

LETTERS TO THE ARMY

April 2009

PASTORAL LETTERS FROM THE OFFICE OF THE GENERAL TO SALVATIONISTS ACROSS THE WORLD

This is the thirteenth in a series of Pastoral Letters from the General to every Salvationist across the world.

The Pastoral Letters are intended to be distributed unchanged and entire to all Salvationists and may be shared also with others interested in the sacred purposes for which God raised up The Salvation Army.

INTRODUCTION

Greetings in the Name of Jesus Christ.

This comes to all Salvationists with my strong, ongoing affection in Christ for you, and with my prayers for your effectiveness in the sacred calling that God, in his supreme wisdom, has placed upon the peoples known as Salvationists.

It has been laid upon my heart that I am to take a step of obedience under God by reaching out to you all through Pastoral Letters written from time to time. I write therefore in order to obey the One who has created us all, and with a longing that what is written will affirm, encourage and inspire you.

The themes for these occasional Pastoral Letters continue to be the themes God reveals. His holy will is made known in many ways. I pledge myself to be mindful that his will is often revealed through interaction with members of the Body and not only or always in the seclusion of the place of prayer.

It is my deep hope that each Pastoral Letter will be read wherever Salvationists are to be found, whether in private or in public settings. The chosen themes may prompt discussion, prayer and - as appropriate - action.

All Scripture quotations are from the *New International Version*, unless otherwise stated.

Shaw Clifton
General

PASTORAL LETTER THIRTEEN

RESURRECTION!

Dear Fellow Salvationists,

Easter greetings to you all!

We have travelled through the weeks of preparation leading to Holy Week and now we have come together again to the Cross of our Saviour, Jesus.

We have journeyed with him to Jerusalem, sharing in his entry into that city. We have heard again the shouts of the crowd as they greeted him. We have heard also the probing interrogation by the High Priest, but Jesus would not defend himself. We have heard the mocking of the soldiers as they prepared him for execution. We have heard, with natural human reluctance and yet with holy fascination, the nails hammered into his flesh - for us. We have heard also his words from the Cross, most compellingly his words of forgiveness.

Those first disciples thought it was the end. They did not foresee resurrection and victory! For those of us who are modern-day disciples it is all so different. We follow Jesus to the Cross knowing that Calvary is only the beginning, not the end. We feel the pain and sorrow, but can anticipate also the victory and resurrection power, even as we watch with him in the Garden, walk with him to Golgotha, and weep with those at the foot of the Cross.

Resurrection!

Resurrection power! Resurrection glory! Resurrection victory!

Heaven wins over Hell! Purity triumphs over sin! Good defeats evil!

Therefore we rejoice over Resurrection power, given to us if only we will have faith to believe and to accept Jesus as our personal Saviour. We rejoice because of the promise of Resurrection power for today and for all eternity if we die in Christ, as his child, forgiven and born anew.

Salvationists are powerless without Resurrection power. We are helpless without the Risen Christ. We are adrift without his guiding hand.

This is why he comes to us by his Holy Spirit, the One who draws near to us even as we walk the highway, even as we toil in the deep waters of life, and even in the quiet moments of the dawn as we wake from sleep each morning. Jesus himself draws near. He is Risen, alive, pulsating with life and Heaven's riches, all to be shared with the one who seeks and finds him as Saviour.

My heart is thrilled as I think of you all, working for Jesus just where he has placed you. I lift you to God in prayer as I write:

O God of Resurrection grace and power, come afresh with Easter life and strength to your people called Salvationists. Bless us again. Infill us anew by your Holy Spirit. Cleanse our hearts and make them fit for your indwelling. Direct and control all we think and say and do. Make us clean and ready to receive afresh your indwelling Holy Spirit. Use us, according to your will, in the world and send us out among those you have called us to serve. Make us bold and fruitful in your power and for the sake of your gospel. All this we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

May Easter blessings fall upon you all, and may you know the nearness of the Risen Christ moment by moment.

I commend you to his love and care in all things.

With Salvationist salutations.

Yours in Christ,

Shaw Clifton
General