

WOMEN In touch

Connecting
to
God
in the chaos of life...

Pain transformed

Young
women in touch
Fitting in...

From brokenness
to beauty

Five wonderful days in Paris!

We had it all mapped out. Where we would stay, the things we would see. Our list included the obvious—the Eiffel Tower, the Sacre Coeur (Basilica of the Sacred Heart), the *Mona Lisa*. We were certainly not disappointed as we spent our days walking along the River Seine, enjoying French lemon tarts and doing our best greeting the locals with a “Bonjour”.

Paris, known as the City of Light (or the City of Love for the romantics), is also famous for its buildings and works of art, its chic fashion and its modern literary, artistic and intellectual ideals. With this in mind you can imagine our surprise as we came across this unexpected creative piece of architecture (see photo). It was not quite what we expected to see as we walked along Avenue de l'Opera!

As we looked closely, we discovered that this creative piece of architecture was actually someone's home. It was creatively put together by gathering things discarded by others as having no worth. It was given new value and meaning to someone who called the shopping trolley – home! Yes, they actually slept inside. Pieces of pipe, shopping bags and broken-up crates were all given a new purpose and meaning. It is as they say – “One man's trash is another man's treasure”.

This challenged me to think about the things that we gather around us and give meaning and purpose to; the things that we choose to value. Jesus said, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also,” (Matthew 6:21). What we treasure not only captures our heart but can steal our passion and demand our attention. We can spend our lives gathering, building and valuing earthly treasure that has no eternal value. That's why we need to be truly careful what we treasure. Focusing on and treasuring the earthly will only leave us defeated and deflated. It's our life in Christ that truly gives us value – we need to treasure the right things!

Proverbs 15:6 says: “The house of the righteous contains much treasure ...” As women of God, may Jesus be our one true treasure. May our hearts be totally captured by him!



Colonel Robyn Maxwell
Territorial Secretary of Women's Ministries



In touch

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PUBLISHED FOR:
The Salvation Army
Australia Eastern Territory
by Commissioner Linda Bond

PRINTED AT:
SOS Print + Media Group
65 Burrows Rd, Alexandria
NSW 2015, Australia

Member of the Australasian
Religious Press Association
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About this issue – from the editor's desk

For many women in the western world, life is busy and seems to be getting faster all the time. In the midst of constant activity, commitments, interruptions and noise, life can often be not just busy, but chaotic. God is not afraid of chaos though, and can reach into our lives and hearts and help us develop a focused relationship with him no matter what is going on around us.

In this issue of *Women in Touch*, women from around the world share how they stay close and connected to God despite a hectic schedule and the many and varied demands of their daily lives.

Many of these ladies write about a quiet place with God, time alone with their Father where he not only restores and refreshes them, but gives them a new perspective, new approaches, new growth.

This reminds me of Henri Nouwen's words in *The Way of the Heart*: “The place of solitude in not a private, therapeutic place ... it is the place of conversion. It is not the place where we recharge our spiritual batteries and then continue to live as we have lived before. It is not the place where we catch our breath in order to madly re-enter the race. It is not the place where we simply find some quietness before we plunge into the world with its babble of voices. The place of solitude is where we are changed ...”

Change and transformation, the essence of the Christian journey, is only possible through Christ. Also in this issue, Major Vicki Clarke shares her journey through dark depression and how the Lord has brought her from brokenness to a beautiful wholeness.

Major Chris Cohen also writes about change and how God can work through an ancient prayer to transform the lives of those who have suffered trauma and abuse or who are overwhelmed by the circumstances of life.

This issue also features reflections, book and music reviews, and news from around the territory. I hope that these articles will help and encourage you on your own personal journey with our great and loving God.



Simone Worthing
Editor

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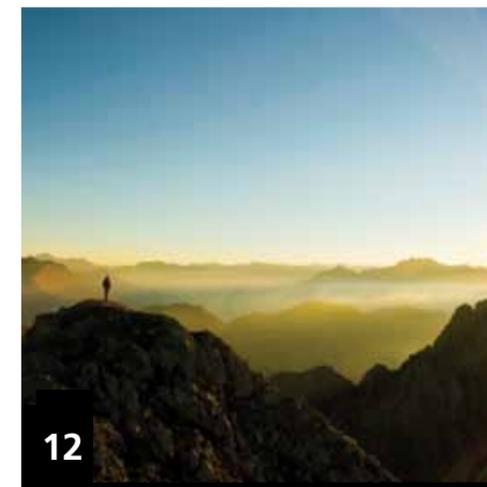
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Staying connected to God in the chaos of life...

For so many women at all stages in their journey, life is full-on, busy and often chaotic. In the pages that follow, women from around the world share how they stay connected to God in the midst of the chaos and remain anchored in him.

A love relationship with God

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life ... Walk with me and work with me – watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace ... Keep company with me, and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly,” Matthew 11:28-30, *The Message*.

I maintain a close relationship with God by doing my best to live out what is outlined in Matthew 11:28-30, summed up in the words, “Walk with me and work with me ... keep company with me”.

Staying connected to God no matter what is happening in my life is simply to be in a love relationship with him. I know God loves me, and my response is to love him in return through the way I live my life. This also involves much listening and talking to him, and praying with others.

There are people I pray for daily, not from a structured list, but God brings people to my mind for whom I have the privilege of being an intercessor.

I am not naturally a morning person so I have had to discover various ways and times to read God’s word. Often this is done as I talk with others and they share what they have read, so I go and look it up also.

I travel by train to and from work and often use this time to read the Bible on my iPod. It is amazing how many times a particular verse has been just what I needed or can pass on to a colleague.

I am a very strong relational person, so for me the best and most logical way to connect with God is most definitely relationally –

praying with others and especially being in a loving relationship with him.

Lieutenant-Colonel Simone Robertson
International Literature Programme
Officer, IHQ

Personal prayer fuels spiritual engine

In this “too busy” and fractured society in which we function, I’m so glad I am part of an Army that can rub shoulders with the lost, the lonely, the marginalised, the high maintenance, and the mentally troubled. It is amazing how I am blessed by these encounters. It keeps me connected with the original mission of the Army and my dedication as an officer.

I do though, keep in mind the beautiful and Christ-like Mother Teresa’s request – “Pray for me that I will not loosen my grip on the hands of Jesus – even under the guise of ministering to the poor.”

Every day when I wake, before I put my feet to the ground, I want to connect with God. While serving in Africa I learnt the routine of getting up very early for school in time for personal prayer and journaling. The habit is firmly entrenched. This is the time for fuelling the engine. But the evil one continues to seek to

destroy the good thing. I am very familiar with spiritual warfare. My Achilles heel is discouragement both in what is happening around me or my own wretched performance.

I am nourished through shared Bible study and stimulating Christian discussion and reading. Eternity interests me enormously but there is lots to do before I go and it is frequently exhausting fitting in all the things I want to do in corps ministry, pastoral care, teaching, travel, daycare of grandchildren as well as a vibrant social life! No wonder I need to keep fit!

I identify with the comment of Catherine Bramwell Booth who, at aged 100 said, “I am in love with life and love with the world”.

Lieutenant-Colonel Olive Lucas (ret.)
Stafford Corps



Intentional time with God

It seems that each year brings with it a faster speed, more to do, more to fit in. When I was asked to write this, I started to think through each facet of my life, listing each event or task I was expected to fulfil like it was a badge I could wear. Suddenly, God gently reminded me – it’s not about how much I do, it’s about the quality of time I spend connecting with him.

As a wife and working mum of two gorgeous girls, spending quality, regular time with God is a challenge, but I am a work in progress.

Each week, God shows me how he works in and through my busy schedule. We meet and he teaches me, grows me and challenges me. Quiet time with God is the catalyst that keeps my life in control.

I’m not saying I have the opportunity to spend huge amounts of time with him, but I try to intentionally spend time with him every day. When we meet, I like to journal my thoughts, my prayers, my journey. It’s a great way to see how God works over time, plus it helps keep me focused, rather than moving on to the “to do” list.

The challenge as women in 2011 is not how amazing we can be at fitting so much into our lives, but rather our ability to stop amidst our busy lives and take time out with God so we can be assured that he is in control.

Michelle Scott
Mission Ministries Coordinator
Tweed Heads Corps

Not by my own strength ...

Sometimes it seems like life is so busy that it couldn’t possibly get any more chaotic! Between caring for my two-year-old, working part-time, running a household and being involved in a number of leadership roles at

the corps, there is rarely any time left to spend quality time with God.

However, in some ways I have found that when life is exceptionally crazy, like when our corps and community were both badly affected by the January floods, it’s actually easier to stay connected to God. It’s impossible then, to keep going in your own strength.

It’s times when life is a bit quieter that I get very selfish with my time and want more and more “me” time.

My relationship with God is strengthened by time in prayer, often while driving the car, and time spent studying his word. For spiritual growth I find it very important to be a part of a weekly Bible study, to get into God’s word in more depth and for both accountability and fellowship with other Christians.

Apart from this my personal devotions aren’t structured and unfortunately aren’t daily. Instead, I find that time spent in preparation for some of my roles in the corps, whether a class for Corps Cadets or devotions for youth group, is invaluable for my spiritual development. I get more out of this time than just reading a quick five-minute devotional at the end of the day.

What I have learnt is reinforced when I am teaching, and as I am challenging the young people, I also am challenged to change my life accordingly.

Renae Strong
Team Mission Leader
Bundamba Corps

Coffee and iPhones

I wish I could travel back in time and tell my corps officer that I simply do not have the spare time to write this article; I barely have time to fit a shower into my day! I am a mother of two children, a two-year-old son, Benjamin, and a daughter, Olivia, eight-

months-old. Being a Mum to my two children is a full-time job!

Being fifth-generation Salvation Army gives me a solid foundation for my spiritual journey and having my own children has drawn me closer to God. Each day brings new joys, and I can see God’s hand over the lives of my family. That is why during my busy schedule I will try to find any spare moment to stop, reflect and thank him.

Occasionally, when I’m at the shops, both my children will fall asleep in the pram. When this happens, I am able to stop for a coffee and today’s technology allows me to have a Bible in my back pocket on my iPhone. I can then place all my focus on him (for a couple of minutes at least) by reading a few verses and making a few prayerful requests.

Sunday is always hectic so it is special to have the opportunity to attend a fortnightly Bible study to fellowship with other mothers of pre-school children. While we sometimes get through only part of our study, with the demands of little children being a constant interruption, we always make sure we have time to pray together. It is so important to share the concerns of life with each other and put them to God.

Kirsty Hawkins
Planned Giving Monitor
Tuggeranong Corps



Staying connected to God in the chaos of life...

Giving up time for God

Like all of you, I live in a world of busyness. I struggle to fit everything in that I need and want to do. I feel I rush about from activity to meeting to practice to pastoral to office work and then collapse into bed, only to wake up the next morning and start all over again. So how do I fit God into all of this busyness?

I have found that my everyday activity and relationships are affected by my everyday relationship with God. The way I cope with the busy chaotic life I live is by staying connected to my source of power. I need some time for me and God. I owe that to myself and to the people I connect with each day.

The way I react and act each day is better when I am connecting with him. In order to learn what he wants to teach me, I have to spend time with him.

A planned moment of peace to connect with God refreshes, renews and rejuvenates me. It gives me the power to keep going, to keep giving and to keep being the person God wants me to be.

Finding this time is one of the hardest things I have to do. There is always something else to keep me busy, but without giving up something to give to God, all my busyness is just that – busyness. The time I give up to God is the best time of my day and gives me



the strength and power to help people in my corps and my community come into a deeper relationship and understanding of God.

Major Glenys Domrow
Corps Officer, Campsie

The power of a focused Life

The list of things I can't do is as long as your arm – can't fly a plane; play the piano; do surgery; speak Russian and lots more!

Instead of trying to do everything, I find it more beneficial to focus on "one thing" – a phrase used in Scripture of three people, three great hearts, who were honoured by the Lord as living wisely.

1. King David said, in Psalm 27:4: "One thing I ask of the Lord; this is what I seek. That I may that I may dwell in the house of the LORD . . . to gaze on the beauty of the LORD".

David, King of Israel; David, Israel's military head; poet; musician and leader. Yet he describes himself as focused on one thing. David knew his priorities.

2. Jesus said of Mary of Bethany in Luke 10:42: "Only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen what is best, and it will not be taken away from her."

Mary defied social expectations and took her place as a student at the feet of Rabbi Jesus, a place where women were not welcome. Jesus commended her for this. Mary knew her place.

3. The Apostle Paul said in Philippians 3:10, 13-14: "I want to know Christ . . . one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead . . ."

Paul was a great missionary and apostle to the Gentiles. Yet in the midst of all his work for God, Paul had his focus set on knowing Jesus Christ.

Like David we must know our priorities – seeking the face of God even in the midst of activity and productivity.

Like Mary we must know our place – regardless of cultural norms or expectations – at the feet of Jesus, listening to and learning from him.

Like Paul we must know Christ – not just working for him but knowing him.

Lieutenant-Colonel Janet Munn
Secretary for Spiritual Life Development, IHQ
Associate Principal, International College for Officers



Dates with Jesus

Find that I've had to schedule in "hot dates with Jesus". Just as you invest quality time into any kind of relationship, I need to be just as intentional about spending time with God by going on "dates".

I leave my mobile phone at home and I take my Bible, my journal, a book and my iPod and just go and enjoy God's company for a few hours. Sometimes I'll go and sit under a tree somewhere, or other times I'll go to McCafe and grab a good Chai Latte, turn my iPod on, get into the Word and journal away.

Unless I am intentional about scheduling these into my weeks, they don't happen, and I notice the difference within myself if I haven't been on a hot date in a while!

Vanessa Kohler
Cadet, Friends of Christ session



Meeting together feeds faith

Despite my best intentions and sometimes short periods of success, I am not good at having a regular quiet time, although I know its value. For me, belonging to a church that faithfully and accurately teaches the Scriptures, encourages and challenges; and to a home group where I can be authentic and unapologetic about my struggles and joys, is vital.

I am an extravert and get my energy and motivation from interaction with other people, so Hebrews 10:25, "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing", is an important principle for my life.

In Malawi, God has led me to a great home group and small church where my faith

life is challenged, stretched, supported and encouraged.

Worship music also feeds me tremendously, especially when I am feeling alone, discouraged or empty. Even when I am very busy in the office, I play instrumental worship music and this reminds me for whom I should be busy and keeps me focused on Jesus.

Narelle Gurney
Director, Development and Projects
Malawi Command



Resource ideas: Cultivating time with God

- Begin the day, conscious that you and God are walking together through the day and place your plans, your will and yourself in his hand.
- Memorise Scripture and meditate on favourite verses during the day.
- Sing!
- Take time out during the day at set times and spend a few minutes focusing on the presence of God.
- Develop an attitude of thanksgiving and take note of the good things you experience, even during hectic times.

in and a few words as I breathe out. During times of stress or busyness, and at many other times, I simply breathe this short prayer and find that I am able to focus quickly and easily on the presence of the Lord.

Bruce Main, *Spotting the Sacred*, writes about "noticing God in the most unlikely places" through the practice of taking notice. He says that each time we notice things like love, gratitude, compassion, courage, contrition, faith and sacrifice, we catch a glimpse of God.

Recommended Read

Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1981.

Huggett, Joyce, *Listening to God*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1986.

Main, Bruce, *Spotting the Sacred: Noticing God in the Most Unlikely Places*, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 2006.

Nouwen, Henry, *Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1992.

R.M. French (translator), *The Way of a Pilgrim and The Pilgrim Continues his Way*, HarperSanFrancisco, 1973

Major Jo-Anne Brown
Corps Officer, Calamvale



Recommended
Read!

The Words We Sing

Nan Corbitt Allen
Beacon Hill Press,
Kansas City, 2010

Have you ever wondered how to raise an Ebenezer? For that matter, have you ever wondered what an Ebenezer actually is? What about Balm in Gilead, Lily of the Valley, Diadem and Morning Star? Chances are you have sung these words many times before the Lord during worship.

Nan Corbitt Allen's book, *The Words We Sing* invites us to stop and consider the words contained in our songs. Fifty nine words and phrases are explored from both ancient hymns and modern worship songs. From Abba to Zion, Nan gives us the definitions, the biblical context in which the words are used and their historical background.

In addition, Nan sometimes grants us a fascinating insight into how the meaning of the word has changed and evolved over the years. Lyrics of songs that use the word are also included, coupled with a short personal reflection from the songwriters.

Songwriter and worship leader Travis Cottrell writes as an endorsement of this book: "I hold my calling as a worshipper of the Most High God in high regard ... and I never want to be flippant about the songs I sing ... That is why I love this book. Nan brings us great wisdom and insight, and as we better understand the songs we sing in worship, our intimacy with the Lord grows and our worship experience deepens."

Nan's work makes the words we sing come alive with fresh meaning and power. With relatively short chapters, this book could be used for personal devotions as well as assisting us in becoming more authentic in our worship. It is highly recommended.



Donna Evans
Booth College
Vice Principal for Administration
& Personnel



In the midst ...

It had been a beautiful time. We'd delighted in ocean views, enjoyed sunshine, fellowship, worship and walking on the beach. We had been able to slow down, spending time with the Lord and listening to him. I felt at peace and close to God as I boarded the plane to fly home.

In the plane I squeezed into my seat, belted up and pulled out my book to continue reading. But all was not quiet and harmonious (it was a plane full of passengers, after all!!) and I found it hard to settle. There was a boisterous group of men travelling back to Brisbane who had obviously been drinking a great amount of alcohol. As a flight attendant quietly rebuked three men for their inappropriate comments, I realised that my feelings of peace and well-being were quickly slipping away. Yes, I was no longer on retreat but smack bang back in the middle of the world. I reflected wryly how quickly that seems to happen.

The cabin lights went out and we were told how to adjust the small lights overhead if we wanted to read. I struggled to reach the lights and the man sitting beside me reached up to help, putting his light on to make it easier for me. The boisterous group of men continued to be boisterous and unpleasant. The quiet kindness of my neighbour reminded me of the still, quiet presence of the Lord – in the midst of turbulence and unpleasantness.

I thought back to what we had talked about during the retreat and I took a few moments to find that centre of stillness within me. As I began to breathe a short prayer, repeating the words in my heart, I became deeply aware of the Lord's presence. While the loudness around me continued, I had regained my connection with the Lord, who is able to still the storm and the waves, and I felt at peace.

Major Jo-Anne Brown
Corps Officer, Calamvale



Every year we gaze at the lists of the richest people in world, wondering what it would be like to have that sort of cash. Where would you really rank on one of those lists? Here's your chance to find out, and to gain a new perspective on your global financial position! Do the simple test at www.globalrichlist.com

Editor's note

There is no category for Australian dollars, so use the \$US option for the nearest equivalent. Prepare to be surprised!

Unconditional
love



People told me I would love being a grandma. Others who have the privilege of being grandparents shared their stories with me and proudly showed me photos of their beautiful grandchildren.

But nothing I was told or shown really prepared me to experience it for myself. Nothing quite prepared me for the instant and overwhelming love I felt for our beautiful grandson, Thomas, when I first held him just one hour after he was born.

On reflection, I think the thing that stunned me most was the absolute purity of the love I felt for him – unsullied by any expectations; unmarred by any thoughts of returned love or reward – it was just an absolute outpouring of immediate, one-way, unconditional love.

Little Thomas is so dependent – he has no capacity to give or “be” anything right now in response to the love he receives – and he's certainly receiving that in abundance from so many around him! And yet everything about him brings joy – his every expression and movement is celebrated and seems to generate even more love towards him.

I couldn't help but think of the amazing, unconditional love my Father has for me – loving me when I was ignorant of his claim on my life; loving me regardless of whether I loved him back; loving me, not for what I do or how good I am, but “just because”! He just loves. And he loves me!

As I held Thomas and watched him sleep so peacefully, I imagined God looking down on me with the same loving smile I was giving Thomas. I imagined him smiling and celebrating with me the small steps forward on my spiritual journey, saying “no” to sin and “yes” to grace. I imagined him smiling because of me. And I marvelled that God would use a tiny baby, yet again, to show me how much he loves me.

My prayer for you is that you will know, deep within your being, just how much God loves and treasures you; that you will feel his love shining down on you as you go about your life and ministry; and that you will picture him smiling – because of you!

Major Kerry Haggart
Divisional Commander
Newcastle & Central NSW Division

Sweet
or
sour?

The things we are going through are either making us sweeter, better, and nobler men and women, or they are making us more critical and fault-finding, and more insistent on our own way. The things that happen either make us evil, or they make us more saintly, depending entirely on our relationship with God and its level of intimacy.

- Oswald Chambers

Recipe
2, 4, 6, 8 cake

- 2 eggs
- 4 oz butter (125g)
- 6 oz sugar (3/4 cup)
- 8 oz flour (2 cups)
- 1/2 cup milk
- Pinch salt

Cream butter and sugar. Add eggs one at a time. Beat. Add flour and milk alternately. Bake in a moderate oven over 25-30 minutes. Enjoy!



Pain TRANSFORMED



Major Chris Cohen shares how an ancient prayer has brought fresh hope and new understanding in helping those overwhelmed with trauma and sadness pray through despair and allow God to begin transforming brokenness

*God be in my head, and in my understanding;
God be in my eyes, and in my looking;
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;
God be in my heart, and in my thinking;
God be at my end, and at my departing.
Sarum Primer, 1558*



Even when the mountains shake and fall ... Formosa, or Taiwan, “the beautiful island”, lies just off the coast of mainland China in a seismically active zone called the Pacific Ring of Fire. Squeezed between the Philippine Sea and Eurasian plates just south of Japan, this tiny leaf-shaped island is fractured by more than 40 active fault lines.

Except during earthquake periods, Taiwan is carpeted in the brilliant green of its cash crops. I had the privilege of ministry here from 1995–2000, during which we experienced four significant earthquake “seasons”.

These all-too-regular earthquakes see homes, families and belongings cascade down the mountains into gaping crevasses that devour everything in their paths.

Renewed devastation

In September 1999, a series of devastating earthquakes hit Taiwan. This involved some 9,000 separate shocks and tremors and resulted in 2,161 deaths, 8,736 injuries and just over 150 people “missing”. It has been etched into Taiwan’s history as “9/21”.

Even as the earth continued to rumble, the familiar pattern of crisis response began

– the urgency of rescue, followed by the anguish of retrieval. Quickly constructed sheds and shelters were stacked with coffins. In Taipei City, survivor kits were dispatched. For the men and women left standing, this was the beginning of recovery.

Before winter’s ice settled on the mountains, clusters of demountable buildings converted into housing were organised into streets and lanes. Children played on restored tricycles and clothing hung on ropes along the lanes.

Each new community “opened” with a celebration. Hundreds of displaced people gathered to sing, celebrate life, feast and pray for the favour of the “gods” for the future.

Attending the blessing of one such “new village”, sponsored by Christian churches, I was deeply moved by the resilience God has embedded in his creation. With the echoes of the *Hallelujah* final verse echoing in my heart, I drove back to the city.

That very night, the mountains of central Taiwan shook and slipped again. The same homes and lives saved from despair on 9/21 were lost from this world in November of the same year.

Processing pain

Humanity carries pain – it has done since the fall. It’s important that we find an appropriate way to deal with our pain. God’s grace is the means by which we indeed CAN process sorrow and sadness. Matthew 12:20-21 reminds us that a bruised reed he will not break. The beautiful thing for the broken is that Jesus is in fact attracted to our need. He

provides the means to transform pain rather than leaving us to transmit it.

Sometimes, events occur that can totally overwhelm us. Feelings unfold that seem to tear at the very core of who we are. I’ve reflected on those earthquakes, and other similar messy events I have experienced, remembering that, as a person of faith in Jesus Christ, my identity – who I really am – is NOT based on ANY events (tragedy or triumph) but on what Jesus has done!

“The beautiful thing for the broken is that Jesus is in fact attracted to our need.”

I have a few “moving forward” thoughts that allow me to repack or reshape the messy. These thoughts are not the only way – but perhaps “a way” to pray through the slime of sadness, grief and sorrow.

I’ve discovered that, if I do nothing, my mind randomly reflects and chooses to chew on that event, revisiting it in my head and heart until I work myself into a despairing dark ache. You might know that cold, dark cavern.

Transforming messy memories

This particular reflection on Taiwan is written with a little hesitancy. I want to acknowledge and respect the fresh pain and messiness of 2011 for so many near friends and neighbours.

This is not intended in any way to add to your grief – nor is it a “how to fix” or a way to “dodge disaster”. This is about finding new meaning in a simple traditional prayer I learnt as a child.

This prayer, when used as a tool, prompts the courage required to ponder on, and in, God’s presence and allows his transformation of the messy memories to begin.



Living in Brisbane and working in the courts and prison, it seems as though there have been a lot of extra people aching, even despairing, over the struggles and sorrow experienced in the first half of 2011.

Whether their life predicament has directly involved floods, earthquakes, financial despair, prison, abuse, or torment, 2011 seems to have been an extra messy, even miserable year for many.

But, before the memories are imbedded with a bleak despondence in our minds, I have encouraged myself as well as friends, colleagues and clients, to reflect, reshape, renew and repack those cluttered feelings, thoughts and images using the filter of this beautiful 13th century prayer.

Healing in the tender places

Sometimes my world of ministry to fellow broken people becomes such a shattered space it feels overwhelming. The catalyst for the chaos may have been an event or a whole season of the wildly unpredictable. Whatever the catalyst, the outcome can be some crazy thoughts and memories coupled with very little to cling to emotionally, except perhaps a fragile faith and the knowledge that God will never leave me or forsake me.

How do I use my faith to invite the healing presence of the Spirit of God into these tender places? In the silence I wait, then comes the prayer:

God be in my head: Lord, what is in there is so fearfully fragmented, I’m almost too scared to think about it. Lord, it keeps coming back no matter how many times I try to push it all aside. Lord, as you continue to renew my mind, reshape the images and refresh the screen of my memory in a way that resolves and stills the storm.

And in my understanding: Father God, I don’t have to understand the how, what or why, but I do need to rejuvenate this memory with an understanding of your love for me, for all of humanity, and that my identity is based in you and your truths.

God be in my eyes and in my looking: Father, as I look back at this memory, give me eyes to see each of the people and events as you see them. Give me the eyes of Christ so that the lens my memory uses in recall and reflection is not one of bitterness, loneliness, sorrow or despair. Lord, may the lens of my seeing and thinking be softer and clearly focus on your redemption, protection and restoration.

God be in my mouth and in my speaking: Father, when I speak about that time, I pray that the thoughts and words used bring honour to you. I pray that your miraculous intervention in the memory being healed and sanctified is portrayed and projected to bring others to you.

God be in my heart and in my thinking: Lord God, as I hold my memory – not lost, but refreshed in and by you, allow my heart the freedom to delight in and celebrate your restorative work. Remind me that I never walk alone and may my thinking reflect the incredible assurance that you are equally with each one of us. How stunning it is to know and reflect to my family and community that you are not repelled by, but drawn to our brokenness to bring healing, salvation and blessing.

God be in my end and at my departing: Constantly review the thoughts and images of my head and heart Lord. Reveal to me what needs to be renewed and reshaped, in and by the filter of you, that my mind might be supple and responsive to your promptings, a sweet sanctuary for your presence to flow through to the lost and broken. May the shadow my life casts be one of light, reflecting only you.



Major Chris Cohen
Chaplain, Brisbane
Women’s Correctional
Centre, George St
Courts

From brokenness to beauty

– the healing power of the cross

Major Vicki Clarke shares her journey through debilitating depression to healing and wholeness, giving thanks to God and encouraging others who may face a similar journey

The first step was to cut up the old china plate; to make the pieces similar sizes, regardless of shape. So, in front of me I had a collection of broken, odd shaped pieces that seemed unfit for anything useful again.

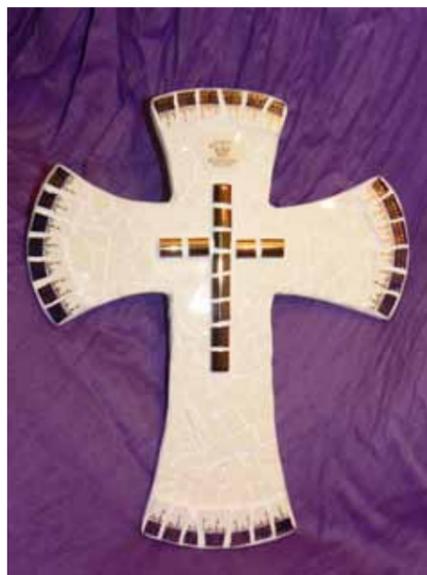
My doctor had suggested I learn a new craft. At the same time my friend Laurice invited me to join her and Robyn making mosaic crosses on a Friday night. Together we cut up china plates and glued all the pieces together on our cross-shaped wood. Of course, there was also much talking and many cups of tea. Not only was I learning a new craft but also enjoying a safe space with two lovely Christian ladies who showed me friendship and Jesus.

The broken pieces of china, when placed on the cross, became a beautiful picture of wholeness through brokenness – the healing power of the cross.

One night Laurice's daughter came home and said, "That's a great looking cross Major Vicki; you can use that when you begin preaching again." Could that really happen for me?

Brokenness

Like the old china plate, my life had become a collection of broken pieces that looked like it would never be useful for anything again. Reluctantly, I had walked away from the corps office on a Friday afternoon. The pieces of my life lay there behind me – my corps



officership, my preaching, my worship leading. My women's ministries, with all their dreams and goals, were shattered.

I had lost the ability to experience sadness or happiness. I could not love life. My energy and the ability to sleep had gone.

Any hope of returning to any kind of ministry in the future was impossible. To function as a wife, a mother and friend was too hard.

I was diagnosed with a major depressive

episode and complete exhaustion.

At this time, God gave me a promise from Malachi 4:2-3: "But for you who fear my name, the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in his wings. And you will go free, leaping with joy like a calf let out to pasture" (*New Living Translation*).

All of the broken pieces God would put together. In the darkness that surrounded me God would bring light and healing.

At the time though, I just saw broken pieces.

Touch of the Holy Spirit

Under medical advice I was not to return to the local corps during the first few months of my illness.

One night a pastor friend invited me to attend the final meeting of a two-week healing crusade at his church.

I went and at the end of the service, the pastor specifically called for people with back complaints, then foot and shoulder problems. I asked God why I needed to come – I had none of those complaints.

Before I knew it the pastor asked for people to come to the front and be touched by the Holy Spirit. I was there, my legs moving to the front. Before it even registered, God had brought me to him and his Holy Spirit moved in my life again that night.

A little while later God used my son to invite me to Sunday afternoon worship. "Come on Mum," he said, "Come worship with your kids."

That afternoon Colonel Wally Greentree preached. He called for those wanting prayers to form a prayer line. This time I moved willingly and I asked specifically for the ability to sleep.

We had tried sleeping tablets, herbal remedies, staying awake for a day and then

trying to sleep, even doing the ironing. Nothing worked. My psychologist told me I would sleep when I was at peace.

Colonels Wally and Joyce prayed that God would continue to heal me – specifically that I would be able to sleep and be at peace. That night I slept for the first time in months and woke in the morning feeling refreshed and at peace – a feeling that had eluded me many years.

The faithful intercessors at the Corps, my Home League ladies and small groups' members never stopped praying for me. God heard their prayers.

Lessons from God's word

During my months of illness, God taught me many valuable lessons.

When I read the word of God, it came alive. God had given me a new depth of understanding and an incredible desire to search his word for answers.

Memorising scriptures played an important role in my recovery. The word of God was the best way I found to combat negative and harmful thoughts.

I began to walk my dog – I'm sure she thought I was crazy! She and I learnt many verses of Scripture and I would repeat them aloud as we walked.

I learnt to pray deeply, to intercede for others, to wait in silence and to simply be in the presence of God.

I came to a deeper understanding of the words of Jesus from the cross: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!" I learnt that often people may say and do things and have no idea of the hurt and damage they may cause. So, I had to forgive some people.

I had to accept the reality of my situation and circumstances. I had to accept that

Scripture says: "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." I had to accept that you don't burn out for Jesus; you burn out by neglecting yourself and having an unbalanced life.

I have come to the conclusion that sleep is a precious gift from God and that I need to balance my life to maintain my physical, emotional and spiritual health.

For someone battling depression, all of those things are easier said than done. During my recovery, and now, I have a few essential rules to live by each day, starting with getting out of bed each morning.

Surrender

I learnt that my worth is in the eyes of God, in who I am, not in what I do; it is the being that I am becoming through God. This meant I had to surrender my all to Jesus and this was a very necessary process for me. My calling to be an officer, my current ministry and my future were all now uncertain. I had to wait, trust and be obedient. My life had changed, but I had to realise that I had to leave it all with God.

Christian writers who shared their stories, similar to mine, became inspirational. It was great to know that others had been on a similar journey and recovered.

I attended a spiritual retreat, with the purpose of receiving reassurance from God. That happened – God gave me the verse Psalm 91:1, "Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty" (*New Living Translation*). The two key words for me are *live* and *rest*.

Brokenness healed

Over the months I completed my mosaic cross. The brokenness was now whole. The spaces between the china pieces were filled, the dust and extra grout had been removed –

there was beauty.

The Holy Spirit was filling the brokenness in my life. I was being put back together in a brand new way.

God enabled me to deepen my love and share life with my husband. I once again can share the ups and downs of my children's lives. I have been able to cry with my kids and also laugh out loud! I can cook, wash clothes and iron for them, clean my house, even enjoy sitting around the meal table sharing life as a family.

God has healed the brokenness in my life. I have experienced the miraculous workings of God in my life.

In January this year I once again took up an appointment as an officer of The Salvation Army – medically that was never to happen again, but God had other ideas.

I have been through what is called by some "the dark night of the soul". But, the Sun of Righteousness has come with healing in his wings. I have risen from the ashes and am free, excited to have abundant life and be living as God's child.

That's the healing power of the cross – from brokenness to beauty.

I share my personal journey to give praise and thanks to the God I love and to give hope to those who may be on a similar journey. God will never give up on us, so don't give up trusting him.



Major Vicki Clarke
Planned Giving Director
Greater West Division

SOCIAL JUSTICE SNAPSHOT
depression

According to Beyond Blue (www.beyondblue.org.au) depression is relatively common, with up to one in four females and one in six males experiencing an episode in their lifetime.

Depression is not always easy to recognise and can vary from person to person. It can alter your feelings, actions and thoughts. All of us occasionally feel down or experience flatness in our moods. However, if you notice yourself feeling sad, irritable, or angry most of the time, withdrawing from the world and social connections; and these symptoms persist for more than two weeks, it is likely you are experiencing an episode of depression.

Depression can also significantly modify your sleeping and or eating habits. It can leave you feeling tired or interrupt your concentration and motivation levels. It can cause you to feel worthless, guilty or to question the point of life.

Young people often describe living with depression as existing in a thick fog.

If you recognise these symptoms in yourself, it is important to try to stay connected with friends and involved in activities. Try to eat healthy food, get enough sleep and do some physical exercise. Avoid using alcohol or illicit drugs to cope with depression. Most importantly, you need to talk to someone about your feelings. Remember, depression is a roller coaster and some days are going to be better than others. If the depression doesn't subside, seek professional help. Visit your doctor who will discuss treatment options and refer you to a psychologist if necessary.

If you suspect one of your friends is experiencing depression, listen to what is going on for them. Remind them that depression is an illness and they are not to blame for the hold it has on their life. Stay in touch with them and encourage them to seek professional help.

Depression is a debilitating disease that can subtly and without warning take hold of your life. It is important, therefore, to act quickly, care for yourself and, if necessary, seek treatment.

Danny Guest
Salvation Army Counselling Service
Centre Manager
Canberra

Where to find support:

- Youth Beyond Blue: www.youthbeyondblue.com
- Kids Helpline: www.kidshelp.com.au/teens/ - 1800 55 1800
- Headspace: www.headspace.org.au
- www.salvos.org.au/more/get-help/

Real style

Azadeh Jalapour attends Sydney Congress Hall and works at Territorial Headquarters as the Database/Office Facilitator in the Property department. While enjoying an afternoon stroll, Azadeh shows *Young Women In Touch* a taste of her personal style!

Tell us what you are wearing today and why you chose it?

I am wearing a long sleeve, white and black top with laces, a simple black, tight-fitting skirt and black stockings. I like the combination of black and white as they complement each other and suit the office environment! Laces are the best way to give your outfit some accent without being too much. Stockings and tights also make shoes look nicer and keep you warm!

How would you describe your style?

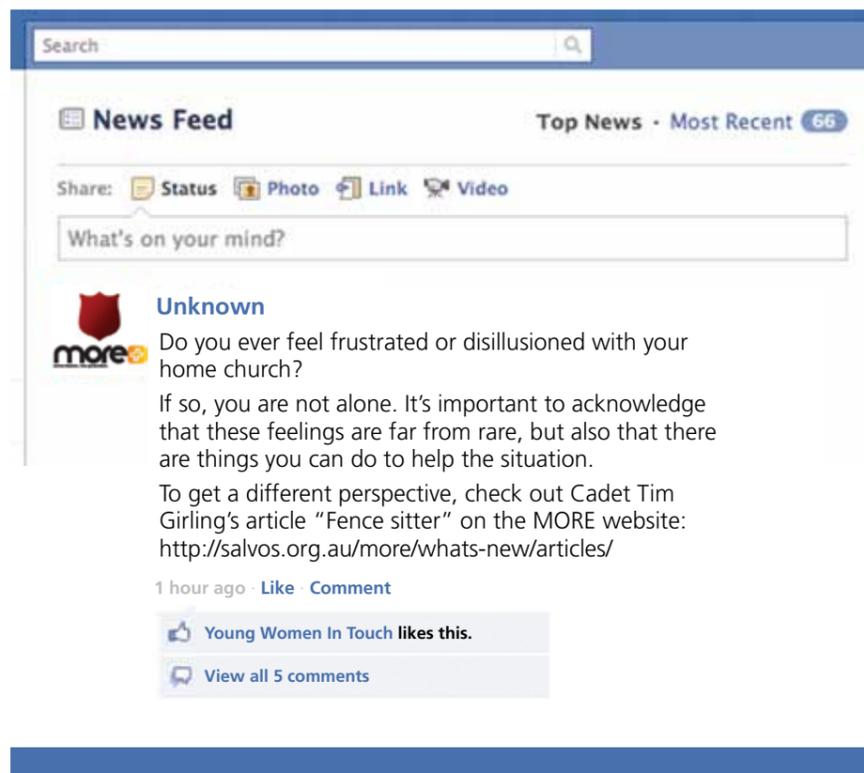
Generally I prefer a girly/feminine style with moderate covering! In terms of colouring, I usually follow a harmony between colours and styles with different pieces of clothing/shoes/bags. Any outfit I choose must be at least partially smart to make me believe I am not inside my bedroom anymore!



Photo: Heidi Steep

What's your "inner beauty" tip?

Inner beauty is such a great way to deal with the world. It is easy to feel disappointed and occasionally upset when things go wrong or we face an unexpected, unpleasant experience. In my opinion, the only tip to protect and maintain our inner beauty is to believe that God loves us so much and keeps looking after us. And also, there is always something to enjoy! Nice flowers, blue sky, fresh air, true friends . . .



Everybody has a story ...

Salvationists Keira Plon and Liz Coward share their stories with *Young Women In Touch* about growing up, finding Jesus and the struggles they faced along the way.

God makes sense

Keira is 19 and attends Auburn Corps. She is completing her second year of a Bachelor of Science degree and also works one day a week at The Salvation Army Australia Eastern Headquarters as the mission support administrator.

“There wasn't one point where I decided whether I was a Christian or not,” Keira explains.

“I've grown up in church ... I suppose I wasn't as committed as I have grown to be now.”

After growing up in a Christian home, attending Church and going to a Christian school, Keira knows all too well what the “Christian life” is all about. However, life hasn't always been simple, particularly because her parents divorced when she was just 10.

While always believing in God, Keira found herself at a point confronted with changes that tested her relationship with God.

“There were a lot of changes at Auburn [Corps]. The youth leader left and then another one came and I wasn't very good with

change,” she says.

“In Year 12 I didn't go to youth. I had an excuse because it was Year 12 and my HSC and I focused on that, but it was half an excuse.”

Keira went back to youth after her HSC and began university. During this time her faith became more real as she stuck by her beliefs when confronted with anti-religious lectures.

“In science they talk about how there's no God and he doesn't exist. That really didn't make me question [God]. I don't know why but I've always been certain,” Keira shares.

“I started thinking about why I believe things rather than just what I believe.”

Keira's curiosity led her to delve deeper into God's word and other Christian material.

“I now have a peace within me where I know that it does make sense. That's probably the biggest lesson I've learnt throughout my walk.”

For more more testimonies, articles, reviews and info for youth, check out www.salvos.org.au/more/



Keira

Fitting in

Liz is 23 and attends Carindale Corps. She is a full-time exercise physiologist completing occupational rehab work.

Liz didn't grow up in a Christian family. It wasn't until she met her friend Courtney at university that she even considered going to church.

“Courtney introduced me to some of the Carindale youth services,” says Liz. “I kept coming and it grew from there.”

“My Mum was a bit wary about my decision at first, because she grew up in the Anglican Church and it was very strict. When she was old enough she stopped going. She was always supportive but not as excited for me being involved in church.”

While it was a challenge, Liz did not let this take her away from pursuing a relationship with God. She says she found herself continually drawn to God through the musical side of worship at Carindale.

“I grew up with a musical education,” she

said. “I could see how I could fit in; how I could take part in that way.”

Now Liz is part of the Carindale worship band and a divisional brass band playing the saxophone.

The journey for Liz hasn't always been smooth, particularly when she was confronted with making a real commitment to God.

“I think at the beginning it was really easy because it was all new and everything happened at once,” she said. “And then after a couple of months, I didn't know what was happening or how to move forward.”

At this point, Liz made the decision to become a Senior Soldier.

While Liz is settled within her church community, she knows her relationship with God will always bring challenges but is committed to seeking him on a regular basis. “It's definitely still a challenge and just trying to stay on top of it – reading the Bible every day and just trying find that moment to be still and to listen and hear what he wants to say to me.”

Esther Pinn
Journalist, *Pipeline* and supplements



Liz

Worth fighting for

For the most part I am fairly independent, pretty driven and like to try new things. However, underneath, there are deep questions that I long to have answered, questions that up until lately were disguised by this “independent” self.

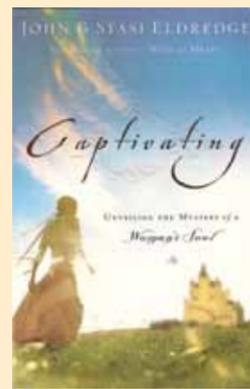
Stasi Eldridge in her book *Captivating* (see Recommended Read) says that each girl, consciously or unconsciously, has deep questions that she too longs to have answered. These include: “Am I lovely?” and “Am I worth fighting for?”

Where does she find the answers?

Firstly, she looks to her earthly father. Today, many girls are growing up in single parent families, usually residing with their mothers. Their fathers may not often be around and the relationship can become fragmented. Or, a girl may have an absent father who still resides in the same household but is always working or busy with other things including, (dare I say it?), ministries in the church.

Girls seek the affirmation of their fathers – it’s just the way they’ve been wired. When girls don’t receive this affirmation they look elsewhere, potentially getting the wrong answers. In my case, I attached my worth to what others thought of me. I know young women who seek affirmation by getting into numerous dysfunctional relationships with guys.

There are girls who are very blessed to have grown up in homes knowing they are loved by their fathers and so are secure in who they are as young women of God.



Recommended Read

Captivating
Unveiling the mystery of a woman's soul
Thomas Nelson, Inc. 2005

Delving into the hearts of women can be a complex (and maybe scary) task! John and Stasi Eldredge boldly take up the challenge in *Captivating*. Since the dawn of time it seems that men have struggled to understand women, and women often struggle to understand themselves. An onslaught of messages from families, media and the church can leave us struggling with our identity and sense of self worth.

This book seeks to bring understanding to “the way we are”; including our obsession with great love stories and pretty things. The authors take us on a journey of discovery as they delicately explore the desires of a woman’s heart, and validate the role we play in the world. The message of *Captivating* is one of restoration and wholeness. It’s a helpful read for women – and even men – of all ages. *Captivating* gives greater insight into the nature of a woman – “the final astonishing work of God.”

Rachael McMurray
Cadet, *Friends of Christ* session

There is hope for every woman because the ultimate answer to these questions comes from a father greater than the one we have here on earth.

When we accept the answers from God to the deep longings of our heart there is freedom and healing – freedom from striving for acceptance, particularly from men; freedom from trying so hard to be “attractive” on the outside; and freedom from giving our hearts’ desires to whoever will take them.

When we truly see ourselves the way

God sees us, it is liberating. I pray that we will know in the depths of our hearts that Jesus came not only to forgive us and heal us but to say, “you are worth it all”.



Vanessa Kohler
Cadet, *Friends of Christ* session

trend watch: Happy feet



You probably have a love-hate relationship with your high heels. Who hasn’t come home with sore toes from a pair of stilettos or an ankle punch from a brand-new sling-back? When you are shoe shopping there are two elements to look at: appeal and comfort. Somehow, appeal often becomes the driving factor in the decision. Even when you start getting blisters, you convince yourself that it will get better! However, there are some things you can do to help remove the pain (or part of it):

- Wear lower-heeled shoes.
- Consider open-toed shoes to relieve the pain.
- Practice foot exercises – find a seat, take off your shoes and move your feet in circles.
- Cushioning – consider gel padding under the balls of your feet.
- Wear thicker heels where possible for balance and to distribute weight more evenly.

Win a CD!

To win a copy of *God is able* or *I Will Praise You* simply tell us in 30 words or less your idea(s) for a special Christmas gift. Send your responses to simone.worthing@ave.salvationarmy.org by 17 October.

Music Reviews

Music Review: *God Is Able* – Hillsong Live

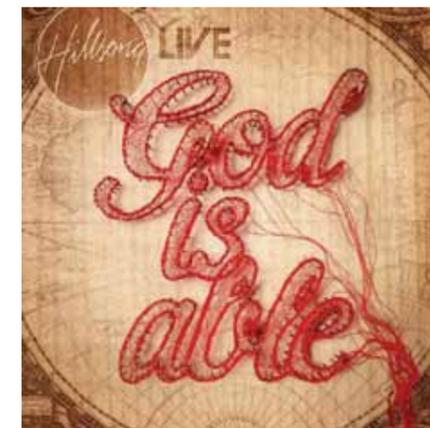
Once again, Hillsong Live hooks us in with their unforgettable guitar riffs, God-inspired lyrics and passionate worship. And celebrating its 20th annual live release, *God Is Able* definitely captivates this same heart.

Featuring 11 new tracks and reinventing two songs from Hillsong United’s latest album, *Aftermath*, the Hillsong worship team describe *God Is Able* to be “a collection of fresh sounds and an inspiring new repertoire of congregational anthems” – also fantastic for private worship and reflection.

The album opens with a catchy guitar lead and slowly builds to produce the anthem, *Rise* through layering of instruments, volume and powerful lyrics – and the song literally rises!

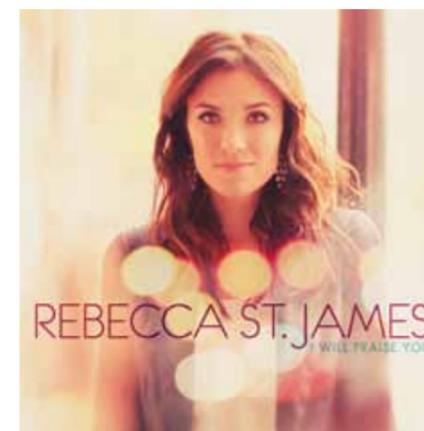
God Is Able is the featured track on the album, capturing the message that God can conquer through all life’s situations.

Hillsong has not failed its listeners in the praise department, producing a catchy praise song called



The Difference. While this song makes you want to dance around, the lyrics make you just as excited about declaring God’s promises.

God Is Able Deluxe CD can be purchased at the online Hillsong store (www.hillsongmusic.com) for \$29.99.
Esther Pinn



Music Review: *I Will Praise You* – Rebecca St. James

Depending on your mood, there are times when you want to dance around while listening to the latest hits and there are other times when you just want to chill out while listening to your iPod.

Well, next time you wish to relax and reflect, *Young Women In Touch* recommends listening to the sweet, soothing tones of Rebecca St. James in her new album, *I Will Praise You*.

It’s not only her soft tones that draw you in, but the honesty in her lyrics. Rebecca has said that this

new collection of worship songs is “her most personal worship recording to date” – and she’s already released 11 other albums! This album is Rebecca’s response to the painful seasons of life – it’s a collaboration of 10 tracks focusing on renewal, acceptance, surrender, hope, redemption, praise and dependence upon God.

The album opens with an upbeat, synthesised, pop track, *I Will Praise You* – steering away from her rock tendencies of the past – and introduces the pathway to the rest of the album with a message of hope.

Rebecca’s new-sounding pop flavours are also highlighted through her radio single, *Shine Your Down Glory* – a song that speaks of God’s majesty. Similarly, *In A Moment* emphasises God’s greatness by describing a powerful moment between the creator and his creation.

Her soft tones continue into the slower tracks which deal with the redemptive power of God: *You Still Amaze Me*, *When The Stars Burn Down (Blessing and Honour)*, and the final track, *You Make Everything Beautiful*.

I Will Praise You is selling at the retail price of \$21.95 at Word Bookstore (www.word.com.au) or Koorong (www.koorong.com).

Esther Pinn

Congratulations

Love Without Measure CD Winner

Congratulations to Shandri Brown, who has won the CD for her comments about *Young Women in Touch* (below):

“The thing I enjoy about *Women in Touch* is the spotlight on different young Salvos, like ‘Meet

Vanessa’. It would be great to hear more stories of what young Salvo women are doing in missions, in ministry to their community and to hear some testimonies of different Christian young women around the world. What is life like in their territory?”

Editor’s note: Thanks Shandri. We will definitely take your suggestion on board!

Home League

a time for tradition and a time for change



Lauren Perry (left) and her grandmother, Marie Perry, learn the secrets to successful muffins in Nerida Auld's (right) cooking class.

Changed group powers on!

As the four of us sat around one tiny table in the middle of a large empty room, week after week, with an average age of 80 and our spirits ageing almost as fast as our bodies, God spoke to me clearly, "You've got to do something about this!"

The beautiful Nambucca River Corps (NRC), and our local community, are full of lively retirees but it was clear that Home League, in its current form, was no longer attractive to people's needs here. Something needed to happen.

From the outside looking in, Home League was perceived to be a place for old women's secret business! Many of our retirees though, weren't women, weren't interested in "secret business" or didn't consider themselves old. They wouldn't give Home League a second glance! And yet the existing members spoke of the spiritual content, rich fellowship and meaningful worship within the group.

What was the answer?

As I sought God, he continued to speak. He placed a burden on my heart that many retirees saw discipleship, fellowship and ministry as something they were past. This should not be! It is a call as long as you have breath! God needs these people to plug back

in and switch back on. He needs them to **POWER ON!**

And so, God's dream for this place began to take shape.

Now, each fortnight, around 12 men and women sit around a much larger table. Slowly, numbers are growing and perceptions changing! Our aim is to connect with God and with each other through food, laughter, prayer, games, singing, study of the Word, ministering and sharing.

Extended ministry

While this time is precious, it is the extended ministry of *Power On* that truly speaks of its success.

Two of our over 80-year-olds pick up the "oldies" from a nursing home for church. Two more run a study group in their home. One knits rugs for orphanages in Africa and was guest speaker at an inter-denominational ladies meeting. Another retiree took up the challenge to help with rural ministries after the floods, while two others feed an elderly church member in hospital each night. *Power On* members led the way in the Red Shield Appeal static collections this year.

In the Bible when Jacob's name was changed to Israel, it was the making of God's man! Praise God that the same can be said for *Power On* in the Nambucca River Corps!

Captain Nicole Viles
Corps Officer, Nambucca River



NRC Power On. Numbers are growing and perceptions changing as *Power On* extends its ministry.

Home League Coolum – coffee for a cause

It all started in a caravan park almost 18 years ago.

Two Salvationist ladies from Sydney, Ruth Hartas and June Howard (deceased), moved to the Coolum Caravan Park to retire and relax for the rest of their lives.

"They had planned to take a cup of coffee to the beach every day and enjoy doing nothing," said Major Helen Ellicott, Corps Officer, Coolum Beach Mission. "God though, had a different plan for them."

As the ladies spent time in their little garden, women from the Caravan Park would chat with them and stay for coffee. Before long, quite a large group would gather every day.

The ladies decided that they had enough women to form a Home League group and the group has been growing ever since.

Between 20 and 26 ladies now attend each week.

The Home League runs along traditional lines, focusing on fellowship, education, worship and service.

Each week, the group meets for a Bible study at the local McDonalds restaurant. "It's just Ronald and us in the room there," laughed Major Helen.

Once a month, guest speakers present different topics of interest to the ladies. These have included researching family history, injured animal care, funeral planning and the Hope program that sells jewellery made by African women.

Each year the ladies fill special coffee cups, made into money boxes, for self-denial.

"We also have an annual spring fashion parade to raise money for our territorial project," said Major Helen. "The women model clothes, shoes, jewellery and hats from our Family Store and afterwards we sell these items."

The fashion parades are divided into casual wear, spring party wear, and formal wear.

"Three years ago our formal theme was a wedding, so the ladies modelled appropriate clothing to wear to a wedding," said Major Helen. "These events are so much fun, and we make it into the local paper each year as well!"



Home League Coolum hosts an annual fashion parade; the wedding theme (above) was one of the most popular.

One of the Home League members, Geraldine, also prepares mystery boxes to sell from treasures she finds in the family store. Every year, over \$1000 is raised.

"The group is growing, has a lot of fun, and just care for and love each other," said Major Helen. "They really are a beautiful group of ladies."

The group has celebrated Ruth and June's willingness to give up their coffee on the beach and follow where God was leading them all those years ago.

Coffee on Cambridge – for people who aren't here yet

"As an elderly lady, not much worries me anymore, but the fact that people are dying without knowing Jesus, that keeps me awake at night," said Edith, at a meeting in Lismore designed to discuss possible changes to Home League. "If we make any changes, it has to be about that."

Similar comments flowed.

"I love Home League, but it's time for us oldies to make some changes, for the sake of the future," said another long-term member, Letti.

Home League has a strong heritage in the Lismore Corps. In recent times though, membership had dwindled and remaining members, although faithful, were becoming discouraged.

"Given the group's heritage, I was amazed at how enthusiastic the ladies were for change," said Lismore Corps Officer, Lieutenant Jennifer Reeves.

"They were ready to do whatever it took to make their group more accessible to newcomers. They want a group designed for the people who aren't here yet. They want to reach out into the community and make a difference. That's the true Home League spirit!"

"As an elderly lady, not much worries me anymore, but the fact that people are dying without knowing Jesus, that keeps me awake at night." Edith, Lismore Corps

Courageous decision

Group members agreed that the name Home League was too closely identified as a group for the elderly, and that the changes they wanted to make would not work under this banner in Lismore.

They made the difficult decision to close Home League and begin something new with a mission and outward focus.

"Now we need to make their dream a reality and create a place where all sorts of people can come and enjoy friendship, learn new skills and discover Jesus," said Lieut. Jenny.

Coffee on Cambridge

A wider corps meeting decided that the new group would be based on five "Cs" and initially take the rotating weekly format of cooking, craft, competitions, combinations and coffee. Devotions are a focus of each meeting.

They named the group Coffee on Cambridge (CCs), after the street on which the corps is located.

"Each of the five areas will eventually have its own leader," explained Lieut. Jenny. "So far we have three leaders in place. Two of these are new to the group and bring fresh enthusiasm."

"CCs has only been going since second term and is still a work in progress, but already there is more energy in the group and growing enthusiasm from the wider corps."

"We aim to be a weekday hub where all sorts of people can come, connect and build relationships with Christians. Our prayer is that this group might be a stepping stone to a friendship with Jesus for many folk."

Weary officers rejoice at retreat

Central and North Queensland Division

What happens when 20 weary women officers go on retreat together two days after the Red Shield Appeal?

Within moments of arriving at The Haven - Emu Park, the women of Central and North Queensland relax, share stories, cry, laugh together and just enjoy each other's company. It's what women do so well.

Major Wendy Walters, Divisional Director of Women's Ministries, led the retreat. Major Jo-anne Brown, Corps Officer, Calamvale, was special guest.

Major Jo-anne shared teaching and practical ideas on "Drawing Near" [to God] by "Cultivating Time with God", "Listening to God" and "Enjoying the Presence of God". The beautiful surrounds of The Haven enhanced worship and added to the weekend.

The spirit of Sisterhood was demonstrated by Sandra Hargrave and Janelle Staines who prepared and presented a delightful high tea on the deck with a back-drop of sparkling blue water, distant islands and a small sailing ship.

The happy chatter and laughter could be heard from the women as they enjoyed the warmth of God's love through others.

During the much appreciated free time, some women walked along the beach, read or did needlework while others chose to have a well-earned rest. The lounge room was a popular meeting place to catch up and spend time with friends.

Everyone enjoyed the special pampering night, with Major Melba Crisostomo's wonderful massages, the hand and foot massages and nail treatments.

During each session there was a wonderful sense of God's presence as a quietness descended upon the women and several gave testimony to their experiences during the retreat.

What happens when you bring 20 weary women officers together

two days after Red Shield? Jesus meets them at their place of need and he ministers his grace through his word, people, fun, food, laughter and nature. Thank you, Jesus.

Envoy Meredith Moore Leader, Far North Queensland Cluster



The ladies enjoyed a high tea in tranquil surrounds as part of the officer retreat.



Camp shows Mums dignity, respect and value

Australia Eastern Territory

This year the Single Mums camp, held at The Collaroy Centre each June and November, dropped the "Single" and became a camp for Mums.

We had though, the same staff team, location, purpose, mission, love, passion, and the same burden to share the love of God, the grace of Jesus and the unity of his people with Mums from all over NSW and two from Brisbane.

This ministry, so precious to us staff, is a unique experience of intense emotions, incredible vulnerability and joy, all wrapped up in one explosive week of noise, fun, tears, patience and loads of tissues.

This year we had Envoy Jayne Wilson, Community Program Manager of the First Floor program in Wollongong (addiction counselling, encounter groups and child support programs) come and share with us.

Jayne asked us two questions that impacted everyone and changed some lives: Who are you? What are you worth?

So many of the Mums don't believe they are worth anything and so make choices based on these thoughts and feelings – choices which compound their view of themselves. It is a vicious cycle.

Our week with them is about empowerment, dignity, respect and value.

It is amazing to see how the Mums change after being shown that they are worth loving. It can transform the way they think about themselves which empowers them to make wise choices.

This is my joy; when a Mum comes to camp with shoulders slumped, eyes downcast, no light or peace in her eyes, no joy in her conversations and braces herself against physical touch, then leaves camp with head held high, shoulders square, a spring her step, a smile on her face, joy in her eyes and love in her heart!

God is good and there is no denying the power of his love to put the pieces back together and to transform lives.

Major Tracy Briggs Corps Officer, Menai

Conference unites holiness movements

Australia Eastern Territory

Women from The Salvation Army, Wesleyan and Nazarene churches met for the third combined Women's Holiness Convention on 22-24 July at The Collaroy Centre, Sydney.

Key speakers from The Salvation Army were Majors Chris Reid, South Queensland Divisional Mission and Resource Director - Corps, and Maree Strong, Director, School for Leadership Training. Captain Deborah Robinson, Tweed Heads Corps Officer, led a focused and inspiring worship throughout the weekend.

On opening night, a representative from each holiness tradition addressed the 75 delegates.

Major Chris spoke on the Seven Mission Priorities of The Salvation Army, emphasising Mission Priority One – prayer and holiness.

Dr Rosalea Cameron, educator and consultant, spoke on the three priorities of the Wesleyan Church with their emphasis on prayer and fasting.

"Dr Mary Fischer, pastor and educator, was the main speaker

again this year, challenging us to look at how we fit into the mission of the Creator," said Major Chris.

Dr Fischer based her presentations on the questions: Do we understand the story and where we fit? Do we know what it means to be a missional movement? Are we a hospitable people?

Other conference highlights included a group discussion on Tom Wright's book, *Virtue Reborn* (SPCK Publishing, London, 2010); a panel fielding questions on theology and ministry in all facets of life; and women sharing how they responded to God's call.

Major Maree Strong concluded the weekend, speaking on "Reflecting the almighty by daily seeking his face".

"Through her unique story and humour, she showed that we need to seek God every day so that our living reflects Jesus to those we meet," said Major Chris

Major Maree has attended all three holiness conventions. "They have been fantastic and meeting women from the Wesleyan and Nazarene churches and sharing in the ministry with them has been a wonderful experience," she said.

Refresh weekend: the gift of being imperfect

ACT and South NSW Division

What you are is God's gift to you. What you become is your gift to God.
Commissioner Lyn Pearce

The Divisional Refresh weekend took place on the weekend of 5-7 August in beautiful Batemans Bay. The theme for the weekend was "Transforming Women".

On the relaxed Friday night, Envoy Roz Edwards interviewed special guest Commissioner Lyn Pearce, who shared some of her life before becoming a Salvation Army officer as well as some of the experiences she'd had throughout her officership.

On Saturday Commissioner Lyn spoke about how we should be the Fragrance of Christ, leading others to God. "God has chosen us and we should not underestimate how he can use us for his purposes," she said.

In session two, Commissioner Lyn spoke about "The Voyage" of transformation. "It's not the destination that transforms us," she said. "Transformation happens on the journey." Commissioner Lyn encouraged us to ask questions when problems or difficulties come our way; "Lord, what can I learn from this?" "What can you teach me in this situation?"

Saturday night brought out the flower child in us all! Ladies dressed up in their very best 60s gear and showed off their skills with the hula hoop and Go-Go dancing. Sunday morning Commissioner Lyn led the session, "The Gift of Being Imperfect". "Most of us, like the Apostle Paul, will have some form of 'thorn in the flesh' as we are not perfect beings," she said.

"Paul learned though, that his 'thorn in the flesh' was a gift from God! Lets give our 'thorn in the flesh' to God and allow him to work in us so we can see our imperfections as a gift. Then, like Paul, we can say that God's grace is sufficient and there is power in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9)."

Captain Darlene Murray Divisional Women's Ministries Secretary



Top: Commissioner Lyn Pearce
Above: Flower children: A 60s night was a highlight of the weekend!

Correction

In the June issue of *Women in Touch*, page 15, it was mistakenly claimed that the song *I Dreamed a Dream* from *Les Misérables* was written by Andrew Lloyd Webber. The music is, in fact, by Claude-Michel Schönberg. The English lyrics are by Herbert Kretzmer, based on the original French libretto by Alain Boublil.

Missionary morning highlights reconciliation

Greater West Division

Granville Corps held a missionary morning on 3 August to raise funds for the Territorial Women's Ministries Project 2011. "We invited other corps in Division as well as churches in our local area," said Lieutenant Pat Cory, Corps Officer.

"A Missionary stall was set up with home made cakes, hand knitted items and bric-a-brac which was very popular," said Lieut. Pat. Ninety people attended.

The theme of the meeting was "Reconciliation". Mr Tom Mayne, a founding member of "Reconciliation Western Sydney" was guest speaker. Mr Mayne has worked for World Vision Australia Indigenous Programs and is a Synod member of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney and Sydney Anglican Indigenous Peoples Ministry Committee.

"He spoke about the stolen generation and work of the early missionaries amongst the Aboriginal people of Australia," said Lieut. Pat. "His informative talk challenged us all."

As part of the meeting Lieutenant John Cory, Corps Officer, interviewed Noonga Yamitgi of the Wadjeri tribe (Graham Merritt) about the significance of the didgeridoo in Aboriginal culture. "Graham explained that learning the didgeridoo was part of Aboriginal law and was passed onto him by a cousin from his father's side who was a Lawman," said Lieut. Pat. "Traditionally there have been about twelve stages of development in Aboriginal law but today only three remain – language, song and dance."

Graham demonstrated the sounds of the didgeridoo and played a sacred piece to honour the gathering, God and his creation.

"We raised just on \$1,000 for the day," Lieut. Pat confirmed.



Granville Corps Officer John Cory interviews Graham Merritt about the didgeridoo.

Cycle to raise funds to support trafficking survivors

PROJECT FUTURES END SEX TRAFFICKING

PROJECT FUTURES, a not for profit organisation that aims to raise awareness and funding to combat sex trafficking globally, has partnered with The Salvation Army to support its Survivor Advocacy program.

The Salvation Army (TSA) safe-house for trafficked women in Sydney will run the project which empowers male and female survivors to share their expertise towards ending human trafficking and slavery. Survivor advocates will be trained by the Public Interest Advocacy Centre and supported by PF and TSA to be consulted in the creation of programs and policies designed to assist them.

Funds raised through a PROJECT FUTURES cycle from Sydney to Canberra in November will be directed to this program.

For more information, and to register for this event, go to <http://www.projectfutures.com/cycles/2011cyclechallenge.php>

Good things come in small packages

South Queensland Division

As a part of the service aspect of their ministry, the Stafford Corps mid-week fellowship group supplies towels and toiletries for those in need in their social communities.

"We love the thought that God can use us to bring joy and love to others by sharing our blessings," said Major Bev McMurray, Stafford Corps Officer.

This year, one of the ladies, Margaret, beautifully gift-wrapped packages of these products which the group then gave to the women of Glen Haven Crisis Centre for Mother's Day.

The ministry of the group has a four-fold focus: worship, fellowship, education and service.

"We all really enjoy the fellowship of the group, as well as the varied guests and leaders who add so much to our meetings," said Major Bev.

From left to right: Mrs Edna Fitness, Mrs Jane McDonald, Mrs Joyce Borrows, and Major Bev McMurray prepare care packages for women in need.



International Perspective



Following God's lead in Canada

St. John's, Halifax, Mississauga, Regina, Kelowna – these are places I hadn't even heard of before coming to Canada. And yet, I now know people who live in each of these locations because this past year I've had the privilege of interviewing them.

My staff writer position with The Salvation Army's Canada and Bermuda Territorial Headquarters has given me the ability to speak to a wide variety of people about their ministry for God. I write for an internal magazine, *Salvationist*, its partner website, Salvationist.ca, and a magazine that is more focused on outreach, *Faith & Friends*. I am also the editor of the children's publication, *Edge for Kids*.

I've written stories about The Salvation Army's disaster response, its involvement in Parliament, its ministry in care homes and about a small corps on the prairies. I've talked to people who use hip-hop, rock 'n' roll and puppetry to worship God, and I have interviewed a popular Canadian singer, a Salvationist in the fight against human trafficking in Thailand and the man who is tweeting the Bible.

The Salvation Army is Canada's largest non-governmental provider of welfare. Its biggest financial campaign is Christmas kettles, which involves standing in malls and ringing a bell for donations. In the summer (June-August), corps' send community children to Salvation Army camps – using some of these funds raised.

Living in Toronto, Ontario, for a year has meant seeing every season. I entered the country in fall, meaning beautiful leaves, I experienced a "snow day" and white Christmas in winter, I appreciated the green grass and coloured flowers in spring and then enjoyed the heat and humidity of a long-awaited summer!

Seeing each season of God's creation has been a wonderful blessing. Add to that the new friends we have made and the experiences of travel to parts of Canada and America, and you can see that my husband, Michael, and I are having an amazing time!

Among our joys are challenges. There is the obvious one – missing our family and friends – but we also experienced a bit of displacement.

I have felt though, from the beginning of this crazy, fun-filled adventure, that this is God's plan for my life right now. As a result of following his direction, he has blessed me and strengthened my dependence on him.

Julia Hosking
Staff Writer
Canada and Bermuda Territory
Julia worked as a staff writer for Pipeline 2009-2010

Youth lead children's camp in Poland

Four years ago the Salvation Army opened a children and youth centre in Starachowice, Poland. Young people from this centre have gradually become more involved in the leadership of the centre's activities and in July, for the first time, members of the youth group went on a mission trip to Poland's capital, Warsaw.



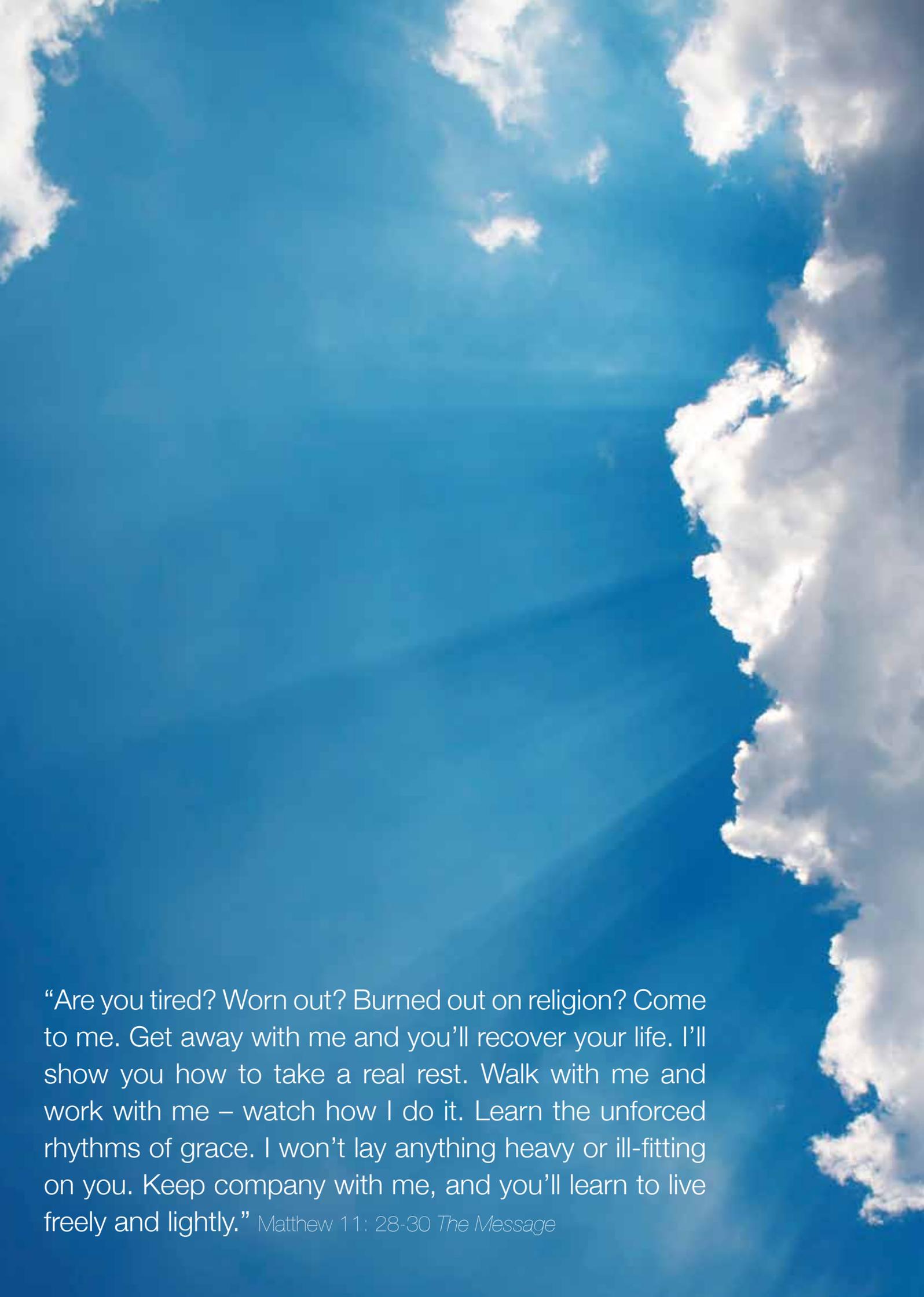
A group of young people from Starachowice went to Warsaw from 24-30 July to lead a club for children there. For five days they led the club, during which participants were "flown" by plane to Banana Island for different activities. Each child was given a "passport" in which they were able to gather points during the week.

On the Island they played various games and each day heard the story of a Bible hero. These included Noah, Gideon, Elisha, Zacchaeus and "Kamila" (the women who anointed Jesus' feet). The children learnt new songs and also made crafts connected with Banana Island.

On the final day, the Warsaw children invited their parents to come and hear what they had been doing all week. There was also a competition to see who could make the craziest costume, with prizes awarded. The person with the most points on their passport also received a prize.

Four leaders from Warsaw: Tetyana, Kasia, Andrzej and Michal helped in preparing and leading the club. The children enjoyed the activities and gave a warm farewell to the Starachowice team, who were pleased with their week's work.

Paulina Pokora, 16
Starachowice youth group team



“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me – watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me, and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.” *Matthew 11: 28-30 The Message*