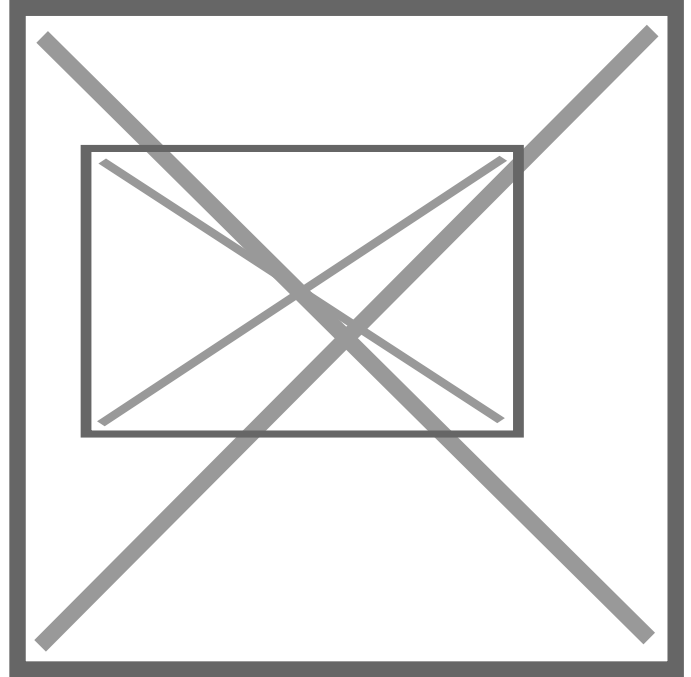


## Meeting needs—one at a time

by Dave Hudson, Major –



*“If you can’t feed a hundred people, then feed just one.”* —Mother Teresa

The Christmas Season is upon us—with angel trees, Toys for Tots, kettles, setting up for the Live Nativity, rehearsals, readings, parties.... Christmas is a busy time for most; however, in The Salvation Army, it reaches another level.

Last week a lady was picking up her family’s gifts at the Lokahi Distribution center. While she was there a donor came in who had neither the time nor maybe interest to wait. They simply wanted to drop off their gifts and leave. Kim, who runs the center, graciously took the gifts, gave the donor their receipt, and then said thank you as the door closed. Turning her attention again to the woman there to pick up her gifts, she saw tears streaming down her face. She was so appreciative of the gifts her children were going to receive, and absolutely astounded at a gift certificate to have her broken stove repaired. She kept thanking Kim over and over again. Kim later mentioned that she hoped everyone was not going to be that expressive, as she did not think she could handle it emotionally.

I often look at the life of Jesus and cannot imagine the pressures he had dealing with schedules, other people’s expectations, disciples’ needs, friends and family wanting special attention, the sick, the dying, the religious leaders... Everyone wanted some of his time and attention; everyone had their own agenda. Yet, I am constantly amazed that in spite of all the demands, Jesus time and time again diverted his attention from the crowd and demands to spend time and touch a single life. The following story is a wonderful example...

*When he came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.” Jesus reached out*

*his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cured of his leprosy. (Matt. 8:1-4)*

The crowd will always have expectations that we will need to address. Some expectations we can meet; others we may not be able to. However, changing lives takes place one person at a time, through needed support, a touch, a smile, an encouraging word. It doesn't always take long to touch a life. Jesus' encounter with the man with leprosy may have only taken a minute, but that encounter marked a changing point in the man's life. In the busyness of the season, let's make sure that we always have that minute. The reward, as Kim learned, is well worth it.