Week 2: Witnesses to the Light – John 1:1-14

*‘In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcomeit.’
John 1:4-5*

## Introduction

The theme of light runs throughout the Bible. From the beginning when God said, ‘Let there be light’ through to Revelation where in the new creation there will be no need of a sun because God will be our light. Whenever God appeared in the Bible, at the top of the mountain or in the Temple or at the Transfiguration, the presence of God was announced with light.

Jesus is the light of all humanity: a light which illumines our lives, and also opens our eyes to the rest of the world. CS Lewis wrote that he believed in God in the same way that he believes the sun has risen – not only because he can see its light but also because by its light he can see everything else as well. The light that Jesus brings not only reveals who God is, but because of it we can also see the world clearly, as it really is, and not hidden behind a shroud of sin and self-interest. We can know our neighbour and love them because Christ shines his light upon them.

Quakers speak of the inner light that directs their judgements, and the Eastern Orthodox Christians speak about the uncreated light of the divine presence. In The Salvation Army we speak about the light of the Holy Spirit as it sanctifies us. The light of Jesus in our lives fills us with life, with love, with joy, and shines out of us. Millions of little lights all across the world, blazing with the light of faith, join together to make a mighty conflagration to outshine the sun – a light which cannot be overcome by darkness.

## Main Body

* **Jesus is the uncreated and eternal light.** There are many other lights in this world, or things which pretend to give off light. Some are like the moon, only reflecting the light that is shone on to them. There are beliefs and practices which contain some truth to them, but which are only reflections of the real truth. Others are like candles; they burn for a while, but when they run out of fuel they splutter and die. Only the light of Jesus has no beginning and no end. It is the light that brought life into existence, and which shone in the darkness over the waters of creation. Just as in creation, the bursting of this light into the created order illuminates not only the good but also the bad. The dark is known as darkness because we have seen the light.
* We once walked in darkness, but we did not know it was darkness because we had never experienced the light. But now, the light has shone. The light has come into this world and revealed itself to us for who it is. We now know the difference between light and darkness, and we have to choose one or the other. If we choose to follow this light, to let it illumine our steps and show us the right way to travel, then we will know this light in our lives.
* When we open our hearts to Jesus, the Holy Spirit fills us with the light of Christ. We learn how to walk in the light. But this light burning within us was not given to us for our own sake. The light of Jesus burns brightly for all creation, and when we share in that light we share in Jesus’ mission to the world. We are to shine brightly, like a city on a hill, like a lamp on a stand, like a star in the sky, so that others can see the light of Jesus in our own lives. What is the point of a light that is hidden? We must be careful that our lives let the light of Jesus shine out of us and we don’t cover it up.

## Response

* When you pray, light a candle as a reminder of the light of Jesus. Watch how the air currents move it first one way and then another. Feel the warmth of it on your hands. Know this light is within you. Ask Jesus to let it shine within you ever more brightly.
* What can you do this week to shine the light of Jesus into the world? Is there someone you can encourage, someone lonely you can speak to? What act of love can you do to shine Christ’s light into the world.
* What are you doing which might be obscuring the light of Jesus? What sins are you holding on to that you need to let go and give over to Jesus? Take this time to come again to the cross, to shed the darkness clinging to you, and let the light of Jesus conquer the darkness in you so that his light can shine through you.