

The Salvation Army International Positional Statement

The Salvation Army and the State

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The Salvation Army is politically non-partisan. Although it seeks to influence governmental and public affairs, it will not promote or endorse specific candidates or political parties.

In working with any State and its agencies, The Salvation Army seeks to promote Biblical values, including justice, truth, mercy, equity, human rights and peace, as part of its religious convictions and practice.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

As an international Christian church and charitable organization, The Salvation Army works within a wide variety of political and social contexts. No matter where it is operating, however, The Salvation Army's unchanging mission is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and serve suffering humanity in his name.

It is therefore appropriate to consider The Salvation Army's view of its relationship with "the State," which is defined for these purposes as the institutions that maintain political sovereignty over a defined territory and population.

FOUNDATIONS FOR THE POSITION OF THE SALVATION ARMY

The State is established by God for securing justice and doing good, and both Christians and the Church have a duty to respect its authority (Romans 13). Nonetheless, the Bible also teaches that we must seek first God's Kingdom (Matthew 6:33). Biblical values must be upheld by the Church even when they are not upheld by the State.

The Salvation Army's relationship with the State is founded upon scriptural principles, which include the following:

- God is the creator of the Earth (Isaiah 40:28).
- States and their leaders are responsible for acting wisely and with an understanding of their subjection, together with all creation, to God and his ordinances (Psalms 2:10).
- God requires justice, mercy and humility. (Micah 6:8)

- While Christians should actively seek opportunities to influence positively and thereby promote the well-being of the State (Jeremiah 29:7), that obligation is subsidiary to a Christian's primary allegiance to God (Exodus 5:1, Acts 4:18-31).

PRACTICAL RESPONSES

1. By virtue of its doctrines, its approach and its reputation, The Salvation Army is particularly called to work with those who live in poverty or who have otherwise been marginalised. Consequently, The Salvation Army seeks opportunities to work in cooperation with the State and its agencies whenever their actions promote a just and fair society.
2. The Salvation Army will work with the State and its agencies to deliver and provide humanitarian and social services that benefit people without discrimination.
3. The Salvation Army will seek to offer pastoral care to those who undertake the onerous responsibilities of political and government leadership, and it will endeavour wherever possible to create productive relationships with those who hold positions of authority in the State.
4. The Salvation Army will constantly seek to be a positive influence on individual States, their respective agencies and institutions, and international bodies such as the United Nations. Its goal in all of these relationships will be the promotion of Biblical values.

Approved by the General, March 2011

The views expressed in this international positional statement constitute the official position of The Salvation Army on the issue addressed, and they may not be modified or adapted in any way without the express written permission of International Headquarters.