

CALLED TO BE A SOLDIER

EXPLORING THE
SOLDIER'S COVENANT



A framework for those considering soldiership in
The Salvation Army and an ongoing resource for
soldiers as they review and refresh their commitment

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The General of The Salvation Army

ISBN 978-1-912981-20-5
E-book ISBN 978-1-912981-21-2

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Design: Jooles Tostevin-Hobbs
Typesetting: Just Composing

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record of this book is available from the British Library.

Scripture quotations are generally taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version–UK.
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Anglicised edition first published in Great Britain in 1979 by Hodder & Stoughton,
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Printed and bound in the United Kingdom



The Salvation Army International Trust is a charity registered in
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101 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4V 4EH.

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Foreword by the General	v
Introduction	1
Chapter 1	5
‘Having accepted Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Lord...’	
Chapter 2	13
‘I believe and will live by the truths of the word of God...’	
Chapter 3	19
‘I will be responsive to the Holy Spirit’s work’	
Chapter 4	25
‘I will make the values of the Kingdom of God...the standard for my life’	
Chapter 5	31
‘I will uphold Christian integrity in every area of my life...’	
Chapter 6	39
‘I will maintain Christian ideals in all my relationships...’	
Chapter 7	47
‘I will uphold the sanctity of marriage and of family life’	
Chapter 8	53
‘I will be a faithful steward of my time and gifts...’	
Chapter 9	59
‘I will abstain from...all...that could enslave the body or spirit’	
Chapter 10	65
‘I will be faithful to the purposes for which God raised up The Salvation Army...’	
Chapter 11	71
‘I will be actively involved...in the life, work, worship and witness of the corps’	
Chapter 12	77
‘I will be true to the principles and practices of The Salvation Army...’	

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FOREWORD

It is my privilege, as General of The Salvation Army, to offer a few words regarding this important new publication, *Called to be a Soldier*. This is a timely book as it challenges us to engage personally in an active, obedient faith. We are becoming increasingly aware of the ways in which our world is interconnected. How we relate to each other as individuals, communities and nations is crucial for our society and environment. It is my conviction that this book will provide a most helpful framework to think about these matters, and more.

A few words about *calling*. It is a Christian conviction that God is a God of mission – a mission that has been expressed most fully and clearly in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through the Spirit of Christ, God is still carrying out his mission in our world. It is God's purpose, however, to invite us to partner with him in this mission. Jesus called individuals to follow him, and by so doing brought about significant changes to their world. While this calling comes to us as individuals, it is not a private matter.

God's calling places us within a community that is different and seeks to make a difference. For Salvationists, this calling finds its place within the community known as The Salvation Army. It is the Salvationist conviction that our mission is shaped by our Christian understanding of salvation. For this reason we are an Army of *salvation*. We are an Army committed to bring God's healing love and welcoming grace wherever we can, and to help bring God's justice into our world. We are also called to holy living, understanding a biblical call and a Salvation Army focus through our doctrine to personally and communally seek what this means in practical terms. These are all expressions of salvation. We do this by the Holy Spirit's empowerment, and we do this together. Those who accept this calling within The Salvation Army choose to be *soldiers*, *with the support of a corps*.

It is timely for us in the 21st century to think again about the Christian life as a battle in which we are engaged. Each nation faces evils that need to be challenged and concerns that should be addressed. While any Christian can do this individually, Salvation Army soldiership provides a means for us to imagine and practise ways to engage in these battles together. Thus, when disaster strikes one part of our world, we will work together as Salvationists to serve that nation. When individuals and families suffer the consequences of addictions, we will work together to restore hope. When tensions between races and ethnicities create division, we will express God's reconciling love. Soldiership within The Salvation Army is an intentional way for us to commit to matters of justice, healing and hope. Soldiership invites us to work together as an *Army* of salvation.

Our actions as Salvationists are grounded in important convictions. What we do is impacted by what we believe. For this reason, *Called to be a Soldier* will help us understand how Salvationist beliefs shape our actions. It will draw attention to the importance of worship, for the God we worship is a God of saving mission. My prayer is that as you read this book and study its contents, you will grow in your conviction that Salvation Army soldiership is a calling of immense importance. Bring questions to your reading. And bring your openness to the God who calls us into his service, into his mission.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Peddle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

General Brian Peddle
International Headquarters
London, UK, February 2021

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INTRODUCTION

As Salvationists we affirm that Jesus calls individuals to follow him in a life of discipleship. When we become Salvation Army soldiers we offer our wholehearted and willing response to this call and state our determination to live in continual obedience to Christ.

Salvation Army soldiership provides a framework through which our response to Jesus as Saviour and Lord and his call to discipleship are worked out. It is a 'public response and witness to the life-changing encounter with Christ which has already taken place...'¹ Soldiership provides guidance, challenge, boundaries and opportunities for personal growth. Becoming a soldier marks a stage on a journey of faith, a commitment to continual discipleship which will include opportunities for deeper understanding, regular examination of our behaviour and lifestyle, and accepting the challenge to become more like Christ in every part of life.

Soldiership is also an intentional choice to respond to God's call to share the transforming grace of the gospel with other people. When we choose to become soldiers we commit ourselves to active Christian service in and through The Salvation Army and affirm our intention to participate in God's mission in, to and for the world. Soldiership both equips us for mission and gives us a framework for it.

1 'Affirmations', Appendix 4, 'The report of the International Spiritual Life Commission', *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine (HoD)*, 305, 2010, Salvation Books, International Headquarters (IHQ)

For any army to be effective it must have soldiers who are committed to its purposes and loyal to its mission. The Salvation Army international mission statement summarises its purposes as follows:

The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church.

Its **message** is based on the Bible.

Its **ministry** is motivated by the love of God.

Its **mission** is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in his name without discrimination.

Accepting God's call to soldiership in The Salvation Army is an act of commitment to this mission. It is a way of affirming, sharing and living our Christian faith. The Salvation Army Soldier's Covenant – also called the Articles of War – sets out the beliefs and values of the Army and provides a framework for living as a Salvation Army soldier. It is a declaration of belief, a promise to allow God to continually transform and renew us, and a commitment to a way of life. It is also a sign of our unity and identity as an Army, because every Salvation Army soldier makes this covenant. When we respond to God's call to soldiership we become part of a unique global fellowship that is marked by commitment – to Christ, to our own growth in holiness and to active participation in the mission of The Salvation Army.

This book explores the Soldier's Covenant. Each chapter focuses on one of the statements of intention that form the covenant, outlining the possibilities and opportunities of life as a Salvation Army soldier. The covenant is set in the context of Salvationist theology and practice, showing how the promises we make to God are also Articles of War – a set of regulations which guide the conduct of an army.

Anyone who wishes to become a Salvation Army soldier should consider this covenant prayerfully. The beliefs, values and behaviours outlined in it call for dedication to God and God's mission, holiness of heart and life, personal integrity and authenticity, and determination to live in ways that model what it means to be a follower of Christ. Becoming a Salvation Army soldier is a public witness to God's specific call and claim upon our life. It is not an end in itself but the sign of a new commitment to God that affects the whole of life.

Living as a Salvation Army soldier is only possible by relying on the grace and guidance of God as we seek to translate into everyday living the commitments we have made. Soldiership should be viewed as an opportunity to be a witness to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. It offers the opportunity to demonstrate the real freedom that is found when we are disciplined disciples who are accountable to God, to the Army and to each other.

CHAPTER 01



Having accepted
Jesus Christ as my
Saviour and Lord,
and desiring to fulfil
my membership
of his Church
on earth as a
soldier of
The Salvation Army,
I now by God's
grace enter into a
sacred covenant.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- The Salvation Army – a brief historical summary.
- The 'shape' of the Soldier's Covenant. How what we believe is translated into values, attitudes, behaviours and lifestyle choices.
- The meaning of covenant for a Salvation Army soldier, and a reminder of the importance of the grace of God in our lives as we live our covenant.

The Salvation Army

In June 1865, Revd William Booth, a Methodist minister, responded to a general invitation for anyone who was converted to speak in an open-air meeting outside ‘The Blind Beggar’ public house on Mile End Waste, London, England. It was to be the beginning of a series of events which led to the establishment of The Salvation Army by William and Catherine Booth. Booth was invited by the East London Special Services Committee to take temporary charge of the tent mission and within a period of six weeks was convinced that a permanent mission to the people of east London must be established. Initially called the Christian Revival Association, it was renamed the East London Christian Mission in 1867, The Christian Mission in 1869 and The Salvation Army in 1878.

The name led to the adoption of military language and customs. William Booth became the General and other ranks were soon added. Members became ‘soldiers’ and a military structure and form of governance evolved. Uniforms and military symbols were introduced; the motto ‘Blood and Fire’ reminds soldiers of the death of Christ for our salvation and the refining work of the Holy Spirit in our lives; the flag is red for the blood of Jesus, yellow for the fire of the Holy Spirit and blue to signify the purity of God; the crest is a combination of a number of these and other symbols which together speak of salvation, holiness and eternal life²; and the red shield with the words The Salvation Army is a shared witness to who we are and our purpose in witnessing to the transforming power of God’s salvation.

In keeping with the military metaphor the required standard for membership is described in the Articles of War and the framework for discipline and discipleship is expressed as *Orders and Regulations*.

The Articles of War were first used between 1878 and 1882. The earliest version made no reference to doctrine, but a selective summary of our beliefs was added in due course. In the 1950s the Doctrines were added in full. Subsequently, there were only small adjustments to the text and the addition of the ban on smoking (1975), until a major revision was instigated in the 1980s. The current Articles of War, including the addition of the title ‘A Soldier’s Covenant,’ were agreed by the International Conference of Leaders in September 1988.

- 2 a. The round figure – the sun – represents the light and fire of the Holy Spirit
- b. The cross in the centre represents the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ
- c. The letter ‘S’ stands for salvation
- d. The swords represent the warfare of salvation
- e. The shots represent the truths of the gospel
- f. The crown represents the crown of glory which God will give to all his soldiers who are faithful to the end
- g. The motto ‘Blood and Fire’ – the blood of Jesus and the fire of the Holy Spirit

An international Army

The Salvation Army became an international movement. When Booth died in 1912 it was at work in 58 countries. Now The Salvation Army exists in more than 130 countries and continues to plan for further expansion.

The internationalism of The Salvation Army is both a spiritual principle and a practical form of organisation. It demonstrates that Christian believers are not divided by race, social class, gender or anything else that might hinder full Christian fellowship (Galatians 3:28³). It also means that personnel and resources can be sent where they are most urgently needed. The authority of the General helps to preserve a common international policy. Although the General holds the highest authority, he or she cannot diverge from the Army's accepted principles. Similar limitations on the authority delegated by the General to other leaders make the Army's system of leadership both safe and flexible.

The universal Church

The Salvation Army is part of the universal Christian Church.⁴ The *Handbook of Doctrine* states that:

Salvationists are members of the one Body of Christ. We share common ground with the universal Church while manifesting our own characteristics. As one particular expression of the Church, The Salvation Army participates with other Christian denominations and congregations in mission and ministry. We are part of the one, universal Church.⁵

Thus, Salvation Army soldiers belong to the universal Church, sharing many beliefs and characteristics with other Christians, but also having distinctive traits and practices.⁶

A sacrament has been described as 'an outward sign of an inward and spiritual grace'⁷ in which Christians experience the divine through ordinary things. While acknowledging the importance of the traditional sacraments to many denominations, The Salvation Army witnesses to the possibility of living a full Christian life without observing baptism and communion (the Lord's Supper).

3 All biblical references are taken from the *New International Version* unless otherwise indicated

4 *HoD*, Appendix 5, 'The Salvation Army in the Body of Christ', 310

5 *HoD*, 247

6 The *One Army* series (<https://www.salvationarmy.org/onearmy>) gives helpful foundational teaching

7 Catechism of the Church of England

As his sacramental people, we find him living and at work in our own life-experiences. We celebrate the presence, the gift, the healing, the reconciliation, the joy in our own life by connecting it with the earthly life of Jesus.

We are a sacramental community because our life, our work, and our celebrations centre on Christ, the one true Sacrament. Our life together is sacramental because we live by faith in him and our everyday lives reveal and offer unexpected grace, his undeserved gift, again and again.⁸

The Soldier's Covenant

The Articles of War or Soldier's Covenant begin with an affirmation of faith and commitment. This summarises the experience and intention of the recruit.

Having accepted Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Lord, and desiring to fulfil my membership of his Church on earth as a soldier of The Salvation Army, I now by God's grace enter into a sacred covenant.

The covenant begins with a declaration of our commitment to the Army's eleven doctrines (Articles of Faith):

I believe and will live by the truths of the word of God expressed in The Salvation Army's eleven Articles of Faith:

We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God and that they only constitute the Divine rule of Christian faith and practice.

We believe that there is only one God, who is infinitely perfect, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things, and who is the only proper object of religious worship.

We believe that there are three persons in the Godhead – the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, undivided in essence and co-equal in power and glory.

We believe that in the person of Jesus Christ the Divine and human natures are united, so that He is truly and properly God and truly and properly man.

We believe that our first parents were created in a state of innocency, but by their disobedience they lost their purity and happiness, and that in consequence of their fall all men have become sinners, totally depraved, and as such are justly exposed to the wrath of God.

8 *HoD*, 270

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has by His suffering and death made an atonement for the whole world so that whosoever will may be saved.

We believe that repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, are necessary to salvation.

We believe that we are justified by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and that he that believeth hath the witness in himself.

We believe that continuance in a state of salvation depends upon continued obedient faith in Christ.

We believe that it is the privilege of all believers to be wholly sanctified, and that their whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe in the immortality of the soul; in the resurrection of the body; in the general judgment at the end of the world; in the eternal happiness of the righteous; and in the endless punishment of the wicked.

The second section of the Soldier's Covenant sets out ways in which those beliefs, and the values and lifestyle choices that flow from them, should be evident in the life of each Salvation Army soldier. These statements are a summary of the ways in which our relationship with Christ is foundational to the whole of life. The words 'I will' express a strong intention to be what God requires us to be, and to live in ways that reflect, and witness to, our salvation. God's love for us provides the resources we need for on-going, faithful love and obedience.

I will be responsive to the Holy Spirit's work and obedient to his leading in my life, growing in grace through worship, prayer, service and reading the Bible.

I will make the values of the Kingdom of God and not the values of the world the standard for my life.

I will uphold Christian integrity in every area of my life, allowing nothing in thought, word or deed that is unworthy, unclean, untrue, profane, dishonest or immoral.

I will maintain Christian ideals in all my relationships with others: my family and neighbours, my colleagues and fellow Salvationists, those to whom and for whom I am responsible, and the wider community.

I will uphold the sanctity of marriage and of family life.

I will be a faithful steward of my time and gifts, my money and possessions, my body, my mind and my spirit, knowing that I am accountable to God.

I will abstain from alcoholic drink, tobacco, the non-medical use of addictive drugs, gambling, pornography, the occult, and all else that could enslave the body or spirit.

I will be faithful to the purposes for which God raised up The Salvation Army, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, endeavouring to win others to him, and in his name caring for the needy and the disadvantaged.

I will be actively involved, as I am able, in the life, work, worship and witness of the corps, giving as large a proportion of my income as possible to support its ministries and the worldwide work of the Army.

I will be true to the principles and practices of The Salvation Army, loyal to its leaders, and I will show the spirit of Salvationism whether in times of popularity or persecution.

Finally, the soldier makes a declaration:

I now call upon all present to witness that I enter into this covenant...of my own free will, convinced that the love of Christ, who died and now lives to save me, requires from me this devotion of my life to his service for the salvation of the whole world; and therefore do here declare my full determination, by God's help, to be a true soldier of The Salvation Army.

A sacred covenant

The promises of the Articles of War are described as a 'sacred covenant'. This shows that Salvation Army soldiership is more than merely being added to the 'soldier's roll' and more than opening up the opportunity to be part of Salvation Army activities and service. It is an integral part of our relationship with God and our calling to follow in active discipleship, as we make lifestyle choices that are consistent with what we believe and the covenant we make.

A covenant is a form of agreement or bond which sets out the promises, privileges and responsibilities between two parties. In the Bible covenants between God and human beings are always initiated by God, who determines the responsibilities and conditions, and confirms the covenant (e.g. Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:3-6; 2 Samuel 7:12-16). Covenants are a sign of God's grace and blessing, a promise of divine love and protection. In response, the people are required to live in obedience to God, as shown in the law. The Old Testament shows how often the people struggled to obey, and how God repeatedly reached out in grace, offering a new beginning when they failed.

Eventually the prophet Jeremiah spoke of a new covenant which would be written on the hearts and minds of the people (Jeremiah 31:31-33). This was fulfilled in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. In the New Testament, Jesus showed that our covenant with God is rooted in a relationship with God which does not contradict the law but brings it to completion (Matthew 5:17).

In making the Soldier's Covenant, each soldier enters into an agreement that flows from God's invitation and calling to be in obedient and loving relationship with him. Through that loving relationship God provides the resources for our ongoing faithful love and obedience. We are called to be a soldier.⁹ It provides one way of responding to the love of God shown in Jesus as we give ourselves in love, mission and service. The promises of the covenant are made to God. They are worked out in service as a soldier of The Salvation Army.¹⁰

This can only happen as we rely on the grace of God, that persistent loving favour towards human beings that accompanies Christians throughout their life. The Bible reminds us that 'It is by grace you have been saved...and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God' (Ephesians 2:8). Salvation and growth in holiness are gifts of grace. Paul's testimony describes how he has relied on God's grace in his relationship with the Corinthians. 'Now this is our boast: our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity and godly sincerity. We have done so, relying not on worldly wisdom but on God's grace' (2 Corinthians 1:12).

Making, and keeping, the Soldier's Covenant is only possible through the grace of God in our life, inspiring and empowering us to become what God requires. The statements are promises that demonstrate our sincere intention. If we read them only as a set of rules that we must keep perfectly by our own willpower, we may find ourselves in a spiral of failure and guilt that will damage our understanding of who we are as God's child, our relationships with other people and our relationship with God. The promises are made to God in the presence of the Salvationist community. At times we will struggle to live them perfectly, and we may fail. When this happens, our own relationship with God, together with the support of our fellow soldiers and our leaders can help us to find a way forward. We can expect that those who hold us accountable will do so in a spirit of love and grace and, where possible, will seek to take steps that enable us to be restored in our relationship with God and our commitment as soldiers. At all times we rely on God's grace as we seek to live well as soldiers. This grace makes joyful, fruitful and adventurous Christian living a possibility.

9 *One Army: In Calling*, IHQ – www.salvationarmy.org/onearmy/incalling

10 *One Army: In Covenant*, IHQ – www.salvationarmy.org/onearmy/incovenant

CHAPTER 02



I believe
and will live by
the truths of
the word of God
expressed in
The Salvation Army's
eleven
Articles of Faith.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- The importance of faith that is 'lived'.
- The importance of doctrine as 'the consensus of the faithful' which is rooted in the Church's understanding of the Bible.
- The historical roots of Salvation Army doctrine.
- The pattern of Christian belief that is expressed in Salvation Army doctrine.

Salvationist faith and practice are rooted in the Bible, personal experience and the heritage of the Christian Church. The principal beliefs of The Salvation Army are stated in the eleven Articles of Faith, which are also called the Doctrines.

For Salvationists belief and action have always been interwoven. Belief in Jesus as Lord is not merely intellectual acceptance; it changes what we do, who we are and who we become. It must be *lived*, and through this life of faith an individual's experience of God grows and develops. So belief leads to the discovery of a new life that is marked by belonging to Jesus.

The Bible is central to our understanding and practice of our Christian faith. As we read it, and discover that it has meaning for our own lives and circumstances, we become the people of God in our own generation. When we develop habits of reading, become absorbed in Scripture, and reflect upon it in the light of Christian teaching, we understand more of who God is, and discover that the more we understand the more there is to learn.

The Bible is not merely the history of God's people. It has the capacity to teach, challenge, inspire and comfort, even when translated into languages and cultures that are very different from the experience of the original authors. The deep spiritual and theological significance of the incarnation of Jesus is summed up in a few words – 'the Word became flesh' (John 1:14); the enormity of God's grace finds expression in a stark statement – 'while we were still sinners, Christ died for us' (Romans 5:8); and the ultimate standard for our life as Christians is described in the beautiful prose of 1 Corinthians chapter 13, with its challenging summary statement in verse 13 – 'the greatest of these is love.'

The Bible is the authority against which the Christian life must be measured. What we do as Christians emerges from the interaction between our understanding of our beliefs, our personal relationship with God and our experience of living in the world. The task of the Church in each generation is to live in ways that are obedient to the authority of the Bible, and faithful to the Christian heritage.

Doctrine is the history of how the Church has interpreted faith. It explores and explains belief. It has developed as preachers, teachers, theologians and other Christians have reflected, in the context of their time, on their understanding of the relationship between God, creation and humanity as revealed in the Bible. It is sometimes described as 'the consensus of the faithful'. The Bible provides the foundation for Christian doctrine, and the standard against which it is judged.

The Doctrines explore and define a Salvationist understanding of God, humanity and the ongoing journey of the Christian life. They are a summary of belief, providing a foundation which helps Salvationists interpret and evaluate the experiences of life so we can live faithfully in our own context. The Soldier's Covenant shows how the

relationship with God which is described in the Articles of Faith can shape our response to everyday life. As our relationship with Christ matures it guides our attitudes, thoughts, motivation and actions. If belief is not expressed in action, it is not true faith in Christ.

The Articles of Faith

The personal relationship with Christ that is summarised in the declaration that ‘Jesus is Lord’ (1 Corinthians 12:3) is at the heart of Christianity. This statement was shared between the earliest believers as a greeting to each other and a witness to their faith. As the Early Church expanded in size, the believers recognised the importance of helping each other grow in faith. They were not only individuals who believed, they were a community who supported and challenged one another in working out what it means to be a follower of Christ. Faith is deeply personal, but it flourishes best in fellowship with other believers.

Through the centuries the Church has learned to express the common experience of faith and to expand the declaration of ‘Jesus as Lord’ in creeds and statements of faith. Three creeds dating from the early centuries of Christian faith, the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed, have become known as the classical creeds.¹¹ Through the centuries other creeds and statements of faith have been developed by groups of Christians, often to explain and explore the doctrinal emphases of a particular church or denomination.

The Salvation Army Articles of Faith fulfil a similar function. Their roots are in the Wesleyan Methodist tradition and the words and content are similar to the Methodist New Connexion doctrines, which can be traced back to 1838.¹² William Booth was an ordained minister of the New Connexion, whose founders claimed their doctrines to be ‘those of Methodism, as taught by Mr Wesley’. The Salvationist emphasis on regeneration and sanctification, the conviction that the gospel is for all people and the insistence upon humanity’s free will are all rooted in Methodism, which drew its theology from the rich consensus of the Church through the centuries.

In 1865 William Booth adopted seven articles of belief for The Christian Mission. Three more were added in 1870, and one more, the current number ten, in 1876. Each additional point can be traced back to the New Connexion document. These Articles of Faith are placed as Schedule 1 of the Salvation Army Act 1980.

Doctrine is the teaching of the Church. The eleven Articles of Faith are an expression of personal faith and a common vision. They are consistent with the classical Christian

¹¹ *HoD*, Appendix 1, 277

¹² *HoD*, Appendix 2, 282

creeds and identify Salvationists as members of the Body of Christ on earth. They are explored in depth in the *Handbook of Doctrine*, but there are also other helpful resources available.¹³

The eleven Doctrines of The Salvation Army are often taught and discussed as separate statements of faith. This is helpful for detailed study, so long as each one is viewed as part of the whole. Read together it is possible to see a pattern, and a progression of faith. Rooted in the revelation of the Bible, we affirm our understanding of the God as Trinity, humanity as separated from God by sin, and salvation as a possibility for all who choose to believe. Holiness, sanctification, is a privilege that is possible for all believers. Doctrine 1 acknowledges that the Bible is inspired by God, and because of this unique inspiration it is the source of Christian faith and practice. The truths that are expressed and discerned in the Bible continue to inspire faith and belief in the contemporary world.

Doctrine 2 is about God who is the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things. In worship Salvationists give a wholehearted response to God who is the only one worthy of this allegiance.

Doctrine 3 speaks of the one God who is at the same time three – Father, Son and Holy Ghost (Spirit). These three persons are a Trinity, an eternal community of being, united in intimate fellowship with each other. ‘The persons are distinct, but united; different but not separate from one another.’¹⁴ The Trinity is a way of describing God as Father and Creator, Son as Redeemer, befriender and maker of disciples, and the Spirit as the one who makes us holy, counsels and empowers us as the people of God.

Doctrine 4 focuses on the Son as both a real and unique human being and the God who brings salvation and transformation.

Doctrine 5 describes what it means to be human, and shows how fallen human nature, which alienates humanity from God, can be redeemed only by God’s gift of Jesus and his sacrifice upon the Cross (Doctrine 6).

Doctrines 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 together speak of the major theme of the Bible, the dynamic interaction between God’s grace, human response and God’s action in our lives as we choose to trust him. They outline the way of salvation (*via salutis*), the continuum of God’s grace, and the journey made by those who come to faith in Christ and who continue to be transformed and made holy . Doctrines 6, 7 and 8 speak specifically of the sacrificial work of Jesus on the cross, the possibility of salvation for all people, and the response that is necessary for salvation. Doctrines 9 and 10 are inextricably

13 For example *Doctrine for Today*, Salvation Books, 2017

14 *HoD*, 51

CHAPTER 03



I will be responsive to the Holy Spirit's work and obedient to his leading in my life, growing in grace through worship, prayer, service and reading the Bible.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Why it is important to be responsive and obedient to the Holy Spirit.
- Some of the challenges we face when trying to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit.
- The importance of spiritual disciplines in our Christian growth.

Choosing to become a Salvation Army soldier is one way of placing ourselves under the authority of God and embracing the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. At the same time, we identify ourselves with The Salvation Army, choosing to live according to its priorities and practices.

This clause of the Soldier's Covenant shows the dynamic nature of our commitment. Our relationship with God makes a difference to who we are and what we do. Becoming a soldier does not automatically make us into the mature Christian that we have the potential to be but it should mark our intention to grow towards maturity (Ephesians 4:13). Soldiership is a process, a journey which requires openness to the Holy Spirit and willingness to grow as disciples. When we make this journey we discover that we are empowered to live in ways that are worthy of our calling (Ephesians 4:1). The *Handbook of Doctrine* describes the possibility of 'a close spiritual relationship with God, marked by openness, obedience and connection to him (John 15:1-7). As a result of this relationship we become more like Christ (Romans 8:29; Ephesians 4:13-15; 2 Peter 3:18; 1 John 3:1-3) and his holiness becomes evident in our living.'¹⁵

I will be responsive

Salvation can only come about through the work of the Holy Spirit. Doctrine 7 says: 'We believe that repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and regeneration by the Holy Spirit are necessary to salvation.' However, the work of the Holy Spirit is not limited to the moment of salvation. It is through our continual obedient responsiveness to the Spirit that faith matures and develops. This requires that we recognise our need for growth, and are willing to be changed as the Holy Spirit works in our lives.

The details of the journey will be different for everyone, but most often it will involve spiritual disciplines, the influence of other people, reflection on our lives and circumstances, and the wisdom of our Salvationist community. The influence of each one may vary at different times in our lives, but all of them will have an important influence on our Christian growth. However, growth will not happen unless these 'means of grace' are accompanied by our responsiveness to the Holy Spirit.

I will be obedient

Willingness to obey is fundamental to our relationship with God. The Bible tells the story of God's requirement for human obedience so that people might flourish, and of the people's repeated failure to obey and their attempts to determine their own destiny. Each time, God provided a way to restore the broken relationship, until they failed again. Beginning from the story of creation, the pattern of obedience, failure and

15 *HoD*, 195

restoration repeats through the history of Israel. It is told in different ways – through the giving of the law (Deuteronomy chapter 5), the stories of the Judges (Judges 2:10-19), the history of the kingdom (1 Kings 2:2-3; 11:33-38), the message of the prophets (Jeremiah 31:1-33) and the poetry of the Psalms (Psalm 119). Eventually, at a key point in human history God acted in a new and different way through Jesus. From this time human obedience was no longer rooted in the law, but rather in the relationship with God made possible by Christ's death and resurrection (Romans 5:8). This obedience is our freely given response to God's love, described by Paul as the 'living sacrifice' which is characteristic of true worship (Romans 11:30-32; 12:1-2). Our obedience is a response to God's provision for us, but at times our natural human nature tends to reinterpret the call for obedience as an unreasonable demand for control and a demonstration of power, so we rebel against it. It is only when we begin from our relationship with God that we are able to see that the desire for obedience is a sign of God's love for us. When this happens, we choose freely to obey, knowing that it will lead to what is best for us.

Despite this knowledge, it is not always easy to be obedient to the leading of the Holy Spirit. A number of factors contribute to this.

It is sometimes difficult to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit. There is no single way in which the Spirit communicates and therefore it is possible to either miss or misinterpret the message, which may come through a variety of means including worship, prayer, reading the Bible, conversation with other people, music or art, solitude or silence.

Similarly, it is sometimes difficult to discern the nature of the message, or to be sure that it is a genuine communication from the Holy Spirit. It is possible for any Christian to interpret our own wishes, hopes and plans as the voice of the Spirit, or to ignore the Spirit's leading when it is not a reflection of our own dreams or opinions.

There are a number of ways in which we can test our responsiveness and obedience. These include considering if what we believe to be obedience to the Spirit is consistent with the overall message of the Bible; if it is confirmed by other believers; if it brings a sense of 'rightness,' peace and joy; if circumstances suggest that it is appropriate and timely. However, none of these are a guarantee of authenticity. Obedience to the Spirit is always a matter of trust and faith.

It is sometimes possible that obedience to the Spirit will bring a sense of discomfort and tension that lead to new wisdom and insight at a personal level, but also within the Church. When the Spirit works prophetically within an individual it may result in disturbance to the status quo and challenge the legitimate authority of others. At such times it is especially important that we test our discernment against the overall message of the Bible and the tradition of the Church, calling on the wisdom of mature Christians to hold us accountable as we seek a way forward. There is danger in untested 'vision' or pursuing our personal agenda but there is also danger in failing to listen carefully to the Spirit and responding with less than full obedience.

Ultimately the future of the Church, including The Salvation Army, rests on individuals and communities who listen and are obedient to the Spirit of God.

Growing in grace

Every soldier should allow the Holy Spirit to direct every aspect of our life – our attitudes, motivation, behaviour, thinking, speech and interaction with other people are all influenced by the Spirit. This ‘consistent cultivation of the inner life is essential for our faith-life and for our fighting fitness’.¹⁶ Paul, writing to Timothy, gives a simple reminder – ‘train yourself to be godly’ because ‘godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come’ (1 Timothy 4:7-8).

Worship, prayer, service and the Bible provide a foundation for growth and deepening spiritual experience through both individual encounter with God and shared experience. They are a reminder that the Christian life is an active experience and a partnership with God. Growth will come as a gift of God, through responsiveness and obedience to the Holy Spirit. At the same time we need to invest in our relationship with God, ensuring that we are open to new insight and growth.

In worship we offer honour and adoration that is God’s by right. It is an attitude of spirit that can be present at any time, when we are alone or with other people. John 4:21-24 speaks of the need to worship God in the Spirit and in truth. Our worship is not defined solely by what we do, but by who we are and the attitude with which we give honour to God.

Prayer can be described as conversation with God. It allows us to express our thoughts and feelings to him. More importantly, it is listening and trying to understand God’s intention for our life and will for any circumstance. It may lead to new depth of spiritual experience, changed behaviour as we recognise attitudes within ourselves that are not like Christ, and insight which leads to new action, either in our own lives or on behalf of others. Prayer is a process of lifelong learning as our relationship with God becomes deeper. There are many ways of establishing a pattern of prayer that is personally suitable. Books, guides and websites can be helpful, as well as praying with other Christians.

For any Salvationist, service flows from our worship as an expression of our adoration for God, and forms an essential aspect of spiritual growth and development. Our salvation must be a personal experience; we are not Christians because we are born into a Christian family, or nurtured in a Christian environment. However, faith is not a private experience; we are Christians with other people, and for other people. Our service will include ‘sharing the good news of Jesus Christ’ and ‘in his name caring for

16 *HoD*, 305

the needy and the disadvantaged'.¹⁷ This may include offering hospitality to those who are on the margins of society, and at the same time, when appropriate and possible, challenging societal injustices that create inequality and harm individuals. Our service must always be offered as an act of obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Reading and studying the Bible with the intention of allowing it to speak into our lives helps to ensure that we continue to 'live by the truths of the word of God'. The broad message of the Bible is the foundation for Salvationist belief and practice. It is not only a historical record, but is the living word of God, which is described as 'God-breathed' and 'useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that all God's people may be thoroughly equipped for every good work' (2 Timothy 3:16-17 *Today's New International Version*). There are many resources that aid Bible study and challenge us to live in ways that are consistent with its message.¹⁸

There are a range of other spiritual disciplines that can be helpful in ensuring this fundamental responsiveness to the Holy Spirit. These are habits that we form which nurture us spiritually and enable us to grow to Christian maturity. Personal disciplines include solitude, silence, living simply, fasting, contemplation and study.

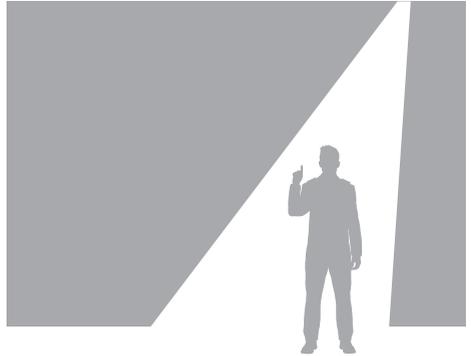
Other disciplines are shared in community. These provide a means of mutual encouragement and support, and the opportunity to grow and develop as we journey with other people. Corporate disciplines include celebration, small groups, spiritual friendship, service and hospitality. Sharing the journey of discipleship with other Christians enables us to encourage each other and, when necessary, to hold each other accountable for our choices and lifestyle. Not all disciplines will be suitable or possible for everyone, but each of them can contribute to a life that is marked by responsiveness and obedience to the Spirit.

It is essential that every soldier finds those patterns of discipline that encourage and enable us to flourish and live well. The exact pattern of worship, prayer, Bible study and other disciplines will not be the same for everyone and our use of them may vary at different points in our lives, but they should not be neglected entirely, or inevitably faith will start to become a habit, or will diminish and die. The experience of Christians through the centuries is that our relationship with God can grow, change and develop throughout life, and that our investment in spiritual disciplines is a part of this growth in discipleship.

17 See Chapter 10

18 See for example *Tools for Interpreting the Bible* sar.my/bibleint, *Words of Life*, daily reading plans, study materials

CHAPTER 04



I will make
the values of the
Kingdom of God
and not the
values of the world
the standard
for my life.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Soldiership cannot be fulfilled only in a personal and private relationship with God. It is a way of being and living in society that is a witness to our life in Christ.
 - The Kingdom of God refers to the rule or reign of God. It is with us 'now' and 'not yet'.
 - There can be tension between Kingdom of God values and the values of our own culture. We are to challenge those values of society that do not bring life and hope.
 - As Christians we are sent into our culture as hearers and bearers of the good news of God's Kingdom. Jesus shows us how.
-

Soldiership cannot be fulfilled only in a personal and private relationship with God. It is a way of being and living in society that is a witness to our life in Christ. Responsiveness and obedience to the Holy Spirit requires that we live distinctively – that we make the values of the Kingdom of God the standard for our life.

This statement of intention acknowledges the possibility of tension between the values of our own culture and context, described here as the values of the world, and those of Christ. This does not mean that we can make a simple comparison and automatically reject the values we see in our culture as unholy or evil, because in any culture there is the possibility of goodness. However, it does require that we are thoughtful and prayerful in our interactions, affirming what is good and critiquing that which is not consistent with Kingdom values. God is at work in the world. When we commit to making God's values our own we partner with God in establishing the Kingdom

A task of God's people has always been to challenge those aspects of society which are unhealthy, exploitative or oppressive (Exodus 16:3; Numbers 11:4-6), and to offer in their place practices which bring life and hope and are a mark of God's rule. This is still true, both for The Salvation Army as a Christian denomination¹⁹ and for individual soldiers who challenge injustice in their own context.

We need to begin by knowing what we mean by the values of the Kingdom. These are broad concepts which can be discerned in the Bible. The life and ministry of Jesus demonstrates them in action.

The Kingdom of God

The Kingdom of God, which in Matthew's Gospel is called the Kingdom of Heaven, is central to the teaching of Jesus in the New Testament. It draws on Old Testament thinking which acknowledges God as the true king of the Jewish nation and refers to the rule or reign of God that is shown in the lives of God's people, as well as the Kingdom of God that will be established at the end of history. The Psalmist describes the reign of God: 'Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you' (Psalm 89:14). These values must be reflected in the lives of individuals and communities that are committed to God. Therefore Kingdom values are at the heart of Salvationist living.

Jesus taught that God's Kingdom has come (Luke 17:21) but also that it will come (Matthew 6:10). The tension between 'now' and 'not yet' points to the reality that the signs of the Kingdom we experience in this life are still imperfect but will one day be completed. For now, the people of God must be 'the salt of the earth' and 'the light of the world' (Matthew 5:13-14) – signs of something new and different, the 'righteousness, peace and joy' of the Kingdom (Romans 14:17).

19 <https://www.salvationarmy.org/isjc/ips> *Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking*

The values of the Kingdom

When Jesus went to the synagogue at Nazareth he read from the book of Isaiah of a time when there would be good news for the poor, freedom for prisoners, sight for the blind and release for the oppressed (Luke 4:18-19, Isaiah 61:1-2). And he said that through him the time of God's Kingdom had begun. Through miracles, stories and conversations he invited people to belong to the Kingdom, to live by its values and to allow its influence to grow in them and in the world until that time when God's purposes are finally complete. So when we choose to become Jesus' disciples we choose to make the values of the Kingdom our own, and we need to discover the nature of those values from his mission, priorities and purpose.

Hope

The message that Jesus read from the book of Isaiah promised hope, especially for people whose circumstances in life mean that they are on the edges of society, outside social networks and excluded from religious practices. The Bible has a distinctive emphasis on the personal and collective responsibility of God's people to make provision for those who are on the margins of society as an expression of God's love for, and identification with, 'the least of these' (Deuteronomy 15:7-8; Matthew 25:31-45). The verses quoted by Jesus suggest more than acts of charity. They look to a time when those who are on the edges of society or are excluded from it will experience freedom from that which oppresses them, and will take their place as citizens of the Kingdom.

The Kingdom is marked by a reversal of many normal standards (Luke 1:51-53). Wealth and blessing as judged by the standards of society do not necessarily guarantee citizenship, in fact they can become a barrier, as one young man who spoke with Jesus found to his cost (Mark 10:17-31). Greatness and authority are first of all spiritual attributes. They are marked by service rather than institutional or positional power (Matthew 20:26-28). This does not mean that there is no place in the Kingdom for the rich or the powerful, but that their wealth and influence must be under the authority of God, and their relationships shaped by the values of their faith rather than those of society and culture.

When we make the values of the Kingdom the standard for our lives we commit to working towards the fulfilment of this hope, to living in ways that demonstrate its reality and, when it is appropriate and possible, to challenging those practices of our culture which perpetuate inequality.

Healing and transformation

The words of Jesus promise a change in circumstances – good news, freedom, sight, release. The Kingdom is about healing, wholeness and transformation. In the Kingdom, disease, decay and oppression will be replaced with health, vitality and true

freedom, because a sign of the Kingdom is a return to *shalom*, that peace, wholeness and completeness that is found in relationship with God. In the ministry of Jesus we see physical healing and spiritual renewal, so that people become what they have the potential to be and are freed from those things which restrict them. When we seek this transformation for ourselves and other people, even if it can only be partial transformation in this life, we are living according to the values of God's Kingdom.

Justice

The transforming power of the Kingdom of God affects individuals, groups, society and the whole of creation. The justice that is foundational to God's reign must be a foundational value for us. The history of The Salvation Army records times when it has contributed to campaigns for justice as a response to societal need, for example in the United Kingdom (the reform of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885, the health and rights of match factory workers 1891), Japan (laws relating to the treatment of prostitutes 1900), India (reform work among the 'criminal tribes') and French Guiana (the close of the Devil's Island penal colony 1945). In the 21st century many Salvation Army territories campaign against human trafficking, often providing practical help where needed, and the Army's International Social Justice Commission provides a strategic voice to advocate for human dignity and social justice.²⁰

It will not be possible for all soldiers to advocate for those who are suffering injustice at a national or global level, and in some contexts the social and political climate of the territory will place restrictions on the ways in which the Army can respond. However every soldier can, so far as their individual circumstances allow, seek to advocate for justice in their personal lives and in their relationships with other people.

Whenever we include the excluded or advocate for the oppressed, we are fighting for justice. When we confront the powerful about unjust decisions or challenge harmful cultural practice, when we fight for justice for those who cannot fight for themselves, when we act creatively to bring hope and wholeness in the world, we are making the values of the Kingdom of God and not the values of the world the standard for our lives.

A foundation of love

A religious leader asked Jesus which commandment was the most important. When he recognised the significance of Jesus' reply – love God with everything that you have and are, and love other people as much as you love yourself – Jesus said that he was close to the Kingdom of God (Mark 12:28-34). Love is the foundation for the values of the Kingdom. The source of our love is in God. God is love, and we are able to love other people because God loves us. 1 John 4:10-11 states 'This is love: not that we have loved

²⁰ <https://www.salvationarmy.org/isjc/isjchome>

God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.’

The values of the Kingdom as pattern and standard for living

In the life of Jesus we see what this means in practical terms. His life is the template for living as human beings were designed to live, and as we allow him to live his life in us and through us, making the values of God’s Kingdom the standard for our lives becomes a possibility, even if at times we fail to make it a reality. Our commitment to God makes us who we are, and whatever we do must be consistent with that commitment.

Living according to the values of the Kingdom of God means acting with new motivation, new allegiance in our context. As Christians we are sent into our culture as hearers and bearers of the good news of God’s Kingdom. Our motivation and action are shaped by our understanding of what it means to belong to the Kingdom of God, and we evaluate our cultural context according to Kingdom values. Whatever works to promote hope, healing, transformation, justice and love can be celebrated and affirmed. Anything that works against the values of God’s Kingdom should be challenged and opposed.

Living according to the values of the Kingdom of God can be costly (Luke 9:57-62) and requires complete commitment (Matthew 13:44-46). Sometimes we will struggle to make this intention a reality because the Kingdom is both ‘now’ and ‘not yet’ and it is not always easy to live the values to which we aspire. At the same time those we live alongside may not choose, understand or agree with our choices. Nevertheless we believe that, because of our relationship with Christ, we are transformed people, and can be a transforming influence in our own situation (Matthew 13:31-33).

This is true of individuals, and it is also true of Christian communities. Our faith should be lived in public as a witness and a sign of God’s reign and our corps and fellowships must model the values of the Kingdom. When we pray the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples, we say ‘your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven’ (Matthew 6:10). As Salvation Army soldiers it is our privilege and responsibility to be an embodiment of the values of God’s Kingdom, now, in every aspect of our lives.

CHAPTER 05



I will uphold
Christian integrity in
every area of
my life, allowing
nothing in thought,
word or deed
that is unworthy,
unclean, untrue,
profane, dishonest
or immoral.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Christian integrity flows from a foundation of life in Christ, a deepening commitment to God, and growth in holiness. The Holy Spirit gives us the strength and power to walk this path.
 - We are to demonstrate Christian integrity in every area of our life, whether we are alone or in public. This doesn't happen in an instant – it is a journey.
 - We are to hold each other to account, accepting responsibility for what we decide and what we do – both individually and corporately.
 - Every soldier needs to be aware of the possibility of failure or compromising our personal integrity, but also the possibility of forgiveness and a new start.
-

A natural consequence of choosing to live by the values of the Kingdom of God is that we aim to demonstrate Christian integrity in every area of our lives.

Christian integrity can be described as that wholeness or completeness that arises from our response to God's gracious call and command to 'Be holy, because I am holy' (1 Peter 1:16). It enables us to live consistently, so that everything we think, do and say is in harmony (2 Corinthians 10:11). It arises from our life in Christ and should be seen in all our relationships and actions.

The foundation of Christian integrity – holiness

Salvation Army soldiers are open to what God will do in and through us by the Holy Spirit. The *Handbook of Doctrine* tells us:

God's sanctifying work is a life-changing experience whereby we are empowered to make radical changes of direction in our lives (2 Corinthians 5:14-15) so that the Spirit of Christ comes and lives his life in us (Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 3:14-19).²¹

The Holy Spirit works within us and calls us to holiness. Doctrine 10, drawing on Paul's letter to the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 5:23) states: 'We believe that it is the privilege of all believers to be wholly sanctified, and that their whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' This experience leads us into a deepening relationship with God and motivates us to live for God's purposes.

The experience of holiness, which is described by Paul as 'Christ living in me' (Galatians 2:20 *American Standard Version*), is the foundation of Christian integrity. It can only be the result of a spiritual and transformative journey, which is often marked by decisive and empowering moments of grace. The journey begins as we open ourselves to God. When we know that we are loved and accepted by God, we can be at peace, find self-acceptance and offer our love in return. In consequence our life becomes shaped by this relationship so that our reflections, thoughts and motives are marked by love and grace as we become more like Christ.

As we grow into holiness every area of life is affected. Jesus Christ's presence changes us as we live in and through him and he lives in and through us. This transformation of our inner life is expressed in practical ways as our thoughts, motives, attitudes, actions and reactions are refined by God's Spirit. Our life becomes a Spirit-led journey towards wholeness and integrity.

21 *HoD*, 194

Our ability to live with Christian integrity flows from this relationship with Christ, and is empowered by the Holy Spirit. We focus on what is good and aim to set aside any thoughts, feelings or intentions that are unhelpful, destructive or damaging to us and other people. We learn to see all situations from the perspective of Christian experience and judge them according to our relationship with Christ. We choose to act with integrity.

Qualities of integrity

Paul reminded the Philippians about the qualities which give the foundation for our life when we are followers of Christ. ‘Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things’ (Philippians 4:8). This discipline will lead to a healthy and whole life. Conversely, when we allow ourselves to be shaped by values other than those of the Kingdom, we place our integrity at risk.

This commitment shapes who we are, both in public and when we are alone and there is no one to observe us. Both aspects are necessary. It provides the foundation for the whole of life.²²

Christian integrity in our relationships

The relationships of any Salvation Army soldier should be marked by integrity, wholeness and authenticity. We cannot be truly ‘in Christ’ if this does not determine how we relate to other people. Life is most rich when it is lived in community, although the kind of community may differ between cultures and according to circumstances. Most soldiers will be members of different communities; these may include our family, friends, work colleagues, those with whom we spend our leisure, and our Salvation Army corps. How we interact with other people in the various communities that make up our lives is an indication of our Christian integrity.

Our actions and reactions must be consistent, showing an example of holy living. We must treat other people as Christ would treat them, with love and respect, even when they are unloving towards us. Christian integrity demands that we love our neighbours, whoever they may be, seeking their good at all times. Loving action builds trust through open and honest interaction, offers dignity and deepens relationships. When we treat other people with respect, and are consistent and transparent in our interaction with them, we build flourishing communities which make space for everyone. When we are unloving, inconsistent, judgemental or untrustworthy, our integrity is compromised and relationships are harmed or destroyed.

22 *HoD*, Chapter 10

A constant challenge

At times we may be tempted to make the promise to live with Christian integrity more manageable or possible by focusing on what we do rather than who we are. We may begin to interpret Christian integrity as behaving in ways that do not cross the external boundaries that are put in place by The Salvation Army, such as uniform wearing or attendance at meetings. It is important to take seriously those boundaries which form an important part of Salvationist identity. However, if we see these things as the only marks of our integrity as soldiers we devalue and diminish what God requires of us.

For every soldier, there will be times when we fail to attain the standard we have promised to keep. This can lead to a sense of shame as we become aware of our shortcomings. It can also lead to secrecy as failures are concealed from others whose disappointment or judgement is feared. Every soldier needs to be aware that, however deep our commitment and however consistent our daily living, there is the possibility of compromising our integrity. Nevertheless there is always the possibility of forgiveness and a new start. This will be most effective if complemented by the ongoing support and encouragement of our leaders and other soldiers, in a compassionate and restorative process of accountability.

Conversely, at times we may become aware of other soldiers who are struggling to live with integrity in some aspect of their lives. As comrades – fellow soldiers – we may be able to stand alongside them, offering guidance and support in a process of accountability, but not condemning. In order to do this, we will need to be sure that our own integrity is secure, and that our motives are right. We are reminded by Jesus: ‘Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven’ (Luke 6:37). It is sometimes easy to claim false pride in ourselves by judging the failures of others. This is never acceptable, and is not a mark of Christian integrity.

The danger of hypocrisy – the tendency to act in ways that are not consistent with what we have promised – is real and insidious. It is deeply damaging because it compromises integrity, leading ultimately to *dis*-integration, when our belief, commitment and action are not aligned.

It also has grave implications for The Salvation Army and the wider church. Jesus spoke of the religious hypocrites of his day as shutting ‘the door of the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces’ (Matthew 23:13). When we live with integrity, our actions and reactions are attractive and faith is seen as something positive and life giving. However, if our integrity is compromised it may cause other people to question the value of our faith. If Salvation Army soldiers, as representatives of the contemporary Church, do not live with integrity, the missional purpose of the Army is threatened and undermined.

The Salvation Army Soldier's Covenant contains a number of clauses which remind us of our responsibility to other people in specific circumstances, and these will be explored in other chapters. In each case, Christian integrity must form the foundation of our example, our attitudes and our actions and reactions.

Christian integrity in community

Colossians 1:19-20 reminds us that there is nothing outside the redeeming love of Christ:

‘God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him (Christ), and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.’

Thus there is no circumstance or issue which we encounter that is outside that love. We need to approach every situation, including those issues which are not directly connected to faith, with integrity.

As we consider any issue, including social issues, moral concerns, consumerism, media and social media, local and national politics, and environmental factors, our response must flow from our commitment to the values of the Kingdom of God and a life of Christian integrity. This will ensure that we have the inner resources that enable us to evaluate the situations that we encounter. We must demonstrate the values and actions of Christ in every situation.

This is a complex process, as the Bible does not give clear guidelines on every aspect of contemporary living. *The Handbook of Doctrine* gives some general principles on the interpretation of Scripture.²³ Other Salvationist resources,²⁴ as well as information from both Christian and non-Christian sources will expand and shape our understanding. As Salvation Army soldiers, our connection with Christ will help us to reflect on and evaluate issues and learn to act and react with integrity.

When we are connected with other people in Christian community we give and receive support as we serve together. Reflection processes such as Faith-Based Facilitation²⁵ can provide a framework. However, it is not always an easy process as there are often diverse opinions both within and outside the Christian Church on many subjects and as Salvation Army soldiers we must be careful to make judgements that are faithful to the promises we have made.

23 *HoD*, 18, ‘For further exploration’ 1, C ‘Interpretation of Scripture’

24 See for example *International Positional Statements* <https://www.salvationarmy.org/isjc/ips> and *International Development Policies* <https://www.salvationarmy.org/isjc/idp>

25 <https://www.salvationarmy.org/xbf>

Accountability

This promise of the Soldier's Covenant states that upholding Christian integrity allows nothing 'in thought, word or deed that is unworthy, unclean, untrue, profane, dishonest or immoral'. This is a high ideal and a constant challenge which requires attentiveness in our personal relationship with God, consistent personal evaluation and willing accountability to others. Accountability may happen through the influence of trusted individuals, in mentoring or coaching relationships, through small groups, in holiness meetings or soldiers' meetings or, in certain circumstances, through a formal process of accountability to the pastoral care council and our leaders.²⁶

Christian integrity must also be modelled in the corporate processes of our movement. The Salvation Army is committed to mutual accountability as a key foundation of its governance processes.

It means that we report, explain and are answerable for the decisions made, actions taken and subsequent consequences. It is essentially about accepting responsibility for what we decide and what we do – both individually and collectively...When it works well, trust is built and people flourish...We are all part of the one body (1 Corinthians 12: 12-27). What happens to one part of the body, will affect the other parts. We are to hold one another to account (Matthew 18:15-17) and work for the good of all.²⁷

Therefore, if we become aware of individuals or processes which abuse ourselves or others, we have a responsibility to speak out for appropriate accountability.

Christian integrity flows from a foundation of life in Christ, a deepening commitment to God and growth in holiness. Our integrity also enables us to navigate the complex relationship between our faith and our culture. There will be times when any Salvation Army soldier will be motivated to question some of the accepted standards and norms in our peer group, our community or our culture. At such times we need to witness to our life in Christ by thinking and behaving differently, not simply because of external standards imposed by the movement, but because Christian integrity offers a better way.

26 *Orders and Regulations for Pastoral Care Councils*

27 'A Salvation Army Theology of Governance' in *Foundations of Governance for The Salvation Army* at https://issuu.com/isjc/docs/a_salvation_army_theology_of_govern-6-7

CHAPTER 06



I will maintain
Christian ideals
in all my
relationships with
others: my family
and neighbours,
my colleagues and
fellow Salvationists,
those to whom and
for whom I am
responsible, and the
wider community.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- We are made for community. Relationships and the restoration of broken relationships are central to the Christian faith.
 - Our relationships are to be ‘right’ – marked by love, harmony, wholeness and unity – with an understanding that all people have dignity and worth because they are created in God’s image.
 - Our divine gift of human sexuality demands respect.
 - When there is difference or disagreement, we are to listen, explore and seek to understand. Difference is to be covered with love.
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The Soldier's Covenant makes it clear that all our relationships should be shaped by our understanding of what it means to be a follower of Christ.

This statement is another practical outworking of the aim and intention to make the values of the Kingdom of God the standard for our life. The biblical portrayal of the Kingdom of God that will be established at the end of history speaks of harmony and wholeness in relationships and in society (Isaiah 11:6-9; Micah 4:1-5). Similarly, Jesus seeks unity for his disciples, praying 'Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one' (John 17:11). When we make the values of that kingdom the benchmark for our life, nurturing and maintaining healthy relationships must be a priority. As with each of the 'I will' statements, we recognise the challenges and obstacles to fulfilling this completely and perfectly in this life. Despite this we make the promise as a sincere intention and aspiration, believing that as our faith grows and deepens so too will our capacity for right relationships.

Personal life

Relationships and the restoration of broken relationships are central to the Christian faith. The gospel is founded on relationship, with God 'reconciling the world to himself in Christ' (2 Corinthians 5:19). The two greatest commandments affirmed by Jesus (Mark 12:29-31) are centred on relationship – love for God and love for others.

All people have dignity and worth because we are created in God's image, for relationship with God. Because of this we have a natural capacity to relate to one another. We are made for community, not for life in isolation. Everyone is an individual, everyone is equally valued in God's sight and everyone is worthy of respect. 'We reach our fulfilment only when we are in community with him (God) and with one another. Without him and without each other, we lack wholeness and the possibility of gaining maturity through developing relationships.'²⁸

The teaching of Jesus provides practical examples (Matthew 5-7; Luke 6:17-49). Christian ideals for human relationships are placed in the context of being 'salt and light' (Matthew 5:13-16), that is living in ways that other people recognise as distinctive and as bringing glory to God.

Jesus looks beyond action to motivation and attitude, showing how our behaviour towards other people should be an expression of who we are as the people of God. His teaching shows how right relationships must be maintained at all times, whether they are seemingly trivial or life-changing. Anything that may damage, defile or devalue a relationship is unacceptable. More than this, as God's people we are commanded to

build or repair relationships that are difficult or damaged. Our aim must be to reflect the perfection of God (Matthew 5:48).

Sexual relationships

When we consider our most intimate personal relationships, including our sexual relationships, the standard remains constant, and the requirement to live according to the values of the Kingdom of God should shape our values, attitudes and conduct. As Salvationists, we affirm that all should be welcomed and treated with respect in our communities of faith.

All people are made equally in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). The opening chapters of Genesis describe the gift of human life, and God declares everything that he has made to be ‘very good’ (Genesis 1:31). Part of the divine gift is human sexuality and the possibility of forming a sexual identity. At the same time, the brokenness that pervades our lives is also apparent in our sexuality.

Medical and psychological research during the last century has established the complexity of human sexuality, with a developing understanding that multiple and complex factors affect the formation of sexual identity.

As Christians, our personal goal and intention is holiness (Ephesians 2:8-10). We should therefore endeavour to order our lives as sexual beings in ways that will honour both God and respect other people. Our commitment to Christian holiness requires that all of our relationships are shaped by our commitment to Christ. Thus any attitude, thought or action that degrades, exploits or diminishes other people or ourselves in any way is unacceptable and is a distortion of God’s ideals for humanity. This would include promiscuous, coercive or abusive sexual relationships and the use or the promotion of pornography in any form.²⁹ Partner violence of any kind (physical, emotional, sexual, spiritual) is never acceptable in a Christian context. Any sexual relationship between an adult and a child is a particularly destructive form of abusive relationship and is incompatible with the calling to, and outworking of, soldiership.

When we live faithfully, with integrity, loyalty and commitment in our relationships, we flourish as human beings and become more Christlike in character. It is possible with God’s help to be celibate in singleness and faithful in marriage.³⁰ At times, some soldiers may struggle with aspects of their sexuality, or feel that they break what they accept as the Christian standard in sexual behaviour. If this happens, they should be assured of the forgiveness that is available through the grace of Christ and our repentance.

29 <https://www.salvationarmy.org/isjc/ips/Pornography>

30 See Chapter 7

Salvationists are entitled to expect that pastoral care councils and leaders will act with sensitivity, wisdom and grace in such situations.

Interpersonal relationships

When we live within the parameters set by our relationship with God, right relationships with each other will follow. This is equally true of our interactions with people we do not know, friendships, family life, work relationships and our Salvationist family.

Paul's letters repeatedly emphasise the importance of learning to live so that our relationship with God shapes our relationships in our Christian community. In the letter to the Philippians believers are reminded to 'have the same attitude of mind Christ Jesus had' (Philippians 2:5 *TNIV*). This is characterised by love, humility and seeking the best interests of others, and is a necessity for any Salvationist community.

1 Corinthians 12:12–13:13 speaks of the importance of love in shaping how we act and react in community. It recognises that each individual brings different qualities, and that a variety of gifts and skills are necessary to the well-being of the whole, but the most important factor is that love is foundational to all relationships. When all we are and do is rooted in love our communities will flourish and will reflect the love of God.

Similarly Colossians 3:12-17 gives a summary of the behaviour of a loving community:

‘Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

‘Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.’

Healthy relationships in community will make space for soldiers to share responsibility for one another's well-being. There will be opportunity for guidance, affirmation and challenge, each of which must be set in a context of love (Ephesians 4:15-16). As we learn to recognise each other as members of the Body of Christ, we will see Christ in each other and respond appropriately. The image of the parts of a body is significant, in that every part is vital to a healthy whole.

It is inevitable that our communities will be flawed because we are human and are not yet able to fully reflect God's perfection. But that does not mean that any attitude or behaviour is acceptable. Our goal must always be to nurture relationships that are characterised by love.

We should live according to Christian ideals in our relationships with the people to whom and for whom we are responsible. Being part of a Salvationist community means that we are answerable to one another, and should hold each other accountable through informal and formal processes. When we practise this discipline we can test our own thinking against that of other Salvationists and gain from those around us the wisdom that enables us to make balanced decisions. These relationships must also be marked by respect and a commitment to the best interests of others, remembering that each individual is made in the image of God.

When we take seriously our responsibility to each other we will find ourselves reviewing our thinking, actions and reactions and may discover new opportunities to flourish as we review our relationships in the light of the ideals taught and lived by Jesus.

When relationships are difficult, damaged or broken

There are times when, as Christians, we find that differences have the potential to threaten the unity of the community. In fact, Jesus seemed to anticipate this (Matthew 10:35-36), and the Acts of the Apostles and letters of Paul describe how the Early Church struggled to live in harmony (e.g. Acts 6:1-7; 11:1-18; 1 Corinthians 1:11-17; Philippians 4:2-3). Some differences are practical and are relatively easily resolved; others may be deep-seated and far-reaching matters of conviction. At times of disagreement it is good to explore differences, to listen carefully and be open to new understanding. There may be times when difference remains, but the Christian ideal of love demands that relationships are maintained, so that division does not destroy the Church. The leadership of a Salvation Army corps, especially the corps officers and the pastoral care council, has the responsibility to support Salvationists who find it difficult to live in harmony with one another, encouraging and enabling them to find a way of living and serving together with mutual respect and acceptance.

The Bible also recognises the reality that it is sometimes difficult or impossible to maintain healthy relationships, either as individuals or in community, because of the actions and reactions of other people. Jesus taught that we may need to take steps toward reconciliation with someone we have offended or wronged before we can offer our gifts to God (Matthew 5:23-24). Similarly, Paul writes to the Romans: 'Live in harmony with one another... If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone' (Romans 12:16, 18). We cannot be responsible for another person's attitude and actions, and sometimes these may lead to damaged or broken relationships. If it is possible to work towards restoration and facilitate wholeness we should do so,

however where this is not possible we should seek to find ways of limiting damage to individuals and the community and to nurture healthy relationships by other means.

A witness and an example

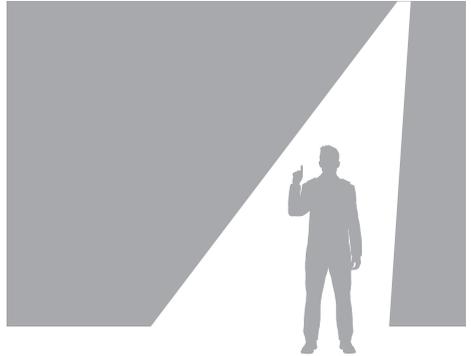
As individuals and as an Army we are a witness to the communities in which we live and work when our relationships are lived according to Christian ideals.

The foundation of Christian love which leads to peace (Colossians 3:12-17) offers wisdom to communities for dealing with the issues of contemporary society. It speaks directly into the tensions of a globalised, multicultural world in which the challenges of learning to live together with dignity often lead to disunity and fragmentation. When relationships are based on the well-being of the other person or group rather than our personal gain, they allow for creative strategies and actions that enable people to live together in harmony, despite their differences.

As Christians we need to find ways of witnessing with respect and love to people of all cultures and every faith, to those who are displaced from their homes, and to those who are on the margins of society, either because of their circumstances or because they choose to place themselves there. What does the good news of Jesus Christ mean for them and their situation?

The message of the gospel is that the reconciling power of Christ reaches beyond individuals into communities and to the whole of creation (Colossians 1:15-20). The parables of God's Kingdom (Matthew 13:31-34) use the images of a small seed that grows into a large tree, and the leaven in the bread. The implication is that what has been begun in the life and ministry of Jesus will grow and flourish. When we conduct our relationships according to the standards of Jesus, we set an example and testify to the world of a way of living with other people that is not based on self-interest and personal gain, but on a wider and deeper foundation of love.

CHAPTER 07



I will uphold
the sanctity of
marriage and
of family life.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Our faith is rooted in our relationship with God and expressed in relationship with other people. Christian ideals should shape our values, attitudes and conduct.
 - Marriage is a divine gift which demands mutual honour between partners.
 - Both singleness and marriage are to be considered equally honourable.
 - Family life should provide a place where individuals grow and develop.
 - Where relationships are damaged or broken, a sensitive pastoral response and opportunity to relearn the norms of healthy relationships are vital to future well-being.
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Our faith is rooted in our relationship with God and is expressed in relationship with other people, including family relationships, marital relationships, relationships in the Christian community and our relationships in society. Who we are in Christ shapes our interactions and reactions. Each of us lives in a web of relationships which are meant to fulfil our desire for friendship, support and intimacy. Through our connections with God and other people we find fulfilment and security and are able to flourish as human beings.

Marriage

Marriage is both a reflection of God's love for humanity and the self-giving love between Christ and the Church. As Salvationists we regard marriage as a divine gift which gives expression to the principle of mutual love, enriching and empowering each partner and diminishing neither. The Salvation Army affirms that marriage is the voluntary and loving union for life of one man and one woman. It is a sharing of life marked by personal consent, mutual respect and fidelity, reciprocal service and equality. It is the only appropriate context for sexual intimacy. This sharing of life at all levels involves willingness to serve one another in love, to forgive and be forgiven and to grow together in a fulfilling relationship based upon equality and mutuality. Such equality precludes domination, but calls for mutual honouring of one another. Christian marriage gives expression to the principle of mutual love and creates a new family. Both marriage partners are enhanced in such a relationship (Ephesians 5:21-32).

The marriage relationship is sacred and blessed by God (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:24). This is confirmed by Jesus (Matthew 19:4-6), yet in the verses following, Jesus gives clear recognition and concession that in a broken world grace is available when this ideal is not achieved.

Absolute fidelity in thought, word and action is expected in a Salvationist marriage. As with all relationships, faithfulness, integrity and trust are essential. However, we acknowledge the need for grace in a broken and wounded world in which the ideal is not always achieved and where marriages do not always reflect the values of Christ. The complexity of human interaction can result in a marriage that is threatened or damaged. Where no resolution is possible, annulment or divorce may follow. At such times a skilled and compassionate pastoral response is vital. Subsequent marriage is allowed within The Salvation Army. Wherever possible a thorough and appropriate counselling process should be provided. This may assist in the healing of deep wounds and contribute to spiritual and emotional renewal.

In some cultures, although the marriage ceremony may be celebrated with other people, the decision to marry will be the responsibility and choice of the two individuals concerned, and family and friends may have little direct involvement in the process or in the couple's subsequent life together. In other cultures, the extended family may arrange a marriage, with a possible expectation that married life will be lived in the

context of the wider family and according to predetermined traditions. For Christians, in these and a range of other scenarios, the recognition and affirmation of marriage as a gift from God remains, and the requirement for personal consent and mutual respect must not be compromised.

The Salvation Army articles of marriage, which outline the foundations for a Salvationist marriage and are often read at the commencement of the wedding ceremony, set marriage in the context of faith and commitment:

We do solemnly declare that, although we enter into this marriage for reasons of personal happiness and fulfilment, we will do our utmost to ensure that our married status and relationship will deepen our commitment to God and enhance the effectiveness of our service as soldiers of Jesus Christ in The Salvation Army.

We promise to make our home a place where all shall be aware of the abiding presence of God, and where those under our influence shall be taught the truths of the gospel, encouraged to seek Christ as Saviour, and supported in the commitment of their lives to the service of God.

We declare our intention to be to each other, by the help of God, true Christian examples and, through times of joy, difficulty or loss, to encourage each other to 'grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.'³¹

Thus Christian marriage is a covenant and calling, a relationship which is lived in the presence of God and shaped by divine purposes. The marriage becomes a space for formation and transformation, for each individual and as a couple. It can also be the foundation for the development and nurture of others.

Singleness

It may be suggested that the promise to uphold the sanctity of marriage and family life is relevant only to those who are married, or who are an integral part of a family at that time, but this is not the intention or the meaning. All Salvationists, whether single or married, are called to conduct their lives in ways that are consistent with Christian principles. We can celebrate the truth that God uses both marriage and singleness to fulfil the divine purpose and transform us into the likeness of Christ.

Against a background where Judaism viewed singleness as a sign of God's disapproval, Jesus taught that the single life was to be respected and considered equally honourable with married life in the Christian church (Matthew 19:3-12). Paul also affirms singleness and expresses his personal preference for it. He teaches that we each have our own gift from God. 'God gives the gift of the single life to some, the gift of married life to others' (1 Corinthians 7:7 *The Message*). For some Christians singleness and celibacy

31 *Salvation Army Ceremonies, Marriage, 19-20, IHQ, 2018*

are a freely chosen offering to God. God uses both marriage and singleness to fulfil the divine purpose and to transform us and brings us to our full potential.

Family life

Christians believe that the family should provide a place where children are nurtured and given space to grow and develop as individuals who are known and loved by God. Christian values and healthy mutual relationships can be taught and modelled as part of family life. The International Spiritual Life Commission emphasised the role of the family in nurturing faith and commitment to mission: ‘We call Salvationists worldwide to restore the family to its central position in passing on the faith, to generate resources to help parents grow together in faithful love and to lead their children into wholeness, with hearts on fire for God and his mission.’³²

The way in which this happens may vary, but the principles remain. Some children will grow in a large extended family, in which the ‘parenting’ is shared by a number of people; others will live and grow only with parents, and possibly siblings. At all times the well-being of the child is of paramount importance. In any circumstance, the expectations of society and the patterns of tradition must be evaluated and challenged by our commitment to Christ, and by God’s desire that all human beings should find their fulfilment in relationship with God and with other people.

In many cultures the family is foundational to the nature and order of society. There may be different customs and expectations but for all it is the model and pattern for a place of belonging. In the family each individual learns the expected customs of living alongside other people. It provides a home and a source of care and protection, particularly at the beginning and end of life. Each individual’s experience of family is different; for many it is a place of warmth, happiness and safety but for others it can be harsh, unhappy and damaging. When the latter is the case, a Salvation Army corps should provide a safe space which offers healthy, expanded family relationships and the possibility of healing.

Our understanding of marriage and family life will inevitably be influenced by personal experience and by the culture in which we live. For people whose family life, singleness, or marriage has been difficult or abusive, this may provoke painful memories and may require careful, sensitive exploration and re-education.

As part of the family of God, all Salvationists have their identity grounded in Christ. A Salvation Army corps incorporates people with a range of relationships and family connections. A truly welcoming corps will seek to respond to everyone’s needs for companionship, emotional intimacy, security and friendship. Any focus on marriage and family in language, worship and programme must not inadvertently marginalise

32 *HoD*, Appendix 4, 302-303

CHAPTER 08



I will be a faithful
steward of my
time and gifts,
my money and
possessions,
my body, my mind
and my spirit,
knowing that I am
accountable to God.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- We are accountable to God for the ways in which we manage and use the resources we have.
 - We have the responsibility to be stewards of our lives as well as our possessions because all that we are and have belongs to God.
 - We are called to love and serve the world that God created.
 - Simple living enables us to be generous to others and allows us to hold lightly to what we have.
-

As Salvation Army soldiers we commit to a disciplined lifestyle that grows from our relationship with God. We are encouraged to live our lives as stewards, recognising that what we have does not really belong to us, but is placed in our care so that we can use it for God's glory. A steward is entrusted to manage or govern the property, possessions and concerns of another person on their behalf. A good steward will achieve the best possible outcome for the owner by using practices that are effective, efficient, innovative and fair.

While the principle of stewardship may seem disconcerting to some people at first, it is a way of viewing life that is liberating and empowering. It releases us from the attitude of greed that is common in many cultures and from the tendency to judge the worth of human beings as measured by their gifts, skills, education or the possessions that they own. It encourages us to live in a spirit of thankfulness, as we recognise the gifts we have from God, and reminds us that we should use them as God requires, for the benefit of other people and the care of creation. This frees us from the temptation to selfish living, and encourages generosity as we share what we have with other people.

In both the Old and New Testaments there are stories of people who lived according to this principle. As King David gathered the resources for building the Temple in Jerusalem he encouraged the people to give willingly, as a thanksgiving for what God had given them. In his prayer of praise he said: 'But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand' (1 Chronicles 29:14). In the New Testament the spirit of stewardship is seen in the generosity of the Early Church as they shared their possessions, ensuring that the needs of everyone were met (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15).

Ownership

When we consider what stewardship means we begin from the truth that God is the provider and owner of everything that we have and all that we are. The Bible makes this clear:

'The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
The world, and all who live in it' (Psalm 24:1).

Salvation Army doctrine affirms God as 'Creator, Preserver and Governor'. As our Creator, God has entrusted creation into our care. The book of Genesis makes it clear that human beings were created for stewardship (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15). As God's stewards we are called to treat creation as God requires (Leviticus 25:1-5), to care for and delight in our world. At the same time, our creation in God's image means that we have the capacity to live in the world well and wisely. We have a responsibility to be stewards of our lives as well as our possessions.

Stewardship

Stewardship is one way of describing how we manage and use the resources we have. We are given the responsibility to ensure that our resources, abilities and opportunities are used wisely, and to God's glory. It connects everything we do with what God is doing in the world. Through stewardship we collaborate with God in the care of creation, and God's work of transformation and re-creation.

The *Handbook of Doctrine* states:

We have the freedom to take the raw materials of the universe and work them into good for present and future generations. That freedom should not be abused. Our challenge is to treat the earth well in the light of increasing population and diminishing resources. The world was made to praise God and reveal his glory (Psalm 19:1-6); our stewardship of it furthers that end.³³

We are called to live in ways that sustain the fruitfulness of creation, celebrating its natural testimony to a creator God (Genesis 1).

However, human tendency to rebel against God means that we may be tempted to abuse the gifts we have been given, or to treat them as our exclusive property. In some translations of Genesis 1:28 the word 'dominion' is used, which means to rule over, or control. At times this has been used as an excuse to drain the earth's resources or exploit other people. We have ignored our responsibility as stewards and have instead used creation to satisfy human greed rather than to serve the purposes of God.³⁴

As soldiers we have a personal and corporate responsibility to be good stewards of the environment, using the resources we have for the good of humanity, avoiding unnecessary consumerism, ensuring that, wherever possible, we reuse and recycle assets and actively care for, and conserve, creation.

Stewardship is transformational

Salvation offers us the opportunity to redress the balance, to live as good and faithful stewards in the world. The personal transformation that is made possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ makes a difference to how we view the resources we have, and can lead to the transformation of communities and the world. God's purpose in Christ is to bring healing and wholeness to all creation, as our relationship with God, with other people and with the earth is renewed and reconciled.

33 *HoD*, 33

34 <https://www.salvationarmy.org/isjc/ips> *Caring for the Environment*

‘For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross’ (Colossians 1:19-20).

Our love for God helps us to see our relationships with other people and the world differently.

As our relationship with God unfolds, love for God draws us to other people, and obedient discipleship motivates us to put love into action...Our relationship with God’s world is also transformed. We see the beauty and reflection of God in it and acknowledge that it is his world, the fruit of his creation. Hostility towards the created world disappears, and we come to understand our role as stewards.³⁵

As stewards we work under God’s direction and are accountable to God for the way in which we treat the gifts we have been given. The parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) makes it clear that our responsibility is not to hide or hoard what we have, but to use it in ways that will lead to growth and flourishing, and to give generously, remembering that ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’ (Acts 20:35).

This statement of intention lists some specific areas in which stewardship is important – my time and gifts, my money and possessions, my body, my mind and my spirit.

Our lives

The dedication of our lives, our body, mind and spirit, is at the root of faithful stewardship. When we are good stewards of ourselves, our attitude to resources will flow naturally.

We are responsible to God for the choices we make about our spiritual lives, whether they are likely to help us flourish or will lead us to neglect our relationship with God. When we choose wisely, we are more likely to be good stewards of the rest of our lives.

As a result of our relationship with God we begin to recognise that our time, gifts, skills and intelligence are not ours by right, but are gifts of grace which must be used – ‘stewarded’ – for the sake of God’s Kingdom. We are called to love and serve the world that God created. This gives meaning to everything that we do.

We recognise that all of our time is a gift from God, and the way we choose to use it should honour him. This will include careful consideration of our responsibilities and our choices, ensuring that we allocate time for those things that are most important and that are life enhancing for ourselves and other people.

35 *HoD*, 196

We are also responsible to God for the way in which we develop and use the gifts and abilities we have been given, seeking ways in which we can contribute to the life of God's people and God's mission on earth. In his letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 12), Paul uses the analogy of the body to remind the church that people have different kinds of gifts, and each one is necessary to the overall health of the whole. When we are good stewards of our skills and gifts we will use them wisely for the sake of the Kingdom.

Stewardship of our lives also means that we should consider carefully how we treat our body. Caring for the world includes self-care and God's love for us demands that we love ourselves. This will mean ensuring that we take enough rest and recreation to renew our energy and keep us healthy, and eating as healthily as our circumstances allow, and only as much as we need.

It is possible that at times there will be tension between different aspects of our stewardship and this can lead to difficult choices. For example, some families may not be able to afford the cost of healthy food, or a parent may need to work long hours in order to earn enough money to care for their children. It is possible that an individual may know that they are overworking and overtired, but believe that their actions are justified by the contribution they are making to the good of other people or creation.

We are responsible to God for the stewardship of our lives, including the way in which we respect the creation rhythm of work and rest. We are not justified in condoning needless unceasing activity because it is 'useful'. We must make a careful and prayerful judgement of the demands on our lives in order to find the best way to live.

Our resources

Good stewardship also requires us to consider how we use the resources we have. Christianity teaches that our money and possessions are a gift of God. When we use them well and with gratitude for what we have, we bring glory to God. Our lifestyle as soldiers should be marked by moderation and the avoidance of excess, so that by our simple living we are able to be generous to others who need our support.

One specific aspect of this is setting aside a proportion of our income as an offering to God. The biblical principle of tithing, which is giving one tenth of our income or our resources, is often used as a guideline. However, by recognising that all we have belongs to God, the principle of stewardship encourages us to be generous in our giving. In some contexts where resources are scarce, giving a tithe is a sacrificial act which brings glory to God. However, others will be able to give more than a tenth and still have more than they require for their own needs. If this is the case, the principle of generosity should guide our giving and shape the way that we choose to use and share the resources we have (2 Corinthians 9:5-6). Some people have chosen to use the principle of 'enough'. This is when an individual determines that which is enough for

their personal needs and the needs of their family, and gives away anything that they have left. Whatever our personal circumstances, it is the responsibility of all soldiers to ensure that our stewardship includes regular giving to our local corps, in addition to contributing to specific offerings such as the Self-Denial appeal. In some contexts this may include gifts in kind – a portion of the harvest, a young animal, or some other produce – as an offering to God.

The principle of stewardship requires that we live a disciplined lifestyle, focusing on God’s purposes rather than personal satisfaction. It encourages us to look beyond ourselves to the needs of others and to offer what we have and are to God. It is not always easy and can feel demanding, as we are accountable to God and each other for what we are and have.³⁶ However, if we begin from the premise that everything belongs to God, we will not feel that we are giving up what is ‘ours’ – time, gifts, skills, money, possessions – but we are giving back what rightfully belongs to God. This may require a change of mindset, but it allows us to see the world in a different way. We live deeply and fully, holding on lightly to what we have, finding new meaning in our daily life, making connections with others who are also stewards, and finding liberating joy in our giving.

For reflection and discussion

- Make a note of ways in which you can adapt your lifestyle so that you are able to contribute to sustaining earth’s resources.
- Take time to examine your time, gifts, money, possessions, your body, mind and spirit. Write down what you discover. What do you need to do?
- Reflect on your need to care for yourself. Does anything need to change?
- Is your giving an outcome of good stewardship? Why/why not?

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36 ‘A Salvation Army Theology of Governance’ in *Foundations of Governance for The Salvation Army* at https://issuu.com/isjc/docs/a_salvation_army_theology_of_govern 3-4, 6-7

CHAPTER 09



I will abstain from alcoholic drink, tobacco, the non-medical use of addictive drugs, gambling, pornography, the occult, and all else that could enslave the body or spirit.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- God intends that nothing in our behaviour and practices should harm our well-being.
 - We should beware of those things that rob us of our freedom to live as Christ requires.
 - We are responsible to God for the way we guard our spiritual, physical, social, intellectual and emotional well-being.
 - When Salvationists speak out and stand against the negative consequences of addictive behaviour they seek justice for others who have been ‘enslaved’ by them.
 - Those for whom this promise brings particular challenges must be treated with compassion and respect.
 - Abstinence from addictive behaviours allows us to live fully, freely and with integrity.
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Following from the intention to be a faithful steward of the gifts God has given us, including our own lives, this statement focuses on our intention to avoid those behaviours and practices which have the potential to harm or destroy our well-being and the well-being of others. If we read this as a simple list of prohibitions or rules it may seem demanding, or even illogical, but when viewed as a spiritual discipline which promotes our health and wholeness it becomes a guideline for Christian living that reminds us of our calling as faithful stewards in all aspects of our lives.

Spiritual freedom

The Christian life can be described as a way of freedom (Galatians 5:1, 13). Freedom to reach our full potential as the people we were created to be; freedom to find fulfilment when we know ourselves to be loved by God and choose to love and serve in response to that love; and freedom to nurture and build deep relationships with other people. This freedom is only possible because of our relationship with Jesus. It is because we belong to Christ as his servants that we are free to be our best self (Romans 1:1, Philippians 1:1, 1 Corinthians 7:22). He has bought us with a price (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) and that love grants us freedom to love and to serve. It does not give us permission to become self-indulgent or self-centred but is a freedom that must be used responsibly and wisely for our own good and the good of other people. We are called to guard this freedom and to ensure that we do not abuse it or lose it by our attitudes and actions. This statement of intention recognises some of the potential ways by which we can compromise our Christian freedom and damage or destroy the richness of life that it brings. It is not so much about restrictions as about choosing to set aside things that would hold us back from fullness of life in Christ.

All that could enslave

A key word in the sentence is 'enslave'. In contrast to the freedom we have as a servant of Christ, when we are enslaved by anyone or anything else, we lose that freedom and put our connection with Christ at risk. Salvationists choose not to accept or use any substance or behaviour that has the potential to change our actions and reactions and lead to dependence or addiction. All of the actions or substances listed, and others, have the potential to enslave because of their addictive qualities. There is the possibility that an initial personal choice may lead to a physical, emotional or psychological need and dependence. This must not be ignored or treated lightly. When this happens, the demands of the addiction may lead us to neglect, damage or destroy other commitments and relationships. We cannot be addicted to any substance or behaviour and retain our freedom to live as a servant of Christ. This may include substances which are not in themselves harmful or illegal, but nevertheless can become addictive due to patterns of use which create an unhealthy need for them.

Self-control

We are responsible to God for the way we guard our own physical, social, intellectual and emotional well-being. When we see ourselves as made in the image of God, we understand the importance of living a healthy and wholesome life. Christianity calls us to ‘put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator’ (Colossians 3:10). Self-control is listed among the qualities that develop in our lives as the Holy Spirit lives within us (Galatians 5:23). Similarly, 2 Peter 1:5-7 lists self-control among the virtues that we must ‘make every effort’ to add to our lives, so that we will be effective and productive Christians. When we are self-controlled we are able to make choices that are consistent with our life as Christians. We choose to live well, to manage our actions and reactions and distinguish between those things that are potentially harmful to us and other people, and those things that will enable us, and others, to flourish and grow. Paul’s letter to Timothy reminds us that this self-discipline is not something that we have to achieve for ourselves, it is a gift of the Spirit (2 Timothy 1:7), but we must choose to accept the gift and choose to allow it to shape who we are and what we do.

Seeking justice

The Salvation Army has a long-term commitment to those who are adversely affected by addiction. When we oppose addictive behaviours we seek justice for others as well as guarding our own lives. We speak out, and stand against the negative consequences of alcohol and drug abuse, tobacco, gambling, pornography and other addictive behaviours in solidarity with those who are adversely affected by them.³⁷ For example, when we choose not to drink alcohol, we acknowledge the potential for domestic violence caused by the abuse of alcohol and the damage and loss of life caused by drunken drivers. Similarly, when we choose to avoid pornography we condemn the degradation of other human beings, or when we choose not to use tobacco we recognise the damage caused to the health of both the user and those around them.

At the same time we also offer a vision for an alternative way of living and demonstrate our commitment to health, wholeness and holiness. We recognise God’s call to ‘act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly’ with God (Micah 6:8) as we stand for, and with, those who suffer because of addiction, and seek justice for them.

I will abstain

In choosing a lifestyle that seeks to avoid addictive behaviours we must be careful not to do so with any sense of moral superiority. We recognise that not everyone, including other Christians, will make the same choices. Many Salvationists will encounter potentially addictive behaviours such as the use of alcohol or tobacco in their home

³⁷ [https://www.salvationarmy.org/isjc/ips/Alcohol in Society; Pornography](https://www.salvationarmy.org/isjc/ips/Alcohol%20in%20Society%20Pornography)

or work lives and when this is the case they should not be judgemental or condemn, but respond graciously while at the same time maintaining their personal intention and integrity.

In some cultures certain types of addictive behaviour are more or less prominent. For example, in a predominantly Muslim society there is likely to be less alcohol consumption, whereas in some Western cultures, because of the danger to physical health, smoking is now illegal in public places and the number of people who use tobacco has fallen significantly.

We also acknowledge that it is sometimes the *excess* or *abuse* of the behaviour, such as drinking alcohol or gambling, that is damaging rather than the activity itself. Despite this, as Salvationists we choose to fully abstain from these activities. In contrast, pornography is wrong for all people in any circumstance, as is the practice of the occult which offers an alternative and opposing spiritual experience to life in Christ.

Pornography is a widespread evil which is becoming more easily accessible due to the almost universal availability of devices with Internet capacity. This means that it is potentially available to anyone of any age who has a mobile electronic device or computer, and consequently it is increasingly difficult to protect vulnerable individuals, including children, from being exposed to it. Pornography is also accessible as a download without any form of interaction with another human being. Both of these trends give cause for concern as they remove barriers which in past generations may have deterred some people from the use of pornography.

The increasing availability of technology, the Internet and mobile phones has highlighted other forms of addictive behaviour. These can include online gambling, obsessive game playing on electronic devices and constant checking of social media. Each of these can consume time and resources that rightly belong elsewhere, and can isolate the individual from normal human interaction. They can, if taken to excess, damage holistic living and ‘enslave’ the mind and spirit.

Similarly, the use of the word ‘occult’ reminds us of the many alternative spiritualities that may oppose Christianity. These may include some traditional beliefs and practices³⁸ or the new spiritualities that are finding a place in contemporary society. In some cultures there is a dangerous assumption that these can be combined with Scripture, theology and Christian community to produce a personalised spirituality that does not conform to any traditional pattern. As Salvationists it is important that we avoid condoning any religious belief or practice that is not consistent with life in Christ.

As with each of the statements of the Soldier’s Covenant, for some people this standard may be difficult to implement or put into practice. If this is the case it is important

38 <https://www.salvationarmy.org/isjc/ips> *Ancestral Worship*

that individuals can rely on the Salvationist community for support, guidance and accountability. Any Salvationist who struggles with this promise can expect to be treated with grace and compassion and to be given the help they need to retrace their steps. As well as spiritual guidance and support, they may be encouraged to seek the professional help they need to set aside addictive behaviours and practices. For some this is a very difficult path which will require patience, kindness and appropriate accountability if they are to remain as soldiers. The compassionate accountability and restorative discipline of the pastoral care council will be vital in this instance.

This statement of intention is both practical and spiritual. Salvation Army soldiers choose to live out their Christian discipleship free from the influence of any substance or activity that enslaves the body, mind and spirit. It is a Salvationist commitment which is not binding on anyone else, nevertheless it is important for us. At the same time, we stand in solidarity with and for those whose lives are damaged and destroyed by addictive behaviours. This statement reminds us of substances and activities that are potentially damaging to our spiritual, physical, social, intellectual and emotional well-being, and highlights the need for us to live in ways that lead to health and wholeness. It is not meant to be legalistic or controlling, or to judge others who do not share our particular commitment. It is a Salvationist affirmation of our calling to live fully, freely and with integrity as those who belong to Christ.

For reflection and discussion

- Is there any addictive behaviour in your life? What must you do about it and to whom will you be accountable?
- Think about 'new' addictive behaviours that are socially acceptable or tolerated unless they are taken to excess – e.g. video games, mobile phones. Discuss the possible effects on individuals and society.
- What practical things can you do to help individuals who are struggling with addiction?
- Where do you see the influence of alternative spiritualities in your society?

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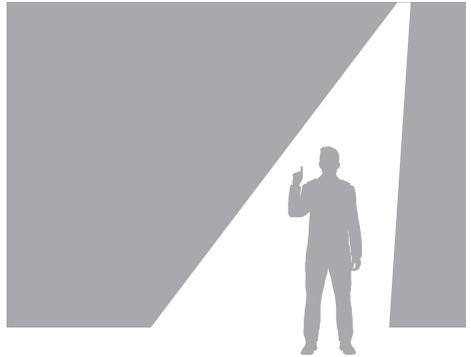
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CHAPTER 10



I will be faithful to the purposes for which God raised up The Salvation Army, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, endeavouring to win others to him, and in his name caring for the needy and the disadvantaged.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Our calling as Salvationists is always missional. We respond to the invitation to participate in God's mission and to share our own experience of salvation with others.
 - We share the gospel through our own experience of transformation, discipleship and communal stewardship.
 - The way in which we share the gospel may differ depending on culture and context.
 - Salvationists understand the holistic nature of mission which calls individuals to share the good news of salvation, and to love our neighbour through practical expression.
-

The final three statements of intention focus specifically on our relationship with The Salvation Army. They highlight the importance of the purposes of God and the principles and practices of the Army in working out our identity as a soldier. As part of the universal Christian Church The Salvation Army participates in the mission of God, discerning the ways in which it can ‘preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and...meet human needs in his name without discrimination’.³⁹

This statement names three purposes for which God raised up The Salvation Army. These are rooted in God’s mission in, to and for the world. The Salvation Army engages in mission because God engages in mission.

The Salvation Army is ‘a Christian denomination in permanent mission to the unconverted’.⁴⁰ Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God reaches out to us in reconciling love, offering a relationship in which we can flourish and grow.

As Salvation Army soldiers we belong to a community of believers in which we can experience fellowship, healing, be nurtured in our journey of discipleship, and be equipped for ministry and mission. Our own lives will be enriched, our spiritual experience deepened and our experience of Christian community widened as we take our place in the people of God. We gather in community so that we can be sent out in mission. Our calling as Salvationists is always missional. Our purpose is to share with others the transformation we have experienced.

Our Doctrine reminds us that ‘We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has by His suffering and death made an atonement for the whole world so that whosoever will may be saved’ (Doctrine 6; John 3:16; Romans 3:23-24). As reconciled and transformed people we reach out to others with a message of reconciliation and transformation which has the power to change the lives of individuals, bring new life and purpose to communities and influence the public life of cities and nations.

The name of The Salvation *Army* reminds us of the need for disciplined activity. The function of an Army is not to separate itself from the outside world by staying in the barracks, but to prepare in the barracks so that, when deployed by the commander, it is equipped for engagement with the world. As soldiers in The Salvation Army, one outcome of nurturing our Christian experience is the development of our capacity to share God’s mission of reconciling love.

39 *The Salvation Army Year Book 2021*, International Mission Statement, i

40 *HoD*, 310

Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ

As a *Salvation Army* our message is salvation. At the heart of Christian faith is the unfailing love of God for humanity. God created us in the divine image and for relationship with God. This relationship requires our obedience to God's will for our lives and for the world. The Bible tells the story of human beings, created in the image of God to live in harmony with one another and with creation. It also speaks of disobedience, of human choice to rebel and of our attempts to live without God's loving influence. But God did not give up on humanity and repeatedly offers salvation and reconciliation.

Eventually the Old Testament speaks of the time when God would finally come and save (Isaiah 35:3-4; Jeremiah 33:14-16), so that the people would be transformed inwardly (Jeremiah 31:31-34). The New Testament tells us how Jesus fulfilled that prophecy. He taught that the time has come for God's reign to be established, and modelled what it means to live as a citizen of God's Kingdom. His death bridged the separation between us and God, and his resurrection is the ultimate confirmation of God's work of salvation through him. God's gift of Jesus means that we can be saved. This will make a difference to our relationship with God, will change the way we see ourselves and will shape our relationships with other people. The Bible says that we become a 'new creation' (2 Corinthians 5:17).

This is the good news of Jesus Christ. As Salvationists who know that experience, we believe that we have a responsibility to share our story with other people so that it can become their story too. 'Our mission is to share in the mission of God; to tell the story of Jesus...with compelling passion so that other people recognise within it the source of their own salvation.'⁴¹ God, through Jesus, reconciled the world to himself, and has trusted us to be his messengers of reconciliation in and to the world (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

Endeavouring to win others to him

We believe that the good news of Jesus is relevant in every place and for each generation. It is not only a story that is good to hear, but is the offer of a relationship that demands our response. No one can remain indifferent; we must either accept or reject a relationship with Jesus that will transform who we are and how we live. We cannot make that choice for anyone else, nor can we see ourselves as responsible if they choose not to respond, but we can witness to the transformation that has taken place in our own lives as we tell the good news of Jesus.

When we make this statement of intention, we must be aware that the context in which we make it may shape how we can live it. The difference in our cultures, and

41 *HoD*, 85

sometimes the laws of our country, will mean that we cannot all do the same things as we endeavour to win others to Christ.

In some places there is complete freedom to share our faith, either in private or in public places, but often with the expectation that other religions and philosophies have an equal right to be heard. In these countries it is possible to tell the good news of Jesus, but it is sometimes difficult to convince people that it requires a definite and exclusive response to Christ as Saviour and Lord of our lives. They have so many options for belief that they struggle to commit to one, or do not think it is necessary to do so, so may try to choose parts of several different philosophies and faiths as their guide for living.

In other cultures there may be restrictions and laws that mean that it is not possible to openly share our faith or to encourage anyone else to become a Christian. In these places, Salvationists witness through the way we live. As we live out our Soldier's Covenant in our family, friendships and workplace, our relationships, actions and reactions will demonstrate who we are in Christ. Our lives will be attractive and meaningful and may encourage other people to question what motivates us to live in this way.

The story of Jesus Christ is 'good news'. To keep it for ourselves would not make sense, but how we share it will also depend on our own skills, gifts and personalities. Some people have the gift of evangelism with a natural ability to communicate the good news of Jesus and to encourage other people to accept him as Lord. But if that is not our gift, we should still be prepared to explain what and why we believe, and our lives must demonstrate what it means to be a disciple of Jesus (1 Peter 3:15-16).

In his name caring for the needy and the disadvantaged

In the early years of The Salvation Army, William Booth's focus was solely upon individual, personal salvation. However, as he reflected on initiatives by Salvationists to provide practical support to some of the poorest people in society, he began to view these redemptive actions as ways in which the mission of God is accomplished. Throughout the Bible the people of God had been commanded to care for people who were poor, on the margins of society, or excluded from it. This is seen in the Old Testament law (Leviticus 25:35-38), the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus (Luke 4:18-19), and the practices of the Early Church (Acts 4:32-35). This holistic understanding of salvation which joins evangelism with compassion has become part of our Salvationist identity. Loving God requires that we love others (Matthew 22:37-40). We offer them respect, dignity and hope as people who are created in the image of God, loved by him, and offered salvation through Jesus Christ. We care for disadvantaged people because this is part of who God calls us to be and because we want to see in our world the holistic transformation that can only be accomplished through salvation. It is as much a part of our ministry as holiness and salvation meetings or open-air meetings.

It will take different forms and be expressed in a variety of ways in different cultures and circumstances. Sometimes we may care for people as individuals, perhaps as a friend or neighbour. At other times we may offer support through the community programmes of our corps. In some places The Salvation Army operates social service ministries, offering a caring and professional service that provides practical, emotional and spiritual support for the present and the future. In every instance there must be opportunity for those we serve to begin their own journey of transformation, and to become all that God calls them to be.

At times it may be tempting to assume that ‘we’ have the solution to ‘their’ problems, but this is not always the case. It is important that we treat each individual with respect and do not assume that we always know what is best for them. We must listen to them and work with them, seeking to understand their situation, not assuming that our interpretation of their circumstances is correct or our provision is what they need.

In some circumstances soldiers may also have opportunity to challenge and change the communal and structural aspects of society that contribute to or cause the need, and to seek justice for those people who are affected by them. This too is a characteristic of the transforming power of the gospel. It is a fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah (Isaiah 58:6) and the teaching of Jesus (Luke 4:18-19), and a witness to the world of the values of God’s Kingdom.

This will not be possible in every Salvation Army context, especially in countries where Christianity is a minority faith. In these places, the gift of care to those in need is a witness to the possibilities of a world in which love is the motivating factor, and no one need be excluded from that love.

God’s mission is our mission. Our response to the invitation to participate in God’s mission is to share our experience of salvation with others, believing that it offers transformation and healing, for individuals, communities and in the world.

For reflection and discussion

- How do you live out your missional calling in your particular culture and context? Write a list of opportunities and challenges.
- How do your skills, gifts and personality influence the way you share your faith?
- What cultural or political challenges do you face in sharing your faith with other people?
- Discuss how we, as a community of believers, may strengthen our fellowship and nurture our discipleship.
- Reflect on how the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ paves the way for our reconciliation and relationship with Christ in ourselves and in others.

CHAPTER 11



I will be actively involved, as I am able, in the life, work, worship and witness of the corps, giving as large a proportion of my income as possible to support its ministries and the worldwide work of the Army.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Salvationists believe in the priesthood of all believers in which every member has a vocation and ministry to fulfil according to our calling, gifts, skills and abilities.
 - Salvationists are called to express a life of mission in and through The Salvation Army. We are required to exercise stewardship through organising and sharing our resources.
 - Soldiers and officers share a common commitment to our faith, mission and service in The Salvation Army.
 - As soldiers we share an affinity with Salvationists around the world and to mutually support one another, learn from each other and, when it is possible, worship, serve and pray together.
-

The Salvation Army is committed to the total mobilisation of all of its soldiers. Soldiers are expected to participate in the life of the Army. We dedicate ourselves to active engagement in the mission of God as expressed in and through The Salvation Army. Not every Salvationist will be able to do this in the same way. Our participation is influenced by our personal circumstances and by the expression of Salvation Army life that is appropriate to our cultural context.

This does not imply or assume that only soldiers can be involved in the life of a corps. In many territories there are people who worship at The Salvation Army who either choose not to be soldiers or their circumstances make this impossible. They should not be excluded from the fellowship, but given opportunities to contribute as they are able, without specific obligations or expectations. In contrast, those who commit to soldiership are called to intentional involvement and are expected to be active participants.

The priesthood of all believers

Our participation as soldiers is as part of the corps, with other people. Our faith is best expressed and nurtured in a community of faith. It is also as part of a community of faith that we witness to the world of the saving and transforming love of Christ.

Salvationists believe that we belong to the priesthood of all believers. This means that we believe that every Christian has access to God through Christ (1 Timothy 2:5). It also reminds us that the Church is collectively a ‘royal priesthood’ (1 Peter 2:9) in which ‘each believer has a vocation and a ministry to fulfil’.⁴² This is true of any soldier in every corps. It does not mean that anyone can choose to do anything or take any role, but it does mean that every soldier should, with the help of others, discern what our unique contribution to the life of the community can be. We each have different gifts, skills and abilities that can be offered and used, and when we work together we can see the importance of every individual and appreciate the immense diversity and richness that comes when believers work together as people of God (Romans 12:3-8). As soldiers in The Salvation Army we experience a deep sense of belonging and fellowship as we serve alongside others who share our commitment. Our involvement in mission brings a sense of fulfilment and joy that enriches our lives, and as we worship together we find ourselves connected to each other, and to God, by the Spirit.

Life, work, worship and witness

‘I will be actively involved, as I am able, in the life, work, worship and witness of the corps.’ Every soldier is enrolled as a soldier of a particular Salvation Army corps. Our name is entered on the soldiers’ roll as we make a public commitment of our intention to live by the standards set out in the Soldier’s Covenant, or Articles of War. As soldiers we

42 *HoD*, 211

recognise that we are under authority. Ultimately this is the authority of God, but at the same time, as an Army, we are committed to working together under the direction of officers and local officers to achieve a common goal.

As soldiers we have accepted the calling of God on our lives. We are committed to our faith, to our ongoing personal development and to mission and service in The Salvation Army. Some soldiers will become local officers, giving their time, gifts and skills to the community as spiritual leaders who accept positions of responsibility in their local Salvation Army corps, offering pastoral care, shaping its strategy, worship and witness, overseeing finances and setting future direction. If we have the responsibility of leadership, we must always keep in sight the purposes of God's mission.

Salvationists also have a responsibility to seek opportunities for mission and ministry beyond the formal programmes of the corps. Our commitment to the Soldier's Covenant must be seen in the way we live and the decisions we make in every aspect of our lives. We have many relationships with family, friends, work colleagues and people with whom we spend our leisure time. At all times we should live as people who know the transforming power of Christ, and who are sincerely trying to live according to the values of the Kingdom of God. This does not mean that we will always be 'model' Christians, or that we can assume any moral superiority, but simply that we choose to live in ways that are consistent with the promises we have made. Our life as soldiers should always reflect the inner integrity and self-discipline that flows from holy living, so that our decisions and choices reflect who we are in Christ. We must be willing to witness to our faith in Christ, sharing the gospel in ways that are appropriate to our circumstances, believing that the transformation we are experiencing is relevant and powerful for all people.

Some soldiers may be employed by The Salvation Army, and through their employment work out a calling to ministry and mission in their local setting, while others use their skills and gifts to serve through paid work that supports, resources and enables the mission.

Other soldiers will be called by God to be officers in The Salvation Army. When this is the case their obedience to God leads them away from their local corps and secular employment to commissioning and ordination as Salvation Army officers. Their calling will be tested and confirmed through an assessment and training process which will also equip them for officer ministry. They will be available to be appointed by their leaders for the benefit of God's mission. Officership demands obedience to this calling. It offers opportunity and fulfilment for those who know that they are called by God and whose calling has been confirmed by The Salvation Army.

In worship we give to God the honour that God deserves. As the people of God we celebrate God's majesty and goodness and give thanks for our salvation through Christ. Our awareness of God is placed alongside our awareness of our own humanity.

We realise that it is only in our relationship with God that we can find the resources that we need to grow in holiness and live with integrity. Through worship we are strengthened, sustained and challenged to become the people that God intends us to be. Worship equips us for active and effective soldiership.⁴³

The name ‘Articles of War’ indicates clearly the activist nature of soldiership. Drawing on the military metaphor of an army of salvation, soldiers are required to participate in the ‘battle’. The image of an Army that is in conflict with evil, however it may affect individuals and communities, is central to our self-understanding. Jesus taught that the most important commandment is ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength’ and the second is ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’ (Mark 12:30-31). Loving God and loving our neighbour gives motivation for the fight against those individuals and structures that, by their attitudes and actions, diminish individuals and groups and do not value them as people who are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). As Salvation Army soldiers we are committed to seeking justice for all people.

Loving God and loving our neighbour also reminds us that everyone has a right to the transformation that comes through accepting the love of God. Our sixth doctrine states that ‘whosoever will may be saved’. Soldiership reminds us of our responsibility to ensure that we share this truth. We are witnesses to what we have experienced. As soldiers we have a responsibility to share our story.

Salvation Army uniform and Salvation Army-branded clothing are important reminders of our own promises, a sign of our identity, and a witness to the presence of Christ in our lives. They are also marks of belonging to the local corps and the wider Salvationist community. Uniform makes us visible as Christians in our local area. In many contexts it can also give us the opportunity to witness to people who are not yet Christian by explaining who we are and why we wear the uniform. In some circumstances soldiers may be fully committed to their covenant and actively involved as soldiers, but do not wear uniform.

Generous giving

An active soldier will choose to give generously to the work of The Salvation Army. As people who are committed to its purpose, practices and principles we have a responsibility to ensure that the Army has the resources it needs to continue and develop. No soldier can be involved in every aspect of the Army’s ministry, but every soldier can be committed to offer what we can according to our own resources and obligations.

43 See Chapter 3

We give to The Salvation Army in gratitude for the gifts we receive from God. This motivates us to give generously and freely of the resources we have, taking opportunities to support our local corps, but also special projects and the work of the international Salvation Army.⁴⁴ This is not just an opportunity for those who have more than they need to give out of their abundance, but is also a meaningful way for every soldier to share what they have. Soldiers are also committed to offer their gifts, skills and abilities as needed so that the work, worship and witness of the Army can flourish.

The worldwide work of the Army

For most Salvation Army soldiers our active involvement will be focused on our corps, division and territory. Yet at the same time we will be aware of, and should support in some way, the international Salvation Army. As soldiers we share an affinity with Salvationists around the world. We live in different countries, have very different lifestyles, our access to resources differs, and our worship may look and sound different. Nevertheless, we share a common commitment to soldiership in The Salvation Army, which transcends difference and holds us in unity. We recognise each other as brothers and sisters in Christ who, each in our own situation, are actively involved in the work, worship and witness of The Salvation Army. We make, and take, opportunities to mutually support one another, learn from each other and, when it is possible, worship, serve and pray together.

As I am able

There are four important words in this statement – ‘*as I am able*.’ When we become soldiers in The Salvation Army we belong to a worldwide fellowship of believers in which there are many opportunities for witness and service. These will differ according to where we live in the world and the ministry of The Salvation Army in our corps. At the same time, we recognise that we are each unique individuals who bring to God and to the Army all that we are and have. Our ‘active involvement’ may be very different from that of other people. There is no standard expectation other than our commitment to become what God intends us to be and to give what God asks of us. When we struggle to achieve this ideal and fail to become what we can be and do what we can do, we should be able to rely on the support and encouragement of officers, local officers and mature Christians who can help and guide.

This statement of intention focuses on our investment in the mission of God as expressed in and through The Salvation Army. We choose to work, worship and witness because we are dedicated to God, and committed to the divine purpose. In our obedience to God we find satisfaction and joy as people who have ‘yielded him their allegiance’ (John 1:12 *New English Bible*) and are therefore given the right to become children of God.

44 See Chapter 8

CHAPTER 12



I will be true to
the principles and
practices of
The Salvation Army,
loyal to its leaders,
and I will show the
spirit of Salvationism
whether in times
of popularity or
persecution.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Soldiership is a guiding framework for our discipleship as followers of Christ.
 - On our journey to becoming what God wants us to be, there may be times when we struggle or fail to reach the standards that are set for us in this covenant. On these occasions, the community of faith is called upon to help restore right relationship with God and with others.
 - As Salvationists we are called to mutual accountability, personal and communal holiness. This should be expressed through commitment, loyalty and acceptance of delegated authority.
 - While Salvation Army soldiership is a privilege and a joy, it is not easy or comfortable. There may be times when Salvationists are called to support one another and draw on the courage and wisdom that comes from God.
-

Becoming a soldier is more than just entry into the Salvationist community; it is more than taking our place in the activities of the corps. Soldiership is a framework for our calling to discipleship as followers of Christ. When we are faithfully living according to the standards in our Soldier's Covenant, our principles and practices come together in a holistic common identity.

True to the principles and practices

Each soldier in every territory makes the commitments of the Soldier's Covenant. Sometimes differences in context and culture mean that the practical outworking is different, but at all times and in any place our practices must be consistent with the faith we share and the pledges we have made as soldiers. We have said 'I will...'. This signifies our intention, as people who have accepted Christ as Lord, to live in ways that are shaped by our commitment.

The Soldier's Covenant outlines important aspects of that commitment:

- We believe the truths expressed in the Salvation Army doctrines and allow them to shape our lives as disciples of Jesus.
- We are open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and aim to live with integrity according to the values of God's Kingdom.
- Our attitudes and actions in relationships, including our most intimate relationships, are shaped by our commitment to Christ.
- We aim to use our resources wisely and generously for the sake of the Kingdom of God.
- We avoid addictive behaviours.
- As Salvation Army soldiers we focus on the mission of God in, to and for our world.
- We are witnesses to Jesus Christ, and treat all people with respect and compassion, seeking justice for the poor and marginalised.
- Our soldiership is participatory, both in the Salvationist community and as we seek to reach out to those who are not yet Christians.

These principles must guide our action. Anything that we do, either publicly as a community of Salvationists, or as individuals, must be consistent with the declarations we have made.

A challenging commitment

This commitment is challenging and can seem daunting. In every corps there will be leaders and mature Salvationists who will offer support and guidance to new soldiers. Every Christian is in the process of becoming what God wills them to be. This journey will continue throughout life. Paul wrote to the Philippians:

‘I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus’ (Philippians 1:3-6).

The same is true of Salvation Army soldiers. We are partners in the gospel, people in whom God has begun a ‘good work’, but we are not yet complete. At times we may struggle or fail to reach the standards that are set for us in this covenant, either in our discipleship, our relationships or our actions. When this happens, it does not necessarily mean that our soldiership is invalid or broken, but it requires us to consider, often with the help of other people, a way forward that will help us to avoid the same difficulties in the future. How this happens in practice will vary according to the context and the nature and severity of what has happened.

In every instance we need to recognise that our covenant is with God, and therefore the first thing that we should do is restore our relationship with him. This may lead to us seeking reconciliation with another person, or putting right something that we have done. At the same time we need to recognise our commitment to The Salvation Army, and to accept the guidance and discipline of the denomination. Officers and local officers, most often the pastoral care council, will be available to support and help us.⁴⁵ They will offer spiritual and practical counsel, while at the same time ensuring that appropriate action is taken. In every situation they should act with respect, compassion and concern for individuals.

Loyal to its leaders

As people who share a common identity we are accountable, first of all to God, but also to our leaders and to each other.⁴⁶ We share the discipline of the soldier’s life. This includes a commitment of loyalty to the leaders of our movement, who will be held accountable for their leadership.⁴⁷ They too are soldiers, to whom authority has been delegated because of their function as officers. As such they should be an example and role model of soldiership. They do not have a different or higher status, but their

45 *Orders and Regulations for Pastoral Care Councils*

46 *Servants Together – Salvationist Perspectives on Ministry*, Salvation Books, IHQ, 2008

47 Hebrews 13:17 – see also www.salvationarmy.org/isjc/ips *The Use of Power*

appointment gives them functional authority within the Army as servant leaders. They are accountable for their personal discipleship and their leadership of people, strategies and practices. As soldiers we should respect their delegated authority within The Salvation Army.

How loyalty is expressed may vary in different cultures, and styles of leadership may differ. Soldiers will inevitably need to respect these differences and express their loyalty within them. However, no soldier should be expected to unquestioningly obey a command that, after prayer and consideration, they believe to be contrary to the values expressed in the Soldier's Covenant. They should be given opportunity to respectfully voice their concern, asking for a rationale for the decision. If they are not convinced by this, they may need to seek further advice. *Orders and Regulations for Pastoral Care Councils* may provide helpful guidance.

The spirit of Salvationism

The Salvation Army began as a mission which was primarily focused on the poor of east London. Throughout its history the commitment to mission has remained. The Salvation Army believes that, although we are created in God's image, our natural inclination as human beings is to rebel against our creator. At all times and in all places, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ offers us a way to restore the relationship that is broken by our rebellion. This reconciliation has the potential to transform individuals and communities and is a sign of the time when all creation will be reconciled to God (Colossians 1:20).

We have learned from our Founders – William and Catherine Booth – that adaptation of methods is necessary if we are to speak this truth in each new generation. We have learned that we may need to communicate differently in different cultures, but the essential message remains and forms the foundation of who we are and the content of our mission.

At the same time we are committed to our own discipleship. Alongside the gospel message there is a call to personal and communal holiness. Having accepted salvation, we are called to grow in faith and to become the people that we have the potential to be. We are called to be holy (1 Peter 1:16), to reflect the holiness of God. We are also called to hold each other accountable for our discipleship, to encourage, support, challenge and rebuke appropriately, and always with compassion and grace. Officers and local officers have a particular responsibility for ensuring that soldiers have opportunities to grow in discipleship and to participate in mission, but ultimately all soldiers are accountable for their own relationship with God.⁴⁸

48 *Journey of Renewal*, 'The Mission Accountability Framework', 29, Salvation Books, IHQ, 2016

Times of popularity or persecution

Salvation Army soldiership is a privilege and a joy. It can bring great personal fulfilment and lead to a deepening relationship with Christ. The shared fellowship of the Salvationist community encourages growth and gives opportunity for mission. In many contexts the ministry of The Salvation Army is encouraged and supported, and soldiers are respected within the Christian community and in society. The work of the Army in seeking justice for the marginalised is recognised and appreciated.

At the same time, soldiership is not always easy or comfortable. For some people soldiership may bring personal challenges within their family, or among friends or work colleagues. This can be a source of pain and distress. The support of the Salvationist community can provide essential strength (Galatians 6:2).

We are also aware that the message of Jesus is not welcomed by some people or cultures and may be actively dismissed or challenged. In such instances, whether this is the response of individuals or society, soldiership will require courage, tenacity and wisdom. Jesus said to his disciples, ‘In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world’ (John 16:33). Soldiers may experience a measure of tension and suffering, but they can be confident in the knowledge that God’s grace and power are sufficient for any situation (2 Corinthians 12:9).

The Soldier’s Covenant ends with a declaration. It recognises that the compelling reason for soldiership is our response to the love of Christ. Our covenant with God and commitment to The Salvation Army, our signing of the Articles of War in an activist denomination, flow from this. ‘We love because he first loved us’ (1 John 4:19).

I now call upon all present to witness that I enter into this covenant and sign these Articles of War of my own free will, convinced that the love of Christ, who died and now lives to save me, requires from me this devotion of my life to his service for the salvation of the whole world; and therefore do here declare my full determination, by God’s help, to be a true soldier of The Salvation Army.

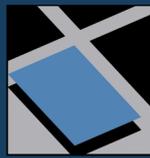
Called to be a Soldier explores The Salvation Army Soldier's Covenant, focusing in turn on each of the statements of intention that form the covenant by outlining the possibilities and opportunities of life as a Salvation Army soldier. The covenant is set in the context of Salvationist theology and practice, showing how the promises we make in response to God's call are also Articles of War – a set of regulations which guide the conduct of an army.

The beliefs, values and behaviours outlined in the covenant call for dedication to God and God's mission, holiness of heart and life, personal integrity and authenticity, and determination to live in ways that model what it means to be a follower of Christ. Living as a Salvation Army soldier is only possible by relying on the grace and guidance of God as we seek to translate into everyday living the commitments we have made.

From the General:

Called to be a Soldier is timely as it challenges us to engage personally in an active, obedient faith. We are becoming increasingly aware of the ways in which our world is interconnected. How we relate to each other as individuals, communities and nations is crucial for our society and environment. It is my conviction that *Called to be a Soldier* will provide a most helpful framework to think about these matters, and more.

It will help us understand how Salvationist beliefs shape our actions. It will draw attention to the importance of worship. My prayer is that as you study its contents, you will grow in your conviction that Salvation Army soldiership is a calling of immense importance. Bring questions to your study, and bring your openness to the God who calls us into his service and mission.



SALVATION BOOKS