

## Rise Running

**T**here is an African story\* about the lion and the gazelle ... Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up. It knows it must run faster than the fastest lion or it will be killed. Every morning a lion wakes up. It knows it must run faster than the slowest gazelle or it will starve to death. It does not matter if you are a lion or a gazelle. When morning comes, you had better rise running...

### CHANGE

In July of 2008, The Multicultural Ministries Bureau celebrated a change in designation from “bureau” to “department.” We’ve been asked how things will be different for us; naturally, the answer requires some thought. But, there will be changes and new opportunities will unfold over time. And the change



challenges us to evaluate what we’re currently doing, in light of the growing needs of a culturally complex and diverse landscape.

First, our commitment to move forward with focus and intentionality, or in the Apostle Paul’s words, to “press towards the mark,” hasn’t changed. In other words, we have the privileged to ‘rise running’. How does that translate to what we do every day?

Our commitments include:

- ◆ Translating materials from English into Spanish to meet the needs of our growing Hispanic ministries —and perhaps other languages, as need arises.
- ◆ Developing cross-cultural ministry resource tools for use on the field
- ◆ Leading training events in multicultural ministry for corps, or at divisional or territorial events
- ◆ Networking with other ministry groups who share our vision for diversity and multi-ethnic ministry
- ◆ Consulting with leaders and supporting those who want to reach out and minister to emerging ethnic populations in their communities, and

- ◆ Communicating a biblical perspective for multicultural and multiethnic ministry. We ‘rise running’.

### INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Second, intercultural competence must be a priority because multicultural and multi-ethnic ministry is integral to who we are as an Army.

Intercultural competence means that people acquire the basic tools and skills needed to minister with diverse people groups in culturally sensitive and appropriate ways. Intercultural competence reduces feelings of threat, often associated with diversity, and increases the positive outcomes of our outreach.

## **WHO WE ARE**

Third, all who are committed to The Salvation Army must own the multicultural “mission.” Our territory is truly a mix of different cultures and people from around the world—from Africa, Latin America, Asia and Southeast Asia, and Europe. We are a mosaic of God’s people. And while we are the “Multicultural Ministries Department,” the demands of this outreach far exceed our capacity. Diversity impacts all areas of The Salvation Army’s ministries.

## **THE INDIANA DIVISION**

Consider this: According to a National Public Radio report (Sept. ‘07), the largest community of Burmese refugees reside in the Indiana Division.

“Fort Wayne is Indiana’s second largest city, roughly equal distant from Chicago and Indianapolis. It’s now home to about 3,500 Burmese refugees, the largest such community in the U.S. It includes Buddhist monks, Christians, and Muslims – all of whom fled Burma over the past 20 years.”

At the time of this report, there were a hundred Burmese arriving in the area each month.

Why Ft. Wayne? “Groups like Catholic charities arranged to bring Burmese refugees here to Fort Wayne because of the city’s relatively low housing cost, low crime rate and unskilled jobs that didn’t require workers to know much English. Once here, many refugees lead unassuming lives, attending services at a Buddhist temple, and mingling mostly with other refugees.” While they may not speak English well, many of them are professionals, coming to the United States from diverse economic backgrounds.

But, Ft. Wayne isn’t the only settlement for the Burmese refugees. There is a significant number of new Burmese being served by the Rockford Tabernacle Corps (Illinois) in the Metropolitan Division and these families will need ongoing assistance for quite a while.

## **RISE RUNNING**

The Salvation Army will increasingly see new people groups coming into Corps, Kroc Centers, and other Service Units for services, children’s programs, and for worship. The opportunity to interface with people from around the world who daily practice different customs, speak a variety of languages and adhere to different religious traditions will grow. How will we welcome them? How will they come to be a part of the body of Christ?

As Paul says, “I’m not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don’t get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I’ve got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I’m off and running, and I’m not turning back..” (Philippians 3:12-14, The Message.)

*\*“Rise Running: The Education Imperative,” by Dr. Julianne Malveaux (DiversityInc., April 2008).*



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