

Dear Don,

We were asked to send in our understanding of holiness to you. I would like to begin with a preface. I was a member of the Army's International Spiritual Life Commission that met in London in the late 1990s for five meetings of one week duration each (Lyell Rader was also a member of this commission). We were given the charge to look at every aspect of the Army's spiritual life, and, of course, gave a great deal of attention to holiness, our central doctrine. Regarding the doctrine of holiness, the commission first affirmed the teaching of holiness, and also sent out a challenge around the Army world. The affirmation read as follows:

"We affirm that God continues to desire and to command that His people be holy.

For this Christ died, for this Christ rose again, for this the Spirit was given. We therefore determine to claim as God's gracious gift that holiness which is ours in Christ. We confess that at times we have failed to realize the practical consequences of the call to holiness within our relationships, within our communities and within our movement. We resolve to make every effort to embrace holiness of life, knowing that this is only possible by means of the power of the Holy Spirit producing His fruit in us."

The call read as follows:

"We call Salvationists worldwide to restate and live out the doctrine of holiness in all its dimensions--personal, relational, social and political--in the context of our cultures and in the idioms of our day while allowing for and indeed prizing such diversity of experience and expression as is in accord with the Scriptures."

Allowing for various definitions of holiness that are rooted in the biblical text, I continue to find strength in a definition of holiness as a life of obedience, rooted in love, to the Great Commandment of our Lord--to love God and love our neighbor supremely. Samuel Logan Brengle in his work entitled *The Way of Holiness* wrote that "Sanctification is to have our sinful tempers cleansed, and the heart filled with love to God and man."

Obedience is the natural outcome of that love for God, and so we are compelled to love our neighbor also. Because holiness is corporate as well as

personal, such obedience is to be manifested by the Church as well as by individual believers.

I don't know if this helps. I regret that I have to miss these meetings and this discussion.

Blessings.

Roger