

REVIEW

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beyond Santa*

FAITH TALK

*'Tis the season
to be lonely*

MY STORY

*I finally
got there!*

Tackling family violence head on

Salvos program assisting men to take
responsibility and change behaviour



SALVOS

MAGAZINE



**“There is no improving
the future without
disturbing the present.”**

Catherine Booth

Co-founder, The Salvation Army





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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got there!

Orange the world

We are nearing the end of the United Nations 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, which began on 25 November. The theme for these days is based around 'Orange the World', with orange symbolising a future free of violence.

The Salvation Army is one of many agencies responding to the recent increase in the complexity of women's experiences of family violence through an expansion of support services and programs – such as the Men's Behaviour Change Program. We feature this program in our cover story – how it works, the challenges involved and some of the outcomes.

In 'My story' this week, Trevor also talks about outcomes, and how his life has been changed since he found support during his struggle with addictions, and hope in Jesus.

In 'Faith talk', Sue Davies addresses an issue most of us face at some time in our lives – loneliness. She talks about how easy it can be to feel even more lonely at Christmas time, and shares how she overcomes that in her own life.

For all these stories and more, go to salvosmagazine.org.au

Simone Worthing **Assistant Editor**

Tackling family violence head on

Salvos program assisting men to take responsibility and change behaviour

WORDS SIMONE WORTHING

Since nations around the world, including Australia, retreated inside houses due to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown measures, there has been an increase in the complexity of women's experiences of family violence.

In response, the United Nations 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence – which began on 25 November (The United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) – took as its 2020 global theme: 'Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!' (Orange symbolises a brighter future, free of violence.) The 16 days conclude on 10 December – Human Rights Day.

In Australia, state and national governments

are increasing their funding to help reduce Family and Domestic Violence (FDV), and agencies across different sectors are developing and expanding a range of crisis and support services and programs.

The Men's Behaviour Change Program (MBCP), run by The Salvation Army Family Violence Team in Gippsland, Victoria, is one of those. This program is underpinned by its emphasis on safety and freedom for women and children and those impacted by intimate-family violence.

The MBCP is the only program of its kind delivered by the Salvos that focuses on supporting men who choose to use violence



PHOTO BY JEREMY PERKINS ON UNSPLASH

in intimate-partner relationships. The support assists men to take ownership of, and responsibility for, their behaviour, and learn a different way of relating to their partner(s).

FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

The MBCP operates from a feminist perspective, which sees violence against women and children occurring in a society based on gender inequality, where male dominance and patriarchy is normalised, and men feel entitled to use violence to get what they want.

“As a feminist, I believe in social justice and human rights; that women have the fundamental right to be safe and to make choices about their lives in a society free of danger and fear,” says Meredith, MBCP team leader.

“One woman dies each week from intimate-partner violence, and this is not okay. If it was any other crime, the response would be different. But gender inequality serves a purpose and benefits a lot of people and we need to change this.”

Meredith believes that the program and its teachings have the capacity to enable men who choose to use violence to take responsibility for, and change, their behaviour.

“Most of the men want to be the best version of themselves – they just don’t have the tools, knowledge and understanding of how to do things differently,” she says.

“We work with some incredibly complex men who have serious violence histories and can be extremely dangerous, but we manage the risks. This space is challenging to work in and can be quite sad, but we also find it incredibly rewarding and hopeful.”

Some of the men who attend the program

are mandated by the courts or a corrections order. Some are referred from Child Protection, the police or family violence agencies. Others are self-referring.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

The MBCP team is a small but dynamic one with highly trained and specialised staff. Senior facilitators Martin and Michelle run the men’s groups and work together with each participant. Jen, the Family Safety contact worker, manages the safety of, and supports, the men’s intimate partners or ex-partners, children and other close family members impacted by their violence. The team constantly communicates and works closely together in this challenging and intense environment.

“

One woman dies each week from intimate-partner violence, and this is not okay.

”

When the men are first referred to the program, they are assessed for group readiness. “Some decide it’s not for them, or they’re not ready yet, so we give them something else to work on first, or we work together with them on a particular issue,” explains Meredith. “We also work with those who are ready until a new group starts that they can be a part of.”

The program runs for 22 weeks, with four different groups annually. In non-coronavirus conditions, a maximum of 14 men meet for weekly group sessions with Martin and Michelle for 20 of those weeks. For the ▶



PHOTO BY FIZKES ON ISTOCK

additional two weeks, the men have individual meetings together with both facilitators.

Having one male and one female facilitator is a deliberate choice, with many of the men not having seen before how an equal relationship works.

“It’s important that the group sees a man and a woman modelling a healthy relationship, respectful communication and other behaviours with each other,” explains Martin. “It also creates opportunity for a woman’s voice in the room.”

Michelle explains that, as the only woman in the room, many of the men often don’t have a lot of respect for her during the groups.

“For example, if I speak about something to try to give them some insight, at least one man will try to make out that it’s not right,” she says. “Others will pinpoint something about me and what I’m wearing. That’s them finding it difficult to have a woman in a place of authority.

“I try to put it back on them, to ask why they see it as okay to ask me about what I’m wearing, when they don’t say those things to Martin. They may try to collude with Martin, but we work well together in the group and this behaviour doesn’t divide us.”

PROGRAM CONTENT

The first four weeks of the program focus on how violence impacts women, children, and the men themselves as well.

“We then focus on building skills around anger management, communication, healthy relationships and what a good dad looks like, but we’re still building on the foundation we’ve laid around the concepts of owning behaviour and understanding the impacts of violence,” Martin explains.

For many men, who come from all walks of life, the groups provide a safe space where they can learn from each others’ experiences and perspectives and support each other.

"A lot of them don't have friendships or the skills to develop them, so it's a real privilege to support them through this and see relationships form," shares Michelle. "It's also a privilege to see the men improve in so many ways – their behaviour, mental health and other possible struggles such as with alcohol or other drugs, or homelessness.

"And it's just great when they start bringing issues to the group, asking for help when they don't know what to do and reflecting on their behaviour and its impacts."

PROTECTING WOMEN

After the men are assessed for the MBCP, Jen lets their partners and other close family members know that a family violence worker will reach out to them regarding safety planning for his duration in the program, as well as support and referrals.

"Much of the support we offer is through phone calls – weekly or fortnightly depending on the needs," Jen says. "We spend a lot of time talking and working with intimate partners and family members – the vast majority of whom are women – wherever they are at."

Many of the women Jen works with do not focus on themselves – it's all about their children, partners, or elderly relatives. "This can often take some 'unpacking'", she explains. "It's about ascertaining the women's needs so we can refer them to other services."

OUTCOMES

'Success' for the program is challenging to define and quantify.

"It's not just based on what we see in the men's groups, but also the shared and lived experience of partners and others

directly impacted by the violence," explains Meredith. "It's the level of engagement men show in trying to change their behaviour towards intimate family members and how they talk about and engage with their partners and women in general.

"It's also around how men manage difficulties when they come up, how they utilise support, and how they apply what they have learned."

“

We are all part of the puzzle, and none of our responses stand alone.

”

The MBCP team emphasise that FDV is a social crisis that every sector and government service needs to respond to and work on together.

"We are all part of the puzzle, and none of our responses stand alone," Meredith emphasises.

"We are working hard to make the MBCP the best program it can be, and we would then like to see it expand and rolled out to other Salvation Army services around the country.

"The most important thing, though, is our message to women – 'You are not alone. Help is available and support can be provided in whatever way you need.'"



Scan here for more on family and domestic violence.

Fatman – beyond Santa

An action movie with
some intriguing twists

WORDS MARK HADLEY

Someone once joked with me that if we really believed in Santa, we'd call the cops. What else would you do with a man who sneaks into your house at night, eats your food and warns you, "You'd better watch out!" if you fail to meet his standards? *Fatman* has just that sort of Santa. He doesn't just dole out presents indiscriminately. And in drawing a line, he reminds us there is another figure behind Christmas with exactly the same attitude.

Right up front, readers should be aware that *Fatman* is not your usual family release. Rather, this is a production for the older viewer browsing the action section for their entertainment. There is teen-level violence and adult-level language, so just be cautious of inviting your little elves along for the ride. That said, it's a pretty interesting story about a familiar character.

HARD TIMES

Santa has hit hard times. His operation usually benefits from a healthy government subsidy – his business actually encourages billions in toy sales across the planet. However, the number of deserving kids (and therefore deliveries) is decreasing, and so is his income. So, Santa decides to take on a government contract to build guidance systems for jet fighters, leading to his snowy compound being overrun by military types. Chris Kringle, played by Mel Gibson (pictured



above), is somewhat depressed by this, taking time out to spend time with his pistol and his punching bag. His wife, Ruthy, played by Marianne Jean-Baptiste, encourages him with her cookies and the reminder that, "... we knew what we were getting into." But Chris remains down about the state of kids today. Kids like Billy.

Billy, played by Chance Hurstfield, is a thief, a torturer and a boy with a hitman on speed-dial. When he gets a lump of coal from Santa instead of a present, he takes it very personally. He calls up his private assassin and sets him on the road north, with instructions to come back with the fatman's head. What happens next is more like *Reindeer Games* than *Miracle on 34th Street*.

As we head into the silly season, there's something refreshing about meeting an unlikely Santa like the one Mel Gibson presents. Sure, he possesses the usual heart of gold. His elves tell the soldiers that despite his grim outlook, "It's the giving that keeps him going."



However, Chris' gruff exterior is actually a throwback to Santas of yore, who were stern judges of behaviour. He is good to those who are good, but dismissive to those who are not. He goes out of his way to bring Christmas cheer, yet he is also aware of his constraints.

But this is also a fire-and-brimstone Santa. He menaces one delinquent with the palpable threat, "The fatman's got his eye on you, kid." When the assassin comes knocking, a gun-toting Chris yells, "You think you're the first? You think I got this job because I'm fat and jolly?!" This Santa is not the head-patting grandfather of Coca-Cola ads. He won't let those who think they live, "... outside of morals and consequences" continue with their lack of respect.

FIRST CHRISTMAS

Now, you won't be surprised to learn that such a tale contains no reference to the original gift-giver behind Christmas. God, who gave the world his son in the form of a baby in a manger, is not anywhere to be found among the dialogue or decorations. However, some might say that he is present in Santa's attitude. He, too, it might be pointed out, can be a very threatening character to the

naughty and a blessing to the nice. But if that were only the case, we would all be in a great deal of trouble. Thankfully, Jesus tells us that the very people who realise they are undeserving can expect to receive the most from God:

"Jesus said to them, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners'"
(Mark chapter 2, verse 17).

And, thankfully, unlike Mel's Chris, there are no limitations to his ability to save.



But let's not put away the *Fatman* too quickly this festive season. The reason God created the first Christmas is because we are desperately in need of a saviour. And if we neglect so great a salvation, well, why would we expect to receive anything? If God and the *Fatman* have anything in common, it's this: neither are moral pushovers.



Scan here for more on finding meaning.

'Tis the season to be lonely

The God of new beginnings and second chances

WORDS SUE DAVIES

It has certainly been a tough year! Restrictions have created 'distance' between people. Lockdowns have kept families and friends apart for months at a time.

Recently, I was reminded of the words of a song written more than 50 years ago – "It's the most wonderful time of the year ... It's the hap-happiest season of all." The lyrics tell of the celebrations and activities of families and friends during the Christmas season.

It's a 'feel-good' song that describes the experiences of many people at this time of year. Sadly, though, Christmas can be one of the most difficult periods for people who find themselves alone – with the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic intensifying these experiences. Estrangements within families

occur, addictions contribute to people isolating and there may be the challenges of a first Christmas without a special loved one.

Reality also hits when people realise that their relationships are not as good as they seem to be on the television or in the movies. The emphasis on family, friends and shared good times during the festive season can often contribute to depression and feelings of being unloved – of not belonging.

So, often it can be hard not to feel lonely at this time.

UNIVERSAL LONELINESS

We all feel lonely at some point. The truth is that most of us experience some level of



PHOTO BY MASAOKI KOMORI ON UNSPLASH

disappointment, or lack, in our most intimate relationships.

People make mistakes, let us down, have character flaws, become busy and distracted and we simply don't feel very special.

Even people who seem to have amazing social skills and are the 'life of the party' are often troubled by feelings of insecurity and uncertainty. These are feelings they keep hidden in a lonely place of the soul – the inner world. Everyone has fears and secrets that often only very few people are aware of, and even fewer understand fully and provide comfort for.

“

The Christian faith is not primarily a set of rules to obey ... it is a relationship.

”

At the end of the day, we all need support to cope during these times.

JESUS UNDERSTANDS

My solution is to seek out the presence of God and the reassurances of his love and purposes for my life. The Christian faith is not primarily a set of rules to obey or moral attitudes to adopt – it is a relationship. This reality is the most important element of faith!

Prayer and our constant walking with Jesus can be the answer to the problems we may have with loneliness. Jesus knew the human emotion of loneliness. He hears the cry of our heart. The faintest whisper of one who feels



PHOTO BY BEN WHITE ON UNSPLASH

alone comes before the heart of a loving God who will go to any lengths to comfort his children. He will send people who step up and speak love into our lives. He reminds us of powerful words of songs that touch our dark places.

Through the Bible, God speaks to our hearts – it's his love letter to us!

In Joshua chapter 1 verse 9 we read, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Take firm hold of this promise at this Christmas time – we are not alone.

Major Sue Davies is a Salvation Army officer (pastor) in NSW.



Scan here for more on finding meaning.

I finally got there!

After being retrenched, Trevor struggled with drinking and gambling. Things began to change when he came to The Salvation Army Project 614 in Melbourne – and he was given more than housing and a job – he found hope in Jesus.

WORDS

TREVOR WULF



Trevor with the Salvos' Major Brendan Nottle, co-leader at Project 614 in Melbourne (Photo taken before COVID-19 social-distancing restrictions).

I'm a born-and-bred Victorian, and I came into the world in Dandenong (south-east Melbourne). I'm 63 now.

I had a long-term job with Kodak, starting in 1992, and that was a large chunk of my life until I was retrenched at the end of 2004. I was shocked, because I thought I'd be there until I retired.

At the age of 48, going on 49, I found it hard to get back into the workforce. I had a job at a meat factory that went well until the company went bankrupt.

“

These days I wake up and I am rapt to be alive. Life is good.

”

I wasn't raised as a church person; I used to drink and gamble my money away. I came to the Salvos at Melbourne Project 614* in 2010 because I was broke. They listened to me, understood me and they helped me. That made an impression. I started volunteering the next year.

We used to have Recovery Church (at the Salvos) on a Tuesday night and I started attending, then started going along to the Sunday meetings. I started helping with things.

I gradually became a Christian – it took a while to sink in, and for my life to change. It took time, but I got there – thank God!

In 2013, the Magpie Nest Program** started, and I got housed. The next year, Major Brendan Nottle (co-leader, Project 614) asked

me if I wanted to work for the church as a cleaner. I took him up on the offer, and I have worked and worshipped here ever since.

In 2015, a position opened, working in the cafe; I applied for it and got the role. I later did three years of the night cafe, which was fun. But I wasn't getting any younger, so I asked to go back on the daytime shifts.

God is a big part of my life. These days I wake up and I am rapt to be alive. Life is good. I've recently moved into my own place and I am happy.

As told to Barry Gittins.

** Project 614 is a group of Salvos passionate about supporting those experiencing homelessness in the inner city of Melbourne. Located on Bourke Street in Melbourne's city centre, it welcomes rough sleepers, lonely people and anyone seeking shelter, food and community. The on-site Magpie Nest Cafe provides 1700 meals a week to the vulnerable over breakfast and lunch. During the cold winter months, those with nowhere safe to sleep are welcomed into a warm and secure environment.*

*** Magpie Nest is a partnership between Project 614 and the Collingwood Football Club Foundation. It provides stable and affordable accommodation in a clean and safe environment, where tenants are involved in volunteering in other programs at Project 614 and attend regular house meetings and individual catch-ups.*



Scan here for more on finding meaning.

Pine lime icy poles



PHOTO BY ANDREA REDFORD

Ingredients

¼ cup lime cordial
3 cups diced pineapple

Method

Add cordial and pineapple to blender and blend until smooth.

Use a sieve to strain mixture into a jug. Throw away pulp.

Pour liquid into icy pole moulds – it makes around 6 – leaving about 5 mm at the top.

Freeze overnight.

Have a laugh



PHOTO BY HELLO I'M NIK ON UNSPLASH

I asked my nephew what he thought about the gifts the wise men brought baby Jesus. He replied, "I don't know what presents they brought him, but a Lego set would have been better."

At a nativity play our young grandson watched the three kings deliver gold, frankincense and myrrh and asked, "Is the Franky Scents like aftershave?"

When asked about Jesus, my friend's son said, "Jesus was a king and he wore a crown even though he was a baby. It was a really small crown."

Bible byte

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed."

Psalm 34, verse 18
New Living Translation

5	4			6		1	
	2		3			7	
			1				
		7	4	9		8	2
8				6			1
							4
		9		8	3	1	
				7			
	1		9				3

Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tum-Tum

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



Answers: 1. 10 December. 2. 1948. 3. Humanity. 4. More than 500. 5. Recover better – stand up for human rights.

on page 8.
Tum-Tum: is hiding behind Chris Kringle

2	1	8	9	5	4	6	7	3
3	6	5	1	2	7	4	8	9
6	8	7	9	6	8	1	2	5
4	7	9	6	8	1	5	4	7
6	9	2	8	3	1	5	4	7
8	5	4	2	6	7	3	8	1
1	3	7	4	9	5	8	6	2
7	6	5	1	2	3	4	8	9
9	2	1	3	4	5	2	8	7
5	4	3	7	2	8	9	1	6

Quick quiz



1. When is the United Nations Human Rights Day?
2. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted on that day in which year?
3. This declaration proclaims the inalienable rights of whom?
4. In how many languages is this declaration available?
5. What is the theme for Human Rights Day 2020?

Did you know?

- Bananas are curved because they grow towards the sun.
- Squirrels forget where they hide about half of their nuts.
- Chickens are the closest living relatives to the T-Rex.

Christmas means Wishes

Help bring hope and joy this Christmas. Choose a gift to send to someone in need.

- A meal for someone living rough
- Christmas gift for a child
- Food hampers for struggling families

For every gift you choose, we'll send you a unique Wishes Card to give to your loved ones to show them the wonderful meaning of their Christmas gift. Purchase your Wishes today.

Order by **December 10** to receive your Wishes cards in time for Christmas.



Visit salvationarmy.org.au/wishes



**LEAVE
NO ONE
IN NEED**