

## Dry bones!

### BODY BUILDER

by Major Terry Camsey When I was growing up, one of my favorite songs was “Dry Bones.” I just loved the way that when the foot bone connected to the anklebone and on up, the singers lifted the pitch half a tone at a time. Then, reversing the process from the head bone to the neck bone and on down, the singers dropped the pitch half a tone at a time. You could literally see those bodies assembling and disassembling themselves! (Of course, the pops and clicking sounds also added to the drama.)

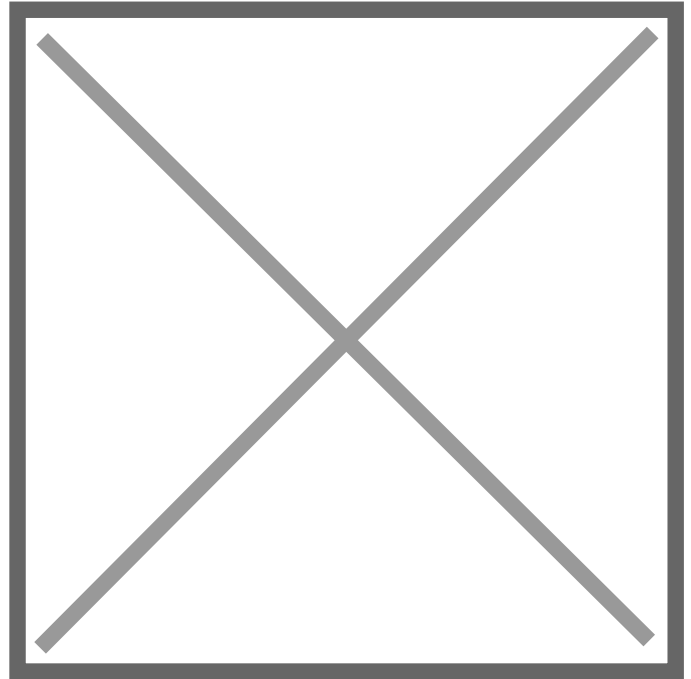
I was thinking about it the other day and, as often happens, one thought led to another and I found myself thinking about the “skeleton army” that used to dog the steps of The Founder’s pioneer Army, attacking and assaulting them. Anyone who has read *The Old Corps*, by Edward Joy, (book on which the Gowans/Larsson musical *Glory* was based) cannot fail to be impressed by the nerve and courage of those early day Salvationists as they prayed, then set out from the barracks knowing the attacks would come. Those pioneers fought for their faith... literally, in some instances, for their lives.

My mind then went to the passage in Ezekiel about the dry bones.

There is a very real “disease” that negatively affects the growth and health of churches. It is known as “St. John’s Syndrome” and is evidenced by a loss of first-love and luke-warmness. It is, basically, a disease that tends to develop among generations following the pioneers and is caused because the belonging is not as costly as it was for the pioneers. A lethargy, apathy, and taking things for granted sets it. It reminds me of the story of the school teacher who wrote in large capital letters on the chalkboard “A-P-A-T-H-Y” then asked students what it meant. One replied, “I don’t know, and I don’t care!”

The Israelites complained (Ezekiel 37) that their bones were dry, their hope was lost and they felt cut off. It can be like that for the church, for an Army of God, when original vision fades and means (methods) become ends in themselves.

Ezekiel encountered God in the valley of dry bones. There were many bones and they were very dry. God asked Ezekiel, “Can these bones live?” Ezekiel responded, “You know!” Then God said:



*Prophesy to these bones and say to them,  
“O dry bones, hear the Word of the Lord! God says, ‘For sure, if you listen to me,  
I will Cause breath to enter you and you shall live...*

*I will put sinews on you, and bring flesh upon you...  
cover you with skin  
And put breath in you and you shall live.  
Then you shall know  
I am the Lord’.”*

Ezekiel did prophesy to the dry bones and, as he did, “The bones came together, bone to bone.” Before his eyes, sinews and flesh came on them...and skin. But no breath. The bones had the appearance of life, but were lying down, still dead. (Without God’s breath within them they had no life of their own.)

God said to Ezekiel, “Prophesy to the breath...and say to the breath, ‘Thus saith the Lord God...Come from the four winds, O breath, and breath on these slain, so shall they live’.” Ezekiel obeyed and breath came into them. They lived and stood on their feet, “An exceeding great Army.”

Then God said, “Tell Israel, ‘I will open your graves and bring you into the Lord of Israel...then you’ll know I am the Lord...I will put my spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land...then you’ll know I have said it and done it’.”

Maybe if we start to pull ourselves together, connecting to each other spiritually (sinews), building ourselves up spiritually (flesh on the bones), trusting God for his protection (skin), and letting him inspire us (breath), God will re-birth us, too. He can if we let him.

Make no bones about it!