



Self Denial Appeal 2022



DEVOTIONAL

Reflections by Lieutenant-Colonel Graham Durston





Self
Denial
Appeal
2022



WEEK 1





WEEK 1



PAUSE AND PRAY

*In this quiet moment, still, before your throne,
Conscious of your presence, knowing I am known.
In this quiet moment, set my spirit free.
In this quiet moment, make a better me!* John Gowans

We will use this prayer to help us become aware of God's presence.

This week, meditate on this phrase – **"In this quiet moment, still"**.



SCRIPTURE: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-25 New Living Translation

¹⁸ The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction! But we who are being saved know it is the very power of God. ¹⁹ As the Scriptures say, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and discard the intelligence of the intelligent." ²⁰ So where does this leave the philosophers, the scholars, and the world's brilliant debaters? God has made the wisdom of this world look foolish. ²¹ Since God in his wisdom saw to it that the world would never know him through human wisdom, he has used our foolish preaching to save those who believe. ²² It is foolish to the Jews, who ask for signs from Heaven. And it is foolish to the Greeks, who seek human wisdom. ²³ So when we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended, and the Gentiles say it's all nonsense. ²⁴ But to those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ This foolish plan of God is wiser than the wisest of human plans, and God's weakness is stronger than the greatest of human strength.



REFLECTION

When a stone is thrown into a calm pool, the water is immediately given a burst of energy because its molecules move up and down and drag other molecules with them. Peaks

and troughs appear on the surface and form the ripples that travel away from the stone until all the energy is expended. The heavier the stone, the greater the energy.

We use the ripple effect as a metaphor to describe how the Spirit of God energises individual Christians to carry out acts of compassion and generosity that multiply and result in amazing outcomes in the Kingdom of God. It is founded on the faith that “God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine according to his power that is at work within us” (Ephesians 3:20). Like most metaphors from the physical world, this comparison falls short because in the realm of the Spirit, the power of God at work in us can never be expended. It is a limitless supply that can be renewed daily through prayer and obedience.

Today’s Scripture in 1 Corinthians 1 takes us to the origin of God’s power in the life of the believer. It commences with a person coming to faith and repentance, having been deeply moved by the unconditional love of God shown by Jesus in giving his life for them on a Roman cross, the death of a slave. This was God’s plan to redeem and reconcile humankind. The Jews and Greeks thought it was foolish and weak (verse 22), but to those who have faith, it constitutes the power and wisdom of God (verse 24). In fact, it is “wiser than the wisest of human plans” and “stronger than the greatest of human strength.” Jesus fulfilled God’s purposes completely. He was raised to life and exalted to the right hand of the Father where he intercedes for us. One wonderful consequence of this plan is that all believers have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit as our guide and energiser.

It was the world-changing Christ event, symbolised by the cross, that commenced a ripple effect that spread the Gospel to every part of the world in every generation throughout history. Human wisdom and power could never have achieved such a result (verse 21). General Albert Orsborn captured the essence of the ripple effect in his song, We Worship Thee O Crucified in the lines “For from thy cross irradiates, A power that saves and recreates.” (The Salvation Army Songbook No. 205)

Re-read the Scripture passage above and then consider the following:

- **Revelation**
What basic truth does it teach?
- **Conviction**
How does this challenge me?
How does this correct, balance and direct me?
- **Action**
What does this Scripture lead me to change within me?
How is the Lord leading and loving me as I plan to act on this Scripture?

WEEK 1 · WEEK 1

1



PRAYER

Lord, help me to comprehend the power of the cross.

May my gift enable the preaching of the cross where the need is great.

For your love's sake, Amen.

Prayer points: The international Salvation Army

- People suffering the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially those who have lost family members.
- The communities that do not have adequate medical care and hospital facilities.
- Territories that have had to reduce community services because of financial loss during the pandemic.
- The International Headquarters Rapid Response Projects, and the need for adequate food, hospital and hygiene equipment.
- That our Self Denial gift will provide the funds required for these needs.





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WEEK 2





REFLECTION

Last week we thought about the cross, the source of the Gospel’s amazing ripple effect. This week, the focus is on three essentials to witness its continued outward momentum – compassion, faith and action. There is so much to learn from Jesus in this reading of the miraculous feeding of the 5000.

Most people would feel annoyed if their privacy and rest time was invaded by a mass of people. Instead, all Jesus felt was compassion. He was moved to the depths of his being (verses 32-34). “Sheep without a shepherd” is a telling figure of speech. It may come to mind when we reflect on how people reacted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some were aimless, having no idea of the way forward. Some could not find the spiritual nourishment needed to sustain them through this difficult period. Others felt defenseless against the impact of the virus. Being like Jesus means that we will be moved with compassion whenever we encounter physical or spiritual need.

However, Jesus did not stop at the point of feeling sorry for the crowd. Late in the afternoon, the disciples came to the Lord with their concern. The people were hungry. The disciples’ solution was to send them away to the farms and villages to buy food. Jesus’ solution was, “You feed them.” Immediately their minds were full of the immensity of the task and the smallness of their resources (verses 37 and 38).

Jesus expects us to do more than assess the need. This is where faith and action must be added to compassion. This was a life-changing lesson for the disciples. God took the little they offered him and miraculously multiplied it to feed a multitude. Faith and action were needed because the Lord immediately involved the disciples in organising the crowd to sit on the ground in groups of fifty and a hundred (verse 39). They then had the joy of distributing the abundant supply of loaves and fishes to the hungry people. The energy that keeps the ripple effect expanding is first an awareness of need, then compassion, faith and action.

When we bring to the Lord our heartfelt concern about the ever-increasing needs, and the limited resources and poverty of our overseas missionary territories, he still says to us, “You do something about it.” Decide in faith to give sacrificially to the Self Denial Appeal and look for the miraculous ripple effect that follows.

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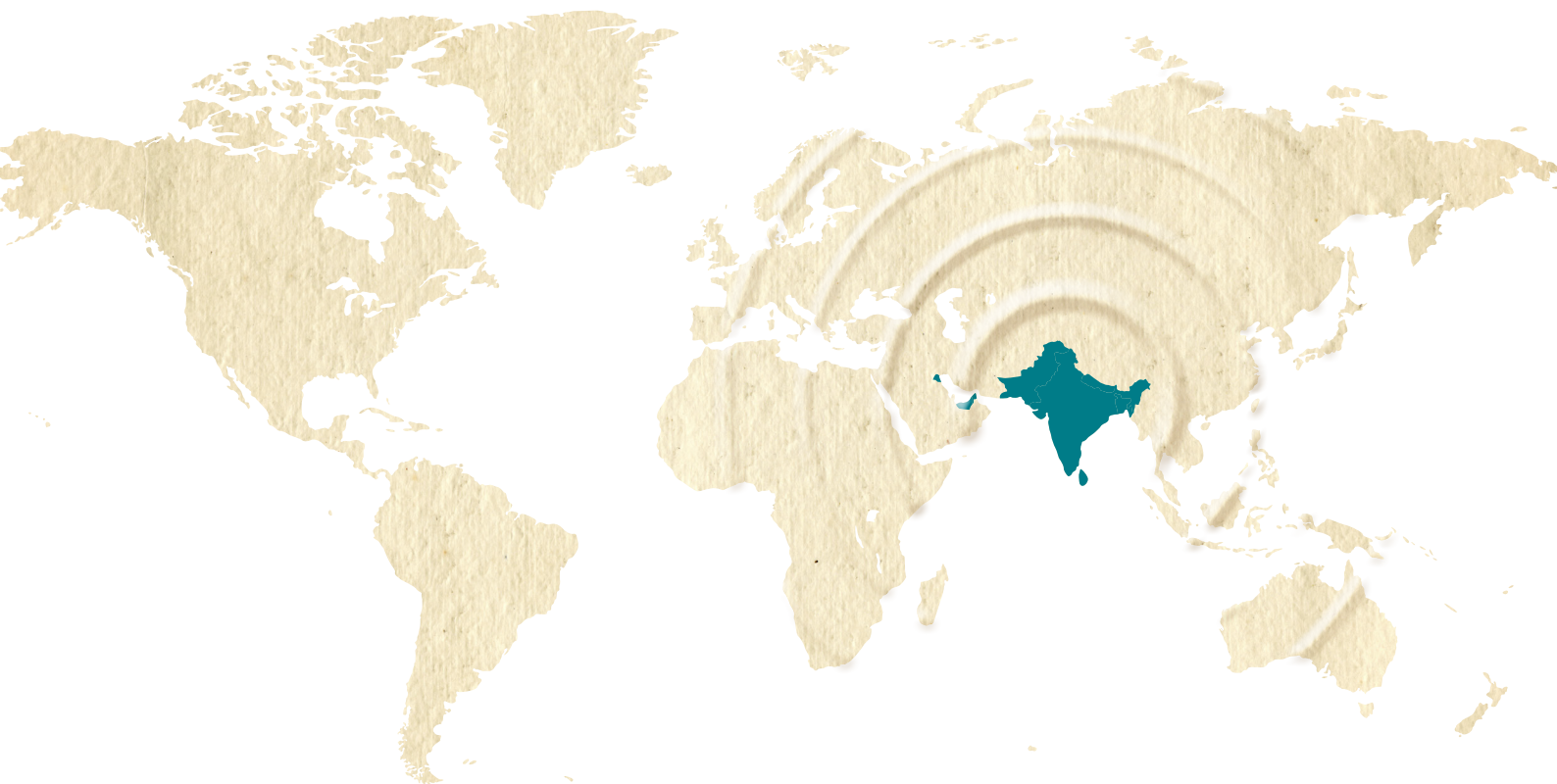
PRAYER

Lord, move my heart with the needs of your mission, then move my will to do something worthwhile towards meeting them.

For your love's sake, Amen.

Prayer points: The South Asia Zone

- The community development projects in 132 corps throughout the Pakistan Territory, including homework clubs, sewing centres, beautician skill-training, mother and child health clubs, anti-human trafficking and family budgeting.
- Local leaders' training and development project in the Sri Lanka Territory.
- Extensive education services – schools, colleges, medical clinics and training hospitals throughout the six Indian Territories.
- The caring ministry to Rohingya refugees in the Cox's Bazaar refugee camp in the Bangladesh Territory.
- The anti-human trafficking initiatives in the Middle East Region and the care of the victims of abuse and trafficking in Kuwait.





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WEEK 3





WEEK 3



PAUSE AND PRAY

*In this quiet moment, still, before your throne,
Conscious of your presence, knowing I am known.
In this quiet moment, set my spirit free.
In this quiet moment, make a better me!* John Gowans

We will use this prayer to help us become aware of God's presence.

This week meditate on this phrase – **“Conscious of your presence”**.



SCRIPTURE: 2 CORINTHIANS 5:11-19 New International Version (Anglicised Edition)

¹¹ Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. ¹² We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. ¹³ If we are “out of our mind”, as some say, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴ For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. ¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come; the old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciles us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

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REFLECTION

The message of the cross that keeps the Gospel 'ripple' ever-expanding can be communicated through many profound expressions. Paul loves the figure of reconciliation (see Romans 5:10 and Colossians 1:22). It is the beautiful picture of a loving God reaching out to a world alienated by sin and, through the incredible self-sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, inviting humankind into a new relationship where their sins are forgiven and forgotten (verse 19). As wonderful as that is, it is only half the story. Those who respond and live by faith in Christ become a new creation (verse 17). They live in a new order of existence sharing in the life of the risen Christ. The self-centred life belongs to the past. In every age, believers are to become ambassadors for Christ, passing on the message of reconciliation.

This could be a daunting prospect unless we are energised by a motivation like that of the apostles. It is declared in verse 14 "For Christ's love compels us." The Greek word 'synecho', here rendered as 'compels', can also be translated as 'controls' in the New Living Translation, 'urges us' in the New Revised Standard Version and 'leaves us no choice' in the New English Bible. I prefer the idea of a loving inner compulsion driving us to communicate in word and deed the message of an inclusive reconciling God. All true Christian service springs from a heart of love. Paul is utterly consistent on this point as is clear in the first three verses of the love chapter, 1 Corinthians 13. The most marvellous gifted and costly service if unaccompanied by love "gains nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:3, NIV).

The Lord takes and uses our gifts of ministries and money, but he looks deeply into the heart. As in the case of the widow in the temple (Luke 21:1-4), Jesus' interest is in the level of sacrifice rather than the amount given. As we bring our gifts to the altar this year could we question our motivation: Is it because we routinely make this gift? Is it the expectation of others that we would always do this? Is there a sense of duty that we should do this? Or can we genuinely say, "Christ's love compels us?"

General Albert Orsborn's language reflects a different era, but his message is razor sharp.

Except I am moved with compassion,
how dwelleth thy Spirit in me?
In word and in deed burning love is my need;
I know I can find this in Thee. (The Salvation Army Songbook No. 626)

Re-read the Scripture passage above and then consider the following:

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3

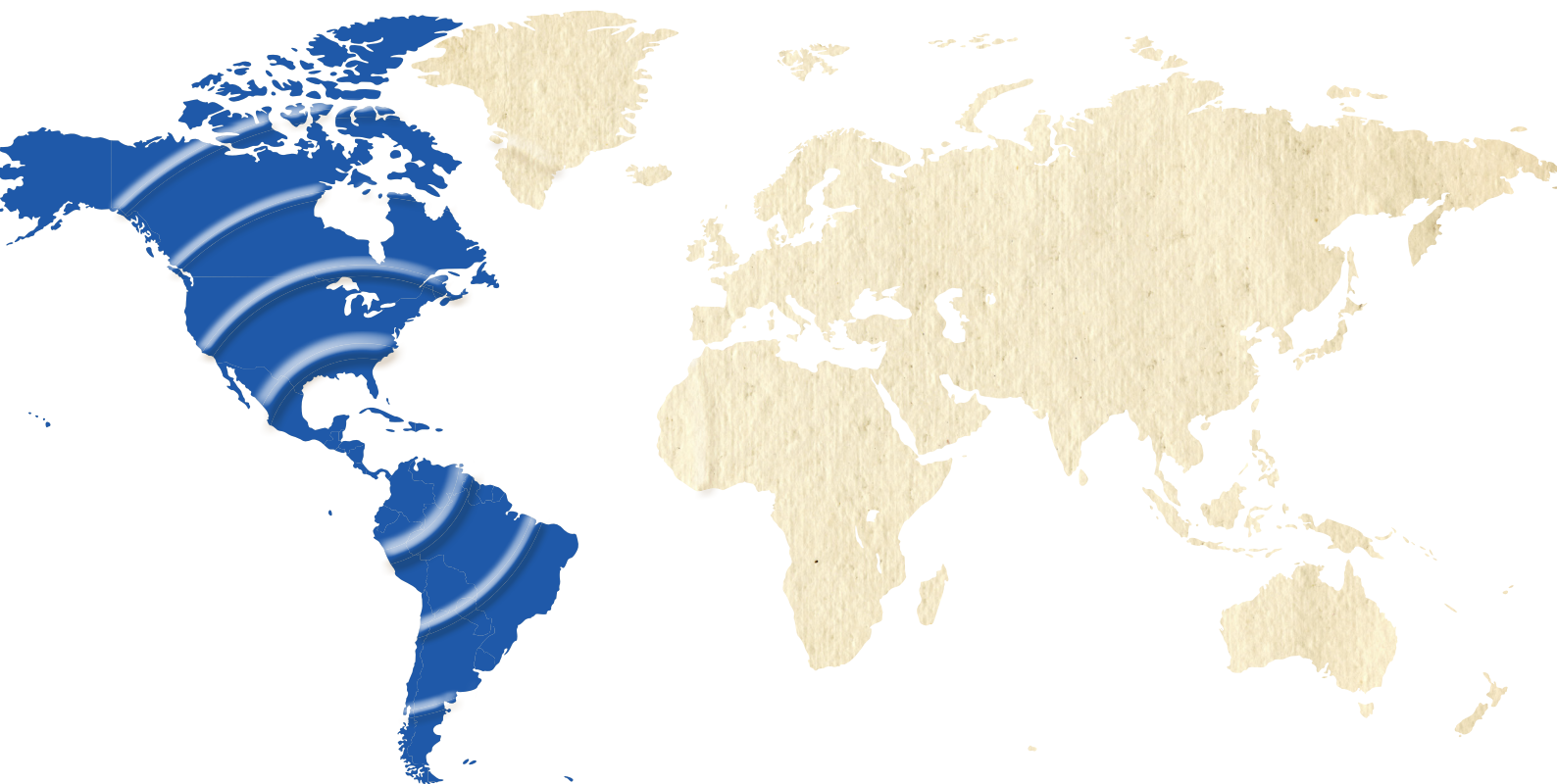


PRAYER

Dear Lord, touch my spirit again that I may feel a loving compulsion to give all I can, so that the message of reconciliation is spread throughout the world.
For your love's sake, Amen.

Prayer points: The Americas and Caribbean Zone

- The people of Haiti still suffering from the disastrous earthquake of 2021, and for the Army's relief programmes.
- Education services in Panama, The Dominican Republic and Guatemala.
- The preventative health clinic in Mexico City with services including clinical tests, dentistry, geriatrics, ophthalmic and general medicine, and a budget pharmacy.
- The Latin America Integrated Mission Team and its work on modern slavery and human trafficking in Paraguay.
- The evangelistic open-air meeting campaign throughout the Brazil Territory.





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WEEK 4



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WEEK 4



PAUSE AND PRAY

*In this quiet moment, still, before your throne,
Conscious of your presence, knowing I am known.
In this quiet moment, set my spirit free.
In this quiet moment, make a better me!* John Gowans

This week, meditate on this phrase – “**knowing I am known**”.



SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 13:3-9 AND 18-23 New Living Translation

³ “Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seeds. ⁴ As he scattered them across his field, some seeds fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate them. ⁵ Other seeds fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seeds sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But the plants soon wilted under the hot sun, and since they didn’t have deep roots, they died. ⁷ Other seeds fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants. ⁸ Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted! ⁹ Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.”

¹⁸ “Now listen to the explanation of the parable about the farmer planting seeds. ¹⁹ The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message about the Kingdom and don’t understand it. Then the evil one comes and snatches away the seed that was planted in their hearts. ²⁰ The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. ²¹ But since they don’t have deep roots, they don’t last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God’s word. ²² The seed that fell among the thorns represents those who hear God’s word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life and the lure of wealth, so no fruit is produced. ²³ The seed that fell on good soil represents those who truly hear and understand God’s word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty or even a hundred times as much as had been planted.”



REFLECTION

Two aspects of this parable told by Jesus are relevant to our reflection on the ripple effect of the Gospel through the ages and now.

The first is the method of sowing. Some Palestinian farmers ploughed their field first and then sowed the seed in the furrows. Others thought it was best practice to sow the seed first and then plough it in. This required the farmer to spread the seed as widely as he could, otherwise it would not produce a good crop.

It is this second method that Jesus had in mind in the parable. He wants his disciples to spread the message of the Kingdom of God as widely as possible and trust God to bring forth a wonderful harvest.

From the time the Spirit called it into being, The Salvation Army has followed the vision to expand its mission throughout the world so that the Word of God is preached, and the love of God demonstrated in many diverse cultures. General Evangeline Booth's stirring song was a rallying cry for generations of Salvationists.

*The world for God! The world for God!
I give my heart! I'll do my part!
The world for God! The world for God!
I give my heart! I will do my part!* (The Salvation Army Songbook No. 933)

All the exclamation marks convey her passion for the vision.

For many years the old Territorial Headquarters in Sydney had the words, 'CHRIST FOR THE WORLD, THE WORLD FOR CHRIST', emblazoned on its external wall which was clearly visible in Elizabeth Street. The 2021 Year Book records that the Army now serves in 131 countries of the world. It has faithfully spread the Gospel widely not knowing the condition of the hearers' hearts while trusting in God for a spiritual harvest.

The second arresting feature of the parable is the remarkable yield of the fertile soil where the seeds are deeply rooted in the good earth. The average Palestinian harvest produced around 10 times the seed sown. Harvests producing 30 to 100 times the seed invested are extraordinarily abundant.

In faith, the Army is still spreading the Gospel into wider fields. In 2021 two officer couples were appointed to commence the Army's mission in Bulgaria, in the Eastern Europe Territory.

I recently heard this inspiring story from Georgia, also in the Eastern Europe Territory. A young man who was a member of a notorious criminal gang in Tblisi was shown an act of kindness by a Salvationist. Soon after, he was arrested and imprisoned for a few years. On release, he sought out the young woman who had helped him and, through her witness, gave his heart to the Lord and was enrolled as a soldier. They married and



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entered the Eastern European Training College. He expressed to the training principal his deep embarrassment that his arms were covered in tattoos which indicated his previous membership of the gang. She made a few suggestions, including the possibility that the tattoos could be covered with something else. Soon after, he returned with new tattoos of The Salvation Army red shield, completely covering any trace of the old life. He now serves with his wife as a corps officer in Georgia. He also has the additional mission opportunity of running a series of youth camps throughout Georgia. He has a wonderful rapport with young people. The ripple effect continues!

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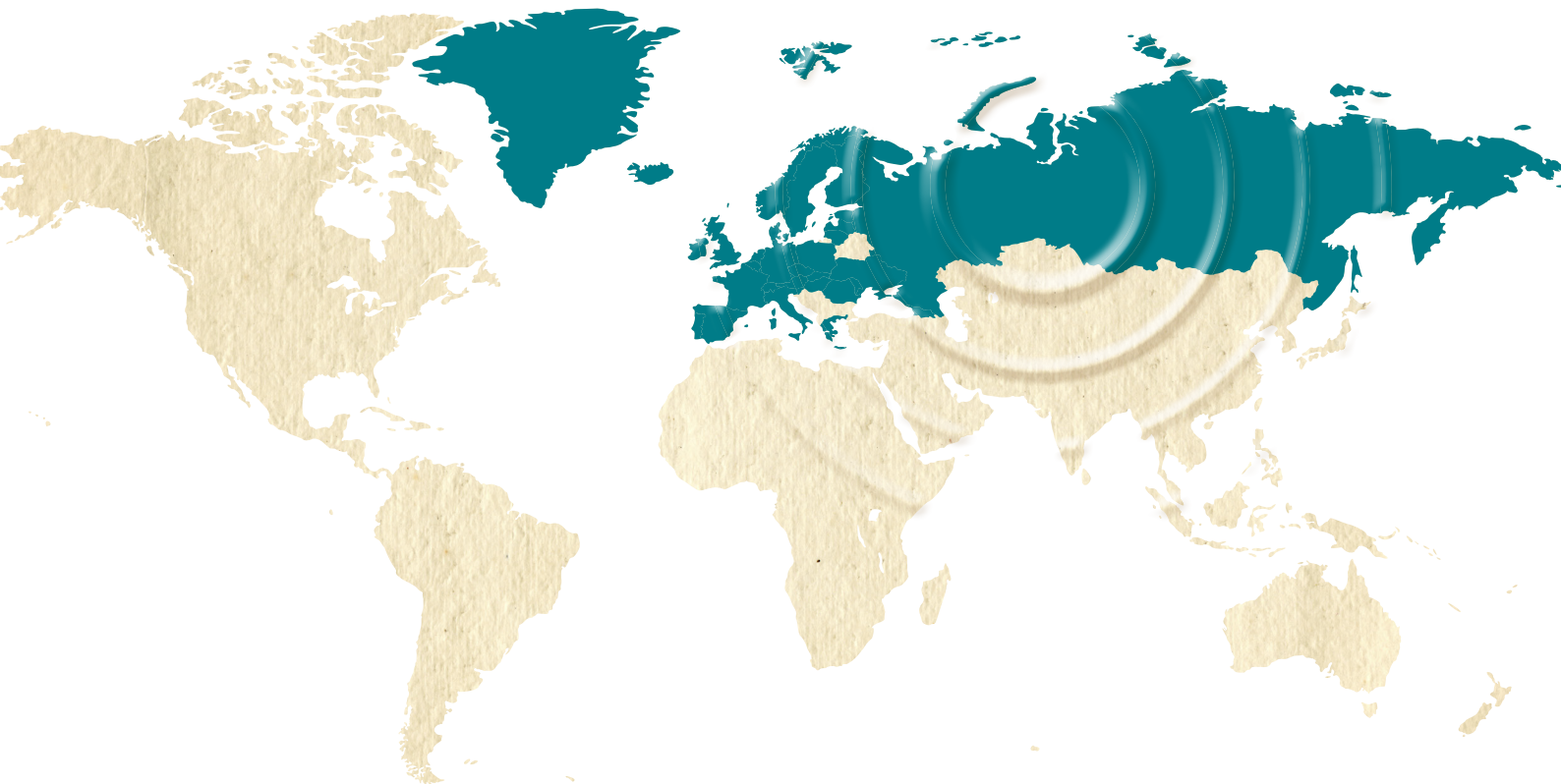


PRAYER

Dear Lord, enlarge my vision of the immense possibilities of the Army reaching the people of the world. Touch my heart and help me to do my part at the altar on Self Denial Sunday. For your love’s sake, Amen.

Prayer points: *The Europe Zone*

- Youth and children’s summer camps in Georgia and Moldova.
- The two officer couples who have commenced The Salvation Army in Bulgaria.
- Caring work among homeless people and the ministry of the reception centre for refugees in Rome.
- Children’s ministries in Russia and the long-term strategies for growth in this command.
- The ministry among the Roma population in Slovakia, including the new kindergarten for 28 of their disadvantaged and excluded children.





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WEEK 5





WEEK 5



PAUSE AND PRAY

*In this quiet moment, still, before your throne,
Conscious of your presence, knowing I am known.
In this quiet moment, set my spirit free.*

In this quiet moment, make a better me! John Gowans

We will use this prayer to help us become aware of God's presence.

This week meditate on the phrase – **“set my spirit free”**.



SCRIPTURE: ACTS 2:32-41 New International Version (Anglicised)

³² “God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. ³³ Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. ³⁴ For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, ‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”’

³⁶ “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.” ³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” ³⁸ Peter replied, “Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.” ⁴⁰ With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” ⁴¹ Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.



REFLECTION

The coming of the Spirit at Pentecost brought the church to birth and energised it with power to carry out its missionary campaign. Our reading is the conclusion of Peter’s famous sermon on this astonishing day. The crowd came running together when they heard the sound of a violent wind and were even more amazed when the apostles told them of “the wonders of God” in their own language (Acts 2:6-11). In bewilderment they cried, “What does this mean?” Peter was pleased to tell them in his sermon.

Jesus was accredited by God. He had been handed over to the Romans to be crucified but had been raised from the dead and exalted to the right hand of God. Just as wonderful as his exaltation, the Lord received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit to pour out on all who believe. This message cut the crowd to the heart, and they asked what they must do. They were told to repent, join the believers and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise was for them, their children and “all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call” (verse 39).

That day, the church increased in number around 26 times, from 120 to 3000 – quite a ripple! God is still calling people with the same invitation. We preach the same message today. We still have the gift of the Holy Spirit to empower us. However, we live in a different society, secular and largely indifferent to spiritual realities. Perhaps we need to ask whether our commitment to this message is still strong or whether we feel that it is easier to care just for the social needs of our society. We can certainly do both. In Acts 1:14, we read that the believers “joined together constantly in prayer,” and that “when the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place” (Act 2:1). These two elements – prayer and unity in the Spirit – are essential today if the Holy Spirit is to empower us and for the Gospel ripple to continue.

We thank God for the evidence of large numbers of people coming to faith in missionary territories and pray that we will be unified in the Spirit as we bring our gifts to promote the evangelical mission on Self Denial Sunday.

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PRAYER

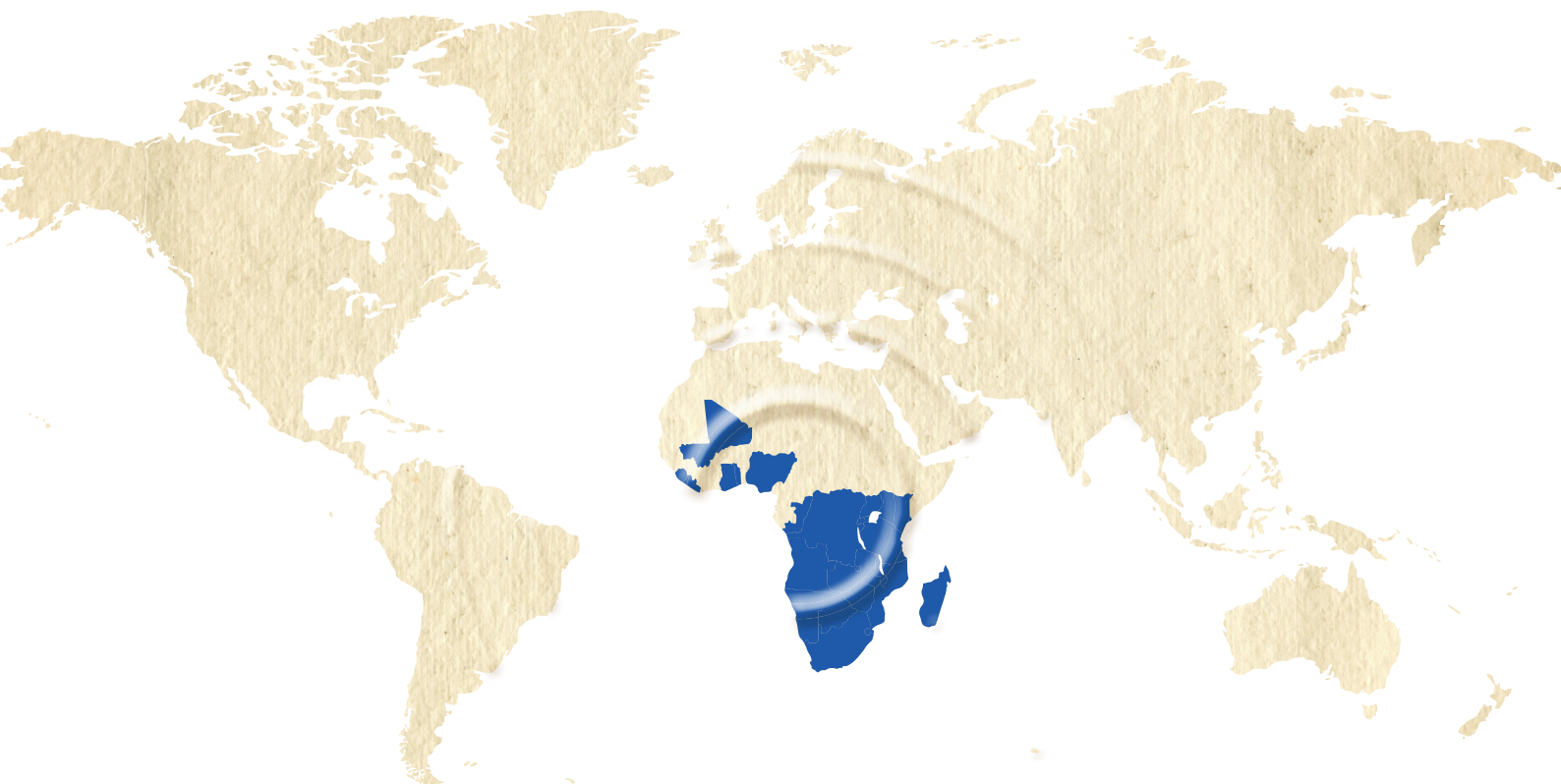
Dear Lord, I pray for the guidance of your Holy Spirit.

By your grace enable me to obey his leading and empower me to follow his direction.

For your love's sake, Amen.

Prayer points: The Africa Zone

- The Chikankata Health and Education Services in the Zambia Territory.
- The Howard Hospital and other medical and educational services in the Zimbabwe and Botswana Territory.
- Community development programmes in Kenya East Territory including WASH (water, sanitation and health) and food security projects.
- The ministry of the William Booth University in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo Territory.
- The capacity building programme for all female officers in the Kenya West Territory. (This is to reinforce strategies of gender equity and leadership development.)





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ALTAR SERVICE



ALTAR SERVICE



PAUSE AND PRAY

*In this quiet moment, still, before your throne,
Conscious of your presence, knowing I am known.
In this quiet moment, set my spirit free.
In this quiet moment, make a better me!* John Gowans

This week meditate on this phrase – **“make a better me”**.



SCRIPTURE: 2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-15 New Living Translation

⁶ Remember this, a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. ⁷ You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully." ⁸ And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. ⁹ As the Scriptures say, "They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever."

¹⁰ For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you. ¹¹ Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God. ¹² So two good things will result from this ministry of giving – the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God. ¹³ As a result of your ministry, they will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ. ¹⁴ And they will pray for you with deep affection because of the overflowing grace God has given to you. ¹⁵ Thank God for this gift too wonderful for words!

6

WEEK 6 · WEEK 6 · WEEK 6 · WEEK 6 · WEEK 6



REFLECTION

Bringing a sacrificial gift to the altar on Self Denial Sunday is one of the most profound acts of worship a Salvationist offers to the Lord. It takes place near to Holy Week when we remember the incomparable sacrifice of Jesus giving his life for us on the cross. This is the gift “too wonderful for words.” We want to give back out of love and gratitude so that his atoning death may be preached in parts of the world where resources are few.

There is another reason that the act of giving at the altar is invested with added significance. Paul writes that, “Two good things will result from this ministry of giving – the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God.” The phrase “ministry of giving” is illuminating. It translates the original Greek word ‘leitourgia’ and conveys the idea that giving is part of a Christian’s sacred service. We are continuing the ministry of Jesus who gave absolutely everything for us. This text also reveals the wonderful ripple effect of the ministry of giving at our altar service. Giving not only contributes to the needs of our missionary territories but flows back in abundant spiritual blessings on the giver.

“Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God” (verse 11).

This Scripture also implies that how much we receive back in blessing is dependent on how much we give. “Remember this – a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop, but the one who plants generously will get a generous crop” (verse 6).

While being aware of this sense of sacred service, it does not mean that we have to be overly solemn. Paul reminds us that God loves a person who gives cheerfully. This is also the theme of two verses in 1 Chronicles 29, “The people rejoiced over the offerings, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly ... I have watched your people offer their gifts willingly and joyously” (verses 9 and 17, NLT).

Can we bring our sacrificial gifts to the altar, conscious that we are engaging in a well thought out act of spiritual worship, and with a joyous heart, knowing that the needs of the Army’s international mission are being met and thanksgiving is also being offered to God?

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6



PRAYER

Dear Lord, as I join with thousands of others in the ministry of giving on Self Denial Sunday, please accept my offering. May the gifts of your people create a ripple of blessing which will encircle the world and enrich every nation where the Army serves. For your love's sake, Amen.

Prayer points: The South Pacific and East Asia Zone

- Medical work including hospitals, nursing academies and clinics in the Indonesian Territory.
- Continued growth in the Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands Territory, where the Army cannot keep up with calls to begin new openings.
- Bethany and Joyville children's homes, and community development projects throughout The Philippines Territory.
- Children's homes, daycare centres, medical clinics and integrated community livelihood development programs in Myanmar, the Singapore, Malaysia and Myanmar Territory.
- The Hong Kong and Macau Command as it faces political upheaval. Pray especially for the corps, schools and educational services.

