

## The Apology

In the 1940's – 1970's Australia experienced a time of great prosperity and economic growth. The Second World War had just ended and the country was in the middle of a population boom.

Things had never seemed better, there was full employment, major construction was taking place, there was a rise in consumerism and things just seemed to be getting better and better.

Society was ordered and structured, people knew their place in that society and at least on the outside all was fine.

But there was a dark side to all of this, a side that no – one really wanted to know about. There was no money or support for women who were bashed and abused, there was no help for the most vulnerable in society; their children. There was really nothing for those who were orphans, those whose parents were unable to look after them; those whose parents split up or were sick and unable to care for them.

There was the shame of divorce, the shame of having children out of wedlock, and women were encouraged to give up their children either for adoption or into the care of large unfeeling, cold babies' homes.

All that remained for children was to enter some form of large Dickensian building generally made of brick and used to hide the most disadvantaged and emotionally wounded and rejected from society. The world of "Oliver Twist" was alive and well.

These were the orphanages, the children's homes, the training farms, the boys and girls homes, supposedly sanctuaries, but in reality, hell – holes where every kind of perverted abusive practice happened with no accountability, no controls, no checks and balances and with seemingly impunity.

This was the Australia where little innocent babies in Victorian Catholic, Methodist and State run orphanages were taken from their beds and injected with adult doses of a vaccine for the sexually transmitted disease, herpes. 83 babies aged 6 to 8 months old were infected when the experimental agent was found to be worthless. Hundreds of babies were also tested with trial vaccines for diphtheria, whooping cough, polio, influenza, measles, rubella, quadruple antigen, human pituitary hormones, and antipsychotic, anti – rejection and psychosurgical medications.

Aboriginal children in care were injected with the leprosy serum to study its effects.

This was all done by the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories – a government research body which has now been privatized with no – one prepared to accept responsibility.

No one has admitted liability and the records have all been mysteriously lost. The only researcher to say anything about the experiments, Dr Norman Wettenhall said of his work, “it was not a mistake at the time, but only a mistake by today’s standards.”

The problem is that none of these organizations saw anything wrong with what they did – they were able to justify – and still can justify these experiments as being necessary, and after all it was only home babies who had this happen to them, and they didn’t really matter much to anyone.

This was the era when churches were believed and the whole idea that babies could be used as medical experiments or that children could be viciously assaulted by church workers was something that no – one would believe and that people still have difficulty in believing now.

When these experiments were occurring there was, at Goulburn, a Salvation Army boys home called the Gill Memorial Home for Boys – I was one of the boys who lived

in that home for a period of my life and like you I am a 'homie' a person who through no fault of their own ended up in care.

Sociologist, Dr Joanna Penglase in her book *Orphans of the Living* said, "*Among the Salvation Army Homes one which recurs as a template for inhumanity is the Gill Memorial Home for Boys at Goulburn NSW.... This home because of its brutality, mindless discipline and sheer cruelty to children, was among the worst. The rituals and routines of institutional life were here intensified into a regime which appears designed purely to oppress the spirit, break the will and destroy the hope of any boy who lived there.*

There were also dozens of other Salvation Army homes around the country side who could also have fitted the description the Joanna gave and today we are also here to remember those who were in those places, those who never survived those places and those who still suffer today because of the time they spent in those places.

In order to look at what happened I want to spend a few minutes just outlining what I am basing my response on.

There are four points that I have taken into account in speaking to you today and they are;

1) *The truth is this is an ugly story. And its ugliness must be told without fear or favour if we are to confront fully our demons of the past. And in so doing, animate, once again, the better angels of our human nature. I believe we do a disservice to those who have been the victims of abuse if in any way we seek to gloss things over. Because the truth is great evil has been done. And therefore hard things must be said about how this was all possible in this in this country of a fair go. Unless we are now transparent about what has been done in our nation's name, our apology can never be complete. (National apology for "Forgotten Australians" 16<sup>th</sup> November 2009, by Kevin Rudd, Prime Minister of Australia.)*

- 2) The second point that I want to base my response on is based on a talk given by Commissioner Clifton (The General's wife) when she said earlier this year at a conference on social justice,
- "...part of the wakeup call the world needs is for people everywhere to do all they can to care for others. She suggested the following extract from a previous version of the Articles of War for Salvation Army soldiers provides an excellent guideline in this regard:*
- I do here declare that I will never treat any woman, child or other person, whose life, comfort or happiness may be placed within my power, in an oppressive, cruel or cowardly manner; but that I will protect such from evil and danger so far as I can, and promote, to the utmost of my ability, their present welfare and eternal Salvation."*
- 3) The third point that I have looked at was a statement made by Dr James Read of Booth University College, Winnipeg, Canada. He said, at the International Theology and Ethics Symposium again held earlier this year at Sunbury Court Conference Centre on the topic of 'Socio-Political Holiness in the . World – Social Justice' *'The simple and utter sacredness of each and every human being should make us stand in awe. That same human being needs redeeming and transforming, it is true; but it is the redeeming of a being who already demands profound respect from every other human being.'*
- 4) The fourth point that I want to use is a quote from the former Governor of Queensland, the chair of the Forde Inquiry into institutional abuse in Queensland and the present chancellor of Griffith University who, when asked what she thought of the response the Salvation Army made to the abuse claims said, *They place too much emphasis on their good name and money, they have to realize that it's a moral issue for them. I mean what would Christ have done?*

I also want to say that whatever I say will be based on primary evidence, I will not make any wild accusations, nor will I make any baseless assertions. I am more than willing at the conclusion of today's event to discuss what I have said with anyone. I will use correspondence written to me from the Salvation Army and official statements that they have made – everything will be open and transparent.

If you have the courage to face up to the truth you can look up the relevant web sites including not only the Senate Inquiry, but also the Forde Inquiry into institutional care in Queensland and the Mullighan Inquiry into deaths and sexual abuse in children's institutions in South Australia – sadly the Salvation Army features in all three inquiries.

I know I will not make everyone happy and I know that there will be those who disagree totally with me, but I have thought deeply about today and so I will be true to myself.

Any talk will always be subjective, but I am open to listening to different viewpoints. When I first wrote to the General I didn't really think that he would answer my letter and based on some of my earlier dealings with some Salvation Army officers I was surprised that he did so and so I congratulate the Army on their willingness to issue this apology.

There are 3 points that I want to talk about as to why we needed an apology, apart from the Christian, moral and ethical imperatives and three short stories I want to tell, but before that I want to clear up a few misconceptions.

Firstly, there is the notion that we were simply disciplined and that at that time this is the way that discipline was carried out. There was also the ridiculous assertion that what we were given was tough love. Let me say that this was a stupid statement showing a lack of knowledge about the concept of tough love. Let's leave off the love part. It was tough, cruel, warped and at times brutal.

Tough love does not wrap the wet sheets of a little four year old boy around his neck and face choking and strangling him on the smell of urine and then carry him hanging like that down the stairs, tough love does not force a person to crawl around the floor on their knees while sat on his back jumping up and down for fun, tough love does not break a boys arm just after it has been taken out of plaster from a previous broken arm for amusement, tough love does not hit boys with a horsewhip and rupture their eardrum because they spoke. Tough love does not kick a little girl constantly for crying until she is removed in the middle of the night and dies from a ruptured appendix. Tough love does not make you eat your own vomit because you are sick after being forced to eat food crawling with weevils and tough love does not make you clean floors with a tooth brush.

Tough love is not locking young girls up for 5 months solitary confinement, nor locked up in broom cupboards for days on end.

Tough love does not beat a boy constantly after each sexual attack as William Ellis did, and as you are aware he was sentenced to 12 years in jail last year, nor does tough love give children to pedophiles for the weekend.

Tough love is not burning a boy's stamp collection in front of him or forcing boys to bend over naked in the shower room whilst being whipped with a thick rubber garden hose.

These things are not tough love; they are criminal assaults against children.

The other assertion is that it was our fault – no it wasn't. It was officers who failed to act in ways that were proper, ethical and morally appropriate. They were the role models; they were the people who set the standards, we were in their care. Boys should never have had to learn to sleep on their stomachs as a way of stopping predatory officers from prowling around the dormitories at night sliding their hands under the blankets and girls should not have been digitally raped and led to believe that this type of behaviour was acceptable because at least they had a bed to sleep in and regular meals

There is also the assertion that we should just get over it and get on with life – this type of statement apart from showing a distinct lack of empathy ignores the fact that we are shaped by those events that have occurred in our lives. The Senate in response to this stupid assertion said that *“To move forward requires recognizing, confronting and addressing the demons of the past into a manageable form.”*

There is also still the belief that the homes were well run and these things were few and far between, as we shall see abuse was systemic and endemic and any reading of any of the government reports will show abuses occurring in most homes over a forty year period.

In an interview for Four Corners, 13<sup>th</sup> August the journalist, Quentin McDermott asked the following question to the Salvation Army spokesperson. He said;

***“Were those homes well run or badly run?”*** Answer – They were very well run despite the record of the people we're talking about today.

Six questions later he was asked, ***“Will you accept that in terms of the Forde Inquiry that the Salvation Army homes were found to be among the worst homes examined?”*** Answer – I think you have to accept that. The Forde Inquiry

was a very reputable inquiry that went very thoroughly into things and we would be very foolish to argue with an inquiry of that repute.

The interviewer also asked this question, **“How did they get away with it?”** Answer, Often because the person in charge either did it themselves or turned a blind eye to it.

The fact is that no matter what cosmetic applications are applied there is no way to deny these things happened.

I will leave this point with a story from the book ***Orphans of the Empire*** by Alan Gill who was the religious affairs reporter for the Sydney Morning Herald for 17 years. One of the interviews he had with a boy ( Reg Simmons) who was captured at Tobruk by Rommel’s’ troops said he was better treated as a POW than as a boy in Box Hill boys home in Victoria.

As a result of his interviews Gill concluded, *“That a Salvation Army officer should mistreat a child seems so out of character as to constitute defilement of their uniform and an insult to the Saviour they serve.”*

On page 183 of the Senate Inquiry the Salvation Army said as part of its submission that instances of abuse, *“...have been relatively rare and not endemic to our services”*.

Such a statement does not however reflect the truth. It is a basic falsehood. As the findings state, *“...the overwhelming majority of submissions to this inquiry from ex – residents of Salvation Army institutions in all States reported negative experiences in these institutions, often citing cases of extreme forms of physical, sexual and emotional abuse. The Committee believes there has been a notable reluctance by the*

*Salvation Army to acknowledge past practices, in particular the nature and extent of abuse in its institutions.”*

There are probably many reasons as to why we need an apology but I would like to give three.

My first point may seem a little unusual to some of you but I think it's an important point to make.

There were many fine officers who served in the homes and it is quite wrong to place them in the same category as those who were the abusers. When I first knew that this apology was going to happen I asked specifically if the Army would give an invitation to Major Margaret Redman.

I have never met Margaret and yet we share a secret that I will share a little later on.

I was spending the school holidays at the Gill; Christmas was over and it was the summer of 1966. I was walking down the playground towards the wet weather shed when I saw the figure of an officer sitting in the shed. He was in the shade so I didn't really get a good chance to see him. As I got closer I saw this young man with jet black hair, freckles and a big warm grin. He told me his name was Colin Redman and that he had just finished at the Training College. He then asked me my name and I told him it was number 23.

He looked at me with a strange look and said to me, “you can't be a number, what's your name.” I knew straight away that he didn't really know the rules – again I answered, I'm number 23.” “No” he said, “you aren't a number you have a name.”

Now everyone here probably had a number and you'll find that the number is totally ingrained into their minds. Whenever I hear no 23 I am always reminded of the Gill.

Salvo kids never forget their number.

It took me a while to figure out that he really did want to know my name and during the time that Colin was there I never once heard him refer to any person by their number.

Colin never hit, yelled at, or abused any boy in any way. He treated everyone with kindness, consideration and dignity, and if all officers acted like him we wouldn't be here today.

I also want to say that as a first year officer Colin broke the rules. The officer he replaced, Captain Bruce Buckmaster (who has recently retired) used to write letters to a number of boys, myself included. Another officer would not give those letters to us nor would he post letters from us to him. Colin carried on a mail service with letters to him from Bruce Buckmaster and our letters to him were posted by Colin.

I can remember him telling us to be sure we didn't get caught with these letters – for us it would have meant a thrashing for getting a letter from a Salvation Army officer.

What he didn't know is that none of us would have admitted anything – isn't it amazing that we couldn't even get a letter from an officer. This was due to the vicious officer who took delight in bashing innocent children.

I now want to share the secret I mentioned before. Every time that Margaret wrote to Colin she used to write little messages for the boys – kind words and thoughts, and every time that happened Colin would read them out to us. He used to say, "Well boys, here's Margaret's words for you."

I want to publically acknowledge the kindness of Margaret and Colin and I thank you for your acts of kindness and also acknowledge those good officers who tried so hard.

Another person I met in Q'ld was Mrs.S. I had heard about her from a number of boys from Riverview and they all said to me that she and her husband were "good ones." She and her husband tried hard to be the epitome of Salvationists and in the end they both saw so much cruelty and abuse that they both resigned and went to a lawyer, paid the money for him to write to the headquarters in Brisbane and get the managers replaced. The only thing is that they were her sister and brother in law and they have not spoken to her since. I won't go into all that she has suffered except to say she has also been incredibly hurt by cruel comments and actions by some officers.

Mrs S has also come along to a CLAN social and the boys tell me that she was just a kind and gentle lady who cared for children.

I was at the state government apology in NSW and a young man came up to me and said, "Can I speak to you sir?" I replied, "Of course you can" and he then proceeded to tell me how his family were embarrassed by their uncle being a Salvation Army officer and also being at the Gill. I was there when he was at the Gill. He had originally been at Bexley, then Indooroopilly and then to the Gill.

Never again Commissioner, should people be embarrassed about their relations being Salvation Army officers and never again should people be treated as they were.

This present day Salvation Army owes an apology to all those good officers who also suffered and although it's not in the program I would like at the end of this that you also remember all those decent officers who did not know who to turn to and who as they tried to make our lives more enjoyable

My second point is that the reason we needed an apology is that there needs to be a change of Salvation Army organizational responses which I presume are based on their policy.

On 25<sup>th</sup> June 2004 a Salvation Army officer sent an email to a man called Frank Golding.

Frank is not a Salvation Army homie although he grew up in a home. At that time I didn't know Frank, or anyone else in CLAN.

The email had a few things in it that I want to draw to your attention. These are some of the comments in the email.

Please remember that this was written by a Salvation Army officer and he's talking about people in CLAN who were in Salvation Army homes, "*...we do not respect them and their attitude to us is one of hatred. I think for these reasons your continued correspondence with me will serve no useful purpose.*"

I find it a little disconcerting that the only church organization to mention the word *hate* is the Salvation Army. Not even the Catholic Church has done that.

It's almost a schoolyard thing, "you hate me so I'll hate you." No other church has used such invective.

Please note those words; we do not respect them, that is people in CLAN, children in Salvation Army homes. I find it interesting that that statement is at odds with those statements I read a little earlier about respect being an integral part of Salvation Army beliefs and the importance they place on people.

I was a little concerned about this and so I wrote to Sydney and enclosed a copy of this email for them. This is the response I got back. "*I very much doubt that this was*

*an official statement from the Salvation Army, more of a personal response from...*

(The officer concerned)

So I thought I would do the right thing and write to him. I also sent a copy of my letter to the Eastern Command and I waited for a response.

I would like to say that I got a response, but he choose not to reply to me. Even the General took the time to write.

I then decided to write to his superior officer – the person in charge of the Southern Territory. I wanted this cleared up once and for all.

The response I got back was to say the least a shock when I read, *"I am told that all letters received from CLAN were abusive."*

If I said all Salvation Army officers were abusive it would be wrong, there were many fine caring men and women. Were all Salvation Army officers thieves, no, but some were, were all Salvation Army officers liars, no, but some were, and in fact one lied to the police numerous times when he was questioned in relation to his abusive ways. Were all Salvation Officers pedophiles, no but some were.

Do all Salvation Army show grace, no, but some do.

No, not all letters were abusive, some may have been, but to children who were shown violence as a way of dealing with situations whose example where they following?

But there's more... the letter then goes on to say, "*they have been organizational responses, not personal responses by him.*"

In other words this is official Salvation Army policy. The official policy is that there is no respect for us – we are a nuisance and should be held in contempt.

We hate you, and by inference you hate us was the statement made by the Salvation Army – this was an official response.

But there's more – the letter then goes on to say, "*I regret... the matters raised in your letter, to have been of serious concern to you.*" What an understatement.

And there's more – the letter finishes with these words; *Every blessing.*

After being told we are not worthy of respect we now receive a blessing.

Now the Southern Territory can say that their policy has changed and that's all well and good, but wouldn't it have been an act of grace to put that up on the web site and to also send me a letter. It would only have cost 60 cents, but again I was totally ignored and so were those who lived in the homes.

I'd like to know if this is still policy or not?

A copy of this letter was also sent to the Eastern Territory – they also responded, and this is what they said,

*"Goodness me ..... (this officer) does not speak for us when he says, "We do not respect them."*

Now I'd like to know what is the International Commands view. Some may say I shouldn't ask that question, the Commissioner could be embarrassed, but it is Salvation Army policy and after all you are the people who wrote it.

No church organization can stand halting between two differing opinions. There needs to a decision made as to what is your policy and if it is to reject these repugnant views then do it as soon as possible and never again allow views such as this to be your policy.

If these views are on – going organizational policies then the apology given today is meaningless.

In this area, the Salvation Army as a Christian organization needs to remember that if God does not reject us who gives you the right to do so?

My final point as to why this apology is so important is simply because we need an apology.

A few weeks ago the apology on the Eastern Territory website was withdrawn. Both Robyn Smartt and the director of communications had no idea this was done.

But at least there was an apology which is more than the Southern Territory could manage.

Now we could say that we already have had apologies however let's look at what the Senate had to say about the Salvation Army apology on page 190 of the Report – *“A number of submissions commented on the conditional nature of Salvation Army apologies and their failure to fully acknowledge past practices. ... the Salvation Army appeared not to fully recognize the extent of past failures of care.”*

The Government of this country should not have had to correct the Army for its misinformation.

In an attempt to justify some of the abuses that happened the Salvation Army in October 2002 ran an article about the Gill just two weeks after the Four Corners program in which they said, “...*the boys who came to stay at the home were larrikins or worse.*” What an incredibly offensive article this was. When I put in a complaint I was told it was put in by accident – it shouldn’t have been done. Peter Farthing quite rightly told me he would withdraw it from the website.

Now this is part of the apology that was initially issued. I will not take anything out of context, but merely quote those relevant parts.

It is available for anyone to read.

Let’s start at the end of this statement – “*It is a shame the way the media operates in this country.*” Now let’s be honest. The Salvation Army gets very good press coverage generally. But what was it that the press was reporting on – the systemic and endemic abuse of little children. Let’s look at an example. In 1974 the Salvation Army dismissed an officer after he confessed to a charge of child abuse with three young men. In 1979 the Army rehired him because as they put it they “...*believe in rehabilitation for all people.*” They put on the stipulation that he should not work with children again.

When the case came to court the Army said they didn’t know what was going on at the time – they weren’t aware of the magnitude of the abuses and then they had to backtrack and say, yes officers in the Salvation Army must have known what was happening.

Why is the press at fault for reporting these things? They didn’t invent the stories.

In this so called apology the Army says they would like to tell the stories of just a few of the thousands who had a good time. I would like to also hear some of the thousands of stories of the good times told as well. We all would. As I said earlier there are some good stories around but this does not detract from all those thousands who were abused.

You can't say well because there are now some good stories let's forget the bad ones.

Now please note the statement 30,000 children in 35 homes; 3000 officers; only 19 reported sexual abuse, by 3 officers and 4 employees and 24 reported physical abuse.

I would like to say these figures are right, but they are a lie – there is no other way to put it.

Any careful reading will show that many people complained and were ignored and treated with disdain.

The problem now for the Army was that with amazing regularity the numbers began to rise and so this statement was taken off the website.

I wrote to the Communications Director and asked him about the apology and this is his response, the apology he said, *"...has been replaced due to its need to be updated with more current figures. I trust this assists you."*

Now you may wonder what these numbers were that this officer was talking about, well, as I said the numbers began to rise as the abuses became more widely known and so this part of the statement was taken off.

How can any church organization use numbers as justification for its abusive practices?

The fact is that you had a vast mission field, you had thousands of lives to influence for good, thousands of lives who could have done great and wonderful things and you openly admit to all these heinous crimes and then say well it only happened to a small number – no it shouldn't have happened to anyone.

A \$1.6 million settlement was made to a boy raped over 100 times by an officer who forced him to listen to Bible verses being read and then raped and bashed him over a period of years. Does that count as one abuse or 100 – numbers can't be used to justify the lack of abusive practices.

We are not numbers, we are people and we cannot be dismissed by saying only a few were abused.

Finally as part of the healing process I wrote to Commissioner Les Strong and Major Peter Farthing with a request as per the Senate recommendations that they put a memorial on each of the institutions. Can I say I was treated with courtesy and consideration by the two of them.

Les spoke at the unveiling of each of them starting at the Gill a few years ago. From my knowledge the Southern Territory have not bothered to do that, but then as their policy is that they have no respect for care leavers I don't doubt it.

The girls home though in the Eastern command still do not have memorials on their former homes and I think it is important that the promises made should be kept.

I know that Robyn Smartt has been asked to look at this and for that I'm grateful, but the promise to do this was initiated years ago by Commissioner Les Strong.

And so when I was at the Riverview reunion I asked an officer if this could be done. His comment to me was, "*I've not had any women come and complain to me yet.*" I'm not even going to comment on that statement except to say it shows a lack of empathy and an endorsement of the fact that he wasn't really taking any of this seriously.

I thought to myself I won't waste my time talking to this man again and so after the NSW state government gave their apology I was approached by another officer and so I raised the issue of the girl's homes with him. This was his response, to me at that apology, "*Here's my business card, drop me a line*" he couldn't even spend five minutes with me. Well lieutenant colonel I will give you back your business card, I have no further use for it and I will give a letter which will state that if you make a promise you should keep it. It's far better not to make a promise than to make it and then fail to do as you've said you would. I will personally deliver the letter to you.

Can I also say that in future do not treat people so dismissively and so rudely. I will not be dismissed as easily again.

Please don't say no one knew about this; it should have been a priority.

And so we need this apology – I hope Commissioner that the apology will be on the website so everyone can read it, I hope this apology goes towards bringing each of you some measure of closure and I hope that it reminds the Salvation Army that they cannot treat innocent children like this ever again.

I would like to close with three stories which add a touch of humanness to today and remind us why we're here.

It was March 1966 and I had just walked in the back gate of the Gill and was passing the quadrangle when I saw three boys standing looking scared and worried. They were thirteen, eight and four and the eldest was trying his hardest to look tough but I'm afraid he really wasn't that tough.

They were there because their mother had been put into psychiatric care at Kenmore Psychiatric Hospital due to the fact that she was sick suffering from schizophrenia. A few months later she was released to live in a half – way house at Moss Vale which is a distance from Goulburn. She desperately wanted to see her children and so she caught the train down to Goulburn one Saturday morning. Now there were very few trains then, one in the morning and one in the afternoon and the walk up the hill to the Gill was a few kilometres.

When she got to the Gill she rang the bell and asked to see her children. *"You can't,"* she was told, *"visiting day is the third Saturday of the month, and this is the second Saturday,"* *"Please sir can't I see my children; I've had to travel a long way and I'd love to see my children."* *"Didn't you hear what I said, visiting day is the third Saturday and this is the second Saturday – you'll have to come back next week,"* *"but sir I can't come back next week,"* *"then you'll have to miss out – come back next month."*

Anyone passing the Gill may have wondered what a lady was doing sitting on the cold grass watching children at play through the cracks in the paling fence, they wouldn't have known that the Salvation Army which preaches God's grace failed to show it. And so she sat and I wonder what she thought as she saw her little children playing. She may have noticed her youngest son playing with another young boy and wondered who he was. He was also the youngest of three brothers and he also was a kind and gentle boy. In fact his two other brothers were two of the kindest and most sensitive children I've ever met. One of those brothers, the middle one is here today,

but the other two aren't. The middle brother was a lot younger than I was and for some reason we just seemed to hit it off. We became friends for that period of our lives and when I left the Gill I often wondered what happened to them.

When we had our first reunion at the Gill I found out. The oldest boy who was a very gentle and sensitive boy was bashed and bashed by Salvation Army officers until he came to think that this was the way that all problems were solved. He began to act the way that Salvo officers acted and ended up being moved to another home. They wrote in a report that they had never seen a person so abused.

He grew up and ended up becoming involved with drugs and alcohol and he also eventually ended up in the psychiatric hospital. On an outing one day he was tortured too much by what he had gone through and so took the only way out for him. He sadly took his own life, the youngest boy was killed after driving into a tree and when I met my friend he had just buried his sister three weeks earlier, and this Salvation Army says they have no respect for any person who was in their care.

A few years ago my friend held up some signs and protested about the Salvation Army and do you think anyone from the Army came to see him and ask him why he was there, the answer was no, instead they took out a court order to keep him away from the Gill and to stop him from holding up protest signs.

I approached the Army and got them to drop all the charges except for the DVO which they were unable to do. Is this the way that Jesus would have acted? I doubt it.

As this lady sat still watching she may have seen a small boy run for his life out the side gate and she may have seen he was also crying. If she looked really hard she could have seen that he had no shoes on and his feet were bleeding. He's here today and it was his job to go and get the newspaper for a vicious and abusive officer. He was hit on his way out the gate and hit when he came back. Perhaps you could also tell him why you don't respect him, I'm sure he'd like to know.

And finally let me talk about self. My mother died when I was four and I was taken away into a house with no legal right for this to happen.

My grandmother also died at a very early age and my mother was fostered and then put into a Catholic Girls home where her name was changed. She was fostered out and rebelled and ended up being sent to Parramatta Girls Home one of the most notorious girls institutions in this country.

I never saw a photograph of her and my father for another forty years and you people tell me that I am not worthy of respect.

I find those comments hurtful, abhorrent and horrible.

As I said we are not numbers we are people and we deserved to be treated as people.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak today – I know I won't have made everyone happy. There will be those who will say I was too soft on the Salvo's and those who will say I was too hard on them.

Yes there is much more I could have said, but I feel that we have brought things out into the open – I hope that people are more aware of the terrible cruelty suffered by so many and also they are now more aware of why we needed an apology.

Again let me say thank you to the Salvation Army for hosting this event and doing something that is positive and will go towards the healing process.

I look forward to meeting more of you when we have morning tea and on behalf of CLAN I would like to sincerely wish you all the best for Christmas.

Thank you again for taking the time to turn up and for the privilege of allowing me to speak.