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Restoring hope in the neighbourhood

**MY STORY**

A place to belong

# The human response to refugees

Welcoming and embracing those who arrive on our shores



# SALVOS

MAGAZINE



“We sometimes look at refugees as a group. But if you look at them as individuals, you change your mind. They have a story to tell.”

Lieutenant-Colonel  
Xuyen Tam Pho  
Salvation Army officer



While every refugee's story is different and their anguish personal, they all share a common thread of uncommon courage – the courage not only to survive but to persevere and rebuild their shattered lives.

**Antonio Guterres**  
Secretary-general of the United Nations





## 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

# Salvos Magazine

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**Press date** 7 June 2021

Printed and published for The Salvation Army by Commissioner Robert Donaldson at Focus Print Group, Rowville, Victoria

**Some photos in this magazine were taken prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.**



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## Embracing refugees

The reflections on page 2 this week remind us of the importance of looking at refugees and asylum seekers in our country as individuals, as our fellow humans, each with their own story of pain and exceptional courage. When we hear their stories – what they have experienced and seen in their countries of origin, and here in Australia as well, it is almost impossible not to be moved by their determination to rebuild their lives and to give back to their new communities.

In this edition, we share the stories of two refugees – Idelphonse and Jonathan. Both of these young men had horrendous experiences in the nations they fled from, and both have established new lives in Australia. Through the Salvos, they are now working to help others going through trauma and tragedy.

The leader of the Salvos in Australia, Commissioner Robert Donaldson, also talks about refugees and the biblical instructions to welcome, accept and show kindness to those who come to our land seeking safety, peace and hope. We can each play our part in making this happen.

To download Salvos resources for Refugee Week, visit [www.tinyurl.com/ruxwkjk](http://www.tinyurl.com/ruxwkjk)

Simone Worthing **Assistant Editor**

# The freedom of forgiveness

From the genocide in Burundi to a life of giving to others in Australia

Refugee Week (14-20 June), with the theme of unity, aims to raise awareness of the issues affecting refugees and promote understanding, harmony and togetherness.

**WORDS** ILDEPHONSE

I was born into a Christian family in the African nation of Burundi. Our country, and neighbouring Rwanda, were thought of as one country. Our ethnic groups were Hutus and Tutsis, but I didn't really know much about them. I went to church and Sunday school, my parents loved God and life was good.

In 1993, soon after the civil war between the two countries erupted, the killing began. Members of my family were killed. We moved to a refugee camp where we stayed for 10 years. I was 10 at the time.

My parents tried to protect me, telling me that my cousin, grandma and others killed had gone to heaven. But I knew what was happening. This hurt me a lot.

One morning, I was playing with my two-year-old brother, Jonathan. I used to look after him when Mum was cooking or doing other things. Early the next morning, I heard Mum crying. Her grief was deep. Dad told me Jonathan had died. I couldn't understand – he hadn't been sick; we'd just been playing together. Mum said it was the cold in the structure we were living in, and not having enough blankets. He had died from the cold.

I was consumed with rage and hatred. I stopped going to church. I was angry at God – why had he created us like this, to hate and kill? It was a very dark time. So many of my generation have struggled with mental



Ildephonse loves to sing and lead worship in church.

health, and many are in prison because of what we've gone through and what we saw.

One day, when I was 17, I didn't have anywhere to go, so I went to church. A lady was preaching and it was like she was talking just to me. I gave my life to God and through his power – only through that – I have been able to forgive the killers and find healing. It didn't happen in one day – it was a journey – but over time, it did happen.

From 2013, I worked as a translator for the American and British armies who were training our national forces in the fight against terrorism.



Ildephonse, left, prays during church with Edward Conteh, assistant officer (pastor) at Auburn Salvos.

“

**The Salvos trusted me,  
encouraged me ... and  
I now want to do the  
same for others.**

”

In 2015, after a constitutional crisis in Burundi, the killing started again. I left the country and went to Rwanda and then to Kenya. My three younger brothers joined me, as they knew they would soon be killed if they stayed.

In 2016, I applied to the UNHCR in Kenya (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) to transition to a safe country. They told me to wait, as they were in

negotiations with the Kenyan Government to keep the refugee camp open. We had nowhere to go and were terrified. I prayed and applied for a visa to get to Australia. It was granted.

I arrived in Sydney on 30 July 2016 and began the journey of seeking asylum. I applied for a protection visa, which was approved on 17 December 2020.

A few months after arriving in Sydney, I connected with the Salvos in Auburn. They showed me so much love and support. They listened to me, made me feel welcome and helped me with food, clothing, prayers and in so many different ways.

I just kept going back to the Auburn Salvos. I felt at home there; I heard the Gospel and felt it was my church. I am one of the worship leaders there now; I do some speaking and am very involved.

I have applied to be a full-time officer (pastor) ►

with the Salvos. I would love the opportunity to serve God full-time. The Salvos trusted me, encouraged me and fed me physically and spiritually, and I now want to do the same for others.

My brothers are still in Kenya and are protected there. I have one sibling still in Burundi. My prayer is that God will open the door for them to join me here in Australia.

There have been many hard times for me, but God has shown me his grace and love, even through those times. That is why I love him.

I could not have forgiven those who killed my family, and allowed my little brother to die, without God's love. His love healed me, I was able to forgive, and my life has changed.

“

**There have been many hard times for me, but God had shown me his grace and love.**

”



Scan here for more on the need for community.

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# Restoring hope and peace in the neighbourhood

Richmond Salvos offers a safe place for all in a diverse and eclectic community

WORDS SIMONE WORTHING



Captain Kris Halliday is working to bring hope to the diverse community in Richmond North.

“Geographically, Richmond Salvos is perfectly situated as the place where many ‘worlds’ come together – migrants and refugees from many nations, housing estate residents in the lowest one per cent income bracket nationally, middle-class areas, and the LGBTIQ+ community. We see opportunity for us to be a key conduit between these groups and to provide safe spaces for people, connecting them to services, to each other and building healthy relationships.”

These are the words of Salvos officer (minister) Captain Kris Halliday, who leads Richmond Salvos in the inner north of Melbourne.

The Richmond Salvos building is located across the road from a culturally diverse housing estate of 3500 people, with large ethnically Chinese and Vietnamese populations and a continual flow of migrants and refugees from around the world. A medically supervised heroin injecting room is opposite.

“These are obvious focus areas for us,” says Kris. “We have developed good relationships with the local community development workers, staff at the injecting room, community health centre, schools, the local council and the police. We are also building partnerships throughout the area as we consider where the Salvos can be of most use in this diverse neighbourhood.”

“

**Going to ‘everyday’ cafes also helps ... break down some stigma about those who are in the area.**

”

Over the past six months, Kris and his team, including Captain Suyi Xiang, associate officer at Richmond Salvos who works primarily with the Chinese-speaking community, have been ►

listening to the local community to understand their needs and hopes and how they see the Salvos fitting in.

As a result of this “intense listening”, Richmond Salvos has started four different areas of outreach.



Richmond Salvos is at the centre of a diverse community.

## COMMUNITY HUB

Four days a week, the Richmond Salvos building is opened to housing estate residents for community development indoor activities, including Zumba and a women’s support group. A language school that runs English classes is also part of this hub. “This gives people, including the elderly, lonely and isolated, a place to connect,” says Kris. “Thanks to a Red Shield Appeal (RSA) grant, we have opened a hospitality bar inside the church, offering tea, coffee and snacks for this group or any who use the facility, including those who come for Doorways [emergency relief] assistance.”

At the request of the health centre, the Richmond team has also started an outreach to the many people who come to the area to use drugs but are not accessing the heroin injection room. “Our simple goal is to sit where people gather, have a chat with them and connect them with Salvos and other services in the area, including the injection facility and health services,” Kris explains.

“Thanks to the RSA grant, we have the opportunity to take those we meet out to local cafes for a coffee or lunch to build relationships. It’s a move away from a welfare model to a relational one. Going to ‘everyday’ cafes also helps reconnect people to their neighbourhood and breaks down some stigma about those who are in the area.”

The team has also developed a partnership with the local Vietnamese Association and two local private high schools. Students from these schools come to the church and help children from Vietnamese-speaking families who attend the local primary school and seek support with their homework. Their parents often can’t support them due to work or not being proficient in English.

“

**For us it is about seeing  
a vision of Richmond  
as it could be ...**

”

“An additional initiative, funded through the RSA grant and with the assistance of volunteer musicians, is music tuition for kids who live on the housing estate,” says Kris. “Parents want the best start for their children, and music is well understood to be a significant development tool. It’s a privilege to assist in meeting this need, identified by those in the neighbourhood.”

Additionally, as well as morning worship in Mandarin, the team offers a Sunday afternoon worship service, in English, based on Taize and Ignatian traditions. “Richmond is a busy place, and life can be quite noisy here, so this service



The Salvos and a local Uniting Church minister are beginning a Bible study for the LGBTIQ+ community to explore their faith.

offers a quiet, meditative and reflective time of prayer and worship," says Kris. "People from across the community find a place to unwind and connect with God there."

In July, Kris and a local Uniting Church minister will begin a Bible study for LGBTIQ+ people who will meet in a local coffee shop. "Many people we have been building relationships with have expressed a desire for a safe place to explore the Bible, develop their existing faith and ask questions," Kris shares.

"The Salvos have been in this area for a long time, and great work has been done, but there is some confusion and hurt in the LGBTIQ+ community towards us. As a gay person who is a Salvation Army officer, I feel it's important to foster positive relationships and understanding in this area."

### RESTORING HOPE

Kris explains that listening to the voices of the eclectic community also shows that people want hope and peace restored to their neighbourhood.

"For us, it is about seeing a vision of Richmond as it could be – people living lives of fullness, of hope and promise, a

neighbourhood flourishing, one that looks and feels like heaven on earth. As co-founder of The Salvation Army William Booth once said, 'That's our business.'"

### INCLUDED

On an international level, including Australia, Kris is also a key player in 'INCLUDED' – a group of members and friends of the Salvos who support an inclusive model of church that fully welcomes, affirms and includes LGBTIQ+ people.

Kris and his team have organised global online events where people can have open conversations around their personal stories, advocacy work, share resources, explore theology and better understand how to connect with the LGBTIQ+ community.

A major online conference, INCLUDED2021, is planned for November to be hosted across multiple time zones. More information on this initiative is available at [includedpage.com](https://includedpage.com)



Scan here for more on the need for community.

# The human response to refugees

Welcoming and embracing those who arrive on our shores

WORDS ROBERT DONALDSON



PHOTO BY KYLE GLENN ON UNSPLASH

You won't find the term 'refugee' mentioned anywhere in the Bible, but the Word of God has so much to say about people it refers to as 'strangers' and 'foreigners'.

It talks about those who have been forced to leave their homes, their extended families, their communities, and so often their countries of origin and who, as a result, find themselves uprooted, displaced and very much lost and alone in a country whose culture, language and lifestyle is alien and, at times, hostile to and judgmental of them.

According to the United Nations Refugee Agency, more than 80 million people worldwide have been forcibly displaced from their homes. About 40 million people are internally displaced

of that incomprehensible number, forced to move within their own countries due to conflict. A further 26 million have fled to other countries as refugees, and more than half are under 18.

“

**God's own son walked this earth as a child refugee.**

”

It may seem like a helpless scenario, but what is our responsibility as fellow humans to those who arrive on our doorsteps after

being forced to abandon their homes and flee their communities?

The Word of God has so much to say about refugees and most of what it has to say is about our response to their plight.



PHOTO BY MARKUS SPIESKE ON UNSPLASH

There can be little room for doubt about the Bible's position when it comes to how we should treat the 'stranger' or 'foreigner'. It states, strongly and unequivocally, that he or she should be welcomed, embraced and loved.

In the book of Leviticus, Moses makes it very clear about what we should do for those who are displaced and seeking refuge: "When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were once foreigners in Egypt" (chapter 19, verses 33-34).

If we are faithful to God's Word – to welcome the stranger and foreigner and work for justice – we have no choice. It is our responsibility to open our eyes to the 'uprooted' among us. Let us take to heart Paul's words to the Hebrew Christians: "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing, some people

have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it" (Hebrews chapter 13, verse 2).

I reckon there is something profoundly significant about the fact that God's own son walked this earth as a child refugee.

This week is Refugee Week (World Refugee Day is 20 June), and while the Salvos, as a movement, are doing some positive things to 'welcome refugees', we are only scratching the surface. There is so much we can and need to do for them.

“

**What is our responsibility – as fellow humans – to those who arrive on our doorsteps?**

”

I want to challenge you to consider what you could do, personally, this week to welcome, embrace and love someone who has had to seek refuge in your neighbourhood. How you respond and interact with them will make a world of difference.

Hear the words of Jesus: "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matthew chapter 25, verse 35).

*Commissioner Robert Donaldson is the leader of The Salvation Army, Australia.*



Scan here for more on finding meaning.

# A place to belong

Jonathan shares his journey from a refugee camp in Sierra Leone to helping the homeless on the streets of Sydney

WORDS JONATHAN ABDULAI

I was born in Sierra Leone, West Africa.

I grew up with a lot of anxieties and not trusting anyone. I lived with my uncle, his wife and their children, which was hard. I didn't know my parents. My father was killed in the rebel war [the Sierra Leone Civil War from 1991 to 2002]. After his death, my mum fled to another town. I later heard reports that she had died too.

I remember living in a refugee camp with my uncle and family. There was nothing to eat or drink. I would hear gunshots all around us and I saw many people dead.

I did not feel encouraged or loved as a child. I didn't play games or have friends around me. I wasn't fed properly and was often beaten or locked in my room. At school I was bullied. I grew up not feeling connected with people.

Years later, a lady from Australia came home for a visit, saw my uncle and told him that my mum is alive and living in Australia. A few months later, a lady started calling my uncle – it was my mother!

Realising my mother was alive was quite confronting for me. I felt angry and abandoned. I blamed her, and even my dad, for everything that had happened to me. She told me that, after my father was killed, she was told that we had been killed as well. She felt threatened in our country and left. So, when she heard we were alive, she started

looking for us. It was hard for me to accept this but, gradually, I realised she was telling the truth. She tried to get me and my twin brother to come to Australia.



Jonathan grew up as an anxious child in Sierra Leone.

Mum also had me talk on the phone to Salvos officers (pastors) Majors Paul and Robbin Moulds. They gave me courage to leave Sierra Leone, although I was still angry.

I arrived in Australia in November 2016. Seeing my mum and brother at the airport ... it was just tears of joy. The family was reunited. It was a hugely different experience to come here. I felt like I didn't deserve this life; it was like being in heaven. All the opportunities. It was life-changing.

I still sometimes had dreams about the things I

saw in Sierra Leone. I was scared and frustrated that these memories followed me. I thought people would laugh at me if they knew. It was hard to communicate and let people get close to me. I could only talk to my mum and brother. My mum, brother and I love and care for each other and our family is amazing.

Mum introduced me to the Salvos and I saw pastors Paul and Robbin. I stopped coming to church but they continued talking to me and connected me to other people and a support group. I started feeling that I belonged, and I had hope.

The most important thing about The Salvation Army is hospitality, caring for each other, emotional and spiritual support. People just called me and started praying for me. They came to my house. I started trusting them. The love that people showed me in the church helped me see that this is the place where I belong. No judgment. No discrimination. These are my people. Now I am the one who sometimes calls others. I collect money for the Salvos and volunteer my time.

“

**No judgment.  
No discrimination.  
These are my people.**

”

I am now working for the Salvos, assisting people experiencing homelessness. I do a lot of outreach. I engage with the community and refer them to Salvos and other services to get them the help they need.

At the Salvos church, I lead the young adults

group and help encourage others who are going through problems to feel safe and hopeful.



Jonathan, right, with his mother and brother, have built a new life in Australia.

I went back to Sierra Leone in 2017. As a child, seeing people maimed, I wanted to help them. I had the opportunity to come to Australia, so I decided to go back to see what I could do. I formed an organisation in January 2018 to help those with disabilities. Our team wants to open a centre where they can meet, learn some skills and produce goods to sell to earn an income and live independently. We are in the initial phases of our work and hope to do more into the future.

My future is clear – I want to serve God, bring more people into his kingdom and help change lives.



Scan here for more on the need for community.

## Chicken curry



### Ingredients

2 tbsp vegetable oil, 3 chicken breasts (approx 500g, chopped into bite-size chunks), 1 large onion, 2 cloves minced garlic, 2 tsp minced ginger, 2 tbsp curry powder, 1 tbsp ground coriander, ½ tbsp ground cumin, 1 tsp paprika, ½ tsp ground cinnamon, ½ tsp salt, ½ tsp black pepper, 2 tbsp tomato puree/paste, 400g tin chopped tomatoes, 1 cup chicken stock, 400ml tin coconut milk, 2 cups (60g) baby spinach, 1 cup rice, fresh coriander to taste.

### Method

Heat oil in frying pan over a medium-high heat. Add chicken and cook for 5 minutes, turning occasionally. Add onion and cook for 5 minutes, stirring often.

Add garlic, ginger, curry powder, coriander, cumin, paprika, cinnamon, salt and pepper. Stir and cook for a further minute.

Add tomato puree, tomatoes, stock and coconut milk. Bring to a gentle bubble, then simmer gently, stirring occasionally for 10 minutes.

Stir in the spinach then turn off the heat. Serve with boiled rice, topped with fresh coriander.

## Have a laugh



I once got fired from a canned juice company. Apparently I couldn't concentrate.

**What country's capital is growing the fastest?**

Ireland. Every day it's Dublin.



If a child refuses to nap, are they guilty of resisting a rest?

## Bible byte

“You shall be richly rewarded, for when I was hungry, you fed Me. And when I was thirsty, you gave Me something to drink. I was alone as a stranger, and you welcomed Me into your homes and into your lives.”

Matthew chapter 25, verse 35  
*The Voice Bible translation*

# Wordsearch

D A A C I T I Z E N S P E S V  
 I S C C T E R D O P I R M T I  
 V Y C O S A R A M E A O I A S  
 E L E M O P I A N R U T G T A  
 R U P P L P C U H S N E R E S  
 S M T A I L E D U E I C A S K  
 E D A S D I E R M C T T T G I  
 G I N S A C N E A U Y I I E N  
 L S C I R A L T N T S O O D  
 O P E O I T N R I I N N G N  
 B L U N T I P C T O Y O R R E  
 A A T E Y O E T Y N U T N A S  
 L C S C O N F L I C T T S P S  
 R E F U G E E S A F E T Y H O  
 R D C U L T U R E I O T A Y N

- |             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| ACCEPTANCE  | HUMANITY     |
| APPLICATION | KINDNESS     |
| ASYLUM      | MIGRATION    |
| CAMPS       | PERSECUTION  |
| CITIZENS    | PROTECTION   |
| COMPASSION  | REFUGEES     |
| CONFLICT    | RESETTLEMENT |
| COOPERATION | SAFETY       |
| CULTURE     | SOLIDARITY   |
| DISPLACED   | STATES       |
| DIVERSE     | TRANSITION   |
| GEOGRAPHY   | UNITY        |
| GLOBAL      | VISAS        |

Tum-Tum: is hiding behind the plant on page 2.

Answers: 1. 14-20 June 2. Sunday 20 June 3. Turkey, Sudan, Myanmar.  
 4. Approx. 26 million 5. Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South

# Quick quiz



1. When is Refugee Week in Australia this year?
2. When is World Refugee Day?
3. Which country is currently taking the most refugees?
4. How many refugees are there globally?
5. Which five countries do the majority of Australia's refugees come from?

# Tum-Tum



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

# Did you know?

- Ants rest for around eight minutes every 12 hours.
- A snail can sleep for three years.
- Recycling just one tin can saves enough energy to watch television for three hours.



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