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“How can ‘One Army’ develop comprehensive solutions to international problems?”

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This paper will deal exclusively with the international problem of human trafficking which is defined as: “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.”¹

Introduction:

Let me tell you a story² to introduce the reality of human trafficking: Julia, a Salvationist, was on her way to the bank in downtown Johannesburg, when she spotted some women in conversation with a small girl who seemed to be the centre of their attention. Julia stopped to ask if anything was wrong. She discovered that Maria, aged 7, had been found alone outside a shop. Maria was from a remote village in Mozambique, and had been brought to Johannesburg by a “friend” of the family, who had told her that her mother had said she should go with her. Maria had told the women about her journey including climbing through fences and hiding in the back of a lorry.

Julia remembered a short informative talk she had heard in her corps the previous Sunday, about human trafficking, and what The Salvation Army is doing to prevent it. She didn’t go to the bank that day after all. She called her corps officer and stayed with the child until someone from the anti-human trafficking task team arrived.

The Salvation Army Children’s Home agreed to take Maria and undertook to deal with the necessary formalities. Maria stayed there for several months while efforts were made to get her home. Working with her embassy and the international social welfare networks were slow. Until one day, when THQ Southern Africa made a call to THQ Mozambique. Could The

¹ Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs (UN Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons... Year)

² All names in this story have been changed to protect the identity of the individuals concerned.

Salvation Army try to find and visit Maria's home? Could we try from both sides of the border to untangle the bureaucratic red tape? As it turned out, there was a Salvation Army Corps quite near Maria's village. Things started moving for Maria and soon she was at home with her family, unharmed and safe. We never discovered the purpose of her removal from her family.

This story illustrates the multi-dimensional Salvation Army response to a probable case of human trafficking: The corps raised basic awareness; a soldier applied her knowledge and took responsibility; an Army institution provided shelter and administrative support; THQs worked together; another corps responded by arranging an investigative visit with the family which continues to monitor Maria's progress.

1. One Army – our strengths.

One of The Salvation Army's greatest strengths is our presence. We are present in cities, suburbs, towns and villages, extending to some of the remotest places around the world. We are not confined to offices, but are found at grassroots level, within communities on all levels of society. If something happens in a community no matter how large or small, local Salvationists will know about it.

How is this possible? Not necessarily, and certainly not only because of our officers or professional staff members, but also because of our soldiers, junior soldiers and adherents. This "presence of people" is a double asset which we often undervalue. I use the term "double asset" for this reason:

Firstly, every soldier, junior soldier, adherent and employee has a home, a family, a community. Each one has knowledge. Each one witnesses what happens in his or her small part of the world. This knowledge, if heard, shared and understood, is powerful.

Secondly, not only does each individual have knowledge, but each individual also has influence. Some are in high offices like government, law enforcement, justice, business. Some are children or students or unemployed or retired people. They all have influence in some way in their own community. This influence of more than 1.7 million people³ should not be underestimated.

Julia went into the city with knowledge of her own city and what was going on in its streets, and some very basic knowledge about human trafficking which was shared from the platform that Sunday. She also carried with her some influence. When she asked for information, she received it. When she said "I am a Salvationist – we can help you" – she was believed.

This leads me to a second strength that we have – a good name. People believe that The Salvation Army can make a difference. They believe it because we proved it in the past. They

³ The Salvation Army Year Book 2013:20 – international statistics of Soldiers, adherents and Junior Soldiers.

believe it because we are still telling them that today – through our advertising, through our public relations. It is my firm belief and experience that people (the public) think of us more highly than we think of ourselves!

We are one Army, present almost everywhere, in all levels of society, with knowledge and with influence. And whether people know us as musicians or medical experts or disaster experts or feeders of the hungry or preachers of the Gospel or ringers of bells, we have one reputation – and it is, thus far, a good one.

A strength we should never take for granted is that we have the approval of heaven. I agree with Danielle Strickland, who, in her address to the Canadian parliament, expressed her “strong conviction that light is more powerful than darkness, and God is on our side.”⁴ We are one Army and hold a privileged position and what a position of strength!

However, when it comes to a challenge like human trafficking, let us not be too quick in patting ourselves on the back as bringers of the solution. When we stand against human trafficking, we stand against the very kingdom and armies of Satan himself. Its source is the most evil kind of greed and cruelty. It involves not just petty criminals, but international masterminds and syndicates. We are up against forces of evil who will stop at nothing and respect no one. “They” are legions, and we are what we are – one Army.

2. One Army – our limitations and challenges

During our 149 year battle against all kinds of evil, The Salvation Army has gathered masses of knowledge, experience, expertise, skills and resources. We have become experts and authorities in many fields. We could almost say: “We have mastered it all”. Almost – but not quite.

Human Trafficking is highly organised, violent, secretive, hidden, and deeply evil. We, as one Army, can fight against human trafficking and God is on our side. But we are not equipped, nor can we be expected to, nor would it be wise to try to deal with it on our own. Human trafficking is bigger than us. It’s not bigger than God, but it is bigger than The Salvation Army alone. To fight human trafficking requires all the many skills we have, and also some which we do not have. We can raise awareness, educate, train, advocate, care for victims and survivors, support families and do a host of other things. But we do not do law making, law enforcement, border control, criminal investigations, arrests, trials, sentencing, international negotiations and many other specialised activities surrounding this crime.

Our earliest encounter with human trafficking, we know now, was the adventure of the Maiden Tribute⁵. An adventure which cannot be detailed in this paper, but which involved the confrontation of the sale of young girls into forced prostitution in 19th Century England, and ended with the exposure of slavery and the raising of the age of consent as a result of a

⁴ Strickland 2006.

⁵ Coutts (1981:104, 105)

partnership between Bramwell Booth, journalist W T Stead, and a Mrs Josephine Butler. The point I wish to make in referring to this is that even in those early days, The Salvation Army did not approach the issue alone, but in a relationship of cooperation and interdependence with likeminded individuals.

We return briefly to Maria's story. Even the 6 "levels" of Salvation Army involvement were not sufficient to ensure her safe return home. A medical examination was required at a special children's clinic. National and International Child Welfare had to be involved. The embassy had to do its part. A police report had to be filed. And Maria's case was probably by no means the most complicated case The Salvation Army ever came up against relating to human trafficking. Maria's story taught us many things, including the importance of networking.

I am fascinated by the way construction is done in my current country, Bangladesh. The framework goes up using steel rods, and as the concrete floors of the multi-storeyed buildings are put in place, they are supported by hundreds of bamboo stems placed about one foot apart from each other. Each cut to the same length, each helping to carry the weight of the next level until the walls are in place. To construct a fortress against something as big as the human trafficking industry, will take many "bamboo stems" if you like.

Working as part of a team brings advantages and a better chance of success, but let us be warned – it also brings frustrations. As part of a network of any kind we are expected to keep the rules – but we do not always make the rules or agree with the rules. Recently a project with great potential of multi-country success had to be shelved because of a government rule which would impair its success significantly.

3. One Army – our contribution

As one Army, we have been "team members" for justice on this issue for years. In fact, we have been team *leaders* in many ways, having spearheaded the fight against human trafficking in some territories. I acknowledge the work of Commissioner Helen Clifton, and the establishment of the Faith Alliance against Trafficking and Slavery of which The Salvation Army was a founding member, as well as the leadership of The Salvation Army International Social Justice Commission, to name but a few ground-breakers. Our international positional statement on human trafficking reads: "The Salvation Army is deeply committed to fighting human trafficking however it may be manifested. We seek to exercise care in restoring the freedom and dignity of those affected⁶."

I offer the following thoughts in answer to the question: "How can 'One Army' develop comprehensive solutions to international problems?"

⁶ ISJC 2010.

1. Cooperation is vital for any effective response: Cooperation between territories, and between ourselves and our partners.
2. We must continue to increase knowledge and awareness. All our units and members can and should be informed about the issue of human trafficking. We should proclaim the Gospel message which includes freedom from exploitation, from our platforms, in Sunday Schools, youth groups, boardrooms and communities.
3. Conducting and sharing of on-going research and documentation. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime names lack of knowledge the number one challenge in the implementation of comprehensive responses to trafficking in persons:

“Lack of knowledge hinders effective implementation of anti-trafficking policies and strategies, since often they are based on political, social and economic agendas rather than actual facts. However, it should be kept in mind that data collection on trafficking in persons is a challenging task which requires focused and continuous efforts to keep the knowledge base updated⁷”.

This may include creating a databank of resources , including knowledge, information, skills, and experience, as well as reference to the multitude of specialised training materials and manuals dealing with trafficking which have been developed by national and international agencies.

4. Membership on national and international bodies should be prioritised. The following message comes from a combined research project in South Africa:

Government departments and NGOs that undertake membership of the (national) task-team should also commit themselves in terms of allocating the required resources and ensuring that representatives are of sufficient seniority to act with authority. Continuity of representation is important⁸.
5. It is important to continue to offer a survivor focused response. “Every single occurrence of modern slavery is happening to a person—someone’s sister, mother, brother, father, daughter, or son⁹.”To be ethical in our methods of recovery, rehabilitation models should preferably be self-determined and individually tailored, though this is costly and time consuming. The model I referred to earlier (p3) would have been a great example. It is recommended that rehabilitation should take place in the country of origin where language and cultural barriers are minimised, although it is recognised that this is not always possible.
6. There is an urgent need for monitoring and evaluation, and for answering the following questions:

⁷ UNODC 2012:90

⁸ HRSC 2010:171

⁹ USA Dept of State 2012:10

- Are preventive efforts helping to decrease the number of victims of trafficking in persons?
 - Is the provision of training sustainable and is it increasing the capacity for action?
 - Are the protective initiatives ensuring safety and strengthening the rights of victims?
 - How can it be ensured that awareness-raising campaigns are appropriately targeted to have a positive impact?¹⁰”
7. The Salvation Army should continue to do what we do well – address the root causes of human trafficking. Poverty and the lack of social and economic security are major factors that push people into migration and into situations of vulnerability. Let us continue to work for economic development, and promote education (especially for girls). Contrary to popular trends of donors, there is still a need for schools in many places. Let us also continue building capacity of the poorest communities. As one Army, we continue to gratefully accept the financial resources of some territories to fight poverty and thus prevent trafficking in other territories.
 8. We should continue to support Fairtrade and ethical trading models, and continue to raise awareness on exploitation of people on farms and in factories.

Conclusion

As stated in a US Department of State report: “A new generation of informed and interested citizens is beginning to look inward and making the choice to reject lifestyles sustained by exploitation. For all those who continue to live in bondage, this moment could not have come too soon¹¹.”

The new abolitionist movement has started. As one Army, we are part of it. Our mission is the mission of Jesus, who said in Luke 4:18-19: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour¹².”

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¹⁰ UNODC 2012:111

¹¹ USA Department of State 2012:7

¹² Holy Bible: New International Version

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