

Vol. 138 | No. 18
4 May 2019
AUD \$1.00
warcry.org.au
Print Post Approved
PP100001474



WARCRY

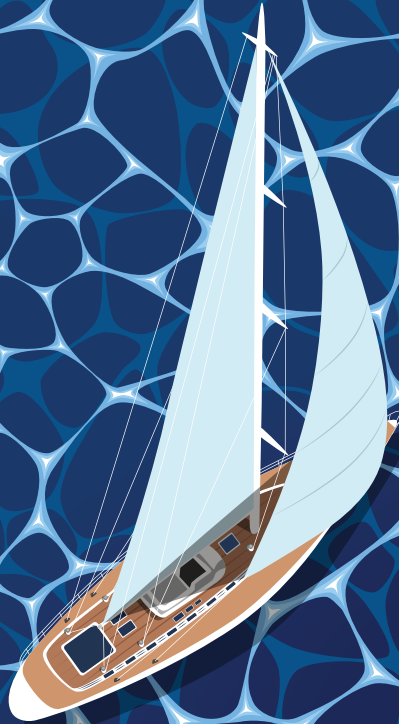
CULTURE & SPIRITUALITY

Setting sail on a
mission of mercy



*"You can never cross the ocean unless you
have the courage to lose sight of the shore."*

Christopher Columbus, 1451 – 1506, explorer





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

WARCRY

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Printed and published for The Salvation Army by Commissioner Floyd J. Tidd at Focus Print Group, Keysborough, Victoria

Press date 18 April 2019

 warcry.org.au

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From the editor

When Salvo chaplain PJ Hopkins, featured in this week's magazine, decided to volunteer with Mercy Ships, he wasn't hearing the call of the sea. He was responding to the call of God, leading him to serve on a hospital ship taking medical care to some of the world's poorest nations.

Ben also heard God calling him — out of despair into new, hope-filled life. He tells us about his tough journey overcoming addiction and depression (pages 12 and 13), and of how God led him to people who showed him love at a time when he didn't even have the will to live.

Is God calling you? The writer of Psalm 81, verse 5, puts it so beautifully: "I hear this most gentle whisper from One I never guessed would speak to me" (The Message).

Are you hearing God call? Listen to him; your life will be transformed.

Faye Michelson **Assistant Editor**

Sailing to a mission of mercy

May is the month to help Mercy Ships take surgical and medical care to some of the poorest nations in the world.

BY FAYE MICHELSON



PJ Hopkins felt he needed a break after 11 years of working with a NSW Salvation Army drug and alcohol rehabilitation program, so in 2006 he got on a ship and headed for the sea.

The next five years on board as a volunteer with Mercy Ships started an affiliation with the charity that continues to this day.

Mercy Ships is an international Christian organisation that has operated hospital ships in developing nations since 1978.

With more than 50% of the world's population living within 160 km of the coast, the ship takes free, world-class medical care directly to people who otherwise have no access to health services.

Mercy Ships has worked in more than 70 countries, providing services valued at about \$1.3 billion to more than 2.6 million direct beneficiaries. Each year, around 1,200 volunteers from around the world serve with Mercy Ships, including surgeons, dentists, nurses, health care trainers, teachers, cooks, seamen, engineers and agriculturalists.

PJ says he was drawn to Mercy Ships because it offered the opportunity of "Christian mission and compassionate adventure".

"I saw God's work in the two hands of the Gospel — spiritual and practical — the same ethos as The Salvation Army," he says.

After completing a three-month training program for long-term volunteers, PJ worked with a team in the Dominican Republic, served at the US International Support Centre, and joined the crew of the hospital ship *Anastasis*. He served first as dining room manager, then as





a chaplain, putting to good use his counselling and theology qualifications.

He later served on board the *Africa Mercy* in West Africa; as senior chaplain, PJ and his team of three chaplains cared for the spiritual needs of more than 400 volunteer crew members.

He describes their work as being similar to church pastors, “except our congregation was all live-in”.

“Shipboard living can be a challenge — issues included homesickness, denominational conflict, compassion fatigue, disillusionment over the needy people we could not help, cabin and workplace conflicts, and the challenges of living in a confined community,” he says.

“Many of us were not just living on a ship, we were doing so long-term and a long way from home — a whole lot different to holiday cruises. Cabin fever is real and prayer is necessary.”

PJ says all who serve with Mercy ships are there with the desire to meet the needs of the world's poorest nations in Africa, following the example of Jesus to bring hope and healing to the poor.

“I saw God's work in the medical and maritime technology that humans built with the gifts of intellect, imagination and dexterity that he gave us,” he recalls.

“God's work was also in both the many minor and occasional major miracles arising from our medical ministry. Most importantly, though, I saw God's work in reminding us that we are all equal in God's eyes.

“Kitchen assistants and deck hands communed with specialist surgeons, electrical engineers and even chaplains, from all around the world. We came together to work in God's name in the African countries, to help in the name of Jesus as a way of explaining our beliefs, giving thanks for the change in our lives ►

and living out those lives with a sense of thankfulness.”

PJ says he knows what it's like to live without an understanding of God. There was a time when circumstances and personal tragedy led him to drown his sorrow and anger with drink until it took over his life.

“I lost everything — home, friends, family, self-respect, reputation. At 39, with no wish to live, out of money and no home, I became aware of The Salvation Army's drug and alcohol rehabilitation program,” he says.

“When it came to a choice of living on a park bench, I chose the program. God was gracious and I started to listen. I eventually embraced Jesus into my life as God and Saviour.”

PJ worked with The Salvation Army as a volunteer, went back to university and became program director of three centres, including the one he had entered as a client. After concluding his volunteer

service with Mercy Ships, he returned to Australia and Salvo work in 2011 as a court chaplain. In 2015 he rejoined the Salvos recovery services as program manager at a new addiction recovery facility for Indigenous clients on the Gulf Coast of northern Queensland.

PJ served also served on Mercy Ships board of directors for several years, remaining a supporter of the organisation. When his contract as facility manager expired, he says his idea was to spend his “remaining useful years working directly with clients as a caseworker at Dooralong Transformation Centre (NSW)”.

“I am now past retirement age, but have no plans to retire,” he smiles.

Africa Mercy is currently docked in Conakry, Guinea where it will serve until June. Mercy Ships Australia is based on the Sunshine Coast (Qld).

For more information about Mercy May, visit www.mercyships.org.au



Grounds for employment

BY JESSICA MORRIS

Many people will tell you that a cup of coffee is the best way to start the day. For residents of a Salvation Army Housing centre in Hobart, a cup of coffee is actually kickstarting their lives.

Coffee Ground, an employment program in the Tasmanian capital, is giving people from The Salvation Army Housing centre in Campbell Street workplace training to prepare them for paid employment.

Hobart Lord Mayor Anna Reynolds and legendary cricketer David Boon launched the Coffee Ground initiative in March at the Campbell Street centre, where 30 support workers and clients celebrated with — what else? — a cup of coffee.

It is a much-needed gateway to employment for residents; 70% of them are on a disability support pension, and many have been unable to find sustainable employment for years.

“These are people that have been shelved by employment agencies and employers, but we are helping them back into the workplace,” said Anthony Fagan, program manager at Campbell Street.

Coffee Ground is a collaborative initiative between The Salvation Army, CVGT Disability Employment Services, TAFE and Hobart City Council.

The program provides workplace and hospitality training and a TAFE accreditation. Many participants will go on to be employed at The Salvation Army’s



Hobart Lord Mayor Anna Reynolds, former Test cricketer David Boon and The Salvation Army Housing Campbell Street program manager Anthony Fagan at the coffee cart.

Campbell Street centre coffee cart.

“Working with Coffee Ground provides a connection between a cohort of people who live in social housing and people who live in the wider Hobart community,” Anthony said.

“Our clients are providing something for others and are doing that in the context of being gainfully employed, thereby increasing their resources, self-esteem, identity and purpose. This is going to bring an otherwise disenfranchised people closer in line with people who are walking up and down the street wearing suits and ties.”

Funded through grants from the Mercy Foundation and Hobart City Council, Anthony said the program reflected the positive collaboration between organisations and services in the city.

“This was developed with a whole lot of determination from individuals, but it was also a great exercise in developing partnerships.”

Getting religion

Documentary gives a reality check on what it means to be a Christian in Australia.

BY MARK HADLEY



"Christianity in Australia is in crisis ... rocked by sex scandals ... dogged by internal battles ... struggling against the tide of public opinion ... and battling to get bums on seats."

The hype is undeniable, the cynicism palpable — and both tell you the first thing you really need to know about *Christians Like Us* (SBS On Demand). This two-part documentary series is produced by a mainstream media company working from a secular viewpoint. The question is: has it captured a fair picture of Jesus' Australian followers?

Ten people from various Christian standpoints spend a week living together in close quarters. As the narrator summarises, "They all believe in God, but that might be the only thing they agree on."

As strong views clash, passionate claims surface and emotions boil over, the audience is asked to judge whether there's any validity in the faith they hold.

Christians Like Us is the creation of

Australian production house CJZ, and the follow-up to *Muslims Like Us*. CJZ's Head of Factual is Andrew Farrell, whose credits include *Big Brother* and *My Restaurant Rules*, and not surprisingly, the show's structure has much in common with reality TV. Video crews constantly probe into personal moments, the participants make 'confessions' to camera, and the narration divides the cast into two groups emotively described as 'conservatives' and 'progressives'. Conflict is the show's guiding light.

The producers haven't attempted to represent the balance of Christianity in Australia today, so much as the variety of positions it apparently embraces. The house is stocked with polar opposites: a pastor who believes in the Bible's teaching on sexuality, and an openly gay man; a female priest, and young woman who embraces male leadership; a catholic teacher who encourages guilt-free sex, and a Coptic Orthodox man saving himself for marriage. The decision to include a man abused by an Anglican priest gives rise to deeply sympathetic scenes, but it's also symptomatic of CJZ's



attempt to mine the show for emotional pay-offs instead of serious discussion.

Religious consultants were involved; however this hasn't prevented the show from making some glaring errors concerning Christian beliefs, including the basis for their salvation:

"For most Christians, entry to heaven is the ultimate reward for a virtuous life on Earth."

The cross, it seems, is merely a decoration, and the Jesus who died on it to save people rarely gets a mention. Instead, *Christians Like Us* focuses its attention on his earthly representatives, summarised under the catch-all phrase 'the Church'. And it's at this point the show lands its most accurate blows.

All participants agree that Jesus' followers could have done much better displaying his love to its members and the marginalised. Chris, the gay man, says he still 'loves Jesus' but believes the treatment Christians have meted out to the homosexual community make persecution claims ring hollow. Steve, the man abused as a child, believes the Church is largely reaping what it has sown: "...they cover this stuff up and refuse to accept the consequence of it. And they've destroyed themselves in the process."

These are only two of the things that *Christians Like Us* rightly calls believers to repent of. The list expands to include using the Bible as a cudgel, passing off scare tactics as evangelism and, probably most sadly, failing to speak the truth in love. Evangelist Steve Chong, also a housemate, admits most believers fail to combine Jesus' confronting message with his undeniable compassion: "We've

lost the art of being able to disagree and do so while being entirely loving."

Yet, the greatest failure of communication probably rests in the show's title. 'Christian' is an extremely loose term. It stretches to cover those who trust in the sacrifice of Jesus, to those who say they can't believe in God. "I do think it's a little hypocritical for anyone to put a label on what Christianity looks like," says Mormon, Hanna, "because every Christian faith is different." In *Christians Like Us*, that faith includes those who see the Bible as God's roadmap to salvation and those who see it as emotional stories not meant to be taken literally.

Most of all, a Christian is not constrained by a set of teachings, but is primarily responsible to the calling of their heart. "People can believe whatever they want to believe," says Anglican priest Tiffany, "but those beliefs can't impact negatively on other people."

What, in fact, would Jesus say? "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me" (Luke chapter 9, verse 23); "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew chapter 7, verse 21); "I am the way, the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except by me" (John chapter 14, verse 6).

His definitions aren't hard to find, and I don't doubt they'd provide all the conflict the producers require — just none of the comfort. Yet, they supply the warning, challenge and certainty we so desperately need.

A snap decision

A new approach can nail a tricky situation.

BY FAYE MICHELSON



The huge manta ray glided literally centimetres above our heads, and it was hard not to react when the long shark moved slowly by, so close you could count its teeth. Standing underneath the huge arc of the aquarium's acrylic ceiling was awe-inspiring, giving us a panoramic view of the underwater wonderland.

We had taken two young members of our family along to meet the fish and other marine creatures. One of them embraced the adventure, dipping her hands into the display rock pools to touch sea stars and swirl the sand around. The other little friend, however, was far more interested in her thumb. The nail had split a little, and her attention was focused on moving it around, chewing it and trying to pull it off.

We tried to distract her by pointing out the exciting creatures in each tank. "Look at these sea dragons — how little are they?", "Wow, how big/colourful/pretty is that?", "Aren't the penguins fast swimmers?" and, finally, "For goodness sake, leave your thumb alone and look at the fish!"

The niggling annoyance of her thumbnail absorbed all her attention, and seemed much more important than the chance to glimpse another, beautiful world. It was frustrating to see her missing out on such a lovely experience because of something so minor.

That's when we had our brilliant idea. The phone. Or, to be more accurate, the phone's camera. I knew she loved taking photos and videos on her mum's phone, so I handed her mine.

"Why don't you take some pictures to show Mum and Dad when you get home?" I suggested.

Immediately distracted from her troublesome thumb, she took the phone and started snapping images (hundreds of them, actually), pausing occasionally to look at a few on the screen, eager to show us what she had taken. Now she was part of the experience, her sore thumb forgotten; she'd just needed encouragement to try a new way of looking at things.

How easy is it to be so preoccupied with an issue or to get stuck in a cycle of being busy/worried/angry/anxious that there's no space to enjoy the present?

A change in routine, a different way of looking at an issue, a new approach to a life that seems to have lost its joy — most of us need a bit of help now and then to climb out of a rut that threatens to stifle our lives.

If you need to break the cycle, take a breather, or start again. Consider the words from the writer of Psalm 46, verse 10 — "Be still and know that I am God". Stopping to connect with God by reading the Bible or praying — just another word for talking to him — is a great starting point to give you a new perspective on life.

If you need someone to help you, call in to your local Salvation Army corps (church). Go to: www.salvationarmy.org.au/get-involved/your-local-salvos

Making the long journey out of despair

Ben's life of hope began when he went to a Salvation Army recovery centre.

I grew up in a broken family — I was a ward of the state until I was 18 years old. I went into foster care with my sister when I was about 10 years old; my sister was only one. My father was a career criminal in Melbourne and my mother suffered because of that. It broke the family and she wasn't able to look after us.

I got through schooling, struggled through my teenage years, and was a rebellious kid. Long story short, I did jump into crime, living on the streets in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. Years later, while I was working around Brisbane in different jobs I had a really bad work accident.

I was crushed by 3.5 tonnes of steel, which nearly took my leg off and almost took my life. I just made it to hospital. Now I have a piece of equipment internally wired to my spine and my leg, and a battery and hard drive to function my right my leg.

Prescription drugs, depression and drinking took over my life and I became a completely broken person and soul. I lost my wife, my house, everything I'd worked for — I lost everything. I gave up the will to live. I had mental health issues, thought of suicide and was in and out of hospital.





A nurse who was checking up on some head injuries I'd got from a fight one week said to me, "Benny, you're not going to see the week out. Would you go to rehab?"

My answer was, "Why would I?" She said, "If I can get you into rehab will you go?"

So I went to rehab and said to God, "Okay, let's see what comes from this. I'll give it everything I've got. Let's see what you've got for me; that was my attitude. I went on a 10-month program at the Salvos' Moonyah Recovery Service in Brisbane and had a wonderful caseworker.

During my time at Moonyah I also had some support from the Salvos' Brisbane Streetlevel Mission when I was homeless. I met some wonderful people at the Salvos — my first contact was Salvo worker Paul Maunder.

I have a special connection with my spiritual growth there because of the love shown to me when I had no love, and when I had no will to live. I had nothing.

I hadn't even bothered to get Centrelink; I thought I'll just wait till my time's up. But these people showed me love and care and I'm grateful to them for giving me my life.

Watch Ben's story at others.org.au/salvation-stories/bens-story

The Salvation Army is one of Australia's largest providers of alcohol and other drug treatment services. For more information, go to www.salvationarmy.org.au/need-help/addiction-rehabilitation

Streetlevel leader Paul Maunder with Ben

Crispy chicken drumsticks

1 kg chicken drumsticks, wings or drumettes, 2 tbsp baking powder, 2 tsp paprika, ½ cup flour, ½ tsp pepper, 1 tsp salt, barbecue sauce for dipping

Preheat oven to 230°C, line two baking trays with baking paper or foil and brush with oil. Whisk together the baking powder, paprika, flour, pepper and salt in a large mixing bowl.

Wash drumsticks and pat dry (this helps them get extra crispy). Coat each drumstick in flour mixture and shake off excess, place on tray around 2 cm apart. Bake drumsticks for around 30 minutes, turning over after 20 minutes, or until crispy and cooked through. Serve with a barbecue or spicy dipping sauce.



Have a laugh

A nervous traveller arrived at a yacht to embark on his first sea voyage. He looked around the vessel, tentatively walking across the deck to greet the skipper.

“Do yachts like this sink very often?” he asked anxiously.

“Not too often,” replied the skipper. “Usually it’s just the once.”

Tip for the race of life

“When you pass through deep waters I will be with you.”
(Isaiah chapter 43, verse 2)

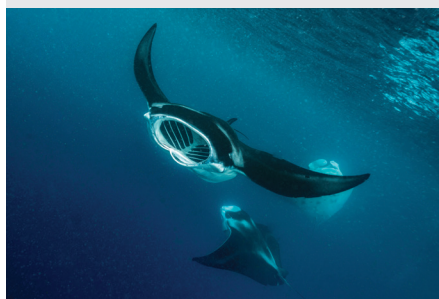
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INTERNATIONAL	TRAINING
MEDICAL	VOLUNTEER

Quick quiz

1. What is a shark baby called?
2. How many teeth does a manta ray have?
3. What sea creature is the seadragon related to?
4. What did Jesus say the disciples would find in the fish's mouth to pay Caesar's tax? (Matthew chapter 17, verses 24-27)



Tum-Tum

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



Answers: 1. Pup 2. 300 (they don't use them to eat)
3. Seahorse 4. Four-drachma coin
Tum-Tum: is hiding in the garden on page 8.

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
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