

## Blessed are those who hunger

### Igniting the fire—The Salvation Army’s Spiritual Life Development initiative

*By Janet Munn, Lt. Colonel—*

I was traveling with a friend by train from London to Southport, England. It was rainy and cold. I saw the fish and chip shop across the street from the train station. We had half an hour to wait for our train. I timidly suggested to my friend that we cross the road for a cup of tea...and some chips. Imagine my delight when her appetite was the same as mine. The joy of a shared hunger and the greater joy of satisfying it together were much better with my friend.



Such has been my experience and the experience of many over the past few years since the establishment in July 2008 of the Centre for Spiritual Life Development (CSLD) on the campus of the International College for Officers in London. Just the announcement of such a place, such a priority, has provided the opportunity for Salvationists to give voice to their hunger—hunger for the Lord, hunger for a fresh touch from the Holy Spirit, hunger for time to go deeper in Christ, in the Word, with the body, the people of God. And finding in that hunger, that others are hungry, too!



Delegates to the Take Time 2 Be Holy retreat held by the Australia East Territory

### What’s the big idea?

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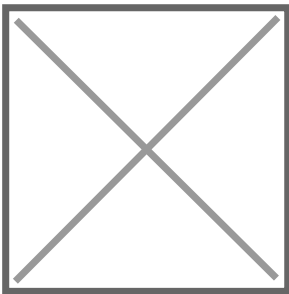
So what is the Centre for Spiritual Life Development? It is a place—but more than that it is a vision. Imagine Salvationists crying out to God day and night in every country around the world where the Army is active. Imagine officers and soldiers, young and old, living holy lives. Imagine bold and adaptive initiatives flowing out of these prayer rooms and holy hearts. Initiatives that reach into the darkest places and bring the Light of Christ! Imagine Salvationists fulfilling our calling to be champions of the poor and vulnerable, and voices for the voiceless. But our exquisite Salvationist mission begins with and is sustained by the life of Christ on the inside of the believer and of believers in community. Hence, the foundational vitality of a Centre for Spiritual Life Development is not so much as a venue but more as a catalyst for ongoing spiritual renewal throughout the Army world.

Here is the mission statement of the CSLD:

The Centre for Spiritual Life Development exists to facilitate the development of the spiritual lives of Salvationists by:

1. Offering conferences and events that are spiritually enriching and that help form people in Christlikeness;
2. Providing resources to cultivate spiritual life development;
3. Encouraging implementation of intentional and systematic opportunities for spiritual growth throughout the international Salvation Army.

### **The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed**



Janet Munn, Lt.  
Colonel

The emphasis being given today to spiritual life in The Salvation Army did not begin in 2008; it originates in the heart of God in the great commandment to love God and worship him wholeheartedly. The Lord Jesus, our Savior, said simply, “*Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness*” (Matt. 6:33). During his term as international leader of The Salvation Army, General Paul A. Rader (Ret.) called the Army to its knees as we entered the new millennium and reminded us of the following:

“Simply put, it is time for us to take more seriously issues related to our inner life. We owe it to our people. It is essential to maintaining the engine of commitment and passion. Our mission is energized

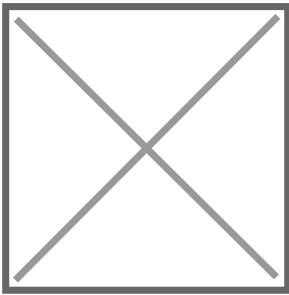
by our spirituality. ...The cultivating and sustaining of the spiritual life of [Salvationists] is paramount” (As quoted in *Called to Be God’s People* by Robert Street).

In 1996, Rader also convened the International Spiritual Life Commission whose report included the recommendation that human resources be given to help prioritize the inner lives of Salvationists. Subsequently, Colonel Earl Robinson was appointed as secretary for spiritual life development for the international Salvation Army and was succeeded by Commissioner Linda Bond. In 2008, I was appointed in this role and since then at least 25 Salvation Army territories have appointed an officer as territorial secretary for spiritual life development, including the U.S.A. Western Territory.

The calls that came from the International Spiritual Life Commission—originally published as a book *Called to Be God’s People* by Robert Street in 1999—are foundational to the ministry of the Centre for Spiritual Life Development. One example is “The Call to the Inner Life”:

*We call Salvationists worldwide to enter the new millennium with a renewal of faithful, disciplined and persistent prayer; to study God’s word consistently and to seek God’s will earnestly; to deny self and to live a lifestyle of simplicity in a spirit of trust and thankfulness.*

This is a call to which our hearts respond, “Yes!” A renewal of prayer? Yes! A renewal of diligence in studying God’s word? Yes! A renewal of simple living? Yes! A shared hunger? Yes!



A time of personal  
commitment to  
holiness

### **Global Call to 24/7 Prayer**

Further evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit among us and across The Salvation Army in every nation is the Global Call to 24/7 Prayer—A Day and Night Cry for Justice. On Jan. 1, The Salvation Army around the world began in 24/7 prayer and will continue indefinitely. This global call comes from the parable of the persistent widow in Luke 18:7-8, where Jesus said:

*“So don’t you think God will surely give justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will grant justice to them quickly!” (NLT)*

And so in obedience to this Holy Spirit invitation, The Salvation Army has entered into a day and night cry for justice. Currently 38 Salvation Army territories are participating in this call. Visit

<https://caringmagazine.org>

SAGlobal247.org for more information and to get a sense of the significant response already taking place—a representation of a deepening spiritual hunger.

If we read about such things in Salvation Army history books, we'd marvel at the zeal and dedication of early day Salvationists. Yet this is happening in our time and Jesus promised greater things. Let's not just remember yesterday's victories but enter into all that God has for The Salvation Army in our day!

### **Beyond what we can ask or imagine**

Earlier in this article we dared to imagine:

Salvationists on their knees all around the world and 'round the clock,

Living holy lives,

Working out bold initiatives that reach into the darkest places with the light of Christ championing the cause of the vulnerable.

Such sanctified imaginings make me hungry. Not for tea and chips but for even more for The Salvation Army. We are coming into our finest hour for although sin is on the increase, grace increases all the more (Rom. 5:20).

At every turn there are signs of deep spiritual hunger in The Salvation Army. The Spirit of God is inviting The Salvation Army to hear afresh the call to become a house of prayer, the place where God makes himself at home. Hear his invitation to you to offer your life as a center for spiritual life development. Receive your hunger for God as his gift to you. Imagine where you'd be without it.

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness—they shall be filled* (Matt. 5:6).

For more information email: [IHQ-CSLD@salvationarmy.org](mailto:IHQ-CSLD@salvationarmy.org) or visit [salvationarmyspiritualife.org](http://salvationarmyspiritualife.org) or [SAGlobal247.org](http://SAGlobal247.org).

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