

## The ultimate promotion

### InProcess

by Glen Doss, Major –

As I opened the package, my eyes lit upon a name, and my heart leaped. The words, “Stephen Sutter,” were engraved in gold on the cover of a very worn black Bible. My eyes teared.

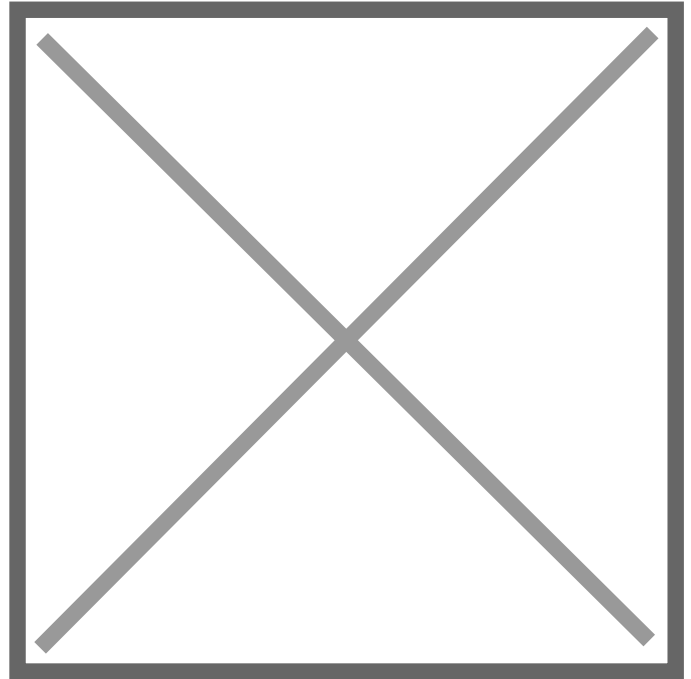
I had been expecting the package, for while we were at the hospital ministering to him Steve’s mother had told me she would be sending it. One of her son’s last requests was that his personal Bible be given to me because I was there at his spiritual rebirth at the Denver ARC 14 years ago. “I want Glen to have it,” he had told her. “It belongs with him.”

As I thumbed through the 8”x5” Bible, my hands trembled. The binding had been reinforced with electrical tape. Several margins were rife with scribbled notes, and numerous sentences were underlined. I noticed documents tucked between the pages. One was a miniature red pamphlet, *A Ladder to Holiness: Being Seven Steps to Full Salvation*, by William Booth. A blue ribbon bookmarker bore the Serenity Prayer, which I knew was very meaningful to him.

“I’m leaning on Jesus more and more,” he often shared during the months he suffered with cancer. As he groaned with pain during his last lucid moments, I had reminded him: “The pain is very bad, brother, I know. Just keep leaning on Jesus. Let him carry your burden. Lean on Jesus.”

“Yes, yes,” he whispered in reply. And, “Yes,” he said again, as a small smile curled his lips, and calmness spread across his features. How my heart had ached for him! But I had also envied him what lay ahead: soon he would be with his Lord, “face to face” (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Flipping further through the Bible, I stop upon spotting a miniature copy of his officer’s covenant. I read: “Called by God to proclaim the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as an officer of The Salvation Army I bind myself to Him in this solemn covenant.” It was dated June 4, 2000, and signed by the Territorial Commander, Commissioner David Edwards.



On the opposite side was a copy of Steve's Officer's Commission. I was moved—for I was struck by the significance these documents obviously held for him. *He carried them with them in his Bible all the time*, I realized, as scenes from the past flashed through my mind:

Bursting into my office, the normally mild-mannered young man, who supervised production for me, was aglow with excitement. Wildly waving a letter aloft, he exclaimed: "It finally arrived! I've been accepted as a candidate into the College for Officer Training!"

Jumping up from my desk, I slapped him on the back and heartily shook his hands, congratulating him, for I knew how meaningful this was to him. Now, before me, between the pages of his personal Bible, lay the tokens of the accomplishments of this young man to whom I had ministered those many years ago.

He had so many questions! "I know nothing about the Christian faith," he told me. "But I am caught in the grip of alcohol. It is a compulsion. There is nothing I can do. Tell me about Jesus Christ." And as I worked with him, one day he acknowledged: "Now I know Christ died for a suffering alcoholic like me. He has given me the gift of sobriety."

When I later asked him why he wanted to become a Salvation Army officer, his reply was straightforward: "It is about how I can say thank you to my Lord who has given me such a wonderful gift."

He became a Salvation Army captain—a competent corps officer and an able ARC administrator. And now he has received the ultimate promotion. On June 24, 2009, this young man I am very honored to have known and whose memory I will always treasure, my Christian brother, Captain Stephen Robert Sutter, 51, was promoted to Glory.