

Redeemed Alcoholic Becomes Salvation Army Media Evangelist

How do you promote an organization that has been in existence since 1865, has a brand that is a dream come true and provides more services to the human community than any other organization on earth? Most would say, "Leave it alone; if it ain't broke, don't fix it."

This particular organization spends its time going, doing, helping wherever and whenever needed, 24/7. It has never blown its own horn. However, relying on the generosity of the public for donations to continue its work necessitates that the public is informed.

Today's mass of humanity is spending the majority of their time online. So what is the Salvation Army to do but become "the intersection of technology and ministry, the digital street corner, and the future of evangelism" and call it –the Salvation Army Vision Network, a new online video and social network?

In order to pull this off, you need someone to lead who is intimately familiar with the inner workings of the Salvation Army and has a working knowledge of filmmaking and production. Enter Guy Noland.

As a fifth-generation Salvationist, you would assume Noland would follow in the footsteps of his officer forefathers—and he has, sort of. Noland is definitely hard-core Salvation Army, but he is also hard-core creative. He is not an officer, but he does work for the Salvation Army as the executive director/producer of the Salvation Army Vision Network.

Noland acquired his creative talent from two very creative

Salvation Army officers: his father and mother. His dad, Commissioner Joe Noland, was responsible during his career for many theatrical and musical events within the Salvation Army. His mother, Doris, is not only a beautiful vocalist and lyricist, but is also responsible for the creation of the Salvation Army's answer to Barney, The Fringle. Both parents are authors. Both parents have served tirelessly for more than 45 years all over the world in many high-ranking capacities. As territorial commander of the eastern territory during 9/11, Commissioner Joe Noland led the Salvation Army as first responders descended on the site.

Guy Noland's talent emerged as a child and played out on the stage of musical theater. "I loved looking out into the audience and seeing the smile on people's faces, knowing I was in part responsible for putting that smile there," he says. "My performance, along with my fellow actors, allowed these people to escape from their lives for a short while and enter another world."

Time on stage led to more time on stage, and eventually, as his adolescent years progressed to college age, he followed his dream by heading to Hollywood and entering film school. Life's checklist seemed pretty charmed, including a future in film writing and directing, a beautiful girlfriend and the vision of enjoying all the glamour of Hollywood. What that dream didn't include was the temptation that would come to call: addiction to alcohol.

Was that a deterrent to Noland's success or just a little side habit that most in the industry enjoyed? He explains, "It consumed me and demanded loyalty as my single focus. I lost sight of my dreams, surrendered my finances, my family, my education and eventually my soul.

"I didn't realize what a harsh taskmaster addiction was until I was sitting at the bottom of the barrel looking up, staring into the face of homelessness. I had given this mistress of

alcoholism 12 years of my young adult life and ended up with nothing to show for it.”

It was time for some hard, life-altering and live-saving decisions. Noland began to pick up the pieces by doing what his parents had raised him to do: go to God. Seeking hard after the Lord allowed Noland to find his joy again and develop the strength to, as the Salvation Army says, “Do something!”

Earning a master’s degree in cinema and TV arts gave Noland the confidence and knowledge to work in executive capacities for major players in the industry. He exercised his creative ability at CBS Studios, Westar Media Group, Westwood One Broadcasting, the Arthur Company, Compass Arts Productions and, eventually, Universal Studios.

Noland, as executive director of , says his life has completely turned around.

“The hopelessness, the despair, the loneliness—they are not a part of my life anymore,” he says. “I can honestly say that I have a life beyond my wildest dreams. I could never have imagined the way my life is now, especially compared to what it used to be and where I came from. James 4:8 says that if you draw near to God, He will draw near to you, and I am living proof of that.”