

# **Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry**

**WCC Faith and Order paper No. 111**

**A response from The Salvation Army**

## **Introduction**

The Salvation Army willingly responds to the invitation to comment upon the Lima document despite the fact that the Army's traditional approach to the subjects dealt with differs significantly from the hypothesis on which the present study rests.

Salvationists regard with great respect the worship patterns of denominations which include sacramental observances, and in most parts of the world find The Salvation Army's non-sacramental stance no barrier to the enjoyment of rich Christian fellowship even when that stance is not fully understood. It is, therefore, a matter of regret and concern that the sincerely held views of non-sacramentalist Christians are ignored in this document. We feel it our duty, then, to respond not in a spirit of confrontation or denial, but of witness born out of our experience of the work of grace in our midst for more than one hundred years.

The Salvation Army finds no difficulty in maintaining its association with the World Council of Churches on the terms of the Council's own definition:

A fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

This accords with the Army's emphasis on Jesus Christ as Lord and only Saviour, on personal salvation, inner sanctification and outward holiness, as evidenced in its written documents and the lives and service of its people.

It was disconcerting to find a new emphasis emerging when in 1975 the functions and purposes section of the WCC Constitution was revised to give increased prominence to the World Council's role in encouraging church unity. Two phrases, "visible unity" and "eucharistic fellowship", were introduced. This appeared to narrow the interpretation of unity implied by the basic membership statement and to seek for the first time to dictate the form of worship the churches should adopt.

In their reading of the Lima text Salvation Army leaders are again sensitized to the apparent change of emphasis which tends to reduce the original recognition of the church as the body of Christ, united in him irrespective of worship practices, to a group of baptized people who observe the sacrament of the Lord's supper. We aver that the continued existence of The Salvation Army and the Society of Friends renders such a definition invalid.

Differences in our approach may be partly understood in the light of our historical background: the composition of the early-day Army — an amalgam of Christians of differing denominations and sacramental traditions and new converts, unwelcome in the churches of that day and including many for whom the fermented wine presented problems. To these features must be added female ministry which quickly became an important aspect of Army life and worship. In the face of these problem-stimulating factors the Army's founders were compelled to seek the guidance of the Holy

Spirit in their interpretation of New Testament teaching on the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist and on the ministry. Gradually but positively there emerged that conviction which salvationists cherish to this day, that the Holy Spirit was confirming this new expression of Christian faith and practice as a part of the body of Christ, his church, with a distinctive witness and purpose, which included the non-observance of the traditional sacraments on theological as well as practical grounds.

In our opinion this witness enriches rather than diminishes the universality of the Christian message, declaring that the Holy Spirit is not bound to time-honoured ways, nor does he necessarily conform to set patterns, but is free to and does give himself to God's people even outside the traditional means of grace. This, we believe, is sound New Testament teaching. Against this background we see in the Lima text a grave danger of limiting that message and causing further polarization by concentrating as it seems to do on the basic hypothesis that baptism and the eucharist are essential to the interpretation of the apostolic faith. We feel that even many churches which observe the sacraments would hesitate to make that claim. The apparent elevation of apostolic tradition to the level of apostolic faith confuses the vital issues and weakens the message and witness.

We foresee the danger of over-emphasis on sacramentalism creating a problem similar to that faced by Paul in the young church in Galatia (Gal. 4 and 5). We take encouragement from Dr Philip Potter who, in *Life in all its Fullness* quoted in *International Review of Mission*, wrote:

He or she who hears the voice of Christ can only answer with the voice of his or her own culture, not somebody else's . . . The freedom to be different, and yet in that difference to be part of the freedom which Christ has brought us. The other element is the freedom of the unity (not uniformity) of his people.<sup>1</sup>

Dr Potter continues in a further paragraph with expressions which could likewise have come from a salvationist's pen:

What Paul was fighting for (in his concern for the church in Galatia) was the true unity of the Church: on the basis of Christ's death and resurrection for us, and on the one condition of our faith in him we have a unity. . . all are one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28). Freedom in Christ is the one condition for the true unity of God's people in this diversity.

To date The Salvation Army has been happy to accept assurances given by WCC leaders over many years and repeated in recent dialogues between leaders of the World Council and the Army, that the terms of the 1950 Toronto Statement hold good, namely that "no church. . . is required to give up its self-understanding or to subscribe to one understanding of the Church". On this basis in 1981 The Salvation Army's leadership deemed it appropriate to remain in active fellowship with the World Council of Churches although requesting a change in relationship.

It is hoped, therefore, that the amendment of the functions and purposes statement, and the development of the emphasis on sacramental unity inherent in the Lima text, does not presage a change in the original inclusive membership standard of the constitution within which Christians of so many churches, each with its distinctive and enriching features, find happy and fruitful unity in diversity. In our opinion to move further in that direction would not only intensify the sense of isolation felt by many Christians and churches sharing our viewpoint, but would again highlight difference in interpretation which a significant number of Christians would consider unessential to personal salvation and the church's real role in mission and the proclamation of the gospel.

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<sup>1</sup> July 1983, p. 319.

A former international leader of The Salvation Army, General Frederick Coutts, summed up the Army's position in this way:

Our non-observance of sacraments is not due to any theological carelessness, a kind of slap-happy evangelism, which thinks it to be of no consequence whether these have any place in our corporate life or not. This is a matter of utmost consequence. . . .

Indicative of the serious approach of The Salvation Army to the study of "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" is the fact that in all five continents study groups composed of theologically and experientially qualified salvationists, ordained and lay, have independently considered the terms and implications of the Lima text. This response, given under the hand of General Jarl Wahlström, present international leader, therefore represents the thoughtful and prayerful transworld presentation by that part of the church of Christ called The Salvation Army of another valid approach to the gift and appropriation of divine grace.

## **1. Preface**

Reflecting on the opening section of the Lima text salvationist reviewers are troubled by the apparent inference that we start divided and must see how we can achieve unity. The basis of The Salvation Army's cordial relationships with other denominations is its belief that we are already "one in Christ Jesus". The task facing the church is to see how this can be realized and made visible in relationships between and within the churches.

We believe there is a serious imbalance in the witness of the church whenever the face we present to the world reflects only matters which tend to factionalize. It is in the vital issues of the faith committed to us by Christ himself and proclaimed by the apostles, that the church has the only viable basis of unity.

It is therefore our contention that the Lima emphasis on matters which still divide beclouds the real issue and challenge of the gospel and its message to a world which sees little relevance to its needs in church debates on forms of worship.

We do, however, see the penultimate sentence of paragraph 2 (p. vii) as indicating an area in which, on the basis of our common faith, the unity of the church should and can most effectively be made visible — Christian witness and service.

We also endorse references in paragraph 3 (p. vii) to church unity being "God's gift" and support the aim of the Commission (paragraph 4, p. viii) "to proclaim the oneness of the Church of Jesus Christ... expressed in...*common life in Christ*". The underlining is ours, pointing to our firm belief that to make any act of worship, however sacred and meaningful, the basis of unity, creates the risk of losing the emphasis on life together in Christ.

With this in mind we consider the term "grow *into* unity" (paragraph 8, p. viii) dilutes the more positive expression of paragraph 3 (p. vii): "manifesting more visibly God's gift of unity". The growing process applies more particularly to personal relationships between Christians and Christian communities already able to enjoy God's gift of unity in Christ.

We welcome the allusion in the same paragraph (8, p. viii) to the present debate seen in relation to "the true meaning of the Church" and to "human community". The Salvation Army urges that "mission" remains paramount in all ecumenical discussions and that the spiritual and social implications of the gospel in relation to the "human community" be fully realized.

Referring to "consensus rooted in the communion built on Jesus Christ and the witness of the apostles" (paragraph 2, p. ix), the general tenor of the text leads us to read this as referring to the apostolic tradition. We again express our doubts about elevating to near-scriptural authority any tradition, however rooted in the history of the church, interpreted differently by different readers of the same history.

With due deference to the scholars and scholarship involved in the Lima text, the document appears as a "high church" pronouncement which comes close to advocating a "baptismal regeneration" and a "eucharistic sanctification", with sacramental language seeming to take precedence over biblical terminology. Thus "the Body of Christ" or "the fellowship of believers" becomes "eucharistic community" worshipping in "eucharistic fellowship".

With "one faith" and "one fellowship" we agree wholeheartedly. These belong to the essence of life in Christ. "Eucharistic fellowship", we claim, is of a different order.

Words of General Frederick Coutts may again be used to echo salvationist sentiments:

The words of Jesus as quoted in John 17:21— "That they may all be one", have nothing to do with what are called schemes for organic union. This is not a prayer for unity of organisation, nor can the "oneness" to which the phrase refers be brought about by administrative changes. The words refer to a spiritual unity as is manifest in the oneness of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We concur that "the churches have much in common in their understanding of the faith" (paragraph 4, p. ix) and again strongly advocate that much more be made of this fact. The unifying force in the Christian church has always been and is today fidelity to the cardinal doctrines concerning Christ and salvation — the atonement, repentance, justification by faith, adoption into God's family by regeneration, the infilling of the Spirit — strong biblical doctrines not dependent on any sacramental rite.

In our view it would be a tragedy for the Christian church if the "hostilities" referred to in paragraph 4 (p. ix) were accentuated by the introduction into this document of judgmental, exclusive elements, counter-productive in a search for common ground.

As noted in our introductory statement salvationists around the world embarked on their review of "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" with deep respect for the integrity of those churches whose observances differ from our own. We therefore share the satisfaction expressed in paragraph 5 (p. ix) regarding "significant theological convergence" discerned by Faith and Order in the work of the Commission, representing, it is claimed, "virtually all" confessions. Our hope would be that this theological convergence will result in renewed and more effective mission and evangelism.

We are, nevertheless, compelled to reiterate our painful awareness of the fact that the integrity of the non-sacramentalist approach to the apostolic faith, as distinct from the apostolic tradition, has been ignored. Even the "reformed" or "non-conformist" view seems to find little acknowledgment in the Lima thesis.

Confronted with the text, salvationists in many lands have felt challenged to a fresh examination of their own theological position vis-à-vis baptism, eucharist and ministry. The resultant consensus reflected in this response indicates a confirmed belief in the soundness of that position in relation to our divine institution as a movement with a particular commission and vocation.

It is not without importance to us that with our name, The Salvation Army, God gave us deep convictions born of the Spirit through the holy scriptures. We have therefore been led to insistence on the very essentials of the faith, the inescapable elements of salvation:

1. *The need for regeneration* by the power of the Holy Spirit, through repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. We firmly reject the idea that any work or rite can accomplish what God has promised in response to faith.
2. *The call to sanctification*, the life of holiness, the inseparable consequence of salvation, an experience created and maintained only by obedient trust in the Saviour indwelling the believer by his Spirit.
3. *The grace of ministry and service*, open to all believers. All Christ's followers are called to be evangelists and have a responsibility for the care of his flock. Some have privilege of a calling to full-time service in the church.

The Salvation Army's response is therefore in the nature of an explanation, an apologia, and above all a witness to the experience granted by the Holy Spirit to many salvationists of succeeding generations and differing nationalities. Having clearly stated our position, our faith and our fears in our introduction and in these comments on the preface, we will not commit to this response the line by line critique of the Lima text produced by our numerous study groups. The following pages record only selected comments illustrating the basic principles either of divergence or harmony stated in the preamble. In conclusion we shall endeavour to answer the four questions posed by the compilers of the document to which we shall add appendices presenting statements of the salvationist's faith and order, supplemented by other supportive material.

## **2. Baptism**

### **I. THE INSTITUTION OF BAPTISM**

1. Assuming (as later §17 supports) that water baptism is referred to throughout this section of the document, we observe that historically baptism was a common initiation feature in both Jewish and pagan religions. It would be natural, therefore, for John, heralding the coming of Christ's kingdom, to adopt the customary mode of initiation. We note the assertion of those in whose form of worship today baptism plays a key role, that "Christian baptism is rooted in the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, in his death and resurrection", and indicates to the believer "incorporation" also into Christ's death and resurrection.

Salvationists consider the experience rather than the symbol as "the gift of God" and are impressed by John's prophetic testimony that water baptism would be superseded by Jesus who would baptize with the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8). We refer also to Mark 10:38 and our Lord's question: "are you able. . . to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?", reminding us that "incorporation" into Christ is a costly business, involving sacrificial commitment.

We do not find any single, uniform or fully developed concept of water baptism in the New Testament, which possibly accounts for the lack of a unified view of baptismal practice acceptable to all.

Although not critical of fellow-Christians whose views differ from ours, the salvationist position on baptism is based on the belief that the only distinctive and utterly unique Christian baptism is baptism with the Holy Spirit. That cannot be duplicated by any other religion — it is peculiarly Christ's: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

## II. THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

2. At various points in the text baptism is acknowledged as a "sign" of new life, as "images" expressed by the "symbolic" use of water. But the text also becomes distinctly categorical: "Baptism is participation. . .", "a washing away of sin". . . "a new birth". . . "a renewal by the Spirit".

Believing that it is the sacrificial death of Jesus which, together with baptism in the Spirit, effects the new birth, we salvationists must record our witness that all the experiences described in §§ 1 to 10, said to be implicit in or effected by water baptism, are our privilege also without the rite described.

### A. *Participation in Christ's death and resurrection*

3. With Christians who observe the sacrament of baptism with deep spiritual understanding, salvationists have a true fellowship in spirit. We find it difficult, however, to follow the thought that "solidarity with sinners. . .", immersion "in the liberating death of Christ" and the radical works of grace here described, can be attributed to the rite itself, as implied by the opening words: "Baptism means...".

Our name, The Salvation Army, indicates our emphasis on the redeeming work of Jesus Christ, and we are uneasy about any suggestion that the agent of liberation from sins is any other than salvation itself, as proclaimed in the New Testament.

### B. *Conversion, pardoning and cleansing*

4. The Salvation Army has always been concerned that outward acts should not overshadow the need for inner personal experience and we see with satisfaction the statement that: "baptism. . . implies confession of sin and conversion of heart".

Analogous to the call of John the Baptist for public repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 1:4) is the Army's invitation to seekers to kneel at a mercy seat (Ex. 25:21,22), thus emphasizing the need for a personal response to Christ in humility and penitence. Care is taken to deny any special virtue or power in the mercy seat itself, which makes us sensitive to the claim that "those baptized are pardoned, cleansed and sanctified by Christ".

The inclusion of "sanctification" in the meaning of baptism is of special interest in that The Salvation Army, like some other churches, holds a distinct doctrine of sanctification as a work of the Holy Spirit creating holiness of character (cf. Luke 1:74,75; Eph. 4:22-24). The tenth tenet of the Army's doctrines quotes 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

We are therefore gratified to read the summing up of the growth of the spiritual life included in §9 on p. 4, which corresponds to our belief that conversion is only the beginning of a "life-long growth in (rather than into) Christ", and of our interpretation of sanctification as the commencement of the Holy Spirit's work of transforming us into Christlikeness.

This emphasis on sanctification and holiness is basic to The Salvation Army's stance and its continuing non-observance of the rites of baptism and eucharist. However beautiful and helpful these visible symbols may be as a means of grace to so many of our Christian brethren, salvationists bear testimony to their firm belief in and experience of the personally mediated redeeming grace of God in Christ without their use.

#### C. *The gift of the Spirit*

5. We find the phrase: "God bestows upon all baptized persons the anointing and promise of the Holy Spirit. . ." theologically imprecise and inaccurate. The impression given is that the gift of the Spirit is theirs through baptism, whereas God's gift is a response to the faith of the believer which in our experience does not require participation in a symbolic rite.

Salvationists are encouraged by the New Testament record that the empowerment of the apostles at Pentecost was not related to any act of theirs save obedience, faith and prayer. Cornelius and his household were evidently first baptized with the Holy Spirit and later went through the ceremony of water baptism as a sign of their acceptance of and into the Christian faith.

#### D. *Incorporation into the body of Christ*

6. We can accept that to those who observe the sacrament baptism signifies reception into the body of Christ, but feel the argument for baptism as a unifying feature of church life is undermined by *commentary 6*.

We prefer to declare that union with each other is by virtue of our union with Christ, which seems a more positive and powerful emphasis on unity and a more authentic basis for witness to a world that sees the Christian's life and character, but is oblivious of the way we worship in our churches.

#### E. *The sign of the kingdom*

7. We do not deny that baptism can be a "sign of the Kingdom of God" in a secondary sense, but baptism is here invested with the power to produce new life and give "participation in the community of the Holy Spirit". 1 Corinthians 1: 30 expresses the salvationist's belief that: "He (God) is the source of your life in Christ Jesus". This provides the "dynamic" to "the gifts of faith, hope and love" whether or not the "sign" is there.

### III. BAPTISM AND FAITH

8. "The necessity of faith for the reception of salvation" and "personal commitment. . . necessary for responsible membership in the Body of Christ" fully accord with The Salvation Army's understanding and teaching.

We see our own "swearing-in" procedure or a symbolic act such as baptism, as a "human response" to what God offers as a gift.

9. We are impressed with the fact that 2 Corinthians 3 credits the Holy Spirit with effecting all the experiences to which it refers, and "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (v. 17).

On this basis salvationists humbly but confidently witness that it is the indwelling Spirit of Christ which makes us and marks us his own, gives us life, leads us into sonship with God, gives us an inward witness, deals with the problems of human nature and facilitates our prayer life. Not only "those baptized" but all Christians irrespective of their form of worship "are called upon to reflect the glory of the Lord as they are transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, into his likeness, with ever increasing splendour" (v. 18). Reference to the Articles of War signed by would-be salvation soldiers reveals an equal understanding of the "new relationship" expected of "the baptized".

10. We are bound to say that the liturgical interpretations contained in this paragraph are hurtful to some believers. Not all believers are baptized as the text implies, but all may enter into the privileges described. Paul is quite explicit: "If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom. 10:9). We believe the experience is immediate and mediated directly to the heart of the believer. Again, Galatians 3 is about faith (v. 26) not ritual, Christian behaviour not baptismal practice.

Salvationists, who believe that the weight of emphasis in the New Testament is on faith in and union with Christ, are surprised to find Ephesians 2:5,6,8 quoted under the heading: "The Meaning of Baptism" (§3). Read on its own merits the meaning of Ephesians 2 hinges on verse 8: "By grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing (not by your own actions), it is the gift of God." We understand the apostle's teaching to mean that Christian unity is to be secured by Christ's reconciling work through the cross, and the unifying presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those so reconciled.

#### IV. BAPTISMAL PRACTICE

##### A. *Baptism of believers and infants*

11. The effort to find consensus between baptism of believers and that of infants was noted with interest especially by salvationists in some countries where a strong state church influences the thinking of a majority of Christians.

It does seem certain, however, that many Christians, including salvationists, will not be able to reconcile the manifold interpretations of baptismal practice as outlined in the Lima text and by which faith is said to be initiated and sustained. It could be said that the Acts of the Apostles does record a diversity of form and pattern: baptism prior to receipt of the Spirit; Spirit prior to baptism; Spirit without baptism; baptism followed by laying on of hands. But the "one (common) baptism" is by the Spirit.

In this situation we find ourselves on sure ground in recognizing the freedom of God to meet faith when and as he pleases, for, as Jesus told Nicodemus: "The wind blows where it wills... so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." (J. B. Phillips: "Nor can you tell how a man is born... by the Spirit".)

Further, we believe Paul's emphasis was that "real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal" (Rom. 2:29), as having replaced the ritual act of the old Israel and on "a new covenant in the Spirit".

The Salvation Army, in common with some other churches, responds to the example of Jesus who himself was dedicated in the Temple, and called young children to him, blessing them by laying his hands on them.

As in infant baptism, The Salvation Army dedication ceremony takes place within congregational worship and is a commitment by the parents and the local congregation to bring up the child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

12. We are left with a big question regarding the implication here that the child shares the faith of the parents and actually becomes a Christian by being baptized. This, to quote Kierkegaard, "savours of salvation by proxy; whereas the church of the New Testament is entered by a personal profession of faith".

The encouragement of family worship and the family altar for prayer and Bible study are implicit in the Army dedication service, in the hope that the child will thus share its parents' faith with growing perception. Salvationists declare their firm belief in the ability of a child of even tender years of understanding to accept Jesus Christ as Saviour, friend and guide, then, after instruction, to be accepted as junior soldiers in the Salvation Army.

In The Salvation Army the "swearing-in" ceremony for over-fourteen-year-olds desiring to become soldiers in the Army, marks acceptance as a member of the visible church for the believer, a public confession of Christ as Lord and Saviour; for the church, a sign that the believer is received and welcomed into Christian fellowship. The salvationist so received would attest to the same sense of incorporation into the family of God and the life and service of Jesus Christ, with the beginnings of the inner working of the Holy Spirit, as does his baptized believer brother. Like that of baptism, this ceremony is always "celebrated and developed in the setting of the Christian community".

13. The meaning of the statement that "baptism is an unrepeatable act" is not quite clear. If it guards against the presumption of one church that the baptism administered in another church is invalid, we agree. We take it also that the possibility of the baptized falling from grace, ignoring his baptismal vows, is taken into account, and that a means of grace and restoration to the Christian fellowship is open.

#### *B. Baptism, chrismation, confirmation*

14. Salvation Army teaching emphasizes the inter-relationship of Christ's death and resurrection, the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the life of the believer in resurrection power both now and for eternity. That baptism "signifies" all this may be true, but that it "effects" a spiritual experience can only be the result of the personal faith of the one baptized. We make passing reference here to the Jerusalem Council and to the recognition that the Gentiles had their hearts cleansed and received the Holy Spirit by faith and not by ceremony (Acts 15:8-11).

Regarding the "sign of the gift of the Holy Spirit" we must again witness to the freedom of the Holy Spirit to act without visible means. We look for the "sign" or "seal" of the

Spirit in the life of the recipient—with Paul we see "fruit unto holiness" (AV), "sanctification" (Rom. 6:22) as the "sign", when "God put(s) his stamp of ownership on you by giving you the Holy Spirit" (Eph. 1:13).

In *commentary 14* one might have expected a more detailed reference to the place, purpose and content of confirmation, referred to only in passing. The importance of adequate preparation for church membership, including assurance of personal salvation, cannot be overstated. The Salvation Army has similar courses for young people.

### C. *Towards mutual recognition of baptism*

15. From time to time transfers take place between The Salvation Army and churches. Usually an official note is provided and honoured by the recipient church. If adult baptism is practised as a witness to faith and sign of reception into that particular part of the church of Christ, the transferee may well wish to share in this. This does not negate the reality of his acceptance of Christ and his salvation or of his entry into the kingdom and church of Christ within The Salvation Army.

Transferees from churches are welcomed into fellowship in The Salvation Army if they sincerely feel that is God's leading in their lives. Usually they also bring some form of introduction from their former place of worship and if they wish to accept the additional disciplines of salvationism, they may be "sworn-in" as Salvation Army soldiers, their declaration of faith being regarded only as a reaffirmation of spiritual vows already made.

16. From the foregoing may be deduced the salvationist's conviction that the worship and practices to which he is accustomed incorporate all the spiritual elements claimed by sister churches, and take cognisance of the needs of both infants and older believers. But Jesus himself remains the unifying factor within his church — Jesus is Lord!

## V. THE CELEBRATION OF BAPTISM

18. The symbolic nature of the ceremonies is now clearly stated — the emphasis on "the symbolic dimension of water" which can "vividly express the reality" puts many other statements in the text in proper perspective.

*Commentary 18* provides helpful explanatory information.

19. /23. As non-participants in the practice of water baptism it is not our place to comment further, save to express surprise that in the Lima text the only reference to "baptism of the Holy Spirit without water" appears in the last sub-paragraph of the baptism section (*commentary 21c*) with a remark regarding "some African churches". This further and crucial lack of recognition of sincere Christians in many parts of the world who, like salvationists, preach and witness to the power of the Holy Spirit at work in the life of the believer irrespective of visible forms, is sadly disappointing.

We reiterate our belief that experience teaches that the outward act is not of supreme importance, but the experience is vital to the Christian's character and witness.

### 3. Eucharist

The salvationist declares his own experience of the mediation of divine grace without symbol or sacrament. As already stated, The Salvation Army maintains its belief in the scriptural doctrine of spiritual cleansing, motivation and empowering by the Holy Spirit, which we define as sanctification or the life of holiness.

Some Christian friends are generous enough to suggest that The Salvation Army's non-eucharistic witness acts as a reminder of the essential spirituality of the Christian experience and we likewise acknowledge the challenge and spiritual enrichment derived from study of this section of the Limit text, meaningful as it is to so many of our fellow Christians.

For information and as a reference point in understanding some of our salvationist views, we include as an appendix a statement of the Doctrines of The Salvation Army.<sup>2</sup> These are vitally concerned with the spiritual realities symbolized by the practices under review in the Lima text, and the way by which these realities can become part of personal experience.

#### I. THE INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST

1. With the historical background we agree, but stop short of investing the last supper with the significance here claimed for it. For instance, we find our own attitude to the practice of the eucharist strengthened by implication through the omission of the "words of institution" from some manuscripts of the gospels, and by the fact that John's gospel, written to present Jesus as the source of eternal life (20:30), preserves what in the Bible is a five-chapter-long record of the vitally significant words of Jesus during and after the meal, without any reference to an "institution".

The synoptic gospels do present us with a picture of the last supper as a "liturgical means employing symbolic words and actions". (It is perhaps appropriate here to observe that the "forgotten sacrament", the foot-washing, seems only to rate symbolic status!) But the gospels also clearly indicate the sharing of a common meal they dipped bread in the same dish... all drank from the cup a token of unity and fellowship.

A thought expressed by Dr J. H. Jowett commends itself:

The day is marked with glory when our daily bread becomes a sacrament,

which is echoed in a Salvation Army statement on the sacraments:

Every meal is sacramental to those who partake with remembrance of him who provides for both material and spiritual needs.

This supports the old Christian custom of saying "grace before meal", which includes thanksgiving as Jesus is remembered and a sense of his presence hallows the meal, unites the partakers in fellowship and reminds them that strength received is to be used for the cause of Christ. The salvationist feels this simple act of worship is an indication of the extension of spiritual communion to the totality of life as taught by our Lord in the whole of his discourse with his disciples during and following the last supper. General Albert Orsborn, a former international leader of the Army, enshrined this thought in a hymn, beloved of salvationists as expressing their deepest desires:

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<sup>2</sup> Editor's note: Appendix not included.

My life must be Christ's broken bread,  
My love his outpoured wine,  
A cup o'er filled, a table spread  
Beneath his name and sign,  
That other souls, refreshed and fed,  
May share his life through mine.

Highly significant as the eucharist is to the majority of Christians, we feel bound to question the final sentence in this section (§1): "Its celebration continues as the central act of the church's worship", an idea surely belied by the widely differing interpretations and practices of the various denominations in this respect. From the salvationist viewpoint meeting with the risen Lord is the central act of his worship, which can be just as challenging and powerful in the preaching of the word, in the song of praise and in prayer. That such a meeting can take place in the eucharist we do not deny, but could not confine it to a certain act.

## II. THE MEANING OF THE EUCHARIST

The spiritual aspirations of all Christians, and their expectations from their particular form of worship, must surely coincide with those outlined as related to and arising out of the eucharist as expounded in Section II.

2. Statements such as: "every Christian receives this gift of salvation through communion in the body and blood of Christ", and, "each baptized member of the body of Christ receives in the eucharist the assurance of the forgiveness of sins", may well indicate the experience of some who view the eucharistic sacrament in this way. But such unqualified statements can hardly stand up against such a scriptural axiom as: "For by grace you have been saved through faith" (Eph. 2:8; also 18; Eph. 1:13, 14; Rom. 10:13).

As in our reading of the previous section, we have to observe that the Lima text appears to foster an unconscious exclusivism, which limits not only those who may be included in the church, but tends to limit even the grace and love of God by its restrictive interpretations. No allowance is made for those who receive the inner assurance of forgiveness uninfluenced by outward ceremony.

### A. *The eucharist as thanksgiving to the Father*

3. /4. With the spirit of these beautiful expressions salvationists can readily identify, although using other means of communication.

### B. *The eucharist as anamnesis or memorial of Christ*

7. That the eucharist is a "calling to mind" we understand, but that it is "the church's effective *proclamation* of God's mighty acts and promises" seems an exaggerated claim and does not do justice to Christians who, without recourse to this sacrament, have remembrance and proclamation of the saving merits and presence of Christ at the heart of their worship and ministry.
8. We applaud the place given to the uniqueness and unrepeatability of Christ's sacrifice, but from experience find ourselves forced to question the *commentary 8* wording: "made actual in the eucharist". It is our claim that Christ's sacrifice cannot be "made

actual" in a ceremony, but only in the believer himself, in his own assurance of salvation and in his sacramental living— in a continual "eucharistic life" (point 9).

10. In view of our understanding of sanctification (baptism, §4) we cannot read literally: "in which (the eucharist) we are sanctified", but any Bible-based emphasis on the experience is welcomed.
  
13. This paragraph seems to be of a crucial nature. We wholeheartedly agree with the statement: "Christ fulfils in a variety of ways his promise to be always with his own. . .", but view with apprehension the claim that "Christ's mode of presence in the eucharist is unique", with its inference that in the eucharist Christ comes in a manner unequalled in any other. This we deny and see this kind of expression as coming close to the aforementioned exclusivist approach. Whether the numerous references to the coming, presence and activity of Christ "in the eucharist" relate to the elements, the ritual or participation in the ritual, many thousands of Christians can gratefully witness to such "comings" of Christ apart from the eucharist —"where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst" is the operative promise.

*Commentary 13:* a radical "decision remains for the churches" as suggested, but the text itself seems to do little to assist. We seriously query a statement which appears to imply that "the total being of Christ" comes only in the bread and wine.

The Salvation Army's view is compatible with the idea that although God remains essentially transcendent, he is graciously near and immanent in all his creation. For the man of faith there is no need for part of life to be essentially sacred while the every-day is secular. For the salvationist the anamnesis of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is of central importance in his personal faith, his worship, his preaching and his daily living.

#### *C. The eucharist as invocation of the Spirit*

We do not disagree in principle with these paragraphs, since forms and ceremonies approached in faith and in the name of Jesus Christ can be a real source of spiritual renewal and insight, provided the ceremony is not invested with inherent powers beyond their capacity.

#### *D. The eucharist as communion of the faithful*

19. We fear that in interchurch relationships eucharistic "oneness" is presently extremely limited, but it is our belief that spiritual oneness which already exists could and should be developed irrespective of eucharistic questions. It is admitted in the Lima text itself that sharing in the eucharist is not "effecting" the oneness of those participating as claimed here. Jesus himself indicated that the identifiable Christlikeness of all his disciples, born of oneness with him, would convince the world that God had sent him (John 17:20-23).

The last sentence in this paragraph echoes one of the principles which has characterized relationships between The Salvation Army and fellow-Christians, to "take seriously the interests and concerns of other churches".

*Commentary 19:* We share the concern of our Christian brethren regarding the breach of good faith in the spiritual sense indicated here, which in our opinion is even more

serious than the diversity in forms of celebrating the same spiritual truths and aspirations.

20. /21. Christian communities such as our own would not dispute the eucharistic claims made here, but §20 presents a challenging interpretation of the expected effect of shared Christian faith in any such communities. The value of a visual symbol embodying the challenge cannot be underestimated, but whilst the Lima document is principally for the devout sacramentalist, we would have welcomed in this context recognition of the fact that all the benefits and manifestations of the activity of God's Holy Spirit and opportunities for Christian ministry are discernible in and through the lives of sincere Christians who do not necessarily participate in eucharistic practices.

It is our belief that union with Christ lies in the fulfilment of his own promise: . . . "we will come to him and make our home with him" (John 14:23), which leads to a life of holiness — a sacramental life.

We are glad to see the eucharist linked with responsible care and practical service, an area which The Salvation Army has always perceived to be the natural interpretation of the social implications of the gospel.

*E. The eucharist as a meal of the kingdom*

22. We believe literally that "signs of this renewal are present in the world *wherever* the grace of God is manifested".
23. These are constituents of any Bible-based, spiritually stimulating form of worship, whether eucharistic or not.
24. We assert that reconciliation is "in Christ" rather than "in the eucharist". All members of the body of Christ are "called to be servants of reconciliation. . . witnesses of the joy of resurrection". "Solidarity with the outcast" has a distinctly Salvation Army ring about it! Christ's sacrifice, however remembered, is a constant challenge to the devotion of life and love in the service of those outside of the kingdom and of the church.
25. Salvationists likewise interpret the outward expression of their inward experience of the grace of God in Christ Jesus.
26. We are bound to challenge the totally unscriptural view that "the eucharist brings into the present age a new reality which transforms Christians into the image of Christ". It is the work of the Holy Spirit to create the image of Christ in holiness of life, independent of outward observance.

The argument in favour of uniformity of eucharistic doctrine and practice seems to overlook the fact that the man in the street who needs our gospel knows little or nothing about what goes on in our churches and probably understands still less the language we use. We regretfully find it unlikely that this excellent presentation of the ideal interpretation of the eucharist in the life and worship of those churches which see it in this light will make sense to him or impression upon him. We make this observation with a deep sense of challenge to ourselves and all Christian witnesses to consider carefully the language in which we present our message to the world outside our churches.

In this context we dare to assert that The Salvation Army's missionary witness has not been weakened at either corporate or individual level by non-participation in the eucharist. We would want to see the argument for eucharistic uniformity balanced by a reference to the strengths which are to be derived from diversity within one united family of Christians.

### III. THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

27. Salvationist students of the Lima text have found this section instructive to those unaccustomed to the eucharistic liturgy in their own form of worship. In relating the truth behind and implicit in the eucharist, salvationists have found enrichment for their own worship and service.

28. The concession: "a certain liturgical diversity compatible with our common eucharistic faith is recognised as a healthy and enriching fact", is encouraging. We hope this is a pointer towards recognition that many Christians experience the same spiritual reality and enrichment in their own traditional form of worship.

The connection between our understanding of the meaning of the eucharist and our proclamation of the doctrine of sanctification as a positive experience producing the possibility of holiness in living has already been referred to. For The Salvation Army, one of the outcomes of this study will undoubtedly be a re-emphasis on the significance of this doctrine.

*Commentary 28* envisages the use of elements other than bread and wine. Would it be too big a step from this to recognition of the possibility of the same resources of divine grace being received and enjoyed without the use of any elements?

## 4. Ministry

### I. THE CALLING OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE OF GOD

6. This scriptural and evangelical exposition coincides with The Salvation Army's understanding of the church of Christ on earth and the "priesthood of all believers". The passing reference to "the gifts of the sacraments" (§1) we read in the broadest sense.

Paragraphs 1 to 5 seem to us to enunciate the basis for true Christian unity — the common "calling of the people of God" — and we agree that any consideration of the ordained ministry" must "work from the perspective of the calling of the whole people of God" (§6). This, we claim, is the perspective from which The Salvation Army views the high calling of its commissioned and ordained officers—its full-time leaders and shepherds of God's people. We particularly note such references in §5:

The Holy Spirit bestows on the community diverse and complementary gifts. These are for the common good of the whole people and are manifested in acts of service within the community and to the world... All members are called to discover, with the help of the community, the gifts they have received and to use them for the building up of the church and for the service of the world to which Christ is sent.

This we see to be the teaching of the New Testament and of the early *church and on this basis we hope the present Faith and Order document will promote wider views of the call to the ministry.*

The obligation upon each salvationist to recognize himself as an individual agent of the Lord Jesus is summed up in a quotation from our official book of guidance for Salvation Army soldiers, *Chosen to be a Soldier*:

Just as the central word of the name of his movement is salvation, so the salvation soldier will recollect that his Articles of War begin with a declaration about having personally received it and conclude with a dedication to personal work for the salvation of the whole world. In other words the soldier knows that he is saved — to save!

For some this leads inevitably to full-life dedication in the Army's own form of ordained ministry.

## II. THE CHURCH AND THE ORDAINED MINISTRY

7. Sub-paragraphs (a) to (c) form a standard by which to view ministry in the church with which The Salvation Army can agree, although we do not invest the laying on of hands with the significance indicated here.

### A. *The ordained ministry*

8. /13. These statements coincide with The Salvation Army's views on the calling and status of its commissioned officers— their whole training is geared to this interpretation and development of an ordained ministry on this pattern (see also note on commentary 13).
10. We do, however, reject the assumption that our ministry is founded on that of the apostles. Like theirs, our ministry is founded on Christ, his teaching and his call to apostleship.
13. /14. While respecting the significance given to the celebrating of the sacraments in relation to the ordained ministry, we regard our officer as focal in his leadership of public worship and our own significant spiritual ceremonies, but also in his Christlike service and leadership.

*Commentary 11:* Experience in The Salvation Army confirms that "(Christ continues through the Holy Spirit to choose and call persons to the ordained ministry" (§8), and the inner assurance of that call and the seal of the Holy Spirit has sustained thousands of Salvation Army officers through a lifetime of active and fruitful ministry. *We therefore support the need to avoid dogmatic claims regarding the ministry of any one church or one form of ordination.*

*Commentary 13:* We fully agree and especially underline the thought that "any member of the body may share in proclaiming and teaching the word of God, may contribute to the sacramental life of that body".

*Commentary 14:* We read into this an acceptance of the fact that the eucharist was not instituted as a form, ceremony or sacrament, which is the Salvation Army standpoint.

*B. Ordained ministry and authority*

15. In principle this statement is acceptable as a definition of the spiritual authority of a Salvation Army officer, an authority conferred by the Holy Spirit.
16. This paragraph could easily have come from *Orders and Regulations for Officers of The Salvation Army!*

*Commentary 16* likewise conforms to an Army officer's understanding of his calling and duty.

*C. Ordained ministry and priesthood*

17. We do not use the term "priest", but the wording of this paragraph describes the function and relationship both of our "priesthood of all believers" and of our ordained and commissioned officers.

*Commentary 17:* This reflects our thinking, except that we believe in the scripture-supported "priesthood of all believers" not of all baptized.

*D. The ministry of men and women in the church*

18. As a part of the church which from its earliest days has given women equal opportunity in the ministry of the word, we underscore the recognition that "the church must discover the ministry which can be provided by women...". We, too, seek "a deeper understanding of the comprehensive-ness of ministry which reflects the interdependence of men and women... to be more widely manifested in the life of the church".

*Commentary 18:* Paragraph 1, reflects the traditional attitude of The Salvation Army to the ministry of women, stimulated by Catherine, wife of William Booth and pioneer in this field even before her husband left the ordained ministry of the Methodist Church. In her pamphlet *Female Ministry* Mrs Booth wrote in defence of women's right to preach the gospel:

I believe woman is destined to assume her true position and exert her proper influence by the special exertions and attainments of her own sex. . . May the Lord, even the just and impartial one, overrule all for the true emancipation of women from the swaddling bands of prejudice, ignorance and custom which, almost the world over, have so long debased and wronged her.

The Salvation Army has at least twice as many ordained women officers as men; all wives of officers are themselves trained, ordained and commissioned; to retain her ordained officer status in marriage a single woman officer must marry an officer.

We prefer to accept the open-door to the full involvement of women in the work of the kingdom as indicated by Paul — "... neither male nor female..." (Gal. 3:28) and therefore welcome the statement that "an increasing number of churches have decided that there is no biblical or theological reason against ordaining women".

### III. THE FORMS OF THE ORDAINED MINISTRY

#### A. *Bishops, presbyters and deacons*

19. /25. We can understand the threefold ministry as three levels of ministerial authority, but find attempts to give distinct theological meaning to those levels unconvincing and confusing. We, too, have functional levels of administration, but see the gifts of *episkope* and *diakonia* operating in and characterizing all levels of ministry. All officers are expected to exercise caring oversight and to undertake the humblest service with their people.

*Commentary 21:* It is interesting to read of "the travelling ministry" and "the local ministry", both of which find their counterpart in The Salvation Army. We note also the comment: "Several of these ministries are ascribed to both women and men" and "While some were appointed by the laying on of hands, there is no indication of this procedure in other cases..."The final lines (p. 26) express succinctly our understanding of the ministry.

#### B. *Guiding principles for the exercise of the ordained ministry*

26. The salvationist has no difficulty in relating the principles here enunciated to the life and work of a Salvation Army officer, whose ministry is exercised "in a personal, collegial and communal way".

*Commentary 26:* Salvation Army officers are guided by Orders and Regulations for Officers of The Salvation Army which are kept under constant review to ensure the maximum effectiveness and efficiency of its officers in all aspects of their calling, ministry and service.

27. This reflects the Army's own *modus operandi*. In recent years, even more than previously, "strong emphasis" has been "placed on the active participation of all members in the life and decision making of the community". Advisory councils and boards, including lay personnel, support the appointed ordained leaders at all levels of Salvation Army life and service.

#### C. *Functions of bishops, presbyters and deacons*

28. /31. In extension of our note on A. 19/25 above we see that The Salvation Army has in its ministry those who conform in a general way to each of the categories described. In considering ". . . the mutual recognition of the ordained ministry" we take the view that the functions rather than the title or form of ordination are of most importance. Further, it could be said that the true ministry is unified, not compartmentalized.

#### D. *Variety of charisms*

32. We find the wide variety of gifts of the Holy Spirit evidenced in the lives and service of our officers and soldiers enriches, enlivens and enlarges the Army's witness and ministry.

33. The challenge of "special ministries" is indeed a matter of serious concern as is the vital

necessity for the church constantly to receive new impulses from the Holy Spirit through "prophetic and (in the broad sense of the word) charismatic leaders", unrestricted by ecclesiastical structures. Perhaps the birth of The Salvation Army is not unrelated and its experience bears witness to the truth of the assertion of this paragraph, as it must continue to do.

#### IV. SUCCESSION IN THE APOSTOLIC TRADITION

##### A. *Apostolic tradition in the church*

34. Apostleship in Salvation Army terms means being sent by God in the power of the Spirit according to the scriptures. Historical continuity alone does not guarantee apostolicity, and can be used to exclude some branches of the Christian family.

Nevertheless, we agree with what this paragraph says about the church, except for specific "sacramental" references. We see ourselves as standing on apostolic ground and in an apostolic succession of creed.

In our Articles of War the salvationist declares:

Believing that The Salvation Army has been raised up by God and is sustained and directed by him, I do here declare that I am thoroughly convinced of the Army's teaching...

there follows a statement of the Army Doctrines.

The church in the first centuries regarded the succession of the apostolic faith, faithfulness to the gospel, the creed and Christian service as more important than succession in the ministry. Church history seems to show that the subject of apostolic tradition, as distinct from apostolic faith founded on the scriptures, presents some snares and difficulties. We cannot give to apostolic or any tradition the same value as to the scriptures or make the scriptures depend on tradition.

Although The Salvation Army does not administer the traditional sacraments, it is important for us to emphasize that we stand on an apostolic foundation. Faithfulness to the gospel as it has been preached "in the church through all times" is a part of the creed of The Salvation Army, whose *Handbook of Doctrine* includes statements of the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds, which we accept and confess in our own way even if not by regular repetition. Our Articles of Faith are in accord with the truths expressed in these creeds.

In recognition of this apostolic foundation, the Army imposes on its officers and soldiers alike the necessity to adhere to its established doctrines as the only authorized basis for its teaching and practice. This indicates our concern for "orderly transmission".

*Commentary 34:* In so far as this refers to the message and ministry of the apostles, we accept this comment.

##### B. *Succession of the apostolic ministry*

35. We do not see the preservation of the apostolic faith as being determined by any mystical transmission from one ordained minister to another, but by faithfulness to the word of God and an openness to the Holy Spirit on the part of each successive generation of Christians. This we regard as the "orderly transmission" of the apostolic faith.

36 and *commentary 36*. From these historical facts we deduce that the Holy Spirit guided those who had emerged as the successors of the apostles as they sought to establish some way in which the apostolic proclamation of the gospel and pastoral care of the "flock" might be perpetuated. The system which evolved into the tradition of many churches has no doubt been effective so far as those churches are concerned. It is our claim, however, that the preservation of the gospel is of greater importance than the tradition, and the spiritual character and authority of the church leader is the essential qualification rather than any title or office he may hold.

37. We read with approval that "it is increasingly recognised that a continuity in apostolic faith, worship and mission has been preserved in churches which have not retained the form of historic episcopate", and that ". . . the reality and function of the episcopal ministry has been preserved... without the title of bishop". This represents the Salvation Army's position.

## V. ORDINATION

### A. *The meaning of ordination*

39. /40. To the Salvation Army officer the heart of the matter is encapsulated in the words: "... it is the risen Lord who is the true Ordainer and bestows the gift". We agree that "properly speaking ordination denotes an action by God and the community by which the ordained are strengthened by the Spirit for their task, and are upheld by the acknowledgment and prayers of the congregation".

*Commentary 39 and 40*: We are gratified to note the recognition the existence and validity of different ordination practices. At the same time we can understand the reluctance of those churches whose structure does not include bishops to admit any necessity for the laying on of hands by one of another church. To do so would, in our opinion, reduce in significance a divine calling and ordination by "the risen Lord who is the true Ordainer", suggest a superiority of one church over another and tend to claim the necessity for a manual transmission of apostolic authority which many like ourselves would deny.

The comparison between the Greek *cheirotonein* and the Latin *ordo* interests us in that the former, meaning "appointment", is the scriptural term used in the New Testament. In The Salvation Army we use the terms "appoint" and "appointment" in connection with the ministry of our officers, although the word "ordain" does appear in the wording of the ceremony for the commissioning and appointment of officers.

### B. *The act of ordination*

41. /44. Notwithstanding references to the eucharist, we find these paragraphs breathe the spirit of our own "ordination" — the dedication and commissioning ceremony.

C. *The conditions for ordination*

45. This corresponds fully to our understanding and experience of the divine call to the life-long vocation of officership.
46. The reference to ordaining people who remain in other occupations or employment is only partly reflected in the Salvation Army's appointment of selected lay-salvationists to serve as part-time "envoys" — possibly akin to "lay-readers" — without ordained status.
47. In accord with our thinking. A young salvationist making known a sense of divine calling to the ministry of the gospel as a Salvation Army officer, is subjected to a process of study and assessment before recognition as an accepted candidate for officer-training which leads to full-time training as a cadet. In-training of cadets takes place in one of the Army's fifty national officer training colleges, the course consisting of theological and practical instruction. Throughout the local level and in-training periods "the candidate's call is tested, fostered and confirmed", or, in Lima text terms, "its understanding modified".
48. It is hoped that commitment to the service of Christ in Salvation Army officership will be a whole-life commitment for the whole of life.
49. /50. We agree with these sentiments.

VI. TOWARDS THE MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF THE ORDAINED MINISTRY

51. /55. Challenging as is this concluding section of the document, we are left with some disappointment regarding the emphasis placed on the "laying on of hands" and "the need to recover the sign of the episcopal succession".

While acknowledging the solemnity and deep spiritual significance of ordination according to the traditional usage, the average Salvation Army officer does not feel himself deprived or less spiritually fitted for his ministerial responsibilities by the omission of this symbolic action from his dedication, the spiritual reality of which is perhaps epitomized in the phrase: "Mine the mighty ordination of the nail-pierced hands."

To this degree we are consistent in our practice and can confidently bear witness to the experience of a succession of Salvation Army officers in all continents, men and women,

... following their Lord by virtue of the same calling as the original twelve, denying themselves as he required and dedicated in personal covenant for his service, in God's name ordained as "ministers of Christ and of his gospel", and commissioned by the hand of the General or his representative.<sup>3</sup>

Officers in The Salvation Army claim the right to be accepted as part of an ordained ministry through which God has been pleased to perform all the essential functions outlined in this section of the Lima text. As already indicated an outline of the salient features and content of the ceremonies in connection with the covenant-making,

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<sup>3</sup> Quotation from a statement on The Salvation Army's self-understanding in *Ecumenical Perspectives on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, WCC, 1983.

dedication and ordination, commissioning and appointing of Salvation Army officers is included.

## 5. Conclusions

The following observations summarize The Salvation Army's response to the request of the Faith and Order Commission for comments' on four points stated at the end of the preface.

1. *The extent to which The Salvation Army can recognize in the Lima text the faith of the church through the ages*

Reading this question literally we find no difficulty in responding on "the faith of the church" as distinct from the traditional observances of the churches.

The Salvation Army's statement of doctrine shows clearly that we belong to the mainstream of Christian faith and teaching, and in this respect find complete harmony with the declarations of the text on basic truths of the gospel—the need for personal repentance and faith leading to salvation through the redeeming work of the one Saviour of the world, Jesus Christ; the gift of the Holy Spirit, effecting that salvation and leading on to sanctification and holiness, and nurturing spiritual growth; the necessity for the positive witness of transformed lives; accountability to God in anticipation of our Lord's return in judgment.

This, as we see it, is the faith of the church through the ages — scriptural faith.

The text, however, fails to make clear the crucial distinction between the sign and the truth signified, between the shadow and the reality. It ascribes to the sacraments powers belonging to the Holy Spirit alone.

We repeat that The Salvation Army does not deny the significance of the two main sacraments for those who practise them, when seen to be symbols of the inner spiritual experiences they typify.

We do, however, differentiate between apostolic faith and apostolic tradition, and it is the binding together of the two as in the Lima text which poses a problem for the salvationist whose one hundred and twenty years' background of teaching and experience convinces him that the gifts of God's grace and mercy are not dependent on rites or ceremonies. Of the early days of the Army when the decision to abstain from the celebration of water baptism and the eucharist was taken on spiritual as well as practical grounds, and after much heart-searching, prayer and Bible study, it is recorded:

... these traditions and hesitations concerning the giving up of the sacraments were overcome by the tremendous passion for souls... love for humanity found a way.

The Salvation Army is humbled by the way God was pleased to use it at a time when it had to sever itself from the ecclesiastical gyropes of constitutional Christianity in order to exist for others as a permanent mission to the unconverted. Its form was necessitated by the function which the Army was called to fulfil in the world through the Holy Spirit. We therefore find it difficult to accept many of the rigid statements in the BEM.

We have to reject an increasingly literalistic interpretation of the sacraments, fearing a resultant tendency to ritualism and a movement away from apostolic simplicity with the reality suffering through the ritual, and the clear testimony of scripture to the cardinal

doctrine of justification by faith being largely obscured by a mist of liturgical traditionalism. In so saying, salvationists are only too well aware of the danger of a swing to the other extreme, which challenges them deeply as section 3 will indicate.

2. *The consequences which The Salvation Army can draw from this text for its relations with other churches*

On the basis of our common faith we have no problem in seeing ourselves as part of "a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit".

Regrettably, a consequence of taking the Lima text literally might well be the arousing of fears regarding the exclusion from this fellowship of churches of all non-sacramental Christians (cf. Baptism 11, 14; Ministry 14, 39. and similar references), by the implied denial of the validity of their views.

Nonetheless it is our contention that visible unity lies in a concerted proclamation of our common faith by word and life; that ecumenism lies in common faith and witness and mutual recognition rather than unified church practices. We hope, therefore, that all churches studying the Lima text will recognize and maximize the strength of the positive aspects of our shared faith and minimize those areas of disparity, which are in many cases mainly differences in method and practice. The simple injunction of our Lord points to the basic principle of Christian unity:

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another (John 13:34).

The study has enabled us to appreciate in a new way the richness of the traditions of our sister churches, and it is our belief that unity in diversity, rather than uniformity, widens the appeal of the church and the gospel to suit all temperaments and national characteristics.

We have no difficulty in relating to fellow Christians who view these matters differently from us, if they in turn respect the salvationist's sincerity and spiritual perception as a valid interpretation of the apostolic faith despite our non-observance of apostolic tradition.

3. *The guidance which The Salvation Army can take from this text for its worship, educational, ethical and spiritual life and witness*

Students of the Lima text in many lands have found the exercise both spiritually challenging and enriching. In this response salvationists have endeavoured to identify their faith with that expressed in the text and have appreciated the explanations given of those ceremonies which support and expound that faith through the liturgy and rites of the traditional churches. Aspects of our own worship which seem to parallel traditional rites have been identified and our worship and ceremonies have been closely examined to ensure that their content is as spiritual and growth-producing as we claim.

While it is recognized that some salvationists periodically participate in the eucharist, especially in countries where state church membership is general irrespective of one's actual worshipping community, the study of the text in every country in which the Army is

established in the five continents has produced a reaffirmation of the biblical and experiential soundness of our non-eucharistic position.

We maintain that there is a need for the continuing witness to the freedom of God to bless his people even outside the traditional sacramental means of grace. We are encouraged by the comment of Prof. John Macquarrie:

Although The Salvation Army has no sacraments, we could not for a moment deny that it receives and transmits divine grace.<sup>4</sup>

We have been challenged to a reaffirmation and intensification of our teaching of the scriptural doctrine of holiness — that "full salvation" which, as our name implies, is our central theme (see Baptism 11, B4). It is our belief that sanctification by the Holy Spirit is intended by our Lord to replace dependence on outward forms and ceremonies.

We are convinced that The Salvation Army has all the essential characteristics of the body of Christ, his church, and that its officers conform to the pattern of the apostolic "calling". A clearer definition of our ecclesiology and of the theology of Salvation Army officership is being prepared. The outcome of this study will be of great value to salvationists everywhere and may provide for other Christians further enlightenment on the Army's self-understanding.

4. *The suggestions The Salvation Army can make for the ongoing work of Faith and Order as it relates the material of this text on baptism, eucharist and ministry to its long-range research project "Towards the common expression of the apostolic faith today"*

This is the most difficult question to answer as we begin our approach to the subject from a different hypothesis. As indicated in our responses throughout the study, we hope a serious effort will be made to emphasize the many essential points of Christian unity in faith and to encourage a freer sharing of the richness which is in every form of worshipful expression, and that without any sense of superiority of one over another.

The high-lighting of differences by Christians themselves, and the various barriers to deep spiritual fellowship erected by one church against another regarding what we feel are but symbols of an inner experience, seem to us to constitute the big problem faced by the Commission and by the churches themselves.

We recommend that serious consideration be given to encouraging openness to joint mission in areas where this would be beneficial to the kingdom and provide a clear evidence of our real unity in Christ Jesus, and show the church reaching out in obedience to Christ's command. In this connection we support a revival of attention to the terms of "Mission and Evangelism — an Ecumenical Affirmation" as a basis for study and action.

Finally, we sincerely hope that the Commission will continue to stress "faith" as its priority, which is more likely to encourage convergence and even consensus than any development of "order". Our experience is that differences in faith and order in the church are issues only to theologians. Only to a lesser degree are they of interest to lay Christians who normally get on well together, and of no interest whatever to the millions outside of the church. Our prime concern must be the production of a mighty force of Christlike people to carry the message of the church to the world in their life-style and character. To this end we hope that

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<sup>4</sup>*Principles of Christian Theology*, p. 376.

the salvationist-experience outlined in our response will provide food for serious thought as it also reflects the thinking of a significant number of Christians other than salvationists.

The Salvation Army will willingly cooperate in the ongoing research of the Commission on Faith and Order if desired.