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Dear Salvationists,

I greet you in the name of Jesus Christ and send this letter, hoping you will receive it in the spirit in which it is intended. I take this opportunity to assure you of my prayers and, by God's grace, my love and appreciation for each of you.

This past year all humanity has been impacted by coronavirus. I do understand and have first-hand knowledge of how all of us have been affected and that some have suffered more than others. I am proud of the culture of generosity that thrives within The Salvation Army, enabling relief, comfort, and encouragement to be offered to countless numbers of people. As we seek a way out of the pandemic, various vaccines have become our focus. Equity of availability is an issue and on behalf of The Salvation Army I have made my voice heard. I hope, when possible, you will join me in receiving the vaccine, if you have not received it yet. In all that has taken place, the Army has stepped up and has endeared itself to millions by helping and serving. I now pray that there will be much fruit – a great harvest of souls – as a result.

As your General, I am well supported by a diverse group of senior leaders who are strategically placed around the world. During this past year, your international leaders have met online to focus on critical agenda items. This engagement has provided enormous support in my responsibility for addressing such matters affecting the Army. There is now a clear mandate, and we are working to secure our place in an ever-changing world as we respond to our Kingdom responsibilities.

For instance, our focus on Leadership Development and Succession Planning is accepted as vital to our future. Woven into this priority is the issue of Gender Equity. Efforts are underway to provide strong and clear action plans while acknowledging and addressing systemic issues within our Salvation Army culture. Of particular note is the complex topic of Human Sexuality. In this I note that our discussions have not led to any desire to move away from our current articulated view. Although it is likely that some Salvationists hoped for change, given the complex nature of this matter around the world it is agreed that further theological thought and reflection is required. We must now accept our responsibility as to how we hold different views from each other while providing a better sense of belonging within the fellowship of the Army.

I am very excited that I am in office as General as a new *Orders and Regulations for Soldiers* is being issued. In fact, I get to give you two books – *Called to be a Soldier* and *Day by Day*. The first focuses on exploring Salvation Army soldiership as a calling, while the second is about understanding discipleship's link with mission. Together these can be tools to transform, renew and revive us as a movement. I pray this gesture will have a positive impact on your journey.

I remain convinced that our world needs and deserves a vibrant, confident, and motivated Salvation Army that is battle-ready and positioned to serve others. Thank you for engaging in the onward march and may his hand of blessing be upon us. May we experience ever-greater things.

My *Call to Mission* remains: Be Ready, Be Engaged, Take Responsibility.

'Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.' (Ephesians 3:20-21 *New International Version*).

Brian Peddle
GENERAL