

## Springtime!

*By Lt. Colonel Mervyn Morelock –*

I've become more aware of springtime this year than any time that I can remember. In the last seven weeks, as we've traveled the territory from north to south, my wife Shirley and I have witnessed the earliest beginnings of springtime in **Kalispell, Mont.**, where the dry sticks of bushes and tree limbs were just beginning to wake from winter with a faint change in color from brown to green. Then it was to **Helena**, a little more south, where the buds were already just beginning to peep out of their branches.

On to **Grandview, Wash.**, where the trees and bushes were alive with fresh, tiny green leaves and the surrounding asparagus fields were rushing their shoots into the cutting knives of the harvest workers, who have to work quickly to keep up with the rapid growth in order to cut the shoots while they are still tender.

In **Oregon**, more southerly, we were amazed at the blaze of color! Green velvet fields, newly plowed fields ready for planting, wild looking flowers splashing their vivid colors of yellow and orange and pink and red along the highway as we drove.

Perhaps the most surprising evidence of spring that we noticed in Oregon were the many hues of green on the hills. The dark, somber green on the timber covered slopes was softened by the bright, vivid greens of new growth on the tips of each tree. On the spruce trees we measured over four inches of new, soft, velvet growth.

Wonderful, new life!

I guess I've taken springtime pretty much for granted until this year.

It's too bad that many of us take the gifts of God for granted. It's only when faced with the loss of a job, or good health, or a loved one, or of our own life that we begin to appreciate what God has given to each of us.



In one testimony meeting, the congregation was asked to share what they were thankful for. One man got up and quietly said only five words, "I am thankful for life." Few knew the significance of that moment. These were the first words he had spoken in public for months. A few of us knew that he was recovering from a serious stroke that nearly took his life.

Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (KJV John 10:10) That's what springtime signifies: life. And that is what accepting Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord means: life, abundant life!

When Jesus enters our life, we change from a "ho hum" attitude to a "wow!" experience. We've been born again! It's springtime!

The month of June is, for The Salvation Army, also a kind of special springtime. For it's the month that new officers are ordained and commissioned and sent out to their first appointments. No officer can witness this sacred and exciting series of meetings without getting a lump in your throat and a tear in your eye as you remember how you felt, seated on the platform, sensing that you were about to enter a whole new life: ordained to the holy office of proclaiming the Word of God; having enormous responsibility for the lives of soldiers, employees, and sinners in a strange new place. There's a wonder and awe at the hand of God who called you.

For The Salvation Army it is a springtime of hope. The hopes and vision for the salvation of the whole world are still alive and bright in the new lieutenants. And every officer and soldier feels anew the assurance that the hand of God is still on our Army, and the future is assured all over again.

May we never take for granted the wonder of God's love and provision for us. Think of it! We've been forgiven and given freedom from the old bondage of sin and despair.

May the springtime of his abundant life be ours, and may we be quick to share it with others!