

FEATURE
Relationships
for a lifetime

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Shining a light

Life in a very different world

Understanding the impacts of social isolation



SALVOS

MAGAZINE



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*“We delight in the beauty of the butterfly,
but rarely admit the changes it has gone
through to achieve that beauty.”*

— Maya Angelou



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



The Salvation Army Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet and work and pay our respect to Elders, past, present, and future. We value and include people of all cultures, languages, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, and intersex status. We are committed to providing programs that are fully inclusive. We are committed to the safety and well-being of people of all ages, particularly children.

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Social isolation

Over the past two years, the necessary steps to keep people safe through the COVID-19 pandemic have also contributed to social isolation and loneliness for many. Social isolation and loneliness, though, did not start with COVID-19. They have been growing issues in Australia for many years but are often hidden or not understood.

In this edition, Tess shares the social isolation she feels as a carer of elderly parents. The impact of not being seen or understood plays a large role in the stress and isolation she experiences.

Coming from a different angle, Dean Simpson writes about the strong connections a group of teenage boys formed in an initially chaotic Scripture class that helped them develop close and lasting friendships. It is in these friendships that the now men feel most comfortable in discussing their life struggles and fears.

Paul Farthing shares another perspective – that the isolating shame and humiliation we often experience can be transformed by God's affirmation, and glory in us. Glory isn't a word we use every day, but it can have a powerful impact on our lives. Enjoy the read!

Simone Worthing **Assistant Editor**

A lesson for the Scripture teacher

Building relationships that last a lifetime

WORDS Dean Simpson

Many years ago, I volunteered to be a high school Scripture teacher.

After several years of doing youth work for the Salvos, I felt sufficiently fit for the task. I had visions of young students responding to my Bible presentations and enthusiastically joining my church youth group within the first couple of weeks.

“Scripture teaching can’t be that hard,” I thought with a touch of arrogance as I put a lesson plan together. “I’ll tell the kids a story or two from the Bible and then give them a quiz. Easy.”

Now, I’m not sure whether it was my lack of training or that I didn’t bring the right lollies to class, but the Year 9 boys assigned to me simply didn’t want to listen to my lesson plan. In fact, when I handed out worksheets, one of them produced a lighter from his pocket and set his on fire.

It went downhill from there, and a teacher in an adjoining classroom needed to rescue me from behind a desk when the boys started pelting lollies back at me. It was chaotic.

Undaunted, either through wide-eyed naivety or rash bravado, I decided to give it another go the following week. This time, however, I had another plan. Bribe them.

BUILDING TRUST

Basketball was all the rage at the time, so I made the following announcement at the start of the next lesson: “Ok boys, give me one minute of your time, and I’ll give you 39 minutes of basketball.” As most classes were 40 minutes long in those days, the boys

thought that was a pretty good deal and went along with it.

I held the boys’ attention for perhaps 45 seconds, giving them a quick outline of who I was, what I did and why I was there before they rumbled out the door and onto the court in the nearby gymnasium, where I nervously joined them in a rough and tumble game.

The following week, I asked for two minutes of their time, giving them 38 minutes of basketball. This pattern continued, and I felt like I slowly gained an ounce of respect over time. By the end of Term 1, I had gained their attention for 12 minutes. My basketball skills had unwittingly improved out of sight, but, more importantly, I felt I had built a small bridge of trust with the boys.

“

A teacher in an adjoining classroom needed to rescue me ... when the boys started pelting lollies back at me.

”

By mid-year, I managed to broker a 50-50 deal – 20 minutes in class and 20 minutes on court. But it was a hard slog. Just when I thought I’d made some progress during my few precious minutes of class time, one of them would break wind or fall off his chair or make a smart comment that resulted in an uproar.



One of the students produced a lighter from his pocket and set fire to the lesson plan during the Scripture class.

In desperation, I enacted another plan. Ask God for help. So, I prayed.

It wasn't until I handed over the class to God, and let him lead, that an amazing transformation occurred. The boys started to ask questions. Not simple questions. Hard questions. Questions about life, about their stresses and anxieties, about God and faith, about war and death, and the big question: where was God and what was he doing about all the world's problems?

So, we talked. Openly. Each boy began sharing from his heart, and, in some ways, the boys took the lead. They'd come up with a subject or a question, have their say, and I'd give the biblical perspective, focusing on God's love for them. And one day, perhaps a week or two before the end of the school year, they talked until the bell rang. One boy, wide-eyed, suddenly exclaimed: "Hey, we didn't get to play any basketball!"

I retained that class the following year. And it

was an awesome year. Now Year 10 students, the boys shared, they discussed, they argued, and they were unruly at times, but they bonded. I'll never forget the time when a boy's mother died, and when he returned to class all the other boys gave him a huge group hug for five minutes and tears were shed.

Oh, and we never did get back onto the basketball court.

LESSON LEARNED

Years later, I ran into one of the boys, now grown up, and he told me that many of this class were still in contact with each other. He shared that he had a deeper relationship with them than some of his other friends: "I just find it easy to talk about life with them," he told me. "And we just support each other on another level when life gets tough. Sometimes, you know, I think it all stemmed from that Scripture class."

And then it all made sense to me. My original lesson plan was exactly that – my plan. But God ►

had other plans for that class. I wanted instant success as a Scripture teacher, but, really, I had no idea. God simply wanted me to hand over that class to him, have patience and facilitate relationship and connection with the boys.

The Bible says something about this: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord. "Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11).

What's your plan in life? Are you forging ahead by yourself, or is God leading the way? Hand your plans over to God, and you'll be amazed at what he'll do with them.



PHOTO BY STEVEN ABRAHAM ON UNSPLASH



Scan here for more on finding meaning.

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Social isolation and loneliness

Over the past two years, Australians have been put under significant strain. The necessary steps to keep people safe throughout the COVID-19 pandemic have led to many becoming isolated from their social communities and experiencing feelings of loneliness. Although a huge effort was made to move activities online and maintain connection despite lockdowns, not everyone felt connected and included.

Of course, social isolation and loneliness did not start with COVID-19. It has been a growing issue in Australia for some time, but it is largely hidden and not well understood.

We know that lonely people have a higher risk of developing mental ill-health, particularly depression and anxiety. This can start a feedback loop, as people who are anxious or feeling depressed may isolate themselves further as a coping mechanism. Loneliness can have other implications too, including poorer physical health, pain and sleep disorders and even gastrointestinal disease.



Lonely Australians are **15.2 per cent** more likely to be depressed and **13 per cent** more likely to be anxious.



Recent statistics suggest **55 per cent** of respondents had felt lonely since the start of the pandemic in 2020.



Men are twice as likely to experience isolation and loneliness (**males 38 per cent to females 18 per cent**), and those that live alone are significantly more likely to experience loneliness.

What we can do?

AS A NATION

- » **We can elevate addressing social isolation and loneliness as a policy priority.** Other nations have created a ministerial portfolio for the issue of loneliness. Such a role in Australia could lead a national discourse on the issue and help drive action across all parts of our society.

AS A STATE OR TERRITORY

- » **We can make sure that service delivery is holistic and focuses on wellbeing.** As many of us access government services, we can design and implement services in a way that strengthens social connection rather than pushing people experiencing family and domestic violence, homelessness, substance abuse and mental ill-health into isolation and loneliness.

AS A COMMUNITY

- » **We are in the driver's seat for addressing social isolation and loneliness.** This might involve dedicated outreach to attract more participants to events or activities or checking in and building deeper connections with currently active members. To foster connection, social programs need to be welcoming to a broad cohort and flexible and adaptable to the needs of a specific community.

AS INDIVIDUALS

- » **We can reach out.** If we're open to building a connection with new people and welcoming new people into our circles, we can make a huge difference to the social connection of the people in our lives.

Life in a very different world

Understanding the impacts of social isolation

In the next two editions, *Salvos Magazine* will be talking to different people who are experiencing social isolation. Sadly, the number of those struggling with isolation is growing. These people come from all walks of life and backgrounds and are usually not seen, or known about, in their own communities. We begin with Tess, a carer in NSW.

Salvos Magazine: Could you share a brief overview of your role as a carer?

Tess: I care for both my parents, who are from a non-English speaking background, as their primary enduring guardian and full-time carer. My father is 95 and my mother is 87. They both live at their home around the corner from my house, and have many serious health conditions, including dementia.

SM: Has being a carer contributed to feelings of social isolation?

T: Yes. Sometimes I feel alienated as the stress it causes and the pressure I carry make

me feel as though others don't understand me. Sometimes I can't travel or attend social activities, and when having to cancel these, take time off work or take time out for myself from exhaustion, it makes me feel as though others may also judge me as making excuses.

“

Take time to listen and to try to understand.

”

SM: How would you describe what it's like to be socially isolated?

T: It feels as though your experiences alienate you from the common person and their experiences, and so you are not relating properly to each other. I feel like I may not be maintaining solid friendships due to my attention being constantly interfered with as a carer.

SM: What impact does social isolation have on you mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physically?

T: I have experienced periods of depression and absolute burnout a few times throughout the last decade. I have felt intense fear and dread at times, and all this has caused what has been diagnosed as 'compounded trauma' from years of high stress caring for my parents. This has recently also manifested



PHOTO BY DANIELE FRANTICO ON UNSPLASH



Many carers who look after elderly parents often face their own physical and emotional health issues.

physically, causing heart issues and chronic illness. The impact has also been on my husband and daughter. They both experience the stress with me and also suffer as I am absent for such long periods caring for my parents.

SM: What are some of the biggest challenges in your current circumstances?

T: Having to make big decisions for my parents in case of serious illness or crisis. Being always on high alert, that causes increasing stress and constant adrenalin surges, which are not conducive to physical health. My health issues are now impacting my caring role as I need to 'step back' from the role to address my health, while my parents' care needs are increasing dramatically. Other challenges include the language barrier with both of them, and my mother's dementia, which contributes to all kinds of

further challenges with doctors, hospitals and care support.

SM: What help or support would assist you in what you are facing?

T: Time with God and his Word, family and friends providing me either physical or emotional support, and local services to be reliable and responsive.

SM: What would you like people to know about those who are socially isolated?

T: Take time to listen and to try to understand. They could be experiencing a very different world from your own.



Scan here for more on mental health.

The affirmation crisis

The way out of humiliation and shame

WORDS Paul Farthing

As I was taking my twin boys to their first day at school this year, I had a flashback to the fifth grade. Our teacher made us do a creative writing piece, which I was quite happy about because I liked writing. So, we wrote these stories, handed them in and went out for recess.

When we came back, I saw that the teacher had made photocopies of my creative writing piece and gave one to every class member. She then announced, "This story has the worst spelling and grammar of all the creative writing pieces I've gotten all year. So, as a learning exercise, we as a class are going to go through it and correct every mistake."

It was absolutely humiliating. Super, super humiliating.

The thing about humiliation is that we manage to remember it so easily – every gruesome detail. I can barely remember anything about primary school, but I remember plenty of humiliations – getting out for a duck playing cricket in the playground, calling my teacher "Mum" by accident, and, of course, the time my teacher passed around my poorly written creative writing piece. I'm sure nobody else remembers all these things ... but I do.

Being humiliated make us feel ashamed and worthless. We become anxious that a new humiliation might be coming soon. We get beaten down by humiliation, and it's a sad truth that once we get beaten down in life, it is extremely hard to get back up.

So, what can we do about this? How can we feel decent about ourselves?

The antidote to humiliation is glorification. Glory makes a difference here. To be glorified is to be affirmed significantly. Glorious things inspire awe and delight. They are worthy of praise.

FAMOUS WITH GOD

A while back, I was driving to Newtown (the urban hipster part of Sydney) on a 40-degree day. I had spent the week at the world's dullest conference, and I hoped some time in a record store might lift my spirits.

“

**The thing about humiliation
is that we manage to
remember it so easily.**

”

As I was waiting at some traffic lights, Tim Rogers, the lead singer of You Am I, dashed across the road in front of me. Despite the heat, he wore a purple suit but had no shirt on, so his chest hair was glistening in the sun. He was tall, and his long hair was blowing in the wind like a lion's mane. He was bold and exuberant. As I watched him, my spirits lifted, and I thought, "Wow, look at this fella, he is magnificent!" I covered him in glory.

In the Gospels, when Jesus spoke of being crucified, he said he was "going to his glory", and he was. To give your life for others is always a praiseworthy thing. Sacrifice is glorious, and this was the great sacrifice.



Humiliation can make us feel ashamed and worthless, but there is a way out. It just takes a leap of faith.

Then Jesus was resurrected, which made him even more glorious. A sacrificial death and then resurrection is an incredible thing. Magnificent indeed. From then and forevermore, Jesus lives covered in glory as our Saviour, as our way-maker, as our hope. He is truly glorious.

NOT YOUR REGULAR GLORY

But here is the mind-bending part. This is the good news part. In John chapter 27, just before Jesus went to the cross, he prayed to God. He prayed that the people who followed him would be glorified just as he was. That what he did on the cross was done on behalf of those who follow him and that they too would be glorified.

Jesus was glorified so that we could be glorified.

C.S. Lewis said that to receive the glory of God is to be famous with God. It means God can look upon us with even greater delight than I felt when I saw Tim Rogers in his purple suit. That God would see us like he sees Jesus. Glorious. Magnificent in his eyes.

But Lewis concedes that this might not seem all that great at first. Most of us have

received an accolade or two, and they don't seem to stick as easily as the humiliations. Affirmation is a temporary high. It is a fickle thing. Humiliation seems to tear us down faster than glory builds us up. Humiliation is more potent than glory.

But this isn't regular glory. This is God's glory. God is the true judge of our worth, and he judges us to be glorious.

Jesus died for you. He gave his life so that you could be glorified. Believe in Jesus. Trust in the Saviour, and the next time a past humiliation pops into your head, it will shiver at the sight of God's great glory.

Do you need more convincing? For the full version, go to others.org.au/viewpoint/paul-farthings-glorification-viewpoint

Captain Paul Farthing is a Salvation Army officer (pastor) in NSW.



Scan here for more on finding meaning.

Shining a light

After experiencing care and compassion from the Salvos, Elena* is now a guiding light to domestic violence survivors

WORDS Elena

Growing up as the oldest child in a European family, I was taught to be seen and not heard, to do as I was told, to suppress every negative emotion and to portray a happy and perfect life.

Bullied at school for being the chubby kid caused me a lot of hateful self-talk and emotional detachment, and as a result, I had low self-esteem and no self-worth. To deal with my life and its challenges in my late teens to mid-thirties, I chose the path of drugs to numb my stress and dull my emotions.

I avoided relationships, working in the corporate world and partying hard for 20 years.

At 35, on a drug-fuelled weekend, I thought I had met my Prince Charming, my soulmate. How wrong I was! I was unable to recognise the monster lurking behind the charm, and the emotional, physical and sexual abuse slowly crept in after I had my daughter two years into the relationship.

WALKING ON EGGSHELLS

When my partner became violent, it felt like I was walking on eggshells. It was such a toxic and abusive relationship – he was narcissistic and controlling, and I was subjected to gaslighting, manipulation, stalking, verbal abuse, drug abuse and his blatant affairs. I was like a zombie – I had no soul.

In 2017, one woman was killed every nine days in Australia as a result of domestic violence, and I could have easily been one of those statistics. Easter Sunday was the day that changed my life – it was the day I left my abuser.

I escaped with a three-year-old and a five-month-old, carrying just the bag I had packed for that day. Seeking shelter at my parents' home was not an option – "What would the neighbours think?" – so I went into crisis accommodation for one week. Options then included a women's refuge, friends or family, or going back to my abuser. Offers of a spare couch or a room with friends often came with strings attached. When I sensed I had overstayed my welcome, I would move on to the next friend.

Domestic violence is very real, frightening and traumatising, and anyone can be a victim. I never thought it would happen to me. I never imagined that I would need to escape from a violent relationship, that my family and friends would turn their backs on me, or that my children and I would become homeless.

IN DEEP DARKNESS

Mentally I was in the deepest, darkest hole, dealing with postnatal depression, high anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and drug addiction. I couldn't see any way out of that frightening darkness.

In December 2017, light and hope came to pierce that darkness – a phone call I remember as my Christmas miracle. It was Judy from The Salvation Army, with life-changing news about transitional housing and case management.

The Salvos accepted me, and Judy saw me not as a victim, a drug addict or a worthless nobody. I was shown care and compassion, and for the first time in my life someone said I was worthy and deserving of a better future.



The Salvos assist women like Elena to work through their trauma, embark on the road to recovery, and rebuild their lives.

Sharon, my Salvos case manager, was wonderful. Over the next year, we built a warm rapport in our weekly sessions – she showed such empathy and assisted me with the support I needed, including referrals, food assistance, clothing, toys, bikes and essential items for the kids, and stable housing. She gave me the courage to work through my trauma by attending programs that helped me embark on my road to recovery.

OPENING DOORS

I am one of countless women who have experienced domestic violence – I lived it and survived it. Recovering from such a horrific experience has become my greatest gift. I learned so many major life lessons when the Salvos opened the door to my journey of healing and where I am today. I am proud to say I am celebrating two years free from addiction.

I have been inspired to use my experience to help others in a similar situation and am now an administrative officer

of the Women's Spirit Project, a volunteer-led initiative of women supporting disadvantaged women to transform their lives through fitness, health and wellbeing activities. I have also completed my Diploma of Community Services to support women who have escaped violent relationships. The Salvos paved the way for me to do this and supported me throughout my studies. Otherwise, I couldn't have done it.

I want to be a driver of change, empower and inspire others through sharing my experience, and reassure those suffering domestic violence that their lives can be transformed and there can be light after the darkness.

**Name has been changed*



Scan here for more information on Salvation Army Family and Domestic Violence Services.

Banana split



PHOTO COURTESY ANDREA REDFORD

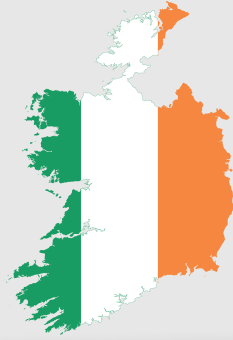
Ingredients

One banana, Neapolitan ice cream (vanilla, strawberry and chocolate flavours), flavoured topping or syrups, canned whipped cream, raspberry lollies, sprinkles and/or chopped nuts (optional).

Method

- Cut the banana in half lengthways and place on a long plate or shallow dish.
- Place one scoop each of vanilla, strawberry and chocolate ice cream between the 'split' banana.
- Drizzle ice-cream toppings or syrups of your choice over the ice cream and banana.
- Top each scoop of ice cream with a squirt of whipped cream. You may like to squirt some additional whipped cream around the dish, too.
- Finish off your banana split with a raspberry lolly on top of the cream on each scoop of ice cream. Scatter with sprinkles and/or nuts.

HAVE A LAUGH



What country has the fastest growing population?
Ireland. It's Dublin every year.

An electrical fault at the zoo saw the entire tortoise population electrocuted.
It was a turtle disaster.

Germany has just warned its population of an upcoming sausage and cheese shortage.
They are calling it the wurst käse scenario.

SIGNING IN



PHOTO: STOCK / GETTY IMAGES

Sudoku

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

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

Tum-Tum

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



Bible byte

"Love your neighbour as you love yourself."
 Matthew chapter 22 verse 39
Good News Translation

Quiz answers: 1. Vatican City 2. China 3. 27 per cent
 4. Niger 5. Japan 6. 31
 Tum-Tum: is hiding in a pocket on page 5.



PHOTO: STOCK / GETTY IMAGES

1. Which country has the smallest population?
2. Which country has the largest population?
3. Millennials make up approximately what percentage of the world's population?
4. What country currently has the youngest population of any country in the world?
5. What country has the oldest population?
6. What is the median age of the global population?

DID YOU KNOW?

World Population Day is on 11 July.

It aims to raise awareness about the impact of a growing population, including gender equality, family planning, poverty, maternal health and human rights.

The first World Population Day was marked in 1990 in more than 90 countries.

In 2011, the world reached a population of 7 billion. Next year the number is expected to hit 8 billion.

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

Have you taken care of your Will?



A gift in your Will can help The Salvation Army create a long-lasting impact in the lives of those experiencing hardship.

Together, we can give hope where it's needed most and you can start or continue your legacy of generosity.

For information or a free copy of Your Will booklet



Please contact:

salvationarmy.org.au/wills
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