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GLOBAL CONVERSATION SESSION 3B

“How can TSA faithfully engage with the state, the market, NGOs and FBOs?”

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For The Salvation Army and other faith-based organizations, the new millennium has ushered in an era of increased visibility for your tireless work on behalf of the world’s poor and suffering. Your quest to do even more and better good also has renewed a long-standing debate: is it possible to forge closer working relationships with government agencies, secular funders and NGOs, and the private sector while remaining faithful to mission and unapologetic about your beliefs?

I believe the answer, in short, is yes. After observing and speaking with you and other thought leaders on this topic, faith appears to be the key that unlocks your unique assets, power and potential.

Faith-based groups, for example, are partnering on an unprecedented scale with the United Nations in its global fight against poverty and disease.¹ In the United States, faith groups have welcomed the removal of barriers that blocked them from receiving federal grants to deliver social programs. These examples reflect a newfound spirit of cooperation based on an emerging understanding of the unique qualities that The Salvation Army and other faith-based groups bring to your work.

To advance that understanding, a broad collaboration of religious groups, international development organizations, UN agencies, and academic institutions, launched in 2012 a three-year project called the Joint Learning Initiative: Faith and Local Communities.² It aims to build “collective understanding of the massive, untapped role of local faith communities

¹ For example, see *Partnering with Religious Communities for Children*, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), January, 2012.

² For more information, visit www.iliflc.com/.

in tackling poverty and injustice all over the world.” In fact, the initiative notes, “many think that local faith communities represent **the greatest untapped potential for development.**”

That potential rests on the distinct assets, cultivated over decades, that The Salvation Army and other faith-based organizations share and that set them all apart from many secular endeavors.³ Some argue that taking these assets into full account represents an exciting new philosophy in global development. They include:

A holistic approach. Faith-based organizations value social, emotional, and spiritual outcomes, as well as considerations for physical well-being. In the field, many secular relief organizations focus on what economists call external constraints, says Bruce Wydick, a professor of development economics at the University of California San Francisco. “If people are unhealthy, build a hospital; uneducated, build a school and buy textbooks.” Faith-based organizations understand there’s more to it, he continues. “Character, hope, aspirations, and community are super important and frankly overlooked by a lot of secular organizations.... You can’t just relieve economic constraints and have as big an impact as you would if you address people as whole beings.”

Bruce Wilkinson, president and CEO of the Catholic Medical Mission Board, agrees. “Rather than adhering to the Western world’s definition of development on purely economic or quality-of-life criteria,” he explains, “faith-based INGOs look for spiritual and moral progress. The emphasis is on being more, not just having more.”

Deep embeddedness in communities. For decades, faith entities have put down roots in every country around the globe, and they often serve remote areas where other service providers are absent. The Salvation Army, for example, reaches 126 countries and territories with 15,409 Corps, 1,150,666 soldiers, and a host of community institutions and programs, including 2,930 schools⁴, 295 hospitals and health clinics and 407 homeless hostels.⁵ It is not about outreach to a community. “Faith-based organizations *are* the community,” says Wilkinson. “They live and breathe it.”

³ *Global Health and Africa: Assessing Faith Work and Research Priorities*, Tony Blair Faith Foundation, 2012, p. 17.

⁴ The Salvation Army Year Book 2014 *Includes Kindergarten/sub primary, primary, upper primary and middle, secondary and high schools.*

⁵ Salvation Army International Statistics, www.salvationarmy.org/ihq/statistics.

Credibility and trust. Faith leaders and institutions forge trusting relationships in their communities. Moreover, local faith leaders typically have significant stature and influence within their communities, and they are more trusted than any other local institutions. Trustworthiness is more than an asset. It's a necessary condition for changing behavior, says Carolyn Woo, CEO of Catholic Relief Services. Faith-based organizations "usually have tremendous authority tied to elders of the community who tend to be teachers, so if you are trying to stimulate behavioral and social change, you need those community leaders." In South Africa, coalitions of faith-based organizations are working hand-in-hand with church elders to reduce the stigma associated with HIV/AIDs, so critical to the behavior change essential for checking the spread of this deadly disease.⁶

Extensive networks and organized delivery channels. Unlike start-ups and newcomers to global development, many faith-based NGOs have extensive global networks that have connected developed and developing countries back through the time of early missionaries. Such presence is an essential precondition for a platform of scaling solutions that work. The networks facilitate rapid delivery of goods and services. What all this means in practice, says Wilkinson, is that faith-based organizations "can go from conception to operations research to absolute transformative impact in a heartbeat because they are in community. They can operationalize ideas in the shortest time frame of any group."

This collection of distinctive assets confers an advantage to faith-based organizations, says Wydick. "They are ahead of the game in some ways in that they've seen things that are important that other secular and government efforts haven't seen," he notes.

Dave Young, COO of World Vision International, shares that view. "People are recognizing that properly tapping into the faith-based communities to facilitate behavioral changes advances the agenda. If you are doing things that aren't engaging local faith institutions, you're losing a huge lever to reinforce and sustain change."

⁶ *Channels of Hope—Igniting a Movement to Transform Communities*, World Vision International, 2013.

So, let me reframe the discussion: is The Salvation Army prepared to build on this newfound appreciation for the advantages of faith-based organizations? As you prepare to celebrate your 150th anniversary and advance toward the next horizon, may I suggest at least three reasons why you may want to seize this moment: 1. Issues The Salvation Army confronts every day are of such magnitude that you cannot solve them by working alone. 2. There are philanthropic resources you can tap into for greater impact, now representing 80 percent of development resource flows. 3. A bold approach to the future will help to attract the talent needed to fill expanding leadership positions.

You are already laying some foundational steps that can support your collective impact.

Bold Steps Forward as One Army

Moving from only serving to also solving. The Salvation Army has embarked on an initiative that builds on its storied past of helping those in desperate need and charts an ambitious future. The Pathway of Hope, launched in 2011 and piloted in the U.S. Central Territory, is now being embraced as one “heretofore unimaginable coalition” that will scale across the four USA Territories. The initiative aspires to move The Salvation Army’s frontline material services from only *servicing* the poor—providing, for example, food pantries, overnight shelters, and clothing vouchers—to also *solving* the root causes of poverty-holistically.⁷ Pathway of Hope will offer families one-stop access to a continuum of social services provided by The Salvation Army in partnership with government agencies and community nonprofits. The initiative’s goal is to create pathways for families with children to break out of intergenerational cycles of poverty—a problem as widespread in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia as in Gary and Elkhart, Indiana, where the initiative was piloted.

...and gathering evidence that programs work. Assessing whether initiatives and programs actually achieve the desired impact will be essential going forward, for internal knowledge, and to satisfy demanding funders. From day one, for example, the Pathway of Hope initiative was designed around a clear set of holistic outcomes and an organizational learning agenda. Foundations and government agencies increasingly expect grantees to provide such rigorous evaluation and clear evidence of impact, a development faith-based

⁷ See <http://centralusa.salvationarmy.org/emi/Pathwayofhope>.

organizations should embrace, says Wydick. “As far as I can tell, the aid industry is about the last that deals with life and death issues that has not had to prove what it’s doing is having a positive impact on people,” he says.

Having recently conducted an extensive evaluation on child sponsorship programs, Wydick believes faith-based leaders should view the demand for empirical results as a demonstration of good stewardship of scarce resources.⁸ In addition to measuring delivery of goods and services, he contends that evaluations should take into account values and attitudes so important to the mission of faith groups. As example, The Salvation Army World Services Organization unit (SAWSO) has embarked on an aggressive five-year plan to “increase its stewardship impact ten-fold”—a goal that goes beyond financial intermediary metrics to reflect its mission and values.

Moving from fragmentation to interdependence—internally. Given its size and global reach, The Salvation Army is well positioned to become a platform for implementing innovative programs globally. But first, internally it must create a system wide knowledge base that will allow The Salvation Army to act as one coordinated organization. That’s the goal of the newly launched One Army Impact initiative, in support of the One Army, One Mission, One Message vision. While continuing to value The Army’s culture of local autonomy, it aims to knit the organization’s geographically diverse operations into a vibrant tapestry by developing an outcome-focused unifying measurement and learning framework. This includes self-evaluation tools that can be used in all of The Salvation Army’s different country settings—from the richest to the poorest. With these tools, The Salvation Army can embed measurement and learning in its global work and promote virtual communities best practice to help strengthen its worldwide impact and self-accountability as stewards of resources.

This promising One Army initiative champions global learning and promotes interdependence. As such, it can be a unifying model for other global NGOs that, like The Salvation Army, serve both developed and developing countries. As one Territorial Commander in Africa recently observed, “We have countries with cultures of dependence;

⁸ Bruce Wydick, Paul Glewwe, and Laine Rutledge, “Does International Child Sponsorship Work? A Six-Country Study of Impacts on Adult Life Outcomes,” *Journal of Political Economy*, 121, 2013.

and, we have countries with cultures of independence. Now we can have a culture of interdependence.”

...and transitioning from isolation to collaboration—externally. Faced with overwhelming need and limited resources, faith-based organizations increasingly see the benefits of joining join forces with other NGOs and governments agencies. Already, the early principles of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (that will replace the Millennium Development Goals after 2015) call for more such global partnerships.⁹ Faith-based organization leaders who have experience with such partnerships have found that they can do good work while remaining faithful to their missions and core values--often achieving greater impact than going solo.

“Faith doesn’t get in the way if you are clear about outcomes, whether you partner with other NGOs, corporations, or other denominations,” says World Vision’s Dave Young, who has made partnership and collaboration a centerpiece of that organization’s strategy. “It’s not an issue of being faith based or not, it’s an issue of being smart about partnering. But it doesn’t work where the partner prevents you from living your identity. We refuse to take money when the partner would prevent us from training faith leaders.” For The Army, as example, this could mean being very clear that you remain a *non-partisan* advocate for the poor.

When forging interfaith partnerships, the Reverend Gary Gunderson, vice president of the Division of Faith and Health Ministries at the Wake Forest Baptist Health Medical Center, advises: “We ask, what faith have you brought into the room, then look for commonalities versus the differences in dogma. These similarities become the unwritten bond supplemented by written “covenants” as the glue to unite partners in mission. But Gunderson is careful to point out that ultimately trust equals an unwritten covenant.

While caution is warranted, the goal of increased partnerships remains sound, says Wilkinson. “We (faith-based organizations) need to open up. We’re in too many closed loops within our communities, and we need to look broader to others who can really make a difference and help us.”

⁹ For background, see <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1549>.

If this moment is, as one observer put it, the “golden age” for faith-based organizations, I wondered what leaders in the field would advise their counterparts. So I asked, “What would you shout from the highest mountaintop to other leaders of faith-based organizations?” Perhaps you will draw inspiration from the following replies as you rise up to envision the next 150 years as One Army.

“Stand up and fully be what you can be. There is no reason to conceal the power of your faith or the power it can have in development practice.... Be proud of the heritage, who you are, get up there and get with it!”

“Build evaluation in a credible way into your program and seek external assessment of your program’s impact. Pursue fundraising on the proven impact you’re having, not on making people feel good. That doesn't necessarily help anybody in the developing world. I would keep saying that until the message gets through.”

“Leverage your impact.”

Jacquelyn Hadley is a partner in the San Francisco office of The Bridgespan Group (www.bridgespan.org), where she focuses on global development and organizational transformation. While exploring the topic of this paper, she spoke with leaders of The Salvation Army and global NGOs, development economists, and philanthropists. She also attended a forum of 15 global thought leaders who have devoted their careers to exploring the role and impact of faith-based organizations. She has worked with The Salvation Army since 2011, leading the USA Pathway of Hope, SAWSO and One Army Impact initiatives.