

WOMEN Intouch

LIFE REASSEMBLED



ALSO INSIDE:
SIMPLIFYING THE SEASON
THAT PESKY BLACK DOG!
FINDING REFUGE IN JESUS
LOVE CHANGES EVERYTHING

team talk

From the desk of the Territorial
President of Women's Ministries

In recent weeks I have learned to do some new things and I am quite happy with my achievements. I am one of the least technical people there is, but I learned to insert a clip into a PowerPoint presentation and to make a DVD clip on my iPhone. Most of you reading this article are probably very advanced and able to do these things much more competently. But for me, learning a new thing is so rewarding.

The words from Isaiah chapter 43 and verse 19 have been referred to a number of times in the past few weeks: "See, I am doing a new thing! ... do you not perceive it?"

As we approach the Christmas season this year, I believe God wants to do a new thing for us each one.

It would be so easy to be complacent or apathetic about Christmas – it seems to come around quickly each year, there is so much to do, it costs so much money and people are too busy to enjoy the season.

For Mary, the honour of being chosen as the mother of the Lord was a new thing and difficult for her to comprehend. Then, of course, she had to make the most inconvenient journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

Just imagine making that trip when you are very pregnant! It must have been very uncomfortable as well.

But this was God's opportunity to do a new thing. Jesus' birth brought joy, surprise and wonder and it was also the fulfilment of prophecy. A child was born who will save his people from their sins – Emmanuel – God with us. A totally new thing – a Saviour for all.

It was a new experience for the shepherds. I can only imagine their reaction when the angelic choir made the announcement of good news. After all, the shepherds were engaged in their normal everyday work when the good news burst forth. They would not have been expecting to see an angelic choir!

Jesus' arrival also brought a new focus – the first to visit the Christ Child were not the kings, ambassadors, the rich or educated, but the humble, lowly shepherds. The focus was on the disadvantaged who were the first chosen to receive the message of peace.

God is doing a new thing! Maybe through our Christmas celebrations this year we will be surprised as we see God doing a new thing before our eyes and in our hearts.

Don't miss out on the "new thing".
Have a God-blessed Christmas.



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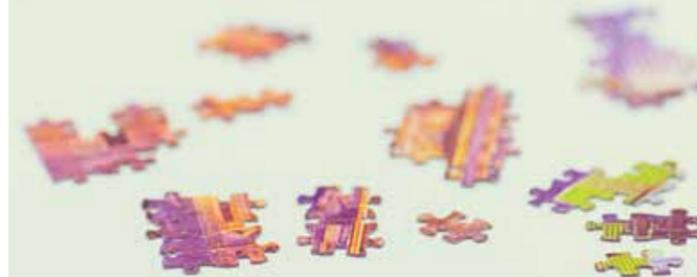


Photo: Shairon Paterson

about this issue

from the editor's desk

We are about to celebrate Christmas – a season of hope and joy in a world worn out with sadness and despair.

On the global scene this year we have certainly seen a continual unfolding of tragedies, violence and abuse that has seemed never-ending and increasingly brutal. Lives have been broken, families shattered and communities destroyed.

Perhaps for you personally, 2014 was a year of loss, grief and sadness. Maybe it was marked by sickness, family breakdown or a deep sense of emptiness and isolation, and you are worn out physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Thankfully, even as we struggle with all that life currently holds for us, we do have a deep hope and assurance of change - present and eternal - as we celebrate the birth of Christ and all that his life, death and resurrection mean for us, and for all humanity.

As the famous Christmas carol *O Holy Night* reminds us, we can hold on to the truth of this season, "A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices".

The incarnation of God, as a vulnerable baby born in a barn at a chaotic and dangerous time in history, changed the world profoundly and permanently. We too are changed personally as a result of this miracle, and, as Christians, Christ will continue to transform us as we experience a deeper relationship with him.

Through Christ, brokenness is restored and lives are rebuilt.

This hope is for everyone, everywhere, both for today and for eternity.

That is, without question, worth celebrating!

As the authors of our main features in this issue discuss, the Christmas season does not take away the pain in our lives, the challenges we face or the tragedies in our world. Christmas though, gives us hope and helps us to see our struggles in context as we celebrate God's passionate love towards us, his merciful and complete forgiveness, the daily strength he gives us, and his promise of eternal salvation.

The articles in this issue focus on lives that have been shattered and rebuilt through the power and love of Christ. Women, and men, who have been abused, addicted and suicidal have found or re-discovered Christ and, despite on-going challenges, are living new lives of purpose and meaning.

From the team at *Women in Touch* we wish you each a hope-filled, encouraging, joyful and liberating Christmas!

Simone Worthing
Editor

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BROKENNESS RESTORED

MAJOR SHELLEY SOPER shares how God has rebuilt broken lives and restored shattered people as they learn to hand their lives over to him

My husband first spotted the rocking chair on his morning walk. Old, worn and broken, discarded on the side of the road. Known for his habit of checking out other people's trash in the expectation of finding a useful treasure, he asked himself the question, "Did this chair have any potential to be restored?" "Always worth a try," said David, as he carried in his latest "rescue project".

"And I have just the man to do it!" The man David had in mind was out of work, estranged from his wife and young family, and an alcoholic. He was often in David's thoughts and prayers as he desired to see him "back on track".

The young man agreed to restore the chair and, on completion, it was given a place in the lounge room. It became David's chair for morning devotions. It never really fitted with the décor but, nonetheless, was frequently used and appreciated. The story of the chair was often told when guests visited, and it was usually tried out and considered to be a worthwhile project of restoration.

Promises lost

At around the same time the chair arrived in our house, the Lord placed

upon our hearts particular people who were struggling with disturbing and challenging life circumstances. Many were weighed down by burdens too heavy to carry in their own strength.

We were drawn to them in prayer and friendship and it seemed natural that we would regularly share dinner. Our heart was to simply listen and seek the Lord for wisdom as burdens were shared, common ground was found and clarity was given on how

"RELEASING IN FAITH ALL THE PIECES OF THEIR LIVES TO GOD, THESE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN "PUT BACK TOGETHER" IN A WAY WE COULD NEVER, AT THE TIME, HAVE COMPREHENDED"

better to encourage and prayerfully support them.

Each time we gathered, a particular photo frame took prominent place. We had set within this frame photos of their children, now adults in varied circumstances of brokenness. Each child's face, smiling

back within the photos, reflected such rich potential, yet each connecting face seated at the table reflected deep grief in the experience of burdens carried and promise lost. The sense of powerlessness in each circumstance was tangible.

For Laura (*), it came after years of being the recipient of anger, abuse and rejection. Working hard, struggling with her husband's infidelity and ill treatment of her precious children and

dogged by resulting depression, she struggled to keep the pieces of her life together.

As her children grew into teenagers, she became powerless to mend their brokenness or cope with their ensuing wrong choices. In despair, Laura walked away and found

herself on the streets, believing herself to be beyond repair.

Restorative grace

An acquaintance, who soon became a friend, helped Laura rebuild. Years passed. A failed business, in debt, suffering from ill health and struggling with the illness of her sister, Laura found her way into our lives and consequently into the Kingdom of Jesus. Praise God!

This came about, first by sitting in a pew at her sister's funeral, attending church and then meeting regularly to ask questions and search for meaning. Laura one day knelt before the cross in the prayer room and handed her broken heart over to Christ.

Her journey continued, and the first night our small group knelt around the rocking chair to pray for each other was nothing less than beautifully amazing! This remains an ongoing victory in the Lord's restorative grace for all those who knelt as we sought the Lord's miraculous power to recreate the lives of his precious children. A handing over of the things that they themselves could not change, could not fix or put back together, has proven to be life changing.

It is important to note that some of the circumstances for the faces in

the frame have not changed but the lives of the people praying for them have.

Releasing in faith all the pieces of their lives to God, these people have been "put back together" in a way we could never, at the time, have comprehended.

Growing in their faith relationship with a God who has the capacity to rebuild, restore and daily renew. Their "picture" no longer reflects hopelessness, but a completely new image within God's picture frame, of people knowing joy in life and fulfilment in service.

Today, they remain close friends in this journey of faith.

For Laura, there is restoration with her adult children as well. They are on track, rebuilding and loving their mum. She continues to flourish in wisdom and prayer and has a ministry of grace to many.

Sharing the mission

Reading from the scroll of Isaiah in the temple, Jesus said: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the suffering and afflicted. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives, release from darkness for the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of

the Lord's favour ..." (Luke 4:18-19, paraphrased).

He proclaimed his mission to the world!

The privilege of kneeling in prayer to intercede for people and the practical journey that ensues remains the greatest blessing of my ministry and service as a Salvation Army officer.

To share in the mission with God who mends brokenness, rebuilding and restoring lives is a privilege. To see his handiwork in the re-creation of lives is joy. Surprisingly, not what we would design, but "immeasurably more, far more than all we could ask or imagine" (Ephesians 3:20, paraphrased).

By the way, the young man who restored our rocking chair is back with his family, holds a full-time job as a carpenter and no longer drinks. Praise God!

And the old rocking chair? It has pride of place in our office at Bexley North and there is ongoing blessing in sharing with those who sit in it from time to time, remaining a constant reminder of God's restorative grace!

Major Shelley Soper
Territorial Officer Recruitment Representative



Photo: Shairon Paterson

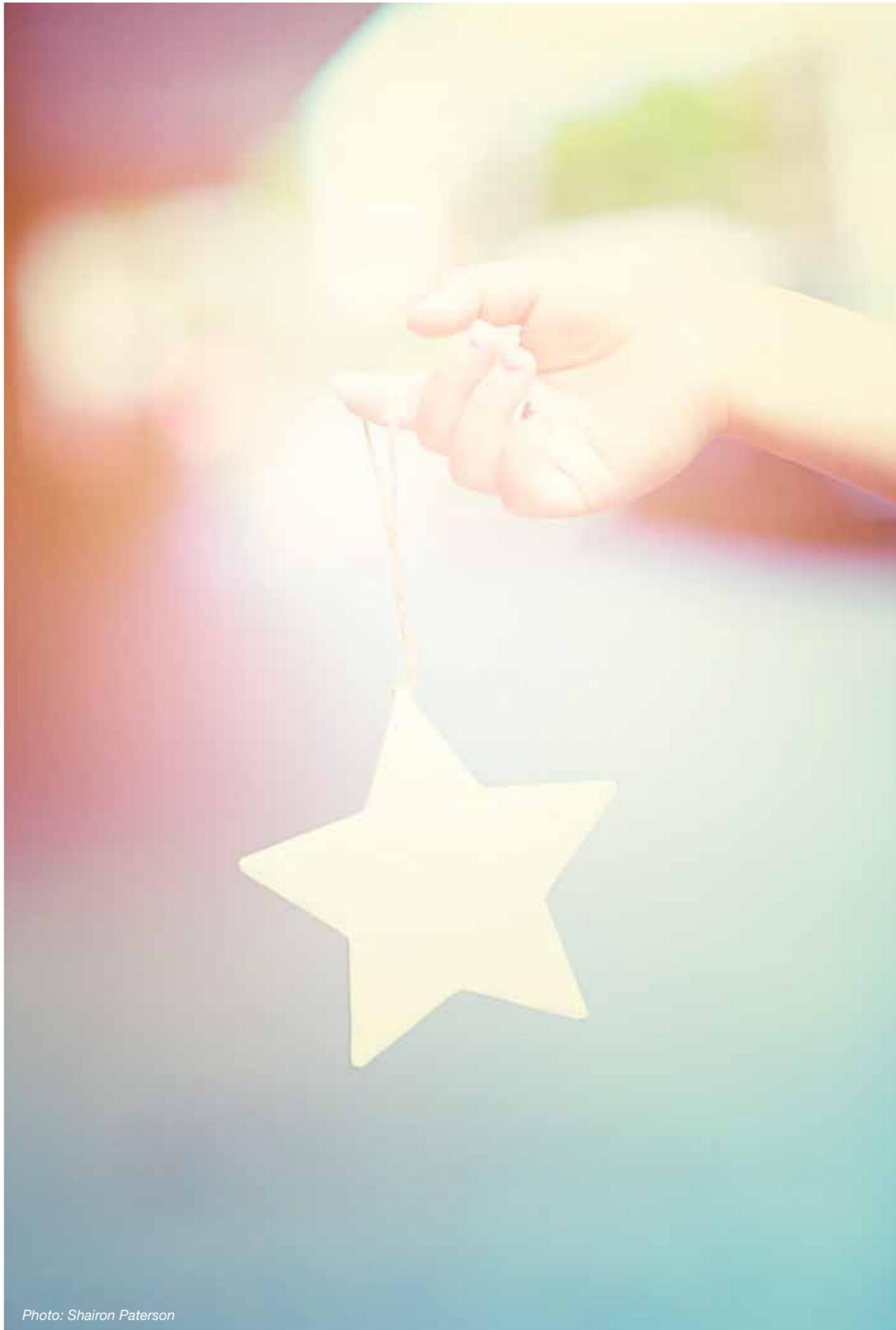


Photo: Shairon Paterson

HOLD ON TO THE REAL STAR OF CHRISTMAS

The joy and wonder of Christmas can so often be overshadowed by the struggles and sadness of everyday life. **Major JO-ANNE BROWN** shares how, despite the complications and challenges we face, we can still celebrate the birth of our Saviour

Last Christmas was not such a good experience for me. Because of things going on in my life, I was fairly half-hearted in hauling out the decorations and preparing my house for the season.

Normally I love Advent, delighting in preparing wreaths and dressing up my home. We have many beautiful Christmas decorations from different parts of the world that hold lovely memories of people and places. Taking each decoration out of its box and choosing a place to put it is like dropping in on old friends. Each piece points me to some aspect of the amazing fact that “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us”.

Last year wasn't quite like that. I didn't have the strength to get everything out, or even to sort through the boxes I did get out.

Despite all my best intentions, Christmas was exhausting. I simplified where I could, concentrated on the important things and spent time reflecting on Jesus Christ and what his birth meant for us.

Despite that, I still found the Christmas season and all that goes with it, not exactly the time of joy and festivity that I usually enjoyed. But then, I'm not the only one facing some kind of challenge that makes the celebration of Christmas complicated.

Broken Christmas

For many people, Christmas barely registers on their radar screen of terminal illness, unemployment, financial crisis or family chaos. In fact, many people see Christmas as simply one more complication in lives that are already stretched to breaking point.

They have absolutely no desire to engage in anything that will cost them more energy, more time or more money.

We all know that Christmas is about the birth of the Saviour, the one who came to redeem us from our sins and bring us into relationship with our Creator Father. We know that it isn't just about the trimmings, even when we do enjoy them as part of the celebration. But knowing that and then actually finding that place of joy and celebration seems way too hard for many people.

One year, some friends of ours buried their 10-week old baby girl early in December. Our corps grieved with them, wept with them, and held them close during those days of Advent. I guess we all asked the question, somewhere in our minds, “What will Christmas look like this year? How do we even think about it, when our hearts are broken?”

As a church family, we sang the usual Christmas songs and held the usual Christmas activities, but we were all a bit sombre, a bit sadder and a little subdued. The message of Jesus' birth was no less joyful, the miracle of his conception no less wondrous, and the love of God no less powerful – **but** there was still grief and loss and a sense of incomprehension to deal with.

God with us

I sometimes think of Mary and Joseph and how they, with their families and neighbours, welcomed the news of the coming Messiah. Both Mary and Joseph chose to embrace obedience and walk the hard pathway of waiting on God when a lot of people may not have understood >>>

*“WE CELEBRATE THE JOY OF JESUS’ BIRTH
AND WE LIVE IN THE MIDST OF SORROW AND
SUFFERING – AND SOMETIMES WE CAN’T DO
ANYTHING TO CHANGE THAT”*

or even believed them. What was it really like for the young Mary, feeling the growing child in her womb, holding the memory of the angelic annunciation in her heart and yet knowing that many people would have scoffed at the truth?

What was it like for her parents? Did they feel the shame of an unexpectedly pregnant, unwed Mary or did they also completely embrace the message of the angel? We don’t know, but we can imagine that for Mary and Joseph, the birth of Jesus would have come with some turmoil, turbulence and uncertainty.

The angels in the field sang the good news of joy and peace to all mankind. Did Joseph worry about having no place for his pregnant wife to rest, or not being able to provide for his newborn son as he perhaps had planned?

Was there a beautiful hand-crafted cradle waiting back in Nazareth as Joseph laid his son among the hay the animals had been feeding on? The Gospel account gives us no indication of whatever else may have been going on in the hearts and minds of Mary, Joseph and other people in their lives – but we do know they were aware that God was breaking through into human history in an amazing way. How could they not be, once the shepherds had visited them and the Wise Men had placed their gifts before the child?

Life’s paradoxes

So it is Christmas and we celebrate. God has broken through into our lives with the most amazing gift. **And** still many of us live in the midst of sorrow, pain, illness and chaos – and many are unsure how, or even if, they want to celebrate this season.

Growing up spiritually is learning to embrace the paradoxes of the journey. Jesus said the Kingdom is here, and yet the Kingdom is coming. God’s Word says that he will heal us when we pray, yet some people remain unhealed. Jesus promises both abundant life and a cross.

There are many things we face as believers that we cannot reconcile into one easy truth. Sometimes it means holding one truth in one hand and another truth, which right now seems contradictory, in the other hand. (It is only for now that something may seem contradictory –

there will come a time when these paradoxes will all fall into place.)

Last Christmas was actually a good Christmas. My house was not how I liked it to be. I prepared less food and spent way less time shopping. My life was messy and complicated and I certainly didn’t feel festive. And at the same time, I knew God was present in my life.

It certainly wasn’t all “Deck the halls” and “We wish you a merry Christmas”, but when I think of Mary and Joseph, it certainly wasn’t that for them either. Life was raw and complicated, amidst the joy and wonder, and the future was uncertain – but they held the Light of the World in their arms.

Celebration and suffering

So how do we celebrate Christmas when life is turbulent and painful and we don’t feel like celebrating?

- Acknowledge your circumstances – grieve your losses, accept your pain and let your family be as they are.
- Recognise that you are not alone in experiencing Christmas as just another “thing” that could add stress to your life.
- Simplify. Think about what you can let go of in order to have less stress and more peace in your life.
- Focus on what is most important to you in the Christmas story and find ways to honour that.
- Accept there is paradox in life: We celebrate the joy of Jesus’ birth and we live in the midst of sorrow and suffering – and sometimes we can’t do anything to change that. This is simply how it is.

And above all, know that the Word who became flesh walks with you and is present with you, most especially in the turbulence!



Major Jo-Anne Brown
Contributing writer

Photo: Shairon Paterson

*JOY TO THE WORLD –
EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR!*

“He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth” (Luke 1:14).

Itotally and unashamedly love Christmas.

I get excited from the moment the decorations start appearing in the shops. As most of my friends are complaining about September being too early for anyone to even think about Christmas, I begin to plan, to dream and to imagine the fun to be had.

In today’s world, much of the excitement of Christmas is wrapped up in the romantic idea of the season as seen in the movies, television shows, advertising and even social media. People are led to believe that they, too, can have a refrigerator full of Christmas treats, a tree decorated with lights and tinsel, gifts wrapped in brightly coloured paper under the tree, and a spectacular light display that will dazzle friends and neighbours alike.

Christmas sadness

Sadly, though, for many people today, the dreams of a fun, family Christmas are far from being a reality. Instead, they are overwhelmed by issues they may not have any control over, that cannot be ignored and that no amount of “shopping” can fix.

In fact, people’s circumstances may mean they are unable to buy the expected food and gifts and any extra shopping would just add to their problems.

For some, even the thought of family visiting can bring fear and

dread rather than joy and excitement, as people negotiate difficult circumstances and simply hope that the day goes by with as few incidents as possible.

Others sit alone on Christmas Day and wish they actually had people around they could argue with.

Joy and peace

As a nation, we do put a lot of effort into our Christmas celebrations. Every so often though, we need a reminder that Christmas is not just about 25 December, but a day about the eternal message of God’s love for us all and his gift of joy and peace through the birth of Jesus, as written in God’s Word. This is something to celebrate!

In Luke chapter two, we read about the angels appearing to the shepherds. The angels encouraged the terrified shepherds to not be afraid, that they were bringing good news that would bring “great joy for all the people” (verse 10).

As they instructed the shepherds on how to find the Messiah, born in the most humble of circumstances, they proclaimed, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests” (verse 14).

They brought a message of joy and peace in a world of turmoil and heartache – not a promise of a perfect life without conflict. Neither did they promise a joy-filled family feast of

harmony at Christmas dinner. Instead, they spoke of the real joy the Messiah would bring – joy that the frustrations of life cannot destroy.

The message of joy and peace is not limited to the account of the birth of Jesus in the gospels. The message of joy and peace continues throughout the scriptures.

God’s presence

Consider the promise of peace as mentioned in Philippians chapter four where we are also encouraged to rejoice, (verse 4), to not be anxious about anything (verse 6a), to give thanks, whatever the situation (verse 6b). “And the peace of God, which transcends all human understanding will guard your hearts” (verse 7).

This is a peace that helps us each deal with situations in our lives that are beyond our control.

This is a peace that is greater than whether we have a perfect Christmas or are even able to be enjoy the day we end up with.

We may spend the day on our own or experience a large gathering of friends and family. Our “issues” will not disappear.

Regardless, we are assured of God’s presence and his peace and we can choose to experience the joy that brings to our lives – all year round.

Major Angela Eyles
Contributing writer

REFLECTION: It's all about relationship

"Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people" Luke 2:10 (English Standard Version).

I am a Christmas grinch! I am quite happy to admit it. It started when I was working in welfare and I realised how many families truly struggle with Christmas. I realised that, no matter how many vouchers, toys and hampers we made up and how grateful those families were, it did not really change the fact that the over-commercialisation of Christmas put so much pressure on them to create the unachievable fairytale Christmas.

So I did not try, until we had our first child. Now we make an effort as she deserves to have what Christmas magic we can create for her. I emphasise *can*.

This Christmas brings a new member into our family. So, my internal conflict with commercialism and over-eating will be compounded by the chaos and sleep deprivation of the mother of a newborn!

But is Christmas supposed to be like this? Was that first Christmas the fairytale depicted in our beautiful nativity scenes? Giving birth in a cattle shed is a far cry from the clean hospital and drug-assisted birth that I received. With

all those people crammed into town, accommodation in Bethlehem was in short supply and water and affordable food probably were as well.

The joy the angels proclaimed at Jesus' birth was not fully realised until his death and resurrection 30-odd years later – events which allow us to have a relationship with God the Father. The joy the angels spoke about is not found in food, possessions or even pulling off the "perfect" Christmas event.

When you strip away the fairytale, the true magic of Christmas is relationship and spending time with family and friends.

So, whatever your Christmas tradition – a seafood feast, a barbecue or a full-roast dinner, beach cricket, serving at your local community centre, sleeping off a food coma or just a quiet day with friends – may this Christmas be about renewing and deepening relationships with those around you.

Captain Christy Kurth
Mission Officer
Port Kembla Mission

Women online

Christians for Biblical Equality

Gender accuracy in Bible translation, motherhood and identity, and giving to the "max" when all you have is the "min" are just some of the topics addressed in this lively and thought-provoking website.

Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE) is a non-profit organisation of Christian men and women who believe that the Bible, properly interpreted, teaches the fundamental equality of men and women of all ethnic groups, all economic classes and all age groups, based on the teachings of scriptures such as Galatians 3:28, which says, "God does not see you as a Jew or as a Greek. He does not see you as a servant or as a person free to work. He does not see you as a man or as a woman. You are all one in Christ" (New Life Version).

CBE affirms and promotes the biblical truth that all believers – without regard to gender, ethnicity or class – must exercise their God-given gifts with equal authority and equal responsibility in church, home, and world.

The CBE website offers extensive resources including blogs, articles, a free magazine, newsletters, stories of women in ministry around the world and links to CBE social media sites.

Their material covers a range of topics. The blogs and articles, for example, include posts on abuse, Biblical equality, church history, gender justice concerns, Christian relationships, devotionals, and women in leadership, ministry and the Bible.

There is an online bookstore with digital downloads and recordings, recommended reading material and upcoming conferences and events.

For more information or in-depth reading, go to www.cbeinternational.org

LOOKING FOR LOVE?

"The story of Jesus is the story of love personified. We miss the point when we simply try to do what he tells us to do. And we miss the point when we merely try to follow the pattern of his life. His life points back to his own Source. His life is intelligible only when understood as the personification of divine love."

D.G. Benner, Surrender to Love
InterVarsity Press, 2003

Crazy Love

Overwhelmed by a Relentless God

Francis Chan
Revised Edition
Publisher: David C. Cook
2013



Francis Chan's book *Crazy Love* should come with a warning: Read at your own risk ... life-altering side-effects have been known to occur! Symptoms include:

- Radical discipleship
- Extreme giving of time, talents and finances
- Sacrifice of own comfort
- Obsessive faithfulness to Jesus.

The passion in which Chan challenges the status quo of mediocre and lukewarm Christianity is infectious. He presents a dare to take a fresh look at God, mission and how to live out of Jesus' heart for the world.

As I read this book, I found myself confronted with the challenges of: How can I give more, love more, do more? Am I really the person I confess to being as a Christian? Chan's purpose, however, is not to induce guilt.

One of my favourite quotes from the book is a comment on Galatians 5:13-14, "When we love, we're free! We don't have to worry about a burdensome load of commands, because when we are loving, we can't sin" (Page 101).

The author's focus is on experiencing the love and freedom of God through loving others. When we live radically, trusting God completely, we find peace, provision and freedom.

The book is biased towards the doing-mission component of discipleship and does not focus at all on the more reflective spiritual disciplines of our personal walk with Jesus. This is neither because they have been overlooked or because they are not important. Rather, it is because of the conviction of the author and his purpose in writing the book – to see more people living out their faith in action.

If you like roller-coaster rides, this is a book for you. If you don't, read it anyway because only good can come from being dared to give in to the relentless, overwhelming, crazy love of God.

This is a book that you could go back to year after year and use as a thermometer to check how hot, or not, is your walk with Jesus.

Lieutenant Katherine Mills
Contributing writer

Shona's Kisses

Recipe and photo by
Shairon Paterson

INGREDIENTS

Biscuits

- 125g butter
- ½ cup castor sugar
- 1 egg
- ⅓ cup plain flour
- ¼ cup self-raising flour
- ⅔ cup cornflour
- ¼ cup custard powder

Cream filling

- 60g butter
- ⅓ cup icing sugar
- 2 teaspoons milk

METHOD

Biscuits

1. Heat oven to 200 Celsius

2. Beat butter and sugar
3. Add egg – beat only till combined
4. Stir in sifted dry ingredients in two batches
5. Roll into balls
6. Flatten with fork
7. Cook until lightly brown – about 10 minutes
8. Fill with cream and dust with icing sugar

Cream filling

9. Beat butter until it's as white as possible
10. Gradually beat in half the icing sugar
11. Add milk
12. Gradually beat in remaining icing sugar.



Handy hints

You may need a little more flour if the mixture is a bit runny.

Double the recipe because these biscuits get eaten quickly!

Don't overcook the biscuits as they brown up once out of the oven.

The biscuits taste even better a day after cooking!

Mr Wesley and Me

SAVING THE
WORLD

NICOLA POORE continues her series of articles on Wesleyan concepts in everyday language, with this feature focusing on unlimited atonement

I earnestly want to save the world. Really, I do. Oh, that men and women, girls and boys would come to know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour; that they would love him deeply and know his love that surpasses knowledge.

I want to want it more. And yet, do I really believe that it is possible to save the world? Can we win the world for Jesus?

The founders of The Salvation Army and their band of pioneering zealots certainly believed this was possible. "Christ for the world, we sing; the world to Christ we bring" (Samuel Wolcott).

In fact, I've heard it said that the evangelistic fervour of the first Salvationists was fuelled by the unshakable belief that Christ would indeed return once the world had been saved. Quite a motivating thought. Is it any wonder the Army grew exponentially?

Universal salvation

The urgency of the mission seems to have faded. The militant radicalism seems to have been tamed. The impossible dream of salvation for the world now really does seem possible.

And yet we would affirm our sixth article of faith [doctrine], which declares that Jesus Christ has made a way so that,

"whosoever will, may be saved".

We can thank Mr Wesley for the universal scope of the salvation we publish. Unlimited atonement is the grand Arminian theme, embraced by Wesley and the Booths. It is possible for anyone to come to a saving knowledge of Jesus. No exemptions. Boundless salvation flowing for all.

Our allegiance to a "whosoever will" Gospel is consistent with our distinctively Wesleyan framework of a loving God. God is love. More than that, God is loving toward all he has made. John's Gospel tell us that "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). A loving God made a way for anyone and everyone to live – really live! Now that's good news.

Our Father's business

We can thank God that Jesus Christ has made atonement for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). Whether it is the adolescent boy who steals some pears or the businesswoman who steals millions of company dollars – all has been atoned and all can be forgiven.

Surely then, this unlimited atonement makes unlimited entry

into the Kingdom of God a possibility. Although saying that it is possible for the world to be saved is different to saying that it will be saved. In this case, we trust in the justice and judgment of our loving God.

In the meantime, I want to live like it is possible to win the world for Jesus. I cannot silence the hopeful strains within me that insist, "The world for God!" Joining the voices of old, and echoing their single-minded devotion, I cry, "I'll do my part!"

So do we really believe that it is possible to save the world? Do we live and speak and act as though it is possible? Or perhaps a more pertinent question comes from Booth himself, who would ask, "Am I doing all in my power for the salvation of sinners?"

We belong to The Salvation Army. We are in the business of salvation. We are about our Father's business, actually. Saving the world.



Lieutenant Nicola Poore
Hawkesbury City Corps
Officer, from 8 January
2015

A broken life reassembled

EVERYONE HAS A STORY ...

Casandra Wilson shares how God is gently restoring the pieces of her broken life as she surrenders to him



Casandra Wilson is directly honest when reflecting on the turning point in her turbulent life. "If I hadn't found acceptance and love at the front door of the Salvos, I wouldn't be here today," she admits.

"My life was like a boxed jigsaw puzzle – when you take off the lid, the pieces are a jumbled mess.

"I thought I was insane when I came here (to The Salvation Army), but I know now that God was searching me out and bringing me here."

Casandra, who is The Salvation Army Doorways Program Coordinator and a senior soldier at the Ballina Corps in Northern NSW, had been struggling with broken relationships, drug and alcohol abuse and self-loathing for more than 20 years. She had been homeless with her children four times, suffered violent and emotionally abusive relationships and was self-harming, angry and desperate.

"I came to Ballina [in January 2012] because it was a safe place for me," Casandra explains. "My Grandma lived in [nearby] Wollongbar and we used to go there for holidays. I had come to Ballina when I was homeless and after relationship breakdowns. And it's been here that I've found Jesus, and healing."

Endless cycle

Tragically, Casandra suffered abuse from an early age. She was sexually assaulted from the age of two until she was 14. At 16, she started drinking to cope with the pain. Drug-taking soon followed.

"At 18, I moved to Canberra and was living in darkness until I was around 23," she says quietly. "I had my kids and they were the only thing that brought me life."

Casandra was determined to give up drugs and alcohol for her children. "I got clean when they were young but as they got older, I began again. It was an endless cycle going nowhere," she says.

"I was depressed and anxious and thought I was insane. I had lived a life of brokenness and somehow I just knew I had to get out."

Turning point

On 9 February 2012, just after moving to Ballina, Casandra went to the local Salvation Army corps for food assistance and beds for her children.

"From the second I came through this door I saw love," she says. "Love came to me through each person I met, though the coffee I drank, the food vouchers I was given; it was everywhere."

The corps officers at Ballina at the time, Captains Gai and Peer Cathcart, invited Casandra to church and she hasn't looked back.

"On 11 March I went to the Mercy Seat, fully surrendered to Jesus and instantly I could feel the difference," she shares.

"There is still hurting and pain, but the load just fell off me. Food even tasted different!"

Captain Grant Kingston-Kerr, Corps-Based Recovery Services Officer in the Northern NSW Division, referred Casandra to Heartfelt House in Wollongbar – a service that provides programs to adult survivors of sexual abuse.

These programs gave Casandra a new perspective on the abuse she had suffered and its effects on her life.

"I realised that the guilt, the depression and everything I was going through came from being a survivor of abuse," she says. "I knew I wasn't crazy and life started to look up."

"These are the moments that have changed my life and now I am daily surrendering to God, spending time with him, and am passionate about Jesus and all he has done."

Captains Cathcart enrolled Casandra as a senior soldier on 11 November 2012. "This was all about freedom, transformation and – the big one – a change of heart," she explains.

"The rock around my heart was still there, but God has healed that and moulded me into a better person so now I can help others.

"I always knew there was a God, and when I finally let him in, he transformed my life. It's about healing, restoration and peace, as the Bible says in Isaiah 57:18-19."

New life

In her role as the Doorways Program Coordinator, Casandra assesses clients who come to The Salvation Army for assistance and works with them to help rebuild their lives. "Just as it was done for me," she says simply.

Pub ministry is also a passion for Casandra.

"This is where I used to drink and be wild and now I am ministering to people on a Friday night," she says with obvious joy.

Casandra also feels called to become a Salvation Army officer and is hoping to one day attend Booth College.

"The corps officers in Ballina (Lieutenants Wes and Debbie Bust) have been my rocks and mentors helping me with this," she says. "It's all a journey and, right now, I want to work on my family and get that right and see where God leads me."

Resilience:

Taking the stress out of Christmas

Resilience is a vital key when it comes to more effectively facing challenging circumstances and handling stress. **LYN BEASY** shares some strategies for doing this, not just as Christmas approaches, but all year round

Every year, Christmas seems to come around sooner than the year before. It often leaves us feeling rushed, unprepared and juggling too many commitments. In the final weeks before Christmas Day we attempt to cram in end-of-year events, school graduations, family gatherings, Christmas shopping, carol services and house guests. I'm getting stressed just thinking about it!

The Christmas season also brings expectations, whether they be the expectations imposed by other people and situations, or expectations that we place upon ourselves. In a society that reflects a consumerist world view, we can get caught up in the commercialisation of Christmas. This is expressed in our gift purchases, decorating and even our Christmas table. Managing extra demands at this time of year requires a level of resilience to not only survive the festivities but also to have reserves to really enjoy all that it brings.

Mental toughness

Being resilient is having the ability to overcome, or bounce back from, difficult circumstances. It requires a level of mental toughness and stress tolerance. It doesn't mean we can avoid stress or difficulty, as we can't always plan or predict when we will experience stress, but it does help us minimise the effects of the situation, recover and get back to feeling our best self.

Everyone has a different level of stress tolerance. What is overwhelming for one person may not seem that difficult for another. The good news is that resilience can be developed at any time to help you increase your tolerance for stress and the ability to bounce back.

However, if you wait until you are overwhelmed with stress before you implement some strategies to do this,

it is much harder to see any real effect.

Resilient people

Generally, resilient people tend to have similar characteristics that help them overcome adversity. Being optimistic helps us recognise that, while things might be hard right now, they will improve.

Resilient people are flexible and adaptable, so they can adjust to change and move things around if something isn't working. Additionally, they tend to have good problem-solving skills and self-belief that they can rise above their circumstances.

Finally, and often most importantly, they tend to have good social skills and seek out support from others in times of difficulty. Relationships where there is mutual support, care and encouragement help boost a person's resilience.

In the lead-up to Christmas, consider giving yourself a gift by adopting some resilience-building strategies. Learning some key ways to become more resilient and less prone to stress will help us all year, not just over the coming holiday season. Keep an open mind and commit to practicing these strategies in order to develop better resilience.

Building resilience

One way to build your resilience is by getting a better perspective. When we are stressed, we often lose focus on what's really important and get caught up in the minor details. At Christmas time, these details can be in trivial things such as co-ordinating our wrapping paper and ribbons! If something doesn't match perfectly, who cares? How important will it really be in one, five or 20 years? Will people really remember the year you forgot the pudding?

In other words, put things in their right perspective and let small things go. If you tend to be someone for

whom perfectionism is a struggle, put effort into decreasing your effort and self-imposed demands, and watch if anyone notices a difference.

Additionally, we need to lighten up and see the funny side of situations. A sense of humour in difficult times is really helpful.

Recognise the signs of overload and implement some self-care techniques. These could include setting aside a few minutes each day for relaxation, stretching or getting outdoors and doing something enjoyable for yourself. Don't neglect your own needs.

Ask for help and if others are putting unrealistic expectations on you, be prepared to find your voice and express your needs. Offer an alternate solution. Maintain an optimistic outlook. The holiday season only lasts a few weeks, and once the busyness of December passes, look forward to doing some relaxing and fun things in January. Find ways to include family and time for you to unwind and recharge.

Sometimes our biggest stresses come from people closest to us, such as those who upset everyone around them, or when rifts between family members occur. When misunderstandings happen, try to reframe the meaning of what has happened. Consider a few different ways of looking at the situation. Instead of imagining the worst, think of a more palatable explanation that can help defuse hot feelings.

Affirming support

At the same time, it's important to maintain those social and family connections that provide support. Recognise those people that add to your life and include them in this time. A wonderful gift you can give each other is to affirm them for who they are, what they mean to you and how they add value to you. It's a

simple yet priceless gift in which you can both reap the rewards.

In our family, we have adopted a practice of setting aside a night to come together where each person shares the highlights of their year, things they are thankful for and a prayer request. It has become a special time of bonding and gratitude – another aspect of developing resilience.

Gratitude helps shift our perspective and prevents us becoming bitter, resentful or losing focus on what's important. Adopting an attitude of gratitude and making it a daily practice keeps our eyes fixed on the positive.

While becoming a more resilient person will help you manage your own stress levels, teaching your children resilience may be the best Christmas gift you can give them. When they see you managing your stress levels and developing resilience they are more likely to feel secure and confident. See the awe and wonder that is Christmas through your children's eyes. Take time to share the Christmas story with them and reignite the child within as you share with them the fun parts of the season. Listen to them and validate their feelings. Develop their strengths by engaging their help in the preparations and build their confidence by encouraging their efforts. Accept them for who they are, avoid constant fault-finding and see mistakes as an opportunity to learn.

Learning resilience is an ongoing process, but one worth investing in. It will equip you to navigate the difficult times and to recover to fully embrace all you have been created to be.



Lyn Beasy
Officer
Well-Being
Consultant

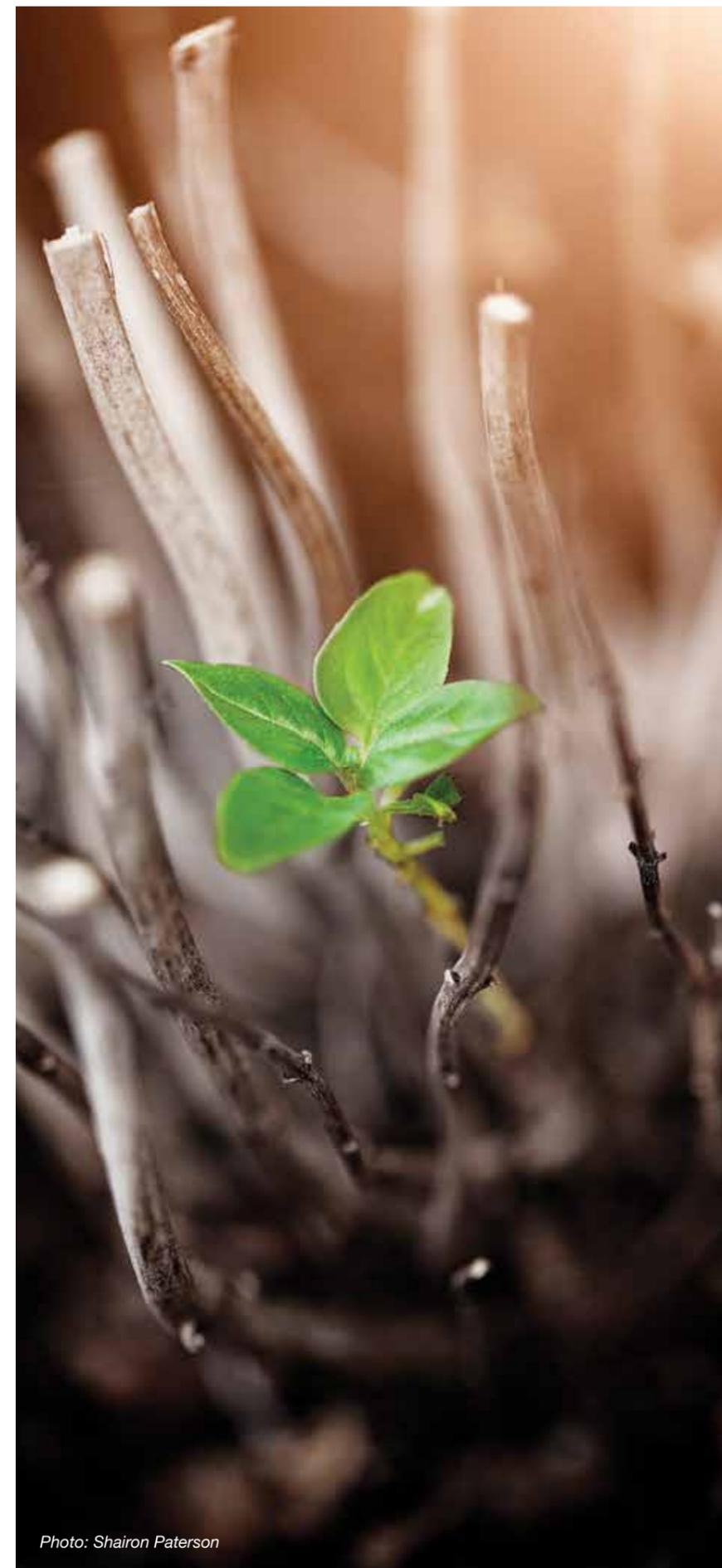


Photo: Shairon Paterson



The world was taken by surprise earlier this year when actor Robin Williams took his life after a long battle with depression.

With all the publicity surrounding the circumstances of his death, I found myself reflecting on my own journey with depression.

Depression is commonly known as the “Black Dog”. I named my black dog “Bramwell”.

Bramwell made an entrance into my life in my first year of officership – 2012. I was sent to be the Cassowary Coast Mission Director at Innisfail in Far North Queensland.

I ended up pretty isolated, not knowing anyone in a foreign place. I was an hour and a half drive from the closest Salvation Army corps. I was also grieving the loss of the community that I thrived in and loved (Officer Training College) and I was struggling in a role that I didn't feel equipped for. It was a very hard season of my life.

Unexpected reaction

I never thought I'd be the kind of person who would battle with depression. Those who know me well know that I'm a pretty happy, bubbly, optimistic, funny kind of girl – one who tries to see the bright side of life.

However, my circumstances in Innisfail started taking their toll on me in a way that I never expected. I found myself withdrawing from my support networks and struggling to articulate what was going on in my heart and mind.

I lost all hope that things would

get better. The lowest point came when, on one of my many long drives along the Bruce Highway, I thought to myself, “What would happen if my car just went off the road ... this pain and depression I'm feeling would just go away.”

It was at that point I knew I needed help and I reached out to an officer who I knew had her own journey and battle with depression.

I then went to see a general practitioner and was diagnosed with depression. The wheels were set in motion for an appointment change so I could be closer to support networks. This was not the end of Bramwell in my life, though. In fact, it was just the beginning.

Not a weakness

I hated the idea of being on medication, but my officer friend reassured me that it wasn't a sign of weakness. Two years later I'm still on medication – a much lower dose than at the beginning – and am also in the process of coming off it completely.

I no longer see taking medication as a “weakness”. God can work through medication and taking it doesn't reflect a lack of faith in God's ability to heal the wounds of a broken person.

The message is this – no-one is immune from the possibility of experiencing depression at some stage of their life.

It took a while for me to discover it, but there is hope. Bramwell can be silenced. There are still some days

when he whimpers and others when he barks loudly, but I now have ways of silencing him that I never had before.

I'm now in a season of my life that feels a long way from those days in Innisfail. I am married and we have a beautiful baby boy.

Amazing God

One thing has remained the same throughout all of this – my amazing God. He is the constant in all of the change. He is the rock when I felt I couldn't go on. He is the same today, yesterday and forever. God never promised me this life was going to be easy, but he promised that he would be with me always.

So today, if you find yourself in a dark place with your own black dog, I encourage you to reach out to someone and let them in to what you're experiencing. Life is better when we do it together; we weren't created to do life on our own. Don't be afraid to make an appointment with a doctor, talk through stuff and get the help you need.

Lieutenant Vanessa Hunt
Mission Director
Oasis Youth Network, Wyong

This is an edited version of the original blog that first appeared on 22 August, 2014 at thehappeningsofa20something.wordpress.com

If you, or someone you know needs help with depression, help is available at Salvo Care Line on 1300 36 36 22 or Lifeline on 13 11 14.

Finding refuge in Jesus

EVERYONE HAS A STORY ...

I am Krischelle. I am 19 years old. I come from the Philippines and I am a survivor of abuse.

I was born and grew up in Navotas City, Metro Manila. My family resides at our ancestral house which is divided into seven rooms. Seven families live there.

I have a simple and happy family. We have harmonious relationships. My father is a fisherman and my mother takes in extra work washing and ironing clothes. I have two sisters and one brother. I am the eldest.

My parents work hard just for us to attend school. My siblings and I were sent regularly to a public school. To help my parents and earn additional money for schooling, I used to assist in our neighbour's video-game cafe after school. I also helped my mother sell the fish my father caught, as well as my grandmother's “suman” rice cakes.

Escaping abuse

My friends had a big influence on me from a young age and I learned to smoke, drink and use profane language. I joined a sorority and got involved in risky activities.

My parents had no idea what I was doing. I wasn't a Christian then and would only go to church if my mother told me to go to Sunday school.

I do believe, though, that my negative behaviour was a result of the abuse I had been experiencing from my parents' employer at that time.

My bad behaviour was my way of escaping the abuse, or at least

forgetting it for a while. It didn't have the courage to tell my parents or share it with anyone, as I was so young. I was also worried that if I told my parents, their employer would fire them. How then would my family survive?

Encountering God

One day, a high-school friend invited me to attend a young people's fellowship in their church and we had a group study about the Word of God. This was the beginning of my curiosity about God and led me to have the courage to tell my parents about the abuse.

For safety reasons, in October 2009, I was removed from the community and placed in a drop-in centre. In November, I was transferred to The Salvation Army's Bethany Girls Home – a safe place for healing and rehabilitation for girls who have been sexually abused. I was only 14 years old at that time, full of anger and in bondage to emotional baggage. I was even questioning my existence on earth, asking, “Of all people, why me?”

As the days went by I slowly began to open up, little by little. I am so thankful that I was surrounded by people who have a deep relationship with God. The Salvation Army Bethany Girls Home didn't just serve as my temporary shelter – it enabled me to unlock my anger and released me from bondage. Most importantly, it helped me to reconnect to Jesus, the giver of life.

Knowing Jesus and having him

“KNOWING JESUS AND HAVING HIM IN MY LIFE HAS HELPED ME TO BECOME A HEALTHY SURVIVOR OF ABUSE”

in my life has helped me to become a healthy survivor of abuse. I threw away the bad vices and I stopped uttering bad words. Instead, I spread the Word of God.

Never give up

I am still at Bethany, courageously facing the battle for justice and am a third-year college student. I am studying to be a teacher, with the help of The Salvation Army Waverley Temple Band in the Australia Southern Territory.

I am also a soldier of Quezon City #2 Corps, a proud Salvationist and active in the corps.

The first Bible verse I memorised is 1 Corinthians 10:13 and my favourite verse is Jeremiah 29:11. I know God has a perfect plan for me, for all of us. The hardest part of my journey is being away from my family, but what keeps me going is believing in God's promises and his plans for me.

So, never give up! Keep going. God loves you as he loves me.

Krischelle
Quezon City #2 Corps
Philippines Territory

Find Your MINISTRY

'Tis the season to show love



Photos: Shairon Paterson

It's the little things that make the difference. Your ministry doesn't have to be an extravagant campaign that changes hundreds of lives this Christmas. Just impact one person at a time through simple acts of kindness.

Surprise someone with a gift. Is there someone in your life you would like to bless this Christmas? This individual might not be on your usual gift list but a small gift can bring joy to someone who might be feeling low.

Visit the elderly. When was the last time you visited your grandparents? Is there an elderly person at your church who is lonely? Or do you know someone living in a nursing home? Take the time to show an elderly person you care for them this Christmas.

Use your words. Write an encouraging card to a friend. Tell them how much you appreciate them. Include a Bible verse or remind them of God's gift of love to us – Jesus.

Share the message of Jesus. Christmas is an opportunity to talk about Jesus. It's a conversation starter and an easier time of year to slip the meaning of Christmas into regular conversation.

Pray for someone. Take this opportunity to pray for someone who might not be experiencing joy this Christmas.

Sponsor a gift. Bring joy to the less fortunate with the simple act of giving a gift. Bring a smile to a boy or girl in Australia through the Kmart Wishing Tree appeal.

Go to wishingtree.kmart.com.au for more information. Or help a community overseas by purchasing a goat or water pump. Go to salvos.org.au/said

A picture-perfect Christmas?

What memories come to mind when you think of Christmas? Are they positive or negative?

On the surface, Christmas appears sparkly but, when you look a little closer, for many people it isn't always glamorous.

Do you have a friend who has no-one to spend Christmas with? How about a family who can't afford to buy presents this year? Do you know someone who splits Christmas Day between two parents? Are any of these you?

There are many picture-perfect images of the day Jesus was born. While the birth of Jesus was a joyful moment, it wasn't picture perfect.

Firstly, Mary would have been publicly disgraced for being pregnant outside of marriage. Although Mary's pregnancy was a miracle, there would have been people who might have doubted she was a virgin.

Secondly, Mary didn't give birth in a hospital – she gave birth in a barn. There weren't any medical professionals to help her, instead she was surrounded by

animals – not a sterile environment.

Lastly, not long after Jesus was born, Mary, her husband Joseph and Jesus went into hiding. They were being hunted by King Herod who wanted to kill Jesus.

While Jesus' birth is one of the most celebrated days in history, it was not picture perfect. Yet Jesus is the perfect gift – then and now.

No matter what circumstance you are facing this festive season, Jesus can turn sadness into joy. Sent to earth to live as we do, Jesus experienced the same temptation, pain and joy we experience daily. He can personally understand the hardships we face.

May you find joy by turning your eyes upon Jesus this Christmas.



Esther Pinn
Journalist, Pipeline and
supplements



YoungWIT Psalm 119:105: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (New Life Version).
#Christmas #joy #gift-of-Jesus

Reviews

MAGAZINE REVIEW

The A21 campaign

Human trafficking is an issue we may know about but it may not impact our lives on a daily basis. The sad reality is that human trafficking is affecting individuals across the world, even locally in Australia. According to The A21 Campaign website, more than 27 million people are living as slaves worldwide and less than two percent of victims are rescued.

The A21 Campaign exists to abolish injustice in the 21st century. A large percentage of its work is devoted to freeing individuals from human trafficking. The campaign was founded by Christine Caine, well-known for her ministry at Hillsong.

And it's a campaign you can get involved with. The A21 campaign's blog is filled with regular posts on how to take part in this campaign and make a difference wherever you are in the world. It's not simply a blog that discusses the issue of human trafficking. This blog offers practical ways to help implement change.

One recent post shared 21 practical tips on how to take action against human trafficking and there are regular posts about practical worldwide initiatives to get involved with.

There are many posts that share sad stories of individuals who have been trafficked and how they have found help through the A21 Campaign.

The blog offers a curriculum pack, *Bodies Are Not Commodities*, that can be purchased for the purpose of education. There are also tips on how to use social media as a medium for change. A prayer guide filled with prayer points centred on human trafficking is available to download from the blog.

If you are looking to be inspired and take action against human trafficking, then the A21 Campaign blog is for you.

Go to www.thea21campaign.org for more information about the campaign and to read their blog.



MUSIC REVIEW

When Christmas Comes – Kim Walker-Smith

Christmas is just around the corner, so if you're looking to add to your Christmas music collection, check out Kim Walker-Smith's festive album, *When Christmas Comes*.

Best known as a worship leader of renowned worship band, Jesus Culture, Kim releases her first Christmas album with a fresh take on this season's classics.

Kim's strong and powerful voice, for which she is well known, helps give these classics a fresh sound. Along with her voice, the musical arrangements, acoustic styling, orchestral sound and even the occasional blues flavour, add a new level to these songs.

Many traditional carols such as *Silent Night*, *O Holy Night* and *The First Noel*, are included in Kim's song selection.

The album also consists of some non-traditional Christian Christmas songs including *Let it Snow*, *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas* and *It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas*.

Tell me the story of Jesus is a short opener but has powerful lyrics that gets to the heart of what Christmas is all about – Jesus.

Kim stays true to her worship style – often involving spontaneous worship, deviating away from the written lyrics. In *O Come All Ye Faithful*, mid-song she sings out freely, "We adore you God" to a new melody.

Christmas carols wouldn't sound right if they weren't filtered with harmonies. Throughout the album, Kim replicates this festive tradition with sweet harmonies in many of the traditional carols.

When Christmas Comes can be purchased for \$14.99 at Word. Go to www.word.com



WIN A COPY OF THIS CD!

Simply send your name and email address to simone.worthing@ae.salvationarmy.org for a chance to win our giveaway copy of *When Christmas Comes*

CONGRATULATIONS TO DAPHNE CLARKE WHO HAS WON OUR GIVEAWAY COPY OF LAST ISSUE'S CD NO OTHER NAME BY HILLSONG.

REACHING OUT TO TANZANIA

Throughout the year, women, and men, have gathered in corps, centres and communities around the territory to raise money for the Women's Ministries project for 2014 – training and equipping women in Tanzania. As a result of funds raised:

- 50 rural women will be trained in midwifery and equipped with basic medical kits;
- 35 women will attend sewing classes and given the opportunity to build a sewing business and establish independence;
- Over 1,000 Bibles will be sent to young women's fellowship groups throughout the Tanzania Territory.

Below is a small sample of the fundraising efforts from some corps and centres and the commitment shown around the territory to help empower women in this developing African nation. Several divisions also held fundraising activities at their retreats and Refresh weekends.

ACT and South NSW Division

The **Cooma Corps** held a fete, just outside the Family Store in the main street of town, to raise funds for women in rural Tanzania.

Volunteers from Home League and the corps sold craft, cakes, biscuits and pot plants at the stall; Captain Louise Nicholson, the Cooma Corps Officer, sold Christian cards and resources; Emergency Services Co-ordinator George Bowden set up the Emergency Services trailer and sold sausage sandwiches, training volunteers in the process; and Jane Fergusson, Salvation Army volunteer and employee, donated bags of sheep manure which sold out on the day.

"Our Home League secretary, Nancy Bowden, had prepared dozens of pot plants and her husband George, a knitter, had knitted blankets and socks for the craft stall," said Captain Nicholson.

"On the morning of the stall, the Family Store traded \$900 worth of goods, and we made \$1005.

"We have a small congregation and Home League, but the town is very generous and supportive of our programs and projects," explained Captain Nicholson.

"We put up posters advertising the Tanzania project, and people see that we are adding value to people's lives and up skilling them, not just giving handouts.

"The people may not know Jesus yet, but they support our mission and we hope we can take them to the next level.

"My parish is the whole community, not just the people sitting in church."

Greater West Division

The **Granville Corps** invited surrounding corps and local churches to a missionary morning set aside to raise funds for Tanzania.

More than 70 people attended the morning which included a jumble sale, bake sale and guest speaker.

Major Karan Ross, Salvos Women/ Salvos Caring Associate Co-ordinator and delegate on the August Salvos mission trip to Tanzania, was guest speaker.

"Every year I read about the Women's Ministries project, look at the DVD and then wait for God to show me the right person to invite as guest speaker," said Lieutenant Pat Cory, Granville Corps Officer. "This year I saw Major Ross at the divisional Refresh day and knew she was the right person."

For something fun, and to raise awareness of the midwifery and sewing elements of the project, those attending the morning were divided into teams and asked to make, and model, an outfit made from newspaper.

"This was so much fun," said Lieutenant Cory.

Major Ross judged the newspaper creations, before speaking about her experiences in Tanzania and The Salvation Army's work there.

A special missionary offering was part of the morning.

"We try to make it a fun morning, to get everyone involved and enjoying themselves, and to get serious about fundraising," said Lieutenant Cory.

"We were delighted with the \$930 raised. We do what we can for a great cause and everyone is always so generous."



Sydney East and Illawarra Division

Lieutenant-Colonel Jan Laws, Divisional Director of Women's Ministries, welcomed women from around the division as they gathered at **Campsie Corps** for a celebration with the theme "Women empowering women".

"The purpose of the morning was for corps and centres to celebrate God's goodness and provision and to have opportunity to present the funds they had raised for the Territorial

ABOVE Jane Fergusson, Salvation Army volunteer and local farmer, donated bags of sheep manure which sold out on the day. Photo courtesy Cooma-Monaro Express

Women's Ministries project in Tanzania," said Lieutenant-Colonel Laws.

Lieutenant-Colonel Simone Robertson, Territorial Salvos Women and Salvos Caring Co-ordinator, spoke about the recent Salvos Women mission trip to Tanzania she had led, and shared stories of the women they had met.

At the closing of the morning, many generous gifts were presented to help empower the rural women of Tanzania through the territorial project. The division raised a total of \$19,281 for the project.

The ladies from the **Menai Corps** Coffee Spot held a weekend celebration craft show which attracted more than 80 visitors over the three days.

Visitors paid a gold coin entrance fee and were also able to purchase goods from the cake stall or the Devonshire tea or cappuccinos stand.

The ladies raised just over \$1139 for the Tanzania project. This was added to the \$250 raised from a card making day, as well as other donations, bringing the total to a generous \$1648.

South Queensland Division

More than 120 women and men from around the Kalbar and Boonah area attended the **Fassifern Corps** missionary morning on 23 October. These included people from local churches, community groups such as the Red Cross, Fassifern Home League and Silver Threads members, and visitors from Home Leagues in nearby Bundamba, Warwick and Ipswich.

Lieutenant Sue McIver, Fassifern corps officer, began the morning playing the DVD on the Women's Ministries project. "I wanted everyone to know from the beginning what we were here for and where the money was going," Lieut McIver said.

A small charge was made for a two-course lunch, and a trading table sold baked goods, pot plants and craft items.

Lieutenant-Colonel Don Woodland (ret.) was guest speaker for the morning. He spoke about his years of service as a Salvation Army officer, specifically his role as a chaplain at some of Australia's worst tragedies.

The local "Gaslight Singers" choir sang during the morning's activities.

"I was happy with the numbers and we raised \$1500 which is not bad for a little country town!" said Lieut McIver.



ABOVE (FROM TOP): Campsie Corps hosted a divisional celebration to present funds raised for Tanzania. From left to right; Lieutenant-Colonel Simone Robertson, Major Gweneth Woodbury, Captain Gai Cathcart; Guests at the Granville Corps made fun "clothing" creations from newspaper to raise awareness of the sewing elements of the Tanzania project; Fassifern Corps focused on African-themed décor for their missionary morning fundraiser.

RETREAT FOCUSES ON GOD'S GIFT OF GRACE

Sydney East and Illawarra Division

Women from the Sydney East and Illawarra Division recently met at The Collaroy Centre on Sydney's northern beaches for a divisional retreat focusing on God's gift of grace.

Lieutenant-Colonel Simone Robertson, Territorial Salvos Women and Salvos Caring Co-ordinator, led several sessions around the theme.

Two sessions designed to equip the women to disciple other women also featured at the retreat. Captain Louanne Mitchell, Manly Corps Officer, led the session "Sharing our faith", and Lieut-Colonel Simone led "Creative Salvos Women".

Majors Bruce and Glenys Domrow, Campsie Corps Officers, led a fun auction night, raising \$1200 for the Territorial Women's Ministries project in Tanzania.



LEFT: Lieutenant-Colonel Simone Robertson spoke on God's gift of grace at the divisional retreat.

EMBRACING THE JOURNEY OF GRACE

Central and North Queensland Division

The picturesque shores of Lake Tinaroo on the Atherton Tablelands set the scene for the recent divisional "Refresh" weekend for women from corps and centres north of Bowen.

Major Susanne Cox, Campbelltown Corps Officer, was the guest speaker.

"The theme taken for this year's women's events is 'Women of Grace ... Embracing the Journey', explained Major Cheralynne Pethybridge, Divisional Director of Women's Ministries. "Major Susanne Cox focused on three aspects of this: the grace-shaped life; the grace-shaped heart; and the grace-shaped future."

Major Beth Twivey, Townsville Riverway Recovery Mission team leader, guided the women through a session aimed at helping them recognise their personality types and how this can assist them in life's journey. This was enhanced by devotional material and a prayer walk led by Major Lynn Whittaker, Divisional Spiritual Life Development officer.

On Saturday night, the women shared around a bonfire on the lake shore.

"A tradition incorporated into women's retreats in the division is a silent auction, the proceeds of which go to the Territorial Women's Ministries project," said Major Pethybridge. "This auction is always a success, despite the laughter that goes with it!"

Commissioner Jan Condon, Territorial President of Women's Ministries, was guest speaker for the "southern" divisional women's retreat at Emu Park.

Women from Mackay to Bundaberg and west to Longreach attended.

"Focusing on the divisional theme, Commissioner Condon took as her topics 'An Inconvenient Journey' (Luke 2: 1-7), 'A Challenging Journey' (Luke 10:30-37), and 'An Unwanted Journey' (John 4:1-14)," said Major Pethybridge. "The Commissioner concluded the weekend by saying that we should be on a 'Journey of Purpose' – our story should be changing the lives of those we interact with.

"The women were deeply challenged and encouraged by her messages."

A fun-filled silent auction on the Saturday afternoon raised over \$1100 towards the Territorial Women's Ministries project. The fun continued into the evening with Captain Gaye Day, Emerald Corps Officer, leading some line dancing.

Major Pethybridge concluded the evening with devotions, focusing on the need to embrace our journeys, trusting in God and growing in grace.



TOP: Ladies from the "north" enjoyed sharing around the fire on the Saturday night of the divisional Refresh weekend;



BOTTOM: Décor for the Refresh weekend in the "south" reflected the 2014 women's events divisional theme "Women of grace ... embracing the journey".

WEEKEND OF SPIRITUAL REFRESHMENT

ACT and South NSW Division

More than 65 ladies gathered at Batemans Bay in August for "Refresh" – a weekend of physical and spiritual rejuvenation and refreshment. Guest speaker was Major San Holland, Ryde Corps Officer, who spoke on the theme of "Grace from the beginning".

While Major Holland captured everyone's attention through her words, Dianne Mortimer, from Tuggeranong Corps, helped bring meaning to the words through her painting during each session.

"When opportunity was given to stand or sit in the river that flowed from the cross, many did so, experiencing the peace and calm that comes when we put everything aside to focus on Jesus," said Major Karen Masters, Divisional Salvos Women Co-ordinator.

The Saturday night was an evening of fun and laughter. The ladies came dressed in recycled clothes and enjoyed playing games, being creative and making new friends.



ABOVE: Major San Holland's messages on "Grace from the beginning", challenged and inspired the delegates.

SALVOS SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN WORK

Australia Eastern and Southern Territories

Salvation Army delegates from Australian Church Women Inc. (ACW) joined those from around Australasia at the Quadrennial Assembly of the Asian Church Women's Conference (ACWC) in the Philippines from 8-13 October.

The ACW is one of 19 members of the ACWC.

The ACWC General Assembly is hosted in a different member country every four years and includes business sessions, worship, Bible studies, testimonies, a young women's forum and cultural events.

The Salvationist delegates were: Major Donna Bryan, Mission Resources Officer from the Australia Southern Territory who is concluding four years as President of the ACWC; voting delegate Pamela Freeman from Parramatta Corps; voting delegate Reiko Koyano from Japan and her translator Captain Melissa Templeman Twells, reinforcement officer from the Australia Southern Territory; and Major Susan Cenerico from the Philippines.

"The theme for the ACWC Assembly was 'United in Christ, we build a life-giving world'," said Mrs Freeman, who has been part of the ACW NSW Unit Council for 10 years.

Other Salvationists serving in the NSW Unit of ACW Inc. include Major Lyn Middleton (ret.), who is the ACW National President; Lieutenant Pat Cory, Granville Corps Officer; Major Lillian Hodges, NSW retired officers' chaplain; Mrs Lorraine Hughes from Blacktown Corps; Mrs Joy Inglis from Campsie Corps and Major Beatrice Kay, Tuggerah Lakes associate officer. Major Mel Stephens (ret.) is the President of ACW in Queensland. Major Nancy McLaren, who has been involved with ACW since 2001, is an associate member and member of the National ACW Committee. Major McLaren also served as president of the NSW State Unit for two years.

"Women's Ministries supports the involvement of these women in ACW Inc. as they represent The Salvation Army," said Commissioner Jan Condon, Territorial President of Women's Ministries.

Australian Church Women

The ecumenical ACW Inc. works through local churches and, among its many activities, fundraises to provide tertiary

scholarships throughout Australasia to young women already involved in ministry.

In August, representatives from some of the 19 member countries of the ACWC, gathered at a praise and worship concert at the Epping Baptist Church, with offerings given directed to the work of the ACWC. The Sydney Salvation Army Korean band played at the concert.

In October, ACW groups held their national annual World Community Day. "Offerings made on this day are divided equally between the ACWC and a special project nominated by ACW Inc," said Major Bryan.

"At the World Community Day service, the Fellowship of the Least Coin [FLC] offerings gathered throughout the year are also presented for dedication."

Fellowship of the Least Coin

Major Lillian Hodges is the Australian National Convenor of the FLC.

The FLC is a worldwide ecumenical movement of prayer for justice, peace and reconciliation. The "least coins" are offered by members when they pray to help support projects all over the world, including Australia.

For more information about ACW go to www.acw.org.au. If you would like to become involved with the ACW or FLC in NSW, please contact Major Lillian Hodges at lillian.hodges@ae.salvationarmy.org

BELOW: ACWC delegates from around the world gathered for the quadrennial assembly in the Philippines from 8-13 October.





"It's wonderful
what happens when
Christ displaces
worry at the centre
of your life."

Philippians 4:7
The Message

Photo: Shairon Paterson