



Dear friends,

General Brian Peddle has released a letter for Salvationists around the world that reflects on such things as the impact of the coronavirus and the dedicated service of The Salvation Army globally in response to this pandemic. The General also speaks of two new books that are about to be released: *Called to be a Soldier* (a new Orders and Regulations for Soldiers) and *Day by Day* by Commissioner Robert Street, which explores God's call to mission for each of us.

In his letter, General Peddle raises the hope that people may experience a better sense of belonging within The Salvation Army, noting that this has prompted the Army's leaders to prioritise such issues as Leadership Development and Gender Equity, and to hold discussions around Human Sexuality. He says that discussions on Human Sexuality have not led to a 'move away' from the Army's 'current articulated view'.

We are aware that this brief comment in the General's letter does not give much context and is likely to cause anxiety and disappointment for some Salvationists and friends of The Salvation Army. Firstly, we want to reassure people that the discussions the General mentions are ongoing within The Salvation Army in the New Zealand, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa Territory as well as at an international level. We are committed to listening to each other in order to build better relationships, just as we are committed to the difficult task of continuing to reflect on the meaning of Scripture. For those who would like to contribute to this discussion, we welcome you to make contact with Major Ian Gainsford, who is Chair of our Moral and Social Issues Council (MASIC).

Secondly, we appreciate that in July 2006, The Salvation Army in New Zealand committed itself to 'rebuilding bridges of understanding and dialogue' with the LGBTQI community in an apology about hurt caused through The Salvation Army's formal opposition to the Homosexual Law Reform Bill (1986). We continue to honour this promise, recognising that as Christians and Salvationists we must always stand against homophobia. All people are equally loved by God, and everyone must have the opportunity to experience the salvation and full life made possible through Jesus Christ; and the opportunity to belong and participate in communities of faith. We do not want to allow barriers of prejudice or judgement to cause people to turn away from God. We also deeply value members of the LGBTQI community who are a vital part of the mission of our corps and centres, and our engagement with the wider community.

Thirdly, as General Peddle rightly notes, Human Sexuality is a complex topic. In an international movement such as our own, our international leadership must balance the sensitivities and sometimes the danger of serving in countries with more repressive laws

OFFICE OF THE TERRITORIAL COMMANDER

TERRITORIAL HEADQUARTERS

202-204 Cuba Street, Te Aro, Wellington 6011, New Zealand. PO Box 6015, Marion Square, Wellington 6141, New Zealand.

Phone +64 4 384 5649

Founders of The Salvation Army Catherine and William Booth. Territorial Leaders: Mark and Julie Campbell

www.salvationarmy.org.nz



or cultural practices than our own. For this reason, we want to support our Salvation Army leaders around the world in prayer, asking God to help and guide them.

There is a wide range of views on matters of Human Sexuality within The Salvation Army. Even in our part of the world, there is not agreement on the best way for Christian churches and other faith communities to proceed. We also acknowledge that the views of many in New Zealand are different from those of many in the island nations that form this Territory. Despite this challenging reality, our intention is to continue this journey of understanding, a journey that requires grace from all of us.

We cannot see where the future will take The Salvation Army, but we do know that as Salvationists we have a clear calling to care for people. We are both committed to obeying Jesus' commands to love God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind, and also to love our neighbours (Luke 10:27). We ask that you make these same words a priority in your own lives, taking great care to engage in conversation with respect and kindness no matter what views you might personally hold.

Thank you again for who you are and what you do in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Regards

Mark and Julie Campbell
Territorial Leaders

OFFICE OF THE TERRITORIAL COMMANDER

TERRITORIAL HEADQUARTERS

202-204 Cuba Street, Te Aro, Wellington 6011, New Zealand. PO Box 6015, Marion Square, Wellington 6141, New Zealand.

Phone +64 4 384 5649

Founders of The Salvation Army Catherine and William Booth. Territorial Leaders: Mark and Julie Campbell

www.salvationarmy.org.nz