

Charge to the new lieutenants

By Judy Smith, Lt. Colonel –

How do you define success?

Is it by the number of black shoes in your closet? Or the number of Bibles you have on your bookshelf? Or is it your name or your Army heritage?

May I submit to you that your success as a Salvation Army officer will not include any of these items. In fact, it will not even take into account how popular you were at training college nor your GPA at graduation, but it will be determined by the grace that you share with the world.

People will want to know, did you change your world?

Did you leave the world or your community a better place?

Did you contribute to society? Did you share love and grace with your community?

Did you serve people with the love of Christ?

Did you express a giving spirit and did you receive gifts of time, treasure and talent graciously?

Did you lead your flock with care and compassion and not out of selfish ambition or selfish motives?

These are going to be the marks of your leadership, your life's work, this will be the evidence of your "Blood and Fire" officership.

So I ask you: Are you ready to become officers and accept your first appointment?

We are ready for you, Heralds of Grace!

During your welcome weekend nearly two years ago, Territorial Commander Commissioner James Knaggs said, "You are Heralds of Grace. Your journey is to serve the Lord through The Salvation Army." Then you were pointed to II Timothy 2:15: *Do your best to present yourself as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*



Well, I would like to share with you a verse that I claimed a few years back when I was installed as the divisional commander of the Cascade Division. I took the words of Isaiah for the vision for my ministry: *Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. For you will spread out to the right and to the left your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities* (Isaiah 54: 2-3).

Your journey with the Lord and The Salvation Army will truly be an adventure that you do not want to miss if you will listen and take in these words of Isaiah.

I charge you:

Be open to the possibilities and opportunities. You will receive appointments that make sense to you and then you will receive appointments that come as a great surprise or are nowhere close to what you have envisioned for yourself or your family. I charge you to not hang back; take the adventure that is before you. Work as if you will stay forever in any of your appointments, yet be ready to take the next step if that is what the Lord, through The Salvation Army, says to you.

Be self-confident. You will hear of session mates or fellow officers receiving appointments that you felt should have been yours; don't feel rejected or jealous as chances are you don't know the whole story. Be happy for them and know that the Lord has a greater adventure for you in your appointment and you wouldn't want to miss the blessings that have been prepared just for you.

Avoid comparison. Comparing yourself and your ministry to fellow officers is dangerous in our business; we must compare ourselves only to the covenant that we signed and the commitment we made to the Lord and to The Salvation Army.

Be a listener. But stop listening to the wrong voices—those of doubt, lack of confidence, indecision, discouragement, and so on.

Choose your battles carefully. I pray that you will choose to affect your world for Jesus Christ. Yes, fight for the Lord, but not with fellow officers, and certainly not your divisional or territorial leaders.

Most of officership is attitude. Work diligently to make each other better. It is not what happens to us in life, but how we handle what happens to us in life is the true sign of our character.

Treat yourself and others with respect. Be quick to say yes and then figure out how to do it later. Take care of all that is given to you, because it all belongs to God and we are just the caretakers.

Prioritize Christ. Don't neglect your relationship with your heavenly Father and loving Savior. Spend time with him often; make family devotions a priority; show your love and gratitude by giving of your tithe generously and gladly to the Lord, just as you teach others; and be a reader and doer of the Word of God, in all parts of your life.

Make your family an integral part of your ministry. God called you into ministry and he is very aware of your children and yes, even your grandchildren. Don't leave them on the outside, but bring them into

the joyful experience of belonging to an officer's family.

Live a joyful life. Live knowing that you will find joy in the service of the Lord, that you will find peace in helping others without discrimination, that you will find your message of grace a mighty message that needs to be shared with or without words, day or night, to the young and the old and infirmed or to the ones that sit in your congregation.

Be a herald. You are Heralds of Grace so blow your herald trumpet loud and proud. Wear your uniform properly, proudly and often. Allow others to speak truth into your life. Be willing to listen to others. Be teachable. Never stop learning. Don't think small. Look beyond the horizon of what you see at this time, and God will bless you more than you can imagine at this moment in time.

Know you are not alone. No one wants you to fail, so put away your sense of having to go it alone but look to others for wisdom, counsel and support. Together we are strong and we are not easily defeated if we stand united. We are one Army, an Army that serves the almighty God and we will be united when we stand together.

You have the message of grace within you, as a session and as individuals, so share it freely and joyfully!

May God bless and keep each of you faithful for all of the days to come, as active officers and beyond.

Amen.