

## Preface

In 1991 and 1998 I visited Zimbabwe in the course of research towards an international history of The Salvation Army. I realized that the history of a global enterprise like The Salvation Army must include Salvationists in the two-thirds world where a majority of the Army's soldiers (members) live.<sup>1</sup> The day before my wife Grace and I left Zimbabwe to return home Major Godfrey Mufanechiya asked if we were aware of a 1981 Salvation Army soldiers' protest march in Harare, Zimbabwe's recently renamed capital. I had not seen reports of the march in Salvation Army journals or in the Western press. Mufanechiya agreed that the Army had not published accounts of the march, but he suggested that it ought to have been recorded in Army histories.

At the office of the Zimbabwean daily, the *Herald*, Grace and I found press coverage of the soldiers' protest march. A front page headline shouted the soldiers' case against Salvation Army leaders in London, the Army's international headquarters. The reporter revealed that there was a rift between Zimbabwean Salvationists and Army leaders. At its heart it was a dispute over who would rule the Army in Zimbabwe. Would it be the leader in London, or in the United States, or newly liberated African Salvationists who had toppled minority white political rule in a decade-long war that had ended in 1979?

Subsequent archival research led to another discovery. The Salvation Army's leaders in the United States had encouraged a rift between the Army and the World Council of Churches (WCC). In the 1970s the WCC, through a Program to Combat Racism, had campaigned to end apartheid and to support African wars of liberation from colonial rule, including the white minority-rule of Rhodesia, now black-ruled Zimbabwe. Many Americans

1. Since the early 1980s, the term, "two-thirds world," has been used—mostly by evangelical Christians—to indicate the less-developed countries of the world, as in "third world" but signifying proportionality rather than precedence. The term is used in this sense in this book.

opposed all Marxist-financed wars of liberation in the wake of America's defeat in the Vietnam War in 1973. Now, after the defeat of Prime Minister Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front in Rhodesia in 1979 by the African Patriotic Front forces of Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo, the American leaders asked their International Headquarters in London to dissolve the Army's thirty-three-year membership of the WCC which had backed "communist" financed struggles.

In the Zimbabwe National Archives and at Salvation Army archives in London I found an ancient tale, full of colonial mythology, which lay behind the Soldiers' 1981 protest march. There had been a "martyrdom" of a British Salvationist missionary during an 1896–97 African rising (the Shona term is Chimurenga), just six years after Cecil John Rhodes' British South Africa Company (BSAC) imposed colonial rule on the Shona and Ndebele tribes. The Africans fought to reclaim land Rhodes had taken from them and renamed Rhodesia.

The 1896 killing of Captain Edward T. Cass near a farm the BSAC had given to the Salvation Army in 1893 was well-known to African Salvationists in 1978 when two Salvationist women missionary teachers were killed at the peak of the independence war in Matabeleland, during the second rising or Chimurenga. Newspaper and Police reports blamed Patriotic Front "terrorists" for the killings but many Africans believed that the culprits were African soldiers recruited into the Selous Scouts, an élite unit of the Rhodesian army.

The 1981 African Salvationist march, the year after the creation of a new African-led state of Zimbabwe, brought long-buried issues to the surface. Claims that in 1896 Shona tribesmen had martyred Captain Cass during the first Chimurenga, and claims that Africans had killed Lieutenant Sharon Swindells and Ms. Diane Thompson during the second Chimurenga both needed investigation. Interviews and research at the Zimbabwe National Archives in Harare and at Salvation Army Archives in London and Alexandria, Virginia, convinced me that the Army's account of these events needed to be probed to connect political and religious history in Rhodesia-Zimbabwe in 1891 and 1981. I also concluded that a colonial mythology had been imprinted on the Salvation Army in its colonial empire, nurtured by Britain's imperial state.

Rhodesian history began at Fort Salisbury (now Harare) in 1890 with the blessing of Britain's government and its agent, Cecil Rhodes' British South Africa Company.<sup>2</sup> With its arrival in Salisbury in 1891 the Salvation

2. For early Zimbabwe history, see: D. N. Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe, 900–1850: An Outline of Shona History* (Masvingo: Mambo, 1980); *A Zimbabwean Past: Shona Dynastic Histories and Oral Traditions* (Gweru: Mambo, 1994); *War and Politics in*

Army became part of that heritage for the next ninety years through its marriage to white colonial rule. As a Christian Imperium the Army found a role in African subjugation in the name of Western Christian Civilization. When Africans rebelled against colonial rule in 1896 the Salvation Army stood with white settlers. Between 1890 and 1980 only a few Christian missions and settlers supported African rights. In the 1970s Rhodesia's state-run media, the Western press, and Salvation Army journals blamed African "guerrillas" or "terrorists" for the deaths of missionaries of several denominations. They also blamed the World Council of Churches, of which the Salvation Army was a founding member in 1948, for its humanitarian grants to African liberation movements. While there were churches that supported African independence forces, including Robert Mugabe's and Joshua Nkomo's Patriotic Front in Rhodesia, the Salvation Army did not.

The incident that made me look again at the 1896 and 1978 events was the Salvation Army soldiers' protest march on Wednesday August 26, 1981. The Army's international leader in London, Canadian Arnold Brown, had decided to suspend the Army's World Council of Churches' affiliation because of humanitarian aid given to Patriotic Front refugees in Zambia and Mozambique until the war ended with the signing of the Lancaster House Agreement in 1979. That agreement brought African rule to the new nation of Zimbabwe in 1980. General Brown's decision came in a Cold War context that included the American withdrawal from Vietnam in 1973. Now, as American Salvation Army leaders saw it, a pivotal African country was falling under anti-Christian Marxist control.

To defend themselves from a public airing of dirty laundry officials of organizations hide stories of conflict, hoping not to stir publicity that might lead to negative public reactions. If a philanthropic agency depends on public funds for survival the situation is critical.<sup>3</sup> This problem faced Salvation Army leaders in 1896–97 and again in 1978–81. When the dispute became public the Army's Commander in the US appeared on "60 Minutes" on CBS

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*Zimbabwe, 1840–1900* (Gweru: Mambo, 1986); Michael Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples: An Ethnography of the Contemporary Shona, with special reference to their religion*, 3rd ed. (Gweru: Mambo, 1987); Frank McLynn, *Hearts of Darkness: The European Exploration of Africa* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1992); and Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870–1939* (Harare: Baobab, 1992).

3. Henry Gariepy, *Mobilized for God: The History of The Salvation Army, Vol. 8, 1977–1894* (Atlanta GA: The Salvation Army, 2000) 323–34, claimed that the Army in the U.S. had for three years, 1992–94, "received \$726 million in private contributions, more than any other non-profit agency," including \$199 million from federal, state and local governments and over \$1.3 billion in total support.

to defend the Americans' push for the Salvation Army's withdrawal from the World Council of Churches.

The Salvation Army-World Council of Churches dispute remained in the public eye until 1983, but there was little investigation of this international Christian conflict. Since historians analyze what lies behind "facts" and "myths" I will try to record faithfully this story and analyze the passions that lay behind it. At its best, history destroys myth. The Greek word *historia* means to learn through research, to investigate. Investigation is uncomfortable for the investigated. Many fear that evidence of friction will damage the glue of loyalty that binds an organization together or will harm its external reputation and income, so they offer the world an image of single-minded teamwork. I will deal with distortions of fact while trying to avoid damage to those who were well meaning. I will not pluck people out of the era in which they made their decisions, nor will I judge them by standards of a later time. Historians do not assert what persons *should* have done. The word *should* is not in our vocabulary. My aim is to understand why people did what they did when and how they did it.

Among public agencies the Salvation Army has been known for managerial integrity and spiritual sensitivity, a standing that permits it to seek public and private funds for its social and religious work. I will not shake confidence in people for whom I have high regard, but I will point to rifts in the ranks that led to the Army's 1978-81 break with the World Council of Churches. This decision revealed fault lines in its leaders and a parochial mentality held by American leaders, many of whom had spent their careers entirely in America. Tensions between leaders in London and New York, and with Zimbabwe Salvationists, led Africans to side with the World Council and to oppose Anglo-American leaders. In the overall leadership there were divergent views that isolated some Anglo-Americans from colleagues in Asia, South America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand, many of whom had served as missionaries in Africa.

Why has the Salvation Army not told this African story of international conflict? Like many organizations the Army is not enthusiastic about historians' attempts to reveal "warts and all." Official histories aim to protect the Army's reputation. Western authors have written nearly all of its histories, leaving Asian, African, and Latin American voices largely unheard. My aim is to let Africans speak of events as they saw them to the extent that a Western author can achieve that end. For this reason I have conducted oral interviews as well as depended on written archived records.

I pieced this puzzle together out of information I gathered on trips to Zimbabwe and correspondence with Africans, missionaries and leaders. I have also gone to Salvation Army centers in Chile (1993), India (1994),

Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, Switzerland and the US, but Zimbabwe epitomizes Army history in the two-thirds world and its conflicted colonial ties to the West. In the 1950s Europe's colonies sought liberation from imperial rule and from oversight by Western organizations including churches. The word "Liberation" describes colonial emancipation from Western hegemony. Africans and Asians did not reject every Western contribution to their civilizations. Medicine, education and religion have had salutary effects. They did reject Western paternalism and imperial rule.

These are my reasons for writing this book. History studies the past, of both fools and heroes. It must be its own reward. It is not intended to guide decision-making, although some may learn from it. Historians explain human conditions as they find them in documents and people from whom they are able to pry loose ideas. And of course the "*why*" of the past follows from the how, what, when and where. Factual accuracy, as best it can be found, leads the historian to uncover *why* individuals and groups acted as they did. To this end historians, as time and resources permit, immerse themselves in cultures in which events occurred and people lived. Here the cultures are African and Western, the Salvation Army and World Council of Churches, with their political, religious, economic, and social nuances. In all I set out to find what happened in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe between 1891 and 1991, during the pre- and post-independence era in Rhodesia-Zimbabwe.

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Some Salvation Army leaders with whom I corresponded were Arnold Brown, Harry Williams, Denis Hunter, Paul du Plessis, Eva Burrows, and Earl Robinson. Army missionaries Ruth Chinchin, John and Heather Coutts, Leonard F. Kirby, Stephen Pallant, Jim Watt, Geoffrey T. Perry, Lyndon Taylor, and Pat and Harold Hill, helped me understand the expatriate experience in Africa and tensions between missionaries in the field

and administrators at headquarters in Salisbury/Harare, London, and New York. In the text I list American leaders with whom I corresponded. The best source for their views in the 1970s–80s is letters in my possession and at the Army's Alexandria, Virginia Archives. I regret that neither of the two missionaries injured at Usher in 1978 responded to my requests for their reactions.

For interviews with World Council of Churches leaders I travelled to its Archives and headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland in 1999 and met staff members to discuss their interactions with the Salvation Army. General Secretary Konrad Raiser, Baldwin Sjollema, Dwayne Epps, and Bob Scott were most helpful. Former WCC leaders who were involved in WCC–Salvation Army negotiations in London did not respond to inquiries.

In 1991 the Pew Charitable Trust gave me a grant for research in London, Geneva, and Harare through the Centre on Philanthropy at Indiana University. In 1998 the University of Cincinnati Research Council provided a grant for a second research trip to Zimbabwe. The University College Humanities Department provided research grants for my work in Harare, Geneva, London, and Alexandria. I profited from reactions to my research from University of Cincinnati colleagues: Professors Janine C. Hartman, L. J. Andrew Villalon and Mark A. Lause, who have supported my work for over thirty years. The Association of Third World Studies published my essay on part of this study in its 1996 Conference Proceedings, and as “‘Darkest Africa’: Martyrdom and Resistance to Colonialism in Rhodesia,” *Journal of Third World Studies* (Spr. 2005).

The University of Zimbabwe gave me a Research Associate title for my work in Zimbabwe's National Archives and invited me to lead a graduate seminar of the Religious Studies Department. I am in debt to Professors D. N. Beach; Ngwabi Bhebe; Terence Ranger; and C. J. M. Zvobgo, who read and critiqued versions of this work.

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