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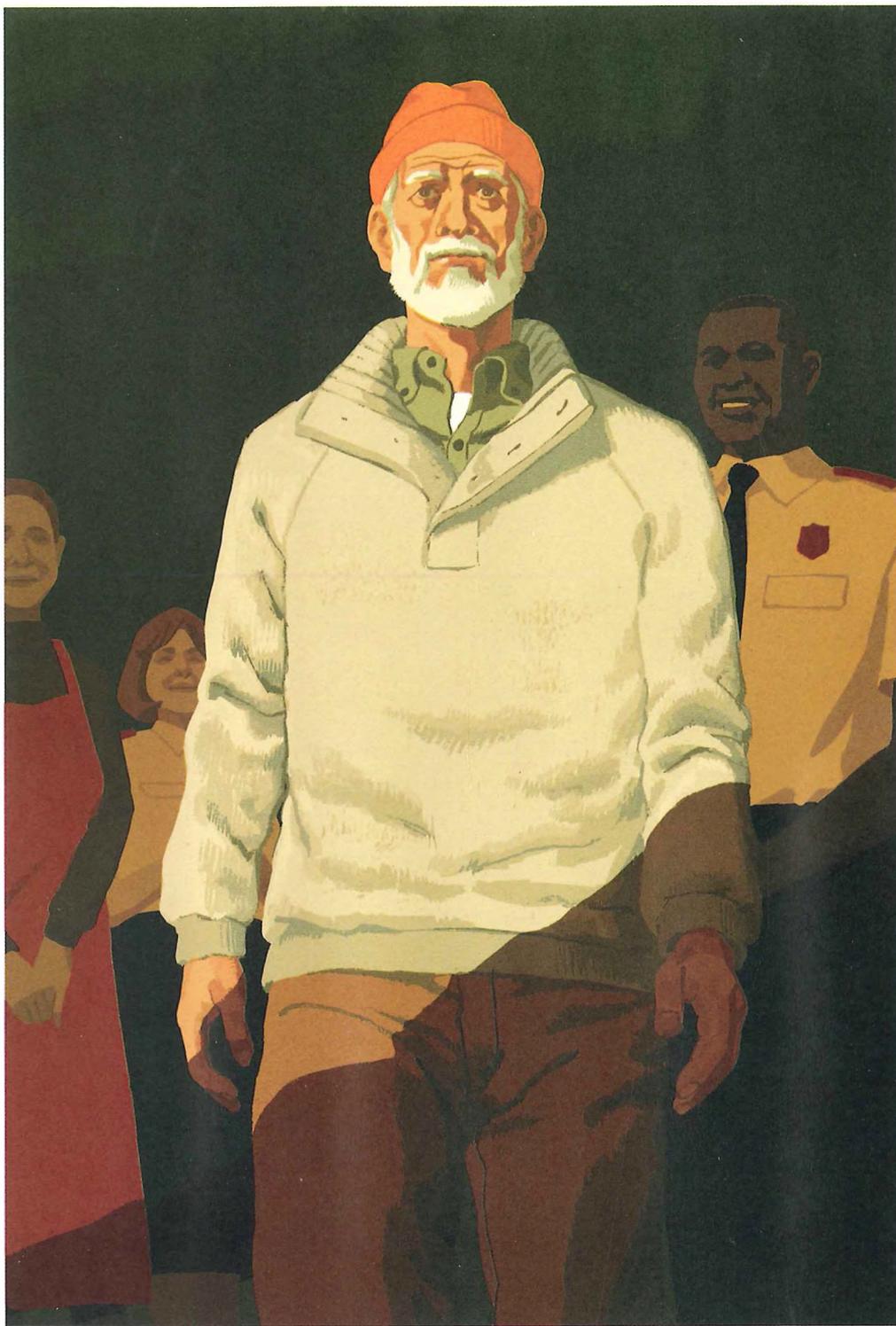
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THE

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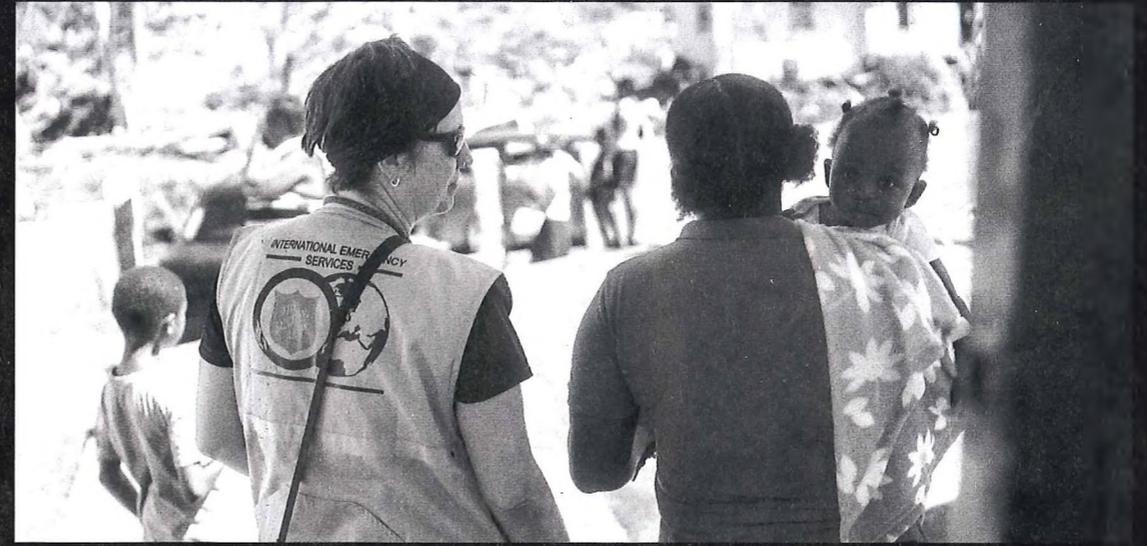
ARMY

THE WAR CRY



Stories of Faith, Service, and Hope





When Hurricane Melissa hit Jamaica, The Salvation Army immediately responded with food and other resources for survivors.

From testimonies of broken lives healed by grace to accounts of human needs met by kindness, The War Cry tells the stories of God's work in our communities and around the world. We celebrate faith that endures, courage that persists, and love that transforms. Every page reveals one central truth: God cares for you, you are known, and you are loved. This is who we are. This is why we tell these stories.

THE WAR CRY

JANUARY 2026

VOL. 146 NO. 1

THE NATIONAL PUBLICATION OF
THE SALVATION ARMY

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Founder

THE SALVATION ARMY NATIONAL
PUBLICATIONS DEPARTMENT

OUR MISSION

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General

Dale Bannon
*National Community Relations &
Development Secretary*

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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USA TERRITORIAL COMMANDERS

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Thank you for bringing joy.

To our 2025 National Red Kettle partners, we thank you
for helping change lives beyond the Christmas season.

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MACERICH

A 30-Minute Exercise in Stillness



T

THROUGHOUT THE YEARS, I have practiced a variety of spiritual disciplines to draw closer to the Lord. Solitude and silence are disciplines that I regularly practice, though I admit to struggling with them at times. I'm an introvert by nature and have no problem being alone or quiet. I do find it difficult to quiet my mind from all that's going on around me, though. With so much to do and think about, I often struggle to simply sit and be still before God.

In graduate school, one of my professors required us to spend at least 30 minutes a week in solitude just to listen for God's voice. This seemed like it would be a glorious activity for an introvert. It wasn't!

The first time I tried this, the quiet felt almost obnoxious. I questioned if I would hear God through the persistent noise of my daily obligations. The texts coming in, the dog barking, the washing machine swirling, even the gurgling sounds of the fish tank distracted me to the point that I almost gave up on the whole exercise.

As I prayed for God to speak through the noise, Elijah's story in 1 Kings 19 came to mind. Elijah had fled to Horeb, where he found solitude in a cave. The Lord asked Elijah what he was doing there and proceeded to tell him to go stand on the mountain because the Lord was going to pass by. Verses 11-12 say, "Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper." The Lord was in the whisper ... the quiet ... the stillness.

That day, God reminded me that He communicates not only in dramatic ways but also in more intimate ones. I must make space for Him to do both. During that noisy morning, He reminded me that He is always present, but that I must prepare myself to listen for Him. When life becomes so overwhelming that God can only get my attention in big ways, there's a problem. Solitude and silence provide opportunity for me to listen for that gentle whisper, even when the world tries to drown it out.

Sincerely,
Colonel Sue Betts

Editorial Note
Commissioner Sue Betts now serves as Territorial President of Women's Ministry in the USA Western Territory.

Happy New Year! And happy new War Cry as well!



OVER THE YEARS, people have sometimes asked why our magazine is called "The War Cry." Since our earliest days, The Salvation Army has used that title to represent the ongoing spiritual battle to win the hearts and souls of people through the love of Christ. The War Cry's aim has, from the very first issue published in London in 1879, been to spread the gospel, help people grow in their faith, and inspire readers to join the great salvation war against sin, evil and social injustice in the world around them. It is literally a war cry, a rallying cry, for robust faith in concrete action.

If you're a regular reader, you may have already noticed that this month's "War Cry" looks a little different than previous issues did. The national publications team has been hard at work on creating a completely redesigned magazine for 2026. The changes begin with the cover. Hopefully, you noticed the bold new logo as you picked up your copy.

Along with design changes like a new logo, better graphics and easier-to-read typography, you will find a new section, On Mission, highlighting the three priorities of the Compass Global Strategic Framework: People, mission and legacy. We hope and believe that the stories told in this new section will help you grow in your understanding of The Salvation Army's mission and how you can be part

of it, whoever you are and whatever your status may be. Soldiers, officers, volunteers, board members and friends of the Army all have a part to play in this work.

This issue also introduces two new article series. Our 2025 feature series explored our core beliefs in articles on Salvation Army doctrines. This year's feature series will examine spiritual disciplines. These articles, written by a variety of Salvationists, will help readers translate those core beliefs to actions. Along with the feature series, each issue will also include a new Talking History column, written by Envoys Steve and Sharon Bussey, explaining the intersection of Salvation Army history with contemporary expressions of our holistic ministry.

And, of course, you will also find some old favorites in this new iteration of "The War Cry." Each issue will still contain the monthly Bible study, feature articles by a wide variety of writers, the spiritual formation column in both English and Spanish, and of course, the monthly puzzle page. It is the hope and prayer of everyone on the publications team that you will be inspired and encouraged as we begin this new year together.

Sincerely,
Lt. Colonel Lesa Davis

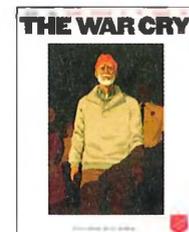
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“We create a space that’s loving, compassionate, hospitable. Our hands are out, welcoming them to the feet of Jesus.”

Lt. Donald Cooper, p. 23

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About the cover

January’s cover imagines an individual who has experienced a Salvation Army community like the Kansas City Prospect Corps (pg. 20). The subject stands with strength, hope, and the loving support of officers and friends.
Illustration by Patrick Leger

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Grammy-winning gospel artist Rebecca St. James is passionate about both ministry and motherhood. In this exclusive War Cry interview, she shares how she juggles both.

David Reardon
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David Reardon is a staff journalist for The War Cry and a monthly contributor to Peer magazine. For this issue, he visited the Kansas City Prospect Corps, where church and dinner go together.

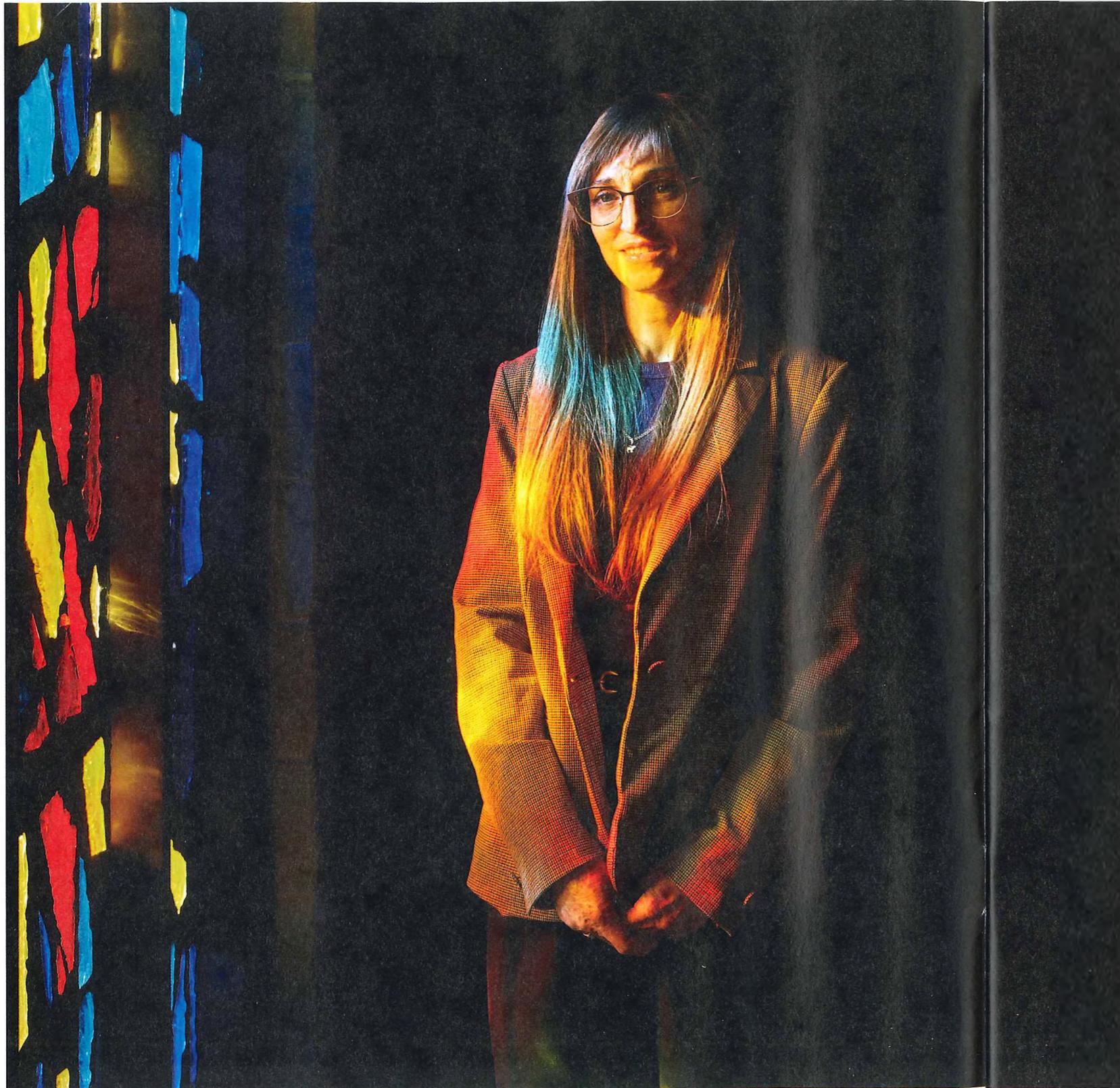
Bee Bryant
Time to Retreat Page 26

Bee Bryant is a West Coast Salvationist podcaster who loves to share ideas as to how we can share the story of Jesus with more people, more often.

Support the Mission
Donations to support the work of The Salvation Army can be made online at: salvationarmyusa.org

Bee Bryant invites us to reflect upon Jesus’ model of rest and renewal. Whether a prayer walk in a favorite park or Scripture journaling in a favorite corner of your home, setting aside time for solitude with God is essential to our walks with Him.

ON MISSION



Ukrainian Family Finds Pathway of Hope:

How God met one family's needs through the Norridge Citadel Corps

IN 2019, NATALIYA STETSENKO, HER HUSBAND AND CHILDREN emigrated from Ukraine and came to the US without knowing any English. Fortunately, her mother had been living in the country for a few years before they arrived, but Nataliia's family would still need more support if they were to survive in their new home in Illinois. They found that support in The Salvation Army and the Pathway of Hope (POH) program. POH is a ministry that helps families identify and overcome barriers to self-sufficiency while supporting them each step of the way. Once that goal is achieved, The Salvation Army maintains contact with those families to ensure things continue to go smoothly.

Nataliia learned about the Norridge Citadel Corps when a neighbor, who also happened to be Ukrainian, informed her about a parenting class available there, which Nataliia happily joined. Suddenly, she had a community of mothers in similar situations that she could rely on. But her children, particularly her son, were also in need of community. He'd lost all his friends in Ukraine, and the struggle to fit in at his new school wasn't made any easier by the language barrier. So, when Nataliia learned about The Salvation Army's summer day camp, and scholarship programs to help families afford it, she saw it as a golden opportunity for her son to make new friends. The first time Nataliia and her husband attended a church service at The Salvation Army was for the summer camp's final concert, where they were amazed to hear their son singing in English despite still not knowing the language. They decided then and there that Norridge Citadel would be their church home.

The next year, Nataliia's daughter was going into preschool. When the school asked for volunteers, Nataliia went to Pamela Church-Pryor, the community ministries director at Norridge Citadel, to say that she wanted to help. She thought it would be a good opportunity to learn more English, and she'd been a schoolteacher in Ukraine, but she wasn't sure how she could get involved. Pamela told her that with Pathway of Hope they could find Nataliia a job at the school, and Nataliia agreed to join the program.

Norridge Citadel has a particularly strong POH program, as the congregation makes a point to support anyone who needs it. "I think the corps overall is very special about receiving people," says Pamela, who's been working at Norridge Citadel for 16 years and has worked with POH participants for 12 years. "We try to connect from whichever point people come through our doors. So when people come through Pathway of Hope, we try to make the experience have eternal value. And we approach it as all hands on deck." ►

By David Reardon Photograph by Mustafa Hussain

“I found strength in believing that God worked through other people who provide help and support.”

Nataliia Stetsenko

“Oftentimes, we just need that entry point,” said Captain Denesia Polusca, corps officer at Norridge Citadel, speaking on the welcoming nature of the corps. “Really, that’s what it is: just creating space and opportunities for that, recognizing that somebody wouldn’t necessarily feel comfortable coming into the office, asking for help, and then coming to church on Sunday. So it’s just having those staircases so people can be able to feel that belonging before they take that next step.”

Norridge Citadel’s intentional programming available to POH families includes Wednesday night youth activities, parenting classes, and conversational English classes for non-native speakers. They’re also always personally invited to church services, where Pamela gives them all visitor badges and introduces them as friends. There’s even a “Can You Help?” section in the corps bulletin where families’ needs are often posted so the congregation can step in.

The parenting class came about specifically as an initiative to connect POH clients, many of which are immigrant families, as the Norridge Citadel team realized many of their clients would get along and support each other, but directly connecting them would breach client confidentiality. The class is now a diverse, multi-faith community of people who do things such as provide childcare when someone can’t afford it, practice English together, and help each other navigate life.

Nataliia lauds the spiritual support she received during her POH experience, with everything from translated Bibles and help understanding Scripture to constant prayer coverage. “Every time I came here, we prayed about my future, my family, and I think this prayer helped me



Scan to watch Nataliia’s video testimony about her Pathway of Hope experience.

believe in myself.” She hopes that her life now can be seen as proof that POH works. “Look at me, look at my story, you can do it the same. God is so good. God works for everyone. Just go on to do first step.”

With help from the POH program, Nataliia and her family became US citizens and bought their condo, and she also got her driver’s license. She’s now working as a teacher’s assistant, and after working at her daughter’s preschool, she’s currently teaching science and social studies to middle and high schoolers. “I found strength in believing that God works through other people who provide help and support,” said Nataliia. “During this program, Pathway of Hope, can you believe, I got my teacher assistant license, and I started working in the school. I have lived six years in this country, I can’t believe I speak English now. And I work in an American school.” She plans to be a full-time teacher at her local middle school in the future but wants to be a preschool or kindergarten teacher first, because she loves working with small children. “They give me hugs,” she said. “This is the best, best gift for me.”

Nataliia also continues to feel more and more at home at Norridge Citadel. She’s now a soldier and a local officer, leading the “cherubs” junior church class at the corps. “I’m just so happy they have given me this opportunity to help this church, not just belonging to this place, but to do something,” she said. “I love to go to Ukrainian Church because this is my language and I love to hear from Ukrainian Christians, but this is my church. The Salvation Army, this is my church.”

Captain Polusca credits the success of Norridge Citadel and their POH program to listening to the needs of the community and following the guiding of the Holy Spirit, which she says anyone can do. And being open to people like Nataliia is just part of The Salvation Army’s primary mission: meeting human needs in Jesus’ name without discrimination. “I love these people,” Nataliia said. “I love this church. And this is place where I belong, you know?”

Five Creative Ways to Serve Your City
United States

You don’t need a title or a platform to make a difference. God can use what is already in your hands and those already around you. Every community has different needs, and every believer has something to offer.

Start where you are. Ask God, “Where are you calling me to restore something this year?” Here are five creative ways to begin. Let them inspire your own ideas for serving in your city.

1 Bless Your City in Writing
Start the year by writing a short prayer or letter of hope to your city. Share it on social media or send it to a local school, hospital, or first responders.

2 Sidewalk of Hope
Use chalk to write uplifting messages or Scripture on sidewalks. Simple words like “You are loved” or “God sees you” can brighten someone’s day.

3 Build a Blessing Box
Set up a small weatherproof container in your neighborhood with snacks, socks, or hygiene items. Let people give or take as needed.

4 Adopt a Forgotten Space
Find a neglected alley, lot, or park and bring new life to it. Inquire with the appropriate person about how you can do something to improve the area, such as planting flowers, picking up trash, or painting something hopeful.

5 Host a “No Reason” Gathering
Plan a simple hangout like soup night, board games, or a movie on the lawn. Invite neighbors and create space for connection.



Want to serve with others? Scan the QR code to connect with your local Salvation Army corps.

The US War Cry Celebrates 145 Years!
United States

The War Cry was first published in January 1881. This year, The War Cry begins its 145th year with a new design that both borrows from its past and charts a new path. National Publications thanks God for the ministry of The War Cry through the decades and for the scores of writers, artists and editors that have contributed to its remarkable legacy.



AI Tech Keeping Buffalo’s \$100M Salvation Army Development Project on Track
Buffalo, New York

A new Salvation Army facility is being constructed in Buffalo, NY, starting with a shelter for families experiencing homelessness. The construction team is using Buildots, an AI progress and delay forecasting tool, to bring added efficiency to the site. Major Annette Lock, Erie County Salvation Army director of operations, believes that this collaboration with maximize every dollar donated.

“What the AI is doing is actually tracking every single element that is going into a building,” said Jessica Herralá, managing director of Buildots North America. The AI analyzes that information and images from the construction site to predict where issues might happen.

“There’s so much historic waste in the construction process period, so anything we can do to weed that out and compress and squeeze it out because we can make those decisions faster, the better off we are going to be,” said Frank Ciminelli of Arc Building Partners, who is overseeing the project.

“Angels” Over Australia: Flying Padres Celebrate 80 Years in the Sky
Australia

The Flying Padres are Salvation Army officers who carry the Christian message to remote, rural communities and isolated people across the top end of Western Australia and Northern Territory via small planes. Multiple events were held over the weekend of September 20th to commemorate the ministry. Beneficiaries of the ministry and retired officers who served in the Flying Padres gathered to share how the effort has impacted their lives.

“Getting to remote communities is key and so are our planes,” said Territorial Commander Commissioner Miriam Gluyas. “Our ‘salt of the earth’ officers have been in the lives of people who live on these properties for 80 years, and this continues from generation to generation. [It’s an] enduring legacy.”

The Flying Padres are often called upon to conduct funerals, memorial services, wedding ceremonies or child dedications as well as Christian education classes and Easter and Christmas services.



Matthew Abbott/The New York Times/Redux

World's Tallest Red Kettle Lights Up Detroit's Cadillac Square *Detroit, MI*

The Salvation Army of Metro Detroit's Red Kettle Kickoff featured the world's tallest red kettle, measuring 56 feet tall and 24 feet wide. The kettle's 26,000 LED lights lit up Cadillac Square at the tree-lighting ceremony while a brass band played festive tunes. Mounted on the tallest red kettle was an LED sign describing the impact of donations, and thanking The Salvation Army of Metro Detroit's generous partners.

"It's not just a holiday landmark, but this is a beacon of hope that symbolizes this great community's generosity and the enduring mission of The Salvation Army," Major Dawn Worthy, Metro Detroit area commander, said in an interview with WXYZ-TV Detroit before the event.

The holiday event attracted 100,000 people who filled the square to kickoff the important fundraising season and hear the meaning behind it. Reflecting on the occasion, Major Dawn observed, "To be able to speak to nearly 100,000 people about The Salvation Army was quite amazing, but to be able to pray with them was the best!"

"It's not just a holiday landmark, but this is a beacon of hope that symbolizes this great community's generosity and the enduring mission of The Salvation Army."

Sheetz, Inc. Named 2025 Recipient of The Salvation Army Evangeline Booth Award *National Headquarters*

The Salvation Army bestowed its highest honor on Sheetz, Inc. in recognition of its Sheetz For the Kidz program, which has partnered with the Army since 1992 to provide toys, clothing and other essential items to children nationwide each holiday season.

"The Sheetz For the Kidz Holiday Program is a demonstration of love in action," said National Commander Commissioner Merle Heatwole. "Their commitment to bring joy to families in crisis reflects the very heart of our mission. We are grateful for their partnership and the hope they bring to communities year after year."



"We are humbled by the outpouring of support from our customers, employees, and business partners, which allows us to reach even more kids each year," said Brittany Funcheon, Executive Director of Sheetz For the Kidz. The charity has helped over 180,000 children since its founding.

Highlights from 2025 National Annual Report *United States*

In 2024, The Salvation Army served nearly 28 million people across 7,461 centers nationwide, with 1.55 million volunteers contributing. These numbers represent the many ways The Salvation Army meets human needs by God's grace through the remarkable efforts of those who choose to serve.

Hunger Relief

183,111,494 meals served.

Homelessness

10,075,059 nights of shelter provided.

Eviction Prevention

1,575,098 households supported with financial assistance.

Disaster Relief

1,234 disasters responded to, assisting 306,517 people.

Additional Services

14.49 million tangible items distributed, 737,224 transportation assists, 35,946 employment assists.

Ministry Activities

3.7 million church attendees and 4.5 million adult ministry participants.

Mission Centers

7,461 centers, including 1,257 food pantries, 302 emergency shelters, and 112 rehabilitation centers.

All The World magazine goes online *International Headquarters, London*

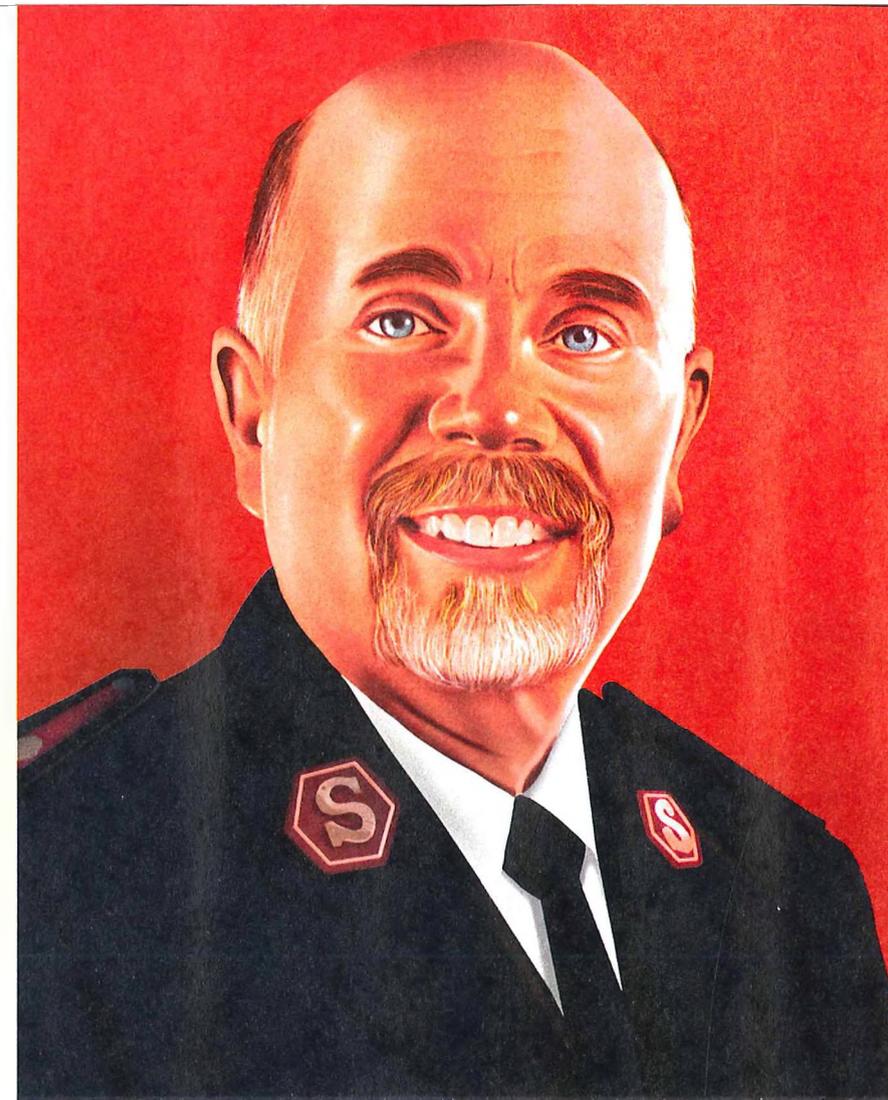
Across 140 years, All the World magazine has told the global story of The Salvation Army. What began in 1884 as a print publication – and aptly named by Salvation Army Founder William Booth – now steps boldly into the digital age, with a fresh format and platform, and a renewed mission: to make inspiring stories from every corner of the globe more accessible than ever before.

Scan below to read All the World. It will be a perpetual magazine with articles published on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.



William Timmons/The Salvation Army USA

Illustration by Richard Chance



My Journey as a Salvation Army Officer

Colonel Ivan Rock

COLONEL IVAN ROCK was recently appointed as the National Chief Secretary for The Salvation Army in the United States. Along with his wife, Colonel Christine, he has served as an officer for more than 35 years in a variety of appointments in the Eastern Territory.

How did you experience God's calling to officership?

For reasons I have never fully understood, tents have always held special significance in my spiritual journey. At the age of eight, I was camping with a group of young boys when a counselor shared the gospel story. In that moment, sitting in an old, smelly tent, I accepted Jesus as my Savior.

I believe the most profound and impactful ministry within The Salvation Army happens at the local church/corps, and I wanted to be fully engaged in that environment.

A little over a decade later, I found myself attending a series of camp meetings. The camp lacked a building large enough to accommodate everyone, so we gathered in a rented circus tent pitched in the middle of a field. Once again, I was sitting in an old, smelly tent. It was there that I clearly heard God's call to serve Him as a Salvation Army officer.

What did you do to prepare yourself for officership prior to entering CFOT? Although I grew up in The Salvation Army, receiving the call to officership made me realize that I was not truly prepared for the journey ahead. The significance of serving God felt overwhelming, and I questioned how anyone could be completely ready for such a responsibility. To prepare, I immersed myself deeply in God's Word. I dedicated considerable time to prayer. And I made it a priority to become as involved as possible in my local church/corps. I believe the most profound and impactful ministry within The Salvation Army happens at the local church/corps, and I wanted to be fully engaged in that environment.

What has helped you stay faithful to your calling through your years of service?

Serving as a Salvation Army officer has brought both rewards and challenges. There are days when I feel completely secure in God's hands, assured of His guidance and presence. There are also days that are undeniably trying. Even in these difficult times, I remain deeply aware of God's presence and His unwavering love. The words of Matthew 28:20 remind me that He is "with (me) always, to the very end of the age" (NIV).

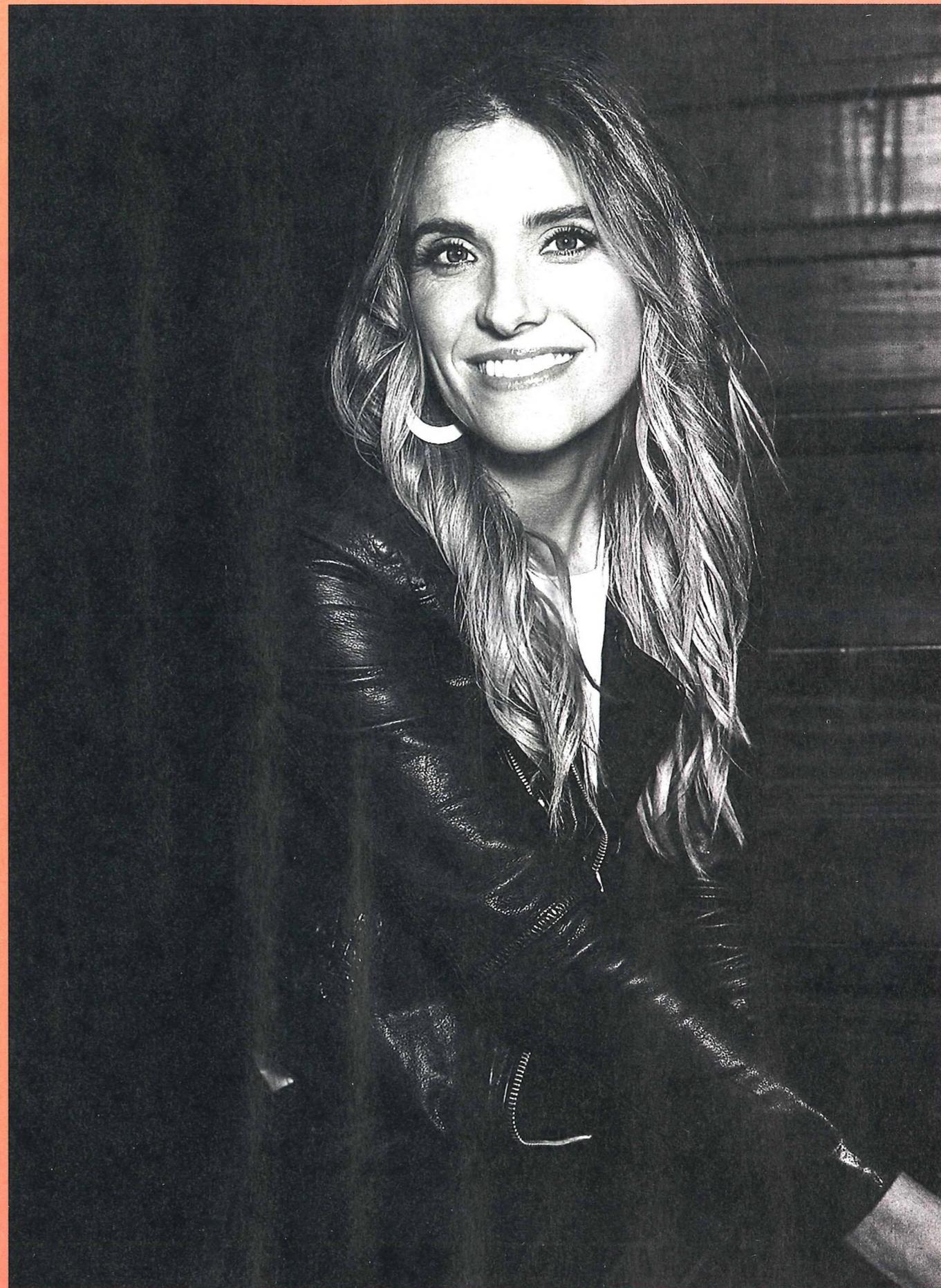
I am honored to serve as a Salvation Army officer. If given the chance, I would choose this path all over again.

INTERVIEW

WITH

A conversation with The War Cry

**REBECCA
ST. JAMES**



Photography courtesy of Rebecca St. James

of His Spirit and His love, then that would be a life well lived.

CL: Did you ever think that you would have done all the things that you've done when you first started off? It's incredible to have millions of songs and albums sold, to be in over a dozen movies, written over a dozen books, done podcasting and been a GRAMMY-winning artist — it must feel surreal?

RSJ: It is. It is a little crazy if you put it in those terms. I suppose I didn't think about it at the time, but I think in this season of life, in my 40s, I'm realizing that it's just been an adventure. So much has felt adventurous, and I remember giving my gifts to God at 12, and thinking, "Lord, I don't know how you can use me, but I want to make a difference." I think at that point because I was starting to get a sense that He was leading me into music. I probably thought I'd do something in music but probably not all the other things. I had a heart

for acting at a young age — probably about six years old I saw "The Sound of Music." I thought, "Wow, that's amazing. It'd be fun to be in something like that." It really had moved my heart in a powerful way, but I don't think I thought it would be as much an adventure as it's been.

CL: Speaking of that adventure, that adventure continued this year with yet another book. You co-wrote with your husband. What motivated you to write this book, and what do you hope it will do for your readers?

RSJ: It was actually a producer friend from "Unsung Hero" that came to us and said that he felt like our story separately and together, me and Cubbie's story, has great value at this time in our present moment — for Christians to hear about what God has done in our lives and be encouraged by that. He just felt like it's needed, and I think what he was saying, and what we see is that a lot of Christians deconstructing their faith or being a

bit disillusioned with the church or struggling in marriage or family life; to have a book where we just tell our stories of our life separately and then together, we hoped we would encourage people to stick it out in the hard times. Which is why, with the title "Lasting Ever," we're saying that God can give you the power to stick it out in your faith, in times in your life that are difficult, in marriage when both of you are committed. A lot of people have a situation where somebody bails on them, and they can't make that person commit to it, but I think when both of you are like, "Hey, we're going to, with the power of God, really stick it out through thick and thin" — I think there's such a beauty to that. We're 14 years into marriage, and I think it's so sweet to see how it gets richer and richer because you weather the hard times, and the trust goes deeper, and the love goes deeper as the trust goes deeper.

CL: And that comes out in the book, your experience of what you're talking about. We're here at The Salvation Army Southern Territory's Bible Conference. You're about to do a concert. What have your interactions been like with The Salvation Army in your life?

RSJ: The two components that for me really stand out when I think of The Salvation Army are all their centers where you can bring used clothing or you can make donations, and then it's giving people the opportunity to work or buy things at a good price. I've seen that have impact, even in Australia. It's a wonderful use of resources that then goes into people's lives, and I just love the missional impact of The Salvation Army. I think it has such a sense of solid mission-oriented purpose being lived out in the Kingdom of God. I was telling our kids about, I was explaining a little bit about today and I was saying, "Hey, you know those people who stand outside of Kroger at Christmas, and they're ringing the bells, and they're taking donations, that's Salvation Army people." I just think that's so wonderful, and that's such a beautiful gift to people at Christmas. It's the

IF PEOPLE CAN SEE THE LOVE OF GOD IN ME AND THAT I'M REALLY WANTING TO OPERATE AS A CONDUIT OF HIS SPIRIT AND HIS LOVE, THEN THAT WOULD BE A LIFE WELL LIVED.

church, and it's mission, and it's bells at Christmas — there's such a loveliness to what The Salvation Army does.

CL: I grew up listening to and singing your music. I was going back through your work and came across the song "Breathe," which for me as a young person was affecting. I can think of times going to Christian youth groups and singing that song and feeling this connection with the Lord. Now, in my family life with my kids, we've begun singing it together. So you've made an impact in my life and made an impact on millions of lives. What's next? What's the next thing? What's God doing in your life and what do you see coming next?

RSJ: The conviction that my husband and I have is that we want the ministry component in our lives to come out of healthy family life, and I think that's a really biblical idea. If there are challenges at home, especially if you're in ministry, you know. It's definitely a biblical thing. We make sure that even though we're often traveling, we are traveling together as a whole family or one of my girls comes with me if it doesn't make sense for the whole family to come out. We try to make sure our kids really feel prioritized because it's a high goal for us that they never feel like ministry took daddy away; and we want to make sure that there's no room for resentment. They know that God is

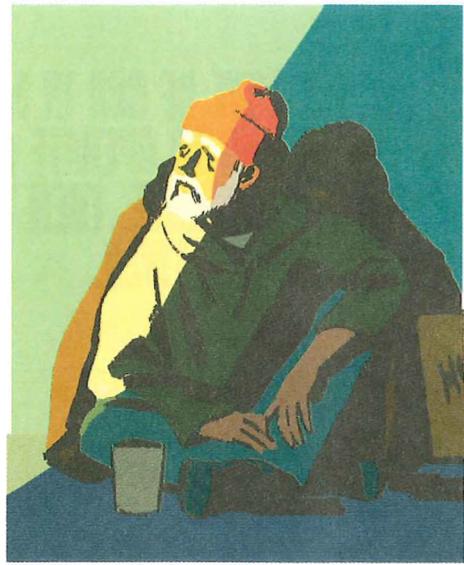
first, then our family, and then ideally healthy ministry comes out of that. I would say that's my primary goal: to be a dedicated wife and mom, and then to minister out of that place.

I lead worship every other month in Dallas, and then I have this weekly podcast with Focus on the Family that I co-host, and I'm just learning so much with that. Then, we have shows and events that come in like this one. Healthy no's is another mantra for us. Is this a God appointment? Is this a right thing for our family in this season or is it not? We try to listen to the Holy Spirit on that, and my husband and I try to be a team on that. We talk every now and again about new music, but I just I think that I'm in a season right now where I just feel thankful for what we have and I don't feel this huge push towards the next project. I think at other points in my life I've just been like, "Okay, on to the next thing. We just gotta go. We're gonna go." Now, I think there's just a sense of being grateful for what we have as a family and in ministry and just being open handed about it. So I don't really know what these next few years are going to look like. My husband is in film, too, so I do know that he's going to be directing, probably I'll be doing a bit of producing and maybe a bit of acting. But, primarily him directing so that's really a lot of where I see us headed. We home school so we can travel with him when he's shooting, and I love that adventure too. ■

CALEB LOUDEN (CL): You are one of the definitive artists in contemporary Christian music history. You're a Grammy-winning singer/songwriter, best-selling author, and actress. You've written over a dozen books and starred in over a dozen movies. You're also a podcast host who has partnered with Christian organizations like Focus on the Family and K-LOVE. You've had an historic career and have worked in a variety of media. Given your many accomplishments and the diversity of your endeavors, how do you define your calling? What is your God-given purpose?

REBECCA ST. JAMES (RSJ): It's funny, somebody asked me a long time ago, "What do you want to see on your gravestone?" I know that sounds like really thinking it through right to the end of my life, but I think it really ties into purpose because I said that I want to be known as somebody who loved God with their whole heart and loved people. That's my goal, and obviously we all fail at times. We don't always attain our goals perfectly. That's why there's the need for grace and the Savior, but that's my heart. Mother Teresa has been a hero of mine because she lived that out so beautifully, and the world saw Jesus in her. I think in all these different areas from songwriting to live shows to the books, all of it — if people can see the love of God in me and that I'm really wanting to operate as a conduit





They Came Hungry.

By David Reardon



They Found Jesus.

Illustration by Patrick Leger



F

For a little more than a year, Lieutenant (Lt.) Donald Cooper and his team of volunteers have been hosting a community dinner and church service (referred to simply as “dinner church”) that’s been growing at an incredible rate and getting some attention after being featured at the Central Territory’s Congress last June. Their weekly worship service caters specifically to people wandering in off the street, often just looking for a hot meal. Lt. Cooper has a heart for ministering to this demographic because he’s been there himself. “I was the worst of the worst,” said Lt. Cooper. “[People] said, ‘He’s done. He’s never going to make it out.’ I was the guy on the street corner. I was a thief, robber, all that stuff.” He grew up in a church and even felt the call to ministry at a young age but fell into addiction when he was prescribed opiates after his service in the US Army. From there, he moved on to heroin, meth, and a life on the street.

Lt. Cooper described what it’s like to be ignored in your church home, when that’s where you need to be while trapped in sin the most. “I went through this phase of God being so distant, and I felt so unwelcome by church people. I felt so judged by the people I grew up with, in the church that was supposed to love me. I knew that my healing was in Jesus. I just wasn’t allowed in those spaces where I thought Jesus was. You get put in the back row, and a babysitter gets put with you so you’re not looking through drawers or whatever. It’s always like, ‘Come to church,’ but when you actually show up, you’re not welcome there.” After several stints in jail, Lt. Cooper finally recovered thanks to The Salvation Army’s Adult Rehabilitation Cen-

ter. Given his life experience, he felt well-suited to plant the Prospect Corps after being appointed there upon his commissioning as a Salvation Army officer in 2024.

Lt. Cooper wasn’t sure what the corps would look like or how to get started, so he steeped himself in prayer. He also spent a lot of those first few weeks walking around and getting to know the community, and he very quickly realized that a traditional Sunday morning service wouldn’t work for the people in that neighborhood. “There was a lot of church hurt in the community. A lot of people wanted to be in church, but they wouldn’t go because they weren’t welcome.” When the idea for dinner church came to him, he ran with it. Lt. Cooper credits the Dinner Church Collective, a group of churches across the nation, with inspiration for his approach. He printed out flyers advertising a “Community Meal” in large text, followed by “Jesus Message” in a much smaller font, hoping not to scare anyone away. That first Sunday, a crowd of homeless people and people being trafficked came for the meal but were hooked by Lt. Cooper’s message when they realized he’d been where they were. Over a year later, Lt. Cooper says those people who came that first Sunday still come every week.

When I visited the Prospect Corps, I showed up two and a half hours before dinner church was set to start, and already a handful of dedicated volunteers from other corps around the area were bustling around and setting everything up as worship music echoed throughout the building. After touring the facility and talking to the volunteers, I thought I knew what to expect from the evening service. But when the Prospect Corps’ tiny chapel was packed to the gills, with a not insignificant amount of overflow listening in from the dining room just outside, I was reminded of how often the Holy Spirit defies our expectations. I stood in the back of the chapel watching and listening as people with nowhere else to go worshipped with abandon and poured their hearts out to their fellow believers. In that time, it felt as though my redeye flight and six hours of delays never happened.

The service was peppered with opportunities for the congregation to share their testimonies and prayer requests. One woman took the microphone to declare that she was ready to go to treatment for her addiction. “She’s never said that [before],” Lt. Cooper said, noting that this was a significant moment for the woman. “Every week she takes the microphone and begs Jesus to deliver her from drug addiction ... Every week you hear people crying out to Jesus to deliver

them.” I could’ve stood there listening to these testimonies and Lt. Cooper’s Scripture recitations for hours. But it only lasted for about 50 minutes. The room emptied, everyone eager for the “dinner” part of dinner church. On my way to the meal, I looked down at a little shelf by the door, where an offering plate had been sitting during the service, empty and unaddressed by Lt. Cooper or the volunteers, now completely full. I was awestruck, wondering how people who have very little could be so generous.

“The people that we serve are sort of on the outside of the church and have been for years,” said Lt. Cooper. “They come in, and you see them feel the Holy Spirit for the first time again in worship. And their eyes are just open, or they begin crying like, ‘Oh yeah, I remember that Man. I remember that Spirit. I remember this feeling of the physical presence of Jesus from growing up.’ And ‘Oh yeah, He’s here again. He wasn’t ever gone. I was gone, but He’s here right now with me.’ The lure is food. The lure is hygiene. The catch is a relationship with Jesus.” The crowd flowed out from the chapel and into the dining hall, and shortly after that, they were served a meal of spaghetti (which Lt. Cooper had been cooking all day) and fried chicken. As everyone ate, Lt. Cooper weaved through the room with his microphone, delivering a sermon on a passage he’d read earlier. He engaged with his congregation physically and had them answer questions on slips of paper so they could engage right back and discuss Scripture with their neighbors. For this crowd, the likes of which you wouldn’t see at a regular Sunday morning service, it seemed the perfect way to share the good news. “I’ve heard more theological depth come out of a person who is in addiction, sitting around those tables, than I have anywhere else,” Lt. Cooper said. He later told me that soldiers from other corps are at each table in plainclothes every week, guiding conversations and loving on the congregation. I had never experienced anything quite like Prospect’s dinner church — and yet it still felt familiar, comfortable, like home.

“If we’re trying to do the original mission of The Salvation Army, seeking the lost, the hurt, those people are not going to come to Sunday morning church,” said Lt. Cooper. “Now people are experiencing six- or seven-day work weeks. If they have a day off, it’s on Sunday morning. They want to rest. They want to spend time with their families. It would be coming from a privileged place for us to say, ‘No, your one morning off, you need to come to church.’” Lt. Cooper is adamant that “church” can be whenever, so long

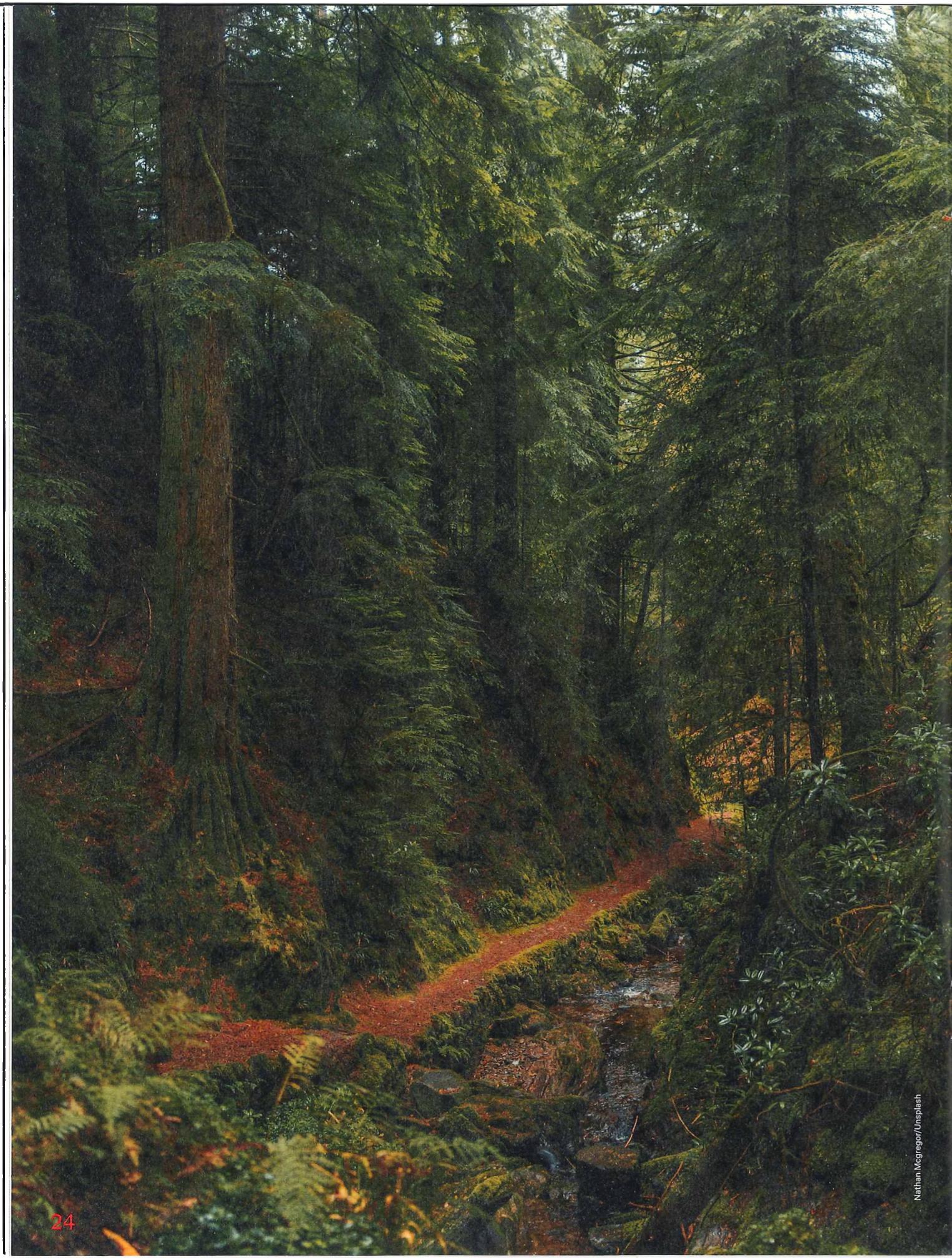
as people show up. The service can be adapted to suit the community. “We can move church to Sunday night or Monday night, or Tuesday night to reach people. Our growth is because it’s *not* on Sunday morning ... If we want to grow, we have to look at moving church.” With the energy and sense of revival at Prospect Corps, it’s easy to see Lt. Cooper’s point — church doesn’t have to be Sunday morning to be legitimate. The idea’s catching on, too. Lt. Cooper cites a corps in Olathe that now has a monthly “market church,” where the gospel is shared in a farmer’s market setting rather than a traditional meeting. Adapting a church service to fit a community’s needs has often proven to be a great way to draw new people to the faith. When the meal ended, the congregation lined up to collect a handful of free hygiene products before they left for the night. And with that, the night was over. Everyone left, and I also headed off for the evening to consider the beautiful service.

My evening at the Prospect Corps left no doubt in my mind as to why dinner church is working and attracting over 150 people every week: the focus on worship, Scripture and community is a powerful combination that anyone would find inviting. Throw in shared meals, and you’ve got a winning formula. I couldn’t (and still can’t) shake the feeling that Lt. Cooper has tapped into something powerful by identifying his community’s needs and shaping Prospect Corps around it. It’s what made The Salvation Army movement catch on to begin with: giving people what they need, where they’re at.

Right now, Lt. Cooper doesn’t have any plans for the future of Prospect Corps’ dinner church services. He calls himself a “day-to-day” kind of guy and has been completely reliant on the Holy Spirit since the beginning — so much so that he refuses to take any credit for the corps’ growth; he’s adamant that none of it would have been possible without God’s intervention. “The deliverance, the spirit of the community, that’s all Jesus. If it was me at all, it would have failed. It would not have gotten off the ground.” Lt. Cooper plans to continue following the Holy Spirit’s guidance. “If we build anything, if we try to mold or fix this corps to be our idea of a ‘Salvation Army,’ it will fall, it will break, it will crumble. So, myself and anyone coming after me, if we don’t rely on the Holy Spirit to do the growing and the developing, it’s going to end up dead. In my experience, people’s hearts have to be ready to experience Jesus,” Lt. Cooper said. “How do we do that? We create a space that’s loving, compassionate, and hospitable. Our hands are out, welcoming them to the feet of Jesus. The food’s great. The hospitality is really great. The atmosphere, the music is really great — All that, for people to be open to receiving a relationship with Jesus.” When it comes to dinner church, the proof is in the pudding. Lt. Cooper has cultivated an atmosphere where the Holy Spirit is alive and well, and people are encountering Him like never before. I was only there for one evening and experienced that truth. And both Lt. Cooper’s own testimony and the ministry of the Prospect Corps show that God can meet anyone anywhere, so long as they’re willing. Or, as Lt. Cooper puts it, “Jesus can show up in the trap houses.”

“I’ve heard more theological depth come out of a person who is in addiction, sitting around those tables,

than I have anywhere else.”



Nathan Mcgregor/Unsplash

Time

to

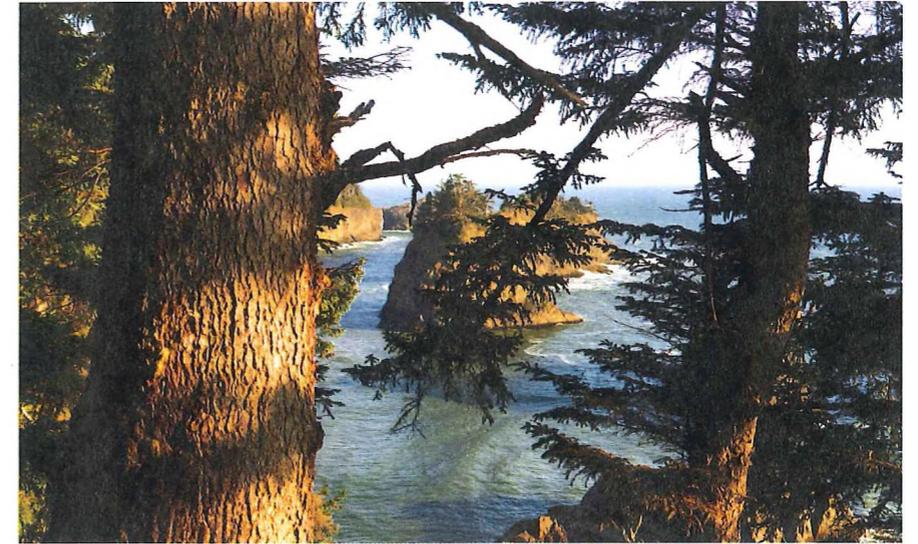
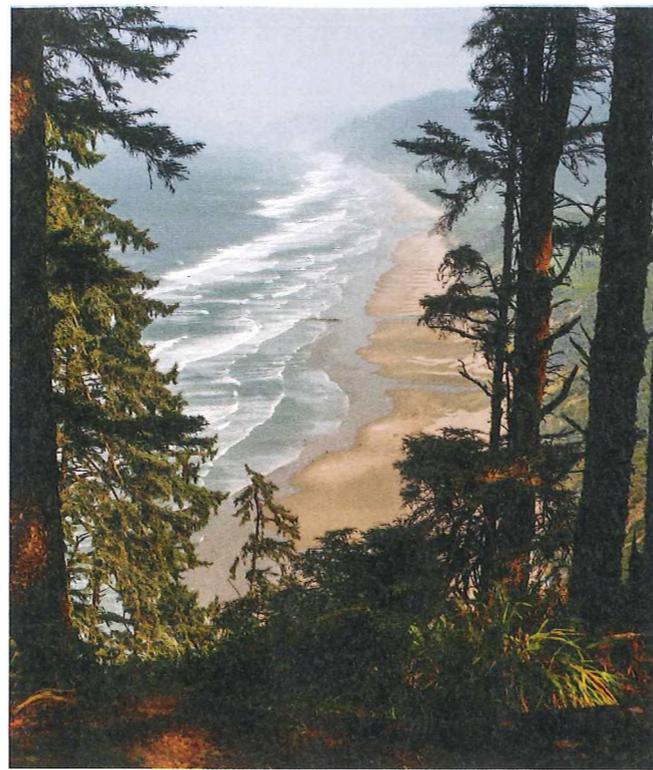
Retreat

By Bee Bryant

I WANT TO TALK ABOUT a thing that I am terrible at. And my guess is that you are terrible at it, too. No, I'm not talking about whistling. I'm talking about solitude. It is a thing that Christians have done for centuries — millennia, even! Intentional solitude, usually with meditation or prayer, is a time-honored way of becoming a better disciple.

But in my house, there are four other people and Sirius the dog. I'm never alone! I don't have time for that! And actually, I used to live alone, and there was a lot of quiet time. But I don't know that I was ever alone then, either. If you've got ESPN on TV, or Paul Simon playing in the background, and your phone open to Facebook, you're not really practicing solitude.

We are busy people! We have a lot to do. And then we fill the spaces in our lives with noise and information. Solitude is about making space, but that space is for God. The point is to get away from all the other inputs in our lives. We give ourselves room to focus on God. It requires intentionality. You don't accidentally give yourself two or three hours of solitude.



Jesus used solitude to recover from something big. He wasn't just an introvert, recharging in a quiet room. He was connecting with the Father in prayer.

How often did Jesus seek out solitude? A lot, as it turns out! Just going by Luke's version of the gospel, he names nine times that Jesus sought out alone time with God. And remember, the Gospel of Luke is a very selective account of Jesus' whole time on earth. He was just recording the important stories from eyewitnesses. So, if Luke had heard about it nine times, one can assume it was something Jesus did all the time. Let's look at some of them and see if anything instructive emerges.

Luke 5:15-16 is an interesting short passage, "News of him spread even more, and huge crowds gathered to listen and to be healed from their illnesses. But Jesus would withdraw to deserted places for prayer" (NIV). This is placed between a story about Jesus healing a leper and one about Him healing a paralyzed man. Clearly, these are good things that need to be done. So why does Jesus stop and withdraw to deserted places? Does

He need a break? It seems almost blasphemous to say that Jesus, God incarnate, needed a break. But I think that's it. Jesus had a sense of pace. He had a life balance.

When you are in the middle of doing good things, do you take time out to retreat? In Luke 6:12-13, we get this story: "During that time, Jesus went out to the mountain to pray, and he prayed to God all night long. At daybreak, he called together his disciples. He chose twelve of them whom he called apostles."

Here's another reason to seek solitude! Jesus was about to appoint the Twelve. He had a big decision to make, so He spent time alone with God in prayer! Even Jesus, who knew exactly what He was doing, took time out to pray about it first. He wasn't rushing into anything.

When you are about to make a huge life choice, do you take time out to retreat? Luke 9:18 says, "One day Jesus left the crowds to pray alone. Only his disciples were with him, and he asked them, 'Who do people say I am?'" This is when Peter declares that Jesus is the Christ sent from God. Jesus tells the disciples to keep it quiet. But then He lets them in on His plan. It's a huge moment, theologically, in the gospel story. And it's set up by Jesus practicing solitude.

When you have a big, game-changing announcement, do you take time to retreat beforehand? Just a few verses later, in Luke 9:28-29, we get the story of the transfigura-

tion: "About eight days later Jesus took Peter, John, and James up on a mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was transformed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly, two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared and began talking with Jesus. They were glorious to see. And they were speaking about his exodus from this world, which was about to be fulfilled in Jerusalem."

As miracles go, this one is way up there. It was the big reveal of who Jesus was, and God clearly saying, "This is my son, my chosen one. Listen to Him!" These are all things we know about Jesus, so they don't seem shocking or surprising. But to Peter, James and John, this was big news!

When you have a big, unique event, do you start it off with prayer and solitude? In Luke 11:1, we read Luke's version of Jesus teaching the Lord's prayer to His disciples. "Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished, one of his disciples came to him and said, 'Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.'" Jesus was teaching an important lesson! We still pray that prayer today (although we usually use the Matthew version).

Jesus retreated just before He was about to be betrayed. He knew what was coming, and that He didn't have any time left. He wasn't happy about it! He knew what He had to do, but he didn't really want to do it. It reminds me of the definition of courage: "being afraid but doing it anyway." Even Jesus had trouble doing the hard things!

When you have something hard that you don't want to do, do you take time to retreat?

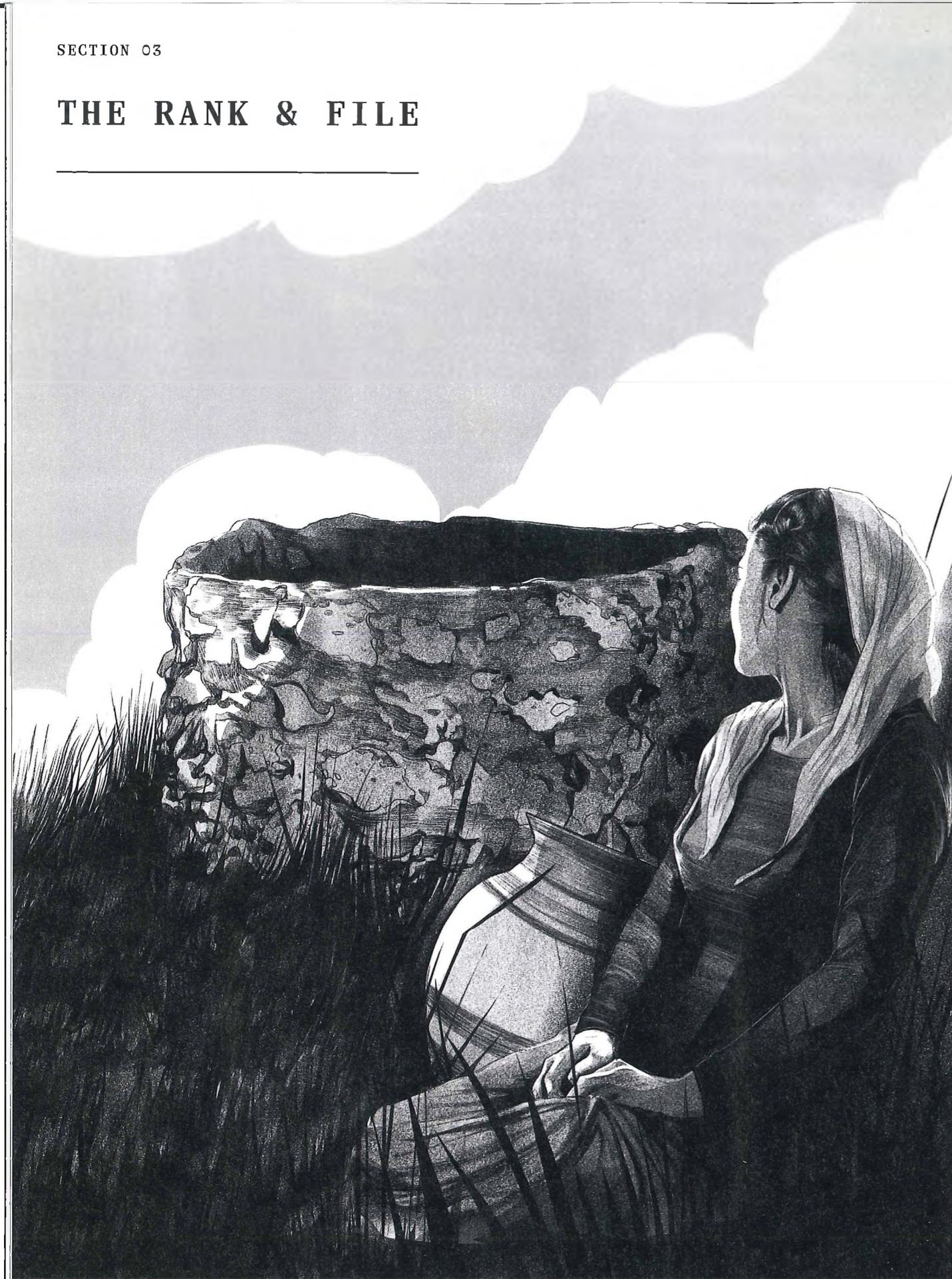
So, what did we learn from looking at these examples of Jesus retreating in solitude? I'm struck that they weren't just scheduled activities. It's not like He had a quarterly solitude retreat in his monthly planner. Jesus used solitude to recover from something big. He wasn't just an introvert, recharging in a quiet room. He was connecting with the Father in prayer.

His solitude often led to something happening. I'm not sure that's something we do. Do we take a time of solitude before a big event? More likely, we take that time to run around and get last-minute things done. Five thousand people are coming over for a fish dinner! We'd better scrub the stove! Get the fridge cleaned out! Vacuum the living room! Maybe that's not the right approach. Jesus didn't seem to think so.

I don't do solitude nearly as often as I should. I don't think I'm alone in this. And as I've looked at when Jesus did it, it seems painfully obvious that my life could benefit from it! We should be using solitude and retreat to recover, recharge, prepare, and connect with our Heavenly Father. I want to do more of that! What about you?

Pray about ways you can make time for solitude. When could you carve out time to be alone, to intentionally seek God? This week, start small. Take just 30 minutes and be alone with Him. Retreat. Pray. Recharge. You never know what good things could happen!

THE RANK & FILE



Nameless and Known: *The Samaritan Woman*

By Major AmyJo Ferguson Illustration by Nicole Rifkin

A

A story is told of a young soldier in the army of Alexander the Great who became so paralyzed with fear during a battle that he turned and fled. When the battle was over, the young soldier was caught and brought before the great general himself. Alexander the Great looked at the soldier and said to the young man, “What’s your name?”

The soldier replied, “My name is Alexander.”

“Well son,” Alexander the Great replied, “you either change your conduct or change your name.”

Many of us have the privilege (or burden) of carrying the name of another. Women often carry the name of their husband. Sometimes we are named after a parent or relative. Sometimes our names have special significance or meaning. Names are important, but what happens when we strip away the name?

For the next several issues, we will be looking at interactions Jesus had with people in the Bible whose

names the Gospel writers chose not to record. It is as though these stories are so important that the writers of the Bible desired for the story itself to take precedence over the characters within it.

Today, we look at John 4, where we find the longest conversation of Jesus recorded in the Bible, and yet, the woman with whom Jesus spoke remains nameless. What do we know about her?

The first thing John tells us about her is that she was a Samaritan and a woman. These two facts alone should have precluded any conversation with Jesus. It was not proper for a man to speak in public to a strange woman, especially if that man was a religious teacher or leader and since wells were often associated with romance, especially if that conversation took place around the town well. If a man was looking for romance, he might go down to the well to “spy” on the women as they gathered the day’s water. It was seen as a sort of unsavory and creepy thing to do.

Moreover, John points out in verse 5 that Jews do not associate with Samaritans. This was especially true of Samaritan women who were considered unclean. For a Jewish man to touch a Samaritan woman or even to touch an object that a Samaritan woman had touched would have also made that man unclean. In the time of Jesus, being declared unclean meant that a man would have been in danger of God’s wrath until he underwent ritual

To Jesus, this woman was more important than any social or religious stigma. She mattered.

purification. It is little wonder that the woman is surprised by the request of Jesus to give him a drink and that the disciples are “amazed” by the scene in verse 27.

To Jesus, this woman was more important than any social or religious stigma. She mattered. Jesus specifically chose to travel this route. John 4:4 says simply, “He had to go through Samaria on the way.” This was despite the fact that Jews routinely made long detours to bypass Samaria.

Amazingly, we matter to God. We matter beyond our name. We matter beyond our nationality. We matter beyond whatever titles we might possess. As we can see from the rest of the story, we even matter beyond our reputation. Jesus has made a divine appointment with every single heart, because we matter to Him, and He desires that no one goes thirsty.

Jacob’s well, the well at which Jesus and the Samaritan woman met, was deep. This meant that the water never rose to the surface. As the woman points out to Jesus, one requires some sort of vessel that must be lowered into the ground to get this water. Someone could not merely walk up to the well and get a drink. It required effort. In fact, getting the household’s water was a never-ending daily task. For most of human history, the availability of fresh water guided human settlement and activity because healthy people require water daily. For this reason, when Jesus talks about giving away fountains, the woman exclaims, “give me this water.”

With his next statement, Jesus draws the connection between what is true physically and what is true spiritually. Part of the issue between Jews and Samaritans revolved around where they worshipped. Jews worshipped at the Temple in Jerusalem. There were three pilgrimage festivals to the Temple every year. The Jewish religion revolved around temple sacrifices and ritual. We see this in the life of Jesus, who was presented at the Temple when he was a baby and whose visits to the Temple were recorded in

the gospels. Samaritans, on the other hand, focused their worship practice on Mount Gerizim. Like the Jews, Samaritans had three pilgrimage festivals each year to the top of Mount Gerizim. Religion for both the Jews and the Samaritans focused on a specific place, and they argued about the exact location of that specific place.

What they did not argue about was the fact that only men had access to the most holy places and only men offered the sacrifices. When Jesus tells the woman to go call her husband, all hope of receiving what Jesus has vanishes. She has no one who will make the claim for her to receive this fountain, just as she has no one who will ascend the mountain, enter the inner court, or make the sacrifice. “I have no husband.” Let’s ignore what comes next, the enigmatic line, “You have correctly said, ‘I have no husband’; for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband” (John 4:17-18 NIV). It is easy to go down the rabbit hole of theories about exactly what Jesus meant. Was the woman a prostitute? An adulterer? A widow? Why did she choose to come to the well at noon in the heat of the day rather than in the cool of the morning when the well would have been crowded with people? Was she ostracized? Ashamed? Forced to hide away from her community?

The important part is not that we know but that in this moment she knew that Jesus knew. Jesus knew more about her than that she was a woman. Jesus knew more about her than that she was a Samaritan. As she would later testify, Jesus knew everything about her, including the fact that she had answered correctly, “I have no husband.” Jesus knew that there was no one who could claim the water for her, so to her, Jesus reveals the truth that He is the Messiah, the Savior of the world. Because we matter, God Himself chose to come to us and become a spring of living water which brings life wherever or whenever or to whomever worships in spirit and truth.

Worship is no longer constrained to one mountain or to the next. Worship is no longer constrained to the person with the perfect past. God in Jesus, the Messiah, the Savior of the world, came to us. Holy Spirit abides within us. As Paul tells the believers in Corinth: “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is within you, whom you have [received as a gift] from God, and that you are not your own [property]?” (1 Corinthians 6:19 AMP). Every believer has become a well of living water spewing forth eternal life.

The Samaritan woman is a testament to this very fact. While we might not know her name, we know for certain that because of her, many more names were written in the Lamb’s book of life. We read in verses 28-29: “So the woman left her waterpot and went into the city, and said to the people, ‘Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is He?’” And in verses 40-42, we see the result of her testimony: “So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. Many more believed because of His word; and they were saying to the woman, ‘It is no longer because of what you said that we believe,

for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One truly is the Savior of the world’” (NIV). Indeed, as her story is shared and re-shared over the years, even more people have come to know Jesus. She truly became a spring of living water.

That opportunity, promise, is still available for each of us today. Jesus knows everything we have ever done. He knows our talents. He knows our skills. He also knows our failures. He knows our doubts. He knows our secret thoughts. He knows our most private and hidden sin. He clearly sees all the good and the bad. In fact, He sees the wholeness of our lives much clearer than we ourselves see our lives. Knowing all of that, Jesus chose to come to us at exactly the place where we are to offer us the water of life. Like the Samaritan woman, we have the choice to leave behind our baggage, our shame, our sin, and to follow Jesus. We can have that river of life flowing in and, then, out of us.

At The Salvation Army’s Camp Mihaska in Missouri, there’s a beautiful, crystal-clear spring. Often it is called the bottomless spring, even though it seems like you can see the bottom because the water is so clear, and you can see rainbow trout darting around it. Professional divers have gone into the spring and tried to locate the bottom of the spring, the source of all that water. Even with all their equipment and expertise, there came a point where the divers had to abandon their efforts. It just became too dangerous. The force of the water and the direction of the spring could not be determined.

Springs of living water might sound safe, might sound serene and inviting even, but make no mistake: To choose to dive into the love and mercy of Jesus is just as dangerous as choosing to dive to the bottom of that spring in Missouri. We will never reach the bottom. We will never exhaust its mysteries. It is a leap we take by faith. Today, the question we must answer is, are we content to keep going to the well, or are we ready for that spring of living water to take us where God leads? ■

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

John 4:1-38

Jesus knew the Pharisees had heard that he was baptizing and making more disciples than John (though Jesus himself didn’t baptize them—his disciples did). So he left Judea and returned to Galilee.

He had to go through Samaria on the way. Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Please give me a drink.” He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.

The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, “You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?”

Jesus replied, “If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water.”

“But sir, you don’t have a rope or a bucket,” she said, “and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water? And besides, do you think you’re greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?”

Jesus replied, “Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling

spring within them, giving them eternal life.”

“Please, sir,” the woman said, “give me this water! Then I’ll never be thirsty again, and I won’t have to come here to get water.”

“Go and get your husband,” Jesus told her.

“I don’t have a husband,” the woman replied.

Jesus said, “You’re right! You don’t have a husband—for you have had five husbands, and you aren’t even married to the man you’re living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!”

“Sir,” the woman said, “you must be a prophet. So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshipped?”

Jesus replied, “Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

The woman said, “I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

Then Jesus told her, “I am the Messiah!”

Rediscovering the Diamond: An Altogether Real Christianity

By Envoys Steve and Sharon Bussey

“The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith.”—1 Timothy 1:5



Have you ever wondered how to tell a genuine diamond from cubic zirconia? To the untrained eye, they may appear identical, but the truth lies beneath the surface. A jeweler, using a magnifying lens to examine each facet, can look at a stone closely to distinguish the genuine from the imitation. A real diamond reveals its authenticity through pure brilliance, perfect clarity, and unbreakable resilience. These qualities are forged at the core. Immense pressure transforms carbon deep within the Earth. The purity of this composition allows light to pass through freely, producing a vibrant, clear, unmistakably authentic sparkle.

In contrast, the imitation may resemble authenticity but fall short.

While lab-made cubic zirconia offers a manufactured, flawless appearance, it lacks the true diamond's depth, distinctiveness, and durability. Its convincing sparkle fades under close inspection, exposing its true nature. Similarly, life often requires us to distinguish the genuine from the imitation. With people, character is revealed only through close and honest examination.

John Wesley, founder of Methodism, faced this kind of spiritual examination early on. Raised in a devout 18th-century English Christian home, he sincerely sought to live for God's glory. At 17, he entered Christ Church, Oxford, where he studied theology, prayed, read Scripture, served the poor, and led a "holy club" of like-minded students. Outwardly, he appeared authentic. Yet beneath the surface, his devotion was fueled more by pure determination than pure love — setting the stage for a crisis of conscience.

In 1735, Wesley sailed to Savannah, Georgia, to serve as an Anglican missionary and rector of Christ Church. The four-month voyage became a turning point in his spiritual journey. During a violent storm at sea,

panic overtook the passengers — including Wesley, who feared for his life. Yet a group of Moravian missionaries displayed a calm and unshakeable faith, singing hymns and praising God during the chaos. Their peace in the face of death exposed the fear at the core of Wesley's own faith. In that moment, he realized he was an "almost Christian" — outwardly cloaked in a facade of godliness, not resilient enough to withstand the storm.

After setbacks and disappointment in America, Wesley prematurely returned to England, disillusioned and spiritually shaken. Despite his sincerity, he realized he lacked the inner transformation of authentic Christianity. He had been playing the part, but missing the pure heart, clear conscience and unwavering faith that defines a heart religion fueled by holy love. Rather than imitating Christ, he was an imitation Christian, lacking the depth, distinctiveness and durability of the real thing.

Everything changed in 1738 at a meeting on Aldersgate Street. As Wesley listened to a reading from Luther's preface to Romans, the truth of God's Word cut to his core.

He later wrote that his heart was "strangely warmed." In that moment, the Holy Spirit assured him of Christ's forgiveness. Sanctification became real, holy love ignited and Wesley shed the facade of an "almost Christian" to embrace the vibrant reality of an "altogether Christian."

In 1741, three years after Aldersgate, Wesley gave voice to his transformation in the sermon "The Almost Christian". First preached at Oxford and later published to instruct future generations, it challenged believers to examine their hearts and discern whether they were "almost" or "altogether" Christian. Like diamonds and cubic zirconia, "altogether" and "almost" Christians may appear similar at first glance, but the difference is revealed by what lies beneath the surface: the authenticity of the core.

Wesley described the "almost Christian" as someone who sincerely desires to follow God, living morally, doing good and engaging in church life. Yet despite these outward expressions of devotion, something essential is missing. The difference lies between outward actions and inward transformation. As Paul warned in 2 Timothy 3:5, such individuals "act religious" but "reject the power that could make them godly." Their faith is built on self-generated righteousness — anchored in personal discipline, self-defined virtue and autonomous strength — rather than on the transforming power of an all-sufficient God.

In contrast, the "altogether Christian" has died to self, come alive in Christ and totally depends on the Holy Spirit. Like a real diamond, an authentic Christian reveals their authenticity through: Pure brilliance — a heart ablaze with holy love, free from sin and hypocrisy, perfect clarity — a conscience cleansed and aligned with God's truth, and unshakable

Refined by the fire of the Holy Spirit, this love becomes the source of sincere love for others, shaping both character and conduct.

resilience — a faith that endures life's storms, anchored in Christ. These qualities are forged at the core; people transformed by the immense grace of God, igniting a pure, single-minded love for God, in which He alone is their glory and delight.

Refined by the fire of the Holy Spirit, this love becomes the source of sincere love for others, shaping both character and conduct. The purity of this composition allows God's light to shine through, vibrant, clear, and unmistakably authentic. This type of belief is not mere intellectual agreement, but a "sure trust and confidence" in Christ — a faith that rests in grace, walks in obedience, embraces suffering with joy and witnesses to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

Seventy-five years after Wesley preached *"The Almost Christian,"* Sarah Milward, raised in privilege in Ashbourne, England, experienced her own soul-searching journey. Though raised in material comfort and cultural Christianity, she suffered early loss when her mother died, leaving her with a stern aunt and distant father. Her life took a dramatic turn on the eve of her wedding when she discovered her fiancé was not the man of integrity she believed him to be. Sarah broke off the engagement, and the young man, devastated by the rejection, was later committed to an asylum. The guilt and emotional weight of her decision left Sarah bedridden and unable to move past the pain.

This season of suffering led Sarah to a moment of honest self-examination. She was forced to confront the

emptiness of her "respectable" Christian faith, which proved powerless in the face of life's storms. A few years earlier, Methodists had begun meeting in Ashbourne and had purchased a plot of land from Sarah's father, where they built a chapel. Though viewed with suspicion for their passionate worship, a minister from this group was called to visit Sarah during her crisis. His compassionate guidance helped her grasp the difference between being an "almost" Christian and an "altogether" one — awakening her to true heart religion.

Years later, this moment was remembered as the turning point in her life. A future biographer shared, "With Miss Milward, the change was not one of mere creed and sentiment. It penetrated every fiber of her being. It shone through her every capacity. It revolutionized her life and marked indelibly her whole career." Despite her family's disapproval, Sarah began attending the Methodist meetings where she met a humble and devout Methodist evangelist named John. Convinced God had brought them together, Sarah chose to marry him, even though her father refused to give his blessing. As a result, she was disowned and cut off from her inheritance. It was a costly decision, marked by sacrifice, but one firmly rooted in conviction and unshakeable faith.

Sarah and John did not live a life free of hardship, yet Sarah's faith remained deep, distinct and durable. She taught her children to discern the difference between an "almost" and an "altogether" Christian. Years later, as her father, William, lay dying, he asked John to pray for him, rejecting the prayers offered by other respectable, "almost" Christians. With quiet joy, Sarah watched her husband lead her father into a real relationship with Jesus Christ, his Lord and Savior.

In her 1880 sermon "Aggressive Christianity," Catherine Booth challenged "almost Christians": "Show the world a real, living, self-sacrificing, toiling, triumphing religion, and the world will be influenced by it; but anything short of that they will turn around and spit upon!" Catherine spoke from experience — she had witnessed this altogether Christianity firsthand in her own mother, *Sarah Milward*. This same charge, first delivered to Timothy by Paul, still calls us out of complacency and into a faith that is deep, distinctive, and durable — a real faith forged in holy love that reflects Christ's light through every facet of our lives. Today, may our hearts be "strangely warmed" as we boldly cast off the facade of an "almost Christian" and choose to embrace the vibrant reality of an authentic, Spirit-filled life. At the core, we are either altogether Christians or not Christians at all. Today, are you an altogether Christian, or are you merely an imitation? ■

Heart Holiness from Hoblitzelle to Hong Kong

By Envoy Bill Ury

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My heart still reverberates with praise over our annual National Seminar on Holiness at Camp Hoblitzelle near Dallas. More than 100 Salvationists gathered for a week of concentrated yieldedness to the Holy One. And He came in clarifying, cleansing grace. I only wish I could have been clearer on the ever-present question: Is holiness an experience or a journey of faith?

Recently, my wife and I were asked to share in two institutes on holiness, one for officers and one for soldiers, in the bustling city of Hong Kong. In both, we were asked that same question as in Texas. That seems

"Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and it dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies it produces many seeds."—John 12:24 NIV

to be a place that we must revisit so that no one misunderstands what the Bible says and what our doctrine affirms. A full answer to the experience of holiness in the way of salvation promises any year with daily awareness of what pleases God.

SANCTIFICATION IS A PROCESS. Of course, all sanctification begins with new birth. Those who were once dead in sin have been reborn from above. No one who has received the Spirit is awaiting a better salvation. But regeneration reveals a deeper need. All believers are confronted with a quandary: What happens when sin reoccurs after we have been pardoned? Why do we slip back into old patterns? For many Christians, that is all that can be hoped for — a lifelong process of constant rebellion and failure, followed by repentance without victory until heaven. Our humble ►

response to that is that it does not align with the tenor of all of Scripture. The testimony of every person who models the true life in God revealed in the Word is that we can be set free in a real, tangible way from inward sin.

SANCTIFICATION IS AN EXPERIENCE. Scripture records the Holy One insisting to those already in relationship with called, redeemed, and chosen people, “I am holy, so you are to be holy.” That ubiquitous invitation of God’s heart is never couched in a long process of stumbling around hopelessly. God’s commands, the nature of the human will, and the prayers of Scripture all indicate the possibility of a radical change in the heart of every believer. There is the expectation of a double heart being made one. A stiff-necked rebelliousness can be altered by the power of the Spirit into a heart of flesh, which is a comprehensive inner agreement with the heart of God. Our tenth doctrine resoundingly affirms that every believer is offered this life-altering gift, an entirety of sanctification. Brengle spoke of pardon and purity, but he was very clear that heart cleansing was not equal to the process of maturity. This experience is never divorced from an ongoing relationship.



The most helpful picture of sanctification as a reality is marriage. No one who has joined in that covenant has ever known the depths of the commitment required in a few words said when in the ecstasy of the vows made on a wedding day. Soon, the relationship reveals that words of unconditional love are threatened by two clashing wills. What has begun must be reconfirmed by the Holy Spirit. A reorientation must transpire. Do I truly want the best for this person? Am I willing to pay any price to be the context for them to be formed by God? Do I love them more than I love myself? So, we have an initial experience (wedding) and a process (marriage) that brings us to a place of dying to ourselves (a crisis in the process). Is there growth? Absolutely! But there is a huge difference between a spouse who expects to be selfish every day and the one who has surrendered their self-centered orientation in order to be filled with the Spirit of love for the other. That critical moment alters the relational process. It freights all the issues of life in the right direction.

What is the orientation of your life this year? The Lord is relentlessly clear. He wants to pour His holy love into your heart for others. He can do that right now. Will you let Him? ■

QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever had an experience of God’s love becoming real in your life? When can you say God transformed your heart and mind, enabling you to love Him completely and others more than yourself?
2. Are you starting the New Year with God’s holy love for others in your heart? He can do that right now. Will you let Him?

Igor Karimov/Unsplash

Eyes Closed Worship

By Captain Stephanie Pavlakis

I was recently at a conference where I was asked to sing on the worship team. I’m not a bad singer, but I had never been asked to sing on a praise team like this before. I’ve played my flute on praise teams. I’ve filled in at church when Plan A, Plan B, and Plan C fell through. I imagined showing up ready to sing and the leader saying, “Ummm, where’s your flute?” To prevent this awkwardness, I came up with a plan to bring my flute so I would be ready just in case this was the situation. It was a great plan, except that I forgot my flute at home, five hours away from the conference. Singing it would have to be!

Here we were. Six people who had never made music together before, with 15 minutes to learn three new songs. I figured, “It’s okay, I’ll just sing the low harmony part I’m comfortable with and it will be fine.” Except that when we started singing, I found that the other female singer also sang the low harmony, and she sang it really well. This meant I was left with either the middle harmony in between the other singers or the harmony higher above the lead. If that sounds complicated, it’s okay. It was complicated to me, too. Needless to say, I was not feeling confident.

Finally, it was time for us to lead the conference attendees in worship. We started singing, and my voice was a whisper. All I could think about was what everyone else must be thinking. There were better singers here than me. There were better musicians than me. My face had a

horrible acne breakout. I suddenly had zero clue what to do with my hands when singing. Worst of all, I couldn’t find the harmony. But then I remembered something the lead singer had said before our practice: “I want this to be pure worship. I want it to feel like we are just sitting in a living room together, worshipping the Lord.” With this in mind, I closed my eyes, and those other voices I had imagined were silenced. I could only hear the lead singer, and all I wanted to do was worship. And as my heart became still and my soul became full of praise at the goodness of God, the harmony line became clear to me.

Sometimes we lose sight of what it means to worship because we are distracted by the voices around us. Instead of worshipping Jesus, we worship our worries, bringing them offerings of more energy, more thoughts, more angst, and they feed off these offerings, growing ever stronger. But if we could still our hearts for a moment and close our eyes to the distractions, we would find that true worship of the Living God is the antidote. When we are engaged in the heart of worship, there is no room for worry, fear, anxiety, hatred, or comparison. In worship, there is only Jesus on His throne. All else falls into place as we declare the authority of the Savior. If you are feeling defeated or anxious today, turn away from the distractions, physically close your eyes if needed, and try worship. Acknowledging the supremacy of God pulls our attention to Him, and there our souls are renewed. ■

ENGAGE:

- What does pure worship look like for you?
- What has been distracting you from worship recently?
- What is one thing you can do to close your eyes to the distractions and worship fully today?

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE:

“But the time is coming — indeed it’s here now — when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24 NLT).

Creciendo en Silencio: El Camino de la Madurez Espiritual

Por Mayor David Repass

Lamentablemente los recién nacidos no vienen con instrucciones siendo que, ¡no saben leer todavía! Son los padres que deben prepararse para su llegada aprendiendo cómo cuidar de su amado querubín. Creo que por esto Dios planteó el periodo de gestación por nueve meses... para darnos suficiente tiempo.

Es similar con cada nacimiento espiritual, pues cada infante en la fe debe ser guiado en su desarrollo. Jesús mismo recetó este proceso específicamente dictando que Sus discípulos “vayan y hagan discípulos de todas las naciones... enseñándoles que guarden todas las cosas que les he mandado.” (Mateo 28:19-20)

Esto de hacer discípulos va más allá de la necesidad de “nacer de nuevo” (Juan 3:3), requiriendo el entrenamiento de cada converso a guardar todos los mandatos de Jesús. Este deleitoso proceso de desarrollo precisa que nuestros progenitores espirituales nos exhortan, animan e instan para que andemos como es digno de Dios. (1 Tesalonicenses 2:10-11)

Parte del propósito de nuestro trajín terrenal es que “sigamos adelante hasta la madurez” (Hebreos 6:1); no sólo continuando en la pe-

lea, pero mejor acabando la batalla (2 Timoteo 4:7). Nunca pretendiendo que hemos “llegado a la perfección,” sino extendiéndonos a lo que está por delante, prosiguiendo a la meta, hacia el premio del supremo llamamiento de Dios. Y aun los que han “alcanzado la madurez pensemos de este modo.” (Filipenses 3:12-16)

Permítanme afirmar aquí que todo esto es en respuesta a la “gracia salvadora de Dios” que se manifiesta en nosotros, “enseñándonos a vivir de manera prudente, justa y piadosa.” (Tito 2:11-2) El mismo Espíritu Santo nos capacita e insta a continuar transformándonos a Su imagen, de gloria en gloria. (2 Corintios 3:6,18).

Muy temprano en nuestra nueva vida con Cristo comprendemos que por caminar con Él no dejamos de vivir en este planeta. Todo lo que nos rodea tiene la terrible tendencia de interponerse a nuestro crecimiento espiritual. Las impertinentes influencias del enemigo buscan conformarnos a este mundo, pero nosotros debemos buscar la continua renovación de nuestro entendimiento. (Romanos 12:2).

Los salmistas nos dan una buena apertura para esta búsqueda al instar que estemos quietos y esperemos en Dios (Salmo 37:7, 46:10, 62:1). Esta imperativa íntima mucho más que el dejar de movernos, más bien a completamente cesar toda actividad, aflojando nuestro fuerte aferró a nuestra propia voluntad.

Autores como Don Whitney enseñan que la mejor manera de llegar a esta bendición es en físicamente separarnos de todo lo que nos distrae. Para muchos de nosotros esto requiere que nos aislemos, entrando en un lugar donde podemos estar a solas con nuestro Señor. Ricardo Foster lo propone como una práctica vital que nos puede liberar de todas las trivialidades que aclaman por nuestra atención.

Jesús mismo es el máximo ejemplo de este ejercicio pues siendo el mero Hijo de Dios, Él buscó pasar tiempo a solas con Su Padre. Se levantaba muy temprano para salir a lugares desiertos a orar (Marcos 1:35), o se apartaba de la muchedumbre en tiempos agobiados (Lucas 5:16). A veces pasó toda la noche orando (Lucas 6:12) o varios días en reclusión (Mateo 4:1-2). Al enfrentar días difíciles (Mateo 14:13), y ciertamente en preparación para Su último sacrificio (Marcos 14:35), la segunda persona de la Trinidad singularmente se postró ante el trono supremo.

Al ausentarnos del mundo, en silencio y soledad, nuestros pensamientos y enfoque más fácilmente se tornan a Dios. Las atracciones y distracciones terrenales desvanecen, nuestros pensamientos y pesares internos se disipan, y podemos con más intención oír la voz del Buen Pastor. Él nos llama a salir del mundo (Juan 15:19) para recibir Su santidad y entonces poder salir a servir al mundo con Su verdad (Juan 17:15-19).

Algunas personas tienen dificultad con esta aparente contrariedad: estamos en el mundo para ser luces guiando a los pecadores a su Salvador, pero no somos del mundo y nuestra eficacia evangelística depende del tiempo invertido en pasar tiempo a solas con nuestro Maestro. El profeta Isaías nos aclara esta conexión cuando, al entrar en la gloriosa presencia del Divino, escucha el clamor del Sagrado corazón: “¿Quién irá por nosotros?” (Isaías 6:8)

Pero Dios no nos envía a Su mies (Mateo 9:38) sin reconocer que fácilmente podemos abrumarnos en el afán de servir al Señor con todo nuestro corazón, con toda nuestra alma (Deuteronomio 10:12) y con gran fervor (Colosenses 3:23). Por esto Dios estableció un perfecto balance entre el trabajo y el descanso. En seis días creó todas las cosas y el séptimo día reposó “de toda la obra que había hecho. Por eso Dios bendijo y santificó el séptimo día...” (Genesis 2:2-3)

Después Jehová instruyó a Su pueblo Israel que utilizara la misma medida al ordenar sus actividades: “Seis días trabajarás y harás toda tu obra, pero el séptimo día es reposo para el Señor tu Dios.” (Éxodo 20:9) Es interesante como lo primero que Dios santificó fue la suspensión de toda actividad para dedicar ese tiempo y esfuerzo a conocerle mejor.

Nosotros también debemos tomar esta primera pauta para tener un saludable desarrollo espiritual. Entrando en la secreta intimidad (Mateo 6:6), en silencio para escucharle mejor (Habacuc 2:20), encontrando fuerzas en esa quietud (Isaías 30:15), y tener plenitud de gozo en Su presencia (Salmo 16:11).

Dios mismo es Quién nos invita a esta amena conversación (Isaías 1:18), a una continua comunión (1 Juan 1:3) y a convivir con Él eternamente (Apocalipsis 3:20). Escuchamos su intensa súplica por intimidad en Su llanto: “¡Cuántas veces quise juntar a tus hijos, así como la gallina junta a sus pollitos debajo de sus alas!” (Mateo 23:37)

Para ahondar nuestra relación con Cristo, no tenemos por qué ahogarnos en muchas tareas nobles o servicios abnegados. Jesús prefirió la paciente pasión de María a Sus pies que el atareado afán de Marta en la cocina. Entonces, ¡escojamos la mejor parte! (Lucas 10:38-42). ■



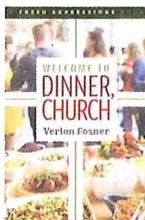
National Commander's Bookshelf

BOOKS TO KEEP THE JANUARY ISSUE GOING. We're adding to the National Commander's Bookshelf five books that relate to different pieces from the January Issue. If you want to take a deeper look at the themes and ideas animating this redesigned War Cry, consider following Bee Bryant's advice, finding a moment of solitude, and cracking open one of these five compelling reads.



"Lasting Ever: Faith, Music, Family, and Being Found by True Love"
by *Jacob Fink and Rebecca St. James*
(DAVID C. COOK)

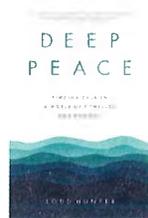
In The War Cry's interview with Rebecca St. James, she explains what motivated her and husband, Jacob (Cubbie) Fink, to write their 2025 book. With authentic storytelling and hard-won wisdom, they illuminate the heartaches and triumphs that have shaped their story as a married couple, as parents, as musicians, and—most of all—as Jesus followers.



"Welcome to Dinner, Church" by *Verlon Fosner*
(FRESH EXPRESSIONS)

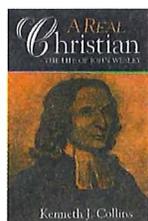
In "They Came Hungry" (pg. 20), David Reardon covers how one corps is using "dinner church" to reach their community. "Welcome to Dinner, Church" examines what it might be

like for a traditional church to plant a dinner church in a nearby hurting neighborhood.



"Deep Peace" by *Todd Hunter*
(SEEDBED)

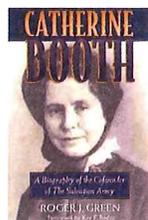
Bee Bryant invites us to consider the importance of following Jesus' example of spiritual renewal and retreat (pg. 20). In "Deep Peace", Todd Hunter analyzes the anxiety and desperation of our current moment and leads readers to receive the peace of Jesus and experience the deep wholeness that comes from the peace of God.



"A Real Christian: The Life of John Wesley" by *Kenneth J. Collins*
(ABINGDON PRESS)

Envoys Steve and Sharon Bussey told the compelling story of the impact of John Wesley's preaching on Sarah Milward and, by extension, her

daughter, Catherine Booth (pg. 32). Get to know the man behind "The Almost Christian" by reading Kenneth J. Collins excellent, short biography of the founder of Methodism and the theological movement that eventually birthed to The Salvation Army.



"Catherine Booth: A Biography of the Cofounder of The Salvation Army" by *Roger Green*
(BAKER)

Catherine Booth..." book: After you learn about the life of John Wesley by reading Collins' book, read Roger Green's compelling portrait of a woman deeply affected by Wesley's ministry—the mother of The Salvation Army: Catherine Booth. Booth was a trailblazer, innovator, and passionate evangelist whose enormous impact continues to be seen through the worldwide movement that is The Salvation Army today.

Answers for crossword on pg. 42

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THEN SINGS MY SOUL

NEW RELEASE

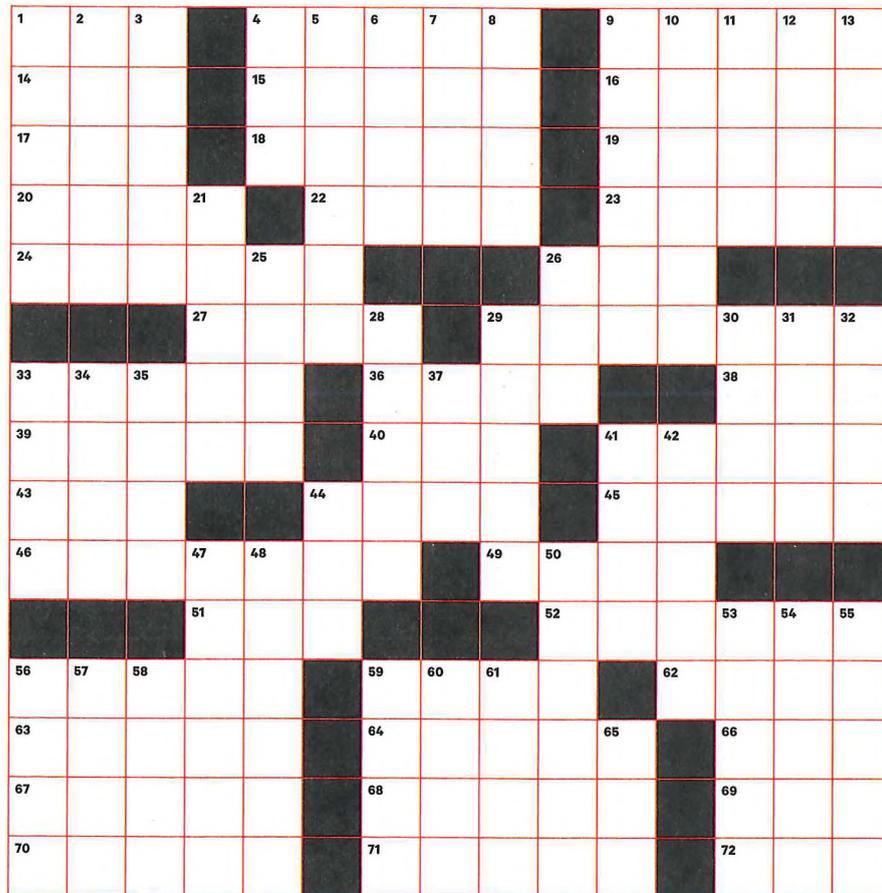
THEN SINGS MY SOUL IS A COLLECTION OF TESTIMONIES from Salvationists telling the story of God's amazing work in their life. Dozens of stories from all over the country and beyond display the ability of God to transform situations, communities and lives. Some testimonies are of their conversion; while others are of incredible answer to prayer. All give total glory to God.

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Paul's Friend & Abraham's Son

THE JANUARY CROSSWORD CONTAINS clues related to relationships in the Bible, Bible quotes and symbols, and miscellaneous themes to test your knowledge. Take a moment to stretch your mind and see how many clues you can get right.



ACROSS

- 1 Cooking measurement
4 Out of style
9 Office furniture
14 Snacked
15 Cut of beef
16 Provide
17 Drunk
18 BB player Kareem Jabar
19 Many
20 Capital Ukraine
22 Tatters
23 Made of oak
24 Writer
26 Explosive
27 Bird; symbol of Holy Spirit

DOWN

- 29 They visited Jesus
33 Brownish yellow
36 Anon
38 First woman
39 Noble
40 Mr.
41 Biblical weeds
43 Samuel's mentor
44 You are the of the earth
45 Warn
46 Paul's friend
49 David's musical instrument
51 Before (prefix)
52 Moral principles
56 Spiny plants
59 Red deer
62 At sea

- 63 Speak without preparation
64 Grabs
66 Alternative (abbr.)
67 Food covering
68 First husband of Bathsheba
69 Wing
70 Braid
71 Joon's friend (movie character)
72 Swindle

DOWN

- 1 Jobs
2 Unemotional
3 Apostle
4 School group
5 Reduce (abbr.)
6 Cola
7 Cosy
8 Snaky fish
9 Evil angels
10 Regard as
11 Brood
12 Soaring plaything
13 Rotate
21 Movie
25 You must be again
26 Can metal
28 Written material
29 Value
30 Meager
31 Always
32 Bird's abode
33 Aid a crime
34 African nation
35 Lip
37 Lubricate
41 Sour
42 I am the __ and the Omega
44 Her
47 Science of light and vision
48 Groups of related families
50 Sea between Turkey and Greece
53 Son of Abraham
54 Stringed instrument
55 The devil
56 Throw off
57 6th month (Jewish calendar)
58 Hint
59 Hurt one's toe
60 Biblical weed
61 Related
65 Reserved

The answers to this month's puzzle can be found on pg. 40.

The gift of salvation through Jesus Christ is free, and it's yours to receive. You might pray something like this:

Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I need your forgiveness and grace. I believe that Christ paid the penalty for my sin, died in my place, and rose from the dead. I invite Jesus 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.

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thewarcry.org.

*Let me live
forever in your sanctuary,
safe beneath the shelter
of your wings.*

PSALM 61:4