In touch

LITTLE THINGS CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

IMMEASURABLY MORE – OR LESS?
IN HIS TIME . . .
PERFECTLY ME!
NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH
A MOTHER’S WISDOM
team talk
From the desk of the Women's Ministries Department

What difference are you making?
In recent months I have had to think about my own life and consider what impact my life has had over the years. I am sure we all want to make a difference in the lives of others with whom we come in contact.

What are you doing today to invest in the lives of other women and make a difference for God and for good?
What seeds are you planting today that will reap a harvest for good in the future?

I read the story of a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who was soon to retire and who devised an unusual method to appoint his successor. He decided to give each of his executives a special seed and asked them to take it home and plant it, water it and tend it and bring it back in a year’s time.

Each executive did that and everyone, except for old Jim, returned with healthy looking plants in their pots. Of course, when Jim saw the other plants, he began to think that he had received a bad deal and had failed.

However, when the CEO called them all together he said, “One year ago today, I gave everyone in this room a seed. I told you to take the seed, plant it, water it, and bring it back to me today.”

He went on to say that he had placed all the seeds in boiling water before he handed them out – they were dead and it was impossible to grow anything from the dead seeds.

The CEO said: “Everyone except Jim has brought me trees and plants and flowers. When you found that the seed would not grow, you substituted another seed for the one I gave you. Jim was the only one with the courage and honesty to bring me a pot with my seed in it. Therefore, he is the one who will be the new Chief Executive Officer!”

Of course, all the executives were greatly shocked and surprised – but you reap what you sown.

You have probably heard these wise words:
• If you plant honesty, you will reap trust
• If you plant goodness, you will reap friends
• If you plant humility, you will reap greatness
• If you plant perseverance, you will reap contentment
• If you plant consideration, you will reap perspective
• If you plant hard work, you will reap success
• If you plant forgiveness, you will reap reconciliation.

What an important lesson for us all to remember. What we plant into our own life and the lives of others now is so important because that determines what we will reap later on.

It does not always have to be great things we do or say; even the smallest of things can make a huge difference to someone’s life. I have found people absolutely amazed and appreciative when I have remembered their name, or when I have taken time to talk with them, or enquired about their children or prayed with them. Small things – yes – but they make a difference.

What difference are you making? Look for “healthy seeds” to plant each day and you will enjoy the harvest.

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about this issue
from the editor’s desk

The internationally renowned priest and author Henri Nouwen said: “Sometimes we are called to do great acts of kindness or make great sacrifices. But this is seldom normal. Usually we have the opportunity for many small acts of love and service and are called to make many small sacrifices. The significance and power of these cannot be underestimated.”

Little things indeed, do make a huge difference in our lives. As a receiver they can change our mood, give us a fresh perspective on a particular issue or incident, encourage us, give us hope, and even lead us to life changing decisions.

As a giver, they can also do all of the above, as well as develop in us a way of thinking, responding and being that is focused on caring, loving and sensitivity to the needs of others. If we are faithful in these “little” areas, God can teach us to be faithful in the “large” issues and circumstances of life.

In this issue we feature short stories from around Australia, and beyond, from people who have been impacted by the seemingly small. Through simple acts of love and kindness, people’s lives have been touched and impacted in a variety of ways.

We continue this theme of “small things” with Anne Halliday’s story on Fairtrade, Major Jo-Anne Brown’s feature on how God uses the seemingly insignificant to transform lives and relationships, and Lieutenant Vanessa Kohler’s reflection on simple ways to change the life of a child.

In her refreshingly open testimony, Captain Jo Chant shares her life journey with us, focusing on how God has given her peace with her past and the strength and courage to follow him now and into the future.

For our younger readers we follow the story of Brittany Klee, review a couple of blogs and also take a look at the United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals.

Learn more about two new leaders in the Women’s Ministries department in our news section, and see what has been happening in Women’s Ministries events around the territory.

From the team at Women in Touch, we hope you enjoy this issue and find a message of practical help, hope and encouragement within its pages.

Simone Worthing
Editor
LITTLE THINGS MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

WOMEN (AND MEN) FROM AROUND THE WORLD SHARE WAYS IN WHICH A SEEMINGLY SMALL WORD OR ACT HAS MADE A LASTING IMPACT IN THEIR LIVES.

LIGHTING THE DARKNESS

For the past year Len Matthews and Major John Hindle, both prison chaplains, have spent one day a week together visiting a men’s prison, including the locked units that house high profile prisoners and a number of sex offenders.

“One of the most powerful moments of my time in this role was last Christmas,” says Len, who also manages Salvo Care Line Brisbane.

“The Salvation Army has a little gift pack they give every prisoner – a hanky, pair of socks, a bag of lollies, a gift pack they give every prisoner – a Christmas,” says Len, who also manages Salvo Care Line Brisbane.

“We visited a secure unit … which was surrounded by all that deep snow. I could hear a train approaching her station she got up to leave, but seemed to linger near my seat. As she walked away I heard her say to whoever she was still chatting with. “This has just made my day! The lady opposite me was reading a Bible. A teenager was sitting opposite me, talking loudly on her mobile phone and glancing at me from time to time. As the train approached her station she got up to leave, but seemed to linger near my seat. As she walked away I heard her say to whoever she was still chatting with. “This has just made my day! The lady opposite me was reading a Bible.”

“I didn’t think people even believed in God anymore. How cool is that. Maybe everything will be okay after all!”

SMALL ENCOURAGEMENT

When I was a new mum (many years ago), I was far away from family support. My baby was very young and sick and I had no idea how to give medicine. When I arrived home after ministering at home league, at my door I found a special medicine spoon. One of my soldiers gone to the chemist and purchased it for me. I was so grateful for this kindness.

I have always remembered Corps Sergeant Major Ewelyn Hopper at Inverell. Every Sunday night after the meeting, he would pack up my Bible and other things, place them all in my briefcase, and carry it and one of my sleeping children to the car at the end of another busy Sunday.

Simple actions but long remembered.

Major Isabel M Beckett Education Officer School for Officer Training Latvia

SIMPLE REMINDERS

A fast reading Sacred Chaos by Tricia Rhodes, I was challenged about how I could observe God more in the every day.

One suggestion in the book was to leave “post it” notes around with encouraging scriptures written on them. However, I opted for a more modern approach. I have set a reminder alarm at 10am, 2pm and 8pm each day that asks me to:

• Reflect that God is always present
• Silently acknowledge that God is always present
• Thank him for his presence
• Ask myself, “What does this mean to me right now?”
• Ask God, “Where do I need wisdom right now?”
• Listen.

This has become something I look forward to. As a manager of a crisis accommodation service, we are often dealing with difficult and traumatic situations. Knowing that the presence of God is always with me brings great comfort and increases my faith.

Captain Merisa Holland Manager Glenhaven Crisis Accommodation

SMALL MIRACLES

The free dental scheme, organised by The Salvation Army in the ACT, has had remarkable spin-offs in the lives of many people, including one young woman we shall call Der. Der and her husband were both known to me as addicts.

Der had only two or three teeth, like pegs, and a couple of stumps. She was very self-conscious of her appearance and held her hand in front of her face when she spoke. I have seen her recently and she is clean, well presented and looking very fit. Der is quite obviously drug free, is self-confident and no longer holds her hand in front of her face when she speaks. Her husband too is clean, looking fit, self-confident and no longer holds her hand in front of her face when speaking. Her husband and Der both are often dressed in gym gear.

I have also seen their young children who are well dressed and sparkling.

I believe the restoration of Der’s teeth through the Salvo free dental scheme has worked a small miracle with this family.

This is one of the best outcomes I have seen in programs operating at the Dickson Community Centre over the 15 years I have been a volunteer counsellor there. Well done to all the participants in this great scheme. I hope it can continue!

John Wilkinson, Vice President Mental Health Community Coalition ACT

SMALL AND PERSONAL

Coromatunga, Shollavans and Northside Corps collect and donate bras to women in Fiji living in rural and remote areas. These ladies live in villages, usually without running water or electricity, and cannot afford “luxury” items such as bras.

The bras are distributed through Ellana, an Australian who lives in Suva, and the “Uplift Fiji” bra appeal. Over 1950 bras have been distributed so far.

“Each and every woman I have met who has received a bra has been so grateful for the ‘sisters’ who care enough to share with them,” Ellana says.

“The oldest lady we have helped is 92, and she has only ever had four bras in her life. The youngest girl is 11.

“It has been one of my life’s many blessings to be involved in a project that helps fellow women, one that brings much happiness and one that shows such compassion. Thank you all so much for your kind support of uplift Fiji!”

If you are interested in donating new, or second hand bras in near-new condition, please contact Lindy Chalmers at lindychalmers@bigpond.com

ACT & South NSW Division

EVERYTHING WILL BE OKAY

I was sitting on the train, reading my Bible. A teenager was sitting opposite me, talking loudly on her mobile phone and glancing at me from time to time. As the train approached her station she got up to leave, but seemed to linger near my seat. As she walked away I heard her say to whoever she was still chatting with. “This has just made my day! The lady opposite me was reading a Bible. Wow, I didn’t think people even believed in God anymore. How cool is that. Maybe everything will be okay after all!”

Gold Coast

Small and personal

“Never get tired of doing little things for others; sometimes those little things occupy the biggest parts of their hearts.”

Unknown

Simple encouragement
A CHRISTMAS GIFT

A six-year-old boy, Kevin huddled with his mother and siblings in an old meat freezer as Cyclone Tracey ripped through Darwin on Christmas Eve, 1974.

The next day Kevin and his family were evacuated and flown to Brisbane. He was very upset that all their Christmas presents had been lost and there had been no Christmas celebrations.

When he and his family went to the nearby Salvation Army warehouse to get some blankets, a “Salvo man” in uniform took Kevin’s hand and showed him a room full of toys.

“He told me that whatever I could carry out was mine!” Kevin recalls.

“That stuck with me and I have never forgotten it. Every time I see the Salvos, like in the pubs, I always make a donation.”

Kevin, who works for Cutting Force, one of Australia’s most respected providers of concrete cutting, coring, drilling and sawing services, has also been instrumental in the pro bono work done by the company at Brisbane Streetlevel Mission.

“We have also helped one client from Streetlevel get a job, and would like to continue to help in the future,” Kevin says.

“I want to help The Salvation Army wherever I can.”

Brisbane

LAUGHTER, THE BEST MEDICINE

During the Unleashed Youth Conference on the Gold Coast last year, several delegates played soccer, table tennis and other games with some of the children whose mums were living in the Still Waters Crisis Accommodation facility.

“The children thoroughly enjoyed the time and were laughing, playing and just having fun.”

“It was in shock, it was the first time I had heard the children laughing like that for such a long time,” said one of the mums. “To see their smiles and the joy on their faces was priceless. You have given them so much!”

Gold Coast

GENUINE ACKNOWLEDGMENT

A young girl came to the corps recently, with her dad. They had ridden their bikes here to donate $8.35 for “children that are in need” as the little eight-year-old told me. Unknown to her parents, she was selling apples to her tree to the people next door, and to family members, to raise this money. She wrote out her very own receipt for her to take home and show her mum. She was so stoked!

Major Jo-Anne Brown
Calamvale Corps Officer

ONE DECISION MAKES GLOBAL IMPACT

On Freedom Sunday in February, I spoke at Cessnock Corps about the issues of human trafficking and fair trade. As a late afternoon I have been advocating about for years, as well as something I now do as part of my job. I was really excited to have the opportunity to speak about something I am so passionate about. What was most encouraging for me was that two women came to speak to me after the service. They had not realised that slavery is so widespread and prevalent in today’s world, or that most tea, coffee and cocoa is harvested on slave plantations. Upon hearing this, they had both decided to change their buying practices to support ethical trade practices and help fight against slavery. Even two women changing to fairtrade tea, coffee and chocolate, and encouraging others they know to do the same, is not just a decision that will impact their lives but it will have a global impact and change many lives. For me, their decision was more than I could have hoped for that Sunday.

Talitha Haggar
Social Justice Project Assistant
THQ Social Justice

A MOST PRECIOUS GIFT

Last year was really rough for me. I went through a few days without time with God – sort of a retreat. I have a friend who had gently just been there for me and was upholding me in prayer during those days. After I returned home I went to a nearby Salvation Army women’s “Coffee & Chat” and my husband rang me to say I had flowers delivered but he didn’t know from whom. They were from my friend and the little card with them said “For all that you have been, I love you. For all that you are, I love you. For all that you are becoming, I love you. Go gently my friend.” Her love and tenderness made me feel like the most precious person, and I love her and thank her for that gift.

Queensland

A SIMPLE CUP OF COFFEE

I asked a lady to have coffee with me who had been coming to our church for about a year. She seemed lonely and still fairly disconnected with our church, and I thought that I would spend some time with her and hopefully connect her with some other women in our church. To my surprise the end of our time together she told me she had moved to Sydney about 12 years ago from a really good network of friends, but since moving all that time ago she had not made friends or developed a social network.

She stopped me and said, “Chery, I have been praying that God would send a friend, someone who would ask me out to coffee and just sit and listen to me and we could do life together.”

A couple of months later God laid another woman on my heart who was a refugee from the Congo. She had an incredible conversion to Christianity from Islam not long after she moved to Australia, and is an incredible woman of faith who is influencing young people and other women to a deeper faith in Jesus.

We were talking and she shared that, 18 months earlier, she had commenced praying to God about how she could use her. God showed her that she could be the woman to unite all the women from all the different nations and cultures within the church and help them make a difference for God in our local community. She had been praying for 18 months that God would bring this to fruition.

Doing something small like taking someone to coffee, listening to their story, reading God’s Word and praying with them is part of God’s plan for me and her ability to speak out in support was a real example. Such a small gesture, but she showed me that while it is easy to think of myself, it takes courage to support others directly. All it takes is one small phone call.

Australian Capital Territory

JUST A PHONE CALL AWAY

When I was at university, an elderly lady in the corps who I had assumed was very traditional and uptight rang me. She told me that having seen me on Sunday she felt she needed to tell me that I didn’t need to worry because the corps would support me no matter what.

I was confused. Had God given her a vision about some trouble in my future? So I enquired further, saying, “I’m sorry, but I’m not sure what you’re talking about.” Her response? “The baby dear, being so young, it will be hard, but we are all here to support you.”

I had to tell her that I wasn’t pregnant, (and of course, she was horrified at her mistake) but that I was delighted to know that I would be supported no matter my circumstances, even by those that I considered traditional and who I expected would have been critical of such an event at my young age.

This goes to show that you can’t judge a book by its cover, and to this day I treasure the knowledge that my corps family will stand by me, no matter what.

I tell this story often as an example of Christian love.

I’ve tried to adopt the same attitude of encouraging others without being asked and trying hard to support those who might need it, no matter what situation they are in. Who am I to judge?

This lady’s faith in God’s plan for me and her ability to speak out in support was a real example. Such a small gesture, but she showed me that while it is easy to think of myself, it takes courage to support others directly. All it takes is one small phone call.

Phillipine

LEN MATTHEWS

SALVATION ARMY PRISON CHAPLAIN

“It IS JUST THE ONLY ACT OF KINDNESS THEY GET IN THE WHOLE YEAR… IT MAKES ME WONDER IF THEIR LIVES HAVE BEEN SO TORMENTED, THAT SUCH A SMALL ACT OF KINDNESS IS SO NOW SO GREATLY APPRECIATED”
Reflection – You have the power!

We live in an age when it’s easy to make a difference in our world. No, really, I mean it. Yes, it is true that there is graphic and overwhelming evidence that global poverty is a daily life struggle for more than a billion people in the world right now, that there are more human slaves in our generation than ever before and that injustice seems to be rampant globally. But that doesn’t mean we are powerless. Rather, we are the ones who have the power to turn the tables. And not just the power, but the mandate that doing justice is what it looks like to follow Jesus (Matthew 25:31-46). And that our resources and freedom are given, not for our personal benefit, but to use as leverage in advocacy for the poor and the voiceless.

You can start right where you are, today, to make a difference. Take Fairtrade for instance. When you make the choice to swap to Fairtrade labelled tea, coffee and chocolate (now available from your local Aldi, Woolworths, or Coles) you are joining a collective movement that is directly changing the lives of 1.2 million farmers in more than 60 countries. Not only does Fairtrade ensure the local producer is paid a fair price for their produce, but choosing Fairtrade products costs you a little more. Will choosing Fairtrade products cost you a little more? Probably. Will choosing Fairtrade products cost you a little more effort to find? Maybe. Will it make a difference? It already has. Join the movement.

Win a copy of this book! SIMPLY SEND YOUR NAME AND EMAIL ADDRESS TO SIMONE.WORTHING@AUE.SALVATIONARMY.ORG FOR A CHANCE TO WIN OUR GIVEAWAY COPY.

Travelling Light

Releasing the burdens you were never intended to bear

By Max Lucado

Thomas Nelson, Inc. 2001

Some years ago I received a phone call and the words I heard just broke my heart: “Why has school forgotten me?” Later, as I sat over a coffee and my Bible, I read in Psalm 22 the very same words. I continued reading through to Psalm 23 but, having read it so many times, there was a temptation to skim through it. This is where Max Lucado’s book comes into play. Purchased a decade ago, I have found myself opening its pages time and time again as it re-introduces us to a chapter so often overlooked because of our familiarity with it.

Lucado, who is well aware of life’s burdens, reminds us of the need to sit in God’s presence, lay our burdens down, release them and not pick them up again. We each carry unnecessary burdens. I was thinking of how, when I attend a conference, I take more luggage than I need but I am not prepared to lessen the load just in case the one thing I take out suddenly becomes extremely important. Of course, I am exaggerating, my life does not revolve around accessories in my bag, but my difficulty in parting with unnecessary items is a reflection of how we all carry unnecessary burdens.

In his book Max Lucado breaks down each section of Psalm 23 to help us understand the value of God’s Word and the burdens we all carry that weigh us down. More than a simple “how to” book, Travelling Light is accompanied by a study guide which, when done as a group or individually, causes us to stop, reflect and choose how we respond.

We may feel despair, like the author in Psalm 22, but we don’t have to stay with that emotion. If we keep reading into the next well-known Psalm, simply known as the twenty third Psalm, we can discover the truths contained in it and then we can travel light.

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.

Leo Buscaglia

Churros

Makes approximately 24

½ cup sugar
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ cup water
½ milk
½ cup (110 grams) butter
1 cup flour
pinch of salt
3 eggs, lightly beaten
Sunflower oil or vegetable oil for frying

Combine sugar and cinnamon. Set aside for coating.

In a medium saucepan combine milk, water, butter and salt. Bring to boil on high heat. Using a wooden spoon stir in flour.

Reduce heat to low and stir continuously for one minute or until mixture forms a smooth ball. Remove from heat. Slowly pour beaten eggs into the dough, stirring constantly until well combined.

Transfer dough into a piping bag with a large star nozzle.

Fill a large saucepan with up to 2cm of oil and heat until it reaches 180°C. Pipe 2-3 strips of batter the length of your hand into the saucepan, cutting each one off with a knife or scissors.

Fry the churros, turning once until they become golden brown. Transfer the ready made churros on to paper towels to drain. When slightly cooled coat with the cinnamon sugar mixture.

Serve with melted chocolate, or your favourite dipping sauce!

Recipe and photo courtesy Lena Pobje

Recommended read

Moving to end poverty

Recommended by The Salvation Army International Development (SAID) office, the Movement to End Poverty is a joint petition of the Make Poverty History and Micah Challenge coalitions for all Australians who believe we can end extreme poverty. It involves many Australian charities, community groups, overseas aid agencies, and civil society organisations.

By adding your name to the Movement to End Poverty, your name will appear in the public mosaic image of signatories. You will join an historic social movement of people who support an end to extreme poverty in our lifetime!

For more information, go to movementtendoverty.org.au/
Love the grand gesture, the great sacrifice, the glorious deed. There have been times in my life when I have waited with longing for God to do something magnificent and glorious in and with my life. I have yearned to see the “immeasurably more” that Paul talks about in his letter to the Ephesians (3:20) bursting forth into my everyday world and bringing with it amazing transformation. And so, I have often been blind to the “immeasurably more” that God has done in and through me in small, less obvious ways.

Expectations and priorities
I remember a comment made at my farewell when I left my first appointment. A lady from the corps said that she would probably never remember any of my sermons, but she would never forget the time I came to the hospital early one morning to pray with her before she had surgery. I remember thinking of all the hours I had prayed with her before she had surgery. I would never forget the time I came to the hospital early one morning to pray with her before she had surgery. I no longer remember his exact words, but I was charmed by the reply. His focus was on simple, moment-by-moment obedience, rather than looking for grandeur and glory. He only wanted to do what God required of him each moment and allow God to do what he wants to do. Whether it is great or small.

The seemingly small
As time has gone by, we have seen how very often the “immeasurably more” does occur in those insignificant moments of obedience and in small incidents that we can so easily overlook. We have planned events and programs and seen nothing come of them; yet a dying child has brought a corps together and strengthened a community in its faith. We have prayed with other churches for an outpouring of renewal, and almost didn’t notice the sheer wonder of seeing so many pastors from many backgrounds, cultures and denominations actually standing together in unity with one focus.

It is the small things that make a difference—a difference far beyond anything that we can see or imagine. And perhaps it is not always ours to imagine or comprehend. Perhaps this is God’s way of reminding us that his is the work of transformation, of glory and splendour. Our responsibility is simple moments-by-moment obedience. He truly does immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine, even though it may be in ways beyond our seeing or perceiving.

God’s gentle touch
I have experienced conversations, almost mundane in subject, where suddenly the incredibly beautiful and intricately painted butterfly delicately perched on the flower beside me. In God’s eyes, there is one more splendid or glorious than the other. It is truly the small things that make a difference—a difference far beyond anything that we can see or imagine. And perhaps it is not always ours to imagine or comprehend. Perhaps this is God’s way of reminding us that his is the work of transformation, of glory and splendour. Our responsibility is simple moments-by-moment obedience. He truly does immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine, even though it may be in ways beyond our seeing or perceiving.

God’s gentle touch
I have experienced conversations, almost mundane in subject, where suddenly the other person is in tears and I wonder what’s going on. God’s gentle Spirit was doing a work of healing, I almost didn’t notice it and I don’t have a clue how it happened.

It is truly the small things that make a difference—a difference far beyond anything that we can see or even imagine.

It is truly the small things that make a difference—a difference far beyond anything that we can see or imagine. And perhaps it is not always ours to imagine or comprehend. Perhaps this is God’s way of reminding us that his is the work of transformation, of glory and splendour. Our responsibility is simple moments-by-moment obedience. He truly does immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine, even though it may be in ways beyond our seeing or perceiving.
REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE AND WHO YOU REPRESENT
As I was walking out the door or getting out of the car, these words would be said. Mum wanted me to have a strong sense of self, of belonging to a family whose identity was part of my character and that young or old, this counted for something.

BLOOM WHERE YOU’RE PLANTED
There are times in our lives when we find ourselves in certain places and think that God has made a mistake. We spend a lot of time seeking the ‘greener pastures’. Mum insisted in me a sense that in every season of our lives, when trusting in God, we can produce fruit – the fruit of our character and outcomes for the Kingdom.

A DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH IS A DIAMOND SURE ENOUGH
Mum had come to appreciate and accept the myriad of people who came across her path. The lesson was to look beyond the exterior and see the precious child of God they really were.

BE SURE YOUR SINS WILL FIND YOU OUT
My mum was teaching me to have a sense that it mattered if I chose to do the wrong thing. I grew up with a healthy dose of guilt about my wrong choices. However, there was always the reminder that I could go to a loving God for forgiveness.

WHEREVER GOD PLACES YOU; PEOPLE NEED TO BE LOVED
As an officer, my mum had learnt that people ultimately long to be loved. Her principle was that she was God’s representative wherever she went to love people. Her desire was that I understand that I could have many gifts and be clever at lots of things, but if I didn’t love people, it was all for nothing.

BETTER TO ERR ON THE SIDE OF MERCY
This was a lesson Mum shared with me in the final years of her life. She had learnt the lesson that, as God had extended mercy to her through Jesus’ death and resurrection, so too must be merciful to others. So much in our world is aboutcondemning and pulling down. Mum’s principle was that if you have a choice – choose to show mercy.

LOVE THE WORD OF GOD AND SHARE IT FAITHFULLY
Mum loved her Bible and I observed her living out what she read. She remained faithful in her obedience to the Word of God in her life, leaving me an example to follow.

EVERYONE HAS A STORY TO TELL – THEY JUST MIGHT NEED YOU TO LISTEN
Mum was a wonderful story teller and she gleaned much from the lives of others. On buses, trains, in car parks, in queues, Mum would strike up a conversation, listen to a person’s story, and make a friend.

IF GOD GIVES YOU A GIFT, THEN USE IT TO GIVE HIM GLORY
This principle was a constant reminder that every child of God has been gifted for service. My gifts were not just to make my life better but were to be used by God to influence others and to bring glory to him.

YOU WILL ALWAYS BE ABLE TO FIND SOMETHING TO BE GRATEFUL FOR
In every situation, if you really look, you will find things to be grateful for and reminders of a God who is good.

The calendar tells me that it’s 18 years since I’ve actually heard my mother’s voice teaching me these lessons. My heart and mind tell me, as I recount them, that in reality her voice resonates over and over again in and through my life. It’s not as a substitute for the voice of my Saviour, but as a reminder of a godly mother who knew well the ways of the Kingdom.

Thanks Mum!

PS: And Lord, please help me to be faithful to continue to teach these lessons and others to those I have influence over.

Remember who you are and who you represent.

Bloom where you’re planted.

A diamond in the rough is a diamond sure enough.

Love the word of God and share it faithfully.

Everyone has a story to tell – they just might need you to listen.

If God gives you a gift, then use it to give him glory.

You will always be able to find something to be grateful for.

Better to err on the side of mercy.

In His Time...

I t hit hard! I’ve been for a Salvation Army man the and his wife who picked me and my sister up every Sunday for Sunday school. I wouldn’t have found Jesus,” said Natalie.

“I knelt and asked Jesus into my heart in that little Salvation Army hall with wooden floorboards. I don’t think the man and his wife knew of the extent of things happening at home.”

Last year Natalie shared her story with Christine Martin, then Family Support & Pastoral Care Co-ordinator for the Oasis Hunter Youth Network. She spoke of her very difficult upbringing, and of living in the most difficult of circumstances.

“The abuse and everything continued for years, but I don’t know what I would have done during those years if I hadn’t found Jesus,” Natalie shared.

Natalie is now married to a Christian man and they have two sons, one with a severe disability. Through her job, Natalie works with many families who have children with disabilities and gives them support and hope.

Natalie explained that, through The Salvation Army Sunday school and then youth group, she learnt simple, but pure and true things from the Bible, even when group numbers were small.

“Sometimes it was just me in attendance, but it was always well prepared and I now feel that it was a blessing from God to have the personalised mentoring and teaching that became a solid core and anchor for the rest of my life, no matter what the circumstances, and it is this that I can share with others,” she said.

When Christine, now Mission and Resource Director – Social, Newcastle and Central NSW Division, heard this story, she was quite moved.

“Later that evening I thought about the hundreds of times over twenty years of my ministry as a Salvation Army officer where we had picked up children for weeks and years at a time, including dropping kids home late on Friday nights after youth group, she said.

“Sometimes it was so tiring and often we just felt like a taxi service. I can remember praying through those moments of tedium that God would bless those we served, but sometimes my prayers weren’t filled with passion.

“Often too we can become discouraged about whether the programs we prepare are having any impact, especially when numbers can fluctuate or are small.

“It does make a difference and God makes all things beautiful in his time.”

* Names have been changed. Printed with permission.
C

On this page, the text discusses Captain Jo Chant's journey towards becoming a born-again Christian and how this impacted her life. The page highlights her past as a non-believer and her transformation towards a more authentic and genuine approach to her ministry. The text also touches on the challenges of being a chaplain and the importance of maintaining an authentic self in this role.
**Testimony | Young**

There was a little eight-year-old girl whose Mum dropped her off at church every Sunday. She stayed there on her own, with various adults looking after her while she was there.

One morning before the meeting she was sitting alone on the end of a row of chairs. I was in the row behind her, also on my own. I leaned forward and said, “Hey Sarah (not her real name), is anyone sitting with you?” She slowly shook her head and said “no”, so I invited her to come and be my friend and sit next to me. She smiled, got her stuff, and came around.

Sarah stuck to me like glue for the rest of that morning at church. Perhaps it was because I took the time to show her a bit of care and interest not long after she arrived. Sarah struggled to interact with the other kids at church and so after the meeting we grabbed morning tea and then Sarah asked me if I would play a game of balloon volleyball with her.

So that’s what we did for a good 20 minutes. We laughed and squatted as we hit this balloon around the hall. When we sat down to take a break I asked Sarah a bit about herself and her family. She told me she had older siblings, one of whom had just had her baby taken by Child Safety (Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services). Her Mum had kicked another sibling out of home because she was pregnant, and she had a brother who lived in foster care.

**Breaking free**

Here is Sarah, a precious eight-year-old girl who I hope and pray will have a different future to her sisters – a life where her potential is realised and she can break free from the cycle of poverty and dysfunction.

Sarah then told me about a lady from church who told her she could call her ‘Grandma’. “I don’t have a Grandma, so I like calling her Grandma!” Sarah said.

I replied, “I know! I then told her that when I was a kid, I too used to get dropped off at church and there I had people who were like my family, too. It was a precious moment.

**Fruit for the Kingdom**

I was a child just like Sarah when I came to The Salvation Army. I was eight-years-old, my parents had just divorced and my Mum had heard about Sunday school and sent my sister and I along. As a teenager I would go back to a family’s house for lunch every Sunday where I saw what a loving Christian family was like. The smallest acts of love made the biggest difference in my life. The way they took me in and the way I felt I belonged in one of the main reasons I stayed around the church. Because of the way they invested in me I discovered God, I had the opportunity to grow in my faith and now I’m an officer! What amazing fruit for the Kingdom from such a simple act!

**Simple acts of love**

It’s not hard to make a difference in the lives of kids like Sarah. If you have kids in your neighbourhood you can chat to their parents and offer to take the kids along to church with you and then have some lunch and take them to the park afterwards.

Older women can be grandmas to children who don’t have an extended family around them. If you’re having a family picnic, perhaps you can take one of these kids along and help them to see how a healthy family has fun together.

**Through the strength of God**

Brittany Klee believes that the secret to living a full and abundant life is hard work, a positive attitude and, most importantly, a relationship with God.

“Living in a relationship with God, doing everything through his strength and believing he is in control of my life what keeps me going, enables me to put others before myself, and brings fulfillment to all I do,” she says.

Brittany, who grew up in The Salvation Army and attends Cannadale Corps in south Brisbane, is a pharmacist who works at the Royal Children’s Hospital (RCH) in Brisbane.

She is active in her corps, teaching kids at SAGALA and Kids’ Church, playing in the timbrels brigade and mentoring youth.

“I love seeing kids develop in their Christian lives, and seeing their smiles and enthusiasm is energising for me too,” she says.

Brittany is also enjoying married life, having recently celebrated her first wedding anniversary with husband Chris, from Tuggeranong Corps. Chris works as an Information Technology service and project coordinator for IBM.

Brittany has faced several battles in her young life, one of those being acute lymphoblastic leukaemia as a young child. The treatment for this life-threatening illness involved 2½ years of gruelling chemotherapy and numerous medical interventions. Brittany also suffered many debilitating side effects including induced diabetes, blood clots, ulcers, infections and muscle pain.

Thankfully, she was cured and today is healthy and cancer free.

“At first I questioned why me, and sometimes I felt like giving up,” explains Brittany, who was 11 when she was diagnosed.

“Everyone was so positive and encouraging and towards the end of my treatment I realised that God could use my experience and my faith is much stronger now.”

In her role as a pharmacist at RCH which includes work on the wards with sick children and their families, Brittany believes that she is more compassionate and can relate more, because of her experience.

“I focus on leaving my life in God’s hands,” she says. “It will all work according to his plan if I do that.”

Brittany also has a word of encouragement for those who are going through tough times.

“Never give up, just keep going, no matter how hard, it is worth it in the end. Stay positive and happy, and know that in all things God works for the good of those who trust in him.”

**Lieutenant Vanessa Kohler**

Mission Director

Oasis Youth Service, Wyong
Social Justice Snapshot

Impossible goals made possible

Have you ever heard of the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals? Maybe you haven’t, or maybe you’ve heard these words tossed around in conversation but never paid much attention to what they’re all about.

The UN is on a mission to meet the needs of the world’s poorest by 2015. This includes removing extreme poverty and hunger, reducing child mortality and achieving universal primary education (see complete list of Millennium Development Goals below).

It’s easy to look at the Millennium Development Goals and think they are unachievable. As Christians we need to have faith in the impossible: “What is impossible with men is possible with God,” Luke 18:27.

Since the goals were developed in 2000, positive progress has been made in certain areas, while others lack momentum. The UN is currently looking at ways it can fast track progress over the next few years to achieve its goals.

Get involved
You might be asking, “What can I do?” While eradicating poverty and ensuring environmental sustainability can be daunting tasks, there are practical and simple things you can do to help. You can donate to the cause, write a song against poverty, create awareness and sign a petition. Visit www.un.org/millenniumgoals/getinvolved to make your contribution or go to Young UN Australia Sydney’s Facebook page for more advocacy opportunities.

Millennium Development Goals

1. Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieving universal primary education
3. Promoting gender equality and empower girls and young women
4. Reducing child mortality
5. Improving maternal health
6. Combatting HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensuring environmental sustainability
8. Building a global partnership for development

From little things...

I’ve never been one for routine. I like change and I get frustrated when things stay the same for too long. As a result my list of passions, hopes and dreams have been known to change on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

Since recommitting my life to Christ seven years ago, one thing has remained the same, my attendance at church. And boy oh boy have I learnt some lessons that only come from sticking around! While inconsistency was definitely evident in my outer life, it was also raging in my inner life. I struggled with regular quiet times with God, with prayer and with reading the Word. This meant I was up and down in my faith, passion and conviction for Jesus.

In my own strength I could never seem to get it together. But God is in the business of transformation and he has been working overtime on me! Now, instead of not noticing I haven’t spent time with God, I LOVE going to the breakfast table with my Bible and journal in hand and I miss it when I don’t. Instead of praying once a week, I pray throughout the day; my faith and passion is steady and I have more confidence to share the love of God with others.

We all want to make a difference, do something big, stand up and be counted. But unless we get back to the basics, we are going nowhere fast in our own strength. We need integrity (sound moral character) and consistency in our lives in order for God to build something lasting and impacting.

“If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones,” Luke 16:10, New Living Translation.

Seek and cling to Him daughters. He’s got you!

Love, Amy

Editor’s note
Check out Amy’s blog review on page 19.

Amy Hefferan, Centenary Corps

Reviews

Kings and Queens – Audio Adrenaline

King of the Comebacks seems a fitting song to be part of Audio Adrenaline’s new ten-track album Kings and Queens.

After Audio Adrenaline’s lead singer, Mark Stuart lost his voice back in 2007, the band was ready to be finished. Much to the surprise of fans, Audio Adrenaline is now making a comeback with the recent release of their new album.

Mark Stuart has now hung up the microphone and taken a more executive position as songwriter and producer on the new album. Audio Adrenaline’s rock sound has freed new faces all around including Kevin Max (former DC Talk lead singer) as the front vocalist.

Kings and Queens enters its new decade with a new sound, opening with pop track, “He Moves You Move”.

Deeper

Young Adults ministry of a Young Adults church service held once every six weeks.

Lincoln Proellocks, Corps in 2012, explains Lincoln.

“...But it’s also a place where people can write about what they’re thinking or be challenged about recently.”

While the blog will often link up with topics that are discussed at their Young Adults church service, the blog is still relevant for young adults who don’t attend Centindle Corps.

Using a number of writers from Carindale’s young adults, the blog addresses a variety of topics including acting justly, a sense of belonging and being aware of how your words affect others.

But the Truth

Salvationist and blogger extraordinare, Amy Hefferan from Centenary Corps in the South Queensland Division has a way with words.

Blogging on and off for a few years, Amy’s blog Noting But The Truth is filled with honest reflections about her life.

Amy has an ability to connect with her audience and knows how to draw them in with an anecdote. However, more importantly, Amy’s blog entries challenge the reader about their own spiritual walks with God. In all of her blog entries, Amy uses Bible passages to support her point of view.

Updating about once a month, Amy’s March entry, “Pied Piper” is one of her best entries yet. Leading off with an interesting hook, Amy offers wisdom about leadership from a psychologist, supports it with a Bible verse, offers her own personal reflections and finishes off with resource suggestions.

Visually, Nothing But The Truth is clean and simple, making it easy for readers to navigate. Amy also adds a personal touch to her blog by posting photos of herself and her life.

To check out Amy’s blog visit amyhefferan.com

Congratulations to Katrina Hindle from Cataramele Corps, Queensland who has won our giveaway copy of Chris Tomlin’s Burning Lights.

CONGRATULATIONS

You were chosen to be free … Live this free life by loving and helping others, Galatians 5:13 New Life Version

Amy’s blog visit

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Women share blessings and challenges at rally

ACT & SOUTH NSW DIVISION

Women from around the division recently gathered in Wagga Wagga and Canberra for “coffee, cake and celebration” – a special time of worshipping God and sharing how God has blessed them through their ministry to women.

Different ladies spoke about the various ways they have been able to connect with women in both their corps and local communities.

“We were all encouraged as we heard how women are stepping up and taking on leadership roles that they never thought they were able to do,” said Captain Dulene Murray, Divisional Women’s Ministries Secretary.

“In stepping out of their comfort zones, God is using them to bless others while also blessing them.”

Lieutenant Bindy Lupis, Wagga Wagga Corps Officer, wrote and performed a drama for the celebration there. Major Sue Hale, Chaplain, Mountain View Aged Care Services, performed this same drama in Canberra.

Guest speaker Lieutenant-Colonel Pamela Hodge (ret.), shared: “This challenged the women about the abundant opportunities that they have to support this work and change the lives of those who are not as privileged as we are,” said Captain Dulene.

“Those were two great mornings full of reminders of how blessed we are by our Heavenly Father, and challenges of how we can share his love to our neighbours both near and far.”

Greater West Division

Ladies from all over the division, including Lebow, Bathurst, Forbes/ Forbes, Blue Mountains and Rosemount, recently travelled to join the women from Orange for the Refresh women’s rally.

Captain Rebecca Inglis, Divisional Youth & Candidates Secretary, was guest speaker for the rally. Kym Briggs, Divisional Women’s Ministries Coordinator, interviewed Captain Rebecca who, in January, with her husband Captain Phil, took 11 young people to the Philippines on a mission trip to serve primarily at The Salvation Army’s Joyville Children’s Home.

Captain Rebecca shared their experiences there, with a focus on the pure and contagious joy of the children in the home, despite their challenging circumstances, and the lessons the mission team learned from that joy.

“Joy was also the theme of Captain Rebecca’s message. ‘As Jesus’ disciples, we need to be full of joy that overflows to those around us,” she said. ’God loves us and when we really get that, we will experience joy. If we’re struggling with not experiencing joy, we can receive the gift of joy by remaining in God’s love. It’s a choice to accept the joy of the Lord every day’.”

Cadets Helen and Brad Whittle challenged the ladies with a drama presentation, and Captain Helen led worship for the rally.

An offering and market stalls raised money for the Territorial Women’s Ministries Project – renovating and equipping childcare centres in Port Moresby and Kainantu, Papua New Guinea.

Rally puts spotlight on joy

Captain Rebecca teaches during the Refresh rally in Orange.

Cadets Helen and Brad Whittle present a challenging drama.

“Let’s focus on ‘heart to God and hand to man’, and that’s what we’d like to continue to practice – to be there to help people in need.”

The next chapter

After a four-year break from officer duties, Captain Louise, who has been a part of The Salvation Army all her life, has moved to Cowra from Queensland’s Sunshine Coast.

As well as serving as the corps officer, Captain Louise is also chaplain at Cowra’s Returned and Services League Club.

Her husband, Sean, has recently retired from the construction industry. Sean overcame an addiction through The Salvation Army’s Bridge program and became a volunteer and a soldier seven years ago.

“I decided to give something back to God and The Salvation Army, and put on a uniform,” he said. “I’m a walking testimony of what The Salvation Army can do.”

Captain Louise and Sean plan to connect with locals at Cowra events and be an integral part of the community.

The scriptures say that we are to love our neighbour as ourselves – this is what we want to practice within the community of Cowra,” she said.

Newcastle & Central NSW Division

Wilk Worshay was the theme for two divisional women’s celebrations, held recently at the Newcastle Worship & Community Centre. Over 200 women from corps and centres around the division attended the events.

Guest speaker Major Sue Cox, who with her husband Major Garry are corps officers for the Campbelltown Corps in the Greater West Division, spoke on King David and the grace and mercy God showed him, even as a flawed human being. Women were encouraged to accept God’s grace in their walk as worthy women of God.

The offerings raised $770 each for the Territorial Women’s Ministries Project – childcare centres in Papua New Guinea – and the Divisional Project – Recovery Bibles for women at Dooralong Transformation Centre.

“Her husband, Sean, has recently retired from the construction industry. Sean overcame an addiction through The Salvation Army’s Bridge program and became a volunteer and a soldier seven years ago.”

“The women of the division enjoyed the opportunity to gather together from far and wide, to worship and fellowship together,” said Captain Jennifer Stringer, Divisional Women’s Ministries Secretary.

Women from around the division celebrate at the rally in Canberra.

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Colonel Janet Munn – Territorial Secretary for Women’s Ministries

Colonel Janet Munn, former Secretary for Spiritual Life Development for The Salvation Army and Associate Principal of the International College for Officers and Centre for Spiritual Life Development, is now serving in the Australia Eastern Territory. Colonel Janet spoke recently to Women In Touch about her new appointment:

WIT: You are known in Australia from Captivated 2011, and for your work in spiritual life development and creative worship. How are you planning to incorporate your passions in these areas, and other creative fields, into your ministry here?

Developing the inner life and worshipping our creator creatively, are intrinsic to my understanding of being a follower of Jesus Christ and as such will always be part of my life and ministry regardless of location or appointment. As to specifics in this territory, I am waiting to sense the Lord’s direction in this new season of life for me. I am confident he will give vision and direction. Even though I am not the best learner, he is simply the best teacher.

WIT: What will be the areas of focus in your new appointment?

Jesus’ own mission statement from Isaiah 61:1-3 is also my mission and focus – the Holy Spirit’s anointing to bring good news to the poor, to release the captive, to bring health to the broken-hearted. To proclaim release for captives, freedom for the oppressed, to give beauty for ashes and joy instead of mourning (New Living Translation). What a mission focus Jesus has given to us all!

I love swimming and I LOVE the ocean! But I’ve never tried snorkelling, surfing or such – perhaps because I’ve always been swimming in the North Atlantic! Those would be some challenges to enjoy facing.

More seriously, both my young adult children live in New York City and my extended family – young and old – live in that vicinity as well. I am trusting the Lord to provide for all their needs and ours, by supernatural provision – including his divine care for my dearest ones when we are living so far from each other. Nonetheless, it is a challenge to remain in a place of faith and trust while feeling the heartache of absence from family. I would be deeply grateful for your prayer support for my family in these things.

WIT: Besides snakes, spiders and sharks (just kidding!), what are some of the challenges you think might be ahead for you in Australia?

I believe that in these latter days, the Spirit of God is being poured out upon the women of the world – as most of those on planet Earth who are poor, broken-hearted, prisoners and mourners, are female. The Lord promises to be close to such (Psalm 34:18) and his anointing is for them very specifically – not only to be healed, set free and comforted, but also to be raised up to then declare this glorious Gospel!

I believe Psalm 68:31 prophesies the days in which we are now living and is a word for the women of the Australia Eastern Territory:

The Lord gives instructions. The women who announce the good news are a large army.

(God’s Word Translation)

May we see and be a great Army of women, full of the Spirit of God, redeemed and restored, moving through the world with this life-transforming Gospel of Jesus Christ.

WIT: What will be the areas of focus in your new appointment?

I am passionate about people coming into a life changing relationship with God and growing through this. I am a relational person and so love building friendships with women as this is one way for us all to grow spiritually.

There are exciting days ahead and I look forward to seeing God at work in every part of the journey.

Lieutenant-Colonel Simone Robertson has recently arrived home in Australia from London, and is looking forward to seeing God at work in her new appointment.

South Queensland Division

Over 350 women from around the division attended coffee mornings recently in the Toowoomba, Gympie and Centenary Corps, joined by staff and residents from the Moonah and Fairhaven Recovery Services Centres.

Commissioner Jan Condon, Territorial Director of Women’s Ministries, spoke at all three events on the importance of visiting the house, school, village and area where I spent my first eight years. I have had amazing experiences, seen beautiful places and made some very special friends.

So now my heart is also there. I have a son and daughter-in-law who live in Melbourne and a daughter, son-in-law and two precious grandchildren in Brisbane. So my heart is in those places too.

For the past 15 months I have been the editor of Revive, The Salvation Army’s international magazine for women (produced by International Headquaters) and I have loved it. Benni, the designer of Revive gave me a mug that says “Home is where the heart is”.

With all the additional places I now call home I think my heart has had to grow as all of them are significant for me.

I have now been appointed to my home territory as the Family Resource Officer which is part of the Women’s Ministries Department and is closely linked with the Program Department at Territorial Headquarters where the giving and sharing of ideas for linking families into the life of the Church is one of the main aims.

I am passionate about people coming into a life changing relationship with God and growing through this.

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South QLD welcomes Commissioner Jan Condon

A warm welcome home to Lieutenant-Colonel Simone Robertson, who has been appointed to the new role of Family Resource Officer in the Women’s Ministries department. Her husband, Lieutenant-Colonel Laurie Robertson, is Secretary for Program.

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Lieutenant-Colonel Simone Robertson

D o you ever feel as though your heart is in two places at once? I know I do! I was born in England and migrated to Australia with my parents when I was eight. I am a naturalised Australian citizen and consider myself to be thoroughly Australian.

However, for the past three years I have been living in London and had the privilege of visiting the house, school, village and area where I spent my first eight years. I have had amazing experiences, seen beautiful places and made some very special friends.

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(God’s Word Translation)

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Amanda Moore, Mission Leader at Coorparoo Mission Centre, spoke about how she is building relationships with families in her local area through Mainly Music, picnics, Messy Church and special nights just for mums.

Megani Halliday, Children’s Ministries Coordinator at Coorparoo Corps, shared how the corps is connecting with families who attend Mainly Music.

Karen Sagala, Senior Mission Leader at Forest Lake Community Church spoke about a new group that has recently started at a local school, providing lunch for parents to give them an opportunity to improve communication with teachers.

effectiveness of women’s ministries groups,” said Major Julie Campbell, Divisional Director of Women’s Ministries.

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"I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it would move. Nothing would be impossible."

Matthew 17:20
New Living Translation