

1-1-2018

Creating an Officer Lifescape: a Path for the Vocational and Spiritual Formation of Salvation Army Officer-Moms

Janene Zielinski
jlzielin@georgefox.edu

This research is a product of the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program at George Fox University. [Find out more](#) about the program.

Recommended Citation

Zielinski, Janene, "Creating an Officer Lifescape: a Path for the Vocational and Spiritual Formation of Salvation Army Officer-Moms" (2018). *Doctor of Ministry*. 241.
<http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/dmin/241>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctor of Ministry by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolf@georgefox.edu.

GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

CREATING AN OFFICER LIFESCAPE:
A PATH FOR THE VOCATIONAL AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION
OF SALVATION ARMY OFFICER-MOMS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF PORTLAND SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

JANENE ZIELINSKI

PORTLAND, OREGON

FEBRUARY 2018

Portland Seminary
George Fox University
Portland, Oregon

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

DMin Dissertation

This is to certify that the DMin Dissertation of

Janene Zielinski

has been approved by
the Dissertation Committee on February 12, 2018
for the degree of Doctor of Ministry in Leadership and Spiritual Formation.

Dissertation Committee:

Primary Advisor: Michael Gama, DMin

Secondary Advisor: Carol Hutchinson, PhD

Lead Mentor: MaryKate Morse, PhD

Expert Advisor: Todd Hiestand

Copyright © 2018 Janene Zielinski
All Rights Reserved.

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible®, La Habra, CA: Foundation Press Publications. Copyright © 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My humble gratitude goes to The Salvation Army United States, Western Territory Executive Leadership, and specifically Commissioner Jim Knaggs, for the encouragement and support. I have much appreciation for the hundreds of Salvation Army officers who contributed towards and encouraged my research. There are just too many to thank individually.

Thank you to the faculty and staff of Portland Seminary. I started this academic journey with the seminary in 2003, investing a decade to complete a Master's in Spiritual Formation before starting this new endeavor in 2015. Lead mentor, Dr. MaryKate Morse once sent me a note that said, "We have walked a lot of life together." I am grateful she was my companion for the journey. She encouraged me to "blaze new trails for the Army." My prayer is that these pages will spark a fire.

Faculty Advisor Dr. Michael Gama's encouragement towards bold, creative thinking kept my heart singing when the drudgery of annotation and format tried their best to discourage me.

Cohort Members Pam Braman, Jacqueline Bland, Madleine Sara, and Brenda Nagunst have cried, prayed, and supported me throughout these last three years. Thank you for your uplifting friendship.

I owe a deep debt of gratitude to my husband, Michael. He encouraged me to ask permissions, refused to let me hesitate, made space and time for my studies, picked me up when I stumbled, convinced me I could when I thought I couldn't, and takes pleasure in my success. Thank you.

Let us maintain it with a jealous regard for the sacred rights of every woman, whether married or single, to the free and full exercise of all her gifts in the glorious work of the Salvation Army. To this end—Let women have their fullest opportunity to work. Let them be promoted in harmony with their ability and worthiness. Let women be treated as equal with men in all the social relations of life. Let consideration be shown to the Mothers of young children. Bear in mind that after a few years, the circumstances of such women will allow them to come to the front with almost as much freedom as before marriage, and that they will likely take their places in the fight with greatly increased love and wisdom, and consequently, with greatly enlarged influence and power.

—General William Booth, Founder of The Salvation Army, in a letter to Senior Officers, 1910

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOSSARY	vii
ABSTRACT	viii
SECTION ONE: THE PROBLEM	1
MODERN SALVATION ARMY OFFICER CULTURE	17
THE RESEARCH	23
SUMMARY	36
SECTION TWO: PROPOSED SOLUTIONS	37
THE DIVISIONAL LEADERS ROLE	37
USEFUL ELEMENTS OF THE U.S. MILITARY APPROACH	49
TRENDS IN THE MARKETPLACE	50
SUMMARY	54
SECTION THREE: THE THESIS	56
BIBLICAL EXAMPLES	56
THE INTERVENTION	65
SUMMARY	71
SECTION FOUR: ARTIFACT INTRODUCTION	73
SECTION FIVE: ARTIFACT SPECIFICATIONS	78
SECTION SIX: POSTSCRIPT	83
BIBLIOGRAPHY	88
APPENDIX: ARTIFACT	92

GLOSSARY

Corps	Equivalent to a local parish (church) and usually includes oversight and administration of a social services office.
Corps Officer (CO)	A person ordained and commissioned as a Salvation Army officer appointed to oversee a Corps (Center for Worship and Service) in a designated community.
Divisional Commander (DC)	An officer responsible for organizational operations within an assigned geographical area (A Division). A middle management position.
Division	A Territory is further divided into geographical divisions for which the Divisional Commander is responsible.
DDWM	Divisional Director of Women's Ministries: A female spouse of DC and considered a co-Divisional Leader.
DHQ	Divisional Headquarters (see Division).
THQ	Territorial Headquarters (see Territory).
Field (the)	Work place context, normally in a Corps Community Center Unit consisting of worship activities, social services, and sometimes a signature program such as daycare, shelter, or after-school programming.
Field Officer	Officer appointed to be responsible for a local Corps or County wide area.
Local Officer	Soldier (lay member) with lay pastoral responsibilities for a group of Corps members such as the band, the youth, and Women's Ministries.
Officership	The condition or relation of being a Salvation Army officer. This term is in common use internationally.
Orders & Regulations	(O & R) Instructions regarding international policy and practice.
Salvationist	A generic term for any type of member of The Salvation Army.
Soldier	Lay member of a Salvation Army Corps.
Territory	A large geographical region. There are four in the U.S.A.: West, Central, East and South. For this study, USA West is the primary territory referenced. It is comprised of the thirteen Western United States including Alaska and Hawaii. Also, Micronesia. It is further divided into divisions.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation claims that the formation of a healthy Salvation Army officer-mom identity is foundational for future organizational leadership development and personal vocational efficacy. Section One explores the historical management of officer-moms, root causes of dissatisfaction, and modern barriers to healthy functioning. Section Two describes the deficiencies within three current methods of officer-mom identity formation. Section Three focuses on Scriptural models of identity formation and suggestions for implementation as a formative and sustainable approach in alleviating four key longings of officer-moms.

This dissertation proposes that fledgling officer-moms need a safe and reliable mechanism to receive instruction and encouragement in establishing an officer-mom identity—a way of being a healthy and thriving officer-mom. Section Four outlines the artifact: a blog created to be a stationary repository of vetted and cataloged articles that will be an empowering narrative towards a healthy officer-mom identity. Section Five includes the blog proposal. Section Six is the postscript where I share the reasons for choosing my topic and some things I learned through a process of trial and error in beginning the blog. The Appendix contains examples of posts from the blog.

SECTION ONE: THE PROBLEM

Vignettes

Twenty-eight-year-old Rebecca stood next to the pulpit in the medium-sized sanctuary on a crisp fall Sunday morning in 1993. Her husband and many of the men from the congregation were out at Men's Retreat for the weekend, and the weight of his normal Sunday morning tasks were added to her plate that morning. After a mostly sleepless night, she somehow managed to get her daughters—ages four and one—up, fed, and dressed. She lugged the car seat into the fifteen-passenger van and drove across town to pick up the herd of rowdy kids from the low-income apartment complex across town. She tried to push aside the memory from a few weeks earlier when someone shot out a rear side window as her husband drove out of this same complex after dropping kids off after a bowling outing.

Rebecca made it to the Corps just in time to turn on the lights and lead an energetic, borderline unruly, Sunday School assembly and teach the class with the challenging kids that the other teachers could not handle. She hoped the Adult Sunday School teacher found the coffeemaker she filled yesterday; Rebecca did not have time this morning to push the button. Thankfully she spent the whole day before cleaning the building and getting everything ready for every possible contingency.

In that magic fifteen minutes of chaos between Sunday School and Worship Service, the pre-school attendant marched the little ones into the sanctuary to sit with their parents or siblings for a few minutes before they left again for Junior Church. Promptly at eleven a.m., Rebecca began sharing the morning announcements. Her girls caught sight of her, pulled away from the nursery attendant, now in the role of babysitter,

and ran up the stairs to the stage, each taking a hold of one of Rebecca's legs like a tree hugger with a logger in sight. Doing her best to continue, with the little tree huggers acting shy for the congregation, Rebecca noticed a visiting Senior Leader in the crowd at the very moment her oldest daughter's cheap bracelet caught on her expensive nylons, making a huge hole. As the congregation waited, Rebecca left the pulpit empty for a moment, moving towards the babysitter, trying to use the steps down from the stage as leverage to peel the girls from her legs and back into the grasp of the babysitter.

Pretending there was not a hole in her "off black" nylons, she shared the day's Bible message. She had good intentions to dig a bit deeper into the text before presenting, but the days and hours of the week slipped away. While helping the ladies serve the potluck, the babysitter had to leave. The girls were hungry and needed naps. While Rebecca's head was turned, one of the church ladies let the girls eat cake. Soon they ran in circles as Rebecca attempted to chat with the Senior Leader amidst the chaos. She still needed to make arrangements for the afternoon nursing home service. She felt as though she was failing at mothering and being an officer. She was exhausted; she thought that no one understood or cared and she might be the only officer-mom who was struggling. Long-distance phone calls were expensive and visits seemed a frivolous waste of money. Lonely and frustrated, God put a spark in her heart that one day she would find a way to minister to other officer-moms so that they would never have to feel so alone or like they were not enough.

Seventeen years later, Valerie is a young Salvation Army officer-mom, married with four children under the age of eight. She and her husband, Josh, feel they have a calling to their Army ministry and both completed the two-year residential training

course requirements in 2010. They received their first assignment as assistant leaders at a Salvation Army Corps in a medium-sized city, leading youth groups and completing other basic assignments under the guidance of a senior officer couple that was “in charge.” After a year, they were transferred to their own “command,” a Salvation Army Corps in a downtown metropolitan city. Now “in charge,” Valerie and Josh find the demands of their assignment and their ministry’s headquarters in constant tension with the hopeful expectations of personal growth, quality time parenting, and the joyful married living they see portrayed on social media. Their training did not prepare them for this struggle and they are not sure where to turn.

Josh throws himself into work and struggles to enjoy practicing his guitar during his precious little time off. Valerie becomes “super mom,” creatively weaving her office and ministry duties around changing diapers and drop-offs at pre-school. She always feels as though she does not do enough ministry work or attend adequately to the kids, let alone address the social media hot topics like “self-care” that everyone else seems to have time for. Comfortable with online communication and social media, Valerie often integrates it into her day with group texts and posting photos and comments to the “Officer-mom” Facebook group, but she longs for real connection and supportive advice. Though her peers let her know she is not alone, they are as inexperienced as she is when it comes to successfully navigating motherhood and ministry. Communications from headquarters usually concern a missing report or a request to add more to their schedule. Irregular phone calls with an assigned mentor help Valerie navigate immediate issues, but ongoing care, encouragement, and support are missing.

Rebecca's officer-mom story was my story thirty years ago, and how it intersects with Valerie's officer-mom story of today is what narrates this ongoing ministry problem. Younger moms tend to already feel insecure and exhausted, but adding a full-time ministry responsibility to the mix can compound feelings. Even for the most capable and organized young mom, thoughts of being "the only one with this problem," and the loneliness of being appointed to an assignment far from family and friends, can bring on fears and questions that that—if left un-checked—can lead to dissatisfaction and underperformance. Young officer-moms do not yet have the knowledge that comes from years of mentoring and experience, and it can take so long to develop that sometimes officer-moms quit or shirk their ministry duties before they work it out.

As a denomination, The Salvation Army¹ in the United States is a unique spiritual movement that has endured many cultural changes in the last one hundred years as it has grown to be an integral part of today's American society. With "modern" society pressing in on all fronts, it is no surprise that Salvation Army officers have felt the squeeze in their own vocational experiences and the resulting effects on their family lives. Salvation Army Senior Leaders' current philosophies and expectations of officer-parents have generally held to the cultural norms that they themselves raised their family in thirty years ago. Since then, postmodernism, individualism, and social media have brought about a shift in Army culture, especially amongst millennials (especially those currently between the ages of twenty-one and thirty) who are now officer-parents. The generation gap between young officers and traditional Army cultural expectations has been

¹ While The Salvation Army is the formal name, for purposes of this dissertation, the word "Army" will be substituted.

identified as a cause of stress and vocational dissatisfaction, as well as untold personal, marital, family, and ministry issues.

There are four terms that are important to the development of this dissertation. The first term is commonly used in Salvation Army culture and every officer uses the term almost daily: “officership.” “Officership” is the condition or relation of being a Salvation Army officer. This term is in common use, even internationally, and one will often hear an officer speak of “my officership.” Three other terms that I created exclusively for purpose of this dissertation, and will be referring to are:

1. Officermomship: The condition of being both a mom and an officer.
2. Officercraft: The art or practice of the special abilities, skills and training involved in being an officer of The Salvation Army. The intention is to increase in skill and dexterity.
3. Officer Lifescape: Altering the contours of officership over one’s lifetime in an effort towards improvement and maturity.

In this next section, the ministry context of The Salvation Army’s organizational structure and details of its history are described. When compared to Rebecca’s story from thirty years ago, Valerie’s story illustrates a shift that is evidenced in the online social interactions of millennials. This has created new avenues of ministry and pastoral care opportunity that were not available when Rebecca was a young mom. The second half of Section One is a critical reflective process that explores the significant perceived issues of today’s Salvation Army officer-moms.

Salvation Army's Quasi-Military Structure

The Salvation Army administrative structure is best described as “top-down” and hierarchical. Based on a military model from the 1860s, there has not been much change to its original organizational structure. All official ecumenical positions—except for the General—are appointed, though many non-officers are also employed in various capacities.

The Salvation Army is both a Christian denominational church and an international charitable organization structured in a quasi-military fashion founded by Catherine and William Booth in 1865. The Booth's sought to bring salvation to the poor, destitute, and hungry by meeting both their physical and spiritual needs in an integrated fashion. The social work of The Salvation Army, operating in over 130 countries, springs from its commitment to Jesus.

The theology of The Salvation Army is derived from that of Methodism although it is distinctive in institution and does not practice traditional sacraments. The Army's doctrine is typical of evangelical Protestant denominations and identifies as a Holiness Movement. The governance of The Salvation Army is hierarchical in structure, has well-defined business practices, and is run by ordained Salvation Army officers.²

The Salvation Army Mission Statement is: “The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical branch of the universal Christian Church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach

² Salvation Army, “Organisational Structure,” The Salvation Army, accessed April 25, 2017, <http://www.salvationarmy.org.au/en/Who-We-Are/About-Us/Organisational-Structure/>.

the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination.”³

The Salvation Army’s local expression of Christian community is called a “Corps.” Each Corps embodies Salvation Army distinctions of joyful worship, fellowship, and service within a geographical region. Through structured group meetings such as Sunday Schools and clubs, Army officers seek to encourage people in Christian faith. They also seek to advance the future of people by: building strong character; encouraging Christian values; training in traditional evangelical Christian lifestyle choices; promoting emotional health; and resourcing creative abilities.

Army officers, many times working as married teams, address issues of public concern and seek to awaken the social and moral conscience of the general public by taking and furthering biblical-based positions on social issues that profoundly affect the quality of human life, such as: abortion, alcohol, drug addiction, gambling, pornography, and euthanasia.⁴ More than “just” pastors, Army officer married teams work out the leadership balance of management of business priorities, spiritual activities, and social activities between themselves. Based on my own experience and conversations with others, most officers would confirm that they both “work” forty to fifty hours a week, often with early meetings and late-night activities falling on the same day.

Officer parents have limited personal and official childcare funds. In many cases, the children accompany a parent to work, most often the mothers. This can cause added frustration as the children can be a distraction in the office and get bored quickly. It can even be difficult to lead children’s programs, as officer-parents must balance the needs of

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

their own children with the dozens of other children who are part of the ministry. Corps officers work hard and have widely varied duties. Officer-parents have the unique situation of doing it all while simultaneously parenting young children. The least experienced officers work as assistant officers within a local community led by a senior officer. This kind of close supervision and continued training expectations can bring additional challenges.

Superior and Subordinate Relationships

Currently, most officer supervisors of officer-parents in the field are baby boomers who have grown children that were raised in a pre-digital world. Most learning was accomplished through linear means such as paper books and small, in-person seminars. Orders from supervisors were followed immediately without question, at least not publicly. In matters of discipline, most quietly left the ministry, not wanting to call attention to questionable activities of leadership due to fear of retribution. Though gossip between friends was common, it was not shared in a public format.

Reactions of millennials in these same types of scenarios are quite different from that of boomers, thus presenting significant challenges for their boomer supervisors. Boomer supervisors were trained to submit, even when a boss was unreasonable or had poor leadership skills. They respected that power within the organization was only at the top. The boomer generation did not like being treated poorly, but they considered it part of the job. In contrast, Martha Maznevski writes concerning millennials: “They don’t put up with bad bosses. For Millennials, power is distributed and control requires permission. They don’t listen to authority figures they don’t agree with. This might seem like a challenge, but, in the long run, the sooner people stop accepting poor leadership, the

sooner leaders will have to improve—and everyone will benefit.”⁵ It is my experience that some boomer supervisors feel the younger officers need to “pay their dues” in similar ways to how they did.

An officer in distress, especially one with little experience, may at times question their “calling,” a discernment and pursuit of God’s will for their life. Speaking of a ministry calling in his book *The Faithful Artist*, Cameron J. Anderson writes about a two-tier system of ministry leadership that is common to evangelical ministry structures. While he compares those in “full-time ministry” to “lay persons,” what he says is valuable in conjunction with the hierarchical system of the quasi-military structure of The Salvation Army concerning “administrative supervisor officers” and “field officers.” Anderson proposes that:

In their postwar zeal to evangelize the world, most conservative pastors and teachers reasoned that Christians belonged to one of two camps: a select group called to full-time ministry or a more general group needed to send and support those who had been called. A two-tiered system emerged in which persons called to serve as pastors, leaders and evangelists operated in the upper story and those tasked with providing prayer, encouragement and financial support occupied the lower.⁶

While Anderson was speaking of clergy and lay people, in many ways, the Army officer system is similar in that it can be understood as “two-tiered”: administrative leaders operate in the upper story and the field officers occupy the lower. Further examination of this relationship will be beneficial for continuing discourse concerning

⁵ Martha Maznevski, “6 Tips for Leading Millennials,” Society for Human Resource Management, May 27, 2015, accessed April 24, 2017, <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/Pages/0615-leading-millennials.aspx>.

⁶ Cameron J. Anderson, *The Faithful Artist: A Vision for Evangelicalism and the Arts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), Loc. 4198, Kindle.

conflict between generations in leadership, as it is not merely a matter of age, but also hierarchy.

With conflict comes the need to be open to new ways of approaching officer relationships. James Davison Hunter, in his landmark book regarding the encounter of religious faith with modernity and how that may change institutions in the future, writes:

But at the same time, those institutions and the larger social order of which they are a part not only provide the framework of meanings and social relations in which individuals operate but also “act back” on individuals to form the structures of their consciousness. In short, individuals and institutions are inseparable. Institutions cannot exist without the individuals who make them work, but individuals cannot be understood outside of the institutions that form them and frame all of their activity.⁷

Therefore, any proposal for enhancing officer-to-officer relationships to meet officer-mom needs will need to include the possibility of making changes within the Army’s hierarchical framework, and the social aspects of officer life.

Supervision by experienced senior officers is essential to the development of ethical, professional, and competent new officers for both the management of the Salvation Army as a business and as the younger officers increase their capacity for spiritual authority and visionary leadership. Presently, officer-supervisors provide oversight using a variety of old and new theories, personal styles, and mentoring/coaching approaches. Regardless of methodology, the quality of the relationship between the officer shepherd and their officer apprentice is key to the development of seasoned officers who will be ready to take the mantle of long-term leadership posts for the Army of the future. In an effective relationship, supervisor-shepherd-leaders spend the bulk of their time and energy in developing a positive

⁷ James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity Today* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), Loc. 35, Kindle.

working alliance. To do this well, they must address the generational differences that could lead to a collision of values and systems of communication and interaction.

Women Officer Roles and How They Evolved

Women officers have been an instrumental force for The Salvation Army since the denomination's inception. Historically, there have been more active women officers than men. Women officer roles have evolved dramatically over the 150 years of Army ministry. There is no "one size fits all" appointment structure among the 131 countries where the Army operates. Often one will commonly find officer women in "care-giving" and "teaching/preaching" type assignments, while others have extremely diverse roles that include fund-raising, supervising hundreds of employees, social work oversight, and financial management.

At the time of this writing, approximately 350 female officers currently serve in the Western Territory⁸ of the United States. For example, in the division that my husband and I co-lead (Oregon and Southern Idaho), there are thirty women officers, eighteen of whom have children at home under the age of eighteen. Several more have adult children who live with them, and others are caretakers of grandchildren or elderly parents. The "bounce back" generation of adult children living at home with parents is a rather new phenomenon to officer parents over the last twenty years, and it has had a noticeable impact on the women's time and energy for ministry.

All this family responsibility, which culturally falls disproportionately on the women, can take an enormous toll on the emotional and physical health of women officers. This toll drastically affects women officers' ability to keep regular office hours,

⁸ The Western Territory consists of the thirteen Western United States, including Alaska and Hawaii.

travel for meetings, and keep their mind on their work. “In 1990 Joan Acker coined the term ‘the ideal worker’ to designate the person who is willing to put work before all else, whose time to spend at work is unlimited, and for whom the demands of family, community, and personal life are secondary or at least rendered invisible in the workplace.”⁹ Responding to this “ideal worker” paradigm, one author explains, “Crisis-oriented work patterns, unbounded meeting times and places, and the need to put in face time impact who is seen as an ideal worker and who is not. While this model—often called masculine—does not suit either men or women very well, it persists. Indeed, with the advent of extreme jobs and 24/7 expectations, the conflict between responsibilities for family and success at work have been exacerbated.”¹⁰ Army officership fits all these categories, including the “extreme jobs and 24/7 expectations” category. Few mortals can live up to these ideals.

In the Salvation Army, there are unspoken parallel categories of “the ideal officer,” and as its sub-category, “the ideal officer-mom.” Much like the “ideal worker” illusion, the officer-mom “ideal worker” guise haunts the officer-mom who carries the guilt of not being able to keep up with the appearance of having it all together, with unceasing perfect work-life balance. One aspect of early Army culture was that communications between Headquarters and the field were slow, allowing many officers to be more self-directed. Historically, societal norms were conservative in nature and the officer-mom who felt unable to keep up or at odds with organizational expectations, typically “stepped out of the work” (resigned) due to a sense of duty, or from feeling

⁹ Joan Acker, *Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies*, 1990, referenced in Deborah M. Kolb, Carol Frohlinger, and Judith Williams, *Her Place at the Table: A Woman’s Guide to Negotiating Five Key Challenges to Leadership Success* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2004), 11.

¹⁰ Kolb, Frohlinger, and Williams, 54–55.

pressured by the organization to do so. Since there was no employment contract, only a spiritual covenant relationship, an officer could be terminated quickly and—since there was not social media—quietly. Lawsuits by officers were few, and it was rare for an officer to challenge his or her senior leader’s authority. While those days—and norms—have been gone for decades, the appeal of the seemingly “ideal officer” remains.

In these unprecedented times of quickly changing societal norms, it is important to recognize that older Army officers cannot simply tell younger officers, “Been there, done that; you’ll make it.” Today’s Salvation Army officer-moms are looking for practical guidance as to how best to meet expectations, do all that needs to get done, and do it well. The following brief overview of Army history in the United States will explain how postmodernism, individualism, and social media have impacted The Salvation Army over the years in general, and officer-moms specifically. It will also describe women officer roles including key eras of officer-moms’ history.

Eras of Salvation Army Officer-mom and Family Ministry

Officer-moms carry with them the rich heritage of The Salvation Army. It will be helpful to understand the evolution of officer family life and women officer’s roles since the 1870s to critically address the issues perceived in the present-day. Consequently, this section provides a brief overview of officer family life and women officer’s roles from the 1870s to the present day.

1870s–1910. During this era, very young, single officers were the norm. Generally, they were assigned work in single sex pairs or small groups with a senior officer leading. Missionary-type postings lasted about eighteen months but offered great adventure to far reaching countries. Many of these single officers eventually left the work

to marry and start normal family lives. Those that married as officers often settled into family life by absorbing the culture's norm for "family life." This included the mother mainly staying at home while the children were very young. If the officer-moms did participate in the ministry, it was generally in capacities defined by their gender at the time. While not unheard of to have some officer-moms take on very public or administrative roles, most did not. Ironically, this era is often regarded with "romantic nostalgia," a time of new, quick growth, with only grassroots leadership before heavy administrative challenges came to be the norm and continued to grow. Older officers who are now senior leaders and have been away from the field for many years may not realize the fact that the number of expectations on the field officers have grown, and both officers working full-time is a necessity to fulfill organizational standards and today's cultural expectations. This only exacerbates the pressures put on present-day officer-moms.

1910–1960s. Through this period, officer families lived and worked in the same building, or lived in an Army officers' quarters, often located next door to or across the street from, the Corps. While the officers worked and ministered, their children were often cared for by Corps members' moms or sometimes a live-in nanny—often a young woman being rescued from life on the street. Children either attended the neighborhood school, or were home-schooled when local schools were not available. Home-schooled children were often "office-schooled," as the children went to work with the parents and did their schoolwork there. Extra-curricular activities included joining the Boy/Girl Scout-type troops that met at the Corps, Young People's Fellowship meetings (Church Youth Group), or learning a band instrument in the Corps' Junior Band. Meals were

taken in their private quarters just steps away, or the officer-children joined in the meals from the feeding line for those at the Corps receiving assistance. Most urban officers did not have vehicles and instead used public transportation and trains.

1960s–Present Day. By the 1960s, Corps began to more closely mirror society in that the “officer as professional” began to come in to the culture. Societal shifts mean that the Corps is no longer a “safe place” in which officer-children might roam loosely supervised. A new awareness of pedophiles and predatory activities against children developed and remains strong as Corps began to expand into true “community centers.” In the 1960s, many officer couples had an automobile for family use and now most couples have access to two vehicles. Since 1960, many officers have earned college degrees and continue to do so to professionalize the social work, and to qualify for more government funding and foundation grants.

Beginning in the early 1960s, most officer-families have been provided with “quarters” as “quiet respites” that were generally mid-size, single-family, suburban houses, sometimes up to a forty-five-minute drive from the primary place of work/ministry. Officer-children thus enjoyed access to better schools with a variety of quality extra-curricular activities and programs. However, these improvements also came with peer pressure for brand name clothing and parent involvement in fundraising, Parent Teacher Association, and carpooling. These cultural parenting expectations further fractured officer-moms’ attention, personal finances, and energy, and they continue today.

Most officer-moms could accomplish much by working in the office most weekdays while the children were in school, and being home for them after school while

still fulfilling SA Headquarters expectations. The moms and children would also be away from home several nights a week at the Corps with youth activities and music practice. Summers were spent with the moms leading youth camps with their own children coming along as campers. Many ministry activities were done as “family ministry.” This is still true today.

Difficulties continued to arise over the last fifty years as women in modern culture began to learn and succeed in developing business skills. In some cases, traditional gender-role reversal evolved due to sharing work between the couple based on gifting. In 1970s and 1980s, these changes caused backlash with many older officers in senior leadership who were more comfortable with a division of labor based on societal gender norms. Today, one can find a blending of both traditional and more contemporary divisions of labor, which can cause confusion and misunderstanding between both leadership and peer officers.

Another area of possible confusion and misunderstanding is the generational differences between junior and senior officers. Sometimes it can also be an officer who is chronologically a boomer, but went through the Army’s two-year training period since the advent of the smart phone. The Internet and cell phone drastically changed how students learned and how much time was spent behind a screen. While newer officers communicate via social media and have high expectations of computer hardware and software, many senior officers still tend to rely on pre-social media communication practices, ministry practices, and ministry resources. This difference can cause considerable schisms in continued training and mentoring.

MODERN SALVATION ARMY OFFICER CULTURE

A Generational Disconnect

In the previous paragraphs, cultural and generational attitudes over the years of the Army's existence were presented to give historical background to the perceived issues that can cause today's officer-mom dissatisfaction and discouragement. These generational gaps seem to be a modern barrier to healthy functioning. Although not well defined in a historical block of years, the millennial generation,¹¹ as it is commonly known, has several unique characteristics that are both disruptive to Army tradition and yet a positive challenge to give the Army a healthier and more sustainable future in this modern era.¹²

In speaking of millennials in the workplace, Martha Maznevski, a researcher for the Society of Human Resource Management writes:

¹¹ Those born between 1979 and 1994. See Karen Myers and Kamyab Sadaghiani, "Millennials in the Workplace: A Communication Perspective on Millennials' Organizational Relationships and Performance," *Journal of Business and Psychology* 25, no. 2 (2010), accessed February 26, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-010-9172-7>.

¹² Millennials are comfortable with electronic and virtual communication technologies, even tending to work outside the office walls well beyond the traditional workday. They work well in teams and are motivated to have an impact for their organization. Many are well educated, tolerant and optimistic. They believe in "fairness." They want to know how much is enough so that they can balance their time at work in accordance with what they feel comfortable. Some even elect to forgo promotion, valuing their time more. They expect flexibility and options. Millennials want open and frequent communication with their supervisors. Many of these millennial characteristics are very beneficial for The Salvation Army into the future. For now, there is a huge cultural divide, as most of Salvation Army senior leadership are boomers who have worked long hours, forgoing vacations and time off to secure their positions of authority, and they feel others should "pay their dues." Unlike most millennials, boomers are most comfortable with in-person conversation, large department meetings, scheduled friendly visits in their office, real paper documents, hierarchical protocols, and deference to age and experience. See Myers and Sadaghiani; Jeanine S. Steward, Elizabeth Goad Oliver, Karen S. Cravens, and Shigehiro Oishi, "Managing Millennials: Embracing Generational Differences," *Business Horizons* 60, no. 1 (2017), accessed February 26, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2016.08.011>; A. Glass, "Understanding Generational Differences for Competitive Success," *Industrial and Commercial Training* 39, no. 2 (2007), accessed February 26, 2018, <http://dx.doi.org.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/10.1108/00197850710732424>; and Michael Houlihan and Bonnie Harvey, "Creating a Positive Work Culture: Millennials in the Mix Reinforce the Need to Engage Employees," *Healthcare Registration* (2015), accessed February 26, 2018, <http://link.galegroup.com.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/apps/doc/A419269598/AONE?u=newb64238&sid=AONE&xid=00afe6e8>.

Their lives are nonlinear. The world has always been complex and volatile for this generation. They witnessed Sept. 11 and the war on terror, came of age in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, and never experienced a world in which climate change wasn't a major concern. This generation has not experienced the world as a safe and coherent place. They know they will have nonlinear career trajectories that reflect shifting circumstances. A lot of them will go back and forth between traditional employment and entrepreneurship. For most of their lives, they have been getting their information online and through mobile devices, focusing on one subject one minute and something completely different the next. Previous generations learned in a more linear way, such as by reading books from start to finish. The good news for leaders is that Millennials are coming to the workforce prepared for complexity. They don't know anything else. Older managers may have a hard time adapting to the new normal.¹³

The Salvation Army is one of those older ministry organizations in which there is a written covenant that implies an expectation of a lifetime commitment. As was just mentioned, millennials' tendency towards often changing employment due to shifting circumstances is in direct opposition to the Army's expectations. Chuck Bomar, a leading expert on millennials explains: "The last thing they want to do is marginalize what they think is important about who they are and how they're uniquely wired. They don't want to simply get a job that pays the bills. They want to do something that's meaningful to them."¹⁴ The Army offers meaningful vocation, but with today's officers subject to the quickly changing circumstances of modern family culture, a lifetime commitment of serving by appointment¹⁵ can seem antiquated.

¹³ Maznevski.

¹⁴ Chuck Bomar, *Worlds Apart: Understanding the Mindset and Values of 18–25 Year Olds* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Loc. 759, Kindle.

¹⁵ An "appointment" is the word used for an Army ministry service. These vary in length of time, cultural features and geographical location. Officers can be moved to a new appointment at any time by the Territorial Commander.

Maznevski indicates that millennials are loyal, but more to principles than to people. They will not give their loyalty or follow one's lead just because he or she is their designated leader. Maznevski shares this advice:

Instead of trying too hard to get Millennials to be loyal to your leadership or organization, focus on developing and communicating the principles and purpose behind your organization's work. Millennials need to know that they are working to make the world a better place. They believe that there is no success without sustainability for individuals, organizations, society and the environment. If you can convince them in an authentic way that what you are doing is principled, they will get behind you.¹⁶

The Army, as a hierarchical system, has often relied on an officers' unquestioned loyalty to both senior leaders and the organization. With the millennials, this is an aspect of Army culture that is swiftly changing. New modes of communication may need to be employed to satisfy the millennials need for trust within leadership, and a heightened definition of what is considered a successful ministry outcome. Part of their insistence includes sustainability for the individual as well. David Kinnaman, President of the Barna Group, in speaking of why young Christians are leaving church and rethinking faith, says, "They are used to 'having a say' in everything related to their lives."¹⁷ These are aspects of individualism that are contrary in nature to a quasi-military organizational framework that makes the decisions such as where one lives and what one will do.

For this dissertation, the dictionary definition of the noun "individualism" is helpful: "a social theory advocating the liberty, rights, or independent action of the individual." A secondary definition is: "the pursuit of individual rather than common or

¹⁶ Maznevski.

¹⁷ David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving Church . . . and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2016), Loc. 3082, Kindle.

collective interests; egoism.”¹⁸ Within the quasi-military framework of the Army that relies on immediate, respectful, and obedient conduct for expedient completion of assigned tasks, the contrast is evident.

In speaking about the aspect of “individualism” becoming a prevailing influence within the church clergy in Europe and the United States, Vincent J. Donovan, a Spiritan priest and long-term Tanzania missionary, writes: “The endowments and talents that are present are often envisaged not as contributions to a community, but as additions to one’s personal stature. Such are the bittersweet fruits of intense individualism.”¹⁹ Independent action of an individual can be damaging within an organizational structure, such as the Salvation Army, that relies on conformity and standardization for successful deployment of resources to meet organizational goals.

Relationship of Millennials to Leaders Within Ministry Contexts

When generations’ values collide between leaders and followers, it was noted above that communication suffers. In a phone interview with this researcher, author, speaker, and millennial, Dr. A.J. Swoboda shares the following choice quips that help us to understand how millennials approach ministry vocations a bit differently than boomers:

- “Millennials love Jesus, but not the church”;
- “Their parents are their peers”;
- “Millennials live and breathe information from all over the world”;
- “For them, social justice can be addressed with virtual care”;

¹⁸ Dictionary.com, s. v. “individualism,” accessed November 25, 2017, <http://origin-mwebserp.dictionaty.com/browse/individualism>.

¹⁹ Vincent J. Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 68.

- “Millennials are the most cynical generation”;
- “Millennials were told their whole lives that they can do whatever they wanted to do and be whomever they wanted to be”; and
- “Millennials are the most highly educated demographic.”²⁰

In speaking about his own experience as a millennial in ministry and how he is supervised, Dr. Swoboda shared that he reports to a group of elders who are boomers. He stated that his “personal relationships with the elders are all that matters in broaching the generational divide.” This reiterates the importance of communication within intergenerational leader/follower systems as being key to successful working relationships.

Millennials and Technology

In the preface to the compilation book, *Global Voices on Biblical Equality*, William David Spencer shares an uplifting and encouraging thought: “We discover that the church may shortly become the chief voice for preserving the uniqueness of the human being in an increasingly technologically confused society.”²¹ It is important for The Salvation Army to be a church that helps in this goal. Technology is making more and more decisions for individuals as to how they spend their time and resources. Technology tracks people’s movement and offers suggestions for their next choices. This kind of decision-making can be foreign to those who are not as technologically inclined.

²⁰ A. J. Swoboda, telephone interview by author, April 20, 2017.

²¹ Aída Besançon Spencer, William David Spencer, and Mimi Haddad, eds., *Global Voices on Biblical Equality: Women and Men Serving Together in the Church* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), Loc. 242, Kindle.

Many millennials are very familiar with technology and social media as they grew up with it. Maznevski explains how most millennials experience decision-making and work production:

They learn through experience. They're not referred to as the PlayStation Generation for nothing. They grew up playing a lot of video games that came with little or no instructions. So they learned to make it to the next level by "dying" over and over again. They can be like that in their professional careers, too. They throw themselves into new experiences without a lot of planning, and they learn by failing repeatedly until they succeed. They expect a leader to play the same role as the walls and cliffs in their video games. Leaders should be aware of this and help point out the potential pitfalls of certain courses of action, both before and after tasks are completed.²²

Within a professional environment, mainly led by older boomers, this kind of seemingly reckless decision-making can be uncomfortable. Branson and Martinez discuss issues of culture in leadership within the life of the church in their book, *Churches, Cultures & Leadership*: "The church's self-understanding as a volunteer organization emphasizes that obligations are minimized and members are 'free agents.'"²³ In the Army, long-term commitment to lean toward the careful and cautious course of action has been a traditional value. Those who feel as though they are "free agents," rather than denying their personal desires for the group's sake, are viewed as individualistic and thus contrary to Army quasi-military culture.

Not having power over one's own destiny can bring its' own type of insecurity. Zygmunt Bauman, in speaking of social inequalities in a global age writes: "After all, we feel insecure because our jobs, and so our incomes, social standing and dignity, are under threat. We are not insured against the threat of being made redundant, excluded and

²² Maznevski.

²³ Mark Branson and Juan Francisco Martínez, *Churches, Cultures and Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011), Loc. 2247, Kindle.

evicted, losing the position we cherish and believe to have earned as ours forever. The partnerships we cherish are not foolproof and secure either: even in the calmest of moments”²⁴ Everyone is expected to conform to what is best for the whole, and be committed to the long-term success of the Army, no matter if they are comfortable with senior leaders’ decisions or not. Some officers, although seemingly committed, cannot fulfill organizational expectations. The following research will highlight some of these reasons.

THE RESEARCH

In the prior section, the discussion focused on the disconnect between the cultural and generational characteristics of older and newer officers in a work situation. The following research shows that common life stressors are amplified amongst not just newer officers, but especially officer-moms of any age. Managing work-motherhood synchronization is another area of division.

Women officers, especially officer-moms, are struggling to be heard and validated, while yet fully admitting their many shortcomings in fulfilling work and ministry expectations. In an interview with this author, Salvation Army senior leader Lieutenant Colonel Marcia Smith discussed her concern for officer issues, including:

- How to share leadership in expanding unknown expectations;
- Women’s attention to their own children and the related guilt from sending their children to daycare;
- Work-family balance;

²⁴ Zygmunt Bauman, *Collateral Damage: Social Inequalities in a Global Age* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2011), Loc. 1315, Kindle.

- Imposition of event attendance;
- Lack of a quality family model and the need for “family life” instruction, including parenting and personal finance classes;
- Imposed continuing education affecting attitude and time management;
- Expectations for those officer-moms who are themselves physically ill or primary caregivers for children, grandchildren, parents, or grandparents; and
- Marital conflict.²⁵

Most of her concerns seem in agreement with author Bruce Nichol, who suggests, “unresolved issues in our lives are the hindrances to our maturity.”²⁶ A significant aspect of maturity is being fully developed emotionally, and as a result, modeling good judgment. These are key personal qualities of experienced officer-moms who thrive and exhibit satisfaction in their ministry.

The Army, as an organization, can also contribute to officer satisfaction. Salvation Army officer, Commissioner Mark Tillsley, extensively surveyed 420 U.S.A. Officers for his 2013 PhD dissertation at Fordham University. He concludes, “The most important finding of this study may be the significant relationship between administrative support (Divisional Leader) and officer satisfaction.”²⁷ This should be a sobering revelation for a Divisional Leader and thus all the organization’s senior leadership. Officers under a Divisional Leader’s command consider his or her support so crucial that it significantly affects their satisfaction in ministry as an officer. Divisional Leaders are generally the

²⁵ Marcia Smith, interview by author, Portland, OR, December 7, 2015.

²⁶ Bruce McNicol, “TrueFaced Seminar” (Founders Address, Territorial Executive Councils meeting of The Salvation Army, Cerritos, September 9, 2015).

²⁷ Mark Wesley Tillsley, “The Salvation Army Corps Officer: A Territorial Survey of Vocational Preparation, Role, Efficacy, and Ministry Satisfaction” (PhD diss., Fordham University, 2013), 100, accessed March 5, 2016, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

first level of supervision over field officers, many of whom are newer officers without extensive experience.

In February 2016, this author developed an informal one-page survey and distributed it to nine Salvation Army Divisional Leaders on the West Coast of the U.S., most of who had a minimum of twenty-five years of experience. The intent was to have them identify how they rank the prevalence of the common stressors in the younger officer-moms that they supervise. This method of informal surveying was helpful in identifying overarching themes and conclusions from the supervisor viewpoint.

Responses suggest that, of the twenty-two stressors listed, most were common. Divisional Leaders wrote in comments that these common stressors were most prevalent in those they considered to lack spiritual maturity. Generally, these were officers who may be newer Christians or new to leading others in a spiritual capacity.

The top three most-common stressors of officer-moms, in order of frequency are: an inability to discern and initiate mission priorities (puts personal ministry preferences first); Corps (organizations) finances and fundraising; and immediate family issues. When compiled and announced verbally at the end of a meeting, these findings were not surprising to the group, and they are in line with the next survey by this researcher, which included findings of the officer-moms within a specific geographic region.

To investigate the prevalence of these concerns mentioned above, actions were taken to identify the most common stressors from the officer-moms' point of view. This included charting commonalities in an active "officer-mom" Facebook group's posts that mentioned issues with feelings of being overwhelmed or stressed. From this list, a survey was developed to incorporate these stressors. This survey was distributed to twenty-four

women officers within the geographic region of Oregon and Southern Idaho in late February 2016. Each woman chose her top three stressors by means of a check vote, and were then asked to share additional thoughts in the comments.

The top three stressors identified in the survey each received eight votes. They were: work too many hours/do not take time off and/or have time for a Sabbath; immediate family issues; and discouraged by conflict with local leaders or long-time soldiers (corps members). The next most common stressors, also receiving equal votes, were personal physical health and loneliness.

Fifty percent of those listing “immediate family issues” also cited “work too many hours” on their surveys. 25 percent of those listing “immediate family issues” also cited “personal physical health,” another 25 percent cited “immediate family issues and “loneliness.” Finally, 25 percent of those citing “immediate family issues” also cited “family members addictions.” This analysis was extremely helpful in identifying comorbid factors of unhealthy stress.

Are the Perceived Issues the Real Issues?

In his book, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, Heifetz notes, “The problem causing the distress frequently will not be on the surface. Although the superficial conflict may be over procedures, power, schedule, structure, and lines of authority, these seemingly technical issues often act as proxies for underlying conflicts in ways of life.”²⁸ With that idea in mind, this section expands on the top three listed stressors as outlined in

²⁸ Ronald A. Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), Loc. 3068, Kindle.

the surveys and considers comments gleaned from casual conversations with officer-moms that help identify possible conflicts that are contributing factors.

Stressor: Work Too Many Hours

Salvation Army officers are assigned a “ministry work assignment,” otherwise known as an “appointment,” without consultation, that has: no defined “time-clock type” schedule, no specific job description, fuzzy authority boundaries, widely varying resources, and a singular mandate of “doing all you can to bring the world to Christ.” Unwritten expectations for field officers generally include finding a comfortable division of responsibilities between the husband and wife. This works best for the purposes of: balancing a multi-million dollar budget; keeping large multi-use facilities clean and maintained with an adequate amount of programming occupancy; serving on community committees and Service Clubs; supervising a few or dozens of employees and hundreds of volunteers; and growing a church congregation through preaching, outreach for all ages, discipleship and lay leader training, and oversight of an additional social program such as a homeless shelter, senior feeding program or children’s after school program. These duties must be balanced with taking care of one’s personal health and juggling the shared duties of home, children, and extended family. Faced with the above, Eugene Peterson’s wisdom that “Work doesn’t take us away from God; it continues the work of God through us”²⁹ is helpful. This is a needed aspect of the spiritual maturity that was noted above as a key component of healthy, experienced officer-moms.

²⁹ Eugene H. Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2008), Loc. 115, Kindle.

George Kalantzis, writing on Christian spiritual formation in his book, *Life in the Spirit*, says: “It seems that what St. Basil identified as a danger lurking behind some of the practices of late antiquity, namely the dangers of isolationism, individualism and self-pleasing, still remain. The temptation of our own time seems to be the same, a spirituality focused on the self as its ultimate *telos* (end of effort).”³⁰ This focus on self is contrary to those aspects of spiritual maturity that are necessary for satisfaction in officer ministry.

Salvation Army officers are compensated on a relatively even level with a weekly allowance, insurance, and other resources commensurate with full-time work, and yet they do not always have clear expectations of “time” or “quality of effort” within their appointments. Many put forth a concerted effort, sometimes at the expense of spending time with their children. Sadly, others seemingly take advantage of the freedom from a time clock, and may use their children as a “holy excuse.” Kalantzis’ consideration of “generosity” amongst the monks whose rule of life he explores, especially in his discussion on St. Basil, indicates that an expectation of a reasonable effort with quantifiable outcomes are spiritual: “He believed that the chief and visible social sign of Christian conversion, life and perfection would be economic in form, not just spiritual.”³¹ It is spiritual that the Army has minimum performance expectations of compensated officers, although expectations are not always clearly defined, even while in an environment of continued learning in ministry.

Often, Senior Leaders mention that officers’ time is largely consumed by the comfortable habits of modern life that do not contribute to the overall vitality of their

³⁰ Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantzis. *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 81.

³¹ Ibid., 80.

Corps. Because of this choice by the officer of how to prioritize her energy and spend her time, there is less time for family, no room for ministry innovation or extra pushes towards worthy goals, or additional time for solitude. Many younger officers feel as Sittser states: “Most of us will not rise to that level of sacrificial love, even if we wanted to. We simply have too much to do just to keep life going; the ordinary demands of life are quite enough for us.”³² Some of those demands are habits or other behaviors that soothe anxiety. Whether those habits and behaviors are determined to be beneficial to people’s health—emotionally and/or spiritually—is a question that needs an answer.

Stressor: Immediate Family Issues

Which comes first, family difficulties cause stress at work or work/ministry difficulties cause stress on the family? Author Gerald Sittser, in speaking about early evangelists says, “The stories of their sacrifices might offend our modern sensibilities, for many of these pioneers seemed all too willing (and even eager) to sacrifice marriage, children, friendships, health, wealth and reputation for the sake of their missionary work, which runs contrary to our inclination to see faith as an ally of those values.”³³ There are many stories of Salvation Army officers throughout history who willingly made those sacrifices as well. Many officers feel their meager sacrifices are always being compared to Army saints of old, and that they fall way short. How much is enough? Sittser continues, “Ministry work, left unchecked, can easily be all-consuming.”³⁴ We can be

³² Gerald Lawson Sittser, *Water from a Deep Well: Christian Spirituality from Early Martyrs to Modern Missionaries* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2007), 293.

³³ Ibid., 264.

³⁴ Ibid.

completely “overwhelmed by the expectations other people place upon us.”³⁵ This commonly leads to a feeling of never being or doing enough. These feelings lead to ministry guilt and a re-examination of work-family synergy that younger officers continue to struggle to find.

Stressor: Conflict with Soldiers

In this author’s experience with hearing the frustration of Corps members, the most common observations they make regarding their newer officers is how officers spend their time, an unwillingness to apologize, and suggestions of entitlement. Even so, fortunately, these types of complaints are the exception and not the rule. When transferred to a new assignment, some officers unwittingly reduce their Corps to what they can manage. This is sometimes done through disregard and neglect.

Eugene Peterson points out, “As we realize both the necessity and the nature of our lives in community, we also become aware of the difficulty, the complexity, and, as Christians who are following Jesus, the seductions all around us to find an easier way, a modified community, a reduced community customized to my preferences, a ‘gated community.’”³⁶ Through inaction, unreliability or malaise, some officers have been known to tailor the Corps membership to a size and type they are comfortable with: “A sect is accomplished by community reduction, getting rid of what does not please us, getting rid of what offends us, whether of ideas or people.”³⁷ It is not surprising then that there is conflict and discord in a community that is saddled with a reluctant leader.

³⁵ Heifetz, Loc. 824, Kindle.

³⁶ Peterson, 239.

³⁷ Ibid., 244.

Teaching new officers about the personality types they can expect and how to handle them is an important aspect of helping officers overcome conflict within their own Corps. I have seen repeatedly how “a perpetual concern for consensus leverages power to the extremists.”³⁸ People will resist when a leader takes initiative, especially a new or young leader. It seems the way to build a leader is not through new techniques, but “one that focuses on the leader’s own presence and being.”³⁹ This focus is crucial to spiritual and emotional maturity so necessary for successful officers.

Fundamentally, there is a great need for continued training of new leaders in the necessary but difficult task of understanding themselves. Friedman lays out this plan when he says, “If a leader who has sought help can be taught how to stay in touch with the reactive group without taking their issues so seriously that he or she is thrown off course, increased differentiation can become a form of leadership that, if sustained, often will result in the rest getting over what ails them.”⁴⁰ The idea of “preserving self in a close relationship”⁴¹ is crucial marital and business advice for the new officer to learn and live.

One test of a good leader who attracts followers and enjoys less conflict is the notion of “follow through.” Agosto defines leadership “functionally, by what leaders do ‘on the way,’ as well as by what they say.”⁴² Those who share leadership also tend to

³⁸ Edwin H. Friedman, Margaret M. Treadwell, and Edward W. Beal, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix* (New York: Seabury Books, 2007), 3.

³⁹ Ibid., 4.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 157.

⁴¹ Ibid., 181.

⁴² Efrain Agosto. *Servant Leadership: Jesus & Paul* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005), 10.

have less conflict: “Both Jesus and Paul refused to work alone.”⁴³ Deborah Koehn Lloyd, in a recent book about vocation, writes, “In accepting my uniqueness I am able to support the unique gifts of others.”⁴⁴ Though working together can sometimes be difficult and is a skill that takes experience and fortitude, it generally does pay increased results.

The top three listed issues causing distress are more about conflicts in ways of living, rather than organizational procedures and lines of authority. These underlying personal issues are not always easy to see. The officers may complain about something technical, but, generally, the stated issue is not the real cause of dissatisfaction. The real issues can be hidden subconsciously or intentionally so that the hard work of dealing with the more personal issue can be ignored.

What is Success?

One of The Salvation Army’s founders is William Booth. A very famous, cringe-worthy quote attributed to him is: “That, and better, will do.” It is a disconcerting way of acknowledging someone’s accomplishments, but still leaving room for future expectations. In the 1800s, it was received as a glorious challenge. Today it is often received as a put-down. A problem often noted among officer-moms is the fact that measurements of success in SA officership are not always tangible.

Eugene Peterson writes, “One of the severe handicaps under which the church operates is the cover-up of the glory with respectable substitutes such as acceptance and

⁴³ Friedman, 206.

⁴⁴ Deborah Koehn Loyd, *Your Vocational Credo: Practical Steps to Discover Your Unique Purpose* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2015), 19.

honor, success and ‘relevance.’”⁴⁵ Even those officers who can check all the boxes on a Minimum Standards form (a general checklist of standardized expectations for programs) and show an overall increase in membership, activity, and budget, may still not feel as though they have hit the bull’s-eye regarding achieving success. It always seems like more could have been done.

Even those who accomplish much can feel unsettled: “Leaders who are looked up to constantly, who give out answers competently, who everyone assumes are living what they are saying, often have acute experiences of dissonance: ‘Who I am and what people think I am aren’t anywhere close to being the same thing.’”⁴⁶ Salvation Army members, lay leaders, and community leaders can have unrealistic expectations. It is a matter of fact that Salvation Army officers are human, although there are plenty of folks with romantic notions from glorified historical accounts or memories that are often disappointed with the officers of today. Many of those folks are recently retired leaders who make up congregants in several corps with newer officers. “It is the duty of leaders,” advises Northouse in his book, *Leadership*, “to treat others with respect—to listen to them closely and be tolerant of opposing points of view.”⁴⁷

Field Officers are the “front lines” of the Army. Small field appointments (Corps) are generally identified locations for first-year officers to be sent to serve. Larger Corps are generally staffed by more experienced officers. Conflict may arise because a few officers are picked out of the line-up partway through their career to serve in

⁴⁵ Peterson, 102.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 13–14.

⁴⁷ Peter Guy Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 7th ed. (Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, 2016), 359.

administrative positions that are perceived as promotions. This creates an “us and them” mentality that can discourage those who are not chosen for these administrative posts with a perception that the administrative officers have it easier and work less hours. This author has been in both arenas, and has not found this to be true, yet the perception persists. Administrative Officers commonly experience frustration as they are bound to work in tandem with Field Officers to make the institution function. This work and cooperation are essential since Administrative Officers are dependent on Field Officers to make timely reports.

As with many ministry vocations, officer-moms struggle with the fact that measurements of success in SA officership are not always immediately obvious. Some officers are held to unreachable standards because of unfair comparison to the past. Jealousy can come about between officers who perceive administrative posts more satisfying than fieldwork. It can be difficult for officer-moms to get a good picture of what “success” looks like, as the markers along the way are few and mostly intangible.

Present Day Responses of Officer-moms to Perceived Issues

Since the explosion of social media, many Facebook groups have popped up, and officers often use these and other social media platforms to express their frustrations with a seemingly supportive group of peers. In many cases, their posts are heartbreaking and telling. One of the largest social media gathering spots specifically for officer women is the closed Facebook group called “Officer-moms,” which began modestly in the Western U.S. with about 100 members in 2012. As of October 2017, it has since grown to 1,523 members from around the world.

Through a recent analysis of this Facebook group, consisting of all posts from June, July, and August of 2017, this researcher found 891 initial posts, averaging 9.7 posts each day. These numbers do not include the hundreds of “likes” and “comments.” These posts can be categorized into nineteen themes as listed below in descending order, with the posts per category in parentheses:

- Seeking or sharing of program plans and ideas, calendar plans and questions (123)
- Prayer requests for self and family members (115)
- Childcare, maternity, parenting and children’s schooling issues (93)
- Sharing of inspiration or encouragement (90)
- Angst concerning new appointment and the moving process (73)
- Angst concerning congregational, client and camper drama (72)
- Prayer requests for clients, country, others (57)
- Employee issues, policy issues and computer/IT frustration (46)
- Seeking directory information such as “who is in Boston?” (37)
- Questions, concerns and complaints regarding uniforms, nylons, regulation shoes and purses (35)
- Complaints and issues concerning cleaning a Quarters (parsonage) or moving into a Quarters which was not in good condition (29)
- Fundraising ideas and frustrations (28)
- Requests for vendor information on specific products (27)
- Questions and comments regarding furlough (vacation) (18)
- Inside jokes or funny stories: “You know you are an officer-mom when...” (16)
- Discouraged or lonely (10)

- Frustration with time management (10)
- Disaster deployment of husband or self (8)
- Sermon preparation and ideas (4)

SUMMARY

Millennial cultural values have been shown to conflict with SA historical norms. As such, today's officer-moms' expectations and desires present new and distinct challenges to boomer leaders with traditional mindsets. Cultural preferences in the SA are ingrained into its DNA. So much of the millennial culture encompasses an experiential approach that conflicts with the expected submissive loyalty senior leaders were expected to uphold. Present day perceived issues of officer-moms reflect this gap. Officer-moms are struggling with common issues related to their identity as an officer-mom, and they are unable to find the compassion and comfort they desire. As such, they are reaching for answers and a listening ear in online communities.

This reaching out online may be the avenue for teachable moments. By rising to the challenge of their imperative to shepherd officer-moms, mature officer-moms and SA leaders are seeking new ways to engage in modern mentoring and pastoral care practices while observing the integrity of SA values. Section Two reviews the Divisional Leaders' crucial role, though many of these instructions apply to any mature officer.

SECTION TWO: PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

In the previous section, the topic of self-reported issues was discussed. In this section, the intent is to analyze the current structures that are intended to address these issues. Pastoral care and officer development of Field Officers are the responsibility of the Divisional Leaders. The directives that these leaders work within will be discussed. A list of officer needs and desires will be presented along with current efforts being made to satisfy those requests while still maintaining standards of Army policy and conformity. A model from the U.S. Military will be presented and useful elements will be considered for application to the Salvation Army culture. The section concludes with trends of today's marketplace and the direction of the future regarding millennials' attitudes in the workplace, with discussion as to how that affects today's officer-moms and their relationships to their leaders.

THE DIVISIONAL LEADERS' ROLE

As explained in Section One, Salvation Army officer Commissioner Mark Tillsley identifies the significance of the relationship between administrative support and officer satisfaction.⁴⁸ "Administrative support" is recognized as the head of the Divisional Office staff, usually consisting of the Divisional Commander and the Divisional Director of Women's Ministries. For purposes of this study, they are referred to as a team known as "Divisional Leaders."

⁴⁸ Mark Wesley Tillsley, "The Salvation Army Corps Officer: A Territorial Survey of Vocational Preparation, Role, Efficacy, and Ministry Satisfaction" (PhD diss., Fordham University, 2013), accessed March 5, 2016, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

“Section 1. Pastoral Care and Counseling” of *Orders and Regulations for Divisional Commanders*, a document outlining the expectations for pastoral care and spiritual support that Divisional Leaders are expected to undertake, states:

Officers’ welfare. The Divisional Commander (DC) is expected to have a personal knowledge of all the officers in the division and to take a close interest in all that concerns their usefulness and well-being. A superficial knowledge of the officers can be dangerous, but a wise leader who cares for them will, by frequent interviewing, develop insights and intuitions, which will reveal the strengths and weaknesses of their personalities. The DC will thus learn to understand and appreciate the officers and to help them in time of difficulty.”⁴⁹

The Unique Pastoral Role of the Divisional Director of Women’s Ministries in the SA Western Territory

To help officer-moms as they navigate these crucial years of their officership,⁵⁰ Lt. Colonel Marcia Smith, the Western Territorial Secretary for Strategic Leadership Planning, outlines the importance of the officers’ relationship with the Divisional Director of Women’s Ministries (DDWM) who is typically the wife of the Divisional Commander: “The DDWM must be the communicator/listener and initiate building relationships. She needs to be the encourager that identifies teachable moments and corrects with love.”⁵¹ She noted that ideals to communicate include:

- Learning how to grow up as an officer—understand the “seasons of our lifetime ministry”;
- Learning how to trust others and how to be trustworthy;
- Working to more fully clarify expectations from the beginning of the appointment;

⁴⁹ Salvation Army, Authority of the General, *Orders and Regulations for Divisional Commanders in the United States of America* (Alexandria, VA: National Headquarters, 2010).

⁵⁰ A state of being an active officer.

⁵¹ Marcia Smith, interview by author, Portland, OR, December 7, 2015.

- Clarifying expectations for sharing the ministry load; and
- Understanding what the Territorial Pastoral Care Department can do to help them, and learning about Policies and Procedures that outline responses in many situations.⁵²

As a community of believers, we value consistent pastoral care: “When we come to understand ourselves and the men and women we work with ‘according to the Scriptures,’ our core identity comes out as persons-in-relationship.”⁵³ We must recognize however that “Leaders are always failing somebody.”⁵⁴

Field Officers often share that they yearn for positive attention as they are bombarded daily with negativity from within and without: “The most powerful rewards we can receive are the attention, approval and affection of people we love and respect.”⁵⁵ Many describe loneliness as one of their biggest challenges. Field Officers are looking to Divisional Leaders with a yearning heart, bursting to share. Dr. MaryKate Morse gently reminds her students that a servant leader “encourages the hearts of followers.”⁵⁶ As a group, DDWM’s come from very different backgrounds and skill sets. They have many competing priorities within their appointed tasks. While they hold an important relationship with the officer-moms, there simply is not enough time for them to be a singular source of encouragement and mentoring.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Eugene H. Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2005), 36, Kindle.

⁵⁴ Ronald A. Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), Loc. 2834, Kindle.

⁵⁵ Bruce Duncan Perry and Maia Szalavitz, *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog: And Other Stories from a Child Psychiatrist’s Notebook—What Traumatized Children Can Teach Us about Life, Loss, Love, and Healing* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), Loc. 1497, Kindle.

⁵⁶ MaryKate Morse, “What is Leadership” (lecture, Portland Seminary, Cannon Beach, OR March 7, 2016).

Officer Needs and Desires

The Salvation Army's Western Territory Clinical Psychologist has interviewed thousands of United States' Western Territory Salvation Army officers, candidates, and officer children in the past decade. Dr. Jack Anderson shares the following most common described needs and desires of Salvation Army officers:

- Communication – be in the know
- Involvement – have a part
- Accountability – notice me and keep tabs on me, but trust me
- Encouragement – pray for/with me and encourage me
- To be Known – take time to know me, my gifts and my situation
- Be treated Fairly – have equal opportunities
- Performance Integrity – meet a set of minimum standards⁵⁷

From my experience, these needs are amplified in officer-moms with their unique stressors. Army leadership has begun the conversation for meeting these needs by recognizing the contemporary challenges and the consequences of policies or cultural expectations, habits, and assumptions in officer-moms' everyday lives, but still more can be done.

When considering the questions women have about how they can accomplish their goals, the authors of *Her Place at the Table* suggest: “We help women answer it by connecting their interests to what is good for the organization. If a woman can clearly

⁵⁷ Jack Anderson, e-mail message to author, April 17, 2017.

articulate that connection, she is more secure in asking for what she needs and others in the organization begin to get more comfortable.”⁵⁸ This is an area for veteran officer-moms to address by encouraging the younger officer-moms to connect with the women in the community that they want to reach, perhaps through an exploration of women’s interests that are compatible with traditional Army ministries. Officer-moms with toddlers, for example, may be encouraged to start a “play group” in the community center, meeting both their own and others’ need for fellowship.

Success in this struggle does not seem to be limited to shy officer-moms. David Brooks saw of how leaders succeed: “They, too, found that extroversion, agreeableness, and openness to new experience did not correlate well with CEO success. Instead, what mattered was emotional stability and conscientiousness—being dependable, making plans, and following through.”⁵⁹ Edwin Friedman, a consultant on the connections between emotional process at home and at work says that when an individual focuses first on her “own integrity and on the nature of [her] own presence,” she does not need to stress about “techniques for manipulating or motivating others” because she can “support differentiation and creative imagination throughout the system.”⁶⁰ Any efforts towards helping officer-moms become healthy and emotionally stable will enhance their ministry capabilities and, thus, their ministry outcomes.

⁵⁸ Deborah M. Kolb, Carol Frohlinger, and Judith Williams, *Her Place at the Table: A Woman’s Guide to Negotiating Five Key Challenges to Leadership Success* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2004), 8.

⁵⁹ David Brooks, *The Social Animal: The Hidden Sources of Love, Character, and Achievement* (New York: Random House, 2011), 138, Kindle.

⁶⁰ Edwin Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix* (New York: Seabury Books, 2007), 18.

The Divisional Leader's Imperative

The challenge of a Divisional Leader includes these imperatives as included in the Orders and Regulations for Divisional Commanders that guides their actions:

One of the divisional commander's most sacred responsibilities is the **cultivation of the spirit and mind** of the officers within the division. Their personal experience of holiness of heart and life must be a reality and not just a theory confined to their public work. Their **vision needs to be enlarged** taking in not only their immediate appointment but also the world at large. They must be encouraged to look beyond any difficulties or failures in their work to the **all sufficient power of God the Holy Spirit**. The DC and his or her spouse together will **exercise pastoral care of all officers** and have a special interest in the children of officers in the division, taking note of any family concerns and giving particular attention to officers who are stationed alone.⁶¹

So, how do Divisional Leaders address the issues officer-moms are facing, keeping this order in mind as the mandate? The research below corresponds to the four highlighted areas within the directive above.

Cultivate the Spirit and Mind of the Officer-mom

"We learn how to love by being loved. Love is not built into our genes."⁶² This is cultivation of the spirit at its best: learning how to love. The development of an officer's mind includes the practice of developing a servant's heart in leadership. How to cultivate a servant-heart within the officers, with a mind towards stewardship, is a consistent theme for Divisional Leaders. Continual spiritual formation practices throughout an officer lifetime would offer that kind of sustainable unselfishness: "We therefore cannot escape struggle, nor should we try. Rather, we should embrace it as one aspect of our

⁶¹ Salvation Army, *Orders and Regulations*, 3. Bold print added for emphasis.

⁶² Peterson, 327.

calling to discipleship, for the goal of life in this world is not ease, prosperity and success but intimacy with God, maturity of character, and influence in the world. Struggle proves that we are taking the Christian faith seriously.”⁶³

Regarding that special kind of stewardship, Agosto says, “Much faith is needed because much suffering can be expected. Concern to feed the masses, both physically and spiritually, must be in the forefront so they can be empowered.”⁶⁴ It takes a solid footing of spiritual formation to make “concern” a sustainable practice: “Therefore, leaders who refuse to employ their calling and their skills with honesty and integrity, especially on behalf of the outcasts of society, will be cast away from God’s presence as “evildoers.”⁶⁵

Enlarge the Vision of the Officer-mom

All worthwhile missions need a large vision. Heifetz asks, “What is the opportunity now? What should our purpose be? ... In this situation, all believers in Paul’s congregations had responsibilities for the community’s development, but some began to stand out as leaders precisely because they showed the utmost concern for the well-being of the community.”⁶⁶ A large part of this concern can be evidenced in an officer due to her willingness to embrace senior leaders’ suggestions and seek out mentors on her own. “People need inspiration and drive to step out into a void which only later is recognized as a place of creativity and development. So strong are the emotions of leadership, they can overwhelm the person who has not developed a sufficiently broad sense of

⁶³ Gerald Lawson Sittser, *Water from a Deep Well: Christian Spirituality from Early Martyrs to Modern Missionaries* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2007), 74.

⁶⁴ Efrain Agosto, *Servant Leadership: Jesus & Paul* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005), 44.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 66.

⁶⁶ Heifetz, Loc. 3323, Kindle.

purpose.”⁶⁷ Opportunities for expanding one’s thinking beyond what she sees in front of herself are invaluable. Another aspect is being able to invest oneself in others for the sake of the movements’ future. “Indeed, one of the tasks of authentic leadership is to create opportunities for others to lead.”⁶⁸ In this manner, putting the needs of others and the community first enlarges one’s vision.

All Sufficient Power of God the Holy Spirit

In the New Testament, the apostle Paul was known to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish all he did. Heifetz shares: “Paul offered such theological leadership models as service, sacrifice, and especially ‘the cross’ to undermine the status expectation of some leaders in his communities.”⁶⁹ Officers are revered for their spiritual reserves of faith in tackling difficult issues. They can take comfort and instruction in the apostle Paul’s fortitude: “For Paul, the marks of a ‘true apostle’ must be found in the effectiveness of his ministry among them in spite of these hardships... ‘Whenever I am weak, then I am strong.’”⁷⁰

Officers are often expected to bring a skillset to their leadership opportunities. Depending on societies’ value of their skills, their status in the community is developed. Most successful officers have developed a balanced mix of ministry skills and work to build their faith in the power of God. This beautiful symbiotic relationship of skill and faith is only accomplished by the power of God at work in the officer. Those that embody this need to understand the importance of sharing their experiences and testimony to

⁶⁷ Ibid., Loc. 3319, Kindle.

⁶⁸ Agosto, 6.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 100.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 104.

encourage others to seek to manage the unique stressors of officership as outlined in Section One.

Exercise Pastoral Care of All Officers

Sittser, speaking of St. Benedict notes, “Living in community forces people to learn how to get along with others, which, considering fallen human nature, is no easy task. In his mind praying for the community was an expression of love, assuming that acts of charity followed.”⁷¹ Divisional Leaders are mandated to consider praying for their officers as a non-negotiable priority. Most leaders want the officers to know they are praying so that they may be called upon in times of trouble. “How many of us manage without the hope of being protected or rescued in times of distress?”⁷² For some this reaching out may be by phone, email, or text.

Encouragement by leadership to be in formative relationships with others is minimal and not generally orchestrated within the organization other than through a formal mentoring program, generally because of time constraints, distance, and expense of travel. Without a network of nearby formative relationships, the officer-mom can feel isolated and alone. The need for genuine and healthy spiritual relationships must be elevated and resourced. Geographical distance can be a real deterrent. Today’s technological capacity for a wide range and type of communication, both written and video conferencing, can be one answer to this dilemma. Use of a virtual mechanism for officer-mom-to-officer-mom communication is a holy aim towards building relationships with the intention of transforming lives. James Davison Hunter explains, “Community is

⁷¹ Sittser, 104.

⁷² Heifetz, Loc. 2982, Kindle.

no longer ‘natural’ under the conditions of late modernity, and so it will require an intentionality that is unfamiliar and perhaps uncomfortable to most Christians and most churches.”⁷³

Ronald Rolheiser shares, “In parishes, as we know, we do not get to pick who we will be standing beside as we worship and celebrate various things together.” This is relevant because officers do not get to pick their appointment. Rolheiser also relates that there is “a grounding, earthiness, and necessary pain that only real involvement within a concrete, parish-type family can give you.”⁷⁴

Meeting Needs Within Organizational Framework

Dr. MaryKate Morse, a leading expert on Spiritual Leadership says, “Leadership is a relationship process, in Christ, and with the Spirit, for God’s intended transformation purposes in us and the world.”⁷⁵ Deficient “relationship process” has sometimes been a contributor to immaturity in the spiritual formation of officers. These deficiencies have added up to a lack of healthy and sustainable officer spiritual identity, along with an unhealthiness in attitudes, emotions, and physical bodies. There are systemic consequences of this type of unhealthiness. Unfortunately, available support networks are often not utilized for fear of backlash or embarrassment. An officer’s satisfaction with their spiritual life is key to avoid suffering emotional exhaustion, low accomplishment, and discouragement. Supporting and building the Divisional Leader’s capacity for these

⁷³ James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity Today* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 227.

⁷⁴ Ronald Rolheiser, *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 61.

⁷⁵ Morse.

types of transformational relationships is yet another important aspect that is outside the boundaries of this writing, but also needs to be addressed.

Softening Boundaries

The building of the godly relationship between Divisional Leader and Field Officer is a holy aim. “Today people want to have access to their leaders and they want their leaders to be open with them. In a sense, people are asking leaders to soften the boundary around their leadership role and to be more transparent. People want to have a trusting relationship with their leaders. In exchange, people are willing to give leaders greater loyalty and commitment.”⁷⁶ Within the SA hierarchical arrangement, two-way relationships can be complicated, as they may be perceived to show of favoritism. This does not mean that it should not be an aim, though emotional maturity must prevail, especially in public situations.

Providing Accommodation

To their credit, Army Senior Leaders recognize that efforts to ease the burden on officer families must be made to accommodate for the complexities within modern families. Whereas expectations were formerly that both officer parents would be present at most all divisional and local events, most Senior Leaders are currently allowing “one parent home” accommodations for large-scale, all day events, especially those that require long travel. An unfortunate byproduct is the seeming unfairness to those officers who may be single or officer couples with no children. Another method that has been commonly adopted relates to the officer couple and the division of roles assumed, which

⁷⁶ Peter Guy Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 7th ed. (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2016), 199.

identifies one “officer in charge of program” and one “officer in charge of business.” The same perceived unfairness applies however, as in the case of single officers who bear the burden of both responsibilities. “Justice requires that leaders place fairness at the center of their decision making, including the challenging task of being fair to the individual while simultaneously being fair to the common interests of the community.”⁷⁷

The Art of Negotiation

The authors of *Her Place at the Table* suggest that women should learn the art of negotiation:

Engagement lets you test chemistry. It is also the primary vehicle for negotiating revisions in the way a role is defined. What’s offered is not always a good fit. Alternatively, it may be a good fit, but not something you want to be doing. Or worse, as currently configured it seems like a recipe for disaster. There is always potential room to modify a role to fit your career aspirations and in ways that make your life more livable as well. Demands that encroach on your personal life do not have to be accepted in their current form. As you gather intelligence, you can explore how much flexibility there is and whether, with some deft negotiation, the role can be reconfigured.⁷⁸

An officer-mom must “make others comfortable with a reconfigured view of what her leadership role will look like.”⁷⁹ How does she do that? The presence of unexplored issues creates a set of challenges for the officer-moms to succeed. How are officer-moms to successfully navigate challenges critical to their success?

The Authors of *Her Place at the Table* anticipate the above issues, explaining that, “Some people underestimate the difficulties that can be encountered during transitions into new roles. Casually assuming that they will fit in once on the job, they can

⁷⁷ Northouse, 359.

⁷⁸ Kolb, 38.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 6.

downplay the impact of the organization's culture and fail to appreciate the inextricable link between their eventual success and perceptions of their suitability.”⁸⁰

USEFUL ELEMENTS OF THE U.S. MILITARY APPROACH

Another possible strategic tool Army Leadership might consider testing is the U.S. Military structure of “Career/Vocational Counseling.” The U.S. Military employs a system whereby Commanders have qualified career counselors who work to help retain officers. Perhaps this is an area to explore further, although “career” can be a hot-button word for some officers who consider officership a vocation. As described in this U.S. Army job description, military career counselors could serve as a model for a similar position in the SA:

U.S. Army Career Counselors: Counsel and mentor Soldiers and family members regarding Army benefits, programs, and opportunities. Career Counselors are the subject matter experts on all facets of Army life to include reenlistment, transfer of education benefits, and reclassification. Career Counselors are highly trained non-commissioned officers and a product of an arduous qualification process. They function as personal agents on behalf of commanders and the Department of the Army through the Army Retention Program. All Soldiers have a Career Counselor available to them and can usually be found at the battalion levels and above.⁸¹

Because the idea of wanting to use benefits is counter-cultural to the traditional “living allowance” structure and “sacrificial service” of the Army's system of remuneration, this could be an area of confusion to some. Also, the presumption of opportunities seems to be countercultural to the Army's long-standing tradition of officers being ready, willing, and able to serve wherever needed without question. While “career counseling” may be a stretch due to officership being considered a calling rather

⁸⁰ Ibid., 22.

⁸¹ “The Official Homepage of The United States Army,” U.S. Government, accessed December 11, 2015, <http://www.Army.mil/info/armylife/careermanagement>.

than a career, counseling in the form of “performance coaching” may be one aspect to consider. A determined skill set that may be useful within certain appointments is important for leadership development. Within that scope, aptitude and strengths could be identified that may help SA leadership identify future leaders and specialists.

TRENDS IN THE MARKETPLACE

As we have already discussed, many Salvation Army officer-moms across the country are from the newest adult generation, the millennials. The intention in this section is to sharpen understanding of millennials in the ministry workplace and their relationship with their older supervisors, while seeking to grasp a better understanding of millennials’ values and practices as parents, and how these interact with their vocational satisfaction. Millennials are the largest generation since the baby boomers,⁸² and they have unique characteristics that both enhance and present unique challenges in workplace and ministry supervision. Thus, “understanding their needs, behaviors and motivations will improve engagement, retention and productivity.”⁸³

Assumptions millennials hold about privacy, boundaries, and roles are fluid. This can be good and bad. On one hand, there are horror stories of young adults suffering the consequences for what they post on social media, like that of a person who was fired for calling their boss an idiot on Facebook or Twitter. On the other hand, not blindly

⁸² Roy Maurer, “From Paycheck to Purpose: How Millennials are Changing Work,” Society for Human Resource Management, March 16, 2016, accessed April 24, 2017, <https://www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/hr-topics/talent-acquisition/Pages/From-Paycheck-to-Purpose-How-Millennials-Are-Changing-Work.aspx>.

⁸³ Ibid. I believe The Salvation Army structure and culture will eventually change as younger leaders continue to fill positions of authority. As with most changes we have made in the past, key drivers are: human resource policies, legal ramifications and “generally accepted” good business practices. Due to its international structure, the Army is not usually quick to “adapt” to cultural change, but generally addresses the issues as they come up within all of contemporary culture, weighs options, and forges ahead.

submitting to antiquated hierarchical structures allows millennials to think creatively and find business opportunities where others might not imagine there were any.⁸⁴ A balance of trust, communication and relationship must be adhered to for all.

Dr. MaryKate Morse shares important aspects of the differences between leadership and management: “Leadership is a relational process which influences positive systemic change in a social environment and elevates the consciousness of followers to higher levels.” Conversely, she shares, “Management is an exchange between a leader and follower to accomplish individual and organizational interests.”⁸⁵ In his authoritative book on leadership, Peter G. Northouse writes: “It is knowledge and expertise that make it possible for people to think about complex system issues and identify possible strategies for appropriate change.” He also reiterates that experience does matter: “It is knowledge that allows people to use the past to constructively confront the future.”⁸⁶

Supervision and Leadership Development

Martha Maznevski encourages those who supervise millennials to put their very best energy into the task: “While leaders should watch out for unintended consequences, they should also encourage younger employees to think beyond the established way of doing things. The lesson here is: Don’t be a lazy leader. Make sure your Millennial employees understand why your organization and team are doing what they are doing. Don’t tell people they should do things just because you said so.” She also encourages

⁸⁴ Martha Maznevski, “6 Tips for Leading Millennials,” Society for Human Resource Management, May 27, 2015, accessed April 24, 2017, <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/Pages/0615-leading-millennials.aspx>.

⁸⁵ Morse.

⁸⁶ Northouse, 51.

leaders of millennials to invest in themselves when she says, “Today’s senior managers should put in the extra effort to show these employees why the hard work is important. Don’t neglect leadership development. Keep investing in your leadership capabilities so you can motivate your Millennial employees.”⁸⁷

Matt Tenney, a writer for *The Huffington Post*, recently interviewed author and millennial guru Simon Sinek. Sinek’s TED videos are consistently among the most viewed on the Internet, with tens of millions of views and a cult-like following. Tenney wrote a summary of his interview with Sinek regarding his book, *Leaders Eat Last* and says, “Simon hypothesized that it’s not great people who necessarily become heroes. Heroic people are simply members of organizations that have a very high level of mutual trust.”⁸⁸ Simon suggests: “If people don’t feel safe inside the organization, they can’t possibly work together to face all of the never-ending challenges that come from outside of the organization. However, when people feel safe inside the organization—when there is a strong Circle of Safety—people work together in amazing ways to create long-term success.”⁸⁹ Regarding the suggestion of a “Circle of Safety,” the interviewer, Matt Tenney concludes the article with this suggestion:

Perhaps the simplest and most easily-actionable idea is to take the initiative to care more for the people on our team. By simply making the effort to help the people on our team more often, and show them we truly care about them, we can start the process of creating an entire team or organization of people who trust each other. This not only makes the team or organization significantly more

⁸⁷ Maznevski.

⁸⁸ Matt Tenney, “From Start with Why to Leaders Eat Last: An Interview with Simon Sinek,” *Huffington Post*, February 11, 2014, accessed April 25, 2017, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/matt-tenney/from-start-with-why-to-le_b_4723648.html.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

effective, it also transforms work from something we may dread into something we wake up excited about.⁹⁰

Transitions in the thinking of boomer leaders towards their millennial employees are possible, and necessary, for significant work—including ministry visions and opportunities—to be accomplished. Concepts of continual development, coaching and iterative communication, when implemented systematically and perpetually, are certain to meet felt needs of this generation. Simon Sinek’s concept of “Circle of Safety” is an action plan of Biblical-worthy proportions. With training and practice, Army boomer supervisors can work to bridge the divide with the millennials on their teams for the good of all.

Changing Attitudes in the Workplace

Jim Clifton, President and CEO of Gallup Research, when interviewed by Roy Maurer, editor of Society for Human Resource Management’s newsletter, shared some intriguing trends regarding millennials’ attitudes in the workplace and outlined how perceptions about work have changed since he was a young man (Clifton is sixty-four):

- **From Satisfaction to development.** Employee engagement for millennials is not about soft perks like free lunches, “ping-pong tables and espresso machines,” as is sometime depicted. Today’s young generation of workers wants to contribute and add value to the company. He suggests that ‘satisfaction’ is condescending. Millennials want a higher purpose and want to know what they can become.
- **From Boss to Coach.** Command and control management practices are a thing of the past, according to Clifton. This is a big shift. Millennials want bosses who are committed to developing and maximizing their skills and strengths.

⁹⁰ Tenney.

- **From annual reviews to ongoing conversations.** The annual performance review does not work for this generation. The problem with the annual review is that it is always looking back. One cannot deliver purpose and coaching once a year; at least one touch is needed each week.⁹¹

SUMMARY

As discussed, the most significant relationship related to field officer efficacy is their relationship with their Divisional Leaders. While Divisional Leaders are under orders to give pastoral care to their charges, they are also obligated to guide in correction and determine suitability for service. There are times when those priorities can seem in conflict with each other and create communication difficulties. It should be recognized that there has been real effort to meet the unique needs of officer-moms by easing mandatory attendance and negotiating expectations, as explained in the previous subsections. Changing attitudes and values in the modern workplace have seeped into officer ministry vocations. Senior officers who implement consistent iterative communication with millennials will have the best chance at bridging the gap between established management styles and practices, and officer-moms coming of age in the present era.

In Section Three, Biblical examples of communication imperatives are shared. The theological principle of all mature officers, not only Divisional Leaders, nurturing younger officers together in community will be emphasized. Officercraft, officermomship, and the notion of officerscape will be further explored. With these approaches brought to life by mature officers through the vehicle of social media, many

⁹¹ Maurer.

officer-mom frustrations and discouragement may be lessened or possibly alleviated.

Social media efforts explaining how to create a healthy and sustainable officer-mom identity will be a viable course of action towards the goal of vibrant spiritual formation for officer-moms.

SECTION THREE: THE THESIS

Based on the findings in Section Two, Section Three will describe four Biblical examples related to the modern officer-mom's dilemma. It is understood that DMin programs need to engage students in intentional theological acts, as articulated in Tim Sensing's work concerning Doctor of Ministry theses. He says a candidate should be a "contextual theologian who is initiating a ministry intervention within a particular context to address critically a discrete problem so that the community will continue its journey of becoming like Christ for the sake of the world."⁹² Thus, this section seeks to identify constructive theological principles that are in undergirding this thesis. In conclusion, a re-imagining of a healthy and sustainable officer-mom identity will be outlined, including the suggestion of neologisms that might be useful in jumpstarting officer spiritual formation conversations and add interest for communication initiatives intended as a pastoral ministry intervention for officer-moms.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

Unlikely Mothers in Unique Relationship Fulfilling Their Calling (Luke 1:26–45)

Luke chapter one is an account of two incredible women: one in the sunset years of life, the other a teen. These women lived miles apart, yet they were both uniquely called by God, through an angel, to a task that is outside of normal circumstance and seemingly impossible. Mary, a teenager, was to bear a son, a holy child, while still a virgin. Elizabeth, a woman so old she was considered barren, was, herself, to bear a son—a God-ordained conception. These two women, though related, lived in very

⁹² Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), Loc. 157, Kindle.

different circumstances. The angel Gabriel was their connection. He mentioned to Mary that Elizabeth was pregnant too. Mary decided to reach out and visit her cousin, Elizabeth. They were both troubled by the angelic news they received, and, understandably, had fear. It was important that Mary have support during this time, and Elizabeth was the perfect choice. She uniquely understood how miracles happen and never doubted Mary's story. Spending time together, they could comfort each other and share their joy, thus calming their fears.

Even with her fears, Mary experienced a direct call on her life. She accepted that calling when she proclaimed, as written in Luke 1:38a, “Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.”⁹³ She opened herself to everything God asked of her, and yet she could barely fathom what lay ahead. Yes, a baby—that part she was told and could fathom—but there was so much more to God's request than she could have known. She had questions: “Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’”⁹⁴ She was assured that human constraints would be removed, “For nothing will be impossible with God.”⁹⁵ She received blessings for her faith and obedience.

All Salvation Army officers, male and female, married and single, are united by a common desire for the salvation of all peoples. The officer body seeks out by many means those who are called and looking towards being added to the ranks. Special meetings and times of consecration are held to assist in creating a holy time of decision

⁹³ Luke 1:38a.

⁹⁴ Luke 1:34.

⁹⁵ Luke 1:37.

for everyone. Salvation Army General Bramwell Booth, the second General of The Salvation Army (1912–1929), in a volume he wrote in 1914 explains:

In the majority of cases that call is a very real, a very beautiful, a very powerful, occasionally a very terrible visitation, exercising an extraordinary influence over the lives of those who receive it, and often bringing about results, both immediate and remote, which altogether astonish those to whom they are known.

The call disposes at one stroke of difficulties, which no human influences could remove. It comes with the imperative definiteness of a command, with the directness of an overwhelming conviction of duty. What before seemed absurd, unreasonable, unnatural, nay, impossible, becomes at once the only thing left to do.⁹⁶

Mary and Elizabeth's story is also the story of Salvation Army officer-moms: married women who have God's calling on their life for a unique purpose. The calling of Salvation Army officership includes fulfilling officer duties while simultaneously mothering their own children. Officer-moms also may experience fear of the unknown, not unlike Mary's fear. They have responded by declaring their willingness to give themselves to the calling of the Spirit, to the holy work of Salvation Army officership. Humbly, they offer themselves to the Lord and the Army, trusting God with themselves, their families, and their futures. The ability to do to give this offering, in community with a companion, is life-giving.

Pregnancy and caring for young children pose significant changes in relationship dynamics for the officer couples' marriage, the husbands' changing roles, and the women's individual vocational responsibilities. For officer-moms, it is invaluable to have other officer-moms to speak with that understand their unique struggles. Sharing common situations and good ideas is comforting. Praying for one another in difficult times is encouraging and life-giving. Anything that can be done to facilitate this sharing will

⁹⁶ Bramwell Booth, *Servants of All: A Brief Review of the Call, Character, and Labours of Officers of the Salvation Army*, 4th ed. (London: Salvation Army Book Department, 1914), 16–17.

make all the difference for officer-mom satisfaction, both in family life and ministry work, just as it did for Mary and Elizabeth.

Older Women to Teach Younger (Titus 2:3–5)

One reads in Titus 2:3–5:

Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.⁹⁷

A respected New Testament Commentary explains how this teaching can be implemented in lifestyle example and behavior. It reinforces that older women have an important opportunity and mandate to seek out younger women and help them:

The adjective *teaching what is good* denotes informal teaching by lifestyle, as verses 4–5 show. It leads directly to the stated purpose of their instruction (*then they can train the younger women*, v. 4). “Good things” in this context are acceptable patterns of behavior. But the term contains a hidden implication: one teaches with one’s life either good things or bad things; pursuit of the acceptable lifestyle will ensure teaching that is good.⁹⁸

Wisdom transference through intentional opportunities for modeling and teaching by veteran officer-moms is a highly sought commodity for new officer-moms. Presently there is no network or platform, other than the officer-mom Facebook page, to make certain these kinds of relationships can be intentional. It is important to note that chronological age is not the only issue. New officer-moms with children of any age are commissioned from The Salvation Army College for Officer Training each year, and their lives and habits drastically change. Moving from an institutional dorm-style

⁹⁷ Titus 2:3–5.

⁹⁸ “Godly Living and Social Groups (2:1-10),” The IVP New Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), accessed December 1, 2016, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Titus+2%3A1-10&version=NASB>.

apartment with on-site childcare to a city or suburb that may be completely unfamiliar is stressful. This is another crucial time where veteran officer-moms could offer advice and encouragement.

Going When Told (Genesis 12:1–4a)

In Genesis 12:1–4a, one reads of how all of heaven stood still and listened as God spoke these words to Abram:

Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you; And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.” So Abram went forth as the Lord had spoken to him.⁹⁹

Concluding twenty-one months of training, Salvation Army officers step across a public stage and approach their Territorial Leader. The audience grows quiet with nervous anticipation. The officer couple has no idea where they will be going or what their appointment will be. The pool of known available openings becomes smaller as each couple steps up to receive their assignment. However, there is an element of surprise as several couples will receive an appointment to a new opening or missionary service. Truly, they are offering themselves to God, and the Army, with the understanding that just about anything is possible.

In recent years, there has been instituted a time for conversation that goes on before the Territorial Commander approves some officer appointments. It is called a “consultative process” between Divisional Leaders and the officers. Health needs, children’s needs, and other factors are taken into consideration. Abram had the benefit of God already knowing him intimately. Army leadership may ask for feedback, consulting

⁹⁹ Genesis 12:1–4a.

with officers regarding family needs, matching spiritual giftedness and sometimes even taking into consideration personal ministry interests for specialized work. Special assignments can include urban or rural appointments, older adult or children's ministries, and residential programs dealing with homelessness, foster care, senior care, addiction, domestic violence, and teen pregnancy. Unlike Abram, at least the officer couple will eventually be told the name of where they are appointed and have a general understanding of the work they are being asked to undertake. However, it is not a negotiation. There are plenty of officers who feel slighted, especially when their appointment takes them to an undesirable location and/or they are appointed as assistants, under the direct supervision of another officer in charge.

God told Abram he would show him where he wanted him to go, but only *after* he obeyed. Officers are expected to have the same humility. New officers are blessed to have a great cloud of witnesses surrounding them that have walked the same road, and consequently have wisdom and experience to share. There is power and comfort in their testimonies and wisdom, if only the new officer is willing to listen. The officer-moms, moving to a new area with children in tow, have a specific need for advice and encouragement from those officer-moms who have gone before them. This continues throughout officership as the possibility of being moved is an annual stressor, especially early in one's officership as her continued training prepares her for larger and more complex appointments.

Comfort Others Through Story and Testimony (II Corinthians 1:3–5)

Another biblical text that informs this thesis topic is found in II Corinthians 1:3–4: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and

God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”¹⁰⁰ As one receives comfort from God, she is instructed to comfort others. Officers with experience are expected to be conduits of God’s compassion toward us, by extending that same compassion to others. An excellent model for this is through the power of testimony of one’s own experience of God’s faithfulness. Officer-moms want to hear from officer-moms. They want to know that they are not alone when they have struggles and question “why a decision was made” or “how best to go about doing a project.” Each “true life” story can make real connection in ways no list of suggestions or best practices ever could. Testimonies help individuals realize they are not alone in their struggles. They also confirm for God’s providential care. Some testimonies can double as teachable moments while others give encouragement to carry on in the fight.

Testimonies can be shared via the written word and even by video. This sister-to-sister approach is a powerful medium for connection, comfort, and care for newer, struggling officer-moms. II Corinthians 1:5 suggests that there is comfort and compassion available from others when we look for it: “For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.”¹⁰¹

This command from Paul seems to be an expectation from those who have received this mercy unto those who are hurting. Officers understand this to be a central part of their ministry work to those they serve. Although it is an expectation that it would be done for all, it is not always at the forefront of officers’ daily tasks to do this for fellow officers. Whether it is a lack of energy or time, or the fact that ministering to one’s own

¹⁰⁰ 2 Corinthians 1:3–4.

¹⁰¹ 2 Corinthians 1:5.

flock feels as though it should take precedence over ministry to fellow workers, there may be many reasons that this is not happening to the scale it could.

Some may suggest that it has not been part of Army culture except for reasonable expectations of pastoral support from Administrative Leadership down to the field, as discussed in Section Two. In fact, in a few cases, there may be a type of competitiveness between Field Officers as they are in pursuit of the next or better appointment. For some that may mean an easier, more desirable location or a bigger budget—it depends on the outlook of the officer as to what they may consider “better.” These barriers are not uncommon to the human reality of limited energy and time.

Life in Community

Salvation Army officers have a unique sense of camaraderie. Officers share a common calling, common seminary training, and vocation-specific experiences. Although officers are a “community,” certain factors such as age, rank, years of service, and geographic distance are possible disconnects that can put up barriers. The New Testament says that the church is to be a community of Christ followers who do life together. The Holy Spirit binds Christians to others and to become “one,” demonstrated by their actions. Together Christ-followers experience blessings that are multiplied because they are shared. Below is a sample of “one another” admonitions from Scripture relating to the thesis:

- “Pray for one another” (James 5:16). Failure and discouragement begin with a lack of a prayer life.
- “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love” (Romans 12:10). Humility is needed to give preference to one another.

- “Admonishing one another” (Colossians 3:16). Teach each other the word of Christ and give correction from its’ wisdom.
- “Accept one another” (Romans 15:7). Christ accepted us and implores us to accept each other even in our differences.
- “Have the same care for one another” (I Corinthians 12:25). There should be equal concern for all because if one part suffers, every part suffers with it.
- “Bear one another’s burdens” (Galatians 6:2). Actively work to restore each other in all humility.
- “Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving” (Ephesians 4:32). Get rid of bitterness and anger, and forgive as God forgave you.
- “Build up one another” (I Thessalonians 5:11). Help each other put on the armor of God so that together we may be kept blameless.
- “Stimulate one another to love and good deeds” (Hebrews 10:24). Do not give up being together. Use time together to encourage one another.

By taking to heart the above admonitions, it is understood that Christians are meant to be interdependent in community. Acts 2:42 says, “They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”¹⁰² Early Christians experienced life together, learning from the elders and sharing encouragement and commitment to each other. This could be our goal as a worldwide fellowship. To achieve this goal, having an integrated methodology of both official and grassroots led mechanisms is ideal because using official methods only may not reach someone due to many circumstances.

¹⁰² Acts 2:42.

Ken Shigematsu, pastor and rule of life expert writes, “When we regularly pause from our ambitions and activities, we create space to experience Christ.”¹⁰³ Pastoral work is done by affinity. Officer-moms of all ages and positions, coming together in virtual community and/or through orchestrated and intentional one-on-one informal situations, can serve as ambassadors of care and encouragement. These suggested practices, as outlined by the above Biblical principles, would be tangible attempts to offer meaningful strategies for users and meet the felt needs with honorable intent and caring purpose. Through a socially embedded strategy, meaningful sharing between the moms would be a good beginning to engender Godly transformation within the officer-moms fellowship.

THE INTERVENTION

Intervention implies activity within a situation. Knowing and providing an officer-mom the space and time for continual development (officercraft) is one of the most loving things a leader can do for a young officer. It is life-changing to assist an officer-mom in seeing beyond the moment when a child is crying and everything is going wrong, and begin to widen her vision (officerscape) to experience both the ups and downs as sacred moments, and the years and decades of ministry as unique seasons. Officer-moms engage in a unique dance of marriage, ministry, and motherhood (officermomship). They never feel as though they have given “enough.”

Therapist Wayne Muller explains:

In our deepest hearts, we hope to be good and useful at what we do, perhaps feel some pride in our accomplishments and find satisfaction at the end of the day. But more likely our to-do list requires so many more hours than we will ever have in any day, we frequently feel defeated and discouraged by the time we surrender to

¹⁰³ Ken Shigematsu, *God in My Everything: How an Ancient Rhythm Helps Busy People Enjoy God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 44, Kindle.

day's end, no matter how much progress we might have made, no matter what we may have done, created, built, healed, or made better.¹⁰⁴

In these next few paragraphs, three key elements for clearer understanding of ministering to officer-moms and addressing their on-going spiritual formation needs will be explained.

Officercraft

Officercraft is a description of the practice of the work of an officer including ministry, administration, and personal development. “Craft and character are woven together. Style is rooted in personality. Authentic ministry, having integrity in pastoral ministry, is rooted in development. A fundamental relationship exists between a minister’s devotional life, character development, and identity formation.”¹⁰⁵ Officercraft has within itself a process of maturity, which is learning to value reliance on the Holy Spirit, seeking wisdom, experience and skill development over accumulating information. Regarding the Holy Spirit, Rolheiser says, “It has to give us energy and fire, so that we do not lose our vitality, and all sense of the beauty and joy of living.”¹⁰⁶

What should be practiced that is not? Are there practices or principles that need to be revisited? What are the essential elements of “being” an officer? We need new designs for interconnected approaches for veteran officer wisdom, practices, and skills transference. Institutional history is to be valued, and knowledge conveyed often, so officers can remember “why it all began.” However, discovering new platforms for

¹⁰⁴ Wayne Muller, *A Life of Being, Having, and Doing Enough* (New York: Harmony Books, 2010), 78.

¹⁰⁵ Sensing, Loc. 252, Kindle.

¹⁰⁶ Rolheiser, 11.

relationship building in community must become a priority since traditional methods such as reading lengthy historical books are waning. We need Holy Spirit leading as to the way forward in passing along the traits of officer craftsmanship, stripping away the old and shaping for rightful use of the new.

Officer Lifescope

Officers lives are a work of art that is unique in overall ministry vocation.

Widening an officer's vision of her life-long experiences to include the whole length and breadth of her years allows her to see where she has been and look forward to where she is headed. Officership is a lifetime covenant and therefore needs to be approached in that manner every day. Rolheiser tells us: "Church involvement, when understood properly, does not leave us the option to walk away whenever something happens that we do not like. It is a covenant commitment, like a marriage, and binds us for better and for worse."¹⁰⁷

These "for better and for worse" moments become pixels that blend together into an artwork that is continually changing and deepening. Life happens, appointments change, families grow, and people come in to, and go from, one's life. For this reason, a young officer needs to be able to see beyond today to the many tomorrows. While the Army may choose the canvas, the officer—in harmony with the Holy Spirit—will choose the medium and process. Choosing wisely will ensure a sustainable and healthy lifetime of "being" an officer.

In this lifework of officership, officers are like the blank canvas. There are some elements and principles of design that can help in the process. The most common element

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 61.

is line. Line creates form, pattern, and structure. Relationships carry one through the long haul in much the same way. Officer-moms have distinct seasons of life that can often be predictable. Looking to those officer-moms who are five years ahead, ten years ahead, and more, can give a newer officer-mom some idea of what is around the next bend.

Color and shadow is another principle of design. Learning to focus on today's controllable factors and allocating resources to this season's priorities add beauty to an officer's life canvas. With the short-term appointment structure, some officer's art will look more like a patchwork quilt, but the most novice quilter will still consider pattern and texture, even as the fabric is cut into pieces.

"Balance," "repetition," and "form" are landscape design terms that are the key to function, contrast, and emphasis within a property's scheme.¹⁰⁸ Emotional boundaries, consistency in spiritual disciplines, and integrity in our work serve that function in one's officerscape. If an officer is the canvas, her time and energies color and define her relationships. The intentional layering and harmony of all these elements through the days, months, and decades is what creates the Master's piece.

Officermomship

In an effort to get to the fundamental heart of the issues Salvation Army officer-moms struggle with, it is helpful to embrace that, as Rolheiser shares, "To be religiously mature is to be a person who freely gives his or her life away."¹⁰⁹ However, it is also seen

¹⁰⁸ Gail Hansen, "Basic Principles of Landscape Design," University of Florida, CIR536, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, UF/IFAS Extension, original publication date June 2010, reviewed September 2016, accessed December 1, 2017, <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 36.

that “Selflessness can just as easily lead to anger as to joy.”¹¹⁰ That said, there are many officers who desperately want to do the right thing, but the pain related to continued giving can lead to just “holding one’s breath” until she can find some relief. That does not seem to be the kind of “joy of living” that Rolheiser describes as true spirituality. “The way to clear our eyesight is precisely through radical honesty, through courageously facing the truth of our own weakness.”¹¹¹

One of these processes of facing the truth of one’s own weakness relates to an idea expressed by the authors of *Her Place at the Table*: “In many cultures, up until quite recently, paid employment was the domain of men while family responsibilities belonged to women. As women have joined the workforce in equal numbers, not surprisingly, the issue of whether it is possible to hold leadership jobs and integrate them with a full family life has become a significant struggle for women and the organizations that employ them.”¹¹²

There is tension between external expectations and what officer-moms thought they were getting themselves into. Difficult times in ministry challenge identity. Having a healthy officer-mom identity can help the officer-mom balance demands and create a healthy self-awareness and judgment of boundaries. A healthy officer-mom identity comes from the internal and external work of God within the individual, namely spiritual formation. As a practice, spiritual formation is intrinsic to officership and develops a strong officer identity. One needs to engage her identity to experience God in

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 37.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 230.

¹¹² Deborah M. Kolb, Carol Frolinger, and Judith Williams, *Her Place at the Table: A Woman’s Guide to Negotiating Five Key Challenges to Leadership Success* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Boss, 2004), 11.

transformative ways. For officer-moms, this is a willingness to invite leaders and mentors to speak into them. Officer-moms all need to marinate in the fellowship of Army officers and soak each other up, without losing individuality, but rather understanding the fullness of adding to it. The process of formation is ongoing throughout the whole length of officership. Officer-moms need to move away from disjointed actions and move in a direction of wholeness to bloom into their unique purpose. All activity is a sacrament to God. One cannot compartmentalize the “Army” in her life. Unfortunately, Army leadership and policies tend to be reactive instead of proactive. The depths of isolation of those who are struggling, or under correction, are especially overwhelming. The Spirit-led desires of those ready to take a next step or grasp a new opportunity can be overlooked or minimized.

There are many complex layers in forming a healthy Officer-mom identity. Officer-mom spiritual formation and identity are necessary not just for the immediate, but also to be sustaining through the span of a lifetime. An increased effort made toward encouraging the creation of an Army-wide, healthy officer-mom esteem would be an excellent start. Officer-moms have an ongoing fear of “not being enough.” They fear being viewed as weak or dumb, and so they create walls and only share with their own family members or trusted friends, if anyone at all. A healthy personal support community needs diversity of experience, education, and experience. Eugene Peterson shares, “When we go to work it must not be helter-skelter improvisation; it must be congruent with the way God works.”¹¹³ Experienced officer-moms can help younger officer-moms write a

¹¹³ Eugene H. Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2005), 112. Kindle.

coherent script as “Authentic leaders have a genuine desire to serve others, they know themselves, and they feel free to lead from their core values.”¹¹⁴

David Kinnaman, a leading expert of college-age young adults says, “The essence of love is presence—presence with someone, knowledge that you are together regardless of what happens and what they do, and a conviction that you are on a shared journey into the goodness God has planned.”¹¹⁵ Developing a mechanism that specifically encourages that conviction and gives Officer-moms the assurance of a shared journey would be welcomed.

SUMMARY

The officer-mom community has guided my story, especially as the pages of the life of this project are being lived out. In turn, the intention is to have this research be catalytic in guiding the officer-mom community’s story for another day. Hundreds of uniquely called moms are living out their calling without an abundance of support and guidance. Younger officer-moms will benefit from the experience of those who have gone before them. Veteran officer-moms are mandated by scripture to “comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”¹¹⁶ Officer-mom camaraderie can be facilitated and officer-mom healthy identity

¹¹⁴ Peter Guy Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 7th ed. (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2016), 197.

¹¹⁵ David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving Church . . . and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2016), Loc. 3672, Kindle.

¹¹⁶ 2 Corinthians 1:4.

encouraged through both organization-supported and grassroots-realized social media platforms. Our “stories are verbal acts of hospitality.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Peterson, 13.

SECTION FOUR: ARTIFACT INTRODUCTION

Salvation Army officer-moms are overwhelmed with unique stressors that differ from those of other full-time working mother. Some stressors are like other clergy moms and some are specific to the Army's systems and culture. Evidence suggests that there is a disconnect between historical officer-moms' methods of coping within prescribed organizational norms, and the desire for a type of work-life balance that today's officer-moms believe lends to a thriving family. To be compatible with organizational expectations, while still seeking their desire to thrive, officer-moms need an up-to-date, healthy sense of identity that is uniquely tailored towards an empowered female clergy Salvation Army culture.

The medium chosen as a solution to this ministry problem is a blog. "Successful blogs are specialized. They focus on one thing."¹¹⁸ Interaction, through blog posts written by veteran officer-moms who have already successfully navigated their young-mother season of life, is one avenue of mentoring, and it is a scriptural directive as described in Section Three. How will this interaction be accomplished? The intention is for blog posts to be "dropped in" as postings to Facebook groups where officer-moms make up a majority of the membership.

In the summer of 2013, a young officer-mom started a Facebook group specifically for officer-moms. As she has reflected, "I started this group a couple of years ago, after returning home from Brengle, in an attempt to give officer-moms a place to encourage each other, pray for each other, ask questions, give advice, etc. Satan wants

¹¹⁸ Jesse Rice, *The Church of Facebook: How the Hyperconnected are Redefining Community* (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook, 2009), 194.

our children and our ministries, and I'm not willing to give him mine, but sometimes need help knowing how to keep him away!"¹¹⁹

This Officer-mom Facebook group is a closed group that consists of administrator-vetted and approved officer-moms from all over the world. As of October 2, 2017, there are 1,522 members. The stated purpose of the Officer-mom Facebook Group is "to offer support and encouragement for officer-moms in The Salvation Army as they minister to the corps and as they strive to raise healthy and holy children. Whether retired or active, you have experiences that can help us all through this journey. So, let's support each other and post ideas, suggestions, questions, struggles, victories. Let's be moms together!"¹²⁰

Almost hourly activity on the Officer-mom Facebook page suggests that the Internet, and specifically Facebook, is one of today's officer-moms' most comfortable and convenient forms of seeking encouragement, advice, and information. "Recent studies have found that while individuals come in contact with many more people than in the past, the twenty-first century is a time when people feel more lonely and isolated than ever before."¹²¹ Concerning Facebook group community membership, Jesse Rice says: "Part of their identity rests on an invisible entourage that accompanies them everywhere."¹²² In explaining its value he shares:

¹¹⁹ Hilary Patterson, Facebook Post in Officer-moms Group, August 9, 2015. (used with permission).

¹²⁰ Officer-moms Facebook Group, "About," accessed October 2, 2017. (used with permission).

¹²¹ Ace Collins, *Sticks and Stones: Using Your Words as a Positive Force* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 198.

¹²² Rice, 111.

One of the best things about Facebook is that it continues this regenerative spirit. It is a space where all are invited to participate, to add to the conversation, to share our experiences past and current, to share our hopes and partner in new visions of the future, to reinvent, reclaim, redeem, renew. Facebook is not a perfect environment—there is no such thing. In many ways, we’re just beginning to learn how to be human in it. We have the mandate to step in with eyes wide open because it can blur the lines of identity and relationships. So we must work hard to be clear, with ourselves and with one another, but clarity is not impossible.¹²³

This dissertation proposes that fledgling officer-moms need a safe and reliable mechanism to receive instruction and encouragement in establishing an officer-mom identity—a way of being a healthy and thriving officer-mom. The practical application of a targeted blog would fulfill that need. A customized blog can include powerful messages “dropped in to” the Officer-mom Facebook page, both as informational posts and in answer to common questions. These blog posts will explain officer-mom values, practices and character building suggestions that seek to encourage and elevate officer-mom wellbeing. Using social media platforms such as Facebook and blogs will connect officer-moms with each other and with good ideas. This type of honest advice will help the officer-moms better navigate organizational preferences and expectations, thus leading to healthier and happier officer-moms, and ultimately to thriving officer families.

Ace Collins shares:

Good blogging is always honest. Whether you’re creating a blog that tells the story of your fight with a disease or is focused on the joys of owning a cat, what you write has to be honest. Readers see through people who aren’t being straight with them. Honesty often means revealing shortcomings or mistakes to others. Not everyone can do that, but those who can be open are well on their way to reaching out and touching others in a positive way.”¹²⁴

¹²³ Ibid., 216.

¹²⁴ Collins, 195.

Why create a blog rather than just posting directly to the Officer-mom Facebook group? Here are a few reasons why a blog has several benefits for the officer-mom audience:

- Blog posts are static and more conducive to longer articles.
- Blog posts are easily “shareable” by email whereas Facebook posts in closed groups cannot be shared.
- Once someone reads a blog post, they scroll right into the next one.
- Blog readers may subscribe to the blog so that they receive all new posts by email.
- Blogs are searchable by topic and found easily in search engines.

“The word ‘community,’ like ‘communication,’ derives from the Latin word *communis*, which means *to share in common*.”¹²⁵ Officer-moms share much in common and easily identify with common struggles. The Army structure allows use of familiar and comforting common cultural language within the blog that will engender inclusiveness, thus resonating emotionally with the officer-moms. Officer-moms share much in common since the denomination is rooted in uniformity. A static, unofficial online community will allow for a depository of excellent advice and healthy identity building information to be easily and anonymously accessed and searched by officer-moms seeking answers and encouragement at their immediate time of need.

More experienced officer-moms are a resource that should be given a platform and encouragement to share their wisdom and personal secrets with younger officer-moms. Many of these experienced officer-moms have been through difficult trials and

¹²⁵ Ibid., 197.

managed to overcome monumental obstacles. As younger officer-moms come across similar trials they need somewhere to turn so that they can safely engage with this resource of veteran officer-moms.

Experienced Salvation Army officer-moms have much wisdom to share, and most are not even aware of it. In motherhood, the gaining of knowledge is an inherent process that is gained through personal experiences, both positive and negative. The same is true of learning to successfully navigate the unique vocational demands and expectations of being an officer-mom. So many younger officer-moms are stationed in appointments that are too far away to receive new mother support in the traditional manners, such as physical support from extended family, or childhood friends.

Technology, including social media, has proven helpful in this quest to unite these generations, but it is only one medium. Salvation Army divisional leaders need to be proactive by clarifying expectations, anticipating the needs for support and furnishing guidance that will assist the new officer-mom in planning and proceeding with her ministry. Experienced officer-moms could work together with the new moms to help develop basic suggestions that could be customized to fit unique situations and changing needs. Many new, younger officer-moms currently have no access to this important type of relationship and are either too embarrassed or shy to ask for help.

SECTION FIVE: ARTIFACT SPECIFICATIONS

<https://offblacknylons.wordpress.com>

The main goal of the blog is to provide content that will educate, encourage and empower newer and struggling officer-moms to develop a healthy officer-mom identity and provide ministry efficacy. This will be accomplished by giving them tools to successfully navigate common stressors, and knowledge to alleviate their guilt and fears, coming from a trusted source: other veteran officer-moms. Important themes will include: imparting Salvation Army officer values; making decisions informed by Army history; sharing instruction concerning women officers' engagement and empowerment in leadership; working within system norms to accomplish holy goals; and developing the officer-mom's unique gifting and individuality in a healthy manner while immersed in a centralized and hierarchal culture. The blog audience specifically includes the 1,522 Officer-mom Facebook Group members, and ultimately could reach the hundreds more who read and speak the English language and have internet available, yet for unknown reasons are not yet Facebook Officer-mom group members.

Blog Scope and Content

To accomplish the above stated goals, articles of varying lengths intended to inform, encourage and give new ideas/viewpoints will be the most central part of the blog. These articles will include true stories of officer-moms who met challenges and thrived and how they did it. There will also be occasional memes on themes of interest to officer-moms, including quotes from Army historical figures that empower officer-moms in officermomship. Testimonies from "veteran" officer-moms will be included as well as

scriptural exegesis and encouragement from other devotional readings. A “How To” section, a “FAQ” page, and relevant checklists and downloadable documents will be added as other veteran officer-moms contribute.

The blog budget is minimal, a personal expense currently relying on the free version of WordPress.¹²⁶ As the content grows and differentiation of the types of content needs to be categorized, this may change, and funds will be set aside when the time comes. As for standards of publication, as per my research, no established standards currently exist for a personal blog. There are in the publishing world, best practices, of which I will take into consideration. These include: responsible and ethical publication of content that respects all rights to ownership.¹²⁷ I have and will continue to use free stock images or my own photography. Any content that I do not write myself will respect all copyrights and include authors’ permission. I also have the authority to use Army copyrighted images and content for educational purposes.

Trends

In 1993, AOL was mailing CDs directly to suburban homes and people began buying personal computers. AOL had some great “community” aspects to it, simple and free website building tools, and hobby/interest bulletin boards. I was very involved on some of those messaging boards, and Facebook does not seem as interactive.¹²⁸ In 1996, Hotmail was launched as one of the first free web mail accounts. When one got an email from someone back then, it was a big deal, and sometimes it even included a funny story

¹²⁶ <https://wordpress.com>

¹²⁷ “Bloggers Code of Ethics,” Cyberjournalist.net, 2007, accessed December 5, 2017, <http://pcij.org/blog/bloggers-code-of-ethics>.

¹²⁸ CNBC.com Staff, “AOL Through the Years,” updated May 12, 2015, accessed May 26, 2017, <http://www.cnbc.com/2015/05/12/timeline-aol-through-the-years.html>.

or a cute picture that could then be forwarded on to friends. Unfortunately, as with all things, advertisers started getting involved, and by 1998 the word “spam” was added to the Oxford Dictionary.¹²⁹ The personal, fun, and non-commercial aspects of receiving email messages—such as encouragement, light humor, and “did you know”—has been diminished.

Facebook came on the scene and became more popular with adults around the autumn of 2006. Its meteoric rise demonstrates the unfulfilled need for people to be able to “connect” with others. Constant changes have made it important to “keep up” and continually learn new features and how to protect one’s privacy.¹³⁰ This can be tiring for Digital Immigrants (those over the age of thirty). One’s information can be “cloned” and his or her identity is stolen. Free blogging has also recently seen a downturn, especially due to the large volume of unsolicited ads, many of them targeted to the reader in an obtrusive manner depending on web search history to learn one’s preferences. This is another reason to move the blog to a paid platform in the future.

Long-term Plan

In more recent experience as I finish this dissertation, I am beginning to see a slight shift away from Facebook and online media use by peer officers, because they are beginning to feel enslaved to it. Many have experienced digital addiction-like behaviors and are fasting or withdrawing from the continuous digital activity. I know of some who have left Facebook completely. I can see the blog shifting to more of an email newsletter

¹²⁹ Glenn Fleishman, “Timeline: A Brief History of Email,” MacWorld, 2012, accessed May 26, 2017, <https://www.macworld.com/article/1167303/web-apps/timeline-a-brief-history-of-email.html>.

¹³⁰ The Associated Press, “Timeline: Key Dates in Facebook’s 10-year History,” Washington Times, 2014, accessed May 26, 2017, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/feb/4/timeline-key-dates-in-facebooks-10-year-history/>.

subscription with a static landing page. This may be preferable for many reasons. I can require the email addresses be verified as Salvation Army officer-moms (my target audience). Currently the free blog is available for anyone to see, and that limits the topics and tone of voice. I may not even want any portion of the catalog to be freely online for anyone to see. I can imagine in the emailed articles a couple links after the email for similar articles on the same topic, in case anyone wants to continue to read complimentary articles. I would also like a clickable “send comments or questions” feature, but not necessarily a comment section for everyone to read. In this way, I can respond individually and open a dialogue with the person on a more one-on-one level.

Opt-in email formats like Mail-Chimp may be a secondary way of disseminating the articles, and could later become the preferred method. Tablets and smart phones make it important that information be not just “digital,” but also “optimized” for completely mobile content consumption.¹³¹ Before I spend hundreds of more hours of time and any more money on the blog artifact I created, I want to explore these other platforms that are just now coming into widespread use. Thankfully, I think much of the content I have already will be able to be modified for new methods of distribution, perhaps even reaching those of the older generation who I know will not join a community like Facebook because of their fear of privacy issues. The older generation of officer-moms is not the primary audience, but they will be a primary source for collaboration and supplying content.

¹³¹ “Why Blogging is Dead—And What’s Next,” Fast Company, last modified December 4, 2012, accessed December 5, 2017, <https://www.fastcompany.com/3003658/why-blogging-dead-and-whats-next>.

Post-graduation Considerations

As for post-graduation considerations, I currently have the encouragement, support, and permissions of U.S.A. Western Territory Salvation Army leadership to continue and expand the blog as I see fit. Army senior officials have expressed their gratitude and interest in my continued work, including giving me the freedom and flexibility in my schedule to write, and permission to request submissions from others.

In summary, I believe officer-moms understanding that there are many other officer-moms with the same questions and struggles as themselves, will help them find comfort and alleviate fears, thus fulfilling one of the major goals of this blog. I have not been able to find any other Army publication, or personal publication that speaks to the unique audience of officer-moms. Officer-moms have expressed a heartfelt desire to connect with other moms that they identify with. One key enlightenment for those who would participate in the writing of the blog posts would be: “It’s not the information itself that’s important but the emotional impact of that information.”¹³² That “emotional impact” is the key to becoming the kind of place where transformation can occur. Author Bill Strom confirms, “full personhood blossoms as others ‘faith’ us into existence.”¹³³ Tapping in to the wide range of veteran officer-moms who have the gift of encouragement, and giving them a place to share that encouragement and express their faith in the officer-moms, will meet one of the most important goals of this blog.

¹³² Nancy Duarte, *Resonate: Present Visual Stories that Transform Audiences* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2010), 582.

¹³³ Bill Strom, *More than Talk: Communication Studies and the Christian Faith* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 2009), 5.

SECTION SIX: POSTSCRIPT

When I first heard that as a Doctor of Ministry student I would be expected to take on a major project, I knew exactly what topic I wanted to explore. Eleven years ago, I was asked to answer several questions on an annual Salvation Army officer performance review form: “What do I want my future to look like? What are my passions and interests? What motivates me in ministry?” My answer was:

If I were to be able to choose how I could spend my time now that my kids are older, I’d like to do more encouraging and outreach to struggling women, especially officer wives and mothers. The ministry of discipleship, spiritual direction, spiritual formation and soul care are my primary passions and interest—including intentional relationships for encouraging fellow officer wives—although I have much to learn. I have a passion for writing for the purpose of inspiring others for self-help. My motivation is to help others discern and respond to the work of Christ in their lives for the purpose of their spiritual growth, future leadership within the church and personal healing.¹³⁴

Over the years I have been privileged to contribute articles on many topics to several Salvation Army magazine publications. I have been blessed to hold a wide variety of Salvation Army appointments and was able to earn a Master’s in Spiritual Formation degree in 2013 from George Fox Evangelical Seminary. This dissertation, a research and blog project, seemed to be a natural culmination of my ministry goals. The officer-mom survey responses were particularly compelling and provide a lengthy list of potential topics yet to be explored in further research.

Sections One and Two include elements from the Year One DMin customized coursework academic essays and Field Research reports. Section Three includes elements from the Year Two DMin customized coursework academic essays and Field Research Reports.

¹³⁴ Janene Zielinski, “Personal Performance Review,” The Salvation Army, 2006.

The appendix includes screenshots and article text of the blog site that I initiated in the Spring of 2016 while a student in the second semester of the Leadership and Spiritual Formation DMin Cohort of George Fox Evangelical Seminary, now known as Portland Seminary. The main purpose of this introductory step was to learn what blogging entailed, and to gain an understanding of whether it would suit the purposes for which it was intended: communication of organizational cultural practices that may not be well known to a newer officer, useful ideas, best practices, and encouragement specifically directed to Salvation Army officer-moms.

Here are some things I have learned from a process of trial and error with sixteen initial blog posts of varying types and lengths:

- The women will comment by texting me directly, or they will leave a comment on the Facebook post that contains the blog link, but they do not leave a comment on the Wordpress blog site. I think that may be because they know it is an “open forum” and that the Facebook Group is a “closed forum.” However, there is another reason for this reticence that I have been made aware of, and it is pervasive in Salvation Army culture. I am a senior leader and any public reaction to my blog post could be construed as “sucking up.” This is a factor I will need to consider.
- Posts of more than 500 words, unless immediately engaging, are less likely to be commented on. I understand the officer-moms live busy lives and may not have the time to read articles of great length, especially if they are just scrolling through social media on a rare break.

- The exception to the “500 words or less” type of post is a certain touching “testimony” post that is over 2,000 words in length. Thus far this post is the most liked and shared blog post on the site. It was written in first person and describes my own grown children’s viewpoints concerning family life and Salvation Army Christmas activities. Many people do not realize that Salvation Army officer parents will often engage in fifty to seventy-hour workweeks from mid-November to the beginning of January. Of great concern to officer-moms is how their children (known as “officer kids”) will be affected by this non-typical holiday schedule.
- Memes with Salvation Army historical quotes that are relevant to officer-moms receive likes but generally no comments.
- Featured photos within blogs that have the Army logo seem to be reacted to quicker than generic free photos related to the topic.
- Using the term “officer-mom” in the title of the blog post generates quicker reactions.

Another interesting aspect to be explored further is the title of the blog.

“Offblacknylons” is a moniker I chose, as I wanted the title to be something that all Army women officers would immediately relate to. All women officers wear a Salvation Army uniform consisting of a knee length skirt, white blouse, and military style blazer.

According to uniform policy, the only acceptable color of nylons is “off black.” The whole uniform is very traditional and not exactly modern fashion. In fact, “off black” nylons are becoming harder to locate to purchase since they are no longer fashionable. It is a common complaint of the younger officers. In the last ten years, the Army finally

made a pants option for weekday office wear, but the skirt and nylons must still be worn on Sundays and on any official business. Most of the women officers identify the blog title as immediately relating to their situation, however with the blog on an open and free site, I have had a few non-Army readers question the term “off black,” not understanding it is a color dye, not a people group.

Conclusion

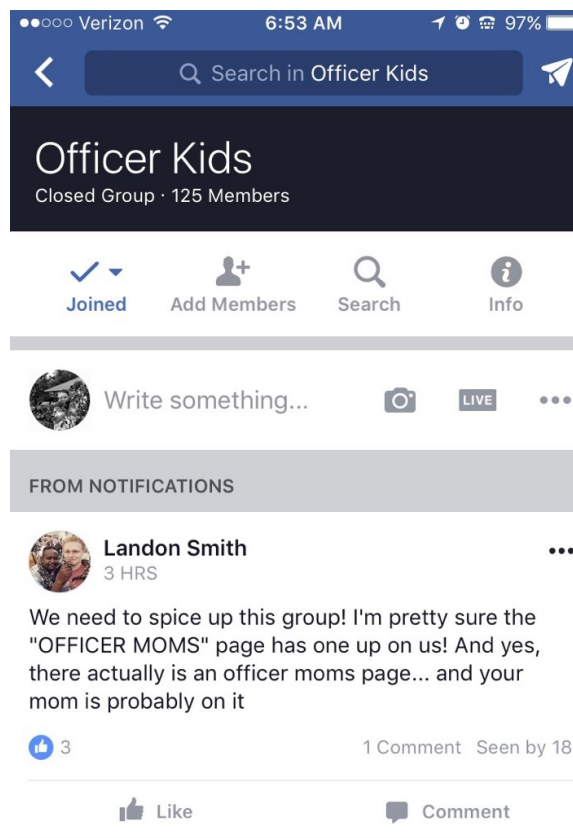
The top stressors identified by officer-moms in the survey discussed in Section One included the issues of discouragement and loneliness. The importance of the officer-mom’s relationship with their Divisional Leader was determined as a key to officer efficacy, but due to distance and time constraints, it is difficult to establish a deep attachment. Key ideals that can be communicated by both leadership and veteran officer-moms include the important aspect of officer lifescape—an understanding of the seasons of lifetime ministry. Officercraft requires practice of expanding your capacities, clarifying expectations, and sharing the ministry load with others.

Officer-moms want to be encouraged, accountable, involved, and aware of aspects of Army life that are important to them at this crucial time in their officermomship. They need the help of veteran officer-moms to help them gauge whether they are meeting their officer obligations with integrity, help them understand opportunities for their future, and to feel as though they are understood and known.

Experienced Salvation Army officer-moms have much wisdom to share, and most are not even aware of it. In motherhood, the gaining of knowledge is an inherent process that is gained through personal experiences, both positive and negative. The same is true of learning to successfully navigate the unique vocational demands and expectations of

being an officer-mom. Technology, including blogs and social media, has proven helpful in this quest to unite these generations. My prayer is that the interaction through blog posts, social media comments, and the personal communications that come about as a result, will be life-changing for these officer-moms.

Here is a funny comment from a grown-up officer kid writing on the “Officer Kids” Facebook page remarking on the “Officer Moms” Facebook page popularity:



BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Agosto, Efrain. *Servant Leadership: Jesus & Paul*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005.
- Anderson, Cameron J. *The Faithful Artist: A Vision for Evangelicalism and the Arts*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. *Collateral Damage: Social Inequalities in a Global Age*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2011. Kindle.
- Bomar, Chuck. *Worlds Apart: Understanding the Mindset and Values of 18–25 Year Olds*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.
- Booth, Bramwell. *Servants of All: A Brief Review of the Call, Character, and Labours of Officers of the Salvation Army*. 4th ed. London: Salvation Army Book Department, 1914.
- Branson, Mark Lau and Juan Francisco Martínez. *Churches, Cultures and Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011. Kindle.
- Brooks, David. *The Social Animal: The Hidden Sources of Love*. New York: Random House, 2011, Kindle.
- Collins, Ace. *Sticks and Stones: Using Your Words as a Positive Force*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.
- Donovan, Vincent J. *Christianity Rediscovered*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995.
- Duarte, Nancy. *Resonate: Present Visual Stories that Transform Audiences*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2010.
- Friedman, Edwin H., Margaret M. Treadwell, and Edward W. Beal. *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix*. New York: Seabury Books, 2007.
- Glass, A. “Understanding Generational Differences for Competitive Success.” *Industrial and Commercial Training* 39, no. 2 (2007): 98–103. Accessed February 26, 2018. <http://dx.doi.org.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/10.1108/00197850710732424>.
- Greenman, Jeffrey P. and George Kalantzis. *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010.
- Heifetz, Ronald A. *Leadership Without Easy Answers*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1994. Kindle.

- Houlihan, Michael and Bonnie Harvey. "Creating a Positive Work Culture: Millennials in the Mix Reinforce the Need to Engage Employees." *Healthcare Registration*, 2015. Accessed February 26, 2018. <http://link.galegroup.com/georgefox.idm.oclc.org/apps/doc/A419269598/AONE?u=newb64238&sid=AONE&xid=00afe6e8>.
- Hunter, James Davison. *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity Today*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- IVP. "Godly Living and Social Groups (2:1-10)," The IVP New Testament Commentary. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994. Accessed December 1, 2016. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Titus+2%3A1-10&version=NASB>.
- Kinnaman, David and Aly Hawkins. *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving Church ... and Rethinking Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2016. Kindle.
- Kolb, Deborah M., Carol Frohlinger, and Judith Williams. *Her Place at the Table: A Woman's Guide to Negotiating Five Key Challenges to Leadership Success*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2004.
- Lewis, Thomas, Fari Amini, and Richard Lannon. *A General Theory of Love*. New York: Vintage Books, 2001.
- Loyd, Deborah Koehn. *Your Vocational Credo: Practical Steps to Discover Your Unique Purpose*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2015.
- Mauer, Roy. "From Paycheck to Purpose: How Millennials are Changing Work." Society for Human Resource Management. March 16, 2016. Accessed April 24, 2017. <https://www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/hr-topics/talent-acquisition/Pages/From-Paycheck-to-Purpose-How-Millennials-Are-Changing-Work.aspx>.
- Maznevski, Martha. "6 Tips for Leading Millennials." SHRM. May 27, 2015. Accessed April 24, 2017. <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/Pages/0615-leading-millennials.aspx>.
- McNicol, Bruce. "TrueFaced Seminar." Founders address, Territorial Executive Councils meeting of The Salvation Army, Cerritos, September 9, 2015.
- Myers, Karen K. and Kamyab Sadaghiani. "Millennials in the Workplace: A Communication Perspective on Millennials' Organizational Relationships and Performance." *Journal of Business and Psychology* 25, no. 2 (2010): 225–238. Accessed February 26, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-010-9172-7>.

- Northouse, Peter Guy. *Leadership: Theory and Practice*. 7th ed. Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2016.
- Perry, Bruce Duncan and Maia Szalavitz. *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog: And Other Stories from a Child Psychiatrist's Notebook—What Traumatized Children Can Teach Us About Loss, Love, and Healing*. New York: Basic Books, 2006.
- Peterson, Eugene H. *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2005. Kindle.
- Rice, Jesse. *The Church of Facebook: How the Hyperconnected are Redefining Community*. Colorado Springs, CO: Cook, 2009.
- Rolheiser, Ronald. *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality*. New York: Doubleday, 1999.
- Salvation Army, The. Authority of the General, *Orders and Regulations for Divisional Commanders in the United States of America*. Alexandria, VA: National Headquarters, 2010.
- Salvation Army, The. "Organisational structure." The Salvation Army. Accessed April 25, 2017. <http://www.salvationarmy.org.au/en/Who-We-Are/About-Us/Organisational-Structure/>.
- Sensing, Tim. *Qualitative Research: A Multi-methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011. Kindle.
- Shigematsu, Ken. *God in My Everything: How an Ancient Rhythm Helps Busy People Enjoy God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013. Kindle.
- Sittser, Gerald Lawson. *Water from a Deep Well: Christian Spirituality From Early Martyrs to Modern Missionaries*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2007.
- Spencer, Aída Besançon, William David Spencer, and Mimi Haddad, eds. *Global Voices on Biblical Equality: Women and Men Serving Together in the Church*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008. Kindle.
- Stewart, Jeanine S., Elizabeth Goad Oliver, Karen S. Cravens, and Shigehiro Oishi. "Managing Millennials: Embracing Generational Differences." *Business Horizons* 60, no. 1 (2017): 45–54. Accessed February 26, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2016.08.011>.
- Strom, Bill. *More than Talk: Communication Studies and the Christian Faith*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 2009.

Tenney, Matt. "From Start with Why to Leaders Eat Last: An Interview with Simon Sinek." February 11, 2014. Accessed April 25, 2017.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/matt-tenney/from-start-with-why-to-le_b_4723648.html.

Tillsley, Mark Wesley. "The Salvation Army Corps Officer: A Territorial Survey of Vocational Preparation, Role, Efficacy, and Ministry Satisfaction." PhD diss., Fordham University, 2013. Accessed March 5, 2016. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

U.S. Government. "The Official Homepage of The United States Army." Accessed December 11, 2015. <http://www.Army.mil/info/armylife/careermanagement>.

APPENDIX: ARTIFACT

Blog articles have had a big impact on my life and spiritual growth over the last ten years or so. A favorite blog that I “follow” has “advocates” who write articles from their viewpoint. I feel very attached to them even though we have never met, and I am always eager to read their latest blog post. I almost always learn something, feel encouraged, or at least do not feel so alone after engaging with this site. That is the type of feeling I would like officer-moms to have when they interact with the posts on the Offblacknylons blog.

In this artifact below, posts one,¹³⁵ two,¹³⁶ six,¹³⁷ and eleven¹³⁸ were previously published magazine articles I authored between 2004 and 2010. They were printed in Salvation Army print publications. I tailored them a bit for the blog. I have approximately twelve more previously published magazine articles that I may consider reworking for the future as none of these articles are available in online formats and they are pertinent to the subject.

Developing content for future posts will be an ongoing exercise and I will want to include other veteran officer-moms. One way to do this will be to share the top areas of felt needs from the surveys with a select group of veteran officer-moms. I will see if any of them would be willing to contribute illustrations or testimonies that can spearhead a future post’s topic, or perhaps write a short article of their own as a guest post.

¹³⁵ Janene Zielinski, “What Not to Pack,” *The Officer*, July-August, 2010.

¹³⁶ Janene Zielinski, “6 Ways Past Disappointment,” *The War Cry*, July 3, 2010.

¹³⁷ Janene Zielinski, “Meddling vs. Helping,” *The War Cry*, May 22, 2010.

¹³⁸ Janene Zielinski, “My Mid-officership Crisis,” *The Officer*, September-October 2005.

There are currently nine categories that the blog posts can be “tagged” with.

These nine categories are: Christmas, Encouragement, Leadership, Moving, Officership, Parenting, Resources and Ideas, Spiritual Formation and Women’s Ministry.

BLOG ARTICLE ONE

<https://offblacknylons.wordpress.com/2016/05/06/what-not-to-pack/>

What Not To Pack



It was 18 inches wide and 3000 square feet total. I don't know how that translates into metric, but suffice to say, it was a very long roll of clear plastic wrap. Specifically, it was a commercial, restaurant size roll of clear plastic wrap that you would buy at one of those huge warehouse club stores. I remember purchasing it when we were Corps Officers in our first Corps command more than 16 years ago. I have a very poor memory usually, but for some reason that moment of opening the pristine cardboard box that was filled with clear plastic wrap rolled up inside ready and waiting to be used for the first time – that moment is lodged in my memory forever.

I love to bake cookies, cakes, brownies, fudge – especially anything with chocolate. Because of my love for baking I have certain items I have bought over the years that are the personal kinds of things that you drag with you from appointment to appointment even when you move on average every 2.5 years. You can't make me

It was 18 inches wide and 3000 square feet total. I don't know how that translates into metric, but suffice to say, it was a very long roll of clear plastic wrap. Specifically, it was a commercial, restaurant size roll of clear plastic wrap that you would buy at one of those huge warehouse club stores. I remember purchasing it when we were Corps Officers in our first Corps command more than 16 years ago. I have a very poor memory usually, but for some reason that moment of opening the pristine cardboard box that was filled with clear plastic wrap rolled up inside ready and waiting to be used for the first time – that moment is lodged in my memory forever.

I love to bake cookies, cakes, brownies, fudge – especially anything with chocolate. Because of my love for baking I have certain items I have bought over the years that are the personal kinds of things that you drag with you from appointment to appointment, even when you move on average every 2.5 years. You can't make me give up my Kitchenaid Stand Mixer, my Silpat non-stick cookie sheet liners or my high temperature spatulas and long handled spoons. This huge roll of clear plastic wrap was one of those

items that I refused to leave behind. The box of wrap was so big I usually had to pack it vertically in one of those extra-large size boxes meant for hanging clothing in. The first 5 or 6 years the cardboard flap top was still attached. A couple years ago the end of the roller poked through the side flap of the box – but I taped it up with clear packing tape and it still rolled so I didn’t worry about it too much. Two months ago, I noticed the box was looking more beat up than ever and the wrap seemed a little thicker and that’s when I realized I was coming to the end of the roll. A few weeks later we had marching orders and funny enough, one of the first things I thought about was the fact that it wasn’t going to be worthwhile to take that huge roll of clear plastic wrap with me. There wasn’t enough left to make it worth the space it would take up in a box. It was going to go on the “do not pack” list this time.

Last weekend I was at a Men’s retreat. During the testimony time one of the men shared how he had realized it was time to stop carrying around those fears and resentments and let old wounds heal. In the last few years I’ve probably heard similar testimonies a thousand times – but for some reason this one went right to my heart. It occurred to me that I had not only carried resentments and fears around with me, I had taken the time and energy to carefully pack them away in moving boxes and make sure they went with me from appointment to appointment. Some of those fears and resentments were so old they had been “taped up” so they could still do their job of making me miserable. There were so many now, either I was going to need a bigger moving box – or I was going to need to make the decision to leave them behind... preferably put in the trash container where they belong.

So, as I get ready to farewell from this appointment, I don’t have a list of what I “must pack” ... I have a long list of things “NOT to pack”. I will not make room for old mistakes, fears, wounds and resentments. God is helping me make the list of what to leave in His hands for him to take care of. I’m going to “lighten my load” quite a bit this time. I’m sure I’ll get careless and in a hurry and some old pain will find its way into a moving box. As I write this I realize I’m still in process. But it is another fresh start and a good time to make the tough decisions of what is worth taking with me into my future.

BLOG ARTICLE TWO

<https://offblacknylons.wordpress.com/2016/05/09/when-you-didnt-get-what-you-wanted/>

When you didn't get what you wanted...



When you didn't get what you wanted...

I get so grumpy when I am disappointed. I think I've gotten worse about it as I've gotten older. You get used to things a certain way or up to a certain standard and then, boom, it's not at all what you were expecting. When something doesn't turn out the way I hoped for or expect, I find instead of accepting it, being grateful for what I do have and moving on – I'm comparing everything, nit-picking and looking for and finding reasons to be unhappy. I seem to enjoy wallowing in my disappointment for awhile – and I tend to make everyone around me miserable as well.

Why do I do that? It's not going to change anything. It won't make the

When you didn't get what you wanted...

I get so grumpy when I am disappointed. I think I've gotten worse about it as I've gotten older. You get used to things a certain way or up to a certain standard and then, boom, it's not at all what you were expecting. When something doesn't turn out the way I hoped for or expect, I find instead of accepting it, being grateful for what I do have and moving on – I'm comparing everything, nit-picking and looking for and finding reasons to be unhappy. I seem to enjoy wallowing in my disappointment for a while – and I tend to make everyone around me miserable as well.

Why do I do that? It's not going to change anything. It won't make the circumstances magically better – in fact it just makes me seem so ungrateful and childish that I look foolish. Instead of thinking of others, I'm just making them miserable. That certainly doesn't help anything.

So, how do you “get over it”? When you find out you didn't get the job, when people don't do what they said they would, perhaps you were even betrayed – any of these kinds of things can lead to disappointment. It's a part of life that everyone must learn healthy

ways of coping. Sometimes our disappointments come from trying really hard and just not making it. Olympia Dukakis once said, “Everyone gets kicked down the stairs”. Other times our disappointment can come from an unhealthy attachment to an unmet expectation, such as an unrealistic dream. Know that you are not alone and recognize it happens to all of us at some time.

The initial shock, disbelief and hurt of a disappointment can have a significant effect on us emotionally and in our actions. We may say or act as if “we don’t care” – when we really do. Acknowledging your true feelings is an important first step. If you don’t have a trusted friend or counselor to talk with, write in a journal or cry out to God. Don’t allow yourself to become bitter or jaded – that will repel people from you when you need them the most. If you approach your pain as a victim of circumstance, you will spend all your effort looking for someone or something specific to blame. That just leads to the “if only” kind of thinking that will keep you trapped in your disappointment forever. When you are consumed with those kinds of thoughts you will be cut off from positive thinking, other open possibilities and more viable choices. Recognize that you may have a crisis of faith, or your faith could be shaken a bit, but God is not to blame.

How to “Get Past It”:

1. Identify and accept your feelings, whatever they may be: mad, sad, frustration. Breathe and take time – don’t react right away – measure your response.
2. Make a conscious choice to let the unfulfilled desire go. Release it or it will bind you. Remember: resentment is a poison that you take thinking it will hurt others. You will only hurt yourself.
3. Look at disappointment as a catalyst for emotional growth. Acknowledge that many good things are out there and you haven’t been cut off from them all. Refuse self-pity.
4. Have realistic expectations – do some realistic thinking. Learn more about the situation. Change what you can. Try again if that is feasible. As you think about a new plan or a new direction, do something you enjoy or take a new road.
5. Think positively and have a back-up plan. Take control of what you have control over – take ownership for your own mistakes, shortcomings and assumptions.
6. Look at what it is that you really want. Think in generalities and not specifics. What do you really want? There must be several ways to get there.

Are you focusing on wallowing in unhealthy emotion or figuring out reasonable solutions? Which will give you an increased sense of satisfaction? Are you forcing your desires? That is selfish and defeating. Recognize your pattern and choose to respond differently – with others needs also in mind.

In the end you have to ask yourself, “Are you looking for immediate gratification or eternal victories”? Sometimes after being let down you find a reason to be glad later. What you may have thought from your perspective was unfair may have saved you from a greater problem. Initial disappointment can sometimes turn into a good or better thing.

Take the time to count your blessings and enjoy the process – it is the journey, not the destination. Rely on God to get you through – but don't resort to thinking of God as a vending machine. He offers you guidance, strength and wisdom for the journey. Never does He claim it will be bed of roses. Ironically, those who learn from disappointment get up and go on – they are those who live life the most victoriously.

BLOG ARTICLE THREE

<https://offblacknylons.wordpress.com/2016/05/23/the-spiritual-discipline-of-coping/>

The Spiritual Discipline of Coping



My dad wanted sons. This was evident in the fact that a congratulations note to my mother from my great aunt on the event of my birth read, "I'm so sorry, I know you were hoping for a boy". I was the third daughter. Dad had a "shop" in the backyard where he liked to make and fix stuff. If you were going to spend time

My dad wanted sons. This was evident in the fact that a congratulation note to my mother from my great aunt on the event of my birth read, "I'm so sorry, I know you were hoping for a boy". I was the third daughter. Dad had a "shop" in the backyard where he liked to make and fix stuff. If you were going to spend time with him, you were going to at least learn something useful, even if you were a girl. At first it was how to hammer a nail and sand a board. Soon enough we got to graduate to a hand cranked drill and various size hack saws. One tool I had difficulty mastering was a coping saw. "Coping" in woodworking is the technique of trimming and curving the end of a piece of shaped wood molding to neatly fit the contours of another piece to make a clean joint. The curves beautifully fit together with no distracting gaps.

Another thing my dad liked to do was to "reclaim" building materials from torn down buildings. He'd always bring us girls along to help him pack and carry whatever it was. One time we were moving those large cement bricks that are hollow on the inside. When we put them in the bed of the truck for transport, it was OK to not have them in neat piles, but when we got them home I remember he was quite particular that they be neatly stacked. After we finished stacking them he fashioned a piece of plastic siding over them at an angle as a type of protection. When it rained, the water was directed away onto the

grass. When I asked him why it mattered since they were made of stone, he told me if they weren't covered the rain would pool up in the holes, freeze, expand, and ultimately break the bricks. The piece of plastic siding was called "the coping". I found out later when you build a wall, the "coping" is sometimes called the capstone and very often is decorative as well as functional.

It occurred to me that if coping can be defined as a "shaping to fit" in woodworking terms, or a "covering" in masonry terminology, perhaps those images from my childhood could be helpful to me in my struggle to contend with and overcome life altering situations. Generally, by the time most of us have lived a few years as an "adult", we've usually experienced at least one season of life where we've felt life has thrown us a curveball, or we've lost someone or something highly cherished and irreplaceable at any cost.

Acknowledging a new reality, and struggling to make the effort to "shape" myself to deal with it in a positive manner can feel like handling a coping saw blade with your bare hands and no experience. My attitudes and actions have sharp edges and need quite a bit of mental sandpaper. One definition reads: "Coping is expending conscious effort to solve personal and interpersonal problems and seeking to master, minimize or tolerate stress or conflict." Yes, we need to make a conscious effort, but we can also rejoice knowing that our God is the true master craftsman. He promises us that even in the midst of our temporary earthly hardships and trials, he will cover us in his protective love for eternity, "we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:37b-39 NIV)

Psychologists tell us that in order to be successfully "coping" with something, we must be able to face the situation in a calm and adequate way, taking steps to "come to terms" with the new facts or realities. In the 14th century the word "coping" meant trading one thing for another. We may need to trade our fears and doubts for God's assurance. "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33 NIV)

Unknowingly, my dad managed to teach me some important life lessons in that woodworking shop. First of all, you may wish for one thing (like sons), and get another, so you will want to make the best of it. But also, as we build our lives even amidst disappointment and pain, it's important to seek the Lord, the master craftsman, who can gift us with some curve to the sharp edges and coverings for the holes. In this way, we can be shining examples of his work, both beautiful and functional.

BLOG ARTICLE FOUR

<https://offblacknylons.wordpress.com/2016/06/04/when-it-just-seems-easier-to-do-it-yourself/>

When it just seems easier to “do it yourself”....



There are several things that are unique to Salvation Army ministry. One of the first things that attracted me to the Army was a woman leading worship from the pulpit. This was a life-changing experience for me since I had never witnessed this before. As exciting and eye-opening to me as that was, what really intrigued me was the encouragement of participation of the “common person” as leaders and fellow “ministers”. As a first generation Salvationist it is easy for me to make a list of all the “attractions” the Army holds. I had been going to other churches for years, but as a female and a young person I never once felt included or needed and there was definitely not a path of leadership made available. I was never once “asked” to do anything that resembled ministry. Once you’ve been blessed to be a part of the Army for awhile, I think you can begin to forget how special it is. For me, the true distinguishing feature of Salvation Army Worship is participation in all aspects of leadership and ministry by the “common person”.

Women’s Ministries within the Army are the perfect place for women to be nurtured

There are several things that are unique to Salvation Army ministry. One of the first things that attracted me to the Army was a woman leading worship from the pulpit. This was a life-changing experience for me since I had never witnessed this before. As exciting and eye-opening to me as that was, what really intrigued me was the encouragement of participation of the “common person” as leaders and fellow “ministers”. As a first-generation Salvationist, it is easy for me to make a list of all the “attractions” the Army holds. I had been going to other churches for years, but as a female and a young person I never once felt included or needed and there was definitely not a path of leadership made available. I was never once “asked” to do anything that resembled ministry. Once you’ve been blessed to be a part of the Army for a while, I think you can begin to forget how special it is. For me, the true distinguishing feature of Salvation Army Worship is participation in all aspects of leadership and ministry by the “common person”.

Women’s Ministries within the Army are the perfect place for women to be nurtured and given opportunity to share their spiritual gifts, thus realizing their ministry potential no matter whether they are young, old, caring for young children or housebound. By nature, women are designed to be relational. The structure of Army Women’s Ministry can be used as an intentional tool for encouraging women to “get their feet wet” in ministry in a

safe environment. Important tasks such as “greeters” and “hostesses” are excellent positions of leadership for women who are just beginning to stretch outside of themselves – moving from the place of constant receiving, to the work of service that ultimately brings a sense of fulfillment and joy. Taking on a small role, such as wearing the “Official Greeter” badge or writing out monthly the birthday and anniversary cards, can give a woman a sense of purpose and ownership that opens them up to new possibilities of responsibility.

If you are already a leader within the Army, it is important to recognize that this kind of building up of leadership and potential leaders will take a strong intentionality. Why does it seem only 20-30% of the women do 80-90% of the work? The answer could be that the other 70-80% have not been asked, or have not been given opportunity lately in a way that is non-threatening. What is that you say? You are “always asking”! Every Sunday from the pulpit, every bulletin has a plea... but let me tell you that in today’s world of media saturation those devices will only serve as helpful reminders. They most likely will not call anyone to action. Today people are only put into action because of personal relationships. A woman has to know that she is needed and wanted because of the unique gift she brings to the group. If you want to ask someone to help with something that you are reasonably sure they could be comfortable doing, you will want to be prepared. Ask for a time to speak to them in person. Begin by reminding them with gratitude of things they have done well in the past to help, or attributes you see in them that are easily transferable to the new task you want them to take on – such as good organization skills, talking to people easily, paperwork, etc. Does this always work? Well, no. Does it take more time? Yes. Is it an important investment in that woman’s life and the future growth of your Corps’ Women’s Ministry? YES!

In looking at this you might say “it would just be easier to do it myself”. Well, you are right, it probably would! You could check off the box and congratulate yourself for completing yet another meeting or task or form all by yourself. But then what? Building the confidence of a woman with even the most minimum of giftedness will never be a waste of time. That woman, and the lives of those she touches, will multiply the ministry and give her incalculable personal blessings she will want to share with others. If you “just do it myself” you are actually selfishly stealing others blessings!

You are one person, probably quite talented and capable, working hard in ministry at 150%. At some point, someone encouraged you. Would you like to double or even triple your ministry effectiveness? Identify a need and ask someone personally who you think could do it, even if it may not get done exactly the way you would have. Give them clear instructions, the necessary information, time and tools and then watch. You may be underwhelmed – you may be totally surprised! Don’t forget to give thanks for their efforts no matter what happens. It is the ministry of the “common” woman that is the precious difference that builds, shapes and fortifies the Women’s Ministries of the Army. That is why the Army is unique and uniquely blessed.

3 thoughts on “When it just seems easier to “do it yourself”....”



Angelina

June 4, 2016 at 4:56 pm

These suggestions are great. I think that if this is out into practice as much as possible it can help build healthier Women Ministries programs. It also can allow for other women to see that everyone has gifts to contribute just as much as anyone else in the group.

[↩ Reply](#)



Lucy Hermanson

June 5, 2016 at 7:50 pm

Thank you, Janine! Excellent article... sometimes we need reminding. 😊

[↩ Reply](#)



martha jewett

July 23, 2016 at 4:52 pm

Fittly spoken! Thank you for your good writing.

There are many, many things I could have done better as an active officer yet by the grace of God I got this one right! The relationships we build lead to the perpetuation of God's will in ways we could never have guessed! It is faith-walking at it's best.

[↩ Reply](#)

BLOG ARTICLE FIVE

<https://offblacknylons.wordpress.com/2016/06/07/ideas-for-a-mindful-move/>

Ideas for a “Mindful Move”



I just finished moving into my 13th Salvation Army quarters. I’ve got a couple practical packing and moving ideas to share with those of you who are on your first or second move. I have also noticed that moving is an excellent time to make decisions that will support better, healthier habits in your new home. I’ll share some of those at the end.

- First of all – Get Packed Now! I know you have good intentions, telling yourself you’ll start the “real packing” tomorrow and that it will all be perfectly packed and stacked. But then, life gets in the way, and before you know it, it’s the night before the truck comes. You frantically throw things into a bag and tell yourself you’ll deal with it when you unpack. Unfortunately, it’s a million times harder on that end and you will regret not doing it the right way from the start. Avoid that regret by having a plan to get it all done in the time you have left.
- Declutter before you pack. Moving is the perfect time to go through your belongings and decide “is this promoting my families physical, mental or spiritual health”? Having less clutter does a lot for my mental state of mind. As you pull things out to pack them up, evaluate whether or not it’s something you really want to bring to your new space. If it’s not, set it aside in a pile for donating or gifting to someone. If it’s something you’re not quite sure about, put it aside for awhile. For me, I grouped all “like” items in the same area and evaluated if I really needed 3 identical Pvrax loaf nans. (I decided I did, but you

I just finished moving into my 13th Salvation Army quarters. I’ve got a couple practical packing and moving ideas to share with those of you who are on your first or second move. I have also noticed that moving is an excellent time to make decisions that will support better, healthier habits in your new home. I’ll share some of those at the end.

- First of all - Get Packed Now! I know you have good intentions, telling yourself you'll start the “real packing” tomorrow and that it will all be perfectly packed and stacked. But then, life gets in the way, and before you know it, it's the night before the truck comes. You frantically throw things into a bag and tell yourself you'll deal with it when you unpack. Unfortunately, it's a million times harder on that end and you will regret not doing it the right way from the start. Avoid that regret by having a plan to get it all done in the time you have left.
- Declutter before you pack. Moving is the perfect time to go through your belongings and decide “is this promoting my families physical, mental or spiritual health”? Having less clutter does a lot for my mental state of mind. As you pull things out to pack them up, evaluate whether or not it's something you really want to bring to your new space. If it's not, set it aside in a pile for donating or gifting to someone. If it's something you're not quite sure about, put it aside for a while.

For me, I grouped all “like” items in the same area and evaluated if I really needed 3 identical Pyrex loaf pans. (I decided I did, but you get the idea!)

- Pack a suitcase just as if you were going on a two-week trip with a variety of the types of clothes, make-up, everything just as if you were not going to be anywhere near your stuff. It is much less stressful to live out of a suitcase than rummaging through boxes. In your suitcase, be sure to pack a set of towels and a set of your bed’s linens. There have been times in my life where the moving truck breaks down or the professional movers come late. It just helped us have less stress not having to look immediately for medications, etc.
- Make a big bucket or a special colored box with hooks, hammer, nails, cleaning supplies, etc. You know you’ll want to clean before you “place” anything in your new quarters. Even if it looks clean, it helps you “connect” with the house to clean the spot before you unload. It’s a very emotional attachment procedure that is similar to “nesting” before the baby comes.
- On moving day, in smaller rooms, if at all possible, don’t try to put all the boxes in the room they belong until you have the furniture where you think you might want it. Then, you can move the boxes into the room from the garage or wherever you put them temporarily. Otherwise it is too frustrating to place furniture with all the boxes already in the room.
- When you do unload your boxes, just put the things in the general area you want them to go, don’t necessarily “put them away” just yet. Group piles of like things that you may want to put on “that particular shelf” or in “that particular cupboard” – but don’t actually put them away yet. It will be hard to resist the urge. Unload all your boxes before you actually start to really put things AWAY. This way you get an excellent visual of everything, can “cull through it again” – even though you’ve been through it once, you’ll still need a big box to throw items in that you say to yourself - “why did I bother to pack this?” Once you have “eyeballed” really well the items you want to group together in that particular cupboard – you’ll know exactly how you want to put them in and how to adjust the shelves, etc. so it all fits.
- Regarding the “stuff” already in the quarters... before I unpack anything I brought, I go through the cupboards and pull out anything that I know I don’t like or won’t use. I pack it in boxes and put it in storage so it is available for me to put back in the quarters before I leave. This way I’ve made the maximum amount of storage for the things I brought with me, use often and care the most about.
- When it comes to the kitchen, try placing just a couple items you use often where you think you want them to go – and live with them there for a couple of days – then try somewhere else. Until you are positive that is where you want them – don’t put them all in the cupboard yet. Make a simple meal and notice where you tend to try to go to “get a spoon” or whatever... then make a note to put those items there when you do unload. Don’t rush the unloading the boxes part, you’ll be sorry if you do. Do not hang any pictures or put any knick-knacks on any shelves for at least a couple days (but don’t wait too long!). I tend to “lean” the picture up against the wall in the place you think it may go – but do not hang it yet. You want to give yourself time in the house to get “the feel”. Just because you had a picture in the living room in your old house, it may be just the thing for

the stairway landing in the new one. I find I move pictures around for about a week before I hang them.

- Every time you say, “I wish I had a hook here...” be certain to add it to your list. I divide a big piece of paper into sections, each section represents a room. I make a list of stuff I want to add or do in that room. On the back of the paper is my shopping list in case I want to do something and I don’t have that item (such as add a shelf, etc.). Newly built homes never have enough hooks, shelves, cupboards, etc. Your enthusiasm will wear off in about two weeks – so don’t put the stuff away until you add the shelf or whatever. The pile will be your motivation to get it built.

Remember, the habits you begin in the first ten days of moving in will probably stick with you the whole time you live there – so be mindful of where the kids naturally plop their stuff – maybe you can put a basket there? Where does your husband put his keys – maybe you can put a tray or a hook there? What spot in the house have you felt drawn to where perhaps you could have a chair for “your space”? Maybe you can put a basket with a Bible, a journal and a devotional book there as a constant invitation to visit. What are your ideas for a “mindful move-in”? Leave a comment and share.

2 thoughts on “Ideas for a “Mindful Move””



Angelina

June 7, 2016 at 3:55 pm

I am on house #8 and I wish I would have done at least half of these. How long is too long for waiting to hang something?

[↩ Reply](#)



C Simpson

January 10, 2017 at 6:34 pm

I am not a officer any longer but was for 20 years. One thing I would add to this list is pack the kids room last and unpack the kids first. Get them settled in their new rooms. We bought our daughter her own bed and dresser. Her own sheets and stuff. That way she was moving in with all her own stuff. This made moves a tad easier for her.

[↩ Reply](#)

A screenshot of a Facebook post. At the top, the post title is "Ideas for a 'Mindful Move'" in bold black text. Below the title is the text "I just finished moving into my 13th Salvatio..." followed by the URL "offblacknylons.wordpress.com". The post has "3 Shares" indicated by a share icon and a small profile picture. Below the post content are three interaction buttons: "Like" with a thumbs-up icon, "Comment" with a speech bubble icon, and "Share" with a share icon. A blue bar indicates "884 people reached" with a progress bar. To the right of the bar is a blue button that says "Boost Post". Below the reach bar is the text "Be the first person to like this." Underneath this is the text "3 shares" and a small circular profile picture of a person. The main body of the post is a light gray rounded rectangle containing the text: "Edith [redacted] I am a former officer and this amusing thought came to me..Every time we received 'Marching Orders' which came all too frequent, first thing, I would take the pictures off the walls..That told me I was ready and on the move..Now this was decades ago but I still remember lol." Below the text are four interaction options: "1w" (1 week), "Like" (with a blue heart icon), "Reply" (with a speech bubble icon), and "Message" (with an envelope icon). To the right of these options is a blue button with a white heart icon and the number "1". At the bottom of the screenshot is a white bar with a camera icon, a text input field containing "Write a comment...", a "GIF" button, a smiley face icon, and a right-pointing arrow icon.

BLOG ARTICLE SIX

<https://offblacknylons.wordpress.com/2016/06/14/is-it-any-of-my-business/>

Is it any of my business?



There is an old saying, "It's either God's business, My business or 'None of my business'". I often need to repeat that to myself. Every now and then I find myself slipping into a bad habit of "meddling". It's just so easy to do, it almost comes naturally. After all, I do have two daughters! Some people would call it "caring", others "helpfulness", "putting in my two cents" or maybe "just my opinion". However, if you are on the receiving end of a meddler, you tend to call it "intruding", "interfering" or "sticking your nose in where it doesn't belong".

I've thought quite a bit about why people tend to meddle. My conclusion is that it is a very selfish habit. I've noticed it fulfills the very human desire to feel important and "needed". We can share our "wisdom" and feel we've done some good. We feel important when we have influenced someone's decision. When we're giving someone unsolicited advice we get that "high" that comes with helping someone. After all, "helps" is one of the spiritual gifts – so we must be doing a good thing, right? Well, probably not.

Sometimes we use meddling when we want to draw attention away from ourselves. When meddling in others lives we are trying to redirect the focus onto them and their perceived "fault" or "problem". We wrongly assume that this helps keep others "eyes" off of ourselves and our own issues. Deflection is a great tool when you want

There is an old saying, "It's either God's business, My business or 'None of my business'". I often need to repeat that to myself. Every now and then I find myself slipping into a bad habit of "meddling". It's just so easy to do, it almost comes naturally. After all, I do have two daughters! Some people would call it "caring", others "helpfulness", "putting in my two cents" or maybe "just my opinion". However, if you are on the receiving end of a meddler, you tend to call it "intruding", "interfering" or "sticking your nose in where it doesn't belong".

I've thought quite a bit about why people tend to meddle. My conclusion is that it is a very selfish habit. I've noticed it fulfills the very human desire to feel important and "needed". We can share our "wisdom" and feel we've done some good. We feel important when we have influenced someone's decision. When we're giving someone unsolicited advice we get that "high" that comes with helping someone. After all, "helps" is one of the spiritual gifts – so we must be doing a good thing, right? Well, probably not. Sometimes we use meddling when we want to draw attention away from ourselves. When meddling in others' lives we are trying to redirect the focus onto them and their perceived "fault" or "problem". We wrongly assume that this helps keep others "eyes" off of ourselves and our own issues. Deflection is a great tool when you want to take attention off yourself.

Many meddlers are simply procrastinating. There are plenty of worthwhile and important things to be doing, but they take so much more effort than telling others what they should

do. Meddling is a fun distraction. Kind of like Facebook! Unfortunately, there is a cost involved to others that isn't always taken into consideration. True meddling is a very selfish action. In meddling we can be pretending to help others, perhaps not even realizing that we're trying to gain attention ourselves by being someone's "savior". Our "helpers' high" makes it still "all about us".

I Peter 4:15 in the Amplified Bible equates meddling with being a "mischief-maker" who infringes on the rights of others, "But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or any sort of criminal, or as a mischief-maker (a meddler) in the affairs of others [infringing on their rights]." Proverbs 26:17 NIV gives us these wise words: "Like one who seizes a dog by the ears is a passer-by who meddles in a quarrel not his own."

So, when is it "meddling" and when is it not? It depends a lot on how close you are to the person. It's probably meddling when you are aware you are taking action or giving advice so that you will feel better. It's probably meddling when you are looking for a "reaction". It's probably meddling when you are doing something that will take away or limit another person's right to choose.

It's probably not meddling when you take quick action to keep a stranger from immediate physical harm – such as reaching with your arm to stop someone about to walk into a hole in the sidewalk. It's probably not meddling when you ask a colleague, "Would you like some help with that?", or "is there anything I can do to help?" But that is strangers and casual acquaintances. Most people will admit that they do most of their meddling with those who are closest to them. Sometimes we will try to be subtle or secret in the way we go about it. With children, we may even use "reverse psychology" to sway their decisions the way we want (remember, meddling is basically a selfish act).

How do you truly help others without meddling?

1. Keep your focus on giving them space and respect.
2. Be courteous and listen well, giving them your full attention without judgment or interruption.
3. Remind them of good decisions that they have made in the past and the methods they took to come to that decision.
4. Only give advice or assistance if asked for it.
5. If you offer, and they decline, respect their decision.

Meddling is a destructive way to try to influence another person, their actions or behavior. When you manipulate and meddle in others' lives, you are not being loving, respectful or caring. Meddling, even just one time, can destroy any chance of a future or ongoing relationship – no matter whether you are doing it out of selfishness or pure intentions. Resist the urge to slide into this habit. Practice instead giving others space and respect. Start meddling in your own issues and be brave enough to work on your own character flaws. Ask God for his advice in your own life. He never meddles, but He is always ready to help. With God's guidance, you can work on your own issues, "mind your own business" and become a silent example for others. That is the most powerful and healthy influence of all.

BLOG ARTICLE SEVEN

<https://offblacknylons.wordpress.com/2016/07/23/living-wisely-in-a-world-of-distraction/>

Living Wisely in a World of Distraction



Have you ever had the experience of walking out of a movie and thinking to yourself, “that was about 30 minutes longer than it needed to be...” In the 1920’s, during the silent film era, directors discovered the benefits of shortening the dialogue and putting most of their effort into the action parts. The term “cut to the chase” was thus coined.

There are many origins of the word “wisdom”, some having to do with the idea of a judge making a distinction from ‘right or wrong’ based on their own experience with the law and legal precedents. Another example is that of a surgeon who uses their knowledge, skill and experience in an effort to “cut out” the infected or defective cells for the purpose of restoring health. It turns out that you must remove the “bad apple” in order to not affect the rest in the barrel.

Have you ever had the experience of walking out of a movie and thinking to yourself, “that was about 30 minutes longer than it needed to be...” In the 1920’s, during the silent film era, directors discovered the benefits of shortening the dialogue and putting most of their effort into the action parts. The term “cut to the chase” was thus coined.

There are many origins of the word “wisdom”, some having to do with the idea of a judge making a distinction from ‘right or wrong’ based on their own experience with the law and legal precedents. Another example is that of a surgeon who uses their knowledge, skill and experience in an effort to “cut out” the infected or defective cells for the purpose of restoring health. It turns out that you must remove the “bad apple” in order to not affect the rest in the barrel.

Spiritual Growth is like that. It is intentional, but not necessarily comfortable. Seeking “Wisdom” is a worthy pursuit as it is the act of constantly prioritizing that which we most value, while removing anything that hinders or distracts. It takes conscientious decision making in every moment – because the culture we live in will do whatever it can to distract us from our pursuit of Godliness. Every thought and action is a choice.

- Every time we open our wallet, we make a choice
- Every time we allow a distraction, we made a choice

- Every word that comes from our mouth is a choice
- Every bite we take is a choice
- Every movement of our body, face, hands and feet is a choice
- Every time we don't make an effort, we made a choice
- Every decision we make is a choice

Where to start?

1. Notice your choices throughout the day. Every single one of them. Do not do anything unconsciously. Some will call this "mindfulness". The Bible tells us in *Ephesians 5:14-17*:

"Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." "Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil." NIV

2. Make a reasonable plan. The goal is improvement, not perfection. What is the one thing that's bothering you the most? What would it take to "make it a bit better", or "stop the bleeding"? Take that step of faith knowing God wants to generously give you the gift of wisdom.

*"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, **you must believe and not doubt**, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind." James 1:5 & 6 NIV*

3. Each evening, reflect on the day. Did you notice your choices? Take a minute, or two, to celebrate and congratulate yourself for good choices. Did you make a choice that now weighs heavy on your heart or mind? Are you squirming with "uncomfortableness"? Make that a matter of prayer and forgive yourself as you ask your heavenly Father to forgive you. Ask for the desire to continue to receive instruction on how to be more like Jesus and be willing to listen and act on that teaching, no matter how uncomfortable.

*"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but **fools despise wisdom and instruction.**" Proverbs 1:7 NIV*

So, how do we make better choices? Like a judge we must use "the book of the law" – for us, Biblical wisdom as well as our own life experience, to distinguish "the right thing" or "the right way". Like a surgeon we can use our scalpel to remove any selfish tendencies that hinder or distract. Like a movie director we can "cut the unnecessary scenes" because we know it will help us make more impact on others.

Life, after all, is a series of choices, each one building on the prior, and forming a foundation for the next. To live righteously means to live unselfishly, making wise choices that make us spiritually stronger so that we can live a life of distinctiveness, reflecting Christ in all we do and say.



BLOG ARTICLE EIGHT

<https://offblacknylons.wordpress.com/2016/08/26/when-working-harder-or-smarter-doesnt-help/>

When Working Harder or Smarter Doesn't Help



There are many situations in life where you seemingly have no power over the outcome. In some cases it is because others may be in charge of the decision and you have little confidence that they "know you". Lately I have made some tough personal choices while working with "limited information". It really bugged me that it was impossible for me to know "what really happened", "what someone really thought", or the whole history behind why things were the way they were. What finally helped me was when I realized **"God does not work with limited information"**. I have to put my trust in God alone, praying for his wisdom in every circumstance. I must trust him, even if I don't get the exact outcome I desire.

It is so easy to say to someone who is hurting, "Trust God", yet it seems flippant. As Christians we know in our heart that God is the only one who is completely trustworthy. Humans will fail, no matter their intention. God is always doing what "is" best for us. Others are only doing what "seems" best, and sometimes that means

There are many situations in life where you seemingly have no power over the outcome. In some cases, it is because others may be in charge of the decision and you have little confidence that they "know you". Lately I have made some tough personal choices while working with "limited information". It really bugged me that it was impossible for me to know "what really happened", "what someone really thought", or the whole history behind why things were the way they were. What finally helped me was when I realized **"God does not work with limited information"**. I have to put my trust in God alone, praying for his wisdom in every circumstance. I must trust him, even if I don't get the exact outcome I desire.

It is so easy to say to someone who is hurting, "Trust God", yet it seems flippant. As Christians, we know in our heart that God is the only one who is completely trustworthy. Humans will fail, no matter their intention. God is always doing what "is" best for us. Others are only doing what "seems" best, and sometimes that means what is best or easiest for them. Even when others are trying very hard to have our best interests in mind, their actions can be hurtful and counterproductive. Generally, they are also working with "limited information". Only God knows their motivations. God is the only one who can resolve some situations. He knows us better than we know ourselves. Trusting in Him and committing to prayer may be our only reasonable form of action. Perhaps we can't see the answer or the reason immediately. Maybe we will not get an explanation for a few

months, and sometimes maybe not in our lifetime. He will never leave us, even when we don't understand. This is the perfecting of our faith.

There are many times in my life I can't put my finger on the cause of the problem or difficulty I'm dealing with. As I've grown older I've learned it's very difficult to please people and super easy to disappoint them. Working harder or smarter doesn't always provide a cure. Sometimes the answer may be, "Be still!". What I need is to stop and seek God's wisdom as to what I should do next. In times of crisis or being perplexed about where to go or what to do, I'm looking to God's Word and being reminded of His promises: "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5). "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1). "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27). Remember, God is always working with all the information – and that's a fact!

What verses or thoughts encourage you when "just working harder" isn't working? Leave them in the comment section below to share with someone else who needs to hear it today...

4 thoughts on "When Working Harder or Smarter Doesn't Help"



Tammy Ray

August 27, 2016 at 5:54 am

Psalm 73:26 "my flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

[Reply](#)



Off Black Nylons

August 27, 2016 at 9:01 am

I'm going to try hard to remember that "God is the strength of my heart". Thanks Tammy for sharing this!

[Reply](#)



Hilary

August 27, 2016 at 3:02 pm

The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in Him.
~Nahum 1:7

[Reply](#)



Off Black Nylons

August 27, 2016 at 3:29 pm

He is My refuge! Amen. Thank you Hilary!

[Reply](#)

BLOG ARTICLE NINE

<https://offblacknylons.wordpress.com/2016/11/24/superhero-officer-moms-reclaim-christmas/>

Superhero Officer-moms Reclaim Christmas



**This blog was created to encourage "Officer-moms" as they navigate living and loving their unique calling as Salvation Army officers. Encouragement provides us with the motivation and excitement to persevere. Sometimes we need encouragement in the form of "Great Ideas". Captain Dianne Madsen, from the USA West territory, recently shared in a Facebook post about how she's learned by experience to "reclaim Christmas" for herself and her family. These ideas are just too good to not be shared! In the spirit of encouragement, please enjoy this Guest Post written by Captain Dianne Madsen, with contributions from other fabulous Officer Moms:*

Hey Sisters,

I feel like getting ready for Christmas feels a bit like being a Doomsday Prepper (and yes, my maiden name is Doom!). I've been an officer for 23 years and did Christmas for many years at the corps I grew up in. I've started putting together a list of

This blog was created to encourage "Officer-moms" as they navigate living and loving their unique calling as Salvation Army officers. Encouragement provides us with the motivation and excitement to persevere. Sometimes we need encouragement in the form of "Great Ideas". Captain Dianne Madsen, from the USA West territory, recently shared in a Facebook post about how she's learned by experience to "reclaim Christmas" for herself and her family. These ideas are just too good to not be shared! In the spirit of encouragement, please enjoy this Guest Post written by Captain Dianne Madsen, with contributions from other fabulous Officer-moms:

Hey Sisters,

I feel like getting ready for Christmas feels a bit like being a Doomsday Prepper (and yes, my maiden name is Doom!). I've been an officer for 23 years and did Christmas for many years at the corps I grew up in. I've started putting together a list of suggestions to get ready for Christmas...it's not comprehensive and I would love to hear your suggestions. The "office" section is a bit light because Christmas in every appointment is so different! I don't share it because I've got it all together...anyone who has met me knows that isn't the case! But I have a passion to reclaim Christmas - the true meaning and essence of the season for us and our families. Here ya go!

Ways to prepare for Crazy Army Christmas:

HOME

- Have enough of all of your medications or your kids' medications
- Have enough of the basics: toilet paper, paper towels, toiletries
- Stock up on pantry basics for quick, healthy meals
- Deal with Christmas cards in October. Costco photo cards
- Stock up on nylons.
- Have enough uniform pieces? Check now and place an order at your Trade Dept if necessary.
- Even if you typically do your own blouses at home, splurge on having a few blouses professionally cleaned and have them hanging in your closet. Just a little insurance policy against being without a blouse during the hectic Christmas season.
- If your older children don't know how to do laundry – TEACH THEM! And bribe them to do the laundry...whatever their love language is. Money. Starbucks. Video Game time...
- Get a haircut before the season hits, if you need one.
- Go get a pedicure (even at a beauty school) and have your toes painted cute and Christmasy. Or, do it yourself!
- Intimacy with the hubby...often times goes to the wayside! Plan it out! Put it on a calendar somewhere as a 'meeting'. It's important for the both of you.
- I ordered a bunch of presents for grandparents, etc. from Shutterfly when I had some great coupons.

Other fabulous officer-moms mentioned:

- "Use the crock pot"
- "I planned all my meals in October for Nov 15-Dec 26. I made double meals in October and put one in freezer."
- "Have your Christmas shopping done by November 1, by Thanksgiving at the latest."
- "I start my shopping in late summer/early September. Starting with stocking items. I mail my parcels home to family by the very latest November 30th, and I also start to plan meals for the kids when we are running around like crazy so it is easy for them. I start picking up items like Cranberry Ginger Ale that I know goes up in price at Christmas or is just plain hard to find. Then I don't have disappointed kids. I try my best to remember to take care of me. Practice what you preach, right?"
- "Don't forget to stock up on the basics. A good stock of toilet paper, Kleenex, paper towels, school snacks, laundry soap, fabric softener and cold supplies. And, pet food! I make a reminder in my phone to check for eggs, butter, milk and bread every other day. You really don't want to have to run out quick after you finally make it in the door so late in the evening."

OFFICE

Captain Dianne continues: In October, clean out your office/desk so they are ready for the influx of stuff. If it's already cleaned and organized, it won't be so overwhelming

Other fabulous officer-moms mention:

- "I've done the entire Advent Season Power points so all I have to do is verify it works and add updated announcements."
- "I typically have file folders of all the Advent readings, etc. ready to go for each week. I do the bulletins in advance and just wait till the week before to make basic changes."
- "I tried to have Advent Worship programs finished but not printed by September 15th. I didn't print until later in case names needed to be changed, but I had all the paper and supplies purchased and ready. I used the same theme for all Corps activities as well to simplify decorations, etc."
- "Yes on Christmas cards in October. I take advantage of long car rides, like to officers councils. This year our cards have glitter; that was not my best plan to be doing them on my lap, but I showed up very sparkly. Make sure you do family and friends but also staff, advisory board, corps members and home league cards. I also order or shop for gifts for all the aforementioned groups in October. The box from Oriental Trading was waiting when I arrived home from OC. I usually make baked goods to go with them, so that has to be done amidst the busyness (but you can include older kiddos with this), but it makes it so much easier if you have a plan and have all the components of the gift. Then you don't have to think, just do. I find that I'm so brain-dead I have to function on auto-pilot to some degree."

FAMILY

Captain Dianne shares:

When my kids were little we were in Puyallup, WA. I stayed home with them in the evenings. Took the littlest to the corps with me. The older one had preschool. I did as much as I could in the office, then went home and kept the kids at home in the evenings. Do work after they go to bed if you need to. Ask for help from your corps people and TAKE IT. Even if things aren't done exactly as you like, you cannot do it all. Take time to do special things with them. You'll always feel you are cheating someone with your time...I'd rather 'cheat' the corps than 'cheat' my kids. When they nap...consider taking a nap yourself!

- Deal with Christmas cards in October. Costco photo cards are a great way to share about your family but not break the bank. Enlist older kids to write envelopes. How precious to get a card with a child's handwriting on it!
- Put up your tree or decorate ANY TIME YOU WANT TO!! If you want to do it before Thanksgiving, just think you are a department store
- Ask your older kids before "Christmas" hits (which is pretty much the first of November!) what is the hardest thing for them at Christmas...and brainstorm with

them how to make Christmas better for the whole family. This involves them, shows them that you are trying to make things better/easier and that you are listening to them. WIN, WIN, WIN! Even if you can't change some things, change ONE thing that they suggest. Acknowledge the change was made due to their suggestion.

- Schedule at least one 'cookie/snack making' time ...buy premade cookies, etc. if you need to. Make it simple, but memorable!

Other fabulous officer-moms mention:

- "I bathed my kids and put them in their PJ's and we hunted Christmas lights while helping to pick up kettles (when we needed to). That was fun and created memories. I've also set up the video games at the corps and my son loves playing on the big TV, and they aren't at home."
- "My honey and I sneak in a lunch date a couple of times a week. After dropping off bell ringers and before picking up the kids from school is a great time for these intentional intimate times."
- "We do advent in a jar with our kiddos to keep us connected during the busyness. It's a mason jar with slips of things we can do in about 15-30 minutes each night. The kids help pick items for the slips and we draw the night before so if anything needs to be prepared I can grab it during the day. Some things we do – bake cookies, hot chocolate night, go see Christmas lights, Starbucks treat, dance party, etc."

A special Thank-you to Captain Dianne Madsen and dozens of other fabulous "officer-moms" for these terrific suggestions to help us keep our priorities in order and our sanity intact throughout the Army Christmas season.

BLOG ARTICLE TEN

<https://offblacknylons.wordpress.com/2016/11/26/grown-up-officer-kids-dish-on-christmas/>

Grown up Officer-Kids dish on Christmas



My name is Janene and I'm what you might call a "seasoned officer". My two lovely daughters are 28 and 24 years old, living on their own in another division. In their growing up years we were Corps Officers, DHQ Officers and ARC Officers, then back to Corps Officers. Recently I asked them about their memories of being an "officers kid" at Christmastime, if they learned anything from their experiences, and if they had any advice for officer-moms with young children in today's world. Here is what my "grown up" Officer Kids told me to share with you:

Jessica, now 28 years old, shares her memories:

Every year, there is Christmas. Which means every year there is a Christmas Warehouse. Basically a kid's wonderland turned nightmare when you learn you can

My name is Janene and I'm what you might call a "seasoned officer". My two lovely daughters are 28 and 24 years old, living on their own in another division. In their growing up years we were Corps Officers, DHQ Officers and ARC Officers, then back to Corps Officers. Recently I asked them about their memories of being an "officers kid" at Christmastime, if they learned anything from their experiences, and if they had any advice for officer-moms with young children in today's world. Here is what my "grown up" Officer Kids told me to share with you:

Jessica, now 28 years old, shares her memories:

Every year, there is Christmas. Which means every year there is a Christmas Warehouse. Basically, a kid's wonderland turned nightmare when you learn you can look but not touch. As the child of the officer running the show, it was my giant playground every year. Now most years I was the happiest sitting in the car reading my latest book, but honestly it didn't matter where my mom had taken me, as long as I had a book, I was thrilled to be left alone between meals to read or play my Game Boy to my heart's content. One year when I was bored, I took a left-over box of decorations and turned an empty section of the back side of the warehouse into my own little wonderland. I used tinsel to distinguish territories and bulbs as houses, I was my own benevolent dictator of my own little world. Until my mom found my "mess" and we had to go do something else.

As I got older I was allowed to help with the toy shop and actual distribution. It was a fun game like Mary Poppins to sort based on type, gender, age, and so on. But what was even better was when I was old enough by a fraction to be given responsibility within the shop. Working up from restocking tables to being big enough to lug around a giant trash bag and help parents choose the perfect gift taught me leadership, empathy and the joy of giving. It also taught me that my mom was the benevolent dictator of her much larger wonderland and she was awesome! She told someone to do something and they did it! Watching my little sister follow in her foot steps and become “Mini Mrs. Major” was hilarious and impressive. Once she was old enough, meaning tall enough people wouldn’t question her being in charge that much, she could run front of house with the actual distribution while my mom coordinated back of house, volunteers and donations. The two of them could run a warehouse that gave away toys, decorations, wrapping paper, food, and who knows what else to thousands of families!

I’m still not sure what the perfect Christmas looks like, but every year I hear about parents calling the corps to find out if they can come serve a meal on Christmas day so their kids can learn that some people have it worse off and then they get angry when we insist we have too many volunteers for that, but we were desperate for someone to ring a bell at a kettle. I feel that my (indentured) service at the Christmas warehouse allowed me to be thankful for what I have and what I received but it also taught me the joy of giving, not only the presents people donated but the giving of my time, my joy, and my teenage testimony.

Angel Trees

One of the oddest experiences I think I’ve ever had as an officer kid came every year when about November my mom would sit my sister and I down with a Toy’s R Us catalog and ask us to identify the most popular toys, the ones that everyone at school was wanting and then add several going down the scale of desirability. She would use this insight to better do her angel tree tags to make sure kids were actually getting what they wanted. I think it was that act more than any of the others we did during the Christmas season as a very young child that made me truly think that what I personally did was actually helping a child get what they wanted for Christmas.

My sister and I have a Christmas tradition that really starts the season. It isn’t buying a Christmas tree or Black Friday. It’s something that we always try to do together and it’s something we’ve been doing since we were old enough to be left by ourselves. My sister and I would go to the mall, purchase a Jamba juice and a soft pretzel and sit at the Angel Tree. We spent the most time at the Angel Tree at the Lloyd Center Mall in Portland, OR. My parents could get us home at a much closer time to our bedtime if they could leave us at the tree to cover a shift while they took two cars and ran around picking up and dropping off Angel Tree gifts from local businesses. We got our treat/dinner, did our homework, and had no clue that this was in any way out of the normal. We still do this tradition together, in our mid to late twenties. Our shift this year is on December 3rd.

Kettles

Going to be honest, kettles still make me have a small anxiety attack. But we can totally blame that on my adult life and my having been a kettle coordinator for several years. The best thing that got me through all the long hours though were my memories of doing kettles as a kid. I have specific memories of being at a Corps in Colorado, which would mean I was 4 or 5? Do your kids measure their ages by where they lived too? How do “normal” people remember how old they were when things happened? I took so much pride when I would walk in to customer service with my dad, pick up a kettle, go back to the corps, dump out and the change and be allowed to count pennies. I was trusted with this important task! Don’t underestimate your kid’s awareness of how important the work you are doing is. I knew full well that the money we made from the kettles helped people. And I was allowed to count the change! Now of course I wasn’t a happy kid when it was past my bedtime and I eventually curled up in my dad’s coat, and I realize now that the pennies I counted were actually more accurately counted by a coin machine at the bank. But I felt important and needed by my dad, my church and my community! Plus, I got to practice counting. Very important at 4 or 5 years old.

Honestly, as an officer’s kid I spent more time in the car in my memories than anywhere else; picking up gifts, swapping out kettles, going to the bank. It was hardest when it was past my bed time or I needed to do an assignment on the computer (we had dial up back then but I think the point is still applicable). Anything you can do to make this time more bearable is going to make the season better for your child. And as long as my parents weren’t constantly apologizing or pointing out how horrible it was, I didn’t even notice my Christmas was not how a lot of other people’s Christmas’ were.

Help your kids be in contact with other officer kids! It was always the best time of the season when we would have the Officer Kid’s Christmas Party and we got to compare notes on how our Christmas Season was going. One year while my parents were in the ARC they heard a bunch of us kids trying to one up each other with whose Center had the most beds or the most stores! The parents didn’t even realize we cared or listened when they talked about work stuff. But having the chance to talk about it with other officer kids normalized our entire situation. The world may have thought we were weird and not doing Christmas “right” or whatever, but all our friends that we kept from move to move knew exactly what we were talking about and didn’t even know there was another way to do Christmas.

This was easier when my parents were on DHQ staff with other officers who had kids our age as well as our Corps Officers having kids our age. It made it easier the rest of the year as well. but it truly shined at Christmas. One year in San Diego a radio/tv show host was doing an event for the Army and they wanted some cute kid singers. Guess who the cute kid singers they found were? Myself and the other officer’s kids of course! So me, my sister, Claire, Deryn and Jackie were carted out, dressed in the typical “angel” costumes we used for every Christmas play and we sang. We were pretty good in my memory. And theirs. It is something we talk about literally almost every single time we get together these days. If you look closely at the picture you can see my sister, Jenn, giving her “I

really don't want to be here can we go home now" face. She still talks about the story with fondness.

Younger sister, Jennifer – now 24 years old tells her story and memories:

Jennifer's Favorite memory #1: Any time I got to help the ARC men reconnect with their kids through helping them send a present at Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter and a back pack at Back to School time - and the kids showing up for their dad's graduation.

Favorite memory #2: Christmas Eve, setting up the ARC men's party where they thought they had to carol but instead got surprised with a present, and then got to go to the movie theater, use a gift card to buy their own ticket for what they wanted to see and buy concessions. Giving them a normalized experience for the holiday. (In a group of course)

Favorite memory #3: As a kid myself, taking families through the Christmas workshop and seeing their joy as they found perfect gifts for each child.

Favorite Memory #4: feigning illness during Christmas so I could help sort toys at the warehouse, or even better, sit at the Angel Tree with my Jamba Juice and Auntie Annie's sinful cinnamon pretzel.

Jennifer's Life lesson #1: As a teenager, even if you aren't sure how to lead a team, you'll learn quickly when your mom puts you in charge of a group of volunteers eager to help with setting up a Christmas warehouse.

Life lesson #2: Discerning how to pick your battles. By volunteering with my parents, I saw the good, bad and ugly in people, saw how compassion can go a long way but learned when you do have to stand your ground.

Life lesson #3: Everyone struggles, we just may not know how much until you see them asking for help. It takes humility to ask for help.

Life Lesson #4: Party planning isn't hard when the location is at a fun place (Shout out to officer parties at Sea World, Six Flags, Wild Animal Park, Medieval Times and Knotts Berry Farm).

Life Lesson #5: Anyone can get over their fear of small spaces when faced with the riddle of how to fit the most Angel Tree gifts in the minivan along with the children and still be able to get to the warehouse. In essence, early day Tetris that I used every year driving down for college.

Dear officer-moms: You are super-heroes doing the best you can every day to spread the Gospel and meet human needs. Your kids love you. Enjoy your Christmas – as I can testify, they grow up too fast! But wow! How proud I am!!
Do your kids help you with Christmas tasks? Got a fun memory to share?



BLOG ARTICLE ELEVEN

<https://offblacknylons.wordpress.com/2017/01/10/my-officership-mid-life-crisis/>

My officership mid-life crisis



These last couple of years I have questioned everything about my officership that once seemed so sure. T.S. Eliot once said, "We had the experience but missed the meaning." I have realized that I don't want to just "experience" officership. Is there anything I have learned about the meaning?

Firstly, I have learned that I am more than my appointment. Someone once said, "It is more important whose I am and who I am, than what I am and where I am." I conclude that God just wants me to be His. I need to give up who I think I should be so that I can continue to become who He wants me to be. My attitude used to be "look at what I'm going to do FOR you God." When all along God wanted to do the work THROUGH me.

No longer will I put a label on myself. I am in constant change and change is a good thing. Old labels do not have to control my future. I cannot compartmentalize who I am from what I am doing. Who I am is my ministry. My identity should always be as a servant of God – nothing else. Servant leadership does not derive its effectiveness from the appointment you are in or title that you list under your signature on a letter. Servant leadership is like a shell, which can be applied to numerous

These last couple of years I have questioned everything about my officership that once seemed so sure. T.S. Eliot once said, "We had the experience but missed the meaning." I have realized that I don't want to just "experience" officership. Is there anything I have learned about the meaning?

Firstly, I have learned that I am more than my appointment. Someone once said, "It is more important whose I am and who I am, than what I am and where I am." I conclude that God just wants me to be His. I need to give up who I think I should be so that I can continue to become who He wants me to be. My attitude used to be "look at what I'm going to do FOR you God." When all along God wanted to do the work THROUGH me. No longer will I put a label on myself. I am in constant change and change is a good thing. Old labels do not have to control my future. I cannot compartmentalize who I am from what I am doing. Who I am is my ministry. My identity should always be as a servant of God – nothing else. Servant leadership does not derive its effectiveness from the appointment you are in or title that you list under your signature on a letter. Servant leadership is like a shell, which can be applied to numerous circumstances and every appointment (no matter how unspecific your appointment is). It is my identity as a

servant of God that will flow into my environment and touch each person I meet. The identity has to be there first.

My relationships are “God appointed” for mutual benefit and I have more influence than I realize. As an officer, I need to remember that one of my goals is to teach and encourage others to attempt great things that I may never accomplish myself. Through our dealings with others we strengthen them to accomplish more. Our lives have the greatest impact when we back off from personal accomplishment and pour ourselves into others. Taking time from relationships appeals to us because it seems to pay off in the short term in our personal productivity – but it really doesn’t. Our work ethic is so deeply imprinted upon us that we see time spent on anything other than work or ministry as wasteful and unproductive. We need to value people and relationships the way God does. But doing things with and through others is usually not as exciting or rewarding as doing it yourself. For that reason, and many others, my personal worth must come from God – not a Command – or man. As His servant, I need to understand how valuable and influential I am. God does want us to do good works – but our personal relationship with Him takes priority over any accomplishment. Something done without Him is not part of my divine appointment.

The “seasons” of my life are great opportunities for new experiences within my officership. What is unique about your present circumstances that you can build from? What we do in fulfilling our task will be clearly affected and flavored by who we are and our present life circumstances. How can I maximize my relationships during each season of my life? Am I a new mom who could reach out to other new moms? Am I a Major who could encourage a new Captain? I am not called to a life of glory and honor and leisure. I am called to a life of service, a life of ministry. Every day I must continue to yield my dreams and agendas to God.

As my life changes, I must continue to re-work my plan. It’s so easy to get stuck. I need to have a routine, but I don’t want to be chained to routine. As a mom, it’s so hard to give my kids to God. What are my hobbies or “pet projects”? Are they God appointed? How can I live my life NOW? I don’t want to wait until the kids are out of the house, or I retire to “start living”.

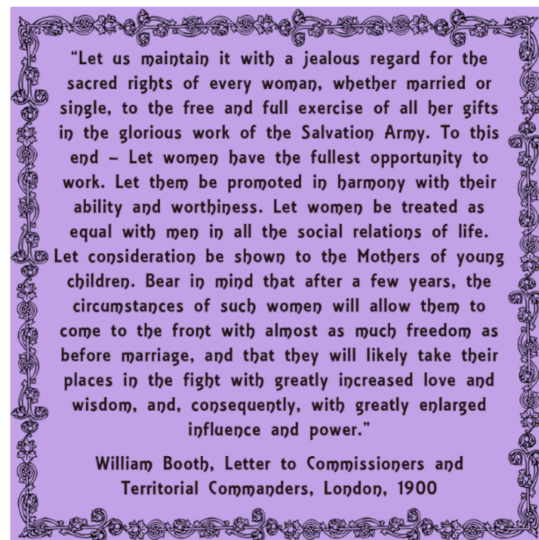
The first half of my officership focused on the development of skills and abilities so I could “be all that you can be”. So far this “mid-officership crisis” has been a pivotal experience for me to more clearly define who I am and whose I am. Having faith that I am His gives me the meaning.

How have you successfully responded to a mid-officership crisis? Do you have any suggestions? Leave them in the comments.

MEME

<https://offblacknylons.wordpress.com/2017/02/24/william-booth-affirms-officer-moms/>

William Booth affirms Officer Moms



MEME

<https://offblacknylons.wordpress.com/2017/03/12/an-officer-mom-shares-from-her-heart-as-she-retires/>

An Officer-Mom shares from her heart as she retires...

In a New Frontier Chronicle article written on the occasion of her retirement - Commissioner Carolyn Knaggs shared a private struggle and a very important decision.

six children—including two nephews and a niece who have become like their own—and seven grandchildren.

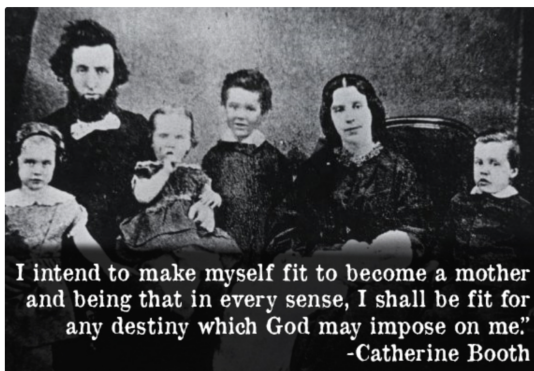
One son tragically died at age 3, a catalyst, Carolyn Knaggs said, to making home a priority. "I would bring home Sunbeam badges or Corps Cadet lessons to grade, but when our son died, I decided that home was going to be home and that I would try to reduce stress for the children and for myself as much as possible," she said. "That made me not waste time at the office and be more directive in accomplishing what needed to happen. Then, I let it go."

Years later, their idea of home took on new meaning when they moved out West.

BLOG ARTICLE FOURTEEN

<https://offblacknylons.wordpress.com/2017/04/10/7-admirable-officer-mom-qualities/>

7 Admirable Officer-Mom Qualities



"I intend to make myself fit to become a mother and being that in every sense, I shall be fit for any destiny which God may impose on me." – Catherine Booth

I know lots of officer-moms who are "in every sense... fit for any destiny". Here's a list of some of the "mom qualities" that I most admire and I think we all aspire to:

1. You are "all in" and completely understand that being a mom is a forever thing, "for better or worse".
2. You know how and when to make sacrifices for others sake, yet you have firm boundaries.
3. You are willing to do the "gross work" that comes with raising beginner humans.
4. You are patient in the chaos, have empathy for others and listen before you react.

"I intend to make myself fit to become a mother and being that in every sense, I shall be fit for any destiny which God may impose on me." - Catherine Booth

I know lots of officer-moms who are "in every sense... fit for any destiny". Here's a list of some of the "mom qualities" that I most admire and I think we all aspire to:

1. You are "all in" and completely understand that being a mom is a forever thing, "for better or worse".
2. You know how and when to make sacrifices for others sake, yet you have firm boundaries.
3. You are willing to do the "gross work" that comes with raising beginner humans.
4. You are patient in the chaos, have empathy for others and listen before you react.
5. You know how to "take charge", distribute resources fairly and encourage the obstinate.
6. You can find the joy in difficult things all while doing what you can to make it better.
7. You can accept that there are things beyond your control.

Catherine Booth appreciated the correlation between the qualities of good moms, and good officers: “fit for any destiny”. What would you add to this list?

One thought on “7 Admirable Officer-Mom Qualities”



Tammy Ray

April 10, 2017 at 7:12 pm

I love this! I love the “willing to do the ‘gross work’ with raising beginner humans. A friend messaged me with a diaper blow out story while picking up her other kids from school....she said that a young girl passed by the car and saw her gagging, and her screaming naked baby....and all I could do was laugh because it brought back so many memories that are funny now, but were awful at the time.

[↩ Reply](#)

BLOG ARTICLE FIFTEEN

<https://offblacknylons.wordpress.com/2017/08/02/an-officer-mom-from-the-past-politics-and-her-challenge-to-us-all/>

An officer-mom from the past, politics, and her challenge to us all...



Our "Officer-mom" sisters from the past created beautiful legacies of service and ministry. They shared their special creative gifts in song, writing, poetry and so many other ways. Do you have something inside of you to share?

This incredible poem was published in 1945 and "still speaks" to us today. Be blessed by "Mrs. Commissioner" – Irena Arnold's earnestness, and her challenge to us, still so fitting for today.

Christ for You and Me

We think of politicians and of all great men of state

Our "Officer-mom" sisters from the past created beautiful legacies of service and ministry. They shared their special creative gifts in song, writing, poetry and so many other ways. Do you have something inside of you to share?

This incredible poem was published in 1945 and "still speaks" to us today. Be blessed by "Mrs. Commissioner" - Irena Arnold's earnestness, and her challenge to us, still so fitting for today.

Christ for You and Me

We think of politicians and of all great men of state,
Of congressmen and all the people who are counted great,
We say "If only all of these were what they ought to be!"
But our first consideration should be Christ for you and me.
We criticise our leaders and we criticise our laws,
And probably we come to find there isn't any cause,
But whether there be cause or not the surest remedy
Is - our first consideration should be Christ for you and me.
If every man and woman from their secret sins would part,
And seek the blood of Jesus that can cleanse the human heart,

Oh, what a transformation in our lovely land would be,
 For our first consideration would be Christ for you and me!
 So here's my heart and here's my hand to join with you today,
 It's Christ for me, I've settled it, I'm walking in His way,
 And He is waiting at YOUR door to see what YOU will do,
 Oh, will YOU answer "Christ for me," my reader friend, will YOU?
 - "More Poems of a Salvationist", by Irena Arnold (Mrs. Commissioner William C. Arnold), 1945. Atlanta, Georgia.

*If you have something you'd like to share, and would like it published on this blog, please contact me or leave a comment below and I'll get back to you

One Reply to "An officer-mom from the past, politics, and her challenge to us all..."



Dawn Luyk

NOVEMBER 25, 2017 AT 11:27 AM

Thanks for posting this – Commissioner Irene Arnold is my Fathers Grandmother!!
 My GREAT grandmother!

↩ **Reply**

Leave a Reply

BLOG ARTICLE SIXTEEN

<https://offblacknylons.wordpress.com/2017/10/05/quality-patience-in-the-process-results/>

Quality, Patience in the Process & Results



I'm always in a hurry when I bake chocolate chip cookies. I suppose that is because I enjoy eating them and want to get to that point in the process as soon as possible. When I was younger I tended to use a lot of store bought mixes. Most were palatable, but nothing special. Determined to make something better I decided to look into how the professionals went about baking cookies. First, I noticed they chose quality ingredients. I had just been grabbing whatever I had in the cupboard and when I shopped, it was generally more about price than anything else. I quickly came to understand that the cookie could not taste better than the ingredients that went into it. I purchased real butter, quality flour, fresh brown sugar, real vanilla and expensive chocolate. My cookies taste improved immensely, but the mixture was

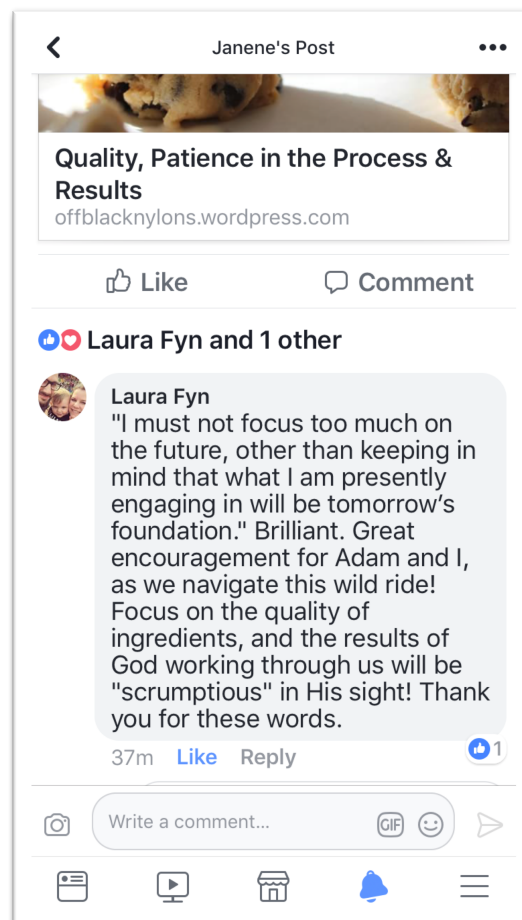
I'm always in a hurry when I bake chocolate chip cookies. I suppose that is because I enjoy eating them and want to get to that point in the process as soon as possible. When I was younger I tended to use a lot of store bought mixes. Most were palatable, but nothing special. Determined to make something better I decided to look into how the professionals went about baking cookies. First, I noticed they chose quality ingredients. I had just been grabbing whatever I had in the cupboard and when I shopped, it was generally more about price than anything else. I quickly came to understand that the cookie could not taste better than the ingredients that went into it. I purchased real butter, quality flour, fresh brown sugar, real vanilla and expensive chocolate. My cookies taste improved immensely, but the mixture was still a bit lumpy and tended to burn easily. Scrubbing burnt cookie sheets diminished the pleasure of baking. Quality ingredients were sometimes ruined – at great expense.

As an anniversary gift my husband bought me a Kitchenaid mixer. I think he figured it was a gift for him as well since he likes cookies too. One day I found a commercial kitchen store and discovered a world of quality baking sheets, parchments, and helpful utensils. It took some time, a lot of cookies that hit the garbage can, some investment and patience, but I can make a pretty good chocolate chip cookie most of the time now. I don't even want to rush it because I enjoy the process so much.

I've been thinking about baking quite a bit as I have been considering this "mode of being" known as officership. Every ingredient, every action, every investment in the process of "being an officer" is important. I can't rush, cut corners or cover up mistakes. I

must not focus too much on the future, other than keeping in mind that what I am presently engaging in will be tomorrow's foundation.

Just as in baking the perfect chocolate chip cookie, the ingredients, process, and results of the creation of "officership" are inseparable. I don't want to taste store bought, be lumpy, or burnt to a crisp. Knowing I want the end result of my "officership" to be a life that glorifies God – that helps me be patient and consider every moment and action in my efforts to invest it for His purposes. Is there an ingredient in your life that needs an upgrade? Specialty tools you could consider? New skills you want to practice? Let's go about practicing and refining our recipe for God's pleasure.



BLOG ARTICLE SEVENTEEN

<https://offblacknylons.wordpress.com/2017/10/20/he-created-me-to-be-me/>

He Created Me to be Me



I recently saw an article that polled people over the age of 65 and asked them, “What was their biggest regret in life”. Most all those polled said their biggest regret was that “they wish they hadn’t spent so much of their time worrying.”

I regret all my worrying, but I also regret

I recently saw an article that polled people over the age of 65 and asked them, “What was their biggest regret in life”. Most all those polled said their biggest regret was that “they wish they hadn’t spent so much of their time worrying.”

I regret all my worrying, but I also regret all my comparing...

As a young Lieutenant, I wanted to be just like a certain “cool Captain” I knew. She was everything I was not: Sweet, soft-spoken and kind. When I got to be a Captain there was this Major I really admired. She was super smart, direct but not mean, and always had good ideas. No matter how hard I tried to be like her, I could never quite pull it off. I regret to say I’ve spent a lot of energy on comparing myself to others. I was “long service” age before God began to get through to me that I could stop the “comparison game” and instead, be secure in who I am **in Christ** and **his love** for me. This has been very freeing for me. Now I am free to be my best self – the one He created me to be – not trying to look or act like someone else.

From Christ’s love to me – I’m beginning to learn how to love myself better, to be a better “me”, and that is something I will never regret.