

The Christmas Kettle and the War on Poverty

Edwards
by Commissioner David Edwards –

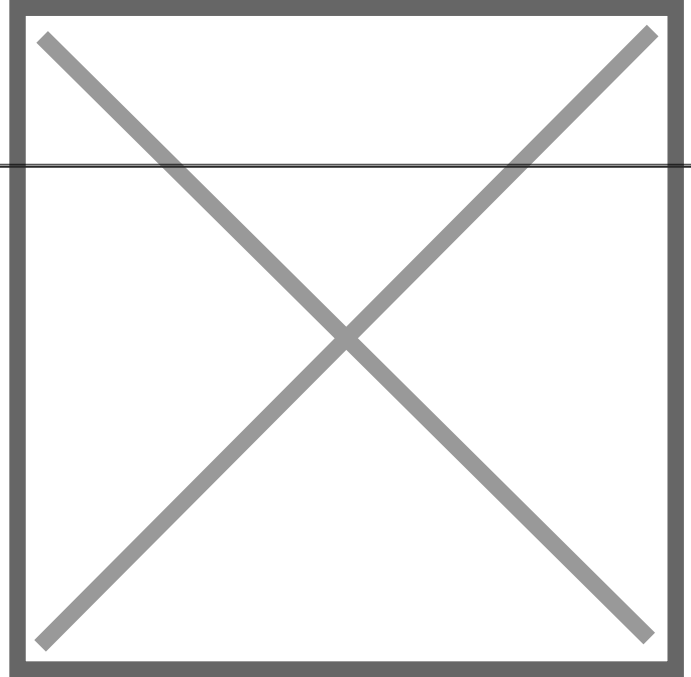
Knowing this article was due on my return, I am writing this following a week in London as a member of an international commission on the subject of "Officership."

Sitting in a very quiet Boeing 777, everyone around me is sleeping and I can think about an incredible week that has started a process which is only beginning. What a week! Twenty-three men and women from around the Army world have been called together to discuss all aspects of officership. Eleven women and 12 men! The Commission members include three local officers, three commissioners, two colonels, four lieutenant colonels, five majors, four captains, and two lieutenants. The ages vary from early 20s to 62 years.

We met together at the International Training College for Officers in London. Upon our arrival, we were assigned to cadet rooms and settled in. We ate together, met together, prayed together, talked and cried together as a group committed to finding some answers about officership which will take us into the next century.

Each member had been given homework even before we went to London. The first day was spent "ventilating." All of us needed to express our hopes, dreams and fears about the entire concept. By the second day we settled down and started the discussions which would take us through the week. Commissioner Norman Howe, the chair, gave us the format which became the direction for the week: the context, the concept, the contract and covenant, and the conditions. Everything seems better when there are terms on which to hang your hat. Our world within and without The Salvation Army is changing so fast that there is rarely time to think through the ramifications before making decisions on any subject.

At the same time, it has never been more important to have answers and rationale. Any and all changes are even more serious and urgent in the light of the internationalism of the Army. Each day, over and over, each member, whatever our culture, educational or experiential background, all gave



voice to a common belief. Spiritual leadership through officership and local officership in The Salvation Army is unique and a privilege. This spiritual leadership is needed to provide the proper direction for the future of the Army.

My mind and my heart are so full after this week. Knowing that we already have been called back for another week in a few months, may I ask that all Salvationists make this a matter of prayer? Pray specifically that we, as commission members, will know and feel the power and the presence of God in every conversation. Pray specifically for the recommendations. Pray that they will be God-honoring and God-glorifying. We need your prayers. We must have your prayers. The process has only begun!