

THE WAR CRY



NOVEMBER
2025



Cyber Services / A Second Look at the Second Coming / Champions of the Mission

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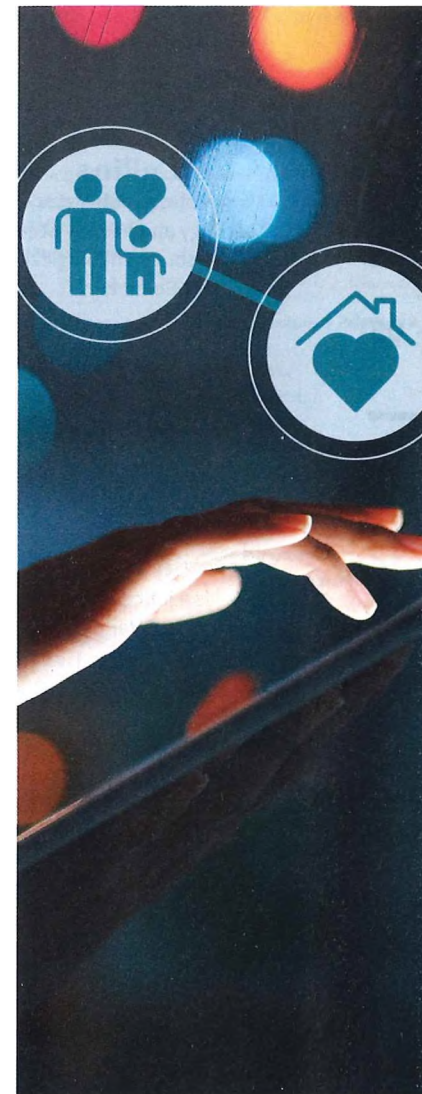


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NOVEMBER 2025 | CONTENTS

FEATURE



18

Cyber Services: The Army Tests Digital Innovation with SAHelp

A case study in embracing new technology to advance the mission.

22

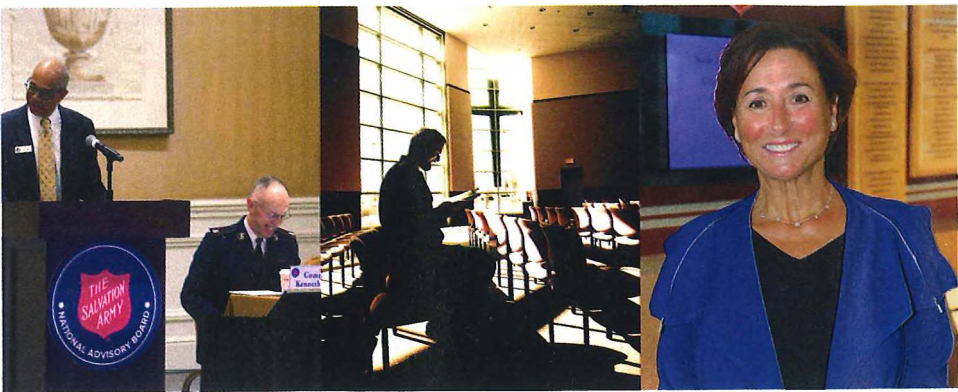
A Second Look at the Second Coming

A biblical call to holiness in light of Christ's second coming.

26

Meet the Champions of the Mission

Meet four newly-commissioned lieutenants from the Champions of the Mission session.



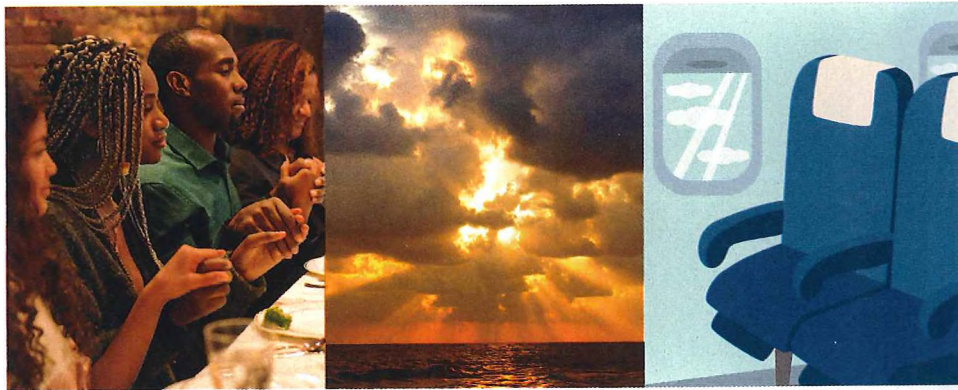
From the National Secretary for Program 05

THE MISSION

Frontlines 08

Army 101 14

Salvation Story 16



THE WAY

The Word 30

Formación Espiritual 34

Spiritual Formation 36

Healthy Habits 38

Going Deeper 40

The Good Life 42

Front Cover **MATT CHINWORTH**
Back Cover by **NINA HUNTER**

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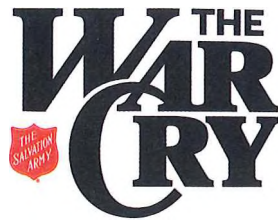
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OUR MISSION

The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian church. **Its message** is based on the Bible. **Its ministry** is motivated by the love of God. **Its mission** is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination.



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FROM THE NATIONAL SECRETARY FOR PROGRAM

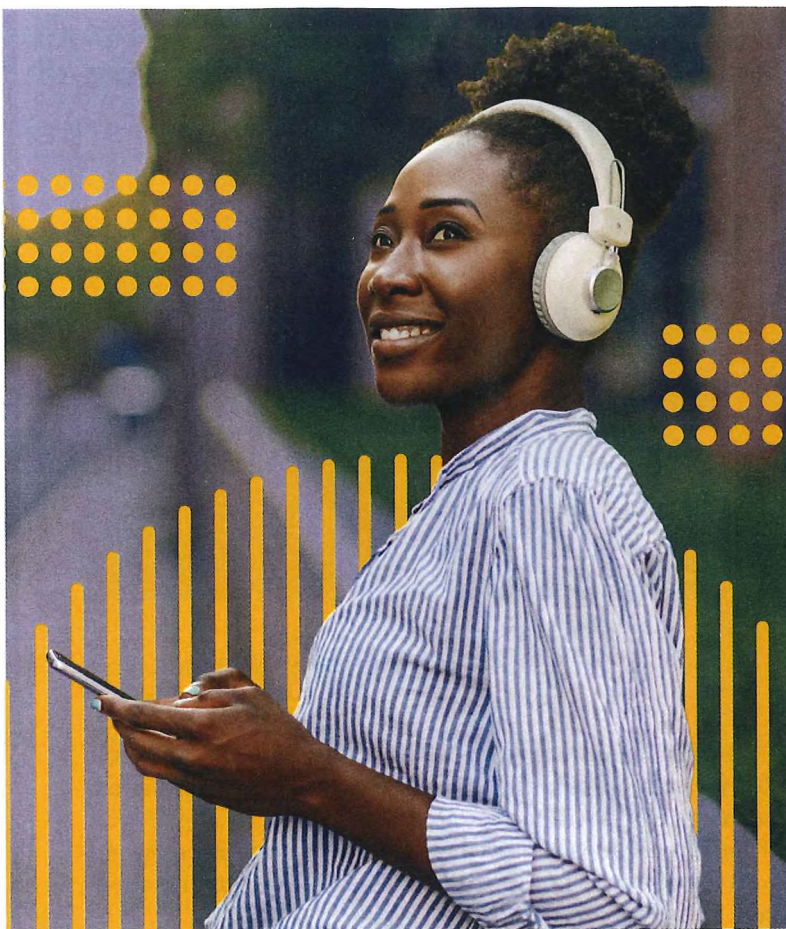


Give Thanks

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18 (NIV) STATES, “REJOICE always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”
These three verses always challenge me — make me stop and think: Is this who I am? Some days, I get it right, and some days, not so much.

Many years ago, I was having a difficult time finding things to be thankful for, and the Lord challenged me to look around and find them. So, I began a journal of thankfulness — it’s a list — now a very long list, as I have continued to add to the list all the time. I began by listing ten things I was thankful for, so by the end of one month, I had 300 things! A few years after that, I wrote down five things every single day for a full year; there were over 1,500 entries. Now, I try to always look for things to be thankful for — the weather, the sight of fireflies after not seeing them for 10 years, my garden, fresh strawberries ... so many things, big and small. I still don’t always get it right, but when I begin to find myself complaining, I go back to that thankfulness journal and read through all the things that I have been thankful for in the past and then add a few more entries to the list.

I hope that this season, you can find things to be thankful for. But if you are struggling to do that, I recommend starting a thankfulness journal or a list. What would be first on your list? Happy Thanksgiving. 🙏



Board Matters Podcast

The Salvation Army serves every ZIP code in the United States. On the Board Matters Podcast, Dale Bannon interviews the leaders who make that work possible. From executives at Fortune 500 companies to community heroes who inspire with their selfless service, each episode features a guest who exemplifies what it means to do the most good through The Salvation Army.

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| FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Thanks-Giving

IN THE NATIONAL PUBLICATIONS DEPARTMENT, THE NOVEMBER ISSUE MARKS the end of the year. Our work on the Christmas issue has to be done very early so it can be printed and distributed to corps and institutions for all their special holiday events, so November is the last regular issue for us. As we came to November this year, I asked several members of the department to reflect on 2025 and describe some behind-the-scenes blessings. Here are just four representative answers:

Caleb, managing editor: I am thankful for our amazing team that makes publishing each issue of The War Cry possible, and for the impact of The War Cry. In 2023-2024, more than 1,300 people responded that they received Christ by reading The War Cry.

Makeda, production manager: This year, I am especially thankful for a faithful volunteer whose thoughtful feedback and quiet dedication help bring each issue of The War Cry to life. Our magazine is a collaborative labor of love, shaped not only by the names you see in print but also by many unsung heroes whose faithfulness ensures that the message of the gospel reaches hearts across the world.

Andrea, art director: In this current climate, where so many are facing uncertainty and job loss, I'm especially thankful to have steady work. I'm grateful for the publications team, whose dedication and collaboration make our work both impactful and rewarding.

Hana, graphic designer: I am grateful to the readers of The War Cry. Whenever I hear that readers have gained strength or found a sense of connection through the magazine, I feel both rewarded and thankful as one of the people who create it.

As editor-in-chief, I am so thankful for the teamwork and creativity I see each day as the entire Publications team works together to produce The War Cry, Peer magazine, Word & Deed journal, and Crest Books. It is truly a joy to work with such a dedicated, gifted group of people. I am especially grateful for the extended team that includes our monthly columnists – Major Jenny Ortman, Majors Amy and Rob Reardon, Majors Angela and David Repass, Captain Stephanie Pavlakis, and Envoys Bill and Diane Ury – all of whom are busy with their own appointments. Their above-and-beyond ministry of writing is truly a labor of love. It is our combined prayer that this and every issue of The War Cry will be a blessing to you. 🙏

THE WAR CRY

The purpose of **THE WAR CRY**, the official national publication of **The Salvation Army** in the United States, is the same as that for which the Army itself was called into being: to **COMMUNICATE** the **CHRISTIAN GOSPEL**, to bring people to experience **JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOR** and to **INSPIRE** them by **HIS EXAMPLE**.



Clockwise from top left of page: In 2023, the NAB meets in Puerto Rico, featuring local entertainers; NAB members work in Salvation Army community garden; The NAB visits Capitol Hill in 2024; Jerry Jones and Second Lady Marilyn Quayle at NAB meeting in 1999.



From top to bottom of page: National Commander Commissioner Merle Heatwole with NAB members working in warehouse; Commissioner Dawn Heatwole joins NAB for service projects; Earlier this year, the General visits the NAB at its meeting in Las Vegas.



This month, we are praying for:

- Latin America North Territory (November 3-9)
- Eastern Europe Territory (November 10-16)
- Middle East Region (November 17-23)
- The Philippines Territory (November 24-30)

The National Advisory Board Turns 50!

The National Advisory Board (NAB) celebrated 50 years of service within The Salvation Army in October 2025. Beginning in 1975, the NAB exists to support the national Salvation Army with counsel, networking and fundraising support. Prominent members of the NAB have included First Lady Laura Bush, Second Lady Marilyn Quayle, and Jerry Jones, owner and general manager of the Dallas Cowboys. Today, the NAB continues to be vital to achieving the mission of The Salvation Army in the USA.

Ministry at the Speed of Wi-Fi

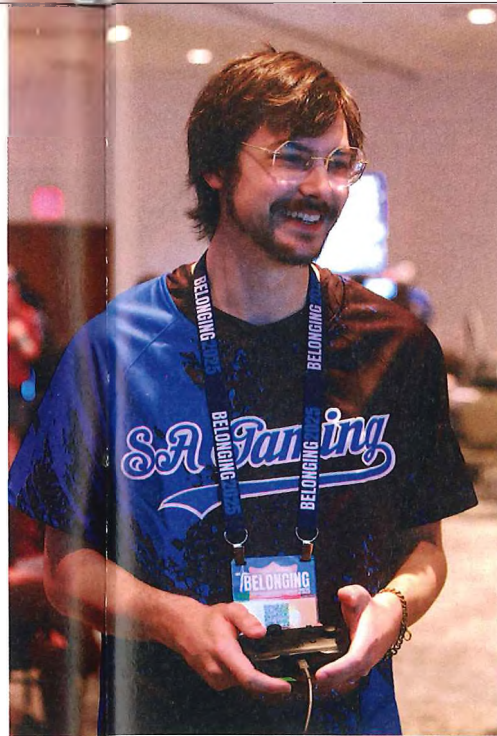
by DAVID REARDON

ZANE KOEHLER IS A SALVATIONIST WITH A passion for ministry, but also a passion for video games. When he played “Halo” competitively throughout high school and college, he experienced firsthand how toxic gaming culture could be. For years, he tried to start a Salvation Army gaming (SA Gaming) community, but nothing came of his efforts until March 2020.

At that time, Zane was working in the youth department at the Central Territory’s headquarters, where he still serves today, when he successfully pitched his supervisors the idea of a faith-based gaming network. As COVID-19 began shutting down the world, SA Gaming was born. Using the messaging platform Discord, Salvationist gamers began to congregate online every other Friday to play Fortnite together as a community. “Essentially SA Gaming is a creative, positive, encouraging community and ministry where gamers who love video games and Jesus can come together,” said Zane. “If gamers don’t know who Jesus is, we hope that they will learn to know who He is from our actions and how we talk with them.”

When Zane livestreams the SA Gaming events on Twitch (@xEnzanebeat), he’s sure to add a healthy dose of Gospel to the gaming. Each session includes a devotional, often tied to a popular game such as Fortnite or Minecraft — and devotional thoughts are posted to Discord for players to reflect on during the week. “We’re not just playing video games, there is a whole ministry aspect to it,” Zane said.

Captain Nate Woodard (Twitch @PastorNaterade) of the Olathe, KS corps also streams for SA Gaming. “To me, SA Gaming is the new street corner,” said Captain Nate Woodard. “It’s the new tent meetings of The Salvation Army like when it first started. What was beneficial about the tent meetings was that’s where the people were. Often, these meetings would happen outside of bars ... this is where the people are.” Captain Nate brings what he calls a “tent meeting attitude” to his digital ministry throughout the week, which often features devotionals and moments of prayer, during which viewers can share prayer requests in real time. He often invites other officers as guests and regularly collaborates with other Christian streamers.



“ ... [Gaming] is the new tent meeting of The Salvation Army ... ”

“Last kettle season, we did a ‘Ring on Stream’ event and raised \$1,300 as a community for our corps,” said Captain Nate. “I streamed for 14 straight days and brought someone on each day. I brought our area commander on, and we played. I brought people from around our territory and asked them about their faith. It was a meaningful experience, but also lighthearted fun.” The streamathon included donation milestones such as Captain Nate adorning his beard with glitter, getting pied in the face, and drinking random concoctions crafted by his wife and kids. The event showcased how SA Gaming’s stream exemplifies the diverse ways it can challenge the often unkind culture of gaming by creating Christ-centered spaces rooted in kindness.

“I remember looking up to people who played musical instruments and led worship at youth councils,” said Captain Nate. “I wanted to be like them and lead worship, and now I get to do that.

There are some very, very good gamers who are Salvationists. What would it look like to have a route of discipleship to teach them how to be a safe gamer? He believes this includes equipping young Salvationist streamers to live out their faith online. “If they want to stream, they can use their witness. God is calling you because of your witness,” he said. “You can stream in a positive environment. You don’t have to cuss. You don’t have to promote negative things. You can share your testimony, and you can create a space where others can too.”

The SA Gaming community has organically taken on a life of its own, with players becoming friends and gaming with each other outside of official events. This, Zane says, is a good thing—it allows him to focus on expanding into in-person ministry. At the Central Territory Congress this year, Zane hosted a gaming tournament, a long-time dream. General Lyndon Buckingham even joined in for a round of Mario Kart. One moment especially stood out for Zane: a couple of kids recognized each other by voice alone and were thrilled to meet in person.

“There’s something special about gaming [together] in person that the kids don’t always expect,” he said. “It’s cool to see those relationships blossom.” Zane noted that SA Gaming’s culture has fostered friendships across generations, bridging the gap between millennials and Gen Z. Zane has been hosting gaming events at corps across the Central Territory, where attendance has con-



sistently exceeded expectations. These events also serve as practical demonstrations for corps officers, showing just how accessible a gaming ministry can be. But Zane's vision is even bigger.

He envisions a competitive SA Gaming network in every territory, with both online and in-person tournaments. These could lead to divisional championships at youth councils, then territorial finals at commissioning, all culminating in a national SA Gaming conference weekend. Such a conference could include worship services, workshops, and even keynote speakers from the gaming community — perhaps even popular streamer Tyler Blevins, better known as “Ninja,” who has recently begun sharing more about his faith. There would be plenty of opportunities for bigger faith-based streamers to get involved and talk about keeping their faith in the gaming industry.

Workshops could cover topics like gaming-related careers (like coding, graphic design, web development and streaming) and mental health. Sessions for parents and leaders could help them support the young gamers in their lives, while providing practical tools for hosting gaming nights at their corps. “I would love for leaders, pastors and parents to see it's more than just playing video games,” Zane said. “Careers can be made out of it, and lives can be changed from it.”

Captain Nate agrees. “I hope we can take some kids under our wings and teach them how to be safe streamers. Maybe even sponsor some professional gamers,” he said. “Give them the tools to succeed and be a missionary, be someone sharing the Gospel out there for others. Because there are millions of people watching streams every day, and to me, that's what SA Gaming is. I see it as an opportunity to bring a bright space to what can be sometimes a dark area of life.”



The greatest goal remains bringing the Gospel to the gamer. With all the dedication of Zane, Captain Nate and the wider SA Gaming community, the top priority continues to be cultivating a safe, family-friendly, faith-based environment where people can play video games together and come to know Jesus more and more. Captain Nate put it best when he likened the ministry to William Booth's defense of setting Christian lyrics to popular secular tunes: “Why should the Devil have all the best tunes?” SA Gaming won't let the devil have all the best games. 



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PROMOTED TO GLORY

Commissioner Robert Watson (RTD.)

AUGUST 11, 1934 – SEPTEMBER 8, 2025



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At 20, while Bob was working at a company known globally for its innovations with steel, he was informed by the president that he would be given the best schooling at no cost to become one of their world-class engineers. While tempted, Bob expressed his thanks for the offer and confidently explained God had called him to be a Salvation Army officer. The gentleman was flummoxed, but 50 years later, after more than 44 years of officer ministry, Commissioner Watson found himself consulting on the development of the Philadelphia Kroc Center, which now stands on the long-abandoned site of that firm.

In 1954, Bob entered the “Soul Winners” session at the Training College in the Bronx from the Philadelphia Pioneer Corps. He was also courting Alice Irwin, whom he had met at a youth rally. Lt. Robert Watson was com-

pact across the USA and the world, first as national chief secretary (1993) and finally as National Commander (1995). At his installation as National Commander, Commissioner Watson said, “More than anything else, we want our lives, our ministry and this occasion to lift up Jesus Christ.”

In 1999, Commissioner Watson presided over the High Council before retiring later that year on August 30. In retirement, Commissioner Watson engaged vigorously for another 21 years in a variety of ministry ventures, including teaching in many board, university and retreat settings on themes in his book, *The Most Effective Organization in the U.S.*, translated into many languages around the globe. Commissioner Watson prioritized his responsibilities as a local soldier. Always a bandsman, his tuba owned the trunk of the car. 

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PROMOTED TO GLORY

Commissioner Robert Watson (RTD.)

AUGUST 11, 1934 – SEPTEMBER 8, 2025

GENERAL ROBERT WATSON WAS PROMOTED TO Glory on September 8, 2025. He was 91. He is survived by his wife, Commissioner Alice E. Watson, son Major Robert Watson and his wife Captain Anita, daughter Major Carol Ditmer and her husband Major Steve, and son Charles Watson and his wife Deborah, along with eight grandchildren and eleven great grandchildren.



Robert Watson (Bob) was born in Philadelphia, the third of six siblings, and spent his younger years in Goldsboro, North Carolina and Richmond, Virginia. The family eventually found their way back to Philadelphia, where Bob graduated from high school.

Bob first encountered The Salvation Army when his mother, Verdie, connected with the local Salvation Army for food assistance. The officers and soldiers shared food and hospitality. Soon, the Watson family was immersed in the whole life and mission of the corps. The kind investments of local Salvationist fellowships wherever the family landed helped lift them out of poverty, changed the course of generations to come, and established them in the grand purposes and service of Christ.

At 20, while Bob was working at a company known globally for its innovations with steel, he was informed by the president that he would be given the best schooling at no cost to become one of their world-class engineers. While tempted, Bob expressed his thanks for the offer and confidently explained God had called him to be a Salvation Army officer. The gentleman was flummoxed, but 50 years later, after more than 44 years of officer ministry, Commissioner Watson found himself consulting on the development of the Philadelphia Kroc Center, which now stands on the long-abandoned site of that firm.

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missioned to the Queens (Jamaica Citadel), NY Corps in 1955. Alice became a cadet that fall, and they were married on June 22, 1957.

The Watsons had corps appointments in Queens (Ridgewood Citadel), NY, Brooklyn (Citadel), NY and Akron (Citadel), OH. They enjoyed fruitful years as youth leaders in Southern New England. Major Bob then had a special assignment to restructure Eastern Territorial Headquarters and subsequently flourished in a new territorial role focused on evangelism. After serving together for 11 years as divisional leaders in Eastern New York, Empire State and Western Pennsylvania, Colonel Robert Watson was appointed as secretary for personnel in 1987 and Chief Secretary in 1989.

His final six years of active service expanded his impact across the USA and the world, first as national chief secretary (1993) and finally as National Commander (1995). At his installation as National Commander, Commissioner Watson said, “More than anything else, we want our lives, our ministry and this occasion to lift up Jesus Christ.”

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Our Doctrines: Faith Seeking Understanding

by LT. COLONEL DAN JENNINGS

OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS, WE HAVE HAD AN INCREDIBLE JOURNEY THROUGH THE ELEVEN DOCTRINES of The Salvation Army. It has been good to rehearse these statements, which make up the core beliefs of those of us who call ourselves Salvationists. The doctrines are foundational to our understanding of what we believe.

The progression in doctrine, what we believe, teach, and defend, is a crucial aspect of our faith. Belief plays a central role in the formation of doctrine. Our agreed-upon theology informs and guides it. For instance, our belief in the centrality of the Bible in our lives as believers is deeply rooted in our faith. Inspired scriptures are definitive for the practice of the Christian life. What we believe about God is captured in doctrines 1-4. Our understanding of humanity, particularly the fallen nature of humanity, is described in doctrine 5. We state our belief in what happens in the “dynamic interaction of God’s grace, our response, and God’s action in our lives,” as our Handbook of Doctrine puts it.

Doctrines are fundamental to what we teach. We have handed down from generation to generation these 11 foundational beliefs or, as some have called them, statements of faith. Because the doctrines are deeply held beliefs, we must help others understand why we believe these statements to be factual. In the book of Titus, the early believers were admonished to teach what aligns with sound doctrine. (Titus 2:1). The Bible raises the importance of avoiding unsound, contrary, and flimsy doctrine that flies in on the wind. Positively stated, it encourages the teaching of excellent or sound doctrine.

The third progression in our definition of doctrine is defending our beliefs. This is not to say that we must become apologists for the doctrines, but rather that what we believe and teach can withstand scrutiny. Paul tells the church in Thessalonica to test everything and hold onto to what is good

(1 Thessalonians 5:21). Remember that our statements of faith are doctrine, not dogma. There is a difference between the two concepts. Doctrines are declared and agreed to statements of faith that are adopted and taught.

In contrast, dogma, in its most general understanding, is the creedal beliefs held to be impassive, authoritative, and revelatory. Dogma will overlap some areas of theology and doctrine. Dogma is the broad, irrefutable truth of the faith. If we can understand these differences, we can find the freedom to test and challenge our teachings. Rather than diminishing them, testing our beliefs strengthens our faith and practice. Doctrinal statements can also evolve over time. Sometimes, that is because of the testing that it undergoes. Sometimes, it is a maturation process. One example to consider related to this is the church doctrine regarding Scripture. What we believe today regarding the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament would not have been possible in the early church. The church had not established clear boundaries around which letters circulated among the individual churches would be accepted. Our Salvation Army doctrines have changed from their earliest version. We brought forward the doctrines of the Methodist New Connexion in the earliest days of the Army. It was not until 1878 that official doctrines we now adhere to were adopted.

Interestingly, our doctrines were nearly identical to what we had borrowed, with some modest edits. The previous New Connexion doctrines were tested. William Cooke, whom William Booth studied under, published a defense of the princi-

ples and polity of the Methodist New Connexion in 1859. It should be noted that the doctrines of The Salvation Army have stayed the same over the last nearly 160 years.

Now that we know what they are, what do we do with them? In our tradition, we ask those seeking to become soldiers to study them and declare that they believe them true. The officer responsible for the soldiers’ enrollment often asks the recruits to affirm their faith by reciting the 11 doctrines. This formal enrollment ceremony is preceded by a period of study and instruction leading up to enrollment. Being enrolled as soldiers should only be seen as a launching point for Salvationists. Our interaction with the doctrines should not end with the enrollment ceremony. I want to suggest a few essential ways to engage with our doctrines as Salvationists.

The Christian material that we interact with should be filtered through the doctrines. We are in an unprecedented age of information accessibility. What we have access to read, watch, and listen to is endless. There are many beneficial materials that we have access to. There is also quick access to materials that are incompatible with our doctrines. I am a proponent of hearing a broad range of thoughts and opinions. It helps to make us more well-rounded individuals and expands our horizons. However, we should be able to determine how these broad-ranging thoughts interact with our doctrine.

What we teach in the context of The Salvation Army should always uphold our doctrines. It is essential that we carefully develop materials, lesson plans, and learning outcomes that are consistent with those established doctrines. It can be easy to sacrifice doctrine for form and functionality. I recently reviewed some materials that were incredibly well crafted and looked terrific. Someone put a massive amount of effort into the look and feel of the materials. However, there were some severe deltas between what we believe as Salvationists and what the material was attempting to teach.

Both those who preach and those who receive the messages have a responsibility to weigh what is being preached by the standard of our doctrines. Preaching is a sacred duty. It should always be based on God’s Word first, and secondly, be guided by sound doctrine. We who hear the message are also responsible for weighing what we hear preached by sound doctrine. Messages should never be essays that convey opinions and unvetted thoughts. Sermons and devotionals are teachings and, as such, fall under the umbrella of doctrine (what we teach). To accomplish this responsibility, we should return to the doctrines and God’s word to help us give and receive sound doctrine. I am excited that we have these articles to help point us to what we believe, teach, and defend — our doctrines. 



IMAGES VIA SALVATIONARMY REDSHIELD TOOLKIT

YOU HAD ME AT ‘HELLO’

by MAJOR FRANK DURACHER

THE LAST KROC CENTER BUILT IN THE UNITED States had in Liz Thomas, its first most passionate advocate for the project selected in Camden, New Jersey. And it wasn't a hard sell.

"My introduction to The Salvation Army was nothing short of a "God" thing," Liz recalls of an encounter more than 20 years ago.

"I was walking up the steps going into a diner here in Camden, and holding the door open for me was an old friend, Steve Dixon, whom I hadn't seen in quite a while."

Standing behind Steve was his new boss, Major Paul Cain, whom he introduced to Liz.

"I asked Steve, Major of what? And he told me that he was now working for The Salvation Army. Then Major Paul gave me this big bear hug!"

At the time, Liz admits, she was familiar with The Salvation Army's brand but little else. That would soon change. As she learned more, she became deeply involved in the ambitious project to bring a Ray & Joan Kroc Corps Community Center to Camden.

"From that point on, I met regularly with Majors Paul & Alma Cain — and our friendship continues to this day," she says.

Liz's public relations firm, Thomas/Boyd Communications (partnered with Pam Boyd), was a natural fit to provide strategic guidance and communication support for the capital campaign to make the vision of the Kroc center into a reality.

The more Liz learned about Joan Kroc's endowment — beginning with the first Kroc Center in San Diego and eventually expanding to 26 Kroc centers across the Army's four U.S. territories — the more she realized what a transformative impact a Kroc campus could have on Camden. At the time, the city was labeled the most dangerous in the nation. An economic recession had the community of Camden reeling with high unemployment, homelessness, and crime. That year, 39 people were murdered — 13 in one month alone, marking the worst period of violence in Camden, New Jersey since 1949.

Liz's leadership during the campaign helped recruit an army of volunteers tasked with calling corporations and foundations to gather public and private support — and secure the funding needed to unlock the endowment. But it wasn't just about raising money. Liz and her crew had to tackle major hurdles before and during construction. For just one example, she recalls, "The

proposed property was a hazardous landfill with thousands of old tires that needed to be removed. This required the state of New Jersey to work with us to clean the site up so that it could be built upon safely."

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection had to remediate the site before legally approving its safety and suitability. Only then could The Salvation Army take possession and turn the first spade of dirt.

It's a bit ironic, Liz notes, that the land itself had to be reclaimed — a fitting symbol for the many lives to be reclaimed by God in the years to come. "The number of tires was unbelievable," she adds. "And the dirty dirt had to be replaced with clean dirt." Liz says the group learned so much about construction and environmental remediation, but emphasizes: "Without the state of New Jersey and the city of Camden, this could not — would not — have happened!"

President Barack Obama later cited the Camden Kroc Center as a national model for public safety improvements and a powerful example of how communities can thrive when united by a common goal.

In October 2024, the Camden Kroc celebrated its 10th anniversary with a gala weekend. No surprise: Liz chaired the planning committee — her beloved "ambassadors."

The celebration kicked off Thursday with a media event highlighting the center's impact. Friday featured a large-scale Food & Goodies Drive-Thru Distribution. Saturday's "KrocFest" was a free public event "utilizing every inch of the campus," with community partners offering healthy living resources, arts, faith-based activities, aquatics, family fun, food and more. That evening featured a special program commemorating the center's 10 years of service and honoring key stakeholders. The weekend closed on Sunday with a church rededication and fellowship lunch.

"Over two million people have been served during this, our first decade of service in Camden. This is the heartbeat of our mission," said Benjamin Ovadia, the Kroc Center's community resource and development director. Liz downplays her role in the 20-plus-year journey, but there's no question the Camden Kroc is one of her passions. She admits that raising money and helping create opportunities for growth is deeply meaningful to her, but quickly adds, "There are a lot of people here who do way more than I do."

"I've been on other nonprofit boards," she says. "But while looking to fill something in my life to help people and my community, this one hit a chord."

Camden is changing, and the neighborhood continues to evolve. A bus stop now sits just outside the Kroc's front door, and a new medical center recently opened down the street.

The Camden Kroc — the 26th and final Ray & Joan Kroc Corps Community Center in the United States — is fulfilling its role in transforming both a community and the lives within it.

Many of Liz's original committee members from two decades ago (she still calls them "my ambassadors") are still part of her regular Zoom group. "Not a meeting goes by that someone doesn't bring up a wonderful memory of what it took to make the Kroc possible — and to keep it thriving," she says.

"The city of Camden was overwhelmed," said one resident, now a Kroc member. "This is the best thing that could ever happen to Camden — especially in this neighborhood."

That's why Liz Thomas is convinced that running into Steve Dixon and Major Paul Cain all those years ago was divinely ordained.

"Our Kroc meets the needs of people of all ages," she says. "It is everything we hoped it would be. My heart is very full for what is being done here." 



Liz Thomas with Benjamin Ovadia at the Camden Kroc's 10th anniversary.

Liz Thomas inside the Camden Kroc Center, celebrating more than 20 years of service.

IMAGES VIA GETTY



Cyber Services

The Army Tests
Digital Innovation
with SAHelp

by DAVID REARDON



SINCE ITS EARLIEST DAYS, THE SALVATION ARMY HAS LARGELY VIEWED new technology positively. Frederick Booth-Tucker, an officer and son-in-law of William Booth, wrote in 1880: “Let science multiply its telegraphs, its steamers, its railways, and effect the increasing shrinkage of the world. Every new device shall make more swiftly possible the salvation of the nations, and shall bring them more immediately within reach of the heavenly influences that radiate from Calvary. The modern apostle of the Cross can afford to rejoice in each fresh discovery, and can turn to consider how best it can be utilized for the one great purpose to which he has consecrated his life.”

A great example of innovative use of technology is The Salvation Army in Australia’s Limelight Department, which produced several films, including “Soldiers of the Cross” in 1900. The Joystings, a contemporary music group born out of the International Training College, fused traditional gospel songs with rock’n’roll, sharing the UK Top 50 chart in 1964 with artists like the Beatles. In 1972, NASA astronaut John Young even took a Salvation Army flag on the Apollo 16 mission, making it the only non-national flag to ever be transported to the moon.

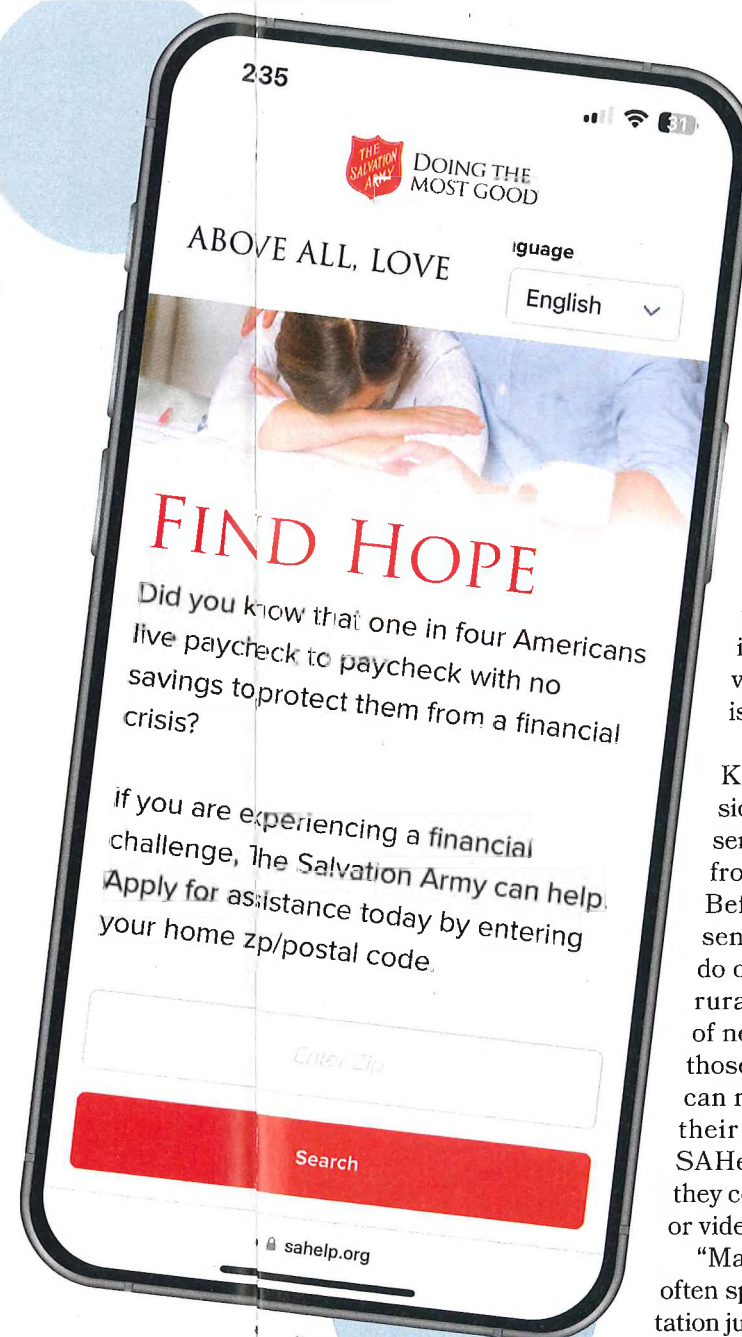
In March 2024, The Salvation Army of Columbus, GA began construction on its new 21,000-square-foot facility with space to house up to 17 homeless families. While the new facility promised to improve the Army’s ability to meet need in Columbus, its construction presented a challenge to the Army’s ongoing social services. “As we worked toward the construction of the Center of Hope, we were required to temporarily relocate our social services department to our corps building,” said Captain Andre Pereira of the Columbus corps. “Unfortunately, this facility is in a part of town with limited access to public transportation, creating substantial barriers for many of our clients.”

However, using technology, the Army found a solution, implementing online casework by using a new platform called SAHelp. A situation that could have significantly hindered vital case work became an opportunity to make the Army’s service in

Columbus more efficient. Captain Pereira concludes, “This transition has not only improved the client experience but also significantly eased the workload of our financial assistance staff. Each case is now processed in nearly half the time it once required.”

During the first COVID Christmas in 2020, Angel Tree, like many Army programs at the time, was struggling. With families unable to apply for Christmas assistance and donors unable to provide gifts, The Salvation Army went looking for a way to do online what it had done for decades in-person. “SAHelp came out of a need that was driven through COVID,” said Paul Booth, president and CEO of SAHelp’s developer, Data Paradigm Inc. (DPI). “The Salvation Army has an immense network of social services systems in place, and people and personnel in place, and it was met with a real challenge in 2020, and that is folks didn’t want to show up. Angel Tree was in jeopardy, a great many of the services it was providing were threatened, and we were asked to put a remote system in place.”

The resulting website was used by approximately 850 units during that Christmas season and received excellent reviews. For many users, the implication of the success of that Angel Tree program was that the Army had more potential to realize in further embracing web-based services, which eventually led to the development of SAHelp—a revolutionary remote registration and case management platform for social services.



IMAGES VIA GETTY AND THE SALVATION ARMY

SAHelp allows the Army to facilitate a variety of social service programs, from food banks to rental assistance to emergency disaster services, over the web. Additionally, the app also enables the Army to maintain a longtime hallmark of its ministry: its holistic approach. The software often makes receiving and processing information for clients more efficient. Simultaneously, it also features built in text and video call features, allowing for intentional communication even when an in-person consultation isn’t possible.

The Paducah Corps in the Kentucky and Tennessee division serves seven counties. Their service area is two and a half hours from one side to the other by car. Before SAHelp, the corps would send one person once a month to do onsite visits with their clients in rural communities, keeping track of needs with pen and paper. Now those people living in remote areas can receive help through an app on their phones—90% of clients use SAHelp on mobile devices—while they communicate via text, phone call or video chat.

“Many of the individuals we serve often spend limited funds on transportation just to reach our location in hopes of receiving help. SAHelp has significantly reduced these costs for our clients, while also enabling us to reach and assist more people overall,” said Captain Benny Carringer of the Paducah Corps. “In addition, SAHelp has become an invaluable tool

in showcasing the impact of our services to other local nonprofits and service providers. It strengthens our community partnerships and fosters collaboration in the social services space.” Captain Carringer went on to praise SAHelp for allowing a hands-on, collaborative approach to engaging with clients, which he said makes a meaningful difference.

The technological optimism of the Army’s early days extends to the present as various systems and digital tools support The Salvation Army’s day-to-day services. Key to realizing new technological capabilities is the Army’s reliance on developers that assist with creating applications specific for the Army’s use, developers like DPI. DPI made SAHelp customizable and adaptable to a location’s needs. “It’s like a smorgasbord. They can take a little of this, they can put that back there,” said Paul Booth. “Use it, don’t, it’s up to you—it’s entirely your call.”

The Salvation Army doesn’t need cutting-edge technology to be on the cutting-edge of ministry. Nevertheless, SAHelp continues to improve the Army’s capacity for meeting human needs across the country. Having partners like DPI builds upon the long legacy of Salvationists venturing into new technologies for the sake of God’s mission in The Salvation Army. Serving every US ZIP code and 134 countries at-large, The Salvation Army contextualizes the mission wherever it is present with each location acting as a kind of missional incubator. What works in one context may not be conducive or necessary in another. With a variety of approaches, technologies and tools, the aim of The Salvation Army remains the same: to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination. 

A Second Look at the **SECOND** Coming:

The Journey of Entire Sanctification

by DR. KENNETH COLLINS
illustration by MATT CHINWORTH

GOOD MAGICIANS CAN BE ESPECIALLY SUCCESSFUL IN THEIR CRAFT IF they can divert the attention of the viewers away from where the real action will take place to some glimmering, though unimportant, object. In a similar way, when some Christians talk about the doctrine of the second coming of Christ, which is important in and of itself, they almost immediately direct attention away from its scriptural context, through which it is properly understood, to other attention-grabbing matters that spark curiosity and interest, but in the end leave believers unmoved, even uninterested, in terms of such weighty matters as grace, faith and holiness.

If Christian believers turn around and orient themselves not to what is popular and vain, but to truth and sheer goodness, by focusing unswervingly on what Scripture has to say about the second coming, then a much different picture will emerge. Now the emphasis will be not on speculation but on transformation, not on an intellectual head game, but on personally challenging repentance, not on a fleeting and empty curiosity, but on the substance, the genuine good, of lasting Christian formation in holiness beginning right here and right now.



But the misdirection, oddly enough, is even far more extensive than this. To be sure, it is not simply the case that the scriptural context of this salient doctrine is in fact a clear and unequivocal call to serious Christian discipleship today, but it is also much more than this, a “more” that may help to explain why Dispensationalists, among others, have, by and large, ignored it. What is this “more,” this further call of the doctrine of the second coming of Christ, deeply rooted in Scripture, that has so often been neglected in a sea of very popular misdirection? It is none other than a momentous and ongoing clarion call for nothing less than heart purity or entire sanctification — yes, entire sanctification, precisely in order to be prepared for the astounding and overwhelming realities of that glorious day when Christ comes again.

If you doubt this basic, though often neglected, truth, consider the clear biblical evidence which has often been either ignored or outright repudiated. First of all, the Apostle Paul, in reflecting on the second coming of Christ, offers a prayer that believers may be entirely sanctified, what John Wesley in his own day had referred to as Christian perfection, precisely in preparation for this climactic event: “May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, and he will do it” (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 RSV).

Second, Paul continues in this vein in the pastoral epistles, in his letter to Titus in particular, in which he not only refers to the glorious appearing of Christ, a commonplace by now, but he also teaches that Christ, himself, will purify his people and sanctify them entirely. He writes: “while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good” (Titus 2:13-14 NIV).

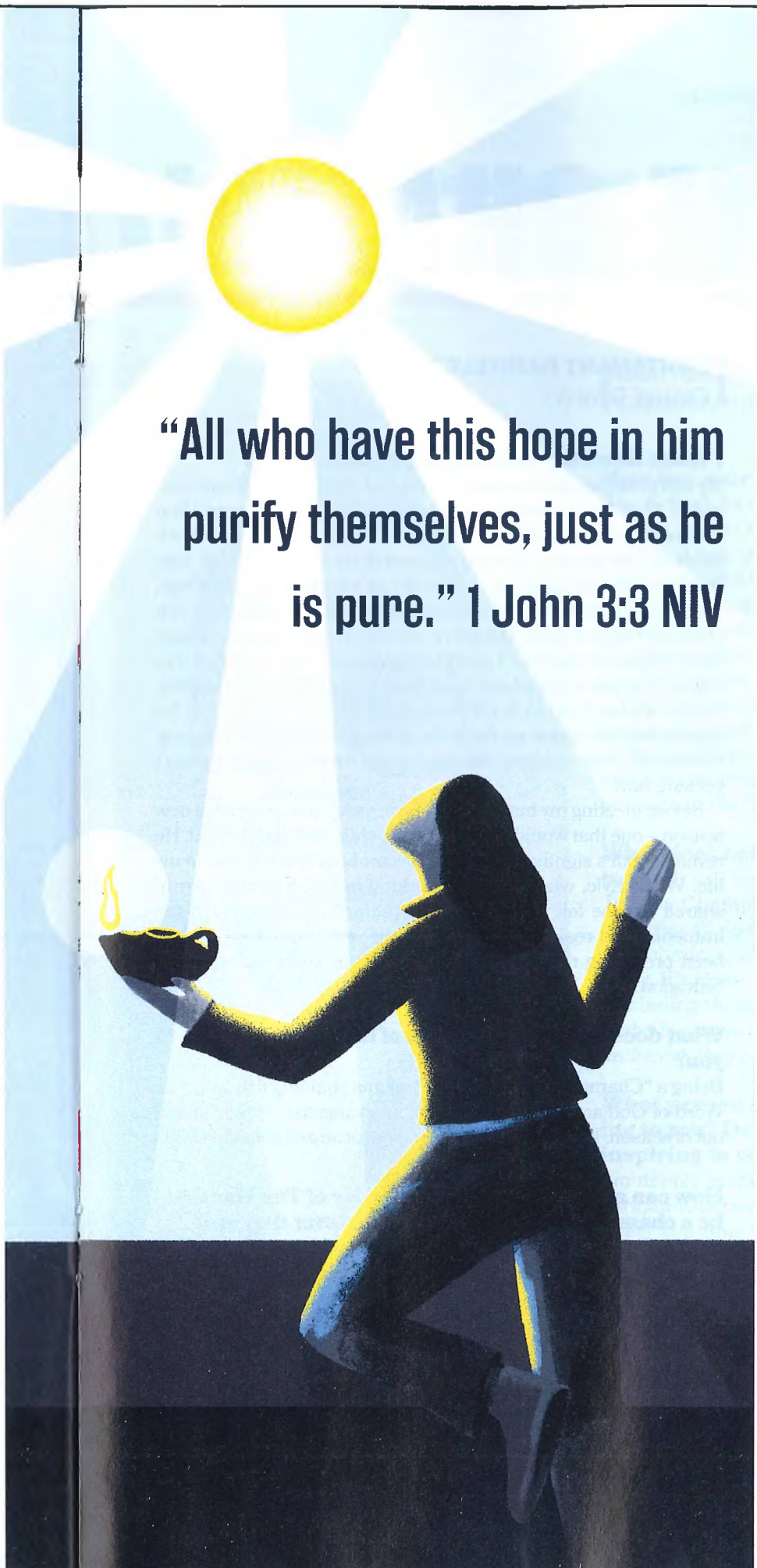
These connections between eschatology, on the one hand, and entire sanctification or Christian perfection, on the other hand, however, are not simply a Pauline teaching. John the Evangelist, in his First Letter of John, also connected the scriptural truths of the glorious return of Christ and the reality of heart purity among genuine believers when this climactic event occurs. Consider the following evidence: “But we know that

when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure” (1 John 3:2-3 NIV). Put another way, in affirming the blessed hope, believers prepare themselves, obviously through the rich grace and ministrations of God, for this coming awesome reality, that is, for the revelation of who Christ is in beauty, power and glory, by “purifying themselves, just as he is pure.” Eschatology then becomes an invitation not to a speculative, date-setting head game, but to robust Christian discipleship today, even to the extent of heart purity in preparation for all that is to come.

Second, John connects heart purity, entire sanctification, with the very confidence that believers will have when Christ comes in the day of judgment as revealed in the following: “In this is love perfected with us, that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17 RSV). Observe the standard, or better yet, the promise, of what is actually being offered here. Believers will be so like the One in whom they have believed, in a perfection of holy love, that they will have confidence, strong, bold and free, and will therefore not turn away in shame when Christ appears. However, curious head games, uncovering mysteries, heated late-night dorm room debates over end-time chronologies, all leave the self utterly at the center of its own life unperturbed, for such preoccupying concerns have driven out the far more important narrative of real lasting holiness. It’s now clean gone; it’s nowhere to be seen.

Ah, but there is at least one last retreat for those who do not want to face the clear biblical teaching on this salient issue and who instead would like to switch out holiness for vain curiosity. Indeed, when some Christians stumble upon the biblical reality of heart purity or entire sanctification that other Christian traditions have repeatedly affirmed (Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy and Methodism, for example) they immediately try to explain away the necessity of such a change for all believers with the comforting bromide that such a teaching, if it can even be acknowledged at all, is actually only for those great saints, those exceptional ones among us, and clearly not for the majority of people sitting in pews on Sunday mornings. Once again, however, such an evasion of clear scriptural teaching falls flat on its face in terms of eschatology in general and of the second coming of Christ in particular.

Who then will be at the second coming of Christ? Will it just be for the spiritual marathon runners among us, if you will? To answer this pertinent question, the earliest writing of the Apostle Paul must be considered, that is, his First Letter to the Thessalonians. In this work, observe which Christian believers will actually be with Christ as the Lord descends from heaven with a loud (not a silent or secret) command: “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.



“All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.” 1 John 3:3 NIV

After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore, encourage one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 NIV). Did you catch that? The dead in Christ will rise first. In light of Paul’s teaching, then, every real Christian, every saint, whether dead or alive, who has ever lived upon the earth, and time makes no difference here at all, will undoubtedly be at this climactic event.

The Scriptures cited above clearly associate heart purity with the serious preparation necessary to see the glorious Christ face to face. In other words, the second coming of Christ itself is an awesome motivating factor, a genuine impetus, for earnest Christian believers to finally embrace all of the grace that God has in store for them, even their entire sanctification. Therefore, all who have the hope of his coming, if they are wise, will heed this prudent counsel, for “all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure” (1 John 3:2-3 NIV).

The second coming of Christ, then, when the smoke and mirrors are swept away, is nothing less than one of the greatest engines of motivation for serious Christian discipleship that there ever was. Beyond this, it underscores the necessity, not optional at all, of entire sanctification for every Christian believer in this life. Indeed, among the saints, where it has been warmly embraced, such a call has done its sanctifying work in the past; it is currently doing this same work today, and it will undoubtedly do such work in the future. Again, the second coming of Christ is a gracious invitation to that holiness apart from which no one will see the Lord (Heb. 12:14). “But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.” Who knew? 



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MEET THE CHAMPIONS OF THE MISSION



LIEUTENANT DANIELLE MOODY
Central Territory

Please describe your calling to officership.

My call to officership has been quite a unique journey. Around the age of 10 or 12, I received a prophetic word from my pastor: "You are going to preach with such boldness that you're going to shock yourself." At the time, I was a shy and quiet child, so I held onto these words with curiosity. Years later as a sophomore in college, I gave my life to Christ. He called me into deeper intimacy with Him and began to pour His Word into me. When I became a high school Spanish teacher, I quickly understood that teaching was ministry. I saw my students as a flock to shepherd and pray for. I often wished I could teach them the Bible and would pray for opportunities to share my faith. The Lord always opened the door. I knew full-time ministry was part of my future, though I wasn't yet sure how.

Before meeting my husband, Kyle, I sensed I was entering a new season – one that would involve a major shift. As I sought God, He revealed that a significant transition was about to take place in my life. When Kyle, who had been working in The Salvation Army, shared that he felt led toward officership, it resonated with me immediately. I realized that this was the very transition God had been preparing me for, a call to pastoral ministry through The Salvation Army.

What does being a "Champion of the Mission" mean to you?

Being a "Champion of the Mission" means standing firmly for the Word of God and doing the work of an evangelist – ready in and out of season. It's a life of surrendered purpose and steadfast faith.

How can anyone – any average reader of *The War Cry* – be a champion of God's mission wherever they are?

You don't need a title to live out God's mission. Anyone can be a champion by recognizing what God is doing in the world, accepting His love and salvation, and showcasing compassion in their everyday lives. Engage with *The War Cry* to understand how The Salvation Army is meeting both spiritual and practical needs, and then take action. Reach out to your community. Love your neighbor. Serve with a willing heart. The mission starts wherever you are.



LIEUTENANT JALICIA SMALLEY
Eastern Territory

How has your time at CFOT been transformative?

The College for Officer Training has stretched and refined me in ways I didn't expect. It's one thing to feel called; it's another to be trained, tested, and held accountable to that calling. The structured spiritual disciplines – daily devotions, corporate worship, and service have deepened my relationship with Christ. The community has shaped me, and the classroom and field have equipped me to be a better officer and a more compassionate servant.

I've also had to confront parts of myself – past wounds, pride, insecurity – and surrender them to Christ. That kind of soul work is hard, but it's necessary. CFOT has helped shape me into a leader who can minister from a place of authenticity and strength in the Spirit.

What does being a "Champion of the Mission" mean to you?

To be a Champion of the Mission means being faithful to Christ's call no matter the cost. It means choosing obedience over comfort, servanthood over status, and truth over popularity. It's about showing up for people who feel forgotten and reminding them that God sees them, hears them, and is still in the business of transformation. Champions don't just wear uniforms; they carry the cross with humility.

What person from Salvation Army history is inspiring to you? Or what current Salvation Army leader is inspiring to you?

I'm deeply inspired by Commissioner Israel Gaither. As an African-American rising through the ranks of The Salvation Army at a time when leadership didn't always reflect diversity, he walked with boldness, excellence, and faith. He paved the way for people like me to see ourselves in leadership. His legacy reminds me that representation matters, and that we must always lead with both courage and compassion.



LIEUTENANT JEREMY WARF
Southern Territory

Please describe your calling to officership.

In 2009, I shared with my wife, Jillian, that I felt led toward Salvation Army officership. At the time, I was a 20-year-old new believer and felt too spiritually young to declare it publicly. I decided that if the calling was real, it would still be there after I completed my college degree. After graduating, I drifted from seeking God's guidance and tried to map out my own future. In that season of uncertainty, I joined the military. While I enjoyed the experience, I still felt a lingering sense of unfulfillment.

Eventually, I was led to work for The Salvation Army as an employee, and it was there that I truly discovered my passion, my mission, and my purpose. Over the past 10 years, I've had the privilege of learning from incredible officers, and now I see how God was preparing me all along. In 2022, while serving in ministry at the Sanders Mission Corps, I felt God's nudge grow stronger. After attending commissioning in Atlanta, my wife and I made a covenant with God at the altar to go "all in" — fully committing to answer His call to officership and to follow wherever He leads.

Do you have a favorite Bible verse to share with readers? What makes it meaningful to you?

My favorite Bible passage is Psalm 23. It reminds me that God's presence and care are constant and unfailing, no matter what season. Especially when life feels uncertain or overwhelming, this passage gives me the confidence to trust that He is guiding, protecting, and walking with me every step of the way.

What person from Salvation Army history is inspiring to you? Or what current Salvation Army leader is inspiring to you?

My father-in-law, Major Chris Flanagan, has had a big impact on my life and faith journey. He's a godly example of how to live with integrity — leading his family, teaching and pastoring in a way that consistently points people to Jesus. Watching him has made me a better man, and I know it will continue to shape the kind of officer I become.



LIEUTENANT JILLIAN KISTAN
Western Territory

Please describe your calling to officership.

God's call to officership was something I had heard many times, but doubt always found a way to silence it. I wrestled with uncertainty, questioning whether I was truly meant for this path. Growing up outside of a Christian home and unfamiliar with The Salvation Army, stepping into ministry felt intimidating and unfamiliar. So, for a while, I ignored the call, convincing myself that I must be hearing God's voice wrong because I was ill-equipped and unworthy.

But God was not quick to give up on me. On the day of my soldiership enrollment, He made His voice undeniably clear. In that sacred moment, I heard Him audibly, speaking directly to my heart. There was only one thing to do: obey Him. Since that day, I have learned that obedience to His calling is not about having all the answers or feeling fully prepared. It's about trusting that He equips those He calls. It's about surrendering it all to Him and stepping forward in faith.

Do you have a favorite Bible verse to share with readers? What makes it meaningful to you?

Whenever I am asked about my favorite Bible verse, it's difficult to choose just one — it often depends on the season I'm in. One passage that has profoundly shaped my spiritual journey and deepened my commitment to Christ is: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matthew 16:24-25 NIV).

What person from Salvation Army history is inspiring to you? Or what current Salvation Army leader is inspiring to you?

One Salvation Army leader who continues to inspire me is Commissioner Donna Igleheart. She exemplifies servant leadership through her authentic care and compassion for others. Whether through a kind smile or a warm greeting, Commissioner Igleheart consistently demonstrates grace, kindness, and a commitment to uplifting those around her.



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You can receive the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ by praying something like the following:

Dear God,
I KNOW I AM A SINNER.

I need Your forgiveness and grace. I believe that Christ paid the penalty for my sin, and He died in my place, and He rose from the dead.

I invite Jesus Christ to come into my life as Savior.

Thank You for saving me from my sin and making me Your child. Help me to grow and learn how to serve You.

Amen.

BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL

Psalm 103

by SHEENA MARQUIS

AS CHILDREN OF GOD, WE KNOW THAT OUR WORSHIP IS MORE THAN WHAT WE BRING on a Sunday morning through instrumental music and singing. Worship, as referenced in the opening verse of Romans 12, is best represented by the offering of our entire lives to a holy God. This idea of being a living and pleasing sacrifice to the Lord can sometimes feel like an impossible task, especially as we continue to work out our salvation daily by acknowledging, confessing and repenting of our sin (Phil. 2:12).

Yet, Psalm 103 reminds us that a life of praise begins simply by remembering who God is and what He has done for us.

Psalm 103 is a psalm of thanksgiving attributed to David, one of 75 psalms connected to him. While we do not know the exact moment in David's life when it was written, many scholars believe it was likely penned in his later years. The preacher Charles Spurgeon wrote that in David's later life, "he had a higher sense of the preciousness of pardon ... a keener sense of sin ... [and a] clear sense of the frailty of life" (The Treasury of David).

In this psalm, David's worship becomes an invitation to all creation to praise God, beginning with the individual, then the congregation, and finally, everything under the Lord's dominion in heaven and on earth.

The psalm begins with a call to the depths of one's soul to praise. From the Hebrew *bārak*, the imperative command is more accurately translated "to bless." Of course, as humans, we do not bless God in the way He blesses us. Instead, to "bless the Lord" is to give Him our adoration, reverence and thanksgiving. It is an invitation repeated twice at the beginning of the psalm and once more at the close (Psalm 103:1–2, 22).

This invitation to praise might seem simple to fulfill. Yet if we are honest, praise can sometimes feel like a routine, or even a burden. Perhaps David knew this feeling, as he urges his soul not to forget all the benefits of the Lord (Psalm 103:2). He begins to list the ways in which God has been good to him, offering us a pattern to follow as we bring our minds and souls into a place of true and holy worship. This is the only kind of worship worthy of our God.

David starts by recognizing the full healing and restoration that come from God. This includes the forgiveness of sins, the healing of our bodies, whether in this life or the next, and salvation from death and the grave (Psalm 103:3–4a). If we were

to pause here and reflect on our own brokenness, the sinful deeds we've committed, the thoughts we've harbored and the ways we've failed to live up to God's call to holiness, we would already have enough reason to bless His name.

But David continues.

God not only saves us from something; He saves us to something. He offers His persistent love and compassion. He renews our strength like the eagle, a symbol of vitality and endurance (Psalm 103:5; see also Isaiah 40:31).

Consider how the Lord has loved you with steadfast love and provided what you needed to endure hardship and live a life of godliness (2 Peter 1:3).

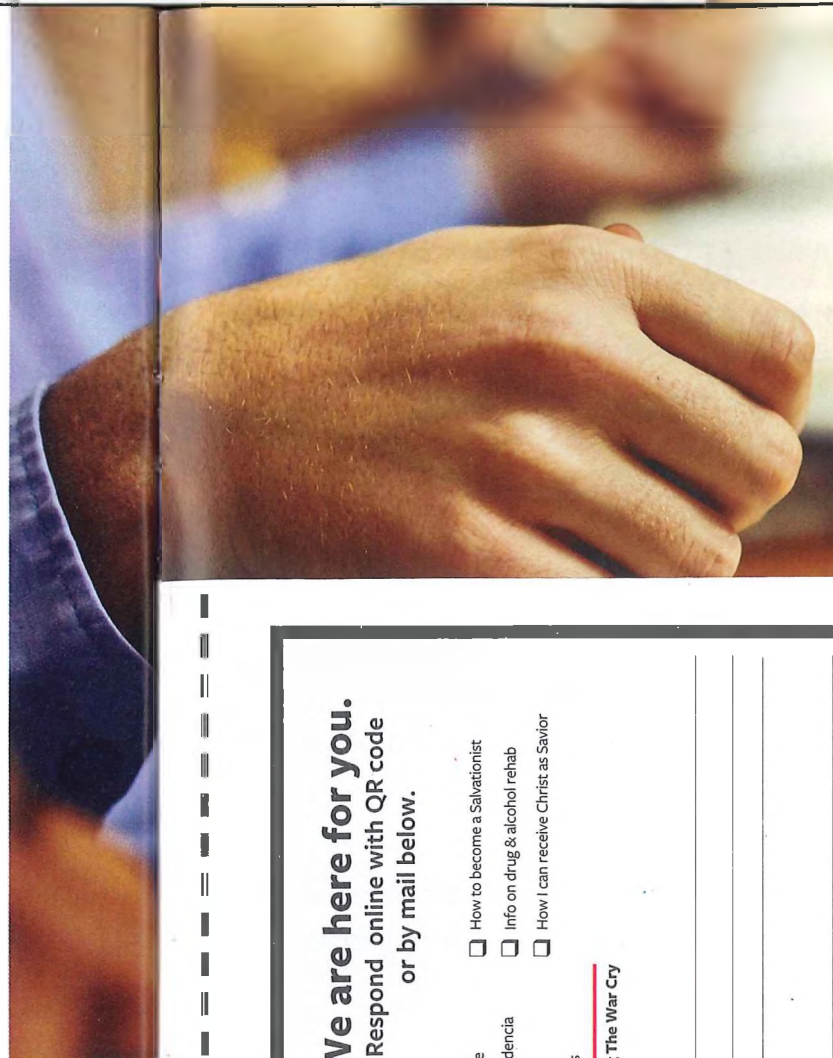
After stirring up his own soul to worship, David shifts to reflect on God's faithfulness to all His people. He recalls the righteousness and justice of God on behalf of the oppressed, referencing how God revealed His character to Moses and the Israelites when He delivered them from slavery and led them toward the Promised Land (Psalm 103:6–7).

The psalm continues, lifting up the love and compassion of a God who is slow to anger, rich in mercy and does not treat us as our sins deserve (Psalm 103:8–10). The Apostle Paul later affirms this truth: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23 NIV).

This grace and love are immeasurable. The psalmist poetically illustrates it: "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:11–12 NIV).

Adam Clarke explains, "As the east and the west can never meet in one point, but be forever at the same distance from each other, so our sins and their decreed punishment are removed to an eternal distance by His mercy."

Hallelujah.



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NOVEMBER 2025

*a life of praise
begins simply by
remembering who
God is and what He
has done for us."*

being, praise his holy name" (Psalm 103:1 NIV).

Let all that is within us praise His holy name. 

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Has your recent praise to the Lord been out of routine or obligation?
2. Recount a sin you have been forgiven for or an illness the Lord has healed you from. How can you bless Him for the restoration He has provided?
3. How does the contrast of your short life compared with the everlasting nature of God's love impact your perspective of Him? How can it change the way you worship?

AS CHILDREN OF GOD, WE KNOW THAT OUR WORSHIP IS MORE THAN WHAT WE BRING on a Sunday morning through instrumental music and singing. Worship, as referenced in the opening verse of Romans 12, is best represented by the offering of our entire lives to a holy God. This idea of being a living and pleasing sacrifice to the Lord can sometimes feel like an impossible task, especially as we continue to work out our salvation daily by acknowledging, confessing and repenting of our sin (Phil. 2:12).

Yet, Psalm 103 reminds us that a life of praise begins simply by remembering who God is and what He has done for us.

Psalm 103 is to David, one While we do David's life who believe it was like preacher Charles later life, "he has sense of of David).

In this psalm tation to all or with the indivi finally, everyth heaven and on

The psalm b one's soul to pr imperative cor lated "to bless." bless God in tl "bless the Lor reverence and repeated twice once more at the

This invitation to praise might seem simple to fulfill. Yet if we are honest, praise can sometimes feel like a routine, or even a burden. Perhaps David knew this feeling, as he urges his soul not to forget all the benefits of the Lord (Psalm 103:2). He begins to list the ways in which God has been good to him, offering us a pattern to follow as we bring our minds and souls into a place of true and holy worship. This is the only kind of worship worthy of our God.

David starts by recognizing the full healing and restoration that come from God. This includes the forgiveness of sins, the healing of our bodies, whether in this life or the next, and salvation from death and the grave (Psalm 103:3-4a). If we were

to pause here and reflect on our own brokenness, the sinful deeds we've committed, the thoughts we've harbored and the ways we've failed to live



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this truth: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23 NIV).

This grace and love are immeasurable. The psalmist poetically illustrates it: "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:11-12 NIV).

Adam Clarke explains, "As the east and the west can never meet in one point, but be forever at the same distance from each other, so our sins and their decreed punishment are removed to an eternal distance by His mercy."

Hallelujah.



"... Psalm 103 reminds us that a life of praise begins simply by remembering who God is and what He has done for us."

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David continues by offering two metaphors to describe God's goodness.

First, he compares God's compassion to that of a father toward his children: "As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him" (Psalm 103:13, NIV). As God's children, we cry out "Abba, Father" to the One who made us and knows us. Verse 14 is a clear callback to Genesis 2:7, when God formed man from the dust: "... he remembers that we are dust" (Psalm 103:14 NIV). Scripture reminds us repeatedly that God not only formed us but lived among us through the incarnation: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14 NIV). We worship a God who knows and loves us intimately.

The second metaphor contrasts the brevity of human life with the everlasting love of God: "The life of mortals is like grass ... But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him" (Psalm 103:15, 17 NIV). Thanks be to God that our lives, though fleeting, are enveloped in His faithful love when we walk in obedience.

The psalm concludes with a declaration of God's sovereignty over all creation. The call to praise is extended to the angels, the heavenly hosts and all of God's works throughout His dominion: "The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all ... Praise the Lord, all his works everywhere in his dominion. Praise the Lord, my soul" (Psalm 103:19, 22, NIV).

David closes as he began, with a personal command to his soul: "Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name" (Psalm 103:1 NIV).

Let all that is within us praise His holy name. 

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

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NUESTRO VIAJE FINAL

por EL MAYOR DAVID REPASS

CADA VEZ QUE SALIMOS DE VIAJE, MI ESPOSA ME PROPORCIONA LOS DATOS NECESARIOS: DONDE vamos (para saber qué tipo de clima tendremos), cuantos días estaremos allí (para calcular cuantos cambios de ropa necesitare) y el propósito de nuestra estadía (para llevar la ropa apropiada para cada actividad). He descubierto, a través de los 26 años de casados, que mi señora es capaz de manejar los detalles mejor que yo y simplemente confío pues en sus habilidades.

Mis limitaciones mentales requieren que dependa en su capacidad organizativa. Su amable compasión me ha proporcionado todo lo que me ha sido necesario para viajar con confianza. Aún con la mínima información proporcionada he viajado sin dilemas, siempre llegando al destino listo a disfrutar de lo que nos espera.

En cierto modo, pienso de la misma manera en cuanto a nuestro viaje final. Dios nos ha preparado un banquete en los cielos para celebrar las Bodas del Cordero (Mateo 22:2-10; Apocalipsis 19:6-8), y desea que transitemos por el mundo sin el estorbo de bultos innecesarios. Es posible (y preferible) peregrinar por la vida terrenal sin tener que cargar con maletas llenas de “accesorios de moda”.

La Biblia nos ofrece toda la información que Dios quiere ofrecernos para estar listos a llegar a nuestro último destino. Todas las verdades incluidas en el Santo Compendio han sido provistas para prepararnos en anticipación a la eternidad. El supremo deseo de Dios es que tomemos el tiempo en ruta para asegurarnos de que llegaremos (Mateo 25) y para que muchos suban al tren de la salvación (2 Pedro 3:8-10).

Nuestra última doctrina delimita cinco conceptos básicos que Dios nos insta a entender en cuanto al final del mundo. “Creemos en la inmortalidad del alma, en la resurrección del cuerpo, en el juicio general al fin del mundo, en la eterna

felicidad de los justos y en el castigo perpetuo de los malos”. Es decir, ya estamos de viaje al más allá, nuestra muerte no es nuestra conclusión y nuestro destino final es determinado durante nuestro transito terrenal.

Confiadamente afirmamos la inmortalidad del alma, pues las Sagradas Escrituras nos dicen: “Volverá entonces el polvo a la tierra, como antes fue y el espíritu volverá a Dios, que es quien lo dio” (Eclesiastés 12:7, NVI). Aún más, antes de corretear por nuestro hogar paternal (Efesios 1:3-10), Dios había provisto para nosotros un lugar donde podremos caminar con nuestro Padre celestial sin cansarnos (Juan 17:24). Es interesante pensar que incluso nuestro desgaste físico es una comprobación de que nuestro trajín en la tierra es sólo temporario (2 Corintios 4:7-18).

Aquí es donde algunas personas se confunden siendo que Dios mismo pronosticó nuestro retorno al polvo (Genesis 3:19). Sí, todo lo físico se descompone, pero Dios añade una tremenda promesa a nuestra declinación corporal: el milagro de un nuevo cuerpo (Filipenses 3:21). Sea lo que sea que pase con nuestro “traje terrenal”, Dios nos transformará de la misma manera que Jesús fue transformado al resucitar de los muertos (2 Corintios 5:1-4).

Jesús es la “primicia de los que murieron” (1 Corintios 15:20), en Él Dios confirmó de antemano nuestra participación

en esa gloriosa cosecha. Cuando nuestros cuerpos son enterrados, como la semilla es sembrada en la tierra, sabemos que lo que se siembra en corrupción, resucitará en incorrupción. Lo que se siembra en deshonra, resucitará en gloria; lo que se siembra en debilidad, resucitará en poder (1 Corintios 15:42-43).

Indudablemente, esto incrementa nuestro deseo de llegar ya a nuestro deleitoso destino. Pero debemos pausar a pensar en el detalle más importante de nuestra terrestre expedición. No podemos ignorar que la trayectoria que tomamos al transitar aquí, antes de “cruzar el Jordán,” será revisada en el muelle. En esa aduana se examinará nuestra fe en Cristo, revelada en la manera en que hemos aceptado Su reinado durante nuestra estadía en este planeta.

Jesús utilizó diversas maneras de recalcar esta importante enseñanza. Nosotros, como las jóvenes que esperaban la llegada del novio para su boda, debemos vigilar activamente; preparados a todo tiempo (Mateo 25:1-13). Poniendo en uso los talentos que Dios nos otorgó, para engrandecer Su reino aquí en anticipo a Su retorno (25:14-30). Mostrando piedad a los hambrientos, sedientos, forasteros, desnudos, enfermos o encarcelados (25:31-46).

Claramente Dios dicta: “¡Todos tendremos que comparecer ante el tribunal de Cristo!”, cuando finalmente frente a Él “se doblará toda rodilla, y toda lengua confesará a Dios”; esta profesión será individual, pues “cada uno de nosotros tendrá que dar cuentas de sí a Dios” (Romanos 14:10-12, NVI). El dar cuenta es que “su obra se mostrará tal cual es, pues el día del juicio la dejará al descubierto. El fuego la dará a conocer y pondrá a prueba la calidad del trabajo de cada uno. Si lo que alguien ha construido permanece, recibirá su recompensa” (1 Corintios 3:13-14, NVI).

Antes de emigrar a la Patria Celestial, cada persona debe entonces tomar los pasos necesarios para que pueda viajar en paz, confiado de que cruzará la frontera sin que nada le detenga. Antes de subir a la celeste Sion, Dios provee a cada persona todo el tiempo necesario para su preparación y para predicar las Buenas Nuevas a todos.

Pues no podemos ignorar que la Biblia claramente describe un destino diferente para los que rechazaron los amorosos avances del Salvador. Si durante su vida, nunca buscaron la gracia divina, si nunca preguntaron por el perdón de sus

**“VOLVERÁ ENTONCES EL POLVO
A LA TIERRA, COMO ANTES FUE
Y EL ESPÍRITU VOLVERÁ A DIOS,
QUE ES QUIEN LO DIO.”**

pecados, Dios les respeta su decisión. Toda alma que prefirió vivir lejos del Padre pasará a la eternidad en esa misma condición. Lamentablemente, esa separación será completa e irreversible (Lucas 16:19-26).

Tomemos nuestro tiempo aquí para avisar a todos de este peligro. Tomemos toda oportunidad para advertir a los ignorantes o indecisos que no necesitan recibir el peor de los castigos que fue preparado para el enemigo de nuestras almas (Mateo 25:41). Mientras tienen aliento, tienen tiempo. 

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SACRED SPACES AND THIN PLACES

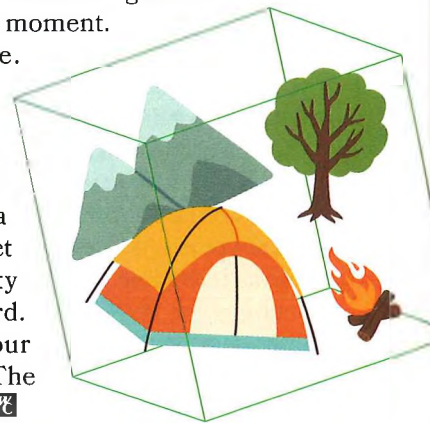
by CAPTAIN STEPHANIE PAVLAKIS

IN LIFE, SOME SPACES AND PLACES ARE MORE SPECIAL THAN OTHERS. SOMETIMES IT IS BECAUSE OF A meaningful event that happened there. Other times, it is because of the beauty of the place itself and the emotions it evokes. There are a few such spaces for me, and nearly all of them are camps. These spaces are special because I met my would-be husband for the first time there, watched my children experience nature there, and because they are simply gorgeous. More than all that, though, they are special because for me, they are the thin places, sacred spaces where we get a glimpse of the new heaven and earth when God's Kingdom will be complete. They are spaces in which the divide between heaven and earth is so thin that at times they even seem to overlap. In these spaces we experience an overwhelming sensation of the presence of God that is hard to describe.

We can experience thin places in the everyday. With each passing moment, the space is becoming thinner, but unless we have our hearts open to see it, we will miss it. We find thin spaces in ministry, worship, and fellowship; in being the hands and feet of Jesus.

But it is so easy to pass it by when we are in the busyness of the moment. That is why we need our sacred spaces — our places where we can go to be reminded of what it feels like to exist where heaven and earth overlap; to be still and simply be aware of Yahweh.

Perhaps you already know where that place is for you. Schedule return visits once or twice a year to remember your previous encounters with God. Or maybe you haven't found that place, and searching for it seems impossible at the moment. Create it in your home. Find the quiet times of the day. Make a space, remove distractions, light a candle, and seek the Lord. Alternatively, go for a walk. Get to a park, a quiet neighborhood, an empty bench, and seek the Lord. Ask the Lord to open your eyes to the thin places. The Kingdom of God is near. 



Engage:

- Where are your sacred spaces?
- Where can you find a sacred space in your life today?

Supporting Scripture:

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared ... I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, 'Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them' (Revelation 21:1, 3).

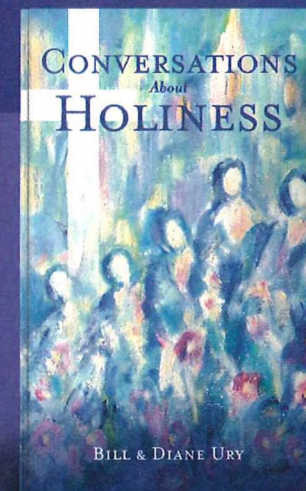
“I can see the light in the darkness
As the darkness bows to Him
I can hear the roar in the heavens
As the space between wears thin
I can feel the ground shake beneath us
As the prison walls cave in
Nothing stands between us.”

—“Another in the Fire,” Hillsong UNITED

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CONVERSATIONS About HOLINESS

NEW
RELEASE



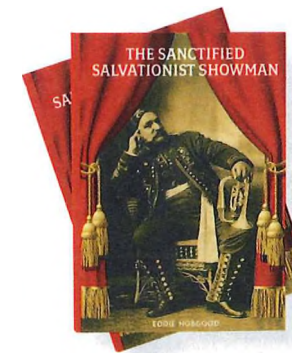
Every person is created for holiness. We are designed by our loving Creator for intimate belonging with Him. This is the hunger of every human heart. But what is holiness anyway? And what is sanctification? How does holiness hold a place of relevance in God's Church for this cultural moment? Should we even continue to use such an archaic word that seems out of touch with present-day Christians? Envoys Bill and Diane Ury spend their ministry responding to questions like these about holiness. Within this book, they share their hearts' passions for the Triune God of Holy Love, who longs to share His life with every person on earth.



More Than Just A Refugee

In this sobering account of global injustice, Sandra Pawar delves into the urgent reality of unaccompanied minors, emphasizing their critical need for secure housing, accessible education, financial stability and psychological assistance.

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The Sanctified Salvationist Showman

Eddie Hobgood shares the remarkable story of Joe the Turk — Armenian Salvationist Nishan der Garabedian — whose 52 arrests defended The Salvation Army's right to march, praise, and evangelize across the U.S.

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MIND YOUR MANNERS

by MAJOR ROB REARDON

RECENTLY, I HAD THE OCCASION TO TRAVEL, WHICH MEANT SPENDING CONSIDERABLE AMOUNTS of time in airports and on airplanes. When I travel, I usually prefer to make my own arrangements. This allows me to choose where to sit on the flight. However, on this particular trip, someone else had booked the reservation. This meant that I was not able to make the choices I would typically make. Most people have a preference when flying, whether a window or aisle seat. But nobody I know would willingly choose to sit in a middle seat.

Airlines make no secret of the fact that the farther back you are in the plane, the tighter the space becomes. And with the tighter space comes the opportunity to exercise your manners, especially if you happen to be in the dreaded middle seat. For instance, where do you put your elbows? Who gets the shared armrest? Who decides whether the window shade remains open or closed?

If you're sitting in the aisle seat, your exposure to the manners, or lack thereof, of others increases dramatically. Fellow travelers lean uncomfortably over you to reach into the overhead compartment midflight, several times. Or they walk up and down the aisle toward the lavatory, bumping into you frequently as they're jostled by turbulence. I think you get the picture, so I will refrain from mentioning the chaos that ensues once the plane lands and passengers are eager to deplane as quickly as they can, regardless of how far back in the aircraft they may be sitting.

On that recent trip, I started observing the importance of manners in airports and on planes. For many, traveling can cause some measure of anxiety and stress levels are increased. Long lines, waiting to hear your boarding group called, wondering if your flight will be on time or canceled are normal things to worry about when traveling. The sheer volume of people sharing in these worries only magnifies this.

According to the Mental Health Foundation in the UK, "Stress is our body's response to pressure. It is often

triggered when we experience something new or unexpected that threatens our sense of self or when we feel we have little control over a situation." Seems that spending time in an airport is simply an incubator for increased levels of stress.

Even when life is more "normal," our levels of stress can be influenced by comparatively small things, a disagreement at work, spilled coffee, or another car that merges into your lane unexpectedly on the freeway. Practically any interpersonal exchange is an opportunity for us to experience a change in our stress levels. And that is where our manners come into play.

In what we commonly refer to as the "Golden Rule," Jesus addresses these areas of interpersonal interactions by saying, "...in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12 NIV). Just before this verse, Jesus was teaching about how people should treat each other. Don't judge, don't criticize, be kind, show compassion. I think we would all agree that our communities would be in a better place if more of us acted in the way Jesus described.

When we take it upon ourselves to mind our manners, we are making a conscious effort to defuse potentially volatile situations. Poor manners tend to cause hurt feelings or worse. They can often communicate disrespect or poor manners can disregard for others. Nobody wants to be on the receiving end of poor manners, let alone the accompanying stress that follows.

Remember the situations I described from my trip? Being bumped into repeatedly not only bothered me, but it also elevated my frustration and stress. I began allowing my irritation with people to spiral, reaching a level that triggered some unhealthy thoughts. Leaning over to my wife, I asked her rhetorically if people were just seeking to make me uncomfortable? Of course, I knew the answer, I didn't need her to say a word.

Biblically speaking, minding our manners goes far beyond simply saying "please" and "thank you." It's more than being patient at work or on the freeway, though it certainly includes that kind of overflowing patience.

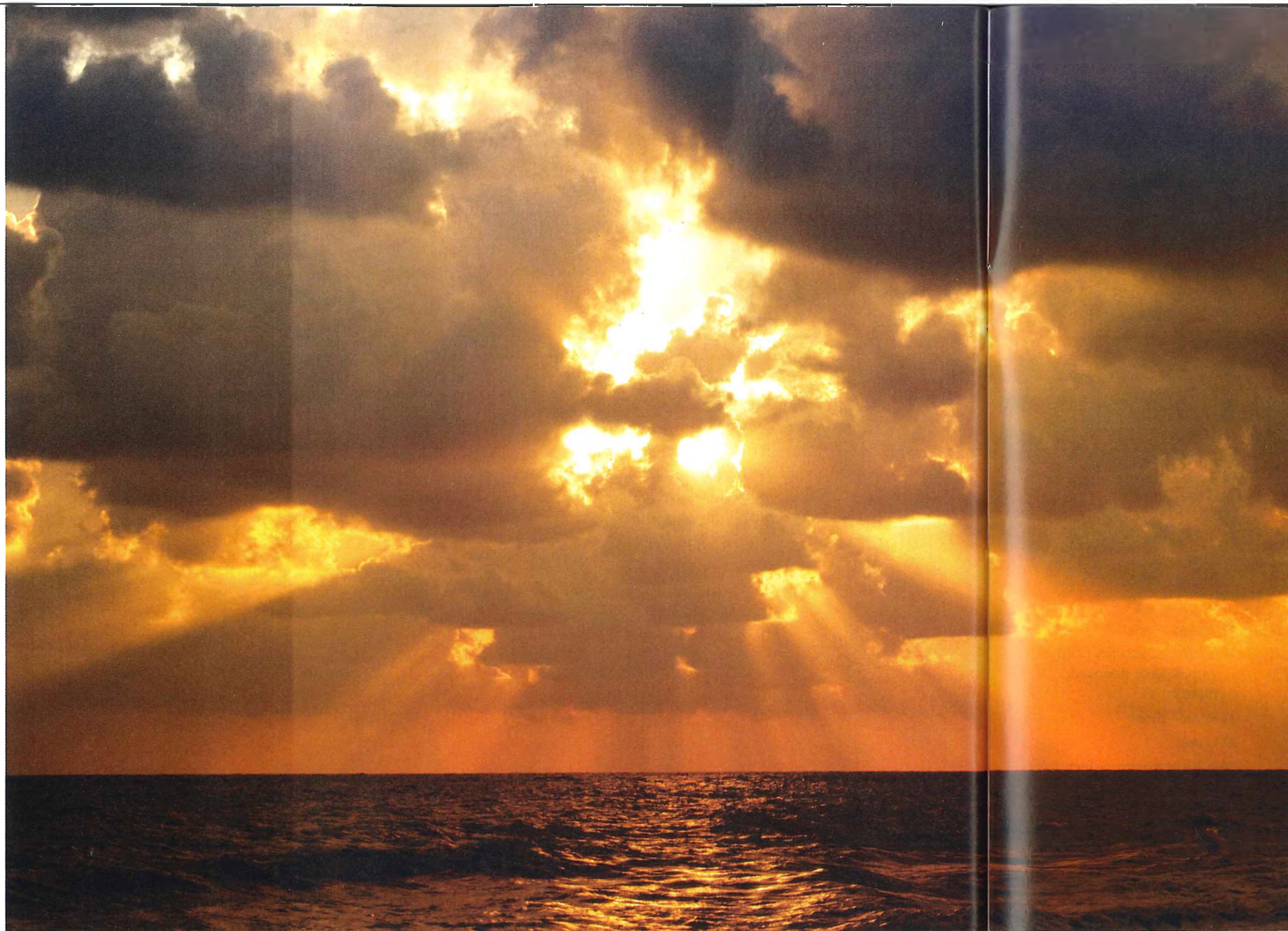
I'm reminded of Eugene Peterson's paraphrase in *The Message*: "If you've gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if His love has made any difference in your life,

if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care – then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget about yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand" (Philippians 2:1-4 MSG).

That passage makes me rethink the thoughts I had swirling through my head on that recent flight. Am I more concerned about my own advantage than the well-being of those around me. Am I truly treating others the way I want to be treated? If I'm honest, most of the time, I get what I deserve. And I know I can do better. I really should mind my manners. 

"In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you."
(Matthew 7:12)

IULIA ANISIMOVA VIA GETTY IMAGES



On Holy Living and Holy Dying

by ENVOY BILL URY

OVER THE CENTURIES ONE OF THE DISTINCTIVE ELEMENTS OF CHRISTIANITY, WHICH EVEN ITS strongest opponents have noted, is that we die well. In earlier days, books bore actual titles like “Holy Living and Holy Dying.” In our anesthetic culture that is jarring. We don’t like to talk about suffering. We hardly ever broach the topics of death and the grief which accompanies it. As believers in Jesus, we must be unafraid to honestly and openly deal with the hardest issues of our mortality. We love Psalm 23, but it’s important to remember that every single one of us must have the Great Shepherd, who alone is able to guide us through the “valley of the shadow of death.”

“
In Jesus,
there are no
dead-end
streets.”
”

I recently met a man whose wife showed incredible bravery in the face of incurable cancer. Their rock-like assurance was the one reality that stood out: Jesus is our resurrection and our life. Neither of those are merely events, they are a person. In Jesus there are no dead-end streets. Everything they experienced was a “transition” from what might be deemed as difficult or tragic into glory — every time. The veil between Heaven and earth was thin for them. To live in Christ and to die to self was the beginning of the process of transition of truly dying in Him. When a person is transformed by the Living One it does not matter what circumstance they find themselves in, for every moment of life bears the possibility of transitioning us into more and more of the life that He is.

For those friends, the unmovable foundation of absolute trust in God

made those last days together an astounding display of realistic hope. John Wesley would call this kind of faith “full recumbency.” Having already chosen to live in the fullness of Christian reality enabled this family to meet life’s starkest challenges with trusting, joyful resolve.

Not everything about suffering, death or grief is neat and tidy. There are places for doubt, resentment, even anguish. But they are to be properly laid at the feet of Jesus. Clear, resonating truth forged by love and pain and faith shines through the darkness. A devastating prognosis can be permeated with the only possession we will have at our last breath: hope in the One who is with us. As our world begins to quake, the only reasonable option is to dive headlong into our unchanging Lord. So realistic was my friends’ life hidden in Christ that they no longer asked, “why us?” but “why not us?” It is only a fully surrendered heart that produces that kind of response. If life is primarily about Jesus, then there is substance before circumstance, faith permeating every stage of dying, and purpose in pain.

Grief is hard. But the people of God can live unafraid of weakness or pain. This most difficult of emotions is given a place to be laid down. The place for grieving love to go in the process of dying and death is into the presence of Christ, who promises to give Himself.

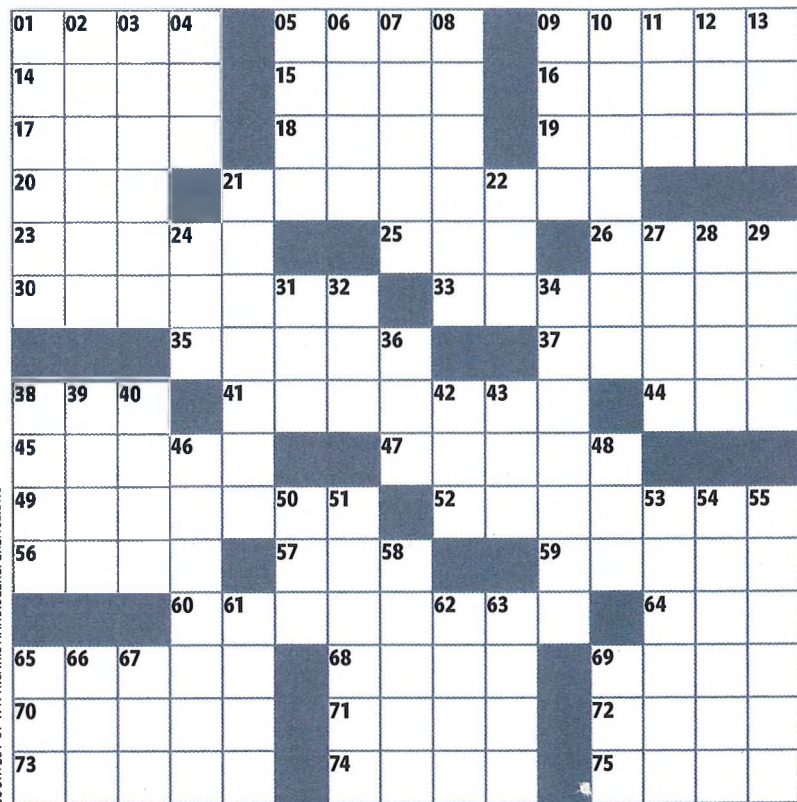
This is the thing about transitions in Jesus. He does make all things new. He promises fullness of joy despite our momentary afflictions and absence of loved ones. He is the indescribable reality beneath our flights of emotion and feelings of being undone. We are called to not waste our sorrows but to find that the crux of our purpose of being is the salvation that Jesus is in Himself. We are meant to live a holy life and to die a holy death in Him, our life. We are all at different points of transition. They are preparing us for our final one. Both life and death can affirm that only Jesus offers new and eternal life, today and forever. 

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

1. What does it mean to “die well” as a follower of Christ? How might that look practically today?

2. Are you living today in a way that reflects your hope in eternity? What changes might help you live with greater focus on what truly matters in Christ?

CROSSWORD

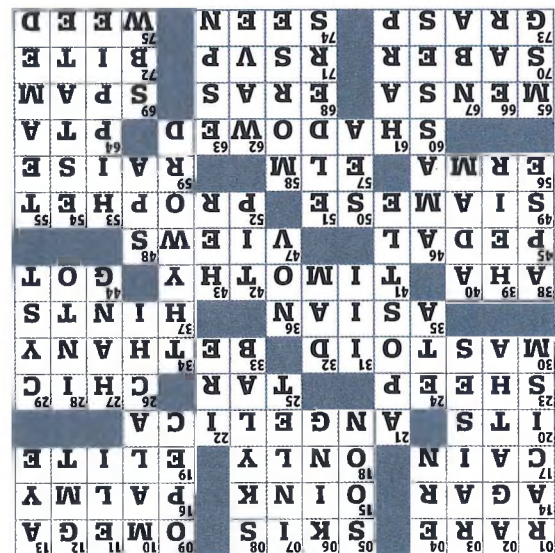


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- 05 Snow gliders
- 09 Last letter of Greek alphabet
- 14 Seaweed substance
- 15 Pig's remark
- 16 Flourishing
- 17 Eve's first
- 18 Just
- 19 Elect
- 20 ___ A Small World...
- 21 ___ Houston, actress
- 23 Parable of the ___ and Goats
- 25 Sticky black substance
- 26 In style
- 30 Bone behind ear
- 33 Village near Jerusalem
- 35 Of the East
- 37 Clues
- 38 Expression of surprise
- 41 Paul's friend
- 44 Obtained
- 45 Cycle
- 47 Scenes
- 49 Thai
- 52 One who speaks for God
- 56 Writer Bombeck
- 57 Shade tree
- 59 Elevate
- 60 Shaded
- 64 School group
- 65 Elite intellectuals' society
- 68 Epochs
- 69 Unwanted e-mail
- 70 Cavalry sword
- 71 Invitation abbreviation
- 72 Morsel
- 73 Fathom
- 74 Was looked at
- 75 Unwanted plant

DOWN

- 01 Prejudice
- 02 Modern female mystery writer Christie
- 03 Lifts
- 04 White-tailed sea eagle
- 05 Anon
- 06 ___ James Version
- 07 Bay
- 08 Space station
- 09 Oil cartel
- 10 Short OT book of prophecy
- 11 Samuel's mentor
- 12 Time zone
- 13 Sailor's yes
- 21 One of Jesus' 12
- 22 Anger
- 24 Airport abbr.
- 27 Drape
- 28 Within
- 29 Saclike structures filled with fluid or diseased matter
- 31 Roman three
- 32 Levee
- 34 ___ is a lamp unto my feet,
- 36 Fall mo.
- 38 Church part
- 39 Inheritor
- 40 First man
- 42 Tilt
- 43 That woman
- 46 Hoards
- 48 Resort hotel
- 50 Body of water
- 51 NT church leaders
- 53 1960's nonconformist
- 54 One's possessions
- 55 Formed a group, with "up"
- 58 ___ code
- 61 David's musical instrument
- 62 Beckon
- 63 Sports channel
- 65 Monosodium glutamate
- 66 Hearing organ
- 67 BB association
- 69 South by west



1865: A Momentous Year!

by GARRY D. REED

Originally published in *Salvationist*

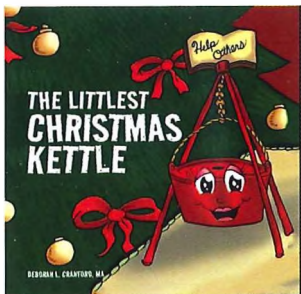
1. William Booth's apprenticeship stirred his social conscience. What was his trade?
2. What was abolished in the USA in 1865?
3. In 1865, Sabine Baring-Gould wrote which song for children to sing in a parade that was later adopted by the Army?
4. Outside which east London public house was The Salvation Army's first meeting?
5. In February 1865, social norms were upset by Catherine Booth when a poster outside a Wesleyan Chapel announced: 'Come and hear a preach!' What's the missing word?
6. For a very short time during the autumn of 1865, The Salvation Army was known by a name that had the initials 'ELCRS'. What do these letters stand for?
7. Name the child born to Catherine and William Booth on Christmas Day 1865.
8. Who was the first person to sign up with William Booth?
9. By the end of 1865, the early Army had how many members?
10. What is the total number of soldiers, adherents and junior soldiers around the world as of 1 January 2024?

1) Pawnbroker, 2) Slavery, 3) 'Onward, Christian Soldiers' (SASB971), 4) The Blind Beggar, 5) Woman, 6) East London Christian Revival Society, 7) Evangelist Society, 8) James Flawn, 9) 100, 10) 1,836,839

READ

THE LITTLEST CHRISTMAS KETTLE

BY MAJOR DEBORAH L. CRANFORD



"The Littlest Christmas Kettle" is a heartwarming Christmas fantasy written by Major Deborah Cranford (retired). In this imaginative story, a lonely red kettle finds its voice, heard only by a six-year-old girl. Available through Amazon/Kindle, and Barnes & Noble. For bulk pricing (10 copies or more), contact Debbi at salliekettle@gmail.com.



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*Teach me your ways, O Lord,
that I may live according to your truth!*

*Grant me purity of heart,
so that I may honor you*

(PSALM 86:11)