

# MONEY & MISSION

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## **EDITORIAL: OUR WORK AS WORSHIP IN 2018**

January is a good month to take a fresh look at the way we do things. Many people make New Year's resolutions, whether these be to become fitter, to help our neighbour more, to

watch less TV, or to become a better daughter, son, parent or grandparent. But how many of us in finance or administration are prepared to consider a new way of looking at our work – viewing it as a form of worship?

What does the Bible have to say about this? Paul, in his letter to the church at Colossae, wrote:

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people." (Colossians 3:23)

This means that whatever we do, we should do it with enthusiasm, as if we were doing it for God. Or, to put it another way, to bring glory to God, which is a form of worship.

Some may prefer to seek guidance in the Old Testament, rather than the New. Turn, then, to the book of Ecclesiastes, which records sayings of the wisest of men, King Solomon, including this one:

"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might." (Ecclesiastes 9:10)

Best-selling author Rick Warren has expressed it this way:

"Every human activity, except sin, can be done for God's pleasure if you do it with an attitude of praise. You can wash dishes, repair a machine, sell a product, write a computer program, grow a crop, and raise a family for the glory of God. Like a proud parent, God especially enjoys watching you use the talents and abilities he has given you." (*The Purpose Driven Life – What on Earth am I Here for?*, page 74)

And had Warren been thinking specifically of the work of finance and business administration in The Salvation Army, he might have added to his list of activities such tasks as prepare budgets, process payroll, assess contracts, authorize expenses and review financial statements.

## **"DON'T LEARN YOUR LESSON THE HARD WAY"**

By Lt-Col. Neil Watt

It was Christmas in the early days of our officership and boxes of the Christmas *War Cry* (now *Salvationist*) had arrived at our small corps in time for door-to-door ministry and collecting.

At the end of a snowy evening, things had gone well. We had some great conversations and the collecting was equally successful. Upon returning to the corps, we placed the money in the ancient corps safe, and left for the night, thinking the money was well secured.

The next morning we returned to the corps to pick up and deposit the funds only to find the safe open and the deposit gone! You can imagine my sense of violation that we had been robbed. I found out the hard way that the locking mechanism on this antique worked only sporadically. Since that experience I have taken great care when it comes to the operation of safes.

I understand completely why inadequate security for cash tops the highest non-compliant ratings when analyzing internal audit reports. 71% of reports in the past two years highlight inadequate security surrounding ministry unit safes, noting:

- safe combinations remain the same year after year even when there have been staff changes;
- no record as to who has access to safe combination;
- safe not physically secured to walls or floors;
- safe not used at all; and
- deposits left in safes for extended periods of time.

The Salvation Army policy on safes has been in place for some 30 years, with the policy being folded into the Territorial Finance Manual, section 6009 in 2014. The policy provides clear instructions for the management and best practices of safe security.

These protocols are vital. Although additional nights of collecting made up the loss, I had let down those who graciously and generously made their donations and assumed their money was being well stewarded. I had let them down because I did not make security of their resources a priority.

Having a well-functioning, secure safe is an important part of our risk prevention practices. Don't learn your lesson the hard way!

## **NRO'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ARMY**

While many readers of *Money & Mission* will be familiar with the thrift stores operated by The Salvation Army for over 100 years, they may know little about the role of the National Recycling Operations (NRO), which since 1994 has operated most of those stores in the

urban centres across Canada. The thrift stores not operated by NRO are overseen by the Army's local corps or Family Services units.

The focus of this article is on the NRO stores and their contributions to the Army's work.

NRO has developed the following vision:

“By operating successful thrift stores and integrating with the mission and work of The Salvation Army as a whole, we exist to be a functioning and thriving modern day model of William Booth's conceived 'Household Salvage Brigade' through which the marginalized and excluded of society will be refreshed and regenerated by way of meeting their practical needs.”

The thrift stores gladly accept donations at the donor welcome centres located in each store. Donors can drop off their gently used clothing, textiles, housewares, furniture, electronics, toys, media and books, accessories, antiques and collectibles. The stores also receive donations of brand-new product including clothing, toys and furniture. In addition, they offer a line of new affordable and high quality mattresses for sale under the Booth Sleep Line; these are produced by a third-party manufacturer to be sold only at thrift stores.

In the year ended March 31, 2017 NRO attained a notable milestone: its annual sales exceeded \$100 million for the first time, reaching \$105 million. This represents a 45% increase over the past 10 years – annual sales for the 2007 year were just \$60 million.

After deducting wages, rent, utilities and other expenses from the annual sales, NRO generated a profit of \$3.95 million in 2017 – a substantial contribution to the other work of the Army. In addition, NRO makes other significant contributions to the Army's work, including:

- Donating clothing and other items to the Army's clients, including supporting refugees from Syria and elsewhere. The value of free merchandise distributed stands at over \$4 million per year.
- Raising funds through its GoodWorks@Work program of over \$600,000 per year to support children in developing countries, support local Christmas Kettle campaigns and send needy children to summer camps.

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Giving Hope Today

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