

SALVATION FOR THE WORLD

THOUGHTS BY CAPTAIN WAYNE KNIGHT

LUKE 13:29 (NIV)

"People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God."

Peter Gott's composition *Salvation for the World* gives us both a backward and forward look. Phrases such as "whosoever will be saved," "salvation for the world," and "we'll lift up the banner" are reminiscent of many of the old Army "marching songs" such as *Whosoever Will May Come, For the World*, and *Lift Up the Banner on High*. Gott's contemporary tune brings this language into the 21st Century.

Three phrases gleaned from the song speak to Gott's desire to write lyrics that tapped into the Army's key values which speak to "having a heart for salvation, partnered with a desire for holiness (full salvation) and building unity, crying out for God to pour out the love of Jesus for the world."

Holiness to the Lord

All throughout Scripture (e.g. Leviticus 19:2, Isaiah 35:8, 1 Thessalonians 4:7, 1 Peter 1:16), God calls His people to a life of holiness. Just as He is set apart from all that is unclean and sinful, so He wants His people to be the same. The doctrine or principle of holiness has been a core element of the Army's DNA since its inception. Booth himself clearly stated that, "Holiness to the Lord is to us a fundamental truth; it stands to the forefront of our doctrines." [*William Booth's Vision for the Future-Caring Magazine*] Indeed, it is encapsulated in Doctrine 10 of our statement of faith and has been written about by countless Salvation Army authors, most notably Commissioner Samuel Logan Brengle. Let us continue to live out that motto: "Holiness to the Lord."

A light to all the world

The phrase, "the empire on which the sun never sets," has been associated over the years with both the Spanish and British Empires. Today, with the Army having a presence in at least 132 countries, the essence of that phrase is reflected in a statement made in June 2018 by then General-Elect Brian Peddle: "The sun never sets on the Salvation Army flag." [*The Salvation Army International - First Interview with General-Elect*] In Matthew 5:14, Jesus told His hearers, "You are the light of the world – like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden." With our flag in evidence across the globe, the Army is many things beside a physical city on a hilltop, and we are certainly not hidden. What a privilege we have as Salvationists to live out the Army's mission by pouring out the love of Jesus for the world. Let us never take it for granted. Let the light continue to shine!

A vast and mighty army of every nation

In Luke 13, Jesus speaks of a time when "People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God" (13:29). This picture of a "vast and mighty army" also appears elsewhere, such as Revelation 5:9 and Revelation 7:9. These images are exquisitely portrayed in the words of General John Gowans' composition, *They Shall Come From the East*, which was first presented in the musical *The Blood of the Lamb*, and subsequently enjoyed in various forms vocally and instrumentally. Anyone who has had the opportunity to attend an international Salvation Army event can certainly testify to the amazing variety of cultures, customs and languages that are represented; a literal microcosm of the "vast multitude" referred to in Scripture. How exciting it will be when we gather one day as a vast and mighty army, not just with fellow Salvationists, but with fellow believers in the eternal presence of our Lord!

THANKS TO PETER GOTT FOR REMINDING US THAT THERE IS INDEED

SALVATION FOR THE WORLD - THEN AND NOW.