

# Bob Hawke Salvo Launch 1992

(Transcribed from live audio recording )

## Honourable R.J.Hawke Prime Minister of Australia 1983-1991

Thank you, Commissioner, (Robert Bath) I want very sincerely to thank you for the honour of inviting me to launch John Cleary's book, Salvo, the Salvation Army in the 1990s, and I want to say that both Hazel and I are very privileged to be with you on this important occasion, and my reason for saying that is very simple. I have an unbounded admiration for the Salvation Army, for its good works, and for its good sense. It's very right for the media release which accompanies today's proceedings to say as it does, and I quote from it, 'Consistently rated as the most widely supported charity, Australians speak with almost universal affection for the Salvos.'

But when we get into this book, we very quickly learn that this was not always so. The work of the Salvation Army, John points out, started in the colonies in the early 1880s, and as John says, and I quote him, "opposition to the Army, its street services, populist preaching and music, came not simply from the larrikin mobs out for a stir. The respectable religious classes also had weapons to combat the upstart Army."

And indeed the measure of the opposition which was experienced by the Army is quite graphically captured by John in the book, and I would just like to refer to what he has to say about that period of turbulence. He says this, "the period beginning in 1891 saw the worst series of arrests, Ballarat, Woolloomooloo, Charters Towers, all across Australia where drums beat and cornets blew, larrikins and police converged. From 1881 to 1907, more than 100 Salvationists were fined or jailed for holding street meetings or marches."

Very difficult to understand now, but that was the story of turbulence and difficulty in those times. More than 100 Salvationists were fined or jailed for holding street meetings or marches. "The battle to obtain the freedom of the streets was long, and it was costly."

He goes on, "William Booth understood the price, 'but what if they kill you? Well you must die. You have often sung and said that you would, now here's a chance.'"

A really tough commander. (Laughter...) John goes on, "the Salvation Army was at war, and the War Cry identified the casualties. Cadet Thompson of Parramatta, New South Wales, died of injuries received. Elizabeth Templeton, Sydney, died of injuries received at Gundagai." So those were the days far removed now from the universal acceptance to which John refers. John also makes it clear that the lasting character of the Salvation Army was forged in those early days at the end of the last century.

As he puts it at page 15 of his book, and I quote him, "by the early 1890s the character of the Salvation Army in Australia was established. Aggressive and uncompromising evangelism matched by a radical social conscience" And this direction, he refers to, "was one of overwhelmingly practical orientation."

Where the Army saw need, where it saw misery, where it saw catastrophe, where it saw degradation, the Army's impulse, its dictate, was to alleviate and not just to preach. In their history of action in this country, they have, I believe, in the most practical way, lived out the truth of the dictum that my father put to me as a young man, in which he said, 'a belief in the fatherhood of God necessarily involves a belief in the brotherhood of man'.

And it seems to me that in their day-to-day action, that the Salvation Army is constantly living out the truth of that dictum. John Cleary strikingly spells out the paradox of constancy and of change in our history, and in the way that the Army has responded to these facts. And that paradox is strikingly apparent right at the very beginning of the book.

I'd just like to quote to you the opening paragraph, which captures, as I say, that paradox of constancy and of change. He opens in this way. "The century is moving into its last decade, and a major recession is clawing its way through the social fabric. Rising unemployment is accompanied by calls for restrictive immigration policies. Politicians dispute whether economic salvation lies with tariff protection or laissez-faire deregulation. Employers want less union power, and individual contracts for workers. Even the place of the Queen and the shape of the Commonwealth are up for grabs. The country is, of course, Australia, but the time? Exactly 100 years ago."

And John then goes on to point out the conditions of the time at which the Army first was established here in Australia. He refers to the fact that James Barker had been appointed by the Salvation Army founder William Booth, and his title was somewhat grandiose. He was the commander of the Salvation Army 'in all the colonies of the Southern Seas.'

Some mandate. (Laughter...) And James Barker, had arrived with his wife Alice in Melbourne in September of 1882. And as the colonies moved from that period of boom into recession that is captured in that opening paragraph of John's book, the Barkers established the practical, the relevant character of their creed by ministering to the needs of the poor.

And in December of 1883 James Barker opened an accommodation and support service for released convicts, the Prison Gate Home in Carlton, which was the first of its type in the world. And as John points out about Barker as he prepared to leave Australia in 1890, Barker offered these words of advice to his comrade Salvationists. Quote, 'by all means aim to reach heaven, but emulate Jesus and take a thief with you.' (Laughter...)

So you've always had the touch for the telling phrase. John Cleary captures the constancy of this commitment through the next 100 years in a graphic and certainly my friends in a very readable way. But he also captures as well the adaptability of the Army as it has responded to the changing demands of the human condition crying out for help.

The drug of alcohol remains a major source of the disaster and dereliction with which the Army deals so compassionately. But as other drugs have become a factor in in our society in creating similar problems, so has the Army responded to those needs. The book details the thoroughness of the Salvo's approach to helping the victims of addiction.

The immediate assistance provided here in Sydney by the Bridge program is followed up by secondary stage treatment. And I'd just again like to, for those of you would not be familiar with the extent and the thoroughness of the approach of the Army, just to refer to the

secondary stage. These first stages are allied to various network centres where clients go for second stage treatment.

These are farm style communities in rural areas. The biggest is Miracle Haven in Morrissette, which has a piggery and a dairy and accommodation for 80 residents. There's also Selah Farm for women at Barclay Vale near Wyong and the Endeavour community for brain damaged men at Chitaway Point.

Other activity therapy centres known as Mancare are located in Newcastle, Canberra and the Sydney suburb of St. Peter's. The book also refers to the global vision of the Salvation Army and Australia's involvement in that global vision. There's a very moving chapter, chapter 5, which is entitled a World of Need.

And it's one which should bring great pride not merely to the Salvation Army, but to all Australians who should, I think, share the sense of pride that they are entitled to feel for what they've done. They talk about the work of the Australian Captain Dr. Ian Campbell, who spent seven years working with AIDS sufferers and their families in Zambia, putting it into a home centred approach, which is calculated to deal with this massive and growing problem in that region, and which has been so successful in its concept and its application that it is now being copied throughout Africa and other parts of the world.

Back here in Australia in the chapter entitled Homeless, John describes the heroic and the valuable work of the Army in helping the thousands of Australians who unfortunately are homeless each night of the week in this country. He refers to the work of David Elridge, who has, for 10 years, been director of Crossroads, the Melbourne-based youth crisis accommodation and employment project. He doesn't only describe the work, he refers to David's philosophy, which is simple and he put in these terms, 'you can talk all you like about advocacy, but if you're not part of the kid's life, you are not an advocate, you might be just an intrusion.'

And John concludes that chapter with a reminder of William Booth's dying threat to his son and designated successor Bramwell. And this was the dying threat: 'Do more for the homeless. Mind, if you don't, I shall come back and haunt you.' and perhaps we should all be haunted.

The chapter Working Women, I think, is particularly pertinent, for it emphasises the path-breaking role of the Salvation Army in terms of equal opportunity, and this philosophy, as John points out, was inherent in its very foundation. I think it would be of interest just to refer to two or three passages from, as I say, a chapter which I found particularly interesting. John points out that William and Catherine Booth were partners in the foundation of the Salvation Army.

Salvationists speak of their work jointly. If William was responsible for its vigour and style, Catherine was responsible for its radical spirit. He refers to when the East London Christian Mission, where it was the very beginning of Salvationism, drew up its constitution in 1875.

In that founding constitution, a declaration was made that no position in it would be closed to women. May I just read, finally in this respect, a quite remarkable passage, I believe, from

the Australian War Cry, and this, my friends, was written in 1895. Remember, nearly a hundred years ago in War Cry, and just how prescient it is.

It said then, 'There are millions who imagine that women were created for hardly any higher purpose than to cook the food, look after the household affairs, and gratify the wants and wishes of the other sex. She was created equal in dignity to man and intended to be his intellectual and moral associate. Society cannot make rapid advances in knowledge and religion until the true dignity of woman is fully recognised.'

That's 1895 in War Cry. So in that tradition, that tradition which goes back to the very foundation of the Salvation Army, it is particularly pertinent to have the Australian Eva Burrows having assumed in 1986 the highest office in the Army, General International Head of the Salvation Army. And may I say that I am proud to count her as a friend, and I can say quite straightforwardly, and not simply because I'm here, that in all my time as Prime Minister, I met no more impressive person than Eva Burrows.

I may say in this book, John, I found particularly moving the story of Gerban Stelstra. Stelstra came to the Army in the blackest of circumstances during the Nazi occupation of Holland. And he had been associated with the Calvinist Reformed Church, and he was persuaded of the work of the Army, and he joined it.

In 1954, he was appointed to South Africa. And there is this moving story of how in 1954, having come from that background of the Holocaust and the persecution of the Nazi tyranny in Europe, in 1954 seeing another tyranny, another philosophy which was equally repugnant, he stood up and denounced the doctrine and the practices of apartheid. So my friends, it's all here in this book, in this very considerable achievement of yours, John Cleary, and to whom I pay tribute.

It is an excellent book. We have here the history, we have the saints, we have the good works, we have the good sense. We have also the strands, the historical strands of tension between the emphasis on those good works, and what Professor Burke of the Catherine Booth Bible College in Canada has quoted by John Cleary as referring to, quote, the evangelical Wesleyan vision, which motivates Christians to strive for the establishment of God's kingdom.

And throughout the book, there is the reference to this tension at times between the emphasis upon the good works and the evangelical crusade. Ladies and gentlemen, this is indeed a book for our times. We are all, or we certainly all should be conscious of the dimensions of hardship, of suffering, and of tragedy in our society today.

And may I say that no group in Australia is more fitted by its creed, by its history, and by its present performance to reach out with competence and compassion to those in need in this country than is the Salvation Army. In peace and in war, when help has been required, the Salvos have been there and are still there. And may I say I hope very sincerely that this book will inspire a younger generation to become involved in and to support this magnificent organisation.

I congratulate you, John Cleary. I congratulate Focus Books. I congratulate you, Stephen Rich.

I congratulate and thank the supporters and the sponsors. But above all, my friends, in officially now launching this book, I congratulate and I thank the Salvation Army, the Salvos, for being what it is and what they are, and that is simply the best.