

**THE SALVATION ARMY AUSTRALIAN TERRITORIES
POSITIONAL STATEMENT**

THE SACRAMENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Salvation Army, in its worship structure and beliefs, differs from most mainstream churches in its non-observance of the sacraments, as diverse as those observances may be, and as they are generally understood.

The Salvation Army respects those who find these sacraments helpful as a means of grace. However, it holds the view that the practice of a particular ritual is not essential to salvation or Christian living.

While The Salvation Army is not opposed to the sacraments it positively asserts that repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and regeneration by the Holy Spirit are the scriptural essentials of salvation.

Approved - IHQ – 3rd August 1994

Amendment approved – IHQ – 11th August, 2005

THE SACRAMENTS - BAPTISM

After full and careful consideration of The Salvation Army's understanding of, and approach to, the sacrament of water baptism, the International Spiritual Life Commission sets out the following points regarding the relationship between our soldier enrolment and water baptism.

1. Only those who confess Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord may be considered for soldiership in The Salvation Army.
2. Such a confession is confirmed by the gracious presence of God the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer and includes the call to discipleship.
3. In accepting the call to discipleship Salvationists promise to continue to be responsive to the Holy Spirit and to seek to grow in grace.
4. They also express publicly their desire to fulfil membership of Christ's Church on earth as soldiers of The Salvation Army.
5. The Salvation Army rejoices in the truth that all who are in Christ are baptised into the one body by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13).
6. It believes, in accordance with Scripture, that 'there is one body and one Spirit...one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all' (Ephesians 4:5,6).
7. The swearing-in of a soldier of The Salvation Army beneath the trinitarian sign of the Army's flag acknowledges this truth.
8. It is a public response and witness to a life-changing encounter with Christ which has already taken place, as is the water baptism practised by some other Christians.
9. The Salvation Army acknowledges that there are many worthy ways of publicly witnessing to having been baptised into Christ's body by the Holy Spirit and expressing a desire to be his disciple.
10. The swearing-in of a soldier should be followed by a lifetime of continued obedient faith in Christ.

International Spiritual Life Commission - February 1998

THE SACRAMENTS - HOLY COMMUNION

After full and careful consideration of The Salvation Army's understanding of, and approach to, the sacrament of Holy Communion*, the International Spiritual Life Commission sets out the following points:

1. God's grace is freely and readily accessible to all people at all times and in all places.
2. No particular outward observance is necessary to inward grace.
3. The Salvation Army believes that unity of the Spirit exists within diversity and rejoices in the freedom of the Spirit in expressions of worship.
4. When Salvationists attend other Christian gatherings in which a form of Holy Communion is included, they may partake if they choose to do so and if the host church allows.
5. Christ is the one true Sacrament, and sacramental living – Christ living in us and through us – is at the heart of Christian holiness and discipleship.
6. Throughout its history The Salvation Army has kept Christ's atoning sacrifice at the centre of its corporate worship.
7. The Salvation Army rejoices in its freedom to celebrate Christ's real presence at all meals and in all meetings, and in its opportunity to explore in life together the significance of the simple meals shared by Jesus and his friends and by the first Christians.
8. Salvationists are encouraged to use the love feast and develop creative means of hallowing meals in home and corps with remembrance of the Lord's sacrificial love.
9. The Salvation Army encourages the development of resources for fellowship meals, which will vary according to culture, without ritualising particular words or actions.
10. In accordance with normal Salvation Army practice, such remembrances and celebrations, where observed, will not become established rituals, nor will frequency be prescribed.

*Terminology varies according to culture and denomination, and is not always interchangeable.

International Spiritual Life Commission February 1998