

others

CONNECTING SALVOS IN MISSION

■ **BUSHFIRES**

Salvos spirit burns bright amid a summer of flame

■ **OPINION**

The problem with religion, and the third option available

■ **TAKING A STAND**

A new series on our International Positional Statements

■ **FEATURE**

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WORDS
LIEUT-COLONEL LAURIE ROBERTSON

We need God, but we also need each other

IN HIS RECENT BOOK, *PEOPLE FUEL*, Dr John Townsend states: “Everything significant starts with relationship. At the end of the day, your faith, your family, your work and your leadership are all based on who you relate to and how you relate ... we are not our best selves when we are isolated and alone.”

As I read these words, I did a double take and thought, “Really?” It’s a big call, yet in his extremely thought-provoking (and action-provoking) book, Dr Townsend delivers evidence fleshing out his premise that “God created a system in which we are to need not only him but also one another.”

My Bible reading from *The Message* version this morning covered 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 and, surprise, surprise, this was also about relationship with God and each other.

Incredibly, as I was reading the articles for this issue of *Others*, it didn’t take me long to realise that there is a massive relationship theme running through the majority of stories. Then it all clicked. It was one of those ‘God-incidences’. We actually are all needed and needy. But while it clicked, I wasn’t wildly celebrating. I am fine when it comes to being needed; however, not so comfortable with being needy.

There is a large part of me that is totally focused on helping others. Also, being needy is totally at odds with a life command – that I battle – regarding having to be competent. Western society applauds competency – not being needy. The needy are so often negatively depicted as helpless and hopeless unless someone else provides for them or gives them an emotional boost.

The Salvation Army is loaded with people who want to help others. Conversely, a huge

number of Salvos have been needy. With the intervention of God and others, they have come through addiction, homelessness, domestic violence, low self-esteem, feelings of being a failure, hurtful childhoods and so much more.

The stories of transformation that we read, hear about or view, reveal the change from needing help to being able to give help. But we often don’t pick that, despite the transformation each person usually saying how they still needed help.

Fifty years ago, when I said to God that I couldn’t do life on my own and that I needed him, my needing him didn’t stop just because I acknowledged it. I still connect with him. Also, while I think I am pretty self-sufficient concerning needing help from friends, family, workmates, acquaintances, professionals, authors, bloggers, leaders, random people and even Ted Talks – the reality is I really do need them.

The areas where I need uplift, care, straight-talking, support and love will be different to what you need, but without people building into me I would be extremely deficient. Realising I am needy is good – not bad.

Other people build capacity within me to cope with life. They pick me up when I am down, we celebrate together, they share the load, stretch my thinking, listen and love. And I give back to them. We are in relationship. “The command we have from Christ is blunt: Loving God includes loving people. You’ve got to love both” (1 John 4:21 *The Message*). *

Lieut-Colonel Laurie Robertson is Editor-in-Chief.



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Weary firefighters take a break after being catered for by The Salvation Army Emergency Services on Kangaroo Island, South Australia. Photo: Mark Foyle



Masthead

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“Wherever there is hardship or injustice, Salvos will live, love and fight, alongside others, to transform Australia one life at a time with the love of Jesus.”

VISION STATEMENT

WORDS

COMMISSIONERS JANINE AND ROBERT DONALDSON

Spiritual wellbeing

Living healthy lives that bear fruit

ONE OF THE PRIVILEGES OF OUR ROLE IS TO travel around Australia to meet Salvos and to experience the good work that is going on in so many communities. As we look out through aircraft windows, we get wonderful views of the countryside with all its colour and diversity. It is easy to see where the plentiful supplies of water are, as there are usually green trees lining the rivers or surrounding the lakes.

God’s Word uses this picture to help us understand spiritual wellbeing: “Oh, the joys of those who ... delight in doing everything God wants them to, and day and night are always meditating on his laws and thinking about ways to follow him more closely. They are like trees along a riverbank bearing luscious fruit each season without fail. Their leaves shall never wither, and all they do shall prosper” (Psalm 1:1-3 *Living Bible*).

As we develop our relationship with God, delve regularly into his Word and follow him more closely, our lives are healthy and bear fruit.

When we lived in Africa, we observed certain deciduous trees that had an amazing capacity to bud prior to the rains. There had been typically no rain for nine months. The ground had become drier and drier. Grass had withered and trees shed their leaves. Temperatures were rising and dry red dust increased with every passing day. Clouds began to form and disappear and then the cicadas began to chirp, indicating that rains were less than a month away. Amid the heat and dryness, some of the trees would ‘dig deep’ and burst forth with buds of new life. It was an amazing sight; a botanical expectation that rain would come.

This is an analogy that reminds us that in the difficult times in life, when God might seem distant, or when life circumstances have become deeply challenging, if our spiritual roots are deep into God then we have the resilience to bud into fresh life even before the rains come.

Jesus expresses another metaphor about healthy spiritual life and fruitfulness in John 15:1-8. Jesus is the vine, we are the branches and God the Father is the gardener. Branches can only produce fruit when connected to the vine, drawing nourishment and strength. Branches need to be pruned in order to remain fruitful. Apart from the vine, branches cannot produce any fruit. Jesus says that when we remain connected to the vine (him), we produce more fruit, are his true disciples and bring glory to God.

Salvos who are connected to Jesus and live healthy spiritual lives are well equipped to live, love and fight to transform Australia one life at a time with his love.

BUSHFIRE APPRECIATION

The recent bushfires have brought devastation and heartbreak to thousands of Australians. Salvos have responded quickly, compassionately and tirelessly in addition to meeting the high demands of the Christmas season.

To all those who have fed emergency personnel, supported displaced people and contributed to evacuation centres, organised appeals and processed donations, transported people and goods, kept vital information flowing, supported with voluntary time, money and prayer, to those who have worked hard and gone the extra mile – we send you a huge and personal “thank you and God bless you”.

Your dedicated and sacrificial service is deeply appreciated, and we thank you for the hope that you have given to so many people amidst this dreadful situation. *

Commissioners Janine and Robert Donaldson are Territorial Leaders, Australia Territory.





TAKING A STAND

Exploring The Salvation Army's International Positional Statements

In early 2008, then world leader of The Salvation Army, General Shaw Clifton, established the International Moral and Social Issues Council (IMASIC), as part of the International Social Justice Commission. IMASIC exists to advise the General (currently Brian Peddle, above) on issues of personal, organisational, social and international morality and ethics on which the Army may have a responsibility to express an opinion.

Members of IMASIC are appointed by the Chief of the Staff (currently Commissioner Lyndon Buckingham) and membership regularly rotates. The group meets twice a year. The main output has been 15 International Positional Statements (IPSs), with more in the process of development. All approved IPSs can be downloaded from salvationarmy.org/ihq/positionalstatements.

Each statement is crafted upon principles derived from The Salvation Army's understanding of Scripture, Christian wisdom and experience gathered throughout history, as well as its social and evangelistic ministry. IPSs provide Army leaders and Salvationists with a coherent knowledge base and The Salvation Army's official view that can be used in engagement with global social and moral issues.

In this edition, we begin a series which explores each positional statement.

THE USE OF POWER – EXERCISING WISDOM

The need for a Salvation Army statement on the use of power emerged from the International Theology and Ethics Symposium held in 2001. Work on an IPS commenced soon after the establishment of IMASIC in 2008 and its release in January 2011 was a significant moment. Up to then, positional state-ments tended to address social issues impacting wider society, such as suicide prevention, abortion and human trafficking. By taking a stand on the use of power, IMASIC was addressing issues much closer to home. The IPS on The Use of Power is a statement with implications for every aspect of Salvation Army life.

All of us have experienced abuse of power at some time in our lives. Power is defined in the IPS as “the possession of command, control, or influence over others”. The statement teaches that power is, in itself, not good or bad. The way power is used determines its character. Power can influence us – positively or negatively – in our homes, in our life as part of the Body of Christ and in the way we engage in the world around us.

Professor N.T. Wright, writer and bishop in the Church of England, identifies links between the abuse of power and the effect of evil, rebellion and sin. He writes that evil consists “not in being created but in the rebellious idolatry by which humans worship and honour elements of the natural world rather than the God who made them ... they ignore the creator and try to worship something less demanding, something that will give them a short-term fix of power or pleasure”.

The IPS explains, “Although the presence and importance of power is frequently denied, ignored or minimised, all

individuals, institutions, businesses and nations have power. It is a means by which they achieve some of the world's most positive goods and some of the world's most horrifying evils. Consequently, an informed understanding of the proper use and potential for abuse of power is essential.”

Every IPS includes biblical principles to ensure The Salvation Army takes a stand firmly grounded on Scripture. The ‘Grounds for the Position’ section includes, for example, these principles:

- Power is given by God, and we are accountable for its use (John 19:10-11).
- In the use of power, we all bear a responsibility to act for the benefit of those in need and to confront the abuse of power (Proverbs 31:8-9; Isaiah 1:17; Jeremiah 22:3).
- Power should be exercised in a spirit of love (Ephesians 6:4), to empower others (Ephesians 4:11-12).
- To fail to use the power one is given may itself be wrong, for abandonment risks exposing to harm and exploitation those for whom one is responsible (Ezekiel 34:8; Matthew 9:36).

Every IPS includes a number of practical responses. To take a stand we need to be clear about what actions we will take. For example, one practical response states, “The Salvation Army is pledged to use its own power wisely and well in relation to all who receive its services, who belong to it, who work for it or who collaborate in its mission.”*

This series of articles was first published in *The Officer* magazine.

THE USE OF POWER – STATEMENT OF POSITION

The Salvation Army believes that power is neither good nor evil in itself. It is, rather, the purposes to which power is applied and the manner in which it is used that define its character. As a Christian church, The Salvation Army believes that almighty God always exercises his power for righteous purposes. As an extension of this, The Salvation Army believes that power, whether it is economic, emotional, legal, physical, political, psychological, religious or social, should always be exercised so as to promote the values of the Kingdom of God, such as love, justice and mutual respect. It should never be used for manipulation or exploitation. The Salvation Army strongly opposes any use of power that is oppressive, cruel or corrupt, or that denies human rights. Download the complete IPS at salvationarmy.org/isjc/ips

THE GENERAL HAS APPROVED THESE INTERNATIONAL POSITIONAL STATEMENTS:

- Abortion
- Alcohol in Society
- Ancestral Worship
- Caring for the Environment
- Corruption
- Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide
- Gambling
- Human Trafficking
- Peacemaking
- Pornography
- Racism
- Refugees and Asylum Seekers
- Sabbath Observance
- The Salvation Army and the State
- Suicide Prevention
- **The Use of Power**

Been thinking? We bring you a selection of opinion, critical thought and topical writing to get you engaging with the world around you. To read more go to: others.org.au/viewpoint

WORDS

SANDRA PAWAR

Compassionate presence

Refugee ministry based on Jesus' example

MAJOR MARIA GALINO IS A SALVATION Army officer who lives in London. She is someone who embodies and models Christ in her relationships with others. She showed me what it means to truly love the refugee and how to genuinely model compassion and presence. Maria spent three years fully committed to the cause of the refugee. It consumed her thoughts and her time, and it was compassion and love that led her.

Maria and her husband, Polis, started the official work of The Salvation Army in Greece, first in Thessalonica and then in Athens. They had just begun their ministry in Athens when the refugee crisis hit the city. She vividly remembers being woken by a phone call one morning and being told she needed to make her way to The Salvation Army building. Hundreds of refugees had arrived and were camping out in Victoria Square, which was a stone's throw away from the Army complex.

One day everything was normal in Maria's city, and the next hundreds of refugees had landed on her doorstep. And they kept arriving. At the height of the crisis, estimates put the number of refugees arriving daily in Athens at 2000.

Maria didn't have to acknowledge their presence, as she had her own people to

look after – Greek people who were in the middle of their own crisis with a devastated economy. She didn't have to lift a finger to help any of the refugees, but she knew that Jesus would and so that's what she did.

From that first day, she modelled compassion and presence. She made sandwich after sandwich, and she didn't stop making those sandwiches for the next three years. She says she didn't have time to get permission from The Salvation Army headquarters to do it. She didn't have time to check whether she was following health and safety rules. She just knew people were scared and hungry and they needed her. So, she went ahead and made those sandwiches and then distributed them every day.

Thousands upon thousands of people landed on her doorstep, hungry, tired and weak. Pregnant women who were sleeping in the rain, children huddled together, men and women who were in deep need. Every day she would visit these people, pray with them, give them sandwiches, toys and sleeping bags, and give them a shoulder to cry on. She would warn them about human traffickers and try to find them places to stay. She modelled her ministry on Jesus and his capacity to notice the humanity of others, especially those most invisible and neglected in his day and time. When they had nowhere else to go and no one else to care for them, Maria was there. She saw them.

I made my first trip to Athens in 2016 and saw for myself the ministry of compassion and presence happening through The Salvation Army. It was the most humbling experience. I saw hundreds of people lining up every day for milk and rice, for nappies and clothes. Small, simple items that we take for granted.

I saw hundreds of Muslims lining up for help; people that did not reflect The



Salvation Army or its theology, yet I saw them being served with love and compassion. The service was not based on religion or country of origin, but on need and humanity. It all started because Maria saw a need and decided to make some sandwiches.

I firmly believe that just showing up and being present in people's lives makes a big difference. How can I expect to heal or counteract the false views of refugees to others if I have never walked or talked or lived alongside them? Maria walked and talked and lived alongside them for almost three years. She modelled to me, and to many, many people, the ministry of Jesus daily, and she made a big difference in the lives of those who came to her, broken, hurting and alone.

Who can you walk with in your community who is broken, hurting and alone? Who can you practise the ministry of compassionate presence with? Who is God leading you to, and will you go? *

Captain Sandra Pawar is Multicultural Planter, WestConnect Salvos, Sydney.

Salt of the earth. Many of the sayings we commonly use today come from Jesus. In describing his disciples with these words in Matthew 5:13, Christ was saying that they were valuable – salt being the preferred method of payment in those days. The phrase is still used to describe people we find valuable or important.



WORDS

JOHN STACKHOUSE

The black hole of consumption

When beauty and pleasure become our focus

THE NEW YORK TIMES RECENTLY featured a meditation on 'The New Spiritual Consumerism: On shows like *Queer Eye*, makeovers, shopping and redecorating are presented as deeply meaningful'. The writer of the article, Amanda Hess, tartly comments on the remedies offered by the show's makeover gurus: "Their salves penetrate the skin barrier to soothe loneliness, anxiety, depression, grief, low self-esteem, absentee parenting and hoarding tendencies. The makeover is styled as an almost spiritual conversion. It's the meaning of life as divined through upgraded consumer choices."

Along the way, Hess properly mentions Marie Kondo, the high priestess of decluttering, and actress Gwyneth Paltrow, who heads the very strange GOOP company/cult. The patron saint of shops and spas as sites of salvation, however, doesn't get noticed. But surely she is Oprah Winfrey, the queen of vertical integration – from lipstick to divinity. (Note her role as gigantic demigoddess Mrs Which in the latest movie version of *A Wrinkle in Time* – the role she was born to play.)

Ms Winfrey has played a huge part in North American (and global)

consciousness generally as she has happily commended self-improvement in a wide range of forms as a kind of spiritual quest. Mysticism throughout history and across the globe, however, typically has tended toward the ascetic, not the aesthetic. It's not easy to train one's mind on challenging intellectual and spiritual concepts while trying to connect one's soul with ultimate reality as one wallows in a warm mud bath, listening to Enya and sipping on an expensive water.

More basically, however, in the spa the vectors all point toward oneself, a little black hole of consumption. True spirituality – at least as Christianity defines it – reverses the vectors: getting one's life in line with the universe,

“Our calling is not primarily to construct a lovely life as a kind of art project ... but to do all the good we can.”

getting along with one's 'non-soothing' neighbours, and, above all, getting in touch with God ... and not God as friendly therapist or supportive patron or indulgent grandparent, but God as Sovereign Creator towards whom one owes abject service, however inconvenient such obedience might be to one's preferred lifestyle, or however embarrassing that identity might be to one's carefully curated social media presence.

“But I feel so much better when I've been to the spa!” And people currently enjoying high-powered opiates feel better than most of the rest of us do, too. Feeling unusually good is no measure of truly transcending the quotidian to arrive

at a higher spiritual plane. Consider the many references to darkness and depletion in the world's spiritual literatures. And one must beware of whatever insulates us from real life rather than helping us make the best of real life.

'This is my Father's world', the hymn reminds us, and the Bible encourages us to enjoy it – from this fabulous flower petal to that stunning constellation. The key to such enjoyment, however, is not to congratulate oneself on another impressive step in one's splendid journey of self-realisation, but to thank God for kindly providing such moments along life's way.

And those moments really are just by the by. The Bible warns us, after all, that this gorgeous world is nonetheless currently a war zone, in war time. Our calling is not primarily to construct a lovely life as a kind of art project, suitable for sharing on Instagram, but to do all the good we can in the furtherance of God's great program of rescue and renewal – however dirty, or even just ordinary, we might have to get in the process.

Should we pause, then, for moments of beauty and pleasure? Of course we should: as God generously grants them to us. Should we make beauty and pleasure the centre of our lives, the summit of our experience? Of course we shouldn't: not when so many people are starving, and raving, and killing and crying.

And not when we ourselves so desperately need fundamental reorientation and reconstruction: to be turned inside out, rather than enjoying a mere makeover. *

John Stackhouse is Professor of Religious Studies at Crandall University in New Brunswick, Canada. He blogs at johnstackhouse.com

The word **bible** comes from the Greek word *biblia*, which means 'books', which comes from another word, *byblos*, meaning papyrus, a material books were made from in ancient times.

WORDS
ANDY BANNISTER

The problem with religion

The solution lies in the 'third option'

A RECENT SURVEY REVEALED THAT many people harbour incredibly negative attitudes to religion. About 46 per cent of those surveyed said that "religion is a major part of the problem in our world", while 42 per cent think it's not religion per se but "people of faith" who are the problem.

Why are people so down on religion? Why do so many imagine, with John Lennon, that a world "without religion" would be more peaceful, more tolerant, more inclusive and more harmonious? What's the *problem* with religion?

Certainly one problem is that religion offers a very easy way to divide the world into 'good people' and 'bad people' and discriminate against the latter. Humans are naturally very tempted to divide the world up this way (ask yourself how quickly you can complete the sentence, "I am better than ..."). All of us, religious or not, are tempted to think better of ourselves (or those like us) and worse of those who aren't. The problem isn't unique to religion, but religion makes this kind of division much easier.

What's the solution? Well, not atheism or secularism, it must be said, since from the French Revolution to Stalin's Russia, atheism plus political power has led to the death of millions. Secularism has as much blood on its hands as religion.

What we need, in order to deal with the human tendency to exclude, is a basis for humility – something that undercuts our tendency to think too well of ourselves and look down on others. And this is why religion doesn't help. Too many people think that religion is all about being good, about being moral, upright, spiritual and so forth and this quickly leads to a sense of superiority. If you're a Buddhist, you can look down on those who are less enlightened than you, whose 'Buddha Consciousness' is less developed. If you're a Hindu, you can look down on those whose karma is less than yours. If you're a Muslim, you can feel superior that your good deeds outweigh those of other people and you're more likely to go to heaven than them. A sense of superiority is a huge problem, especially if you're religious.

"Jesus was the most anti-religious founder of any religion."

There is one exception to this pattern, and that's Christianity – at least Christianity as Jesus preached it. Jesus was the most anti-religious founder of any religion – read the Gospels carefully and you'll discover that Jesus spent most of his time attacking religious people, calling them out for being religious because it made them feel superior to others. In contrast, Jesus attracted irreligious people. In fact, he was regularly criticised by religious people because he spent his time hanging out with all the wrong people. Jesus said there was no point doing good if your motives were wrong; if your heart wasn't right.

Most people think that there are two ways to live. You can choose to be *irreligious* – but the problem is that leads

to self-centredness; my life revolves all around me, and I become the centre of the universe (it's sobering that if you try to remove God, you usually end up making yourself God). Or you can choose to be *religious* – but that leads to arrogance; I am nicer, better, holier, more enlightened than you.

Irreligion or religion, that seems to be the only option. Both, however, lead to excluding others and to discrimination. But what if there aren't two ways to live but *three*: irreligion, religion, or *the Jesus way*?

The message of Jesus isn't, 'be a good person and God will like you'. It's that you don't have the power to be a good person, that your life is so broken and you're so far from God that you don't have the ability to change how you live without radical, inner transformation. And that the only way to get that is by accepting what Jesus did when he paid for our brokenness on the cross, when he took the punishment we deserved for our self-centredness, arrogance and pride. The Jesus way says we can do nothing to put our lives right without first powerfully encountering Jesus and discovering forgiveness and new life in him.

Why are we all tempted to exclude others and discriminate? Because our brokenness has excluded us from God. In Jesus, we have the offer of having that relationship put back together and, as our relationship with God is put right, seeing our relationships with others reorientated too.*

Andy Bannister is the director of the UK-based Solas Centre for Public Christianity.

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Join the conversation

"Great stories of lives being transformed and new ministry opportunities with a missional purpose."

f Tracey Tidd

"The Army must again live up to its call to be a mission-focused Army!"

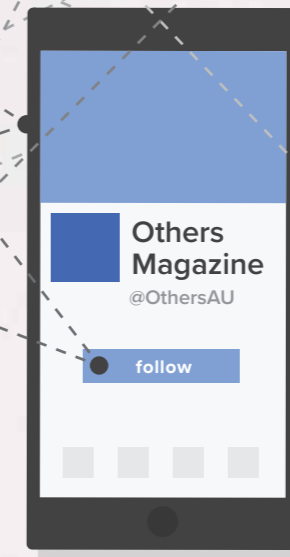
t Brian Peddle

"Brilliant! Love the good news from around Australia."

f Peter Hobbs

"Awesome. God is doing a new thing in the hearts of people. Keep transforming lives in Jesus' Name." #livelovefight

o Belinda Spicer



YOUTH SERVICES - BUILDING A STRONG VOICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE TERRITORY

Continuing a regular series looking at ways that The Salvation Army is engaging in mission across Australia

WORDS NICKY GANGEMI

What comes to mind for you when you think of The Salvation Army Youth Services? Youth homelessness? Helping youth in crisis? Casework? These things are true, but Youth Services is so much more.

Youth Services offers a whole range of programs that respond to the needs of young people. They can come in the form of tailored programs including driver training, homelessness services,

life and living skills, mental health and drug and alcohol support programs, specialist schools and educational and training options. Youth Services also includes programs that help young people engage with their community and build independence, including social and recreational activities.

Natalee O'Brien, General Manager for Youth Services, says: "The Salvation Army offers a diverse range of options for young people that is not easily summarised. Our aim is to provide support across a continuum of care that works from early intervention all the way through to crisis assistance."

Natalee's role in the new national structure is overseeing the department across the country and working with state managers and services as well as general managers of other mission expressions. She is also extremely passionate about advocating for the youth voice to be heard across The Salvation Army.

"With the creation of the Youth Services stream, we have a real opportunity to build a strong youth voice. Young people are very intelligent, independent and resilient and have so much to offer our future direction. We need to capture their voice well and ensure they are heard."

The Youth Services stream is building a new national model of care. This model

aims to ensure standardisation of practice and a clear framework that is built upon the mission, vision and values of The Salvation Army.

"We want the same levels of quality practice everywhere, so whether you walk into a service in Perth or somewhere in Queensland, you will get The Salvation Army model of care, but the service is still relatable to the specific local community it is in.

"We are working on building our own key performance indicators for our services. We have expectations that we have to meet for the government and the community, but we want to create our own internal indicators that go beyond those expectations. We want to set our expectations higher. We are asking ourselves, what is the best that we can offer young people, and how do we get there?"

A strong focus for the stream as it shapes its model of care and builds programs is client participation. Natalee wants to ensure that youth involvement is integrated into the process; from the initial co-design through to tendering for and writing programs. This high level of youth participation is something Natalee sees as integral to the continued effectiveness and growth of Youth Services. It has already been successful in some areas, such as The Youth Group Advocates Program (Vic.).



The Drive for Life program for young adults aged 16 to 25 is one of the many successful programs The Salvation Army Youth Services offers.

ADVOCACY ENGAGEMENT

- The Salvation Army has written to Federal Government ministers about the importance of the government supporting an independent voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This was prompted by the Federal Government's decision to defund a peak advocacy organisation representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family and domestic violence services.
- The Salvation Army also made a substantial submission in relation to homelessness in Victoria exploring the issues identified by people who have experienced homelessness and focusing on positive actions that can be taken to end homelessness.

Stakeholders in this program have been involved in focus groups and interview panels for new staff, as well as the design of the physical spaces where programs are delivered. This involvement allows for a strong youth perspective to be heard. "It is fabulous where this participation and inclusion is occurring," says Natalee, "and we want it to continue happening."

To allow the youth voice to be heard across the whole organisation, the Youth Services stream is working hard to get connected to many other Salvation Army expressions. There have been some great wins in this area.

The Youth Outreach Service Lawnton School (Qld) is in partnership with the local corps. The students and corps members share the premises and resources but, more importantly, they share life with each other. Elderly corps members regularly engage with students, which has led to strong, positive relationships. Some corps members are mentors in the Drive for Life program and have helped students to get their licence. Students with small children actively participate in the corps' Mainly Music program, and some assist with the program.

Ingle Farm Youth Services (SA) is co-located on-site with the local corps. This has meant that the Youth Ministry team and Youth Outreach Team have developed a strong partnership that allows them to engage in a holistic manner with the young people within the local community.

Area Leadership Teams are helpfully facilitating collaboration, which allows for stronger understanding between mission expressions and the opportunity for the growth of new localised partnerships.

Natalee says research shows that "education, employment and training is the key to breaking the cycle of disadvantage for young people. These programs provide a great opportunity for young people to identify pathways for their future and to re-engage with their communities". Being available for youth and providing them with the highest levels of care and support is what Youth Services is really all about. *

Nicky Gangemi is a resource writer with the Territorial Mission Support Team.



Photo: Bruce Harmer

SALVOS SPIRIT BURNS BRIGHT AMID A SUMMER OF FLAME.

Army of volunteers stands tall in ‘unprecedented’ emergency response

The *Summer of Bushfires* will be how the holiday season of 2019-20 will long be remembered in Australia as vast tracts of land were blackened and lives and property were devastated by flames that refused to die.

As Australia burned, the world turned its attention Down Under, and the word ‘unprecedented’ became the favoured adjective in media reports and in general conversation.

The Salvation Army’s response was also unprecedented, with its vast network of volunteers, backed by emergency services personnel, deployed in almost every state and territory, playing a crucial role in

catering for evacuees, firefighters and many others impacted by the natural disaster.

Australia’s territorial leaders, Commissioners Janine and Robert Donaldson, cut short their summer holiday to tour various centres where The Salvation Army had set up relief operations.

“I’ve seen a lot of disasters first-hand during my time as an officer and every disaster is different,” said Robert, the Territorial Commander. “Earthquakes in Christchurch were devastating in a different way. Zambia was the HIV/AIDS crisis. All very different. But this one in Australia is unprecedented in terms of the

number of fires and overall area covered.

“But I’ve been humbled by the incredible resolve and determination shown by Salvos here in Australia. We’d especially like to thank Salvation Army Emergency Services, volunteers, corps and staff who have shown selflessness and love as we’ve served the Australian community.”

Janine echoed Robert’s sentiments after their visit to the Northern NSW towns of Kempsey, Grafton and Coffs Harbour, which were heavily impacted by fires in October and November, and to Sale and Bairnsdale in Victoria where fires hit hard throughout January.

“The last few weeks and months have

seen a time of unprecedented devastation in Australia,” said Janine, Territorial President of Women’s Ministries. “These fires have pushed us all to our limits – physically, emotionally and spiritually – but through it all we are seeing the Salvos spirit come alive.”

The statistics are sobering. By the middle of January, the Rural Fire Service was already saying it was the worst bushfire season ever – more than 10 million hectares razed (that’s about 110,000km² or nearly the size of England), more than 6000 buildings destroyed (including 2200 homes), 27 people losing their lives and perhaps a billion animals killed.

And right in the thick of it, The Salvation Army, doing what it does best – caring and catering. At one stage during January, there was a call for extra volunteers to help at evacuation centres that were operational in Queensland, New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia.

Yes, people needed a meal, but, most of all, they needed to hear there was hope. They needed a listening ear and →

SALVATION ARMY BUSHFIRE RESPONSE - BY THE NUMBERS (as at 15 Jan)

- Evacuation centres: 165
- SAES personnel/volunteers: 3000
- Meals: 225,000
- Light refreshments: 115,000
- Disaster Appeal: \$40 million (to be distributed in coming weeks/months)
- Amount already delivered: \$5 million

Commissioners Janine and Robert Donaldson talk with Coffs Harbour Corps Officers Majors Andrew and Jeanette van Gaalen during a visit to the Mid-north Coast of NSW where bushfires were at their worst in early November.



“

These fires have pushed us all to our limits ... but through it all we are seeing the Salvos spirit come alive.

”



they needed to tell their stories. And the Salvos were there to meet this need as well – all part of the healing process that will be ongoing for weeks, months and years ahead.

The scale of the Army’s efforts around the country since the bushfire crisis began in September can be encapsulated in statistics released in mid-January showing that 225,000 meals had been served, 115,000 light refreshments provided and thousands of volunteer shifts worked in 165 evacuation centres around the nation.



“And these have been served in such a diverse range of environments and circumstances,” said Norm Archer, Strategic Emergency and Disaster Management Coordinator for NSW/ACT. “From our volunteers serving firefighters from our catering trucks at fire-staging grounds, to our people partnering with other Salvation Army expressions and volunteers from the local community in evacuation centres. It’s been a massive effort and we need to remember that the bushfire season is still not over yet.”

And in a nation reeling from disaster, Commissioner Robert Donaldson said the work of the Salvos was also not over yet.



“The Salvation Army will continue to work tirelessly to do all we can to help those impacted by the fires. It’ll take the work of the entire organisation; a challenge I know we will face with grit, determination and faith. It’s at times like these I’m especially proud to lead the Army here in Australia.” *



Ⓜ An army of Salvos all over Australia have come out in force during the bushfire crisis to do what they do best – care and cater for firefighters and people impacted by the disaster that has been running since September last year. Among those encouraging and thanking the Salvos for their efforts have been NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian (pictured opposite page bottom left in Kempsey) and Prime Minister Scott Morrison (opposite page bottom right, on Kangaroo Island). Photos courtesy Mark Foyle, Bruce Harmer, Carol Purdie, Tim Parry Jones, Ben Day, Anastacia van Gaalen.

RELIGION TO RELATIONSHIP.

How Robert Donaldson found salvation in training college

WORDS BILL SIMPSON

There are times when you are talking with somebody and they disclose something that is, well, a surprise. Commissioner Robert Donaldson, the man who, with his wife Janine, leads The Salvation Army in Australia, has provided one of those surprising moments.

In his own words, he didn't "get saved" until he was studying to be an officer. He was 25 at the time and only weeks away from being commissioned after studying at the New Zealand Officer Training College. How could this happen? He knows the answer.

His initial and early commitment, he says, was geared more to winning the approval of others than a personal walk with God. A first-generation Salvationist – joining through the influence of an aunt who saw to it that he was dedicated as a baby – he was very much a part of The Salvation Army from childhood, doing the things that Army people do.

His parents joined when he was in his teens. "I like to say that I am first-generation Salvationist and my parents are second-generation," he says. He grew up in a medium-sized corps, Dunedin South, and participated in the whole gamut of programs and activities. →





➤ A young Robert Donaldson with his parents and older sister.



Robert and Janine cutting their engagement cake in 1982.



The Donaldsons with the Officer Training College staff in Zambia in 1996.

At 14, and attending youth councils, he recalls God speaking to him clearly about the purpose of his life. From then, everything was focused on obedience to the call. But, it seems, he mistook it as a call to do his duty in The Salvation Army rather than a personal relationship with God. He was corps bandmaster at 18, divisional youth band conductor and a youth group leader.

“I was totally involved; totally committed. But I struggled with myself and with living a God-honouring life, basically struggling in my own strength to live the Christian life,” he says. “I was a very committed Salvationist; hardworking. I read my Bible and prayed regularly and was very responsive to God’s leading. But it was very much based in my head.

“It was pious, and it was religious. It was based on ‘earning’ salvation. My personal acceptance was caught up in the approval of others, which was achieved through hard work. This was wrong and it was so futile.”

Even so, he was committed to the call to that 14-year-old and offered himself for training as a Salvation Army officer at 23. A few months before his commissioning, while still struggling with who he was and reacting badly in some situations, he was counselled by a member of the training college staff. “Essentially, he led me through the sinner’s prayer,” says Robert. “I was set free. In some ways, I got saved at the training college.”

His wife had spoken with training college staff about what she saw as Robert’s spiritual uncertainty.

“Initially, it hadn’t occurred to me that he hadn’t experienced salvation,” Janine says, “I suppose that I always assumed he had made a commitment.”

INNER CONFLICT

Janine was only seven when she first made a commitment of her life to Christ. Her father, an officer, was preaching in a Sunday meeting and invited people to make that commitment. She did and has always understood its significance.

“But in college, I could see the agony for Robert. At first, I couldn’t work it out. I could see in Robert’s behaviour that there was conflict. He wasn’t at peace. I went to a training college staff member to talk to him about it. It was that person who led Robert to the Lord.”

Robert’s spiritual life changed dramatically. “How did that experience change me? Well,” he says, “life in the Spirit began. I was in relationship with God that was not based on my efforts to gain approval. Of course, that day of spiritual birth was just the beginning and God, by his grace, has continued to work on me ever since.

“So, what is my message for people who may be in a similar situation to mine back then? The Christian life is one of forgiveness and freedom. It is not about earning religious points to feel God’s favour. God’s love is unconditional and boundless. We need to be careful about being formalistic about being saved. How could God call somebody to officership

if they are not saved, we may ask. For me, it was going from religion to relationship [with God].”

And, so, by God’s grace, Robert was commissioned as a Salvation Army officer and embarked on a journey initially revealed to him as an early teenager. He studied at the Officer Training College in New Zealand with Janine. They had met at Dunedin South Corps, married in 1983 and now have three adult sons. Before entering college in 1985, Janine was a nurse and Robert a labourer/driver studying physiology at Otago University in Dunedin.

HEALTH SETBACK

They first served in New Zealand-based appointments before going to Zambia, where a second surprise surfaced. In 1997, toward the end of six years in Zambia, Robert battled with severe lethargy. He felt tired and unfit like never before.

It was a shock. Robert had always been a fit and healthy man. He had always been on the go, delivering newspapers at nine and milk at 11, and playing cricket and basketball as a teenager. He was a rower and prided himself in working in New Zealand before officership as a garbage collector – running behind

trucks to collect the rubbish – providing plenty of daily exercise, while studying at university. But this feeling he had in Zambia was like nothing he had experienced before.

Robert and Janine returned to New Zealand, tired, and a new appointment. But Robert’s condition deteriorated alarmingly. Janine had a “full and frank conversation” with their doctor.

Serious tests were arranged. They revealed that Robert had critical heart issues. An immediate quadruple heart bypass was crucial. There were complications. He was told it was unlikely that he would ever work again. He was only 37.

Back in New Zealand after Zambia, the Donaldsons were commanding officers at Timaru Corps. Janine took single command while her husband underwent surgery – and for some time later. She was also running a family, with three boys.

There were difficult moments, she says. “But I remember that when Robert was about to go into surgery, my oldest son, then 15, phoned to say, ‘Mum, just have faith’. It was one of those incredible moments for me. Of course, my son was right. And, with God’s grace, and great family and corps people, we got through it.”

The news of heart problems had been devastating for Robert. His father had suffered several heart episodes. Robert had been a workaholic and he was no longer the ‘dynamo’ he thought he was.

“But,” says Robert, “the heart problems resulted in me discovering and accepting who God had created me to be. It was the beginning of another personal growth journey that matured me in so many areas of thought and life. I still believe in giving my best and working hard. But life and faith is so much healthier than such a confused and unidimensional approach.”

Recovery took time, but it came. There have been 20 years and many officer appointments since the summit of the health scare. “My dependence on God has developed as my reliance on myself has diminished. He has made me stronger in my weakness. I have experienced a relationship based in acceptance and love and not in futile human effort.”

The journey continues.*

Bill Simpson is a contributing writer for Others.



Photo: Jacob Dyer

NEW CHIEF LEADING THE WAY.

Winsome says appointment empowers women and men

WORDS SIMONE WORTHING

Colonel Winsome Merrett says being the first married woman in Australia to fill the position of Chief Secretary is a privilege that carries enormous weight in the gender equity sphere.

Winsome (left) began her new appointment as second-in-charge of the Australia Territory on 1 February, after previously serving as the Assistant Chief Secretary.

“It’s an incredible privilege to be appointed to this role that plays a significant part of how The Salvation Army will express its mission both now and into the future,” Winsome says. “At its heart, The Salvation Army is what it’s always been, raised up by God to ensure people can respond to the Gospel message and Good News of Jesus, and which also has open hands to people experiencing crisis and disadvantage.

“Sometimes it’s daunting and challenging, but also incredibly exciting, to see the great things God has yet in store for this territory and how he will use us to transform lives with the love of Jesus. As the first married woman in this role, I also feel incredibly honoured and pray that how I lead in this appointment actually

empowers women and men, and forms a solid foundation so that doors continue to open for other women to take on leadership roles and gender equity can become a reality.”

Winsome explains that one of the messages around gender equity is the importance of men also promoting women and creating opportunities for them, especially since men still hold most of the power and authority in organisations and governments around the world. “My officer parents [Majors Hilton and Wilga Morris] were full partners in ministry and officership,” she says. “They modelled gender equity and equipped and empowered me to lead, too, as I grew up and beyond. Marital status was not even an issue in their ministry and leadership.

“Kelvin, my husband [Secretary for Personnel], thinks the same way. He is a competent leader in his own right and is also very supportive of me in my own ministry and leadership. He has created opportunities for me to lead and develop skills in the past and made sacrifices himself for me to do this. I know, though, that this is not every woman’s experience. There are many talented women in The Salvation Army and they are a resource God wants to use and we need to find ways to make this happen.”

Although Winsome is not a part of the Gender Equity Committee, she hopes that her appointment is significant to the gender equity focus, both in Australia and internationally. “My role is to ensure that this mandate is continually kept before leadership [management] and that it continues to play an integral part in our decision-making and thinking. My advocacy is in the leadership that I provide.”

ROLE OF THE CHIEF

As ‘the Chief’, Winsome will be accountable to the Governance Board for implementing board-approved strategies that impact how the Australia Territory operates, develops and grows. “This relates significantly to making sure that our Local Mission Delivery model is being effectively implemented so that our vision is being fulfilled across the territory,” she said.

In addition, Winsome will also lead the Executive Mission Council, which assists and works with the chief secretary to make high-level operational decisions to ensure the mission and vision of The Salvation Army are being achieved. Winsome is also accountable to the territorial leaders, Commissioners Janine and Robert Donaldson, who together are responsible for the spiritual health and development of the territory.

“‘The Chief’ also has many management and leadership roles, but it’s all about what I see as my life’s purpose – to give people the opportunity to find hope and salvation in Jesus, to care for the needy, love those hard to love, be a friend to the friendless,” she said.

“‘Heart to God, Hand to man’ hasn’t changed – which is why the new Local Mission Delivery model is so important – it brings those two together in ways that maximise opportunities to serve the whole person when they access our services, whatever that might look like for them.” *

Simone Worthing is a contributing writer for *Others*.



COMMITTED TO PROGRESS

Commissioner Janine Donaldson (above), Territorial Leader and Territorial President of Women’s Ministries, now drives and oversees the Gender Equity agenda for the Australia Territory.

“This role is part of my Memorandum of Appointment, and I am committed to continuing progress with Gender Equity achievements and goals,” she said. “I am still working out the relatively new role I have with Robert [Commissioner Robert Donaldson] as the territory’s leaders, focusing on the spiritual development of the territory, so I may do things a bit differently, but the momentum will certainly continue.

“Gender equity continues to be an important issue, mainly because we’ve been so poor at it historically. Salvation Army theology and practice have simply not matched up. I would hope that gender equity remains a priority in all discussions and decisions made, and that all people are considered fairly and equally. It is important that in progressing gender equity for women we don’t unfairly marginalise men.”

Janine also paid tribute to Commissioner Julie Campbell, who previously held the role, and the “tremendous” job she did laying the groundwork. “I stand on Julie’s shoulders, value her, the work she has done and the legacy she has left,” she said.



Photo: Duan Kereru

DESTINED FOR OFFICERSHIP.

Renae makes ‘inevitable’ step of commitment

WORDS BILL SIMPSON

Don't try putting Renae Phillips in a box. She won't fit – and won't stay there, anyway. She is pretty much an individualist who doesn't agree with doing something for the sake of it. But she can work in a team environment, too.

Now 30, Renae (pictured) resisted Salvation Army soldiership until just over a year ago but has entered training college this year to become an officer. She plays piano in a contemporary worship band but loves the Army traditions of brass bands, songsters and timbrel brigades, even though she is not overly keen on uniform – although will wear it when appropriate. “I love innovation,” she says. “But I don't accept scrapping our tradition. We learn from previous generations.”

Renae has an arm-length tattoo of Alice in Wonderland, Canada's maple leaf and a reminder of Pumpkin, her toy poodle. She also loves the Queen. She has a cupboard full of royal-themed crockery and a large framed portrait of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth in her house. But she also has a large framed portrait of tennis legend Maria Sharapova. “I am neither a monarchist nor a republican. I just love the Queen. She is an incredible woman, regardless of her title,” Renae says.

Renae enjoys the ballet, but also likes a good rodeo. She was born and raised in Adelaide but is not an AFL fan. She prefers netball. “If anybody thinks they have me pinned, well, they haven't,” she says.

Accepting a call to a life of Salvation Army officership does not come as a surprise to Renae, despite taking a third or so of her life to get there. She has, she says, always known from the time she was a little girl that she would get to this point one day. Renae is a second-generation Salvationist. As a child, she attended several corps in Adelaide with her parents. By her mid-teens, with her family, she switched to a local Baptist church and got a job as a laboratory technician.

KEY INFLUENCES

In 2014, aged 26, she travelled to Canada. Somehow, she linked with The Salvation Army Cariboo Hill Temple Corps in Vancouver, where she engaged with officers who won her respect. She was back in Adelaide a year later, linking with the city's Congress Hall Corps and getting her old job back at the laboratory.

“After six months back at work,” Renae says, “a guy there said that I was made for something more than this. I knew what he →



◀ Renae enjoys a cup of tea in the garden, especially if it's out of one of her many royal-themed cups she has on display in her house. **Right:** Adelaide is home for Renae, but she has now embarked on a journey to Salvation Army officership after entering Officer Training College in Melbourne last month. Photos: Duan Kereru

meant. I knew there was something else. I have known forever – since I was a child – that I would have a ministry role, probably in The Salvation Army. When I was at the Baptist church, the youth pastor told me when I was only 18 that he wouldn't be surprised if I ended up in ministry. I knew that.

“It's strange, but even when I was in the Baptist church, I would defend The Salvation Army whenever anybody criticised our beliefs on baptism and that sort of thing. I guess that, for a while, I resisted coming back to The Salvation Army because I knew that once I did, God would put things into place. I was right; he did.”

Going to Canada for 12 months, Renae thinks, was the catalyst for her ultimate decision to accept that Salvation Army officership was her destiny. New officers at the Cariboo Corps challenged her thinking. In Canada, she did things within her church and circle of friends that she didn't do back in Adelaide. She prayed with people. She felt more capable and comfortable around people.

“

When I look back on my life, officership has always been there, even when I wasn't in The Salvation Army. Everything points to it.

”

“At home,” she says, “I think I probably held myself back a bit. I always had an excuse for not acting on my convictions. I didn't think I was good enough, for example. I didn't doubt that God could use me. I doubted myself. But after Canada, I knew that I was coming home to be an officer.”

TIME TO COMMIT

Renae settled into Adelaide Congress Hall Corps, playing piano in the contemporary worship band. Talk of combining Australia's two territories into one national territory was underway. “I knew, then, that it was time for officership,” she says. “I felt that The Salvation Army was alive again; that it was going back to its roots and that I needed to make a commitment to that.

“I still believe strongly that God has a mission for The Salvation Army and that I was called not just to ministry but ministry in The Salvation Army. I believe that God raised up The Salvation Army at a time when it was needed. The Salvation Army is still needed. We have influence. We can get a seat at tables of influence where no others can. We need to be at those tables.”

As the Australia One plan continued to play out, Renae accepted it was time to become a soldier as a step toward officership. She was enrolled as a soldier in October 2018 – “the same time as I got my motorbike licence”.

“During soldiership classes, I thought, ‘Why wouldn't I want to become a soldier; I believe all of these things’. I love Christianity, because God asks something of us. No other religion really does that. I think in our world today that a lot of people are worried about Christianity because “it could be true”. People are aware that they are missing something, and that God may be that something. People are very angry about everything. We have an opportunity to do something about that. I have an opportunity to do something about that.

“When I look back on my life, officership has always been there, even when I wasn't in The Salvation Army. Everything points to it. In Canada, I went to The Salvation Army because I was meant to go there and hear the things that redirected my thinking. When I came home, I went to The Salvation Army at Adelaide Congress Hall because I was meant to.

“Australia One was happening and I had to be a part of that. And when I look back, I recall the impression on me of family members who were officers. As a kid, I was struck by their commitment for life. Now is my time for a commitment for life.” *

Bill Simpson is a contributing writer for *Others*.



NEW CADETS BEGIN TRAINING

Renae Phillips is one of eight cadets who started their officer training at Eva Burrows College on 29 January, as the *Messengers of Reconciliation* session. The cadets are pictured below (from left) Anthony **Bezzina** (Miller Corps, NSW/ACT), Nicole **Bezzina** (Miller Corps, NSW/ACT), Keven **Williams** (cadet-in-appointment Eastern Beaches Corps, NSW/ACT), Renae **Phillips** (Adelaide Congress Hall, SA), Shaun **Featherston** (Hobsons Bay, Vic.), Crystal **Lee** (Rockingham and Perth Fortress Corps, WA), Ryan **Matulick** (Adelaide Congress Hall, SA), and Rachal **Mills** (Miller Corps, NSW/ACT).



LAUNCESTON TUNES IN TO COMMUNITY NEEDS

Tasmanian corps shows the way by making connections

WORDS JESSICA MORRIS



Good morning Launceston, you're listening to WayFM! The chirpy voice of the breakfast radio announcer is heard above the background noise of bacon and eggs sizzling on a hotplate and the chatter of a roomful of people.

Instead of a plush studio, the WayFM announcer is sitting in a Salvation Army hall, where clients from the Doorways program are enjoying breakfast served by the WayFM team as part of a collaboration between Launceston Corps and the listener-supported community radio station.

The growing relationship between the corps and the station began following the 2019 Red Shield Appeal, when Auxiliary-Lieutenant Roderick Brown and Ministry Assistant Kelly Brown sought publicity for the appeal. Looking for more innovative ways to partner with the family-friendly station, a friendship developed with the WayFM team. "They offered to come and do a live broadcast once a month," says Kelly. "There's such a buzz about the place when they come!"

The Doorways program offers clients a free breakfast each morning, and access to a shower, washer and dryer. "The meal is basically for those who are homeless or experiencing financial distress," explains Roderick. Kelly adds, "We see 10-15 people every morning, and then the WayFM team come in one Wednesday every month for the broadcast and make bacon and egg muffins for them!"

The breakfast radio program is just one way Launceston Corps has partnered with an organisation to reach out to the community, with camaraderie also being cultivated with the local council and police.

The corps has become a member of the Launceston Safer Community Partnership, contributing volunteers to Street Teams once a fortnight to keep partygoers safe in the city. A recent grant from the Tasmania Community Fund



Launceston Corps is reaching out to the community in a variety of ways. **Left:** 'Shieldy', The Salvation Army mascot, mixing with some young supporters at the Launceston Tornadoses basketball game. **Top:** Launceston Corps Ministry Assistant Kelly Brown promoting the Salvos at Festivale in the city. **Above:** Two children - Jesse and Aleah - who have connected with the Kids in the Kitchen program at the corps..

also means these teams come with an upscale coffee cart. "The teams' intent is to help keep partygoers safe, arrange safe transport home and serve coffee!" says Roderick. "We give people a chance to take a break from the club during the night and come have a chat."

DISADVANTAGED FAMILIES

Roderick says Tasmania's homelessness crisis is at the forefront of Launceston Salvos' work. He points out that disadvantage isn't just found on the city streets, but also in surrounding suburbs and schools as local families do it tough. A partnership with Tasmania Divisional Schools Coordinator Sarah Davidson has given the corps a chance to embrace a new sector of the community.

"A Girls Day Out was done in partnership with the Beyond the Classroom project," says Kelly. "We had 30 girls from several primary schools across Launceston come and engage in activities that gave them both a focus back out to others in the community, and also working alongside each other."

The Girls Day Out has also led to eight participants joining Kids in the Kitchen - an initiative run through Beyond the Classroom to teach children about food preparation and health. And they've also seen crossover, with many of the girls' families attending corps events including

its monthly movie night. "A lot of families experiencing disadvantage come to our movie night because they can't afford to go as a family to the cinemas," says Roderick. "We see between 50-70 people come to the corps to watch movies like *Dumbo* or *Toy Story 4*. And for \$2 entry they see the movie and receive their movie munchies ticket for a selection of tasty snacks!"

Like the schools initiatives, the Mainly Music program has also become an entry point to the Salvos in Launceston. Beginning the program 18 months ago, the corps purposely shaped it with an Excluded Communities model, creating pathways for people experiencing higher levels of disadvantage to connect with the community, parenting groups and Doorways. "We aim to help build social inclusiveness and connections for those who attend," explains Kelly.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Launceston Corps has mastered the art of coming alongside others, an aspect of The Salvation Army Australia Territory's Vision Statement, learned only through experience. Sometimes this happens in the spotlight. After all, when the local Women's National Basketball League 1 club, Launceston Tornadoses, gives Salvos mascot Shieldy a chance to promote The Red Shield Appeal alongside local alderman and Red Shield ambassador Janie Finlay, how do you say no? →



But, most often, walking beside people on the margins happens in the small moments. Like when the corps women’s group fundraises for the African Women of Worth project, or the local Salvos Stores partners with the Behind Clothes Drawers Market to sell and receive clothing to fund community services.

For one day a month, though, Launceston Salvos know that coming alongside their community looks like blitzing the airwaves to the tune of a hearty breakfast and a fresh load of laundry. Because it’s the simple things that make all the difference, and that occurs when we walk together, one step at a time.

“Jesus always stood in solidarity with the poor and those on the fringes of society,” says Roderick. “So as we go about our mission each and every day, we simply try to follow his example as best we can, in helping people experiencing hardship to find belonging and community.” *

Jessica Morris is a writer for *Others*.

“ We had 30 girls from several primary schools across Launceston come and engage in activities that gave them both a focus back out to others in the community, and also working alongside each other. ”



Top: Celebrating Mainly Music’s first birthday (from left) Shirley Watson, Paula Reeve, June Tyson, Kelly Brown, Lynne Howick, Wafa Ismail and Yvonne Walters. Above middle: The Girls Day Out program in action at Launceston Corps. Above: Salvos volunteer Anita Reeve with the Street Team trailer at the WayFM monthly breakfast.



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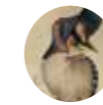


Promotions available in Salvos Stores across Victoria, Tasmania, Western Australia, South Australia and Northern Territory only.

THERE'S A HUMBLE LEMONADE BOTTLE on display at The Salvation Army Museum in Sydney that is over 135 years old. It's easy to miss, but once you take a moment to hear the story of Mary 'Poll' Cott, the original owner of the bottle, you realise it's actually a trophy of grace.

Poll Cott was an infamous character in northern NSW during the mid 1800s, particularly for her use of the lemonade bottle as a weapon. She would put the bottle in a sock and swing it at shopkeepers or people on the street in a threatening manner before robbing them. She was the local police department's number one criminal, with 257 convictions to her name. It was reported that it often took up to six policemen to subdue her during one of her rampages.

Transported to Australia from Ireland at the tender age of 16, Poll Cott's life continued to spiral downward after her three-year-old son died. She blamed her doctor for the death, assaulting him and trashing his workplace. She took to drunkenness and violence to deal with the grief. Over the next 40 years she was in and out of prison until an incident on 18 May 1885 that became the turning point in her life. Kicked out of the first-class cabin at Maitland railway station, Poll Cott armed herself with a pair of scissors and was on her way to attack the railway porter who had evicted her. Witnessing the scene was Salvation Army officer Captain William Rundle, who,



Lemonade bottle a trophy of grace.

WORDS JESSICA MORRIS



instead of berating Poll Cott, invited her to join him and his wife at home for lunch. Seeing an opportunity to rob their quarters, she happily took up the offer and was given a bed for the night.

Initially, the kindness of her local Salvation Army officers didn't sway Poll Cott. Armed with her lemonade bottle, she waited until it was midnight and walked downstairs to ransack the place, and do whatever was required to its owners. The scene that greeted Poll Cott stunned her – the captain and his wife were kneeling on the carpet, tearfully praying for her wellbeing. Overwhelmed, Poll Cott gently put down her lemonade bottle and knelt beside Captain and Mrs Rundle. In an act of repentance, she gave her life to Christ and was dramatically changed.

Poll Cott never picked up that lemonade bottle again. She lived out the rest of her days in peace, joining the local Salvation Army corps and ardently serving wherever she could. Today, her lemonade bottle stands as a reminder that no one is beyond the grace, divine mercy and forgiveness of Jesus. All it took was the compassion of some local Salvos to change the course of her life. *



A Salvation Army publication telling the story of Poll Cott, and the lemonade bottle she used on her rampages.



The Salvation Army Heritage Museum is located in Melbourne and Sydney. The Melbourne site, at 69 Bourke St (floor 4), is open from 9am-4pm Monday to Friday, and 9am-4pm on the first Saturday of the month. The Sydney site, at 32a Barnsbury Grove, Bexley North, is open from 9am-2pm Monday to Saturday.

Keep up to date with Salvation Army history at facebook.com/SalvosMuseums



01

A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Rating: PG

Release date: 23 January

Words Mark Hadley



A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood stars Tom Hanks as the legendary children's television presenter, Fred Rogers, who presented programs to America's youngest minds from 1954 to 2001. This particular story, however, is set in 1998, while he is hosting his benchmark show, *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*.

Award-winning *Esquire* journalist Lloyd Vogel is given the job of writing a profile on Rogers. Vogel has been so successful revealing unflattering truths about people

that no one wants to be interviewed by him any more. It doesn't take the audience long to realise, though, that this journalist's deep distrust of exteriors is an extension of his own early life. Vogel's father abandoned his family while his wife was dying of cancer, to run off with another woman. When the writer arrives in Pittsburgh to meet the real Mr Rogers, he is determined to find the man beneath the mask. Yet he is profoundly disturbed by the gentleman waiting to meet him.

Hanks portrays a television host who is unearthly and attractive at the same time. He is amazingly patient as he addresses his pre-school audience, clear in his affection for every little thing that makes them who they are, and profoundly helpful in the advice he offers: "Forgiveness. It's a decision we make to release a person from the feelings of anger we have at them."

It's this piece of wisdom that forms the moral backbone for the film. *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood* is the true story of how Rogers' patience with Vogel led the journalist on a journey to reconciling with his father. Yet this film contains much more to consider than just a single storyline. Mr Rogers provides us with a pattern for life that left me longing to be a better person.

Most importantly, Rogers loves people. We may live in a world that mouths the

importance of every human being, but Rogers stops to listen – really listen – to children. He asks parents to remember what it was like to be their age. And he asks the film's angry antagonist to take one minute's silence to think of all the people who loved him into being. Then *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood* does it – in real time.

It's only as the storyline deepens that the audience realises *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood* is celebrating the life of a man who made it his goal to follow Jesus. Rogers was a committed Christian who saw Jesus' call to "Love your neighbour as yourself" as more than just an aphorism. He read the Bible every day and prayed for people by name each night. The more broken a person was, the more Rogers saw them as worthy of his prayer list.

The film stops short of a complete Gospel message, but it also avoids undercutting Gospel truths. What emerges is a picture of Christianity's most powerful argument in a sceptical world: the life of its Lord, shining through dedicated men and women, into a dark world.

Watch *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood* and you'll see the truth of Jesus' words, millennia before we ever turned on a TV set: "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35). *



02

MESSIAH

Rating: M

Channel: Netflix



Messiah begins in Damascus, where the Syrian capital is bracing itself for an attack by a resurgent ISIS. A wild-eyed young man begins preaching that this is the time that God has marked out to judge the hearts of all humanity. Those who truly follow him need not be afraid. Then, to assure them of this truth, he seemingly calls down a sandstorm that forces the fundamentalist forces to flee. His prophetic words and commanding manner attract not only a growing number of followers but the attention of the CIA. Officer Eva Geller is tasked with investigating this strange individual gaining the world's attention. The crowds are beginning to refer to him as 'Isa' and

'Al-Masih', the Islamic names for Jesus and Messiah. Yet Geller's Al Masih, like the Jesus of the Bible, is challenging all who think they know the will of God. His association with miraculous events, and appearances in Israel and eventually the United States, are making it hard for anyone to write him off as a hardliner or heretic. As in the first century AD, and so now, the key question is: who is this man?

Messiah has done a masterful job of translating the past to the present. The historical documents that chronicle Jesus' life record a similar confusion gripping ancient Palestine. The Pharisees, the preachers of the day, treated him with suspicion. The evidence for Jesus' miracles was too clear to deny, but that didn't stop them doubting his motives.

Like the CIA analysts, noted scholars like Gamaliel placed Jesus in the same camp as malcontents who aimed at popular rebellion. And the Israeli and American governments concerned over the behaviour of *Messiah*'s Al Masih have much in common with the authorities of Jesus' day, who worried about the political unrest his preaching would cause.

Controversy is one thing the two have in common. Jesus was at least as divisive a figure as Al Masih. The Christian writer and lay theologian C.S. Lewis famously wrote that "A man who was merely a

man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher ... either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse ... but let us not come with any patronising nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us."

The same might be said for anyone who turns up today claiming divine authority, *Messiah*'s mysterious figure included. Al Masih names himself 'the Word', literally God's will made flesh. Yet he displays little of God's power and characteristics. Particularly, he lacks the mercy and compassion that so characterised Jesus, not to mention his openness.

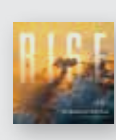
In fact, what keeps the controversy of *Messiah* going are the truths Al Masih refuses to reveal. But Jesus is rejected for the opposite reason. He tells those who reject him it's not because he hasn't been plain about his purpose or identity, it's just that they can't stand to hear the truths he says about them: "... for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word." (John 8:42-43 *ESV*). *

Mark Hadley is the culture writer for *Others* and one of Australia's leading Christian communicators.

Listen

MELBOURNE STAFF BAND

RISE



There's a lot to like about the Melbourne Staff Band's new album, including the spread of musical styles, all well played and well recorded.

English composers are also represented and there are marches from Sharman and Ponsford. In addition, the title track 'Rise' is a fine work from Martin Cordner, based on the contemporary hymn 'Still'. Australians Connor Hutchinson and Britteny Ling contribute pleasing devotional arrangements and the versatile Sam Creamer is featured twice: in a playful arrangement of Gowans and Larsson songs and, later, in a satisfying work based on 'O Praise the Name'.

Brian Hogg's piece is a Latin setting of 'Showers of Blessing' for flugel soloist Scott Downes, and Roger Trigg has penned a solo for euphonium, 'El Olam (Yesterday, Today, Forever, Jesus is the same)'. It's well played by Jamie Smith. Roger's major work, 'The Pilgrim', uses tunes associated with the Christian journey.

A lyric sheet would have been helpful in associating the music and words, but it's clear this is a fine recording. Yet the piece de resistance is still to come. Ralph Hultgren's wonderful three-verse setting of 'Breathe on me, Breath of God' stunned me with its beauty. Its quality stands alongside the work of Dean Goffin and Morley Calvert. This track alone justifies buying the album.

Available at Melbourne Salvation Army Supplies (1800 100 018) or **commerce.salvationarmy.org.au**, and Sydney Salvationist Supplies (1800 634 209) or **thetrade.salvos.org.au**.
– Merv Collins

Listen

SUNDERLAND SONGSTERS

NOW IS THE TIME



Hailing from the Sunderland Millfield Corps in the United Kingdom, the Sunderland Millfield Songsters' new album *Now is the Time* is as vibrant and energetic as it is haunting and complex.

Tracks like 'Peacemaker' and 'I Need Thee' quietly talk to the soul. 'It's Simply Jesus' speaks a clear simple message, as does 'Guardian of My Soul', highlighting that if we don't take the time to be still with God, we may miss out.

This album is about making time. There are some amazing voices led by the songster leader, Andrew Mair, matched beautifully with thoughtful lyrics. Helping this is the cover booklet, which includes the words and associated Bible verses.

God's Word advises us to use our time wisely because he knows that there are many things in life that can distract us from what truly matters. This album reminds us not to waste our time so that we look back with regret.

Available at **SPS-shop.com**.
– Adam Cole

Read

GRAEME GOLDSWORTHY

HOMEWARD BOUND



Some books are deceptive. This little book of about 130 pages is subtitled 'Sabbath rest for the

people of God' and I assumed it would be a gentle read reminding us of the nature of 'Sabbath' and its place in modern Christendom. Well, I was wrong.

Goldsworthy is a Brisbane-based Anglican theologian and a former lecturer at Moore Theological College in Sydney. He has published a dozen books and is renowned especially for his teaching on the Old Testament. While he writes in a relatively easy-to-read style, some of the theological notions he expresses here are not for novice readers.

At the core of this book is an exploration of homelessness and exile, the role of the 'city' in the Bible and the rightful 'home' of Christians. Towards the end of the book, he writes: "... the Sabbath rest for the people of God speaks of a return from our exile and homelessness in a fallen world."

If you've always had a sense that, as C.S. Lewis might say, you were made for another world, you'll enjoy this book's explanation of what it truly means to be at rest with God.

Available at Koorong (**koorong.com**).
– Mal Davies

To read more reviews on books, music, movies and television shows, go to **others.org.au/reviews**



Tiny home a big answer to prayer in the Shire

THE SALVATION ARMY IN Sydney's south has been gifted a tiny home to assist with transitional accommodation for people experiencing homelessness.

Designer Eco Tiny Homes created the 3.6 x 2.4-metre 'studio series' home, which contains a queen loft bedroom, lounge, TV, table, kitchenette and bathroom. The tiny house is one of a number that the company has donated to The Salvation Army.

"One of the things our church has been praying for is to be able to house more people. Affordable housing is such a huge issue in the Sutherland Shire," said Menai Salvation Army Leader Mark Soper.

Shire Salvos, which includes Menai Salvation Army, Miranda Salvation Army and



Menai Salvation Army Leader Mark Soper inspects one of the tiny homes (inset) donated to the Army.

2508 Salvos in Helensburgh, now has several accommodation options to assist people in need. "Coralee Rough is the Shire Salvos Community Coordinator," said Mark. "She's done a lot of the legwork to make this happen."

Samara House offers transitional accommodation to women and children impacted by domestic violence and Chara House accommodates single women experiencing

homelessness. The new tiny home will enable people experiencing homelessness to have a safe place to live for the short-to medium-term until they can secure stable housing. Since the donation of the tiny home, The Salvation Army in the Sutherland Shire has also been offered additional accommodation at reduced rent for use by people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness.

"We've got ladies in their

50s and 60s who are homeless because they can't afford to pay their rent any more, and we've got guys coming out of prison and they've got nowhere to stay," said Mark. "There are just so many needs in this area around housing that's affordable or people on Newstart or low incomes. Our goal is to have at least 10 accommodation options, so we'll just keep praying into that."

– Lauren Martin

Melbourne school continues annual generosity to the Salvos

MELBOURNE'S KNOX SCHOOL has once again embodied a spirit of generosity towards The Salvation Army with a donation of \$20,000 worth of gifts, food hampers and money to Ferntree Gully Salvos.

Over the past 23 years, the school in Wantirna South has donated more than \$250,000 worth of gifts to the corps with the aim of teaching its students

how to 'give back'. The latest donation came from a variety of fundraisers throughout 2019, including a spellathon, a free dress day, the Year 9 Entrepreneurial Program, the Giving Tree Appeal and the philanthropic-based school fair.

"The Knox School partnership is a godsend," said Captain Rachel Attard, Ferntree Gully Corps Officer. "We couldn't

have our [Christmas] toy drive without it."

A special assembly was held at the school to officially hand over the many donations.

"What once was a relatively small appeal has now become an annual community event and tradition that all families of The Knox School proudly support," said teacher Brooke Henderson.
– Jessica Morris



Student Jack Henderson hands a cheque to Captain Rachel Attard on behalf of The Knox School's Giving Tree campaign.

Reservoir rolls a six for games ministry

BOARD GAMERS HAVE 'ROLLED a six' with the launch of the Salvos initiative 'Just Game'.

Pioneered by Reservoir Salvos in Melbourne's north, Just Game is designed for isolated and lonely members of the community to connect with others over a board game.

Aux-Lieutenants Esther and Matt Atkins, Corps Officers at Reservoir, said they have been using board games as a ministry tool for the past decade, but a recent Innovation Grant from The Salvation Army has given them resources to expand the idea.

Their hope is that the Just Game network will spread around the Australia Territory.

"We began a monthly gaming group 10 years ago from our house," said Esther. "It was an isolation project for people



◆ A monthly board games night hosted by Reservoir Corps in Melbourne has been a key way of connecting with the local community.

stuck in their houses to meet in a safe environment and play board games.

"After a while, we couldn't fit everyone in our house, so we moved the ministry to the corps building six years ago," said Matt.

Esther and Matt said they have seen many people encounter community, break free of loneliness and experience the love of God through

building relationships over a simple board game.

"We want this idea to be producible across Australia, so every expression can reach their most isolated individuals," said Esther.

After receiving the innovation grant, the Atkins' road-tested their Just Game model in local schools.

"The idea of playing games in safe environments and

providing places for those who want to connect through games is a reasonably easy, cheap and reproducible model for those wanting to break through to those stuck in isolation and struggling with social connection," said Matt.

For more for information or to receive a free Just Game starter pack, contact the Atkins at info@justgame.net

—Jessica Morris

Little fundraisers with hearts for the homeless

KIDS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE – JUST ASK seven-year-old Isla Eagleton and her four-year-old sister Emma. They raised about \$400 for The Salvation Army after seeing homeless people on Melbourne's city streets.

The sisters were so impacted by the sight of people sleeping rough that they gathered their neighbourhood friends to come up with a fundraiser. With their simple aim to "help the homeless", they decided to create and sell wheat bags. Isla and Emma's mother, Melinda Eagleton, provided the girls with all the materials and they set

about their mission. The sisters and their friends – Anika (8), Grace (7), Myriam (6), Imogen (6) and Molly (5) – made 50 wheat bags and sold them to friends and family.

"I don't believe they were aware of any charity that took care of homeless people. They just saw people living rough and thought of them," Melinda said. "I did a quick Google search and we decided on The Salvation Army.

"In Isla's words, the girls felt 'proud of themselves' and they hope the money 'can be used to make people more comfortable.'"



◆ Colonels Mark and Julie Campbell invited the little fundraisers and their mothers to Territorial Headquarters in Melbourne to thank them.

Making disciples begins at home in Rockingham

JASON McDONALD SAYS THE kind act of strangers inviting him into a loving home during a tough period in his life saved him. Now, he's 'paying it forward' by inviting others into his home in Rockingham, Western Australia.

Jason, a Salvationist, is one of two 'lead tenants' at the Discipleship House, which was officially opened as a ministry of Rockingham Salvation Army last year. The opening came after two years of prayerful planning and waiting on God to provide suitable premises for the ministry.

The idea is to have two mature Christians rent rooms in the home and commit to living alongside and discipling one to two other tenants. These tenants have been invited into secure housing, with the opportunity to be mentored and supported.

Jason, who has stayed in numerous Salvation Army homelessness accommodation and recovery services centres in his lifetime, said the aim in setting up the Discipleship House was to keep it personal.

"We didn't want it to be a program house, we wanted it to be first and foremost a home," he says. "The vision for the Discipleship House is that the lead tenants are on fire for Jesus Christ and on board with the vision of getting around people 'one life at a time'. They get together and they just offer to take someone else in and actually live life together."

It's a vision that Jason is passionate about because many years ago it was the kindness of strangers inviting him into



◆ Read Jason McDonald's Salvation Story on p46

their home that led to dramatic transformation. He had been in and out of prison since the age of 17 and says he was on a 'fast-track' to going back in, due to addiction, homelessness and crime, if God hadn't intervened through this couple.

"Basically, what they were doing is that people were invited into the home," he says. "It thoroughly impacted me. Here I was, disenfranchised from my own family, and these people loved me and cared for me. The bloke that was heading up the house, he was the original one that introduced me to Jesus Christ. It was amazing."

The first tenant of Rockingham's Discipleship House, 26-year-old Steve Whiteaker, said he was thrilled to be invited. "Since I've been here, honestly, it's been nothing but joy. I'd been praying for the last 10 months just for a safe place,



◆ Above: Jason McDonald is a passionate volunteer for The Salvation Army in Rockingham, Western Australia. He is the lead tenant of the corps' new Discipleship House.

◆ Left: Corps Officer Captain Darrell Wilson officially opens the Discipleship House earlier last year.

and a grass area for my dog. I'm so very blessed."

While it isn't a 'program', the Discipleship House has a spiritual rhythm centred around the tenants connecting with each other and with God. There are morning devotions and a Wednesday night Bible study. On Thursday, the Rockingham Pallet Ministry Men's Shed meets at the back of the house.

Jason is prayerfully hoping that more such houses will spring up in Rockingham and other Salvation Army

expressions right across Australia. "It's simply about living life by example," he says.

The experience of living in a safe, loving home with a focus on being in relationship with God and partnering with him in his work to restore humanity, has already had a huge impact on Steve. "I'm growing every day just by plugging in ... I'm just praying that God will guide me. At the moment, I know I'm supposed to be here. I know that 110 per cent."

—Lauren Martin

Army volunteers turn out in force to assist during Indonesian floods



Salvation Army relief teams on duty during the floods that hit parts of Indonesia last month.

SALVATION ARMY TEAMS IN Indonesia responded to floods around the capital city, Jakarta, last month that killed at least 66 people and led to more than 200,000 being evacuated.

Meals and hot drinks were provided to people from badly-affected communities in the Jelambar and Kampung Melayu areas.

Response teams were put

together from corps volunteers across Jakarta, including Jakarta 1, Jakarta 2, Polonia, Jelambar and Depok. Cadets from the training college also assisted with the evacuation and food distribution.

The Indonesia Territory Medical Services provided assistance in cooperation with the Indonesian Christian Association Health Services.

In the four days of the initial response, more than 2000 meals and hot drinks were served in Jelambar and out of the public kitchen at the Officer Training College in Jakarta. Medical services were provided to 154 people, and four were evacuated to a safer place.

As conditions improved the government took over the recovery phase.

Relief teams in action following Puerto Rico quakes

THE SALVATION ARMY HAS been part of a coordinated response on the Caribbean island of Puerto Rico after a series of earthquakes damaged homes, buildings and roadways, causing power outages for nearly one million people and leaving hundreds of thousands without water.

According to the United States Geological Survey, there have been more than 950 earthquakes and aftershocks recorded in Puerto Rico since 1 January. At least 500 have been of magnitude 2 or higher.

The biggest quake – a magnitude 6.4 that struck the southern coast on 7 January – killed one person and injured at least nine others.

Salvation Army Emergency Disaster Services (EDS) personnel, in tandem with the Puerto Rico Emergency Management Agency, began assessing impacted communities within hours of the major earthquake.

Mobile units provided support with hot meals and various commodities to help responders and disaster survivors, and four Salvation Army recovery centres were opened to the public to provide emotional and spiritual care as well as cell phone charging for critical family communication.

“We are continuing to coordinate with our partners and government officials to provide services to those in the most impacted areas on the island,” said Major Eric Rodriguez, Divisional Commander for the Army in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands.

Peddles lead significant weekend in New Zealand

GENERAL BRIAN PEDDLE and Commissioner Rosalie Peddle, World President of Women’s Ministries, spent a short but significant weekend in Wellington, New Zealand, in December that included commissioning celebrations and the retirement of the New Zealand, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa Territory leaders.

The Silver Star service – recognising the part played by cadets’ parents and people who had played an influential role in their spiritual development – was held at Booth College of Mission over a Saturday morning brunch. Commissioner Peddle spoke from her own experience of being a recipient of the Silver Star and what it meant to see her child serving God wholeheartedly as an officer.

On Saturday afternoon people filled Wellington City Corps for the commissioning and ordination service of five members of the *Messengers of the Kingdom* session and one



The Peddles conduct the commissioning and ordination service of six cadets in Wellington, New Zealand.

cadet from the *Messengers of Compassion* session.

In a powerful Bible message, the General reminded everyone that the Gospel’s message – as captured in the prodigal son story – is that “anyone can come home to God ... anyone!”

Later that evening during a dinner, the international leaders joined senior leaders of the territory, with 19 officers honoured for their dedicated

service to the Army and given long-service leave.

The General presented territorial leaders Commissioners Andy and Yvonne Westrupp with 40-year long-service badges and honoured them for their faithful leadership.

The Westrupps’ service was recognised again on Sunday morning at their retirement celebration. The General spoke about the strong personal bonds

that have existed between the two couples since they served together in New Zealand when the General and Commissioner Peddle were appointed as divisional leaders in 2007.

“There is a very personal link with these good people as well as the organisational link as we serve together in leadership in the Army,” he said. “I want to celebrate both of these links here today.”

US First Lady wraps presents with kids at London corps

MELANIA TRUMP, THE FIRST Lady of the United States, visited Clapton Corps in London as part of her tour of the United Kingdom before Christmas.

Accompanied by the wife of the US Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Suzanne Johnson, Mrs Trump spent most of her time with children, wrapping gifts for the corps’ Christmas Present Appeal.

The children also performed a festive song while a Salvation Army band played some carols for the guests.

Territorial leaders for the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland, Commissioners Anthony and Gill Cotterill, gave the guests a tour of the corps’ facilities.

“I was proud to highlight Clapton Corps’ work with the local community,”

said Commissioner Anthony Cotterill. “Majors Karl and Ruth Gray have run the Clapton Corps for 16 years and have worked hard to meet the needs of local people. From food parcels to after-school clubs, their team works tirelessly to reach out to those who need us most.”

Mrs Trump and Mrs Johnson also donated gifts to the corps’ Christmas appeal.



US First Lady Melania Trump wraps Christmas presents with children at Clapton Corps.

MERVYN FRISBY-SMITH



MERVYN FRISBY-SMITH, OF Adelaide Congress Hall, was promoted to glory on 12 October 2019, aged 84. Majors John and Wanda

McKeand conducted a service of thanksgiving and celebration at the Heysen Chapel, Centennial Park Cemetery, Adelaide. Grandson Nick Frisby-Smith read from the Scriptures and tributes were given by Mervyn's brother Roy, son David and a group of his 11 grandchildren. In the tributes, it was pointed out that Mervyn loved nature, sport, music and carpentry. He was also an avid collector of stamps and coins.

Mervyn was born on 21 August 1935 to Gordon and Merle Frisby-Smith and spent his childhood on the family market garden in Fulham, Adelaide, with his siblings Valerie, June and Roy. His family had a Baptist background, but they joined the Army while Mervyn was still a child. He learned to play a brass instrument and joined the Adelaide Congress Hall band, playing baritone and bass.

After leaving school, Mervyn worked at the family market garden and shared a milk round with his father, who was assistant Young People's Sergeant Major at Adelaide Congress Hall. During this time, Mervyn felt the call of God to serve as an officer in The Salvation Army. Consequently, Mervyn entered Officer Training College in 1959 as a member of the *Pioneers* session of cadets.

Mervyn served for 15 years as a lieutenant and then captain until ill health forced him to resign. He married Lieutenant Margaret Miller on 18 January 1964, and they had four children – David, Jenny, Roslyn and Christine (dec.). Some of their appointments as corps officers were at Stawell, Williamstown (both Vic.), Thebarton and Kadina (both SA). In 1970, while serving at Williamstown, Mervyn was one of the first relief workers to respond to the collapse of the Westgate Bridge.

After resigning from officership the Frisby-Smith family soldiered at Adelaide Congress Hall. Now with his Heavenly Father, Mervyn was a devoted, loving and generous person with a great sense of humour.

MARGARET WILSON

MARGARET WILSON, OF FLOREAT CORPS, Perth, was promoted to glory on 28 October 2019. Almost 250 people packed the citadel for her service of thanksgiving, which showed the influence she had on so many lives.

Margaret Cake was born in Hobart in 1937 when her parents, Herbert and Agnes Cake, were Corps Officers at Ranelagh (Tas.). After leaving school, Margaret married Len Webster at Leederville Corps, Perth, in March 1958. They served in ministry positions in Victoria and South Australia but tragedy struck in December 1967 when Len lost his life in an accident while he was serving at the Bayswater Youth Training Home (Vic.). This left Margaret a widow at the age of 29, caring for five children under the age of nine.

In 1971, Margaret and her little family made the huge move back to Western Australia where she had family to assist. She renewed links with Floreat Corps and gained employment as a nursing sister at Royal Perth Hospital Annexe, a position she held for five years, moving up to a special role as a clinical instructor. She was then offered a position as director of a new Salvation Army child care centre in Balga and for the next 21 years child care became her life.

During this period of her life, Margaret married Russell Wilson in 1981 and continued to soldier at Floreat, being involved as a songster, corps cadet counsellor, recruiting sergeant and also led several Bible study groups.

Margaret retired in August 1996 due to health concerns. She loved the Lord, loved The Salvation Army and was an integral member of the Floreat Corps church family.

MARIE TOWERS



MARIE LORRAINE TOWERS, of Macarthur Corps (NSW), was promoted to glory on 28 September 2019, aged 85. Lieutenant

Nicola Poore conducted Marie's funeral service on 4 October at Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Leppington. Major Evelyn Sneller led the congregation in the Lord's Prayer, Pam Apolony brought a corps tribute, and Major Phyllis Thorley and Christine Miles read from the Scriptures. Marie had also chosen 'Amazing Grace' and 'What the Lord Has Done in Me' to be sung.

Marie Lorraine Topham was born on 27 March 1934, the eldest daughter of Herbert and Dorothy Topham, of Mascot, Sydney. She attended school in nearby Rosebery and, after graduating, was employed for 10 years at the Rosebery Sweetacres factory.

Marie married Bryan Towers in 1954 and they had one son, Lindsay. After Bryan died suddenly in 1968, Marie cared for her ageing parents in their home. She became involved in leadership of Girl Guides, Boy Scouts and Cubs, and Botany Council gave her a civic reception for her loyal work with these groups.

In 1993, Marie moved to Carrington Retirement Village in Camden. She became involved with the Army in Campbelltown and then Narellan, where she was enrolled as a senior soldier in 1997. She loved serving in Community Care work at local nursing homes, in street ministry, Friendship Group, and Salvation Army Emergency Services.

Throughout her life, Marie managed and overcame myasthenia gravis, a chronic autoimmune neuromuscular disease. Supported by a vast network of good friends and loving relationships, she lived life to the full and her faithful care for others often took priority over her own health concerns. This gracious, humble, tender-hearted woman made a difference in this world and is greatly missed.

ABOUT PEOPLE

APPOINTMENTS

Effective 23 December 2019

Lieutenant Sharnna **Ainsworth**, Support Officer, Mornington Peninsula, Victoria Division (additional appointment).

Effective 8 January

Major Lauriee **Arthur**, Officer in Charge and Red Shield Defence Services Senior Representative, Enoggera, Qld, RSDS Chaplaincy Stream, Community Engagement. Major Graeme **Craig**, Adults Ministry Secretary, Australia Mission Support.

Major Mavis **Salt**, Consultant, Adults Ministry, Australia Mission Support.

Aux-Lieut David **Hopewell**, Corps Officer, Singleton, NSW/ACT Division.

Aux-Lieut Val **Hopewell**, Corps Officer, Singleton, NSW/ACT Division.

Major Naava **Brooks**, Manager, Graceville Services (WA) Social Mission.

Major Deidre **Dearing**, Positive Lifestyle Program, State Coordinator, Western Australia Division (additional appointment).

Effective 20 January

Major Cathy **Elkington**, Personal and Spiritual Formation Coordinator, Officer Formation Stream, Eva Burrows College.

Effective 30 January

Captain Susan **Lamotte**, Corps Officer, Whittlesea Victoria Division.

Effective 1 February

Captain Lai **Li**, Assistant to the Chief Secretary,

New Zealand, Fiji, Samoa and Tonga Territory.

Effective 3 February

Major Evonne **Packer**, Client Participation Manager, Policy and Standards Team, Professional Standards and Quality.

Effective 13 February

Captain Bindy **Lupis**, Youth and Young Adults Secretary NSW/ACT, Mission Support.

Captain Susanne **Geracia**, Children's Secretary, NSW/ACT, Mission Support.

Major John **Viles**, Corps Officer, Inner West Sydney, NSW/ACT Division.

Major Nicole **Viles**, Manager, Stanmore House, Property Department.

Effective 17 February

Aux-Lieut Deb **Strapp**, Associate Officer, Unley Corps South Australia Division.

ENGAGEMENT CALENDAR

COMMISSIONERS JANINE AND ROBERT DONALDSON (TERRITORIAL LEADERS)

- 11 Feb – Leading a Large Corps Conference, Collaroy.
- 16 Feb – Sunshine Corps 100-year Celebration.
- 19 Feb – Retired Officers Fellowship, Camberwell Corps.
- 21-22 Feb – WA Missions Conference.

COLONEL WINSOME MERRETT (CHIEF SECRETARY)

- 4 Feb – Welcome to Cadets, Melbourne.
- 16 Feb – Welcome and Installation of Divisional Leaders, Adelaide.

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A GODLY FAMILY INFLUENCE CHANGED EVERYTHING FOR ME

WORDS JASON McDONALD

WHEN I CAME TO THE SALVATION ARMY, I was a fairly broken man, definitely in spirit, but also emotionally, mentally and physically. I'm now 47, but I was out on the street on my own at the age of 14. From the age of 17, I became one of those blokes going in and out, in and out of prison, just as William Booth (Salvation Army founder) once said. Some of my time was spent in maximum security prisons and, you know, I was just hurt and broken.

My first contact with The Salvation Army came through a friend I was travelling with at the time. That friend required some assistance and I was basically just tagging along but, I believe now that it was God drawing me to The Salvation Army. That was the start of my long recovery process with the Salvos. Over the years, I spent a lot of time in Salvation Army rehabilitation centres, five times actually, in and out, in and out. I could never complete the program. I was normally thrown out for being aggressive and violent. I have also stayed in homeless men's shelters with The Salvation Army all over Australia.

Then I came to Rockingham in Western Australia, and it was the turning point in my life. Essentially, there was something strikingly different going on to what I had seen before. I got some accommodation and across the road there was an organisation, a Christian organisation, and they had a house there. A married couple ran it, and they basically invited people into their home. It thoroughly impacted me. Here I was, disenfranchised from my own family and these people invited me into their home, and they loved me and cared for me. The bloke that was heading up the house, he introduced me to Jesus Christ. It was amazing.



Jason McDonald (left) with Commissioner Robert Donaldson at Rockingham Corps.

“
It was an overnight change. Seriously. I had *heard* about God before, but when I finally *experienced* God and his love for me, that changed things in an instant.”

It was an overnight change. Seriously. I had *heard* about God before, but when I finally *experienced* God and his love for me, that changed things in an instant. I made a vow to never be in a place again where I'm separated from where God is at work, in my life and those around me.

Church was the next step, and I started to go to Rockingham Salvos that was open every day across the road. First thing in

the morning I would pray to God that I'd have the opportunity, somewhere over at The Salvation Army, to share what I was learning about God, maybe just to be a gentle ear for someone in need. It was awesome.

From the start, Rockingham Salvos has essentially loved and supported me and encouraged me. Jesus invites us into a family, and that's what's been shown to me at the corps, through the people there, and I think it's definitely a way of living, loving and fighting, just like that vision statement for the Army says.

I'm studying theology and volunteering three days a week with our corps outreach ministry. I also attend the Rockingham Pallet Ministry Men's Shed. It's a gathered community of believers getting around others. And this year our Discipleship House opened, and I am a lead tenant. My vision is to eventually move into chaplaincy – I'm thinking definitely around prison ministries and working with people that are in and out, in and out, of prison.*

* As told to Lauren Martin

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Each year the Self Denial Appeal challenges you to give one week's salary on missionary service. But did you know you can pledge your gift as a yearlong sacrifice?

Giving your gift as a regular donation enables you to steward your finances throughout the year. It helps you build your generosity into your budget and transform lives on an ongoing basis.

Your donations are recorded and tallied prior to the Altar Service, so you know what you've given and what sacrifice you may still be able to make. You'll be able to participate in the Altar Service by marking your envelope as a regular giver.

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