

The Salvation Army
2014 USA Salvation Army Conference for Social Work and Emergency Disaster Services
25 to 28 March 2014

GLOBAL CONVERSATION SESSION 1B

“How does The Salvation Army work together as One Army?”

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Introduction

The Salvation Army from the days of William Booth has kept the holistic approach of “Soup, Soap and Salvation” with an emphasis on total care for people. This paper gives perspectives on how the Army has worked as one in practice through Evangelism and the Social Service in which I highlight the role of Faith-Based Facilitation in today’s Army.

I come from a country with more than 73 tribes and our national coat of arms carries the words: ‘One Zambia, One Nation’. Our coat of arms also has a man and woman holding a shield together symbolizing the need for men and women to work together and other things that we value as Zambians. Similarly The Salvation Army is united by its doctrine, an IHQ leadership structure and the sharing of resources. For example funds raised under self-denial are all put in one pot and allocations made not according to who collected the most but as to who is most in need. This is the practice we find in the book of Acts 2 in the early church. Territories are partnered at a global level to facilitate the sharing of resources and personnel.

1. One in Practice and Doctrine

The Army is very diverse in ethnicity and culture; it exists in all the five continents of the world and the word of God is being preached in 175 languages yet our doctrine is one and our symbols are the same. I have travelled many times to foreign lands; there is nothing more relaxing than to see the Army uniform, crest or shield. The Army music is one all around the globe; different countries have their own way of singing one and the same songs as they march along in an array of uniform colors; white, grey, beige, navy blue and others but all with the same ‘served to serve’ SS and whatever rank they carry.

Recently I witnessed the commissioning and ordination of the new Lieutenants of the ‘Disciples of the Cross’ session. The sessional name is global and not unique to any one country just as are the officers covenant and undertakings. Male and female officers are ordained alike the world

over (Galatians 3:28). The Articles of War declaring a way of life that is pure and holy; a life of service for others is one and the same for any Salvationist east, south, north or west as we raise the red yellow and blue colors symbolizing the triune God.

The Orders and Regulations for Officers of the Salvation Army; and various local officers including those governing our music sections; bandsmen, singing company and songster brigade are all one and the same. Officers of the Salvation Army can be appointed at home and overseas; this is seen as normal for the Army. Across the world the Army serves without regard to color, ethnicity, gender, political or religious affiliation upholding the sacredness of human life.

2. One in Evangelism

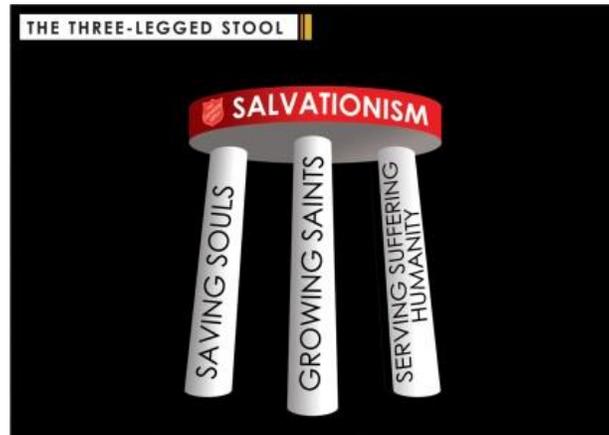
The Salvation Army doctrine number eight states: 'We believe that we are justified by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus and that he that believes hath the witness in himself'. The later part of this doctrine means that every soldier of the Army must be and is a witness for Jesus for a witness is one who tells what they have experienced. The number of countries where the Army exists now stands at 126. From one Englishman in England we now have a whole Army in the physical sense of over one million senior soldiers all hopefully saved to serve, all doing their bit in extending the Kingdom of God as an act of obedience to the Lord Jesus' great commission (Matthew 28:19-20). As we go; we sing

"Thou hast called me from the byway to proclaim thy wondrous love;
Though hast placed me on the highway that to all men I may prove
There is mission in my living, there is meaning in my word;
Saviour, in my daily striving may this message yet be heard."
(SASB 463)

Every corps, society or outpost of the Army will have the three core values – evangelism, holiness and service to suffering humanity made visible by the league of Mercy or Community Caring Ministry. Young people and women have their place; it is not strange to find young people leading meetings on YP or youth decision Sunday. We invest in international gatherings such as Congresses and Youth Conventions as events which communicate to all Salvationists and the world that we are "One Army".

The Officer magazine, International College for Officers (ICO) pastoral letters from the general to officers from time to time and the International Positional Statements for the Army on controversial issues all help for the Army to work as one. Salvationists round the world have the same symbolism, values and beliefs that drive the activities that are carried out in all parts of the world where the Army is present. It does not matter the location or size of the group the

three core activities as described by General Gowans' stool at the Millennial Congress in Atlanta remain – Evangelism, Holiness and Serving Suffering Humanity.



3. One in Social Response

The Army has always worked as one with a focus on the voiceless, the hard to reach, in short 'suffering humanity'. Interventions have been diverse depending on the needs and prevailing situation in each country. Each generation describing this work in a language best suited for that time; among which are holistic care, integrated mission and now Faith-Based Facilitation.

Health, Education, Emergency Services, shelter for vulnerable populations like old people, children, refugees and the homeless are among the ways of working for the Army. Response to social evils and assisting people to be free from these social evils such as alcoholism, prostitution and human trafficking are common practice to Army centers worldwide; these social evils are not unique to one country.

Health: Care for common conditions and care for dreaded conditions such as leprosy in Africa and India and now HIV/AIDS. The Home Based Care Concept, Community Counseling Process, Community Based Care for Orphans and Vulnerable Children are some of the widely adopted best practice pieces by an Army hospital – Chikankata. The Army health institutions train health professionals that are highly rated as 'good nurses, lab workers, etc' because over and above they do get Christian values infused over their time with the Army. Prime activities to improve the quality of life; water and sanitation, nutrition are also undertaken.

Education and Skills training: The Army is providing pre-school primary, secondary and tertiary education for a lot in many countries. In Zambia and Zimbabwe for example the governments count on the Army as a partner in education including training of Health Professionals.

Community Development & Projects: Terms and ways of working have also evolved and now we have the Community Project Management Support system (CPMS) that gives access to all

Salvation Army projects round the globe at a click of a finger, countries can learn how others are responding to similar areas of need. The CPMS system¹ gives a standard way of writing a proposal indicating the key areas of response required by any Amy project and equally a standard way of reporting and approving a proposal.

FAITH-BASED FACILITATION

The world has changed, people have changed, and the Army must also change approaches. The Army used to design projects and programs to implement in different communities but now this is different. Communities are looking for ownership through participation in the identification and implementation of programs and projects. This brings me to the new way of working – Faith-Based Facilitation (FBF) with an overall aim of building deeper relationships at an individual and community level.

FBF is ‘a way of working’ described in the booklet “Building Deeper Relationships” produced by IHQ in 2010. The FBF way of working recognizes and respects every human being young or old through Bible reflections and the use of participatory methodologies. The tool enables the Army to build deeper relationships with communities because it empowers the local people not with money or materials from outside that come and go but with the reality that they can do something for themselves. FBF is a tool for self sustainability for the global Army whether we are talking of numbers, finances, programs and holiness or growing saints. FBF uses tools that are not new; listening and attending skills, brainstorming, the Bible, exploring, community walk, community mapping, home visits, prioritizing, identifying resources, self-assessment, creative thinking and problem solving.

Territories are in the process of translating the FBF materials in local languages and training facilitators. A facilitator may be defined as:

"An individual who enables groups and organizations to work more effectively; to collaborate and achieve synergy. She or he is a “content-neutral” party who by not taking sides or expressing or advocating a point of view during the meeting, can advocate for fair, open, and inclusive procedures to accomplish the group’s work. A facilitator can also be learning or a dialogue guide to assist a group in thinking deeply about its assumptions, beliefs, and values and about its systemic processes and context"(Kaner: 2007: xv).

There is no one individual expert of FBF, no special group, but we can all learn and use the FBF cycle to come up with plans and actions for any issue at hand. Here is the process:

¹ The Community Projects Management and Support (CPMS) system is a database available to every Salvation Army territory to track projects and funding. A similar database for Mission Support Projects is also used to track funding to strengthen Salvation Army evangelical and system strengthening projects.



Faith-Based Facilitation is fast becoming a common way of working in Africa across most territories. At the Nairobi 2013 FBF retreat, we listened to each other about how FBF is being used in different territories; from the identification of projects in all territories to resource mobilization at corps level, church growth, conflict resolution, management of schools to mention but a few. Every territory in Africa was represented from the oldest to the newest on the continent.

So does FBF change the already prescribed procedures of the Salvation Army? If for example a young person who gets pregnant outside marriage, the procedure is to suspend for six months. The answer is no, the FBF process in this case provides an opportunity for the pastoral care team to discuss and explore the teaching of young people about reproductive health and how they can support the young person to maintain her Christianity.

The merits of a FBF way of working are that it enables local human capacity development. FBF can be used by all kinds of people even those who are not so literate. It can be used for all situations, it helps communities know their priorities and therefore request help in a relevant area of need not take on a project just because there is a donor, and FBF enhances faith tradition as we carry out social programs.

Conclusion

The Salvation Army has worked well when international standards have been maintained around our belief, values and practice. The ordination of women for example at a time when the status of women in the communities was low like in Africa has gone a long way in uplifting the profile of women and changing the attitude towards women both in and outside the church. This can also be said for the children, many new churches are now making church programs specifically for children. In Zambia the Army has played an important role in helping other churches begin to respond to social evils and HIV/AIDS through training workshops for

religious leaders. Currently we have a large project running in two districts in which we trained 100 faith based leaders in FBF to reach more than 3000 people with messages of preventing transmission of HIV.

The Army has worked well as one when the already established structures of communication have been followed; everyone within the system being aware of the flow of information; the chain and level of responsibility.

The Army has worked well as one Army when the core values have remained one and the same but the preference allowed to be modified according to the likes of each individual territory or area for example the colour of uniform does not matter but the number of SS does not change to three or some other number – blue for soldiers and red for officers ranks are all maintained as per international standard.

Allow me to close with the third verse of song 690 in the SASB by Baring – Gould

*“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”!*