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WARCRY

CULTURE & SPIRITUALITY



Beyond flowers and chocolates

Building community in a society
obsessed with romantic love



Did I offer peace today?
Did I bring a smile to someone's face?
Did I say words of healing?
Did I let go of my anger and resentment?
Did I forgive? Did I love?
These are the real questions. I must trust
that the little bit of love that I sow now will
bear many fruits, here in this world
and the life to come.

Henri Nouwen (1932 –1996)
Dutch pastor, writer and theologian





The Salvation Army is about giving hope where it's needed most.

What is The Salvation Army?

The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church.

Vision Statement

Wherever there is hardship or injustice, Salvos will live, love and fight alongside others to transform Australia one life at a time with the love of Jesus.

Mission Statement

The Salvation Army is a Christian movement dedicated to sharing the love of Jesus by:

- Caring for people
- Creating faith pathways
- Building healthy communities
- Working for justice

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needs
community

From the editor

Traditionally, Valentine's Day is a celebration of romantic love, a time for couples to spend time together and buy gifts for each other. As important as this is, expressing love to others does not have to be limited to romantic partners. As people 'hard-wired' for connection and relationships with our creator God, and with each other, showing kindness and love to our families, friends and wider community can broaden and enrich our lives, and theirs, in ways we never thought possible.

Love can also change lives, as it has done for the participants of the Salvos' First Step recovery program, that you can read about in this issue. Actions like these can often mean stepping outside our comfort zones and engaging with others, in both good and challenging times, for everyone's benefit.

If you need a hand along the way, Salvation Army teams are there for you.

Visit salvationarmy.org.au/need-help/

Simone Worthing
Assistant Editor

Beyond flowers and chocolates

Developing close relationships without romantic love

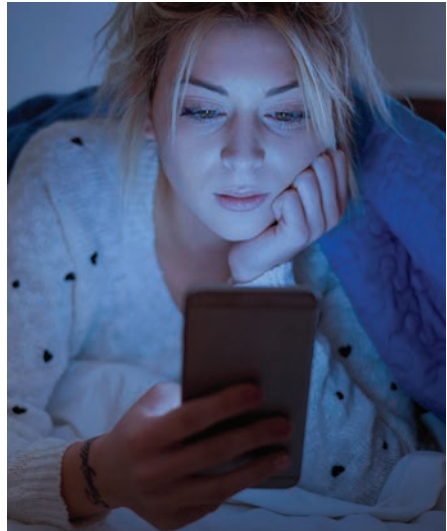
BY SIMONE WORTHING

Valentine's Day is just around the corner. Chocolates, flowers and soft toys are on sale everywhere and elaborate date nights and surprises are being carefully planned.

Or so it would seem, according to our culture that appears almost obsessed with romantic love.

There is little mention of the single people who would prefer to be with a partner, of the exhausted sole parents, the newly widowed or divorced, those struggling in difficult relationships, and the growing number of lonely people. For them, and many others, Valentine's Day can be particularly painful and sad.

We all want to give and receive love, but there are many fulfilling ways to experience love that we can easily overlook. There are deep and close friendships, a connection with our work and colleagues, attachments to extended family, community interest groups, friendly neighbours, and relationships that provide support and company through the ups and downs of life.



Our hyper-connected Western world is experiencing an epidemic of loneliness.

As wonderful as romantic love can be, we don't have to find one kind of love in just one person to enjoy rich relationships. We should not assume that there is something wrong with us, or we can't be happy and content, if we don't have romantic love in our lives.

Many people, in fact, choose to be single

and instead view loving relationships more broadly and in a wider range of contexts. Their focus is on community, rather than an all-encompassing romantic partnership. We are multi-faceted people, and finding our community and developing relationships within that space can enable us to enjoy the various parts of who we are, and contribute to the growth and development of others as well.

As people we are relational — even the introverts among us! We are designed to connect with others and build strong and healthy relationships. Restricting close relationships to just one person can often also put unrealistic expectations and pressure on couples to meet their partner's every need and prevent them experiencing and contributing to life's diversity.

An almost 80-year study from Harvard University followed the work, home lives and physical health of 724 individuals and found that people who are more socially connected to family, friends and community are happier, healthier and live longer than people who are less well connected.

In our Western world, anyone with a smart phone — which is most of us! — spends an average of four hours per day tapping, swiping, glancing and checking. Our world is hyper-connected, and yet we are also experiencing an epidemic of loneliness.

We were created for a full life of love, relationships, meaning, purpose and adventure. Sometimes the potential for these relationships and experiences is right in front of us, ready to be developed and enjoyed. Perhaps it's just a matter of making an effort to connect.

PHOTO BY JAMES BALDWIN ON UNSPLASH



Why do guys hate Valentine's Day?

BY INGRID BARRATT

It's an (admittedly sexist) cliché: the guy dreading having to make some grand romantic gesture for his expectant girlfriend. The truth is that lots of us — guys and girls — dislike Valentine's Day. But why is it so annoying?

Well, where to start? ... Valentine's Day is a horribly exclusive celebration. It excludes anyone who is single, and puts pressure on couples to force romance. It seems like the only people really celebrating are retailers, simply to make money.

A non-scientific discussion around the *War Cry* office reflected some of the reasons we find Valentine's Day annoying:

"There's pressure that this is the day you must be romantic, and if you don't do something on this day you're not romantic," said Martin. "But what about the other 364 days of the year?"

"There's an expectation that you have to put in a certain amount of effort, otherwise you don't love your partner enough. It's a problem of comparison," agreed Sam.

When I was single, I felt that every couple was celebrating their perfect love on Valentine's Day. And I was missing out. But now that I'm married, I literally couldn't care less about the day because I realise I wasn't missing out on anything.

Romance isn't about flowers and



chocolates and forced togetherness. True romance is the everyday ways we find to show that we love each other.

Love is the greatest God-given gift that we have as humans, and that is definitely worth celebrating. But love can't be quantified. It is personal, it is about thinking of the other person and what they need. It's about being generous with our encouragement and words. Ultimately, love guides us toward freedom from striving, because we are fully accepted and fully accept others.

In addition, real love is not exclusive. There are many ways to express love beyond romantic relationships. Friendship and family are not lesser expressions of love.

Love is the stuff of life and it can be celebrated in a myriad of ways, every single day. Oh, and if you happen to love Valentine's Day, that's just one more way to express love — so have fun!

Ingrid Barratt is the former editor of War Cry New Zealand, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa Territory.

Taking the first steps

Bringing hope to recovering addicts and their families

BY SIMONE WORTHING

Jenny Wayman has a long history of working for the Salvos in Rockhampton, Central Queensland, in social welfare, counselling, disaster relief, Family Stores and more.

Almost a decade ago, the Salvos asked her to work with Queensland Corrective Services, people in prison and on parole, and those battling with and recovering from addiction. Jenny took on the role, networking with others in the recovery and mental health sectors, and working to provide direction and support for her clients and their families.

“I quickly realised that these guys had nowhere to go after they completed an initial six-week recovery program, so God inspired me to start something at our church,” she said.

“With help from the network, other contacts, the Salvos Capricorn Region Corps [church] and participants, we developed a year-long recovery program — First Step — based on the Salvos’ Bridge Program and the Alcoholics Anonymous 12 Steps to lasting recovery.

“I like to see the positive, encourage participants to move beyond where they are and to think about a different way of doing things,” said Jenny.

“And people come. They come because



In 2019, Jenny received an Australia Day Community Event/Initiative award for her work.

it’s community, it keeps them on track, and they learn more each time about their own or others’ addiction and strategies for staying in recovery.”

A small team of volunteers assists Jenny, including group co-facilitator Dave, who was one of the program’s first participants. Anyone can attend the weekly group — all they have to do is to want recovery.

“We are trying to help people to see beyond their mistakes and problems and find the good in themselves,” Jenny said. “Addiction hides their pain, problems and complex emotions, and we are encouraging participants to pull those out and work on them so they can manage them better and move on into a better life.

“The support of the group provides a safe place to share these issues and helps them get the assistance they need to move on. Some come and stay, others come and go. Even if they fall back into old ways, they are always welcome to come back to group, and start again.

“When they need us we are here.”

Gail, a First Step participant, shares her story on page 12.

Recognising the Messiah

Are we ready for Jesus to come again, and will we recognise him when he does?

BY MARK HADLEY

If Jesus turned up in your town, would you recognise him? What would give him away — and what would your response be? Netflix's newly launched series *Messiah* shows that, practically or spiritually, the majority of us are just not ready for the second coming.

Messiah is a strange mixture of *Homeland* and *Jack Ryan* as the CIA agents struggle to deal with the return of a figure they never expected to see again.

The series begins in Damascus, where the Syrian capital is bracing itself for an attack by a resurgent ISIS. A wild-eyed young man begins preaching that this is the time that God has marked out to judge the hearts of all humanity. Those who truly follow him need not be afraid. Then, to assure them of this truth, he seemingly calls down a sandstorm that forces the fundamentalist forces to flee. His prophetic words and commanding manner attract not only a growing number of followers but also the attention of the CIA, in particular an agent who has come to believe there is no God.

Officer Eva Geller has lost her husband to cancer and is desperately trying to conceive his child through IVF. However, four miscarriages suggest she won't have this joy. Instead, she is tasked with investigating this strange individual gaining the world's attention.

The crowds are beginning to refer to him as 'Isa' and 'Al-Masih', the Quran's names for Jesus and Messiah. Yet Geller's Al Masih, like the Jesus of the Bible, is challenging all who think they know the will of God. His association with miraculous events, intimate knowledge of her life, and appearances in Israel and eventually the US, are making it hard for anyone to write him off as a hardliner or heretic.

As in the 1st century AD, and so now, the key question is: who is this man?

Messiah has done a masterful job of translating the past to the present. The historical documents that chronicle Jesus' life record a similar confusion gripping ancient Palestine. The Pharisees, the preachers of the day, treated him



with suspicion. The evidence for Jesus' miracles was too clear to deny, but that didn't stop them doubting his motives: "It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons!"

Like the CIA analysts, noted scholars like Gamaliel placed Jesus in the same camp as would-be revolutionaries: "Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing."

And the Israeli and US governments have much in common with the authorities of Jesus' day, who primarily worried about the political unrest his preaching would cause: "If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation."

But Officer Geller is forced to consider whether Al Masih, like Jesus, will fit into any of these categories.

Controversy is one thing the two have in common. Jesus was at least as divisive a figure as Al Masih. The Christian writer

C.S. Lewis famously wrote that, based on the all-or-nothing claims Jesus made about himself, an unbiased mind could reach only one of three conclusions: "A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse ... but let us not come with any patronising nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us."

The same might be said for anyone that turns up today claiming divine authority, *Messiah's* mysterious figure included. Al Masih names himself 'the Word', literally God's will made flesh. Yet he displays little of God's power and only a limited number of his characteristics. Particularly, he lacks the mercy and compassion that so characterised Jesus, not to mention his openness. In fact, what keeps the controversy of *Messiah* going are the truths Al Masih refuses to reveal.

But the Jesus of the Bible was never so vague. He tells those who rejected him then, as well as those who push him away today, it won't be because he hasn't been plain about his purpose or identity. It will be because we'd rather not hear what he has to say about us:

"Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word'" (John chapter 8, verses 42-43).

Everyone needs community

When our family village is not built on biology

BY BELINDA CASSIE

We've probably all at some time or another heard the saying "It takes a village to raise a child". It's been attributed to everyone from the writers of Proverbs (in the Bible) to Hillary Clinton. I came across it again today and it got me thinking that we could extend the sentiment, because the need for a village, whatever that might look like, doesn't stop at the end of childhood.

I'm a staunchly independent woman. Some might say a little too independent and, truth be told, some might be right on that one. But lately I've recognised my need for community and the relationships we find there. I need that mother figure. You all know the one — she'll tell you that you look pale and ask if you are eating properly and getting enough sleep. She might spoil you at Christmas-time, or any other time the fancy takes her, for that matter. She's your biggest cheerleader, and the first to have the tough conversations with you too.

Sometimes she brings with her someone who is like a father figure, although he might arrive through a different avenue.

He's the one who tells horrible dad jokes, but you laugh along because, as bad as they might be, dad jokes are always hilarious ... although that could be just me! He's possibly going to lecture you about rotating your car tyres and shakes his head when you shrug your shoulders and mumble something about the last service.

You might acquire an older sister or two. They give amazing advice — whether you've asked for it or not. They'll tell you if that haircut suits you, and definitely when that potential significant other doesn't! They'll likely share their home with you at times, an untold number of meals, and allow you to play aunty to their kids — which is a whole new kind of awesome.

If you're lucky your village might have some younger sisters to mentor, and annoying brothers, and a wild aunty or three. Because sometimes that's what family looks like, right? Maybe our village is built on biology, but often it's not. I think for most of us, our village is made up of all the family that we choose for ourselves along the way. It's all the people we get to love and be loved by for no



other reason than the fact that we do.

It's not always easy to come by. Some of us need to look a long time before we find it. Maybe it's at school, or work, or the place we live. Or it might even be the folk we encounter at church — that's where I've found most of mine over the years. We're an unlikely village in some ways, spread widely across Australia, and some of my sisters are even across the ditch in New Zealand. But we've loved and laughed and cried, and at the centre of it all is Jesus, right in the middle of our village.

We argue occasionally about politics and religion and climate change, and whether

pineapple belongs on pizza. At times we might even argue about Jesus, what Jesus had to say about life, the world, the way we live, and what it means for us to be people of faith. There's room for that too. Because if anyone taught us how to keep loving, whether we agree with each other or not, it was Jesus.

So, I think as much as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a village for you and me to just be us. Oh, and by the way — pineapple totally belongs on pizza!

Belinda Cassie is a Salvation Army chaplain with the Salvos' Inner City Social Mission, Sydney.

Freedom through forgiveness

How learning to forgive herself and others in a Salvos' support group gave Gail a fresh perspective on life and relationships.

BY GAIL

Gail doesn't have a drug or alcohol addiction, but she has family members who do. She found a support group for others in similar situations at the Rockhampton Salvos — First Step — and has discovered a supportive and caring community there who help each other face their challenges and grow personally through whatever life brings their way.

Gail shares her story below:

Every church should have a recovery program for people facing difficult situations. Every person has a story, and at these groups there is a lot behind every single story.

When I first saw the ad for First Step and the 12 Steps program it offers, I responded immediately and just connected with Jenny who runs it, and those who attend, right away. For me it's been about just going along, listening to and learning from people's journeys and stories. By hearing these struggles and sharing my own, we gain different perspectives and ways of dealing with

situations, and it's a great supportive network.

The group is a safe place to share where you're at emotionally as well, and to connect with a counsellor if you need to. The sponsors of First Step — those who support some of the group's participants who are recovering from addiction — are also available if we need someone to talk to. These are great opportunities to download all that is happening in our lives.

I also believe in God and pray, all the time, but it's good to have a person to talk things through with and know your confidentiality is respected and you are valued. It's an honour to be a part of the group.

As someone who has family members in addiction, I knew I needed some help to try to assist them get off the drugs and build bridges in those relationships at the same time.

For me this was a personal journey as well as learning to grow in patience,



understanding and grace. It was about learning to understand what my loved ones were going through and how to provide the kind of boundaries, firm love and support they needed to get through their tough times. It was about forgiveness, and knowing that without it there is no way forward.

This demanded a lot of self-reflection and learning good strategies to work on my own stuff and how I can improve areas within myself, as well as my relationships with others. Anyone can apply the 12 steps in their lives and it taught me so much.

As well as sharing within the group, First Step also has guest speakers from different places who speak about their own journey with addiction or helping

others, and their wisdom and encouragement are beneficial to us all.

When you have people in your life struggling with addiction, it's really only others who have done the journey themselves who can get a handle on what you're going through. I am not ashamed of what is happening in my family, but just having understanding people around me to talk through different incidences, deviations and rough times was great.

Now that I have completed the program, I am thinking about doing it again, both to stay connected with the group and to keep on learning. It's a lifelong journey.

To read more about the First Step recovery program, see story page 7.

Corn and zucchini fritters



Ingredients

2 medium zucchini; ½ cup self-raising flour; 1 garlic clove, crushed; 1 egg, whisked; ¼ cup fresh continental parsley, chopped; 1 tsp salt; ¾ can corn (400g can), drained; olive oil; sour cream; shallots finely cut for garnish

Method

Wash zucchini and trim ends. Coarsely grate zucchini. Place in colander, squeeze out excess moisture. Transfer to bowl. Stir in self-raising flour, garlic, egg, parsley, salt and corn. Heat 2-3 teaspoons olive oil in non-stick frying pan over medium-high heat. Scoop tablespoon of zucchini batter for each fritter into pan. Fry until each side is golden brown and cooked through. Transfer to plate lined with paper towels. Repeat with olive oil and remaining batter. Serve topped with sour cream and shallots.

Hearts for the homeless



The Salvation Army thanks the little fundraisers.

Kids can make a difference — just ask seven-year-old Isla and her four-year-old sister Emma. They raised about \$400 for The Salvation Army after seeing homeless people on Melbourne’s city streets. The sisters were so impacted by the sight of people sleeping rough that they gathered their neighbourhood friends to come up with a fundraiser — creating and selling wheat bags. The sisters and their friends — Anika (8), Grace (7), Myriam (6), Imogen (6) and Molly (5) — made 50 wheat bags and sold them to friends and family. “In Isla’s words, the girls felt ‘proud of themselves’ and they hope the money ‘can be used to make people more comfortable,’” said the girls’ mother, Melinda.

Tip for the race of life

“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful.”

1 Corinthians chapter 13, verses 4-5

Wordsearch

E L D E R L Y H Y A T D T C T
 W R E O I E T T C R S T A O N
 O Y I V O U I C O K T D G N E
 R V R V O N E P Z L O V E N M
 K Q R Y U P P Y G P S L S E T
 P T A M T U H L T Z A I Z C I
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|------------|------------|
| COMMUNITY | MARRIED |
| FAMILY | FOSTER |
| CONNECTION | SUPPORT |
| ACCEPTANCE | WORKPLACE |
| LOVE | TRIBE |
| FRIENDS | TRUST |
| RELATIVES | CHILDREN |
| ADOPTION | YOUTH |
| NEIGHBOURS | ELDERLY |
| HOUSEHOLD | NURTURE |
| SINGLE | COMMITMENT |

Quick quiz



1. When is World Radio Day?
2. What is radio as a medium famous for?
3. What is the theme for World Radio Day 2020?
4. How many community radio stations are there in Australia?
5. How do you access Salvos Radio?

Tum-Tum



On which page of this week's *Warcry* is Tum-Tum hiding?

Answers: 1. 13 February 2. It is globally the most consumed medium. 3. Uphold diversity. 4. More than 400. 5. <https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/radio/>
 Tum-Tum: is peeking out from a ceiling tile on page 13.

Want to know more?

Visit warcry.org.au/want-to-know-more or return the coupon to Warcry, PO Box 479, Blackburn VIC 3130.

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- to learn more about who Jesus is
- information about The Salvation Army
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