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## **READING ASSIGNMENT FOR STUDENTS TO BE READ BEFORE MEETING FOR LESSON 10**

**Final Reading selections.** A Salvation Army distinctive. Read prayerfully.  
**The Sacraments: A Salvationist's Understanding**

### **Why does The Salvation Army not baptize or hold communion?**

A major difference between The Salvation Army and other religious denominations is that it does not include the use of sacraments (mainly holy communion, sometimes called the Lord's Supper, and baptism) in its form of worship.

The Salvation Army has never said it is wrong to use sacraments, nor does it deny that other Christians receive grace from God through using them. Rather, the Army believes that it is possible to live a holy life and receive the grace of God without the use of physical sacraments and that they should not be regarded as an essential part of becoming a Christian.

Salvationists see the sacraments as an outward sign of an inward experience, and it is the inward experience that is the most important thing.

It should be noted that The Salvation Army did not cease to use the sacraments because of any prejudices it had against them or from any desire to be 'different'. The decision to discontinue their use was a gradual process in the minds of the Army's founders.

### **The reasons for The Salvation Army's cessation of the sacraments may be summarized as follows:**

1. The Army's Founders felt that many Christians had come to rely on the outward signs of spiritual grace rather than on grace itself. William and Catherine Booth believed, with the Apostle Paul, that salvation came solely from the grace of God personally received by faith. They felt that much of what passed for Christianity in their day was primarily an observance of outward ritual.

2. Some Bible scholars had pointed out that there was no scriptural basis for regarding the sacraments as essential to salvation or Christian living. Many Christians assumed that Jesus commanded the use of baptism and holy communion. But there very few New Testament references to these practices and it was argued that none of them showed any intention by Jesus that they (or any other practice) should have become fixed ceremonies.

3. The sacraments had been a divisive influence in the Church throughout Christian history and at times the cause of bitter controversy and abuse.

4. Some churches would not allow women to administer the sacraments. The Army, however, believed that women may take an equal part in its ministry, and did not want to compromise this stance.

5. The Society of Friends (the Quakers) had managed to live holy lives without the use of sacraments.

6. Many early-day converts to the Army had previously been alcoholics. It was considered unwise to tempt them with the wine used in holy communion.

To a large extent this is still the Salvationist's standpoint. However, it should be stressed that Salvationists have never been in opposition to the sacraments. Indeed, when they take part in gather-

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To become a Salvation Army soldier a person must first and foremost acknowledge that they have asked God for forgiveness for their wrongdoing and that Jesus Christ is their Savior from sin.

Recruits – as those who wish to become Salvation Army soldiers are known – study the Army's doctrines and the principles and practice of a Salvationist lifestyle before a swearing-in ceremony takes place, usually in a Sunday meeting. During this, recruits stand under the Army flag and publicly acknowledge their salvation from sin, state their belief in the Army's doctrines and promise to live by the standards laid out in the 'articles of war'. They then sign a copy of these articles of war and a prayer is said asking for God's help in keeping those promises.

While this ceremony is a serious occasion, it is also a very joyful one with the new soldier being warmly greeted by the congregation and by individual fellow-Salvationists.

As with the ceremony of Communion, Salvationists are not forbidden to be baptized in another church if they feel this is right for them as individuals, and the Army has from time to time reconsidered its stance on the sacraments, and continues to keep it under review.

See also: [www.thesacramentsandthebible.org.uk](http://www.thesacramentsandthebible.org.uk)

Review of The Sacraments and The Bible by Captain Phil Layton

—————**This is a fun read- a blast from the past....**—————

**CHARACTERISTICS OF SALVATIONISM. Marching to Glory, pg 84-87** (first printed in 1927)

The Army's founders set a pattern for their followers, the essential feature of which may be termed Salvationism. From the early days of The Salvation Army 'the Army spirit' has been a characteristic expression in the vocabulary of the movement. It has been a way of indication that certain qualities, convictions and principles have always been accepted as desirable and necessary.

Among these are a willingness to witness, emphasis on holy living, an active concern for others, a refusal to accept barriers of class, sex or race and a loyalty to the aims and methods of the Army.

First, the Army provided, for all who would have it, a free expression of the joy of the Lord. This has shown itself in public testimony. From the beginning it has been an Army custom to call upon converts to testify – in the open air as well as in its halls. By this means not only have they themselves been helped and strengthened, but countless souls have been won for God.

The uniform presents another way of witnessing for Christ. The distinctive dress, or the Salvation Army badge on plain clothes when uniform cannot be worn, is also an invitation to people to avail themselves of the help, in spiritual and material matters, which a Salvationist might be expected to provide.

In an age when mass media techniques claim an increasingly important role in communications, it is vital that the Salvationist should not under-estimate the effectiveness of one-to-one evangelism-through the spoken and written word and by the witness of a consistent life-style.

Another characteristic of Salvationism is faith in the possibility of holy living. When the Army was born, John Wesley, the great revivalist and holiness preacher of the 18th century, through whose writings the Founder himself was led into the experience of holiness, had been dead for more than 70 years. Many of his followers were beginning to neglect his teachings concerning holy living. God inspired the Founders of The Salvation Army to raise again the banner of holiness, and holiness meetings became from the first a regular feature of Salvation Army activity.

Salvationism includes specific responsibility for others and the underlying purpose of Salvation Army activities is still to raise up, from ordinary people, soldiers of God who will take their places in the fighting line and form part of the great force attacking evil. This principle of attack has marked out the Army from the early days when the Founder, in person, led his forces into the hooliganism and sin of Whitechapel.

‘A satisfactory meeting,’ said the Founder, ‘has always meant a real fight, a regular struggle to get something done; a real effort to get the devil out of some soul, young or old, rich or poor, to get God and goodness in; or to make somebody fight for him who did not fight before.’

One of the most striking aspects of Salvationism is the Army’s insistence on the equality of woman with man in warfare for Christ. Against centuries of precedent, the Founders proclaimed the moral and spiritual equality of the sexes. At a time when women were in the background of public life, it was remarkable that William Booth should open every position of The Salvation Army to women equally with men.

In God’s plan, the highest interests of men and women stand or fall together; it is a Salvationist principle that, whenever any attempt is made to separate these interests, injustice must follow. The Salvation Army emphatically declares that no laws can be good in effect which profess to care for and guard the interests of one sex at the expense of the other.

The spirit of the Army is also a spirit of internationalism.

When, without any deliberate intention on the Founder’s part, the work of The Salvation Army spread beyond the land of its birth, it became clear that salvationists could not live for one people alone, if they were to accept their part in the apostolic commission; “Ye shall be witnesses unto me...unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

While not everyone is called to go to other lands with the gospel, salvationists will never be narrowly nationalistic in spirit; they will be gladly willing to help Christ’s cause beyond the borders of their homeland.

Modern migration patterns have meant a much greater intermingling of people and communities, and the ready acceptance of people of different racial origins is a natural extension of that spirit of internationalism.

True Salvationism also includes loyalty to God, to one another and to the Army.

Salvationists are a highly-pledged people, and Salvationism demands of them loyalty to all their pledges. While the Christian Mission was still young, the Founders realized the need for some simple form of promise which would unit the members and prevent unworthy people seeking admission among them.

As time passed and the Army developed, various other promises or pledges were entered into by its soldiers, local officers and candidates for officership. Loyalty to pledges, voluntarily made to God and the Army in moments of high inspiration, bring unity with the whole Salvation Army and strength to the pledge-maker.

To the convinced Salvationist, The Salvation Army cannot merely be an optional method of serving God and the people. No one is under any compulsion to enter the Army; but having done so, nothing less than true Salvationism will enable the soldier to discharge his obligations with satisfaction to himself, to his leaders, or to his Savior.