprietor of the large foundry at the north end of Light Square, had erected at the corner of Hindley and Morphett Streets a terrace of sixteen two-storied shops and dwellings. There was a row of old buildings at the rear. At the suggestion of Saunders, these were demolished, and on the site Mr. Hooker erected for the Corps a Barracks eighty feet long by forty feet wide. The rent was £130 per annum...Brother James Hooker, who had become a Salvationist, played a clarinet, and was later appointed Bandmaster. When on a business trip to England, this comrade helped the infant cause by visiting a number of Corps with the Founder, suggesting to young women Salvationists the advantages of migrating to Australia under the South Australian Government Scheme. In this he anticipated something of the Army's migration activities of forty years later.[61]

By the Australian Centenary in 1980, Hooker had become simply another helpful immigrant Salvationist:

> Now James Hooker – another immigrant Salvationist – was supervising the building of a hall at the corner of Morphett and Hindley Streets...When [this] proprietor of a flourishing foundry, and his wife paid a visit to England in 1881 they were able to give William Booth a glowing report of the Army's progress in Australia. They also recruited young women Salvationists under the South Australian Government's Scheme.[62]

But in a recent treatment, Hooker was reduced to being merely the landlord:

> James Hooker, who was the owner of a large foundry, erected the Hooker Building in 1880 at the corner of Hindley and Morphett Streets, Adelaide. A row of old buildings at the rear were demolished and on this site Hooker erected and leased to The Salvation Army the first barracks.[63]

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[61] Percival Dale, *Salvation Chariot* (East Melbourne: The Salvation Army, 1952), 5.
[62] Bolton, *Booth's Drum*, 13. Note that there is no record of prior contact with The Salvation Army before the Burnett meeting. The date of 1881 is incorrect.
[63] Ken Sanz, 'Our First Corps,' *Hallelujah* (Summer 2007): 39-42.

The process of downplaying the role of soldiers was probably unconscious, a symptom of a culture that stresses the importance of officership. *The Orders and Regulations* states that 'the salvation war requires the performance of special duties, to which God calls suitable persons by various means. No call can be more important than that to officership.'[64] The Salvation Army is, above all, a practical movement and the emphasis on officers has important purposes. It discourages action independent of the organisation and promotes greater unity in the diversity of an international organisation. It encourages others to officership by implying that ministry of lasting consequence is only available through full-time commitment. It was particularly important when the Founder, William Booth, was ageing and there was a danger of loss of purpose under a new leader, even if it was his son Bramwell. There had already been defections from two of his sons, Ballington and Herbert, and it was critical that control was exercised over the organization to prevent it fracturing completely. The authority of officers and the 'chain-of-command' to headquarters needed to be strengthened. Ranks became regulated. 'Deserters' were publicly punished.[65]

This is, of course, a simplification of the process,[66] but either consciously or unconsciously the progression had an effect on how history was written. The changed mindset enabled historians Robert Sandall and Dale Percival to determine the relative input of Gore and Saunders into the commencement of The Salvation Army in Australasia based upon their rank upon retirement.[67] John Coutts could not imagine a simple soldier achieving what John Gore had, so claimed that in holding the first meeting in South Australia Gore 'had not waited for his Captain's commission to arrive from London

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[64] *Chosen to Be a Soldier: Orders and Regulations for Soldiers of The Salvation Army* revised edition (London: The Salvation Army, 1999), 79.

[65] The marks where Herbert Booth's name was chiselled from the foundation stones he laid as the Australasian Territorial Commander are still visible at corps such as Norwood. For an analysis of the events surrounding the defections of Booth's children see St John Ervine, *God's Soldier: General William Booth* vol 2 (London: W. Heinemann, 1934), 750ff.

[66] Harold Hill spent an entire doctoral thesis (now the previously cited book) analysing the change in organisational norms that I have dismissed in a few sentences. Harold Hill, 'Officership in The Salvation Army: A Case Study in Clericalisation,' PhD thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 2004.

[67] Letter from Percival Dale to Robert Sandall [March 1945], D151197, Salvation Army Heritage Centre, Melbourne.

before taking action'.[68] In fact, there is no evidence that Gore had ever intended to become an officer and did not become one until late 1883.[69]

Recently there has been concern expressed that Salvationists are increasingly merely passive participants in Sunday worship, rather than the dynamic fighting force of previous years. The recommendation of a Salvation Army leadership conference in Hong Kong that a theology of the 'priesthood of all believers' needed to be developed to encourage greater involvement in ministry' led to the writing of *Servants Together*. It stresses that traditionally there have been no rigid lines between soldier and officer and that 'it has been one of the distinctives of The Salvation Army to believe that there is no essential ministry exercised by a Salvation Army officer that could not also be carried out by a soldier.'[70]

Part of the revitalisation of the soldiery may come from a recovery of 'lay' involvement in historical mission and a key to this is the neglected primary resource of newspapers. The Salvation Army newspaper, the *War Cry*, was first published in Britain in 1879. One of the printers, James Barker, was subsequently appointed the Australasian Territorial Commander. Soon after his arrival Barker established the publication of a local version of the *War Cry* in each colony. The first edition in South Australia was produced on 6 April 1883. Victoria and New South Wales editions soon followed. The four page, weekly broadsheet (expanded to eight pages by 1890) gave detailed corps reports, including particulars of meetings, events, supporters, testimonies of soldiers, difficulties experienced by officers, physical opposition, international news, expansion methods and much more. Although there is not a continuous run available, it has the potential to provide a unique insight into the everyday beliefs and worship of the ordinary attendee. In addition, local secular and religious newspapers gave lengthy reports of meetings, legal proceedings and the reactions of the wider community. Pamela Walker made extensive use of the local press to locate The Salvation Army in its social, political and religious context in *Pulling the Devil's Kingdom Down*, which gave the book a much greater depth than if she had relied solely on internal Salvationist records. It also

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[68] John Coutts, *The Salvationists* (London: Mowbrays, 1977), 51.
[69] *War Cry* (Adelaide), 9 November 1883.
[70] Earle Robinson et al, *Servants Together: Salvationist Perspectives on Ministry* (London: The Salvation Army, 2002), 9, 78.

enabled an analysis that included the stories of soldiers as well as officers. [71]

Although the creation of heritage centres in some locations has enabled this material to be more widely available, this is not new. The question is then why has it not been used in the past? The answer may be as simple as a lack of historical training. But it may also lie in the reports giving new insights into the life of soldiers in local corps, rather than significant officers. The new awareness of the importance of an empowered soldiery enables these resources to be examined with a different attitude.

Can history produced by a denomination be both penetrating and inspirational? The Salvation Army's primary aim has been to build God's Kingdom, rather than provide critical analysis for academics. It could be argued that this is the aim of all internal denominational historians. However, with a greater historical self-awareness can come a more effective use of history to inspire. Just as it is unrealistic to expect outside academics to identify the grace of God operating in the lives of past believers, it is also unreasonable to expect them to make the internal critical analysis necessary to motivate future development.

How history is written has changed. There is an increasing emphasis on church history being written from the perspective of the every-day life of a religious movement - from the 'bottom-up', rather than from the 'top-down'. Gerald Pillay has stated that 'crucial to the understanding of the whole Christian story is the history of ordinary people, of worship and worshipping communities, of life and thought, of Christian morality and spirituality, and not, as the case has so often been, of mainly synods and doctrinal development.'[72] In an organization that has always stressed the priesthood of all believers, this is an important point. Salvation Army soldiers were not just part of the congregation, but maintained a significant involvement in the Army equivalent of synods and ecclesiastical hierarchy.

With the new developments in religious history, the interests of academic and Salvation Army historians may coincide. New ways of looking at historical records are particularly useful to an organization that has mainly produced popular history. Academics

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[71] Pamela J Walker, *Pulling the Devil's Kingdom Down: The Salvation Army in Victorian Britain* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2001).

[72] Gerald J. Pillay, 'The Challenge of Teaching Church History from a Global Perspective,' in *Enlarging the Story: Perspectives on Writing World Christian History*, Wilbert R. Shenk (ed) (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), 83.

have discussed reading 'with the grain', i.e. analysing a document with the writer's intent in mind. Feminist theologians urge 'reading behind the text' – looking for voices that have been excluded or stories that are not being told. Murphy himself felt that Wiggins' book could be used to examine the intellectual categories which informed the thinking of the Army's leadership.[73]

Seeing the past as a foreign country, with no relevance to the present, is unhelpful. It fails to acknowledge that much of what happens in the present is in reaction to events of the past. Furthermore, how the past is described - the choice of leading characters, the analysis of their motives, the figures that are dismissed - has a profound impact on the future. Historical writings shape our view of who we are and what we can achieve. The Salvation Army has instinctively understood that history can inspire the future. It has often failed to demonstrate the understanding that by over-emphasising particular groups, it excludes those it wishes to inspire. However, with a greater self-awareness of its own dynamic history, a more determined preservation of historical memory, and the new tools offered by developments in how history is written, there is every reason to expect that Salvation Army history can become both penetrating and inspirational.

[73] Murphy, 186.