

COVENANT: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

by Captain Stephen Court



COVENANT is the much-overlooked key to effective soldiership. Once called the 'Soldier's Pledge', the articles of war are now known as 'A Soldier's Covenant' yet many Salvationists don't understand the profundity and potential of this rich biblical truth. It might persuasively be argued that a universal embrace of covenant is the best means by which The Salvation Army might position and mobilise itself to fulfil the following prophecy of Catherine Booth: 'The decree has gone forth that the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and that he shall reign, whose right it is, from the river to the ends of the earth. We shall win. It is only a matter of time. I believe that this Movement shall inaugurate the final conquest of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

1. But isn't covenant legalistic?

If it is, then our God is a legalist God. He is big on covenant.

2. Doesn't Ecclesiastes command us not to make covenant?

That isn't exactly how the passage goes. It declares: 'Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in Heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few. As a dream comes when there are many cares, so the speech of a fool when there are many words. When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it' (Ecclesiastes 5:2-5).

Some use this verse and similar ones in the New Testament to argue that we shouldn't covenant. But that isn't at all what Ecclesiastes is saying. It makes two points: don't make rash promises to God, and it is better to say nothing than to make a promise you don't fulfill.

3. Some have made rash promises of soldiership. What about them?

Some have made rash promises in their soldiership covenant. It would have been better to say nothing. A friend of mine never became a soldier as a teenager, partly because all his friends jumped into uniform so they could go on the